

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST
IN THE LIGHT OF MISSIONARY EXPERIENCE
IN INDIA.

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Contents
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Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. The Early Church and the Church in Modern India - A Comparative Study of Situations	11
Chapter 3. The Effect of the Situation (Challenges) on the Interpretation of the Doctrine of Christ	38
Chapter 4. Conclusion	145
Bibliography	1

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Chapter 1

It is in the main with our present situation in India that I shall concern myself in this introductory chapter. With the coming of independence in the year 1947, India has embarked upon a new era in its history and is a democratic nation, growing in a sense of responsibility and leadership. There is a great future before the country, on account of its own ancient culture, its learning, and its natural resources. If India receives the right help and leadership, it will be one of the countries of the world to uphold all that is best in the interests of peace and the welfare of mankind.

India has been greatly influenced by the West during the past century and a half. Indian Nationalism, in its essentials, is a product of the impact of the West, and national unity is maintained by the use of the English language and administrative system left behind by the British. A sense of unity in time or historical consciousness of unity is a gift of western scholarship to India.

Indian Nationalism has been helped by Western Orientalists in two ways. Their works for the first time made Indians conscious of the Indian past. "European Oriental research rendered a service to Indian and Asiatic nationalism which no native could ever have given

The resuscitation of their past fired the imaginations of the Hindus and made them conscious of a heritage of their very own, which they could pit not only against the Muslims but also against the far more powerful and virile English". (1)

These researches made it possible for Indians to see their past as a whole and trace the continuity of the cultural evolution. European scholars translated Sanskrit and Persian works into English and traced clearly the continuity of the civilization. India can never forget the remarkable contribution made by the West in this field.

Indian Nationalism is intimately connected with Hinduism. There has been a great deal of interest in reviving and reforming Hinduism, especially in recent years. Students of Indian history know that Hindu Nationalism has been a live and constant factor for over a thousand years. It evolved between the eighth and twelfth centuries A.D. in the course of a losing struggle with Islamic expansion. By the time the Muslims established their power in India (about A.D.1200)it had become a full-fledged system of resistance to everything foreign.

There has been an all-round development in our national life especially during the past fifty years. An urge for the independence of India influenced not only our political and social life but also our religious life. Systematic efforts were made to revive and reform Hinduism. In these efforts to revive Hinduism the Hindu leaders pictured Christianity as a foreign Religion.

(1) The Western Influence on India - NIRAD C. CHOUDHURI. ATLANTIC MONTHLY - March 54. P. 72.

We have however enough evidence to prove the early origin of Christianity in India and I shall deal with this question later on in this study. "The St. Thomas Christians" in Travancore became an isolated community and their existence was not known by Christians in other parts of the world. It is only from the 16th Century that they came in contact with the Christians from the West, and now they have begun to play an important part in the social and religious life of the country. Greater contact was due to the missionary labours of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. As a result of these labours over eight million were gathered in.

Let us examine briefly the Hindu attitude to Christianity in general and Christian Missionary work in particular. Mahatma Ghandi wrote in "Young India" (Ghandi's Publication) of April 23, 1931, about Christian Missions as follows.

"If instead of confining themselves purely to humanitarian work such as education, medical services to the poor and the like, they would use these activities of theirs for the purpose of proselytizing, I would certainly like them to withdraw. Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another.

"Let me amplify the bald statement. I hold that proselytizing under the cloak of humanitarian work is to say the least, unhealthy. It is most certainly resented by the people here. Religion after all is a deeply personal matter, it touches the heart. Why should I change my religion because a doctor who professes Christianity as his religion has cured me of some disease, or why should the doctor expect or suggest such a change

while I am under his influence? Is not medical relief its own reward and satisfaction? Or why should I whilst I am in a missionary educational institution have Christian teaching thrust upon me? In my opinion these practices are not uplifting and give rise to suspicion, if not even secret hostility. The methods of conversion must be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. Faith is not imparted like secular subjects. It is given through the language of the heart. If a man has a living faith in him, it spreads its aroma like the rose its scent. Because of its invisibility, the extent of its influence is far wider than that of the visible beauty of the colour of the petals.

"I am not then against conversion. But I am against the modern methods of it. Conversion nowadays has become a matter of business, like any other. I remember having read a missionary report saying how much it cost per head to convert and presenting a budget for the next harvest.

"Yes, I do maintain that India's great faiths are all-sufficing for her. Apart from Christianity and Judaism, Hinduism and its offshoots, Islam and Zoroastrianism are living faiths. No one faith is perfect. All faiths are equally dear to their respective votaries. What is wanted therefore, is living friendly contact among the followers of the great religions of the world and not a clash among them in the fruitless attempt on the part of each community to show the superiority of its faith over the rest. Through such friendly contact it will be possible for us all to rid our respective faiths of shortcomings and excrescences.

"It follows from what I have said above that India is in no need of Conversion of the kind I have in mind. Conversion in the sense of self-purification, is the crying need of the times. That, however, is not what is ever meant by proselytizing. To those who would convert India, might it not be said 'Physician heal thyself'?" (2) We can not easily dismiss Ghandi's criticism of Missionary work, but we have to point out clearly the distinction between proselytism and evangelism. Evangelism means the proclamation of the Gospel and proselytism has come to mean the act of urging people to leave their ancestral faith.

Swami Akilananda, a Missionary of the Ramakrishna Mission, states that Christianity is "a political game of the West." (3) At one point during the year 1953 it seemed as if the very basis of Missionary effort in India was in question, as a result of some remarks by the Home Minister in the Indian Parliament. "It seems evident that there is some distinction between freedom of Religion for Indians and freedom for foreigners to propagate what is sometimes called a "foreign" religion. The whole idea of evangelization, so fundamental to Christianity, is something repugnant to the Hindu temper as found in India, more especially as it has been associated with help from abroad in men and money". (4)

'Young India' April 23, 1931

(2) Quoted by Clifford Manshardt, Christianity in a Changing India (Page 27)

(3) Akilananda. Hindu View of Christ. P. 264

(4) International Review of Missions. January 1954.

"Survey for the year 1953"

It is not only the missionary method that the Hindus criticize but they also criticize the Christian Theology of Missions. "The end and aim of our evangelistic work is not achieved until all men everywhere are brought to a knowledge of God in Jesus Christ and to a saving faith in Him. Therefore, in this changing world we must re-affirm the message which is our witness to His Grace. Our message is that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself'. We believe that God revealed Himself to Israel, preparing the way for His full revelation in Jesus Christ, His Son, our Lord. We believe that Christ is the way, the truth and the life for all, that He alone is adequate for world's need. Therefore we want to bear witness to Him in all the World". (5)

Ghandi and Radhakrishnan opposes this point of view. "I cannot ascribe exclusive divinity to Jesus. He is as divine as Krishna or Rama or Mahamad or Zoroaster" says Ghandi (6)

Radhakrishnan protests strongly against the claim that Christ is the only Saviour of the world. (7) The Hindu leaders do not stop there. They claim for Hinduism a place not only of supremacy but even of finality. "The Vedanta is not 'a religion' but Religion itself, in its most universal and deepest significance". (8)

Now, under the circumstances, should we preach the Gospel?

(5) The World Mission of the Church. Tambaram 1938 (I.M.C.) P.51.

(6) E.C. Dewick quotes from "Christian Missions" by Gandhi

Ahmedabad 1941. Christian Attitude to other

Religions.

(7) Radhakrishnan - Eastern Religions and Western Thought. Pages 341 - 48.

(8) Radhakrishnan - Hindu View of Life. Page 23.

Our Hindu friends find it difficult to understand and appreciate the Christian's sense that he is under an inescapable obligation to present his religious faith to others. Throughout the nineteen centuries of the Christian era the disciples of Jesus Christ have considered it to be their duty and privilege to proclaim to others the Christian message of salvation. His first disciples went out into the world to preach the Gospel and one of them, St. Thomas, is believed to have come to S. India. To this day the Christian Church throughout the world has not lost the sense of inner constraint to proclaim the Christian message. Christians do consider it to be their privilege and duty to preach the Gospel. The practice of the Christian faith involves as an integral part of it the proclamation of that faith or the bearing witness to it.

This question is discussed at length by Prof. C. P. Mathew, former Principal of Union Christian College, Alwaye, Travancore in the National Christian Review. (9) "There is no freedom of religious practice to a Christian if he has not the freedom to preach openly his religious convictions.....It would be a grievous sin on his part if he were to submit to the financial dictation of any tyrannical government that he should not openly proclaim the Gospel. It would be his hard duty to disobey such a behest of the State and to invite the worst that the State could do to him.....It is good therefore that the Constitution has made it clear that a citizen is guaranteed the right and the freedom 'to profess, practise and propagate' his faith".

(9) N.C.C. Review. P. 473. November 1954.

It is under such circumstances that we have to proclaim the Gospel. The Church in India therefore feels the great need for a restatement of the fundamentals of the Christian faith in the language and thought forms of the people. The essential content of the Christian Faith is the same for all times, places and circumstances. But the expression, interpretation and application must both grow out of, and meet, the actual situation, making such particular emphases as are called for.

My purpose in this study is to show that our Missionary experience in modern India throws considerable light on the development of the Doctrine of Christ. Christianity is not a system but a life. "All living Christian doctrine grows out of, reflects and cannot be understood apart from, the worshipping Christian Community, and both doctrine and worship presuppose Christian experience, i.e. the corporate conviction of heart and mind that a great event has happened. Here it is our task to interpret the great act of God in all its bearing; to build the implication of the revelation in Christ into a system of thought, reasonable, not in the sense of demonstrable by argument, but in that it, as does nothing else, makes sense of all the facts".(10)

We observe a similarity in the religious and social background of the Ancient Church and the Church in India today. On closer examination we see that the problems which we are facing in India now are very similar to those which confronted the early Church. We shall trace the development of the Doctrine of

(10) Marcus Ward "Our Theological Task". P.2.

Christ - its expression, interpretation, and application - resulting from the contact between Christianity and the Non-Christian religions, especially Hinduism.

In Chapter II of this Thesis, we propose to make a comparative study of the situation in Modern India with that of the early Church. While stressing the similarity between them, we must also indicate the significant contrasts. (For example, from the eighteenth century onwards India was presented with Christianity in a foreign form and with a developed Theology.) Further, we shall follow the history of Christianity in India, giving consideration to the preparation for the Gospel message of the nineteenth century, in both the presence of the St. Thomas Christians on the Southwest coast, and in the work of Roman Catholic Missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In Chapter III we shall examine the Biblical foundations of the Doctrine of Christ, pointing out its development within the writings of the New Testament. We shall endeavour to show that the challenge to the Church in India today, from Syncretism and the various schools of Philosophy, is markedly akin to the challenge which came to the early Church in the form of the popular Gnosticism. The Church in India is called upon to restate and reinterpret the Doctrine of Christ in the language and thought forms of India. It was in the context of such similar circumstances that the early Church was forced to formulate her Doctrine of Christ.

The fourth Chapter will comprise a discussion of the reactions to the challenge of Syncretism, and to that of the other non-Christian philosophies met in India.

Broadly speaking, we observe two paths of reply and response within the Church to the non-Christian religions. One group which may be termed liberal in outlook, seeks points of contact through similar prior concepts in non-Christian systems and relates the Christian message to the religious heritage of India. This immediately calls to mind Clement of Alexandria who took a similar position in the second century. The other group cannot readily appreciate this point of view, which they feel leads down the road towards Syncretism. They believe that the Church should confine herself to the Bible for the interpretation of Theology. They tend to become Separatists. The existence of such groups in India helps us to understand St. Irenaeus and his Biblical Theology. In his defence against Gnosticism St. Irenaeus based his interpretations of the Doctrine of Christ on the historic Revelation as recorded in the writings of the Evangelists.

Today in India, as at Caesarea Philippi, we must answer Jesus of Nazareth as he asks,- 'Who do you say that I am?'

(11) A man like Gandhi, one such as the AVATARS in Hinduism, or the Christ, the Son of the living God?

It is my contention that our missionary experience in modern India illuminates the development of the Doctrine of Christ in the early Church.

(11) Matthew 16:15 (R.S.V.)

Chapter 11

The Early Church and the Church in Modern India.

A comparative study of situations.

In this chapter I am endeavouring to examine our situation in India, especially the Church's struggle with non-Christian religions and philosophies, and to show how this study throws some light on the problems which the early Church had to face when it came in contact with non-Christian world. (In speaking of the 'early Church', I am referring to the early centuries of Christianity, and principally to the Anti-Nicene period.) On careful examination of the facts we see that the background of the early Church and that of the Church in India are very similar.

But before I discuss the similarities in the two situations, I must point out that there are also certain contrasts. In the first place we have to bear in mind that the two situations were separated from each other by a period of nineteen centuries. During that time the thought-forms and presentation of the Gospel have been shaped by succeeding centuries of Christian experience: there is therefore implicitly a difference in the form and content of the message presented by the early Church from that presented by the missionaries from the West who came to India. Those early missionaries to India presented the Gospel in a 'western form', and the Christianity which they brought to India was a developed one with a developed Theology. Even here however, a

parallel can be seen between the two situations, because the early Christians, especially Jewish Christians, presented the Gospel in Jewish forms to a predominantly 'Greek' world.

Allowing for qualifications, the missionary impulse, already inherent in Judaism was especially active in the Hellenistic or Greek-speaking Synagogues of the Dispersion. It was quickened in the case of the disciples of St. Stephen because they firmly believed that the decisive hour of the world's history was at hand. The followers of Stephen were already Hellenists and when they came to Antioch they preached the message of the Lord Jesus, not only to the Jews, but also to the Greek-speaking pagans. That was a new departure from their previous policy of 'speaking the word to none except Jews'.(12)

The atmosphere of the gentile world was radically different from that of Palestine. Antioch was one of the typical cities of the gentile world where an intermingling of people of various languages, races, religions and civilizations had been going on for several centuries. They exchanged their ideas in the colloquial Greek which, as a result of Alexander's conquests and the policy of his successors, had become the common medium of intercourse in the Graeco-Roman world.

It was also a world in which religious syncretism flourished. J. Weiss describes Syria as, 'the true homeland of syncretism'.(13)

(12) Acts 11:19

(13) Quoted by Rawlinson - New Testament Doctrines of Christ.p.58

Here Greek, Jewish and Oriental religious traditions were in intimate contact. The Church found itself confronted at Antioch, exactly as on the mission-field today in India, with the problem of how best to present its essential message in terms intelligible to the minds of its hearers without itself incurring the danger of becoming partially paganized in the process.

We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that the people of Athens derived from the preaching of Paul the impression that he was, 'a setter forth of foreign demons' (He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities' - R.S.V.) (14) whose names were 'Jesus' and 'Anastasis'. The Athenians could not understand St. Paul, and so they thought that he was trying to introduce two foreign gods. This is a problem we are facing in India even today. It was indeed a very serious problem for the early missionaries who had to learn the Indian languages and translate the Christian ideas into those languages. This problem of the communication of the Christian message will be discussed further in connection with the missionary methods of the Church.

In order to obtain a full appreciation of the modern missionary situation and its bearing on the development of the Doctrine of Christ, we shall review the history of Christianity in India. We shall have to consider whether non-Christian

(14) Acts 17:18 See F.J.Foakes-Jackson, Acts, P.163;
and F.F.Bruce, Acts (English text) P.351.

India was in any way pre-disposed toward the nineteenth century Protestant missions. Was there any preparation for the reception of the Gospel? A strong tradition traces the origin of Christianity in India to the mission of the Apostle Thomas, who is believed to have come to the Malabar Coast, (South-western India). There, at the dawn of the modern missionary era a Christian community, well organized socially and economically, was already in existence. (The Syrian Church is the generic name for this community which existed in an undivided state until the sixteenth century.)

We can divide the history of Christianity in India conveniently into five periods: first, the first fifteen centuries; second, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; third, the eighteenth century; fourth, the nineteenth century; and fifth, the twentieth century.

1. The first fifteen centuries. For the first fifteen centuries of the Christian era the Church in India lived its life in obscurity. Its existence was not known in other parts of the world. Isolated from all other Christians by Moslem domination in the near East, the Christians kept their watch and preserved their faith, never allowing their light to be extinguished. "According to the commonly accepted tradition St. Thomas landed in the year AD 52 at the port of Muziris (now Cranganore, not far from Cochin) and began to preach the Gospel. He was successful in winning many converts and established churches in seven different places. After ordaining

two presbyters to continue the work he passed over to the east coast of India. Here also his efforts met with encouragement and the King of that region and many people were baptized... The Brahmans were filled with envy on account of the progress of Christianity in these parts and stirred up opposition against him. A riot took place, in which St. Thomas was pierced with a lance and won a martyr's crown. This is said to have taken place about the year A.D.72" (15)

There is nothing inherently improbable in the account of St. Thomas' visit to India. From very early times there has been regular trade between India and countries in the West. The 'ivory, apes and peacocks' which Solomon imported - (11 Chronicles 9:21 and 1 Kings 10:22) may have come from India. It is pointed out that the Hebrew names Shanhabbim (ivory) Qophim (apes) and Tukkiyim (peacocks) have a clear connection with their names in old Tamil and Sanskrit.

The Apocryphal 'Acts of Thomas' and 'Martyrdom of Thomas' both probably dating from the second half of the Third century, recount the Missionary labours of the Apostle Thomas in India. "It chanced that there was a certain merchant from India, whose name was Abbanes, sent from the King Grunda-phorus, and having Commandment from him to buy a carpenter and bring him unto him: 'Wouldest thou buy a carpenter?' And he said to him: 'Yea'. And the Lord said to him: I have a slave that is a carpenter, and I desire to sell him'. And so saying he showed

(15) F.E. Keay. A History of the Syrian Church in India. p.1

him Thomas afar off and agreed with him for three litrae of silver unstamped, and wrote a deed of sale..... And when the deed was finished, the Saviour took Judas Thomas and led him away to Abbanes the merchant; and when Abbanes saw him he said unto him: Is this thy Master? And he said: 'Yea, He is my Lord'. And he said: I have bought thee of Him'. And the Apostle held his peace". (16)

'Acts of Thomas' explains that the lot fell to Thomas to go and preach the Gospel in India, and, since he was unwilling, the Lord devised this stratagem to send him. This story was regarded as a legend. But this account of St. Thomas' visit to India, so improbable in itself, received unexpected support through numerous discoveries of coins in the mountainous districts of Iran and adjoining districts of India. Some of the coins bear the name of Gondophernes. "His reign may be placed between A.D.20 and 48. He ruled an extensive realm which included Araclosia, Kabul and the Kingdom of Taxila. The name of Gondophernes or Gondophares has become more or less familiar to European readers because early ecclesiastical legends, going back to the third century A.D. affirm that Apostle St. Thomas preached Christianity in his dominions and was there martyred ." (17)

The story also shows that in the centuries about the time of the birth of our Lord the Greek language and culture were

(16) Bishop Neil. (Quoted) Builders of the Indian Church.p.17

(17) V.A. Smith. Oxford History of India. p.126

widespread in these regions, and Christian communities were already in existence at the time of the composition of these Apocryphal writings. "There is no necessary reason why an Apostle should not have preached in India. Trade was brisk between the Roman Empire and the Coromandel coast and thousands of Roman coins have been dug up from the soil of India. It is not incredible that the sea which carried Paul to the West may have carried Thomas to the East". (18)

We get glimpses of this church from time to time in Ancient history. Among the 318 Bishops who took part in the Council of Nicea there was a certain "John, Bishop of all Persia and greater India". From about the eighth century we have our first real relic, an ancient cross with an inscription in old Persian. This was discovered in 1547 at Milapur, near Madras. Later on an exactly similar cross with precisely the same inscription was discovered at Kottayam, Travancore, some four hundred miles away from Madras. Dr. Burnell, an English Indologist, is of ^{the} opinion that these crosses could be assigned to the sixth or the seventh century. (19) Mr. Winckworth of Cambridge says that they were made in the eighth century. (20) The discovery of these crosses confirms the belief that there were groups of Christians in many parts of S. India by the seventh or eighth century. It was not until the beginning of the sixteenth century that the Thomas Christians became generally known in Europe.

(18) S. Neill. Builders of the Indian Church. p.18

(19) Richter. History of Christianity in India. p.32

(20) S. Neill. Builders of the Indian Church. p.19

This ancient group of Christians have played an important part in the history of Christianity in India. They are now divided into various sections, but they all cherish their common origin and history. "Their antiquity as a Christian community", says P. Cherian, "the many social and political privileges conferred on them by the early Malabar sovereigns, the proficiency their ancestors had attained in the use of arms, the respect and consideration shown them by the princes who ruled in different parts of the country, the consequent social position which they have occupied among various communities on the Malabar Coast, their strict adherence to the law of monogamy and the principle of the indissolubility of marriage, even though they have been living in the midst of communities which recognized and largely practised polygamy..... are all constantly remembered and cherished by the entire Syrian Christian Community". (21)

However, it should be pointed out that their habit of clinging to the past has resulted in a spirit of exclusiveness.

Members of the Syrian Christian Community are found all over India, and they are respected by the Hindus. Their presence in the various cities in India has facilitated the spread of the Gospel among the so-called high-caste groups.

As a result of their contact with the Church Missionary Society, the St. Thomas Christians are taking a keen interest in the evangelization of India. "The Ancient Church in India"

(21) P. Cherian, The Malabar Syrians and
The Church Missionary Society. p.333

writes Yohanon Mar Thoma, Metropolitan of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, "has a great opportunity in India. The Western Missions are finding it more and more difficult to carry on the work in India. Doors are opening for Missionary work in various new fields." (22) Even the Hindu leaders recognize the fact that Christianity is one of the oldest religions of India. In a letter to the All-Indian Conference of Indian Christians Jawaharlal Nehru wrote: "Christianity came to India in very early days, long before it spread in Europe, and for hundreds of years it flourished in South India without any political help or hindrance. As a whole, India was remarkably tolerant in matters religious. But later on, when the British power became dominant in India, there was an increasing tendency to associate Christianity with this power and most people forgot that Christianity is one of the oldest religions in India". (23)

The allegation that Christianity is a foreign religion in India is discredited by the very fact of the existence of the St. Thomas Christians from the early centuries of the Christian era.

2. The sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. During this period the Portuguese were the masters of the field. They depended on the power of the secular arm for the extension of the Roman Catholic Church. Much of their work was superficial and in course of time disappeared. Francis Xavier was the greatest

(22) Yohanon Mar Thoma. Christianity in India
and Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

p.65

(23) Appasamy. Christian Task in Independent India.

p.21

missionary during this period.

3. The Eighteenth Century. At the beginning of the eighteenth Century the non-Roman churches entered into the field.

Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Plutschau, the first Protestant Missionaries landed in India, at Taanguebar, on the 9th day of July, 1706. These two German Missionaries were sent to India by the King of Denmark, Frederick IV. The eighteenth century was a period of extreme disorganization and the missionary work was seriously hampered by wars and rumours of wars.

4. The Nineteenth Century. This was the greatest age of Missionary work in India. The establishment of the British power brought peace and order out of chaos. The whole country was opened up to the work of the church. Several English and American Missionary societies entered the Mission fields in India, and to-day there is hardly any Church in Christendom which has not its share in the task of winning India's millions for Christ. The main lines of occupation were laid down in this century. By the end of the century the Church began to strike roots of its own into the Indian soil.

5. The Twentieth Century. The Mission has now become the Church. At the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, it was recognized that the time had come for the foreign Missionary to hand over responsibility to his Indian fellow-workers. A remarkable feature of this period is the attitude of the non-Christians to Christianity. The educated classes began to look to Christ as the One who may have the decisive word to say in the perplexities of their life. The depressed classes came into the Church

in thousands. The so-called high caste people began to be attracted by a new quality of life seen unexpectedly in those whom they despised and oppressed. This is particularly true of the early part of the ^{twentieth} ~~nineteenth~~ century.

The establishment of Independence in India on August 15, 1947, is an important land mark in the history of Christianity in India. Christianity had been associated with the British Government. Though the British did not show any special favour for the spread of Christian religion, the prejudice against Christianity as their religion has persisted. Now, with the end of foreign rule, Christianity will be considered on its own merits.

The Constitution of India is generous in the position it allows to Christianity and other religious groups. It reads: "Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion". (24) It is one thing to promise religious freedom in the Constitution and quite another thing to have it translated into daily life. This is indeed a day of opportunity. Our Lord calls us for a fresh faith and fresh adventure. Modern missions in India started with Carey's great sermon: "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God". His faith was justified by his own work of forty years, and by a hundred and fifty years in which the Church has proved over and over again the goodness of God.

(24) The Constitution of India. Article 25 (1)

We shall now pass on to a comparative study of the background of the early Church and the Church in Modern India.

In New Testament times the greater part of the civilized world belonged to the sphere of influence of the Roman Empire. The Romans were under the impression that they ruled the world. "In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled". Luke 2:1. The Roman Senate conferred the venerable title of Augustus on Octavian in January, 27. B.C. The eastern provinces, long accustomed to invest their royal benefactors, with divine honors were keeping the emperor's birthday as the birthday of "the God and Saviour of the whole human race". (25) A war-weary people could now expect a period of peace and prosperity. Their national wealth would no longer be squandered on the weapons of war.

In the centuries that followed, travel became safe and trade prospered. With growing prosperity there developed a huge foreign luxury trade which sent Roman merchantmen to scour three continents for cargo of "gold, silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet, every fragrant wood, every article of ivory, every article of precious wood, bronze, iron and marble, cinnamon, spice, incense, myrr~~h~~, frankincense, wine, oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots and bodies (that is, slaves)" (26)

(25) PRIENE. Inscription 80 and 105.

(26) Revelation 18 12-13

The Roman Government had always rested on the concept of 'imperium' which was, in theory, shared between the emperor and the senate who delegated their authority to magistrates and governors. Good communications, free trade and the mingling of races in cosmopolitan seaports accelerated the spread of a superficial unity across the heterogenous peoples that composed the Empire. In the East the process had been going on for nearly three hundred years and in what remained of Alexander's Conquest, Greek was the universal language and Greek culture was universally esteemed. The name "Greek" was no longer a national but a cultural term. (27)

Augustus must have been greatly tempted to hasten by legislation the growth of imperial unity. But Julius Caesar had been assassinated by the old guard of the Republic because they suspected him of planning under his own monarchical rule an egalitarian regime which would have left no room for the privilege of Roman citizenship to those who could genuinely represent the Roman way of life. For the administration of this imperial province Augustus instituted a bureaucracy which his successors developed into a civil service of many departments. It was typical of the Roman genius that this strong central government should be combined with many forms of local independence. There were cities which possessed the full Roman franchise- "Coloniae" which had been settled by Roman citizens and 'Municipia' where citizenship had been given to a previously autonomous community.

(27) St. Mark 7 26 A Greek woman, Syro-phoenician by race.

There were free states, some with their rights guaranteed by a perpetual treaty and others enjoying independence at the discretion of Rome. In the outlying districts there were dependant native Kings such as Herod the Great. In each province a Concilium was held in which the leading men of every city could meet to discuss provincial affairs. It is against such a background that India under the British Empire strikes many similar notes. There were about three hundred and fifty 'Native States' which were free to manage their internal affairs. Colonel Munro, the British Resident in Travancore, (1811 - 1818), expressed his advice to the British Government in dealing with Indian States in the following words,- "Justice and policy equally dictate the necessity of avoiding every occasion that might lead us to take territorial possession of any of the allied States; for it is of high importance to retain these Native Governments, on the ground, without reference to other reasons, of their giving situations of trust, emolument and dignity to the natives in general and especially to the higher classes among them". (28)

The real problems of the ^{Roman} Empire however lay deeper than politics. The welcome peace could not undo the havoc of the long wars. Farm land had fallen into the hands of a few proprietors and ^{the} rural population was drifting ^{the} into ^{the} cities. (29) The slaves captured in many campaigns were a source of cheap labour with which the free peasant could not compete. Prolonged military service had reared a generation accustomed to receive a living

(28) Kerala Society Papers 1931. II Series 7, Page 61

(29) Pliny's Natural History 18:16

from the State. Everywhere there were dispossessed persons, uprooted from the old social order and unable to find a place in the new. Such people felt the great need for community or club-life and a great variety of clubs came into being. In the interest of public order Augustus had to regulate their proceedings by law. These clubs provided only a superficial escape from loneliness and left a deeper need to which the new fellowship of the Christian Church would appeal.

There was also a widespread sense of the futility of human endeavour. Man's destiny appeared to be dominated by an indifferent or even hostile power which was known as Luck, Fortune, Necessity or Fate. This pessimism which often goes with political impotence was reinforced by a pseudo-science from the East.

When we turn to India, we see the widespread influence of the Hindu doctrine of KARMA. This is the solution that Hinduism is offering to the great riddle of the origin of suffering and inequalities which exist among men in the world. Hindu scholars labour hard to show that Karma is not just another name for fate.

R.N. Dandekar, Head of the Department of Sanskrit in the University of Poona, says that, - "the doctrine does not imply the operation of any extraneous factors or external power, such as fate or destiny. What man did in the past life is entirely responsible for what he is in the present life. This", he says, "is the very opposite of fatalism, Karma eliminates Caprice or Chance and dis-countenances the working of an over-riding providence". (30)

(30) Dandekar - Article on 'The role of man in Hinduism', in 'The Religion of the Hindus'. p.117

However much Hindu scholars try to explain the doctrine of Karma, one cannot but note the widespread influence of this teaching which results in pessimism and lack of initiative among the Hindus. Radhakrishnan himself admits that, "Unfortunately, the theory of Karma became confused with fatality in India and man himself grew feeble and was disinclined to do his best. It was made into an excuse for inertia and timidity and was turned into a message of despair and not of hope". (31)

Horace's famous dictum that "Captive Greece took captive her fierce Conqueror" is only a half truth. (32) Greece herself had already undergone a similar conquest at the hands of the Orient. It was really a hybrid Hellenism from which Rome took her culture, and one constituent of it was the astrology of Babylon. "Astrology fell upon the Hellenistic mind as a new disease falls upon some remote island people". (33) To a few astrology was a mystic faith in the kinship between the order in the soul and the orderly course of stars, between the flame within and the divine fire which feeds the light of heaven. (34) To many astrology was a horror of great darkness, a rule of principalities and powers, which robbed life of its purpose and its meaning.

(31) Radhakrishnan - The Hindu of Life. P.76

(32) Horace Epist. ii 1.156

(33) G. Murray. Five stages of Greek Religion P 144 -
Quoted by A.E.J. Rawlinson - New Testament of Christ. p.62

(34) S. Angus Religious quest of the Graeco-Roman World.

When men live without any purpose in life and with a sense of insecurity, it is hardly surprising that their morals are not high. Half of the vast and crowded population of Rome were slaves. Of the free inhabitants, some two hundred thousand received a dole and were kept out of more serious mischief by the sinister entertainment of the amphitheatre. Slavery was accepted everywhere without demur. The master regarded the slave more as a possession than a person. Slavery put a severe strain on the passions of an age not remarkable for its chastity.

Life was held cheap and one of the best attested vices of antiquity was the limitation of the families by abortion or exposure. The majority of the exposed children were girls who were commonly acquired by 'baby farmers' and reared to fill the brothels of big cities. In some parts of India, there was a custom among Hindus to offer their young daughters to serve in the temples as 'Devadasis', (servants of God). Attempts at reform of this recognized group of prostitutes in the Hindu Society met with strong opposition from Hindu leaders in the Legislative Assemblies. "The Devadasis are today proposed to be destroyed; Hindu girls may follow next; widows may take their chance later; Temples may be demolished; worship desecrated; and we shall be torn asunder from all traditions". (35) Returning to Rome, the Epistles of St. Paul give some account of the extent of the moral degradation of the Roman Society. (36)

(35) Manifesto to the Madras Government by Members of Devadasi Association, December, 1927.

(36) Romans 1 20-32 1 Corinthians 5 1-

"If one considers Paul's attitude to the gentiles, he appears as their friend and champion but he allows himself to indulge in no delusion concerning them. Their upbringing had made them morally weaker than those trained under the stern discipline of the Mosaic law and Rabbinical tradition and Paul does not fail to realize this". (37)

It is very difficult to fix and define the characteristics of Hellenistic religion. The diversity of Greek politics was reflected in Religion. "That religion" says Xenophon "is true for each man which is the religion of his own country". (38) Gandhi and some of the Hindu leaders in India will certainly be happy to support Xenophon's view. In 'Young India', April 23, 1931, Gandhi wrote, - "I do maintain that India's great faiths are all-sufficing for her". Greek religion never became a book religion and so it was never standardised. "Greek religion" says Farnell "is presented to us by its various records mainly as polytheism of personal divinities grouped in certain family relationships around and under a supreme God.....And in these theistic creations of the Hellene the dominant impulse was that which we call anthropomorphism, a mode of feeling and thought to which the average Greek temperament was so attracted that both the artistic and religious history of the race were mainly determined by it". (39)

(37) F.J.Foakes Jackson

Rise of Gentile Christianity. p.98

(38) MacGregor and Purdy - Jew and Greek tutors unto Christ.p.216

(39) Farnell. Higher aspect of Greek Religion (quoted by MacGregor and Purdy. p.218)

In the Religious life of the Greek we note three clearly marked stages: ^{In} the ancient "Chthonic Cults" of earth and Hades, fear haunted and rooted in a forgotten antiquity; the colourful and heroic religion of the Olympians and the more thoughtful and sophisticated religion of the poet and philosopher where all that is noblest in the Greek religious heritage comes to expression.

The Olympians have often been regarded as a personification of human forces. They also humanized the Gods. If it be true that in many other religions the human is deified, in Greek religion the divine is humanized and the Gods become vivid symbols of various aspects of human life and society". (40) These humanized Gods have their counterparts in the heroes of the Indian Epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Another aspect of the Greek religion to be considered in this connection is the mystery cults. These cults spread from the land of their origin when soldiers and refugees, merchants and travellers settled in foreign cities. Rome tried to expel these nature-Gods but they kept coming back. The meeting of religions soon led to syncretism; and Isis in particular tended to absorb the persons and functions of her rivals. Ptolemy 1 and Manetho were even able to construct a synthetic deity, "Serapis", from elements of existing cults.

The mystery cults gave new scope for the growth of personal religion and for the quickening and satisfaction of the

individual hope of immortality. They gave a special place for the emotional element in religion. They also gathered their adherents into societies and brotherhoods. "Though their organization was loose and there is no sign of a central authority or a uniform standard of belief and practice, such small voluntary religious associations, the members of which were united by a common relationship to the cult deity, undoubtedly served as a model for the local churches of early Gentile Christianity".(41)

To the Romans religion meant the awe which they felt in the presence of Numen - the Gods of Agriculture, the Lares, the Spirit of tree and spring and those darker beings from beyond the grave. Worship was the propitiation of these unseen presences by the strict observance of an elaborate ritual. This animism was the breeding ground for magic and enchantment.

"Trees" says Pliny, "were temples of divinities and in the old way the simple country folk to this day dedicate any remarkable tree to a God. Nor have we more worship for images glittering with gold and ivory than for groves and the very silence that is in them". (42) The Country people hung rags and other offerings on the trees. Holy wells too were common. Every household had its 'Lares' in a little shrine on the hearth, little twin guardian Gods with a dog at their feet, who watched over the family and to whom something was given at every meal and garlanded on great days. (43) Not unlike these 'Lares', is the

(41) MacGregor and Purdy

IBID - p.227.

(42) Pliny's Natural History 12:3

(Quoted by T.R.Glover - Conflict of Religion p.13

(43) Glover IBID p.14

'Kuladevata', (family God), of the Hindu house.

Among the educated the vacuum left by the decay of religion was filled in part by philosophy -- not the disinterested quest for truth but the more practical creeds of the garden and the porch. Both Epicurus and Zeno confronted by the moral chaos which followed the death of Alexander the Great had addressed themselves with widely differing results to the problem of suffering and their teaching remained ~~a~~pposite to the similar conditions of the first century A.D.

According to Epicurus the root of all evil was fear, the unnecessary fear with which men tortured their minds. If there were Gods they took no interests in human kind. Death was but an untroubled sleep; evil could be avoided by justice or if it came could be endured; happiness could be attained by the quiet life and the cultivation of friendship.

To give intellectual backing to this advice Epicurus adopted the atomic theory of Leucippus and Democritus and argued that the universe was a machine without caprice and without malevolence. Among the Romans he had a small following well represented by Horace and Lucretius, the one delighting in the life of simple pleasures, the other finding in the Gospel of natural law, deliverance from the intolerable burden of superstition. But the problem of evil was not to be solved by running away from it, and the Roman world needed a faith which offered not escape but victory.

Zeno diagnosed desire as the fundamental ailment of which other ills were but symptoms and prescribed suppression of the emotions as the cure of sick souls. For this purpose, like Epicurus, he enlisted the support of an older philosophy.

Heracleitus, searching in his own heart for truth, had there discovered reason and had deduced that at the heart of the universe there must be a similar reason -- the rational formula which had in tension the warring element of the Cosmos. This formula or Logos he further identified with the divine fire underlying all existence. The world had emerged from fire and to fire it would return.

Armed with this metaphysic Zeno taught that virtue consisted in living according to nature, that is, in allowing the reason within to live in harmony with the cosmic reason of which it was a part. Man could be at home in the universe as long as he was content to abandon himself to an all embracing destiny. He who had thus accepted the Universe was self sufficient and could defy evil things.

This philosophy provided the Empire with the basis for a cosmopolitan brotherhood. The Stoic itinerant lecturer became a familiar figure even in the market place. Stoicism dominated Roman thought for three centuries and finally left its stamp on Christian ethics.

Stoicism lost much of its crusading Spirit by coming to terms with Polytheism, and by assimilating astrology it gave undue emphasis to its own inherent fatalism. Its belief in a

Universal purpose was cancelled out by the Cyclic theory of history, in which all things were periodically reduced to the primordial Fire. The Roman world needed a faith which could bring the mind as well as the emotions into the service of the divine purpose, which was not restricted to the realm of change and decay.

It is in this connection that we should consider the contribution made by Judaism. Jewish synagogues could be found in every city of the Roman Empire. It is estimated that there were about one million Jews in Egypt and about ten thousand in the city of Rome. It was not through a high birth-rate alone that the little nation of Jews had grown to include seven per cent of the total population of the Empire. It was because Judaism had become a 'missionary religion'. It is quite true that some Jews had a proselytizing spirit, (Matt.23:5), but the greater majority of them felt that their religion was a treasure given to them in trust for all nations. The whole world needed the knowledge of the one spiritual God and His Holy Law, and every Nineveh should have its Jonah.

So when in the course of trade, the Jews scattered along the trade routes of the Empire, some went in the spirit of zealous missionaries and won converts among the highest as well as among the lowest classes of society. Alike among the rich and poor their very presence must have been a reminder of the belief in One God, a much more effectual reminder than that of the enlightened Greek Platonists. For to the Jew, the Oneness of God was not a Theocentric deduction from philosophic reasoning, but

^{revealed}
 the fact of the root of all things. The Jewish synagogues became great centres of hostility to Christianity, but as witnesses to Monotheism throughout the Roman Empire they were a most valuable preparation for the Christian Gospel. They were the bridge over which the Gospel passed into the pagan world. (St. Paul and St. Stephen were Jews of the Dispersion).

As it was with the Jews in the Roman Empire, so it is with the Muslims in India; a people, (forming one fifth of the total population of India and Pakistan), hostile to Christianity, yet stressing the Oneness of God. An aspect of His being which Christianity endorses and vitally supplements.

And while the Greeks failed to build up a Greek nation, they succeeded in imposing on the whole educated world their ideas, beliefs and their language. The best poems, the best statues and the best philosophies were all Greek. The Greeks were to be found everywhere and the whole educated world began to talk their language. In the book of ACTS we read that St. Paul was preaching in Greek throughout the Empire. It was only once that he had to use a different language (Acts 14+11). The momentous decision to make the English language the official and literary language of India is an important landmark in the history of our country. Lord Macaulay, who was appointed President of the Board of Education, became the leader of the Anglicists, in opposition to the Orientalists, (Conservatives who championed the claims of Arabic and Sanskrit).

A Resolution dated March 7, 1855 stated that "The great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of

European literature and science among the natives of India and the funds appropriated to education would be best employed in English education alone." (44)

Looking back on the history of our country for the past hundred years, we see that the English language has played a very important part in the progress of our country. Indirectly it has provided a means of communicating the Christian message in a non-Christian land. In India the English language has taken the place held by Greek in the Graeco-roman world.

There is one fact worth noting here. It was only during the centuries when Christianity was spreading over the whole Empire that Greek was in universal use. By the third century Rome talked little Greek and by the fourth it was a purely Latin city. God used the Greek language as one powerful instrument for the spread of the Gospel. Hindi may soon take the place of English, but the English language is still the official language of India.

Just as there were various schools of philosophy in the Graeco-roman empire, so in India we have a rich and diverse background of philosophies. It will be convenient at this time to diverge slightly, in order to consider briefly this religious and philosophic background, by way of preparation for what is to follow.

The Hindu tradition by its breadth seems to be capable of accommodating various religious conceptions. "It brings under its sheltering wings all the religious, semi-religious and social practices ~~of~~ and observances of the Hindu race. Polytheism, Monotheism, Pantheism and Atheism have flourished under the auspices and in the name of Hinduism, not necessarily at different times, and still form an integral part of the recognized Hinduism. Demon worship, hero worship, ancestor worship, worship of animate and inanimate objects, worship of natural forces and worship of God have all been woven into its web. It caters for every taste, every grade of life, every stage of development, all the stages are provided for". (45)

There are at least five different types of religious life in Hinduism, namely: Polytheism, Pantheism, Atheism, Monism, and Theism.

We shall pass on to examine these systems, and the development of those religious and philosophic tendencies which gradually resulted in the formulation of Gnosticism and other syncretistic systems which threatened the early Church (in the next chapter as we trace the development of the Doctrine of Christ). My point here has been to examine the background of the Primitive Church and to see it in relation to the modern Indian experience.

We have seen that political unity was provided by the Roman Empire, a 'lingua franca' in the Greek language bequeathed by

(45) H. Harcourt. Sidelight on the crisis of India.

Quoted by Nicol MacNicol - Living Religions of the
Indian People. p.27

Alexander the Great, that colonies of Jews in Roman cities paved the way for a Christianity proclaiming itself to be the fulfilment of Judaistic Monotheism, and finally the mystery cults and philosophic systems which revealed the crying need for a way of salvation and a powerful Saviour. It was in this context that "God sent forth His Son".

So it was in India, that the British Government, gave to the people of British India, (India, Burma, and Ceylon), speaking two hundred and twenty-five languages, a central administration, one language of government, and an intrinsic sense of unity. So too is the emphatic Monotheism of Islam, the search after truth by the Hindu philosophers, and the desire to worship God, (especially as seen among the Bhaktas), by way of preparation for the Gospel in India.

And while there are many and substantial differences between the circumstances and environment surrounding the early Church in the Roman Empire, and the Church in Modern India; as it once happened in the Roman Empire, so in India, Christianity came once again, 'in the fulness of time'.

Already, to some extent then, we have seen how the modern missionary experience in India, illuminates the problems and background which confront the early Church.

Chapter 111

The Effect of the Situation (Challenges)
on the Interpretation of the Doctrine of Christ.

SECTION A.

Having surveyed the world in which Christianity was preached, we have now to consider what was preached and how it was relevant to the world. We have to consider the question: What is Christianity?.

Jesus Christ is central in Christian Theology. Who and what was He? There is hardly any other theological subject around which so much controversy has centred, and concerning which there has been such diversity of views.

Emil Brunner maintains that the centre and foundation of the whole Christian faith is "Christology", that is faith in Jesus Christ, the Mediator. "The actual appearance of Christ, the entrance of this Divine Being into this world would have to be regarded as the central fact, as the actual fact of redemption". (Harnack) (46) "The question 'What think ye of Christ?' is in no sense a deflection of interest from the main body of Christian truth. From the beginning this has always been the central question within the Christian Church, and from the very outset the Christian answer to this question has always been the same; it is 'the power of God unto Salvation' as Paul defines the Christian faith.

(46) Quoted by E. Brunner. p.233
The Mediator

The question 'Who is He?' means the same as the other questions: 'What has God to say to us in Him?'; the one cannot be answered without the other. The first answer to the question 'Who is He?' was this: 'He is the 'Divine Word''. Rightly understood, this reply contains the whole truth. He is that which God has to say to us..... What can there be beyond that? But the converse is also true: What God has to say to us is just this: He has to tell us what He is. Unless you know who He is, you cannot know what God has to say to you. When you know who He is, then indeed you possess no mere speculative theory, with no reference to your life; when you acknowledge Christ in faith, you are acknowledging your King, and God is telling you something about yourself and about your life which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive!" (47) Wright agrees with Brunner, when he says so succinctly, "What is called 'Christology' means a reasoned statement of the relation of the Historic Jesus to the Eternal God: or, more positively, of how Jesus has for Christians, the value and reality of God". (48)

The old 'Back to Jesus' movement with its emphasis on the Historical figure rendered a great service to Theology, for it established firmly the truth of the true humanity of our Lord. Its weakness was that for too many it ended there. Some saw Him as little more than a great teacher. Harnack contended that

(47) 1 Cor.2:9 E. Brunner . Mediator p.234

(48) C.J. Wright. Mission and Message of Jesus. p.676

"the original Gospel message in the teaching of Jesus was not about the Son but about the Father".(49) Some others found in Jesus a Leader and Guide. In man's long search for God, Jesus was the supreme finder, and because He found God, He can lead others. They are prepared to go a step further and say that He is not only the pathfinder, but is Himself the path, the living way, through whom alone we can surely come to the Father. St.Jn. (14:6). The real Christological question is not simply a psychological or an historical question about Jesus, as to His psychical constitution as to how His mind worked, as to His self-consciousness and what claims He made; but is fundamentally a question about the nature and activity of God.

It is true that Jesus is the climax of the age-long search, for God. But what kind of God did He discover? What kind of God do we find in His teaching? Not a God waiting to be discovered, but one who was Himself seeking man. D.Baillie points out that "It is well known how the Jewish scholar Claude Montefiore, when he sets himself to see whether there was anything quite new in Jesus' teaching, anything which no Jewish prophet or rabbi had ever said before Him, singled out this one thing as quite distinctive: the picture of the Divine Shepherd going out into the wilderness to seek a lost sheep, the picture of God as not merely receiving those who turn to Him, but as taking the initiative in seeking those who have not turned to Him. That, he says, is 'a new figure' and 'one of the excellences of the Gospel'. So that is the kind of God whom Jesus 'discovered';

a seeking God, whose very nature it is to go the whole way into the wilderness in quest of man". (50)

So something more must be said of Jesus than that he was the supreme discoverer of God. He is the means whereby God seeks men. He not only discovered God, but He also revealed God. He revealed God because He was indwelt by Him. A true Christology will tell us not simply that God is like Christ, or that Christ is like God. It will say that God was in Christ. It tells us not only about the nature of God, but about His activity, about what He has done, coming the whole way for our Salvation in Jesus Christ; and there is no other way in which the Christian truth about God can be expressed. A knowledge of the Lord Jesus, as He lived and taught on earth, is a basic necessity for a sound Christology. "If we cannot find any revelation of God in the portrait of Jesus as an historic person, how are we ever to reach and accept the dogmas about Him? If we cannot get so far as to know ~~what~~ He was like, or if that has nothing to do with the real meaning of the story, then how can we go so much farther and know that God was incarnate in Him? In short the relevance of Jesus of history raises ultimately the whole problem of the basis and rationale of our Christian belief in the Incarnation". (51)

Can we know the Jesus of History? Many would answer "No". Such would be the answer of the Form Critics, who claim that the Gospels are not narratives compiled from the testimony of eye-witnesses, but are a collection of stories which

(50) D.Baillie - IBID p.63

(51) D.Baillie. God was in Christ p.50

grew up in the Christian Community and were used for the purposes of evangelism and teaching. Some may have been true reminiscences of what Jesus said and did, but others were invented to meet the needs of the time. So they say that it is impossible to reconstruct a picture of our Lord as He lived on earth. The objection to this point of view is that the Form Critics tend to be too subjective; their classification of a story depends on the impression it makes on them. It seldom seems to occur to them that a story about Jesus may have been handed on because it was true. Surely those who had known Jesus and believed what they did about Him would be interested in recalling what He had said and done, simply because it was He that said or did it. While the Gospels are not biographies in the strict sense of the word, they still give us a picture of Jesus as He lived and taught among men.

We do not find anything that could be called a Jesus-cult in the New Testament. Whatever Jesus was or did, in His life, in His teaching, in His Cross and passion, in His resurrection and ascension, and exaltation, it was really God that did it in Jesus. Even His death on the cross was a reconciling act of God. His early followers spoke of it as the love of God who sent Him. In the New Testament the love of Christ and the love of God are the same thing. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself". "It is all of God". (52)

What the early Ecumenical Councils have done for us is found in the doctrinal decisions repudiating the various errors, the heresies which were always of the nature of over-simplification. By rejecting the errors they tried to protect the mystery of the Incarnation. It is the perennial task of Theology to think out the meaning of the Christian conviction that God was incarnate in Jesus, and that Jesus is God and man.

The Biblical Foundation.

We have been discussing the place of Jesus Christ in Christian Theology. Christian Theology is based upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ; therefore we shall examine the Biblical foundation carefully before we trace the development of the Doctrine of Christ. While we shall consider this foundation first of all in the light of the four gospels, it is important to stress that it is the same apostolic Kerygma which underlies all books of the New Testament. "The apostolic church possessed a definite Kerygma. This Kerygma underlies every book in the New Testament; it is the apostolic gospel".(53)

In the days of the great Church Councils, those who defended the Christian faith and also the heresiarchs they condemned accepted the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures; a theory they had inherited with the Old Testament from the Jews. For them the writings of Psalmists and Prophets, the synoptic Gospels and that according to St. John were all on the same level of inspiration and could be quoted with equal authority to prove a point of doctrine. But during the past century the Church's view of the Bible has changed. Few scholars of standing today would contend that the picture of Jesus presented by the Fourth Gospel is identical with that

(53) Alan Richardson: A Theological Word Book of the Bible. p.172
(Author's underlining)

depicted in the first three. Archbishop Temple points out that "the synoptists may give us something more like the perfect photograph; St. John gives us the more perfect portrait Because St. John is the portrait painter, consciously submitting his mind to be interpenetrated by his subject, and then giving forth what his mind contains, he is not careful to distinguish between what the Lord historically 'said' and what that saying has come to mean for him in his life long meditation". (54)

Another fact we have to bear in mind is the development of the doctrine of the Person of Christ in the New Testament. In the early stages we see Jesus as a man, especially chosen by God, but not as the Divine Being depicted in the Fourth Gospel. It was as their experience of Him deepened that the early Christians came to realize who Jesus really was. The Fourth Gospel marks the climax of that conviction. "The way to the Knowledge of Jesus" writes Emil Brunner, "leads from the human Jesus to the Son of God and to the Godhead. 'The Scripture beginneth very gently and leadeth us to Christ as to a man, and after that to a Lord of all Creation, and after that to a God..... We must begin at the bottom, and afterwards rise to the heights'. (Luther) It is the miracle of the divine condescension towards us that He wills to meet us in a human being. If God has opened this way to Himself for us, we ought to follow it too; we have no right to try to reverse the process. That is

(54) William Temple - Reading in St. John's Gospel.
p. XVII. Introduction.

why the Gospels, the records of the human life of Jesus, are placed first in the New Testament, in order that, meeting the man Christ Jesus, we may through this encounter, come to the knowledge of God". (55) But the idea of development must not be taken too far and must be used with great caution. Vincent Taylor says that Mark's Christology is a high Christology, "as high as any in the New Testament not excluding that of John". (56) The claim that, according to Mark, Jesus becomes the Son of God by adoption has often been made, but it depends on a superficial reading of the Gospel. The evangelist's idea is that Jesus is by nature Son of God. In Mark we come across the view that behind the fully human life, Deity is conceded, but is visible for those who have eyes to see, in His personality, teaching and deeds.

C.H. Dodd, points out that the appearance and movement seen in the Fourth Gospel is only illusory. From beginning to end Jesus is exercising the functions which properly belong to Him as risen and ascended Lord, the Saviour and Judge of men. (57)

St. Matthew tells us that Jesus came 'preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom'. (58) One of the most assured results of recent study of the Gospel is that the person of Christ must be

(55) Emil Brunner. Dogmatics Vol:2. p.322.

(56) Vincent Taylor. The Gospel according to St. Mark. p.121

(57) C.H. Dodd. New Testament Studies. p.170

(58) St. Matthew 4:23

interpreted in the light of his teaching about the Kingdom of God. It is difficult to find out the exact meaning of the Aramaic phrase which is rendered in Greek by the words $\zeta^{\epsilon} \beta α σ ι λ ε ι α τ ο υ \Theta ε ο υ$. John Knox says that "no single English phrase con-

veys the full and varied significance of the term. Three meanings can be distinguished, although none of the three is really complete when it is separated from the others.

(1) The eternal, ultimate sovereignty of God, His Kingdom (as in "Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory). (2) the rule of God in and among men in so far as God's sovereignty is acknowledged and His will is done; (3) the, complete and perfect establishment of God's rule in the 'age to come'. In the first sense, the Kingdom was real, indeed, the ultimate reality -- but was not yet actual; in the second sense, it was actual but imperfect and incomplete; in the third sense, it would be both actual and complete. In the first sense one would acknowledge the Kingdom of God; in the second sense one might belong to it even now; in the third sense one would expect and hope for it. In the first sense the Kingdom was above history; in the second sense it was within history; in the third it was at the end, or beyond the end of history. Once it is seen that the same phrase might be used in all or in any of these closely related but distinguishable senses, there will be no surprises that contemporary students of the Gospels differ in their understanding of what Jesus meant". (59)

Jesus identified Himself with the Kingdom of God. The expressions 'for my sake' and 'for the Kingdom of God's sake' have the same significance and are used interchangeably. Where Mark reads 'for my sake and the Gospels' sake' (10:29) Luke reads 'for the Kingdom of God's sake' (18:29) Again our Lord associates Himself with the fulfilment of Messianic hopes. It is impossible to dismiss the witness of Christ's consciousness that He stood in a special relation to God and to the fulfilment of His purpose to the world. Expressions like "Thou art my beloved Son' (Luke 3:22) and 'This is my son my chosen' reflect the inner consciousness of Jesus.

Vincent Taylor says that $\acute{\alpha}\mu\acute{\alpha}\rho\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ is used in the sense of $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\mu\omicron\epsilon\nu\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ 'only' 'sole' (60) Aristotle has the word in that sense in Rhetoric 1:7,41 (61)

The New Testament sets forth Jesus as 'The Christ' and so let us consider the significance of the title and the way in which our Lord fulfilled the role. It is difficult to arrive at any one clear or consistent picture of the pre-Christian belief about the Messiah. But it is an indisputable fact that there was a widespread popular belief among the Jews that the Messiah, the God-appointed redeemer of Israel, might appear at any moment.

(60) Vincent Taylor. St.Mark p.161

(61) "

"And that which is held most dear, sometimes alone, sometimes

(continuation of footnote (61) carried forward from
page 48.)

accompanied by other things, is a greater good. Wherefore he who puts out the eye, of a one eyed man and he who puts out one eye of another who has two, does not do equal injury (for in the former case, a man has been deprived of that which he held most dear".

ARISTOTLE: RHETORIC. (Tr.by FREESE). p.86

Quick points out that there are three generally accepted characteristics of the Messiah's person and work.

"(1) Although God would raise him up to fulfil his promises to his people, the Messiah was never thought of as himself personally divine. He was to be a human King, of David's line according to general belief, who was to reign over God's people on this earth. It is true that the words of Psalmii., 'Thou art my son, etc., were usually interpreted as referring to the Messiah, but in the Old Testament both Israel and David were spoken of as God's sons with no suggestion that they were other than human.

(2) The Messiah's work was to be primarily the salvation or deliverance of God's people from their earthly foes and alien oppressors, so that they might live in righteousness, peace and prosperity.

(3) The Messiah's coming was associated with a miraculous intervention of God declared in works of supernatural power, and more vaguely with the end of this world or age and the inauguration of a new world-order". (62)

Israel looked forward to a time of deliverance, not only from the yoke of Rome, but also from sin and all unrighteousness. It was a religious salvation which was bound up with the ideal of the coming theocracy, the manifested Sovereignty of God. It involved the fulfilment of everything that was or that might be implied in the new Supernatural Age -- in the Kingdom of God

on earth, or in the new heavens and the new earth wherein righteousness dwelt.

"And at a particular date in the first century" says Rawlinson, "there came into this world, ... in the first instance, into the Jewish world, which cherished such spiritual hopes -- One who in some manifestly non-political sense was a Claimant of Sovereignty, and who today is the object of the passionate faith and of the adoring loyalty of multitudes 'dispersed throughout the whole world'. (63)

There are those who contend that the historical Jesus was a prophet and that the picture of Him as the Messiah is the invention of the Church. "If it was Christianity that created the figure of the Christ of the Gospel" asks Rawlinson, "What was it that created Christianity?". The only adequate answer is that behind Christianity is the Jesus of history, and that behind the Jesus of history is the redemptive activity of the living God..... It was as a Messianic claimant that Jesus was condemned by the Jews and put to death by the Romans, a fact which involves that He must have himself claimed to be the Messiah in His lifetime".(64) From the time of Isaiah there had been an expectation of the intervention of God in the affairs of Israel and that God would raise up a true King as ruler of his people. It is very important to realize that Israel was a Theocracy -- that God was the real King and the earthly Monarch

(63) Rawlinson - New Testament Doctrine of the Christ. p.24

(64) Rawlinson - New Testament Doctrine of the Christ. P.10 and P.11.

His representative. It was because Saul failed to recognize this that he was rejected and David chosen in his stead. Men treasured the memory of David as the ideal King of Israel. It was believed that he had given the nation deliverance from its enemies and that he had ruled the people justly and 'walked in the way of the Lord'. The hope of the Prophets was that God would raise up another David to rule in the same way.

As we read the Gospels we note that Jesus is depicted as the Son of God, and appropriates to Himself the title, Son of Man. And though he never uses the actual words, the title 'Servant of the Lord' often trembles on His lips. Beneath this apparent titular diversity, there lies a deeper unity. If we compare the attributes and functions of the Messiah as sketched in Psalm 2:6-8 with those of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53:13; 53:9, 12, and again with those of the Son of Man as set forth in Daniel 7: 13 - 14, we shall find that all three are really variant phases of one Messianic idea -- Israel's age-long and unquenchable hope of a Saviour. Vincent Taylor rejects Wrede's hypothesis that the Messianic secret is a literary device of St. Mark. Jesus re-interprets the Son of Man in terms of the suffering Servant. (65) "Jesus imposed silence because of the nature of Messiahship as He conceived it to be. To Him it was not primarily a matter of status but of action". (66)

(65) V. Taylor. The names of Jesus. p.35 (MacMillan 1953)
 (66) V. Taylor. St. Marks. p.123

William Manson says that 'All three are invested with the same attributes of wisdom, judgment, righteousness and the possession of the spirit of God. All three are a light to the Gentiles. All three are associated with a 'covenant' which God makes with his people. All three receive homage of 'Kings' and raise the mighty from their seats.'" (67)

1. The Son of God. In the old Testament the phrase 'Son of God' is variously applied to Israel (Hosea 11:1), to Kings (Eg. Solomon 2 Sam. 7:14), to Angels (Job 1:6) and to the Messiah (Psalm 2:7). "The Lord said unto me, Thou art my son; This day have I begotten Thee". Psalm 2:7. This passage was Messianically interpreted in our Lord's time. In the Apocryphal book known as 4 Ezra, written towards the end of the first century, Messiah is called 'The Son of God'. This usage is seen in the Gospels too, 'Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God' (Mt.16:16) 'Art thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed' (Mk.14:61) The demoniacs (Mk.3:11) the high-priest (Mk.15:62) and the Centurian at the Cross (Mk.15:39), all designate Jesus ^{as} 'the Son of God'. This phrase occurs on our Lord's lips in the stories He told of the Baptism and Temptation. 'Thou art my beloved son' says the heavenly voice at Baptism. "If thou art the Son of God", says the Tempter to Jesus.

Most conclusive of all is the passage in Mt.11:27 (Lk. 10:22): "All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the

Father except the Son, and any one to whom the Son Chooses to reveal him". Vincent Taylor calls this the aerolite from the Johannine heaven". (68) This passage and Mk.13:32, are our historical basis for the sonship terminology in the thought of Jesus himself. (Mt.11:27 should be taken as it stands). (68) A.H. Hunter says that this is the most important Christological passage in the New Testament. (69) Our Lord claims not only that he is the organ of God's self-revelation, but that He alone knows God truly as Father and for that supreme knowledge all men must become debtors to Him. This is an unshared sonship. "A filial relationship to the Father, to which there is a parallel nowhere else, is the secret of the work and ministry of Jesus". (70)

2. The Son of Man. Our Lord accepted the title 'Messiah', but the title that He claimed was 'the Son of Man'. It occurs about seventy times in the Synoptic Gospels. It is found only on the lips of Jesus. In the Old Testament the expression 'Son of Man' means 'a human being' (Psalm 8:4). It is in that sense that the phrase is used in passages like Lk.7:34, 'The Son of Man came eating and drinking'. Hunter points out that, in the main, the passages in which this expression occurs may be grouped around two motifs: (a) "humiliation, as 'The Son of Man must suffer many things' (Mark 8:31), and (b) exaltation, as 'Ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming with the

(68) V. Taylor. The names of Jesus. p.62

(69) Hunter - The work and words of Jesus. p.84

(70) V. Taylor - Jesus and His Sacrifice. p.38

clouds of heaven'. (Mark 14:62)". (71)

Most modern scholars agree that the source of our Lord's title must be either Daniel 7:13 or the Book of Enoch (37 to 71). No one has conclusively proved that Jesus knew the book of Enoch, but He certainly knew the book of Daniel. "I saw in the night visions, and behold with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him." In v.18 we see that the 'One like unto a son of man' represents 'the saints of the Most High' that is, the people of God. It seems clear that Jesus regarded Himself as the 'one' like the son of man. He also must have regarded himself as the representative or head of the people of God. Whether the Son of man as he appears in Daniel is thought of as an individual, the representative or leader of the Victorious Kingdom, or as a more or less Corporate Symbol or personification of that Kingdom has occasioned a good deal of debate. But in the Canonical book of 1 Enoch he seems to be thought of clearly as a ~~pre~~-existent Being, residing from all eternity with God in the heavens, who should appear in the end of time as the divinely sent deliverer. (72)

The dominant idea in the title seems to be that of sovereignty. In Daniel 7:14, 'one like a son of man' receives a Kingdom from God. He is the bearer of a divine rule. Jesus associates his title with the thought of His ultimate exaltation

(71) Hunter. Work and Words of Jesus. p.85

(72) John Bright. The Kingdom of God. p.201

and triumph. The Son of Man is destined to triumph and with Him the cause of God's people. With this idea of sovereignty Jesus combined the idea of service and sacrifice. "The Son of Man must suffer many things". 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many' Mk.10:45. He knew that he was called of God to fuse in His own person and destiny the two roles of the Son of Man (Daniel) and the servant of the Lord (Isaiah). "He poured into the 'Son of Man' mould the contents of the 'suffering servant' idea".(73)

3. The Servant of the Lord. At His baptism our Lord heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Thou art my beloved son, with thee I am well pleased". The reference to the 'Son' recalled Psalm 2:7 and 'beloved' and 'well pleased' recalled the first of the servant passages in Isaiah (Is.42, 1-9), "My chosen in Whom my soul delights." Some have suggested that it was His study of the Word of God in Isaiah 53 which first revealed to Him the necessity of dying in order to reign. It may be that this truth was revealed to Him by His Father. In any case it is quite certain that most of His sayings about His death echo Isaiah 53. It is only in Luke 22:37 that we find an express quotation "And he was reckoned with transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12). He speaks of His whole mission as one of 'service', a service that must end in death. Mark 10:45.

Turner states that the suffering Servant Christology goes back to Jesus. "He shall not cry nor lift up His Voice". This verse is an example of the silence and indirectness of the claim which Jesus imposed upon Himself. (74)

The three concepts of the Messiah, 'Son of God', 'Son of Man' and 'Servant of the Lord' tended to coalesce into one. It is evident that Jesus saw Himself as fulfilling the role of the suffering servant and that in this he identified Himself with the Son of Man. This is plain from His answer to the high priest found in Mark 14:61 and 62. "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?", and Jesus said, "I am; and you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of Power and coming with the Clouds of heaven".

We shall now proceed to consider the Christology of the Acts, the letters of St. Paul, the epistle to the Hebrews, and finally that of the fourth Gospel.

While the four gospels may have been based on later source-manuscripts. than Acts, "The Gospel-tradition of the teaching of Jesus was built up during the oral period of its formation in the decades in which the preachers were proclaiming the unchanging Kerygma, which was and is the foundation on which the Church stands. (The Kerygma underlies every book in the New Testament - it is the apostolic gospel)". (75)

In their early preaching, the Apostles speak of our Lord as a 'man' (Acts 2:22) and as 'a prophet' (Acts 3:23). He is also spoken of as the Christ: "The Christ appointed for you, Jesus" (Acts 3:20). In their preaching we see them moving, perhaps unconsciously, towards a higher apprehension of His Person. As Messiah Jesus is the vehicle of the Divine endowment. God has given Him His Spirit and the Spirit is shed forth by Jesus (Acts 2:33). The forgiveness of sins is intimately connected with faith in Him. (Acts 2:38, 4:12, 5:31). In His controversy with the Pharisees Jesus had challenged them to tell why, if the Messiah was to be the Son of David, David had called Him 'Lord' quoting Psalm 110. God raised up Jesus and had constituted Him both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). The forgiveness

(75) Alan Richardson. 'A ^{Theological} True Word Book of the Bible". p.172

of sin had always been considered the prerogative of God alone; but on earth Jesus had claimed authority to forgive, and now His followers were proclaiming forgiveness through His name. V. Taylor comments that there is no foundation for the view that Jesus claimed the power to forgive sins because He was the Messiah. The Enochic "son of man also has no power to forgive sins. Jesus/^{claimed}that His power of forgiveness was based upon the unique relationship in which He believed Himself to stand toward God and man". (76) His claim to forgive sin was a genuine utterance, which Jesus spoke without the expectation of being immediately understood". (77)

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the willingness of the followers of Jesus to suffer persecution for His sake. Their persistence in loyalty to Him drove a wedge between them and the established Religion of the Jews. Until then the only way of approach to God was through the ordinances of the Mosaic law. If a gentile wanted to share in the blessings of the coming Kingdom he had, in effect, to become a Jew. These early Christians were taking the risk of being cut off from the only means of approach to God. It can only be that they had found a better way. They had found that Jesus was "The Way, the Truth and the Life". It is but a step from this to setting Jesus on an equality with God.

(76) V. Taylor. St. Mark. p.195

(77) V. Taylor. Names of Jesus. p.27

St. PAUL'S CHRISTOLOGY.

St. Paul's Christology rests upon the fundamental conviction that in the earthly life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God had accomplished a supreme act of grace for the deliverance of men from the otherwise inevitable consequences of their transgressions of His law. It is pretty well agreed among New Testament Scholars that Paul nowhere uses the word 'God' for Christ. It appears to be done only in Romans 9:5. Drs. Sanday and Headlam, while commenting on the controversial part of V. 5 adopt one alternative and say: 'St. Paul's phraseology is never fixed; he had no dogmatic reason against so using it. In these circumstances with some slight, but only slight hesitation we adopt the first alternative and translate "of whom is the Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen".(78) On the other hand C.H. Dodd translates the controversial part of the verse as 'Blessed for evermore be the God who is over all! Amen' and says 'Even though he(Paul) ascribes to Christ functions and dignities which are consistent with nothing else than deity, yet he pointedly avoids calling Him 'God'.'. (79) R. Bultmann points out that Doxology in Rom. 9:15 is scarcely to be referred to Christ". The New Testament exercises great restraint in calling Christ God. (80) It is wrong to say that Jesus is God, for that implies that we already know what God is. We really ought to say

(78) W. Sanday and A.C. Headlam. The Epistle to the Romans.
(Int: Cv: Com: 238)

(79) C.H. Dodd. Epistle of Paul to Romans. (Moff: N. Test. Com: P. 152)

(80) Rudolf Bultmann. Theology of New Testament. p. 129

But cf. Jn 20:28. II Thes 1:12 Tit. 2:13 and II Pet 1:1

that God is Jesus. Jesus is the presence of God, the divine Being Himself. (81)

Paul frequently uses the word 'Lord' for Jesus. Rawlinson points out that "behind the absolute description of Jesus in Greek-speaking Christianity as $\delta\ \kappa\upsilon\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma$ ('the Lord') there lay an earlier description of Him as $\delta\ \kappa\upsilon\epsilon\iota\omicron\varsigma\ \mu\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$ ('our Lord') corresponding to the Aramaic 'Marana', and that consequently the belief of the Christian Community in the religious lordship of Jesus must be traced back behind Greek-speaking Christianity to the original Aramaic-speaking Church". (82) It is significant that St. Paul uses this Aramaic form even when writing to the Greek-speaking Corinthians. (1 Cor. 16-22). 'Lord' as a title of Jesus was not derived from the mystery religions. Paul's deepest affiliations are Jewish, not Greek. (83)

The first Christians fervently believed in the 'Son' but they invoked "the Lord". (84) The use of Lord probably arose from the Christian use of Psalm 110:1 quoted by Jesus himself in (Mark 12:36) his controversy with the Pharisees, in which ^{He}_A made an appeal to the early Church. "In acknowledging the risen Jesus as both God's Messiah and their own Marana, the first Christians were beginning to discern, though not yet actually asserting, his full Godhead". (85)

- (81) Hans Werner Bartsch. Trans. R.H. Fuller. p.50 *Kerygma and myth*
 (82) Rawlinson - New Testament. Doctrine of Christ. p.231
 (83) V. Taylor. Names of Jesus. p.47. C.P.F.F. Bruce. O.P.C.U. P 239
 (84) IBID p.57
 (85) O.C. Quick. Doctrines of the Creed. p.89

Buttman has revived Bousset's theory that the use of the term *Κςςςςς* as applied to Jesus was an innovation of the Hellenistic Churches and represents an approximation of the Christian Theology to Hellenistic religiosity. The conclusive argument against Bousset's theory is the Aramaic liturgical formula Maranatha, which Dr. Rawlinson aptly calls the 'Achilles' heel' of Bousset's theory. (86)

Paul brought out clearly the identity of Jesus with the heavenly Christ. To Paul Jesus Christ is one who is to Christians in their inner life what only God can be. "Paul presents the life of Jesus as the act of the living God working mightily in love for the deliverance of His creation from bondage to sin and death. 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2 Cor. 5:19) 'In this God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us' (Rom. 5:8) In Colossians 1:13 we see the order of St. Paul's Christological thought. He is 'the Son of God's love', in Him 'we have our redemption' and he is 'the image of the invisible God, the first born of all creation'.

In Philippians 2:5-11 and 2 Cor. 8:9, St. Paul expresses the underlying conviction that by His earthly life and death Christ Jesus expressed not only the Father's love and grace towards man, but also and equally His own, and that this is the reason why his pre-existent divinity must be asserted. We also see in Paul's letters some sort of identity between Christ and the redeemed

Israel.--Christ to be regarded as the true representative of the Christ-nation.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

Hebrews sets forth Jesus as both God and man. Nowhere in the New Testament is the humanity of Christ set forth so movingly. Bruce points out that "not even all the Gospels show us Jesus in the weakness of His flesh side by side with the purity of His spirit as He is exhibited here. (87) The name 'Jesus' occurs about ten times in the Epistle. He is pictured as passing through the normal development of human life, learning obedience, even though a Son, by the things which he suffered. (5:8) No aspect of His life escaped the assault of evil and thereby He was schooled in sympathy. Yet no corrupt strain existed in His nature to which temptation could appeal. His sinlessness is affirmed as a qualification for His work as Saviour and intercessor. The author alludes to His faithfulness ("He was faithful to him who appointed him" 3:2) His trust in God ("I will put my trust in him" 2:13) and His patience under reproach ("Endured such hostility against himself" 12:3). He offered up prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears and he "learned obedience through what he suffered".

(87) Bruce - Epistle to the Hebrews. p.443

Along with this portrait of Jesus goes a lofty christology. "Hebrews, like the rest of the New Testament, begins from the exalted Lord". (88) It was because He was more than man that He was able to accomplish His atoning work. (8:1) It is as 'son' that Jesus discharges His priestly functions. (4:14). The sonship of Jesus is the central theme of the writer's Christology. It is set forth in the opening verses of the Epistle 1: 1-5. His person is definitely set forth in relation to God. In contrast to prophets and angels, (servants) He is 'Son', and described in His essential being as the effulgence of His glory, etc. An 'effulgence' is more than a reflection. "He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature" (1:3). "It is indeed true that the sense of 'effulgence' passes into that of 'reflection' in the one case the nature of Christ is emphasized and in the other His office. The 'effulgence' is the necessary manifestation of the luminous body: the reflection is the manifestation through some medium as it takes place in fact. It is however necessary to observe that 'effulgence' is not any isolated ray, but the whole bright image which brings before us the source of light". (89) "He sat on the right hand of the Majesty on high" suggests dignity, authority and equality. His essential greatness is set forth in the early chapters. Because He is the Son, He is superior

(88) Mackintosh - Person of Christ. p.80

(89) Westcott. Epistle to the Hebrews. p.11.

to the Angels, to Moses, to Joshua and to the whole line of Araonic High Priests.

. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews teach that Christ did not begin to be at His earthly incarnation but was Mediator of creation from the first. Both teach that He has reached a glory far above men and angels by way of the cross. At His resurrection He attained to a manifested greatness which was His always by right. Both teach His true Godhead and real subordination. In combining a 'Wisdom' Christology with a strong emphasis upon the human life of Jesus the writer anticipates the Fourth Gospel.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Scholars are still divided on the question of authorship. "The Johannine Witness of Jesus to Himself," says Mackintosh "is at bottom historically trustworthy, while yet His actual words have passed through the colouring medium of the writer's personal reflection. His type of exposition, so unlike that of the synoptists is due to his having thoroughly worked over into his own style his recollections of what Jesus said and did". (90) The title 'Son of God' is the real key to the Christology of this Gospel and its significance is developed by the Evangelist in a very definitely theological sense. The title 'Son of God' was synonymous with that of the 'Messiah'.

(90) Mackintosh. Person of Christ. p.97

"We have found the Messiah (which means Christ)". The Evangelist remains faithful to the historical fact that our Lord, during His ministry upon earth, was addressed by the pre-Christological title of Rabbi (1:38). He also shows acquaintance with the early Christian use of the title 'Son of Man'. 'It is as the Son of Man that He is to be lifted up' (3:14). As the Son of Man also He is, in the Pauline sense, pre-existent. "No one has ascended into heaven, but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man". (3:13) The title 'Lord' is relatively speaking, not prominent in the Gospel.

The Gospel is rooted in history. The fourth evangelist uses historical tradition as a kind of transparent medium.(91) The writer draws on the tradition held by the Church. Jesus of the Fourth Gospel is truly man as depicted by the synoptists. But He is more than man. He is the incarnate Son of God. This is obvious throughout the Gospel, but is set forth dogmatically in the Prologue.

The subject of the Gospel, as we have seen already, is not the Logos or Word, but the divine Person Jesus Christ. Jesus never refers to Himself as 'the Word'. "The writer desires to avail himself of a conception more congenial to the thought of his readers than to his own, in order to set forth in words familiar to his readers the doctrine he wishes to teach, namely, the uniqueness, finality, and all sufficiency of the revelation

(91) Strachan. The Fourth Evangelist. p.71

of God made in the person of Jesus Christ". (92) St. John required a term which could express the absolute nature of Christ, in Whom the eternal, self-revealing God was incarnate. In addition to its place in Old Testament thought, it has received from Hellenism a certain cosmic width of meaning and this furnished a point of contact between Christianity and current religious thought. In doing this the author took special care to preserve the Christian meaning without being overshadowed by former associations. The 'word' is interpreted by Jesus and not Jesus by the 'Word'.

We may distinguish four stages in the prologue. They are "[1] The Word in His primeval everlasting being (2) The Lord who comes to His own as Life and Light (3) Jesus Christ, upon whom the writer's mind has been fixed from the very outset, and who is now further characterized (4) as the only 'Son' ". (93)

The picture of the Christ of New Testament writers is first and foremost due to their faith. At the centre of their faith stand the Cross and Resurrection. They experienced Salvation by being crucified, buried and raised with their Lord and Saviour. The New Testament critics are trying to get behind the Gospel tradition in order to separate fact from interpretation. However, history is a matter of the selection and the interpretation of facts. This is exactly what the Gospel writers have done for us.

(92) Burton. Short Introduction to the Gospels. p.132

(93) Mackintosh - Person of Christ. p.119

Facts and interpretation are indissoluble and together they constitute history. (94) It is hard to draw the line between ^{the} Jesus of history and ^{the} Christ of faith.

The writers of the New Testament were not directly conscious of the intellectual inconsistencies. Theirs is the testimony and witness to what they saw, handled and experienced, even the Word of God. The total impact of the Master's personality was profound and integral. In the face of the empirical unity of the life of Jesus Christ and their experience of it, there was no room whatsoever for raising irreconcilable issues. Even now wherever the Apostolic experience is recaptured the difficulty of rational synthesis is not felt. When we try to analyze the New Testament experience of the Person of Jesus Christ we come face to face with problems which are more than a match for our intellects.

On the basis of our study of the New Testament, we see that no sharp differences exist among New Testament writers. A logical sequence and evolution of thought is noticeable throughout. There is also a steady weaving of loose threads of thought and we are assured that they are all talking about one and the same Person.

In our discussion of Christology we have followed two different and in a measure opposite lines of thought by which the writers of the New Testament sought to give expression to the impression which the life and work of Jesus made upon them. On the one hand Jesus was not merely an instrument but

also a personal agent of God's great act of love for the forgiveness and redemption of man. This line of thought had led to the formulation of the doctrine of his pre-existent deity. On the other hand we see that Jesus was pictured as the sole perfect representative of human righteousness and obedience to God's will. And having been raised from the dead and exalted by God, Jesus had become the head of the New Israel which after his example and "in Him" serves God in filial obedience and inherits the promise. When we consider these two lines of thought in their opposition and unity, we are confronted at once by the theological problem which a few centuries later the Church defined by the Orthodox dogma of two natures in one person.

SECTION B

We have been following the trend of thought about the Person of Christ. in the New Testament. We shall now endeavour to show how the interpretation of the Person of Christ was necessary as an answer to the challenge of the various schools of religion and philosophy confronting both the early Church and the Church in Modern India. It is essential to emphasize the fact that the necessity to develop and state the Church's teaching about the Person of Christ. (in Modern India and the early Church), arose only because Missionary work was undertaken, and we cannot discuss it apart from the historic situation of that Christian experience. This it is that we shall now review, by way of introduction to the challenges which confronted them both; indicating that experience in India gives us an insight into the gradual process of development within the early Church.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see that the disciples presented the Christian message as good news. C.H. Dodd has drawn attention to the fact that there is a clear distinction drawn in the New Testament between the 'preaching' and the 'teaching'. It was 'Kerygma' and not 'didache' that was set before the non-Christian world. The teaching followed upon

the 'Kerygma'. The disciples were not urging upon their hearers the acceptance of an ideal, but announcing to them that something of eternal significance and value had happened. All Christian witness is the telling of what has happened.

The Missionaries who come to India started their ministry by preaching the Gospel. There was "much preaching in the bazaars", (95) of Serampore by William Carey and his fellow Missionaries. "In addition to ^{his} literary work Ziegenbalg was diligent in preaching the word to the heathen". (96) Proclamation of the Gospel to the non-Christian is a regular feature of the Church life in India. A regular observance of the 'Week of Witness' is awakening the faithful to the idea that evangelism is a normal activity of the Church. "The week of witness has come to stay. While the primary meaning of Evangelism is the spoken word of good news, the term 'witness' expresses what is meant by the larger evangelism". (97)

Just as it happened in the early Church this preaching was followed by regular teaching. It comprised instruction in the life of Christ and His teaching in Christian morals and other things. We see in the pages of the New Testament how fully the task of teaching, as distinct from the preaching of the fundamental news was undertaken. The memoirs of the life and death and resurrection of our Lord were compiled,

(95) Richter. A History of Missions in India. p.139

(96) IBID p.107

(97) J.Z. Hodge. Recent Evangelistic Work in India. Thambaram Series. 3. p.119

and all the difficult ethical problems that had to be faced in the early Church were discussed and weighty advice recorded. But beneath it all lay the news of the redeeming Act of God in Christ.

The life, character, teaching, deeds, death and resurrection of Jesus were the starting point of Christianity. "In its nineteen hundred years, Christianity has taken on many forms in many different environments. Through them all, however, has run the influence of the written records of the life of Jesus". (98) The Bible has always been the indispensable accompaniment of Missionary work in India. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, even before the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed, there were in and near Calcutta two separate groups of translators at work on the Bible. The College of Fort William, founded in 1800 by Lord Wellesly^e, had "a department of Bible translation and pundits from many parts of India were attracted to Calcutta by liberal pay to assist in this work". (99) The Bible in the Indian languages is one of the most valuable contributions made by the Missionary Societies to the Church in India.

It was primarily for the purpose of Bible instruction that educational institutions were started by the Missionaries. Alexander Duff (1806 - 1878) was the pioneer in this field of work. The purport of the first Missionary resolution of the

(98) Latourette. A History of the Expansion of Christianity.

Vol:1 p.60

(99) J.S.M. Hooper. Bible in India. p.13

Church of Scotland General Assembly in 1825 was "to found schools and colleges for the dissemination of Christian culture in India".(100) Encouraged by the generous attitude of his Missionary Society, Duff started Christian Schools in Calcutta. He sought to 'create a culture for Christ'. Christian education has always been a leaven, changing the body of culture by a permeation of Christian ideas. "No Hindu can attend a mission School without having his faith deeply shaken, even if he does not loose it altogether..... Contact with the new civilization and the new religion sets in motion amongst the people a process of intellectual fermentation".(101) This optimism has become less pronounced in recent years especially in view of the revival of ancient cultures under the dynamic forces of nationalism. The social and cultural influence of Christian institutions upon Indian life has been more marked than the evangelistic results. We have already noticed the far-reaching effects of the introduction of English education in India. (Chapter 11)

For the most part conversion in the early Church seems to have been by individuals, rather than by groups. Later on in the history of the Church we hear of mass conversions. "Either because of them (Apologists) or for other reasons increasing thousands flocked into the Christian fold".(102)

(100) Richter. History of Missions. p.174

(101) IBID - p.367

(102) Latourette. IBID. Vol.1. p.127

The Gospel in India has made its most powerful appeal when social solidarity is maintained and the individual is not wrested out of his native life to be placed in a strange environment. It is estimated that not less than eighty per cent of the non-Roman converts and their descendents since 1800 are of mass movement origin. The National Christian Council made a study of the situation and published a report entitled 'Christian Mass Movements in India'. The motives that lead Indian people to Christ in mass movements areas are the motives that lead people anywhere to Him". Out of 3947 answers analyzed the results were: (1) Spiritual 34.8 per cent (2) Secular (educational work and other factors 8.1 per cent (3) Social (influenced by the group) 22.4 per cent (4) Natal (child of Christian parents 34 per cent.(103) This has a definite bearing on our Church life in India.

The mass movements had been chiefly among "depressed classes", but a recent phenomenon in Andra Desa, South India, is a similar movement among "middle classes". R.W. Scott, Secretary for Evangelism, National Christian Council of India, writes: "It was found in Andra that about 90% of the higher caste converts who were interviewed attributed their conversion wholly, or in part, to the influence which the changed lives of "depressed classes" converts had exerted upon them. One man testified: "I began to observe that some of the depressed

classes were living honourably, forsaking drink and superstition, and worshipping God more than any of my own caste or of the Brahmins.....I was baptized by a minister from the 'depressed classes' and want to have fellowship with all who confess that Jesus Christ is God". (104)

We have already seen that in the early Church, conversion seems to have been by individuals rather than by groups. The Church in India has never neglected this aspect of evangelism. "The personal method of friendly contact", says R.C. Das of Benares "is about the only way of touching our Hindu brethren". (105) Socially, Hinduism is communally minded; religiously its most typical expressions are individualistic. This fact is very clearly brought out and expressed by A.G. Hogg, Principal of the Madras Christian College, in his recent book "The Christian Message to the Hindu".

"It may seem strange" says Dr. Hogg, "to accuse of excess individualism a religious system so corporate or communally minded as Hinduism. Essentially it is a social order, cemented by a religious cultus and claiming a religious sanction and authority. How firm is its communal hold on the individual Hindu is made painfully manifest whenever a Christian convert contemplates baptism. Nevertheless, possibly by way of reaction against the cramping of individuality by the caste-system and the system of Joint Family, the most typical

(104) R.W. Scott. Evangelism in India. P.11

(105) R.C. Das. How to present Christ to a Hindu. p.19

flowers of personal religion which spring up in the seed-bed of Hindu religious and social order are individualistic. Its ways of Salvation are essentially ways to the Salvation of the individual soul in its solitariness. It has been remarked that from the finely spiritual prayers to be found in the Hindu religious literature, one note is conspicuous by its absence, the note of intercession. Hindu doctrines of a way of salvation betray no recognition that the corporate social order needs a revolutionary transformation, no consuming interest in a universal reign of God". Most of the converts from the 'high caste' groups have joined the church as individuals and very often they become leaders of the church. Our Christian institutions, schools and colleges, hospitals, and the like, have a very important part to play in the presentation of the Gospel to individuals.

The Church in India should be willing and ready to welcome the seekers after truth who are attracted by our Lord who is the truth, the way and the life. Some of the individual converts who joined the Church in the early centuries of our era became leaders, theologians and Apologists. Justin Martyr, an intellectual in quest of wisdom who had tried several of the philosophies of his time, became satisfied that in the Christian revelation he had found fulness of truth. Clement of Alexandria, also an educated man, seems to have arrived

at inward peace only after a search which took him to so many Christian teachers. These are only two of the several instances of individual converts who became leaders of the Church.

In many parts of India it is now possible to draw a line in history and to say "here ends the history of the foreign mission, here begins the history of the Indian Church." Re-organization has been going on for sometime and in many places it is complete. The educated classes and the so called 'high castes' are beginning to look to Christ.

The Church in India has already begun to assume responsibility for evangelistic work. In 1903 the Indian Missionary Society was formed at Palamcottā, South India, with the object of developing "by an indigenous organization the missionary spirit of the native church in order to spread the Gospel in India" and other lands. On Christmas Day 1905, the National Missionary Society of India was formed at Serampore 'in order to unify the Christian Community by giving it a common indigenous medium of missionary expression'. These missionary societies have helped us to realize that the evangelism of the world is as binding on Indians as on Christians from other parts of the world.

The ancient Syrian Churches are also stirred up as a result of their contact with the C.M.S. Mission of help. The presence of the Anglican Church along side of the Syrian Church has in many ways greatly affected the latter. Its example in

evangelizing the non-Christians, its efficient organizations, its educational institutions, its well educated clergy-- all these and many other factors exercised enlightening and stimulating influences on the Syrian Churches, 'The Servants of the Cross', the Missionary Society of the Syrian Church, is carrying on its work among the 'depressed classes'.

The Mar Thoma Church, which is the reformed section of the Syrian Church has been working in close and harmonious co-operation with the Anglican Church. Their Missionary Society 'the Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association' is engaged in evangelistic work in Travancore and other parts of India. It is in the context of Missionary work that we felt the urgent need for Church unity. In 1919 a Conference on evangelism was held at Tranquebar, which drafted the following resolution:-

"We believe that Union is the will of God, even as our Lord prayed that we might all be one that the world might believe.... We face together the titanic task of winning of India for Christ -- one fifth of the human race. Yet confronted by such an overwhelming responsibility, we find ourselves rendered weak and relatively impotent by our unhappy divisions". (106)

After 28 years of negotiation the Church of South India was inaugurated on the 27th day of September, 1947*. The Church of S.India purposes ever to be mindful of its missionary

(106) E.Priestly. A United Church Evangelizes. (Article)
N.C.C. Review. p.379

calling; and prays that it may not only be greatly used of God for the evangelization of South India, but may also take its due share in the preaching of the Gospel and the building up of Christ's Church in other parts of the world". (107)

At its first meeting of the Synod, the Church of South India set up a Synod Board of Missions to co-ordinate the work of the various indigenous societies of the uniting churches.

We have discussed the Christian missionary experience in India, as we believe that it is only in this context that we can fully appreciate the effect of the challenge from the other religions. The attitude of the Hindu mind is syncretistic; Hindus believe that all religions are in a sense one. The greatest challenge which we face in India today is Syncretism. To understand this tendency we shall now examine closely the trend of Hindu religious thought. There are five main channels within the delta of Hinduism.

1. POLYTHEISM. The popular religion of the Hindus consists largely in the worship of innumerable Gods and Goddesses. These seem to have come down from ancient times. The aboriginal peoples of India, like primitive men all over the world, worship many Gods. Some worship the Spirits of dead heroes. Others still worship diseases like small-pox or cholera, which were regarded as evil gods who had to be worshipped. New Gods are constantly coming into existence. If

a specially holy man dies, a shrine is built for him and his worship is started.

2. **PANTHEISM.** Many Hindu thinkers are Pantheists and regard the world of physical objects as identical with God. The Sun, the moon and the stars are God. These are not illusion, but they are entirely one with the divine. All lovely spots, like water-falls, mountain-tops, sea-shores and the like are set apart for worship. The beauty of nature captivates the Hindu mind and it identifies nature with God. The River Ganges is regarded as a goddess. The snow-clad Himalaya mountain is also regarded as a goddess.

3. **ATHEISM.** Some of the Hindu thinkers are Atheists. In the Samkya Philosophy, for example, there is no clear and definite teaching about God. This philosophy speaks of two realities, Spirit (Purusha) and Matter (Prakritic). This system is highly speculative.

4. **MONISM.** The monism of Sankara is based on his interpretation of the Vedanta. Advaita ("one ultimate" or "not-two") is the most popular system of faith and philosophy in India today. The main idea of the Advaita (non-dualistic) Vedanta philosophy is this, that the ultimate and the absolute truth is the self, which is one, though appearing as many in different individuals. The world also as apart from us, the individuals, has no reality and has no other truth to show than this self. All other events, mental or physical, are but passing appearances. While the only absolute and unchangeable

truth underlying them all is this self. While other systems investigated the pramanas (object or principle) only to examine how far they could determine the objective truth of things or our attitude in practical life towards them, Vedanta sought to reach beneath the surface of appearances, and enquired after the final and ultimate truth. "The famous instruction of Svetaketu, the most important Vedanta text "Mahavakya" says, "Thou art thou, O Svetaketu". This comprehension of myself as the ultimate truth is the highest knowledge, for when this knowledge is once produced, our cognition of world - appearances will automatically cease. Unless the mind is chastened and purged of all passions and desires, the soul cannot comprehend this truth; but when this is once done, and the soul is anxious for salvation by a knowledge of the highest truth, the preceptor instructs him 'That art thou'. At once he becomes the truth itself which is at once identical with pure bliss and pure intelligence. (108) When an individual has this experience all ordinary notions and cognitions of diversity and of the many cease; there is no duality, no notion of mine and thine; the vast illusion of this world process is extinct in him, and he shines forth as the one, the truth, the ^Brahman. The path by which one may reach this belief is known as the path of knowledge (Jnana Marga). There is nothing that counts except the clear knowledge that God alone exists and that everything else is an illusion. This will be discussed ^{more} fully later on.

5. ~~THEISM~~ MONISTIC THEISM. This philosophic system is known as the qualified Monism of Ramanuja - Visishtadvaita. Ramanuja taught that Brahman as absolute is really embodied in the self and the world, and there is identity between Brahman as absolute and Brahman as embodied. Brahman is the only absolute and independent reality which pervades the whole world. Material objects and individual selves are not independent realities but are grounded in and dependent on Brahman, the Supreme Being. They are organically related to the Supreme Being and form the body of the Lord. Brahman is, therefore, not an unqualified and indeterminate reality, but a determinate and qualified being. "Brahman is both the independent, absolute reality and the embodied self of the world. Since Ramanuja thus admits the identity of Brahman as qualified by two different forms or characters, his system is called qualified Monism, one ultimate as qualified", or 'Visishtadvaita'. (109)

Ramanuja's philosophy is closely associated with the Bhakti Movement in Hinduism. We have to consider the possibility of relating the Christian Gospel to the Bhakti religion of India.

The most vital and powerful stream within the delta of Hinduism today is the Vedanta, the outstanding philosophy of India, which we shall now consider in some detail.

(109) S.C. Chattarjee - Article entitled 'Hindu Religious Thought'.
Religion of the Hindus. p.229

We find ourselves in a situation which is very similar to the one which the early Church had to face. In the place of Gnosticism, the Church in India finds a strong opponent in 'Resurgent Hinduism', or 'Neo-Vedanta Movement'. Sankara, the greatest exponent of the Vedanta philosophy, describes Reality as, "the cause from which (proceeds) the origin or subsistence and dissolution of this world which is extended in names and forms, which includes many agents and enjoyers, which contains the fruit of works especially determined according to space, time, and cause, a world which is formed after an arrangement inconceivable even by the (imagination of the) mind".(110) Brahman is this absolute reality.

Brahman is pure existence, consciousness and bliss (Sat - Chit - ananda). Sankara asserts that from the purely philosophical stand-point, Brahman cannot be described at all.

The authority for Vedantic teaching is the self-evident revelation of the Vedas and the Upanishads. The aspiration for reality is discernable clearly in the Upanishads.

Lead me from the unreal to the real!
Lead me from darkness to light
Lead me from death to immortality. (111)

(110) Sankara's Commentary 1.1.2. (Quoted by Dasgupta. p. 438.
A history of Indian Philosophy.

(111) Brihadaranyaka. Upanishad 1.27. Hindu Scriptures. p. 48

Search for 'reality' is one of the most profound and recurring themes of the Upanishads.

The aspiration for this reality seems to find its fulfilment in some other passages in the Upanishads.

"Verily, the self is to be seen, to be heard, to be perceived, to be marked, O Maitreyi! When the self has been seen, heard, perceived, and known, then all this is known". (112)

Who is this self?

"Its secret name is 'Aham', which means 'I' and he who knows this, destroys evil and leaves it".

"That person, under the form of mind, being light indeed, is within the heart, small like a grain of rice or barley. He is the ruler of all, the lord of all - he rules all this, whatsoever exists". (113)

The self lying hidden in me is identical with the self of the universe. I am It. The self is to be described by No! No! All accounts of Him must be in the negative. "Brahman according to Sankara is the identity of pure intelligence, pure being and pure blessedness. Brahman is the self of us all. So long as we are in our ordinary waking life we are identifying the self with thousands of illusory things, with all that we call "I" or "mine", but when in dreamless sleep we are absolutely without any touch of these phenomenal notions the nature of our true state as pure blessedness is partially realized.

(112) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. 4:6.

Hindu Scriptures (Everyman's Library). p.100

(113) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. 4:5 and 6.

Hindu Scriptures. p.104

The individual self as it appears is but an appearance only, while the real truth is the true self which is one for all as pure intelligence, pure blessedness, and pure being'.(114)

As a result of the impact of modern thought on Hinduism many changes have taken place in the cultural area of the life of the Hindu. Beginning from the days of Ram Mohan Roy (1772 - 1833) down to the period of Mahatma Gandhi (1869 - 1948) there were several reform movements within Hinduism. These reform movements helped the Hindus to effect certain radical reforms in their social and religious life. The removal of caste restrictions on social intercourse, as in intermarriage and interdining; the emancipation of Hindu women from social customs in regard to marriage and enforced widowhood; the abolition of the disabilities of the outcastes; and the increased acceptance of the individualistic conception of the family as against the customary joint-family systems are some of the many reforms effected in Hindu social life.

The Hindus hold various views about these changes brought about in their social life. Some feel that these new practices should be reconciled with traditional faith by reforming Hinduism; and some argue that these new practices need not be reconciled with the ancestral faith because they do not conflict with it; and some others are quite unhappy about these changes because they feel that these changes will, in due course, do away with the Hindu religion.

One of the factors that helped to bring about these radical changes in Hindu social life was the evangelistic work of the Christian missions. So the Hindu leaders felt called upon to show that Christianity's claim to be wholly true was unfounded and that Christianity had nothing to offer which Hindus themselves did not possess. Some of them even dare to say that Christians would do well to learn from Hinduism what essential religion is and what it involves.

In order to justify these new claims (put forward by the Hindus) the ^{Hindus} had to effect radical change in their generally accepted creed. It was the creed that needed to be revived and defended. The intention behind the whole movement was to prevent 'conversion' to other faiths by showing their folly and futility.

This general trend in Hinduism for social and religious reforms resulted in the Theistic movements in modern Hinduism. The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj and religious revival associated with the Gandhian movement claim that essential Hinduism is theistic, implying that the Ultimate Reality of Sanathana creed is 'personal', the object of worship, the author of all creation. In Gandhism, however, additional emphasis is placed upon the Vaishnavite view that God is a God of grace, a present source of strength and inspiration to the Bhakta. The origin of this modern theism is due to the anxiety to vindicate Hinduism against the charge that it is

polytheistic, idolatrous, pantheistic and legalistic. But in no case does it take the position that the theistic view of reality alone is valid". (115) The latest trend in Hindu reform is what is known as Neo-Vedanta movement. This movement was originated and expounded by Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836 - 1886), and popularized by his able disciple Swami Vivekananda. Ramakrishna held that Hinduism according to the Vedanta stood for: "(1) a mystic self-culture; (2) a conception of truth and value which was beyond what determined this material world of time and space; (3) what was good and valuable in all religions, for they can all serve the common end of self-realization". (116) Ramakrishna was not a systematic thinker and his message would probably have disappeared had it not been for one of his disciples, Vivekananda.

We note certain emphasis in Vivekananda's interpretation of the Vedanta. One is that the Spiritual is the ultimately real and the material things of the world should not be invested with final value. He taught that Hindu Spirituality should be revived and protected on the basis of Vedanta. He also pointed out that Vedanta did not rule out active social service and humanitarianism. In fact, he said that, the Vedanta provided the right religious motivation for service. The Parliament of Religion in Chicago gave Vivekananda an opportunity which he turned to good advantage. "It would not be an exaggeration

(115) R.B. Manikam. Christianity and the Asian Revolution. p.127

(116) R.B. Manikam. IBID. p.129

to say that Vivekananda's Chicago speech marked the beginning of a new era in the history of religion, in that it was the first announcement of the claim of Hinduism to be not merely a religion, and not merely a world religion, but the world religion, the religion within which the truths of all other religions had already been included and transcended". (117)

We shall now pass on to consider the interpretation of Vedanta by Sri Aurobindo Ghose. "He saw in the essential Vedanta, interpreted as 'synthetic philosophy' and 'integral yoga', an ecumenical Hinduism, both as an acceptable system of metaphysics and a religious scheme of Salvation through self-realization. Brahman who becomes all of creation, and yet infinitely transcends it, is not a will-less cause, aloof from his creation. He is active in the cosmic process, which is a double movement of 'ascent' (from the lower to the higher order of being) and of descent ('a downward movement of Reality erupting into the creative process to help the upward movement'). 'By the practice of what he called 'integral Yoga' Aurobindo maintained that man can attain the status of 'super-man'. At first this process is recognized as descents, eruptions, and messages of revelations from a superior power. Then begins a stage of 'Shuddhi'. When the 'intermixture' of lower (lesser) mind is progressively eliminated, and finally 'siddhi' 'the final stage when supermind occupies and super-

(117) Bishop Newbigin. "The Quest for Unity through Religion".p.17
The Journal of Religion. January 1955.

mentalizes the whole being and turns even the vital and physical sheaths into moulds of itself. Man then becomes wholly the superman".(118) In Aurobindo's teaching we see an attempt at a synthesis and integration of the Spiritual and other values of the East and West.

The most important person we have to consider in connection with Neo-Vedanta or Neo-Hinduism is Radhakrishnan. He advocates the creation of a world community, in which religion has an important part to play. He also advocates a reformation of Hinduism. Reform must be based on and related to the past and so he would build on the foundation of the Vedanta. "If we do not bring together in love those who sincerely believe in God and seek to do His will, if we persist in killing one another theologically, we shall only weaken men's faith in God..... We must recognize humbly the partial and defective character of our isolated traditions and seek their source in the generic tradition from which they all have sprung".(119) Radhakrishnan suggests that Hindus must work out a practical program of reform fully recognizing the actual conditions of modern life.

There are certain affirmations which are generally accepted by the various schools of Vedantic interpretation. The Ultimate reality is essentially unknowable, but in every case they affirm the undeniable fact of Reality. No one

(118) R.B. Manickam - IBID. P.130 & 131

(119) Radhakrishnan. Eastern Religion and Western Thought.p.348

theological formulation about the nature of ultimate reality can claim absolute validity. Hinduism recognizes the right of every Hindu to accept and practice whatever way of life he may find useful to his mode of thinking.

This attitude of the Hindu mind has resulted in a syncretistic view of life. "Within India the belief that all religions are in essence one has become not merely an article of faith but almost an axiom of thought".(120) Anyone who doubts its truth is regarded as semi-illiterate. This creates a very important problem for missionary work. Bishop Newbigin states the Hindu reaction to the Church's declaration that Christ is the hope of the world. The declaration is met by indignant repudiation. "If by the word 'Christ' you mean the same universal religious principle which is also in Buddha, Krishna, Mohammud, Gandhi, we agree that this is the hope of the World. But if you mean that all the world is to follow one way, to be enrolled under one banner, to accept one dogma, namely, the one you bring us, then we say, 'no'. That is not the way to unity, but the way to sectarian strife..... We are happy to hear what you have to tell us about your religion; we recognize in Jesus an incarnation of the one universal religious principle. We shall gladly worship him as we worship others".(121)

(120) Newbigin - IBID. p.17

(121) Newbigin - IBID. p.20

We can interpret all, in terms of the Vedanta, say the proponents of this, the pre-eminent School of Hindu Philosophy in India today. The ways in which the Church has sought to meet the challenge of movements of syncretism in India will be discussed at the conclusion of, and in the light of, our consideration of the marked similarity between this challenge and that of Gnosticism to the early Church. We shall now proceed to consider those areas of Indian syncretism which have sought to incorporate elements of Christianity. It is interesting to note that syncretism takes various forms. There is the unconscious acceptance of certain values and practices from one religion by another; for example, Hinduism taking ideas from Christianity or Islam. Then there is the conscious appropriation of the practices or values of one by the other through deliberate choice. And finally there is the purposive blending of elements taken from various sources into what is called a new religion; Theosophy may be taken as an illustration of this type of syncretism.

Hinduism is by its very nature disposed to syncretism. It can be compared to a sponge which is capable of absorbing into itself many elements. The Brahmo Samaj is a good illustration of the syncretistic tendency in Hinduism. Here Christianity has furnished a number of characteristic elements. It is monotheistic like Christianity, though Islam may also have made its contribution. It exalts Jesus, though it refuses to regard Him as the Son of God. The modern Samajist in his

attitude toward Christ approximates the position of the Unitarians. It is non-idolatrous. In its worship forms it is Congregational, differing distinctly in this regard from Hinduism.

The Arya Samaj, while accepting less doctrinally from the Christian faith, has made use of almost every technique of evangelization and social work, known to Christianity, finding authority for such practices in their own scriptures. But it is quite obvious that they are following the Christian model.

We have already seen that Theosophy is a syncretistic religion. Madam Blavatsky, the founder of Theosophy writes in the introduction to her book, *Secret Doctrines*, that "the secret doctrine is the essence of all these (Religions). The aim of the work is.... to rescue from degradation the archaic truths which are the basis of all religions; to recover to some extent the fundamental unity from which they all spring".(122) Mrs Besant, one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society of India, identified Jesus Christ with the 'World Teacher'. "His (Buddha's) place was taken by his brother, the world teacher today the Lord Maitreya, whom Christians call Christ"..... When the Indian worships Shri Krishna, unknowingly he is worshipping One in whom the Christ is incarnate".(123) Theosophy as a religious System has practically lost its hold on the Hindu mind, because Hinduism can offer all that Theosophy offers.

(122) Madam Blavatsky - *Secret Doctrine* p.8
(Quoted by W.S. Urquhart).

Theosophy and Christian Thought. p.28)
(123) McNeille. *From Theosophy to Christian Faith*. p.12

The syncretistic Systems and modern Hinduism remind one of Gnosticism, which faced the Church in the early centuries of the Christian era. In fact Radhakrishnan says that Gnosticism was a deliberate attempt to fuse Greek (Platonic) and Hindu elements. He also feels that many of the chief features of Gnosticism are those common to the Upanishads and the mystic traditions of Greece. (124) However, it is clear that Oriental thought formed the ground work of most of the Gnostic systems. It seems as if the Indian and other Oriental ideas were first absorbed in Greek philosophy and in that form brought into connection with Christianity by the Gnostics. Syncretism is the most dangerous enemy we are facing in India today. The Ramakrishna Mission, which seeks to propagate the teaching of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, is an attempt to create an amalgam of all religions on the basis of Hinduism. The movement set afoot by the life and teaching of Aurobindo is attempting to effect a synthesis on the basis of Mysticism. Intellectualism, under the leadership of Radhakrishnan, is trying for a method of comprehension of all faiths. Indian nationalism wants to corrode away the differences between religions, for these differences cause tension.

We have seen how the Hindus are prepared to accept Jesus as the incarnation of the one universal religious principle' and as one of the many incarnations of God. The crucial point

on which the Hindus ask for a compromise is the Church's stand that God's self-disclosing revelation in Christ is absolutely 'Sui generis'. Any compromise on this vital issue will be detrimental to the very existence of the Church.

The manner in which the Church in India meets the direct and the creeping call of syncretism, is to reassert and emphasize the facts of history upon which it stands or falls. The special revelation which Christianity claims to possess was mediated through the long series of events of Jewish history which culminated in Christ and His Church, as these events were interpreted by the prophets and apostles through whose witness the Bible came to be written.

The events of history as such do not themselves constitute a revelation, but it is the prophetic interpretation of historical events which is the vehicle of special revelation. It is in that sense that the Christian tradition understands that conception. "If the phenomenon of prophecy is found nowhere except in Jewish Christian tradition," says Alan Richardson, "then we must cease to complain about the 'Scandal of particularity' and resolve to accept facts as facts, refusing to explain them away in obedience to a quite unscientific predilection for a general theory which was conceived before the facts were examined".(125) We do not know why this special revelation or this special type of knowledge of God as active in history should have arisen

in Israel only. It is a mystery. But the fact that we cannot explain why God chose the Jewish people to be the special instrument of His purpose in history is no reason for denying the plentiful evidence that He did so choose them.

To the Hindu the concentration on one historic figure seems at once the weakness of Christianity and its offence. Vivekananda's saying is often quoted and much approved that Hinduism alone 'escapes shipwreck' on 'the rock of historicity'.

(126) There lies behind this statement the view that time is the sphere of illusion, and that in time there can be no full revelation of God.

The 'Vedantin' finds the clue to all experience in a particular kind of individual spiritual experience which is, in principle, equally available to all men at all times and in all places. Starting from that he develops his whole world-view with logical order and consistency. The starting-point of the Christian is an event which happened in Palestine under Pontius Pilate. He finds in this event, which is unique, unrepeated and unrepeatable the clue to all his experiences. Everything hangs on that event. If that event did not, in fact, happen, the whole Christian religion falls to the ground. This is why we insist on accurate and critical historical study. To the Vedantin all this is incredible folly; it is self evident for him that no universal truth can be established on a particular event in history.

(126) Quoted by S.Cave - Hinduism or Christianity. p.156

Consistent with his starting point, the Christian insists that he is related to that once-and-for-all event through a continuous, living, historic process. The report of that event comes to him in a tradition which is both oral and written, and which is continuous from the original event until today.

The character of this once-and-for-all event governs the character of the unity which it creates. The experience which lies at the base of the Vedanta does not issue in a visible community. The typical Vedantin (for example a Sannyasi) is an isolated figure. The experience of enlightenment does not create community; on the contrary, it frees him who attains it from the load of all human community, including those of the family. The death of our Lord on the Cross, on the other hand, is an atonement. It is an event by which atonement is wrought between God and men and therefore between man and his fellow man. It is the essence of such an atonement that it must issue forth in a visible community. This is the reason why the Church has always insisted upon the historical personality of Jesus Christ, his life and work, as the basis of all Christian thinking. A Christian does not and can not accept for a moment the position that all religions are equally good, and true as long as he is loyal to Him who said: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' writes Principal C.P. Matthew, a member of the Indian Parliament. In this situation we feel that we should declare our stand in unambiguous terms. We are confirmed in our belief that the Bible should form the basis of our Theological thinking.

Even within the Church we observe a tendency to push the Bible to the background. "If the Old Testament represents the cradle and swaddling clothes of Jesus", writes G.V. Job, "the Upanishads prove the cosmic claim which St. John the Divine makes for the Lord in whose striking words which introduce his story of the Incarnation To argue that the Old Testament forms an integral part of Christianity which asserts itself as a record of God's self disclosing and recreating revelation in Jesus appears somewhat artificial and strained." (127) Mr. Job and his friends in "the Re-thinking Group" feel that the Hindu Scriptures can take the place of the Old Testament in Christian teaching.

Under these circumstances the Church declares clearly its belief in the Incarnation which is God's self disclosing revelation. In our preaching and missionary work we emphasise this historical aspect of the Christian faith.

I have been trying to show how we in India are facing the challenge of resurgent Hinduism and Syncretism. This challenge of non-Christian philosophies brings to mind the challenge of Gnosticism to the early Church. As I have already pointed out Radhakrishnan says that Gnosticism was a deliberate attempt to fuse Greek, (Platonic) and Hindu elements. We shall now proceed to examine the challenge of Gnosticism in the light of our missionary experience in India, especially with reference to our approach to non-Christian religions.

(127) Re-thinking Christianity in India.

How the Church faces the Challenge
of Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was a many sided system. Under this system were included manifold systems of belief which combined Christian teaching with ^{γνῶσις} ~~γνῶσις~~ or higher knowledge. According to Hippolytus the title 'Gnostic' was assumed by the Nasserenes.

The word Gnosticism has been used to designate a great variety of phenomena which, though clearly akin, are by no means identical. Dr. Burkitt reminds us that "the Gnostics come before us historically as Christians". (128) It was only the final triumph of Christianity which made clear the identity of principle which underlay various heretical doctrines, and caused them to be defined generally as Gnosticism. Hence the Gnostics are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics.

It is not only with one system with which we have to deal but with a large and many sided movement which was continually changing. Ever since the time of Alexander the Great a religious as well as an ethnic amalgamation had been going on. Religious ideas from Persia, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt were combined in various ways and degrees with the Graeco-Roman religions to form a syncretism. This was a peculiar characteristic of the Hellenistic world.

Gnosticism was not a phenomenon which was to be found only in the guise of Christianity. The pagan Gnosticism was protean, taking many forms and drawing from a wide variety of sources. When combined with certain elements from Christianity, Gnosticism proved very attractive. The suggestion has been made that for a time the majority of those who regarded themselves as Christians adhered to one or another of the many forms of Gnosticism.

In the Graeco-Roman world into which Christianity came two philosophic tendencies were prominent: Stoicism which was ethical in its interest and Monistic in its ontology, and Platonism which was dualistic and predominantly religious. An Orientalized platonism was fairly wide-spread and was steadily gathering strength and finally culminated in Plotinus and Neo-platonists. The Gnostics draw on these philosophic systems, but they were more than philosophers, they were religious devotees as well. It was the combination of philosophy and practical religion that gave Gnosticism its peculiar character.

The Gnostics were primarily interested in the problem of salvation. They endeavoured to find a means of escape from this present evil world and to attain the higher world of the Spirit. Since they found in Christianity an answer to this great problem many of them became Christians and joined the Christian Circle. They were eclectics both religiously and philosophically, taking, where-ever they found them, ideas and practices which might serve to illuminate the

way of salvation and assist the individual to flee from the realm of things to the realm of the Spirit. Moreover Christianity, at least as interpreted by Paul, was in some respects closely akin to their own way of looking at things and supplied them with material of a most valuable kind. A divine saviour through union with whom one may escape the flesh and enter upon a new life in the Spirit - what could better meet their need than this?" (129)

The Gnostics were impressed by St. John's emphasis on 'Knowledge' and his interpretation of the eucharist as a feeding upon Christ. Attracted by the teaching of St. Paul and St. John they joined the Church in ever increasing numbers. In the lands of such people who came into the Christian Church, Christianity was transformed into a Gnostic religion of redemption. There were many Gnostic groups within the Church. Basilides of Alexandria, Valentinus, an Alexandrian who became famous as a teacher in Rome, Saturnius of Syria and Carprocrates were some of the most important figures.

In general the Gnostics held that there exists a first principle, the all Father, unknowable, who is love, and who alone can generate other beings. Since love abhors dwelling alone, the first principle brought into existence other beings or aeons which together with the first principle constitute the Pleroma, "Fullness", true Reality. From this world of the Spirit the present world appeared. The present world was

ascribed to the subordinate being, the Demiurge, who was identified with the God of the Old Testament. Men belong to the present world, and are compounded of spirit and matter, soul and flesh. Salvation, the freeing of the spirit from the contamination of matter, is through Christ the redeemer. Many different accounts, conception, and interpretation were given of Christ. Some held that Christ was never associated with flesh but that he merely seemed to be man and was really pure Spirit. Another system conceived Christ as an Aeon. This view separated Christ from Jesus, but held the latter also to have been an aeon in whom something of all the other aeons was included. It also taught that another Jesus, sent to be the saviour of men, was born of the Virgin Mary. Not all men were saved, so the Gnostics went on to say, for many have little or nothing of Spirit in them and in due time they will be destroyed. Others having a portion of Spirit in them will be saved by being taught the hidden knowledge or 'Gnosis' and through faith and works, they will be freed from the contamination of the flesh and mount to the Pleroma.

There were Jewish as well as Gentile Gnostics before the time of Christ and they were all decidedly hostile to Judaism. Their dualism was opposed to Jewish Monotheism. Some of the Gnostics rejected the God^{of} the Jews altogether, but some others identified him with the demiurge. Basilides taught that "God of the Jews was one of the Angels; and on this account, because all the powers wished to annihilate his father Christ came to destroy the God of the Jews". (130)

Marcion is often counted among the Gnostics. But he ~~needs~~ separate treatment. He is reported to have been the son of a Bishop and so grew up as a Christian. Having rejected the Old Testament Marcion felt the need of Christian Scriptures to take its place. He therefore constructed a Bible, the earliest Christian Bible - a revised edition of St. Luke's Gospel and the epistles of Paul (omitting the Pastoral Epistles). Like the Gnostics Marcion denied that Christ became a real man. Christ's body was only a phantom according to Marcion. Christ was not born of a woman but appeared suddenly in Palestine as a full-grown man. He did not die on the cross or rise again from the tomb.

We observe certain fundamental Conceptions. Matter is the home of all evil, and spirit the home of all good. There is a higher world, that of the spirit, inhabited by graded hierarchies of beings emanating from God. There can not have been any real incarnation for that would have placed Christ also in bondage to evil matter. Man is a captive spirit entangled in the world of matter. Christ came to the world to deliver the Spiritual part of man from matter by giving him the true understanding of things. Christians may be divided into those who are saved by faith and those who are saved by knowledge.

In their teaching about Salvation the Gnostics divided man into three groups, namely, material men, psychic men and pneumatic men. Material men had no hope of salvation. To the psychic men salvation was a possibility. To the pneumatic men

salvation was already an experience. Some groups even taught their followers that the soul being superior to matter could not be corrupted and so they were at liberty to lead licentious lives. (131)

The chief danger from the whole Gnostic movement was that the Church would have become a Theosophic Society offering knowledge to a special group of people, instead of a Church of Christ offering redemption to all mankind. Christians were compelled to think out and express clearly what they really believed. Since the Gnostics made a wrong use of philosophy, the Church viewed philosophy with contempt. Defenders of the faith appeared on the scene. Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Hippolytus and others ably attacked these heretical theories and finally defeated them.

It will be convenient at this point, to compare briefly the Syncretism of Modern India and Gnosticism; both of which we have now considered separately in some detail.

First, both advocate a way of escape from the 'cosmic machinery', a way of salvation, from a world which is evil and illusory. The Vendanta is regarded as 'Gnana marga', the salvation by knowledge, the knowledge that Atman, (individual soul), is identical with Brahman, (universal soul). The Gnostics offered salvation by Gnosis. "By means of this Gnosis", says Irenaeus, "man receives power to overcome those very angels that made the world". (132) Their systems offered

(131) Hares. A History of the Christian Church.

(132) Irenaeus l. 33:5

redemption from an evil world into a world of life and freedom. If you have the right knowledge your salvation is assured.

Secondly, both represent a 'flowing-together', an amalgam, of religious doctrines and ideas. Syncretism as we have said, is an innate tendency of the Hindu mind. Such examples of syncretistic religious groups as the Theosophic Society of India, the Brahmo Samaj, and the Aryasamaj, all rooted in Hinduism, draw upon the streams of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity, in addition to the many different movements within Hinduism itself. Gnosticism was an amalgamation of the religious ideas taken from Persia, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, India and other countries, and finally from Christianity.

Thirdly, both movements are practical. Neither is simply philosophic speculation, both are proclaimed as 'ways of salvation'.

Fourthly, both movements are of their very nature trying to compromise with Christianity, and herein lies the power of their challenge. They do not reject Christianity, but seek to incorporate that which is 'best' of it, into the other great religious traditions of the world.

The deepest difference between these two movements of Syncretism, is that the Gnostics gave Christ a supreme place. "A divine saviour through union with whom one may escape the flesh and enter upon a new life in the spirit - what could better meet their need than this?" (133)

The battle of the Church against Gnosticism was a battle fought to deliver the simple truth of those saving facts which the Church believed. "Gnosticism was the reality of peace" says Sohn "which the culture of the second century offered to Christianity. Had Christianity agreed to the terms it would have perished together with the culture".(134)

In this conflict the Church won the hard-fought fight, Through this fight Christian theology and with it the ecclesiastical Constitution of the future received its form. The Church could stand against not only the pagan state, but against a pagan philosophy and mysticism. In defending itself against Gnosticism the Christianity of the primitive age was transformed into the Catholicism of the next.

It was the work of the great "Anti-Gnostic" Fathers at the end of the second century, above all Irenaeus and next to him Tertullian, to meet the Gnostic attack.

St. Irenaeus was deeply interested in the practical aspect of Christianity and in anything that made for religious devotion and moral purity. He was familiar with the type of Christianity prevalent in Asia Minor and was strongly attracted by it. The extent of his acquaintance with the work of Gnostics is shown by his treatise against them. He took special care to read and understand the gnostic writings and it was largely in reaction to them that he reached his interpretation of the place of Christ and the meaning of Christianity.

His great surviving work 'Adversus Haereses' appears to have been written over a fair period of time during the early years of his episcopate. This work was principally aimed at Gnostic heresy. Another work, mentioned by Eusebius, 'The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching', was regarded as lost until an Armenian translation was found in 1904. The Demonstration was written after Adversus Haereses, and is a simple handbook of Christian evidence.

The work of Christ and His person are very closely connected in the writings of Irenaeus. Salvation, according to Irenaeus, included not only man's release from the control of Satan, but also his deification. The basis of this deification was found in the union in Jesus Christ of the mortal nature of man with the immortal nature of God. Jesus Christ was greater than man and stronger than Satan. He was also God. When Christ became incarnate he united the nature of God with the nature of man and thus deified the latter, giving it the quality of divinity, "The Word of God (Logos), Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who did, through His transcendent love, become what we are, that he might bring us to be even what He is Himself".(135) How can they be saved unless it was God who wrought out their salvation upon earth? Or how shall man pass into God, unless God has first passed into men? And how could He, (Christ), have been greater than Solomon, or greater than Jonah, or have been the Lord of David, who was of

the same substance as they were? The Son of God was made man, assuming the ancient production (of his hands) into His own nature.(136)

St Irenaeus says that Man could not have received incorruptibility and immortality if Christ had not become man. Christ must have been really God or he could not have accomplished what was necessary. If he had been merely a subordinate divinity of a being of a different nature from God, his incarnation would not have united God and man and hence the latter would have remained mortal and unsaved. In facing the onslaught of Gnosticism, Irenaeus felt strongly the need to take a firm stand on the Historical revelation of God in Jesus Christ. John Lawson points out that Irenaeus held that Logos was the revealed God. When Irenaeus speaks of Logos or of God the Son, he always thinks of Jesus, and therefore does not identify the divine element in Christ with the world-idea or with the Reason of God.(137) St. Irenaeus' contribution to the study of the Doctrine of Christ will be discussed further when we discuss the Logos Christology.

The doctrine of the Church was established on a new foundation, more definite than of the past. The new appeal was in the first place to the creed, which now became a standard of doctrine. The creed presupposed by both Irenaeus and Tertullian is essentially the Roman (Apostles) creed.

(136)IBID - Section IV 33:4 p.507

(137)The Biblical Theology of St. Irenaeus. p.135

The Gnostics attacked the Old Testament and put it almost out of court. The Church retained the Old Testament as the foundation of Monotheism. A new standard of doctrine was established by the formation of a Canon of Scriptures. The four Gospels and Pauline Epistles, the most fundamental source of Christian doctrine, composed the Canon from the very first.

The Bishops of the Apostolic Churches were declared as the holders ^{of truth} in opposition to the Gnostic secret tradition. This appeal to the Bishops is of the greatest importance because it put out of court the Gnostic allegorization of the statements either of the creed or the New Testament. The Church placed anti-gnostic statements ^{to meet} ~~to~~ the gnostic interpretation of the creed and the scriptures.

The work of the 'Catholic Church' proceeded on these principles. By the end of the third century the Catholic Church became a firm reality in all parts of the Roman Empire, through the acceptance of the three norms, the creed, the scriptures and the consensus of the Church. Robert Franks points out that the Church solved its problems by adopting these three norms. (138)

The most important result of this struggle was the establishment of certain basic principles. It was made clear that Christianity is a religion alike for the learned and the simple, with no reserved places for a select intellectual aristocracy. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

is the maker of heaven and earth. This world is no prison house of spirits, but the creation of his love. Jesus Christ is no intermediate existence between God and Man, but the Son of God and Son of Man, who came as a real man and draws us to God. He saves us not from matter, but from sin; not by enlightenment but by faith as personal loyalty to Him.

The triumph of Gnosticism would have meant the overthrow of Christianity as a historic Religion and the disruption and the ruin of the Church. The leaders of the Church faced the challenge of Gnosticism very boldly, and they could establish a genuine apostolic standard. However it is true to say that Gnosticism and the Church's answer to this heresy aroused great interest in the claims of Christianity. Fathers of the Church in this period used all available methods for the propagation of the Christian faith.

Some of the greatest minds of the period were engaged in working out the doctrine of the Divine Logos and of His Incarnation in Jesus Christ. Dorner points out that Ebionism and Gnosticism to a great extent contributed to the formulation of Christology.(139) Bethune - Baker, however, says that it is not easy to compute exactly the influence of Gnosticism on the development of Christian doctrine.(140)

(139) Dorner. Person of Christ Vol.1 p.252

(140) Bethune - Baker. Early History of Christian Doctrine.
p.91

In the light of the evidences, we have to admit that the wild conceptions of the Gnostics forced the Church to think out and formulate its doctrines. Gnosticism presented a real challenge to the Church. It is pointed out that the Church has never passed through any other crisis of such utter peril. The Lord of the Church who has overcome the world, enabled her to face the Gnostic challenge and emerge victorious.

We have been considering the challenge of non-Christian religions and philosophies to the Church in India. In the face of resurgent Hinduism or Non-Vedanta and Syncretism the Church in India is emphasising the historical personality of Jesus Christ. We are convinced that the revelation of God as seen in the Old and New Testament should form the basis of our preaching and teaching. We have to declare clearly and in unambiguous terms that we can not accept the position that all religions are equally true as long as we are loyal to Him who said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life".

To safeguard this faith in Christ, we feel that the Church in India should be strengthened and unified. I have already pointed out that it is in the context of our Missionary work, in our attempt to preach the Gospel to the Non-Christians that we strongly felt the need for Church unity. The Church of South India was formed with the definite purpose of preaching the Gospel with one voice "that the world may believe".

In this connection I should point out that we in the Church of South India have come together on the basis of the Bible, the Creeds of the Church, the Dominical Sacraments, Baptism; and Holy Communion, and the historic episcopate. We feel that in a predominantly non-Christian country we should hold fast to the Scriptures, Creeds, and Sacraments according to the Scriptures, and to the unity of the Church safeguarded by the Ministry. We see how the early Church found it necessary to emphasize the historical aspect of the faith. Irenaeus for example starts from the historic Jesus, the God-man, not from the cosmic Logos, and his central problem is: why did Christ descend?(141) He says that in Christ very God himself has come to us. He attached fundamental importance to the incarnation which had meant little to the Apologists and was denied by the Gnostics. Irenaeus leaves metaphysics aside and takes his stand upon the religious need for "a Christ who as man can suffer with us, and who as God can forgive."

The New Testament was for Irenaeus equally authoritative as the Old Testament. He repudiated the claims of false (secret) traditions of the Gnostics and offered "a universal and constant tradition", the Holy Scriptures, guaranteed by the succession of Bishops.(142)

(141) Irenaeus. Adv: Her: 2: 14.7

Ante-Nicene Fathers. p.378

(142) Lawson. IBID. p.16

In our non-Christian surroundings in India we find that we should hold fast to the Bible, the Creeds, embodying the fundamentals of the Christian faith, and to the unity of the Church safeguarded by the Bishops. This helps us in a very real way to see why the early Church tenaciously held on to the Canon (of Scriptures), the Creed, and Bishops, in its life and death struggle with Gnosticism.

We have seen how the Doctrine of Christ developed in response to the challenge of non-Christian religions and schools of philosophy, and how our experience in India throws light on the Christological problems of the Early Church. The Hindu background and the various Schools of Hindu philosophy are influencing the Christian thought in India, just as Gnosticism influenced the various types of heretical thoughts that arose around the cradle of Christian faith. Over against the challenge of Syncretism in India, the Church has to stress the uniqueness of Christ and the historicity of the Incarnation, just as Irenaeus and the Anti-Gnostic fathers based their teaching on the revelation of God in history as recorded in the Bible. We shall now pass on to consider the development of the Doctrine of Christ in response to the challenge of similar prior conception. There is a conception of Incarnation in Hinduism and I feel that we should use this conception as the starting point of our approach to Hinduism. Before I begin to consider the advisability of using this word, I shall very briefly state the various methods of approach to non-Christian religions in the mission fields in India.

In the history of Christian Apologetics there have been many different types of approach to non-Christian religions. The various attitudes do not lend themselves to easy classification. However, three main approaches to non-Christian religions can be distinguished and these may be conveniently called, (a) the attitude of aggressive condemnation, (b) the attitude of sympathetic appreciation and co-operation, and (c) the attitude of proclaiming a unique and final Gospel, without denial of values in other religions.

(A) The attitude of aggressive condemnation. Karl Barth in an address given in 1928 stated: "Does Christendom know how near to her lies the temptation, by a slight betrayal of her proper business, to escape such an imminent conflict with these alien religions? Does she know that this should not happen? We can only ask, does she know that under no circumstances must she howl with the wolves?". Again he says: "Three years ago we had the experience of seeing an International Missionary Conference assembled in Jerusalem bothering their head for a whole week, not so much about what the Gospel means as about the 'values' of the non-Christian religions!" "Such 'bridge building' he goes on "must be abandoned without reserve. Christendom should advance right into the midst of these 'religions' whatever their names may be, and let come what will, deliver her message of the one God and his compassion for man forlorn, without yielding by a hairbreadth to their 'demons'. "If the church hears the word of God, she has a mission".(143) This attitude has remained prominent in Missionary literature. This note was sounded, though mildly, (143) Macnicol. Is Christianity Unique? p.168

at the three great International Missionary Conferences. At Edinburgh (1910) the outlook was, in D.A.Kraemer's words, that of an army 'viewing the non-Christian world spread out before its eyes as a world to be conquered'.(144) At Jerusalem (1928) the 'military' note was more subdued, but the claim of Christianity to 'world Dominion' was clearly voiced.(145) And the Tambaram Conference urged Christian Missionaries to 'call men out' from the non-Christian religions -- a call which surely implies at least some measure of hostility towards them.(146) This attitude of hostility and conflict, having as its ultimate aim the conquest of all other religions by Christianity has to be reckoned as one of the present day replies of the Church to non-Christian religions.

This attitude is questioned by the non-Christians, Indian Christians and Missionaries. "Even from the official biographies of Jesus we learn that he is more considerate and compassionate than his followers..... It is difficult for us at this time of the day to believe that only one religion provides divine revelation and others have nothing of it".(147) "This method of aggressive refutation and condemnation of other faiths began to be questioned when more objective studies of non-Christian scriptures and a more sympathetic understanding of non-Christian religious experiences were possible".(148)

(144) Kraemer. The Christian Message. p.36

(145) Jerusalem Report. Vol.1 p.469

(146) Tambaram Report. Vol. p.200

(147) Radhakrishnam. Eastern Religion and Western Thought.p.343

(148) R.B. Manickam. Christianity and the Asian Revolution.p.189

If we believe that we have a message to offer to the world, we have to declare it. But we have 'to speak the truth in love'.

(B) The attitude of sympathetic appreciation and co-operation.

The key note of this attitude is the idea that Christianity 'fulfils' all that is good and true in non-Christian faiths. One of the factors which contributed to the development of this attitude is the influence of the so-called "Liberal Theology" which abhorred dogma and emphasised the 'example' of Jesus and His ethical teaching. Further, through the impact of Christianity, Hinduism and other religions were being interpreted and many reform movements were started. The Spirit of Nationalism added momentum to such reform movements. The works of European Orientalists like Max Muller contributed much to this new attitude to other religions.

Dr. J. N. Farquhar of the Indian Y. M. C. A. is the Chief Advocate of the 'fulfilment' theory. In his book "The Crown of Hinduism", Farquhar maintained that Christianity is the fulfilment of the various aspects of the Hindu religious system. The Jerusalem Conference of 1928, and the Lambeth Conference of Bishops in 1930, also take a similar line, bidding us to regard the non-Christian faiths as 'lesser rays from the Light of God, (149) or as 'Approaches to the Truth of God'. (150) A. J. Appasamy

substantially reaffirms the main contention. The 'fulfilment theory' is not very popular today. It found only very few advocates at Thambaram. It no longer dominates the Missionary outlook to the extent that it did some fifteen years ago.

(C) The attitude of proclaiming the unique Gospel without the denial of truth in other religions. The Christian faith, that we know God because He has revealed Himself to us in History and that in Christ we have the final revelation of God, has always raised the question whether God has revealed Himself in any way in the non-Christian religions, and whether there is any knowledge of God in those faiths. The answers to these questions may be summed up under three headings.

(1) The Thomistic Approach. A distinction is made between Revealed Religions and natural religions. Even though all religions have received a primitive revelation, Christianity alone possesses the final revelation of God. The elements of truth in other religions ~~and they~~ have to be completed or supplemented by truth of Revelation. Robert De Nobile, Missionary of Roman Catholic Mission in the seventeenth century translated the New Testament into Sanskrit and called it the 'Fifth Veda'. Brahmabandav Upadhyaya (1861 - 1907) an Indian Catholic suggested that Vedanta could take the place of Aristotelian Philosophy for an Indian interpretation of the Gospel. The attempts of De Nobile and Brahmabandav were rejected by the Vatican.

2. Barthian Approach. According to this view there is no revelation in non-Christian faiths. The ideas of 'continuity' 'fulfilment' and 'point of contact' are rejected. Kraemer described this approach as 'Biblical Realism'. According to this view God's self-disclosing revelation in Christ is absolutely sui generis. The Biblical revelation is accepted as absolute and made the basis for the evaluation of other faiths. The policy of sharing with other faiths is the suicide of missions. (151) The task of the Christian Missionary^{'s} is to confront people with the message of God's Act of Redemption' in Christ Jesus, and summon them to respond to this faith.

The Barthian affirmations of the 'absolutely qualitative difference' between truth revealed in Christ and truths discovered by man, do not obviously follow from the acceptance of the Biblical revelation. We have also to bear in mind that there are divergent views about the nature and content of the Christian revelation. However, Kraemer's views came before the public with the endorsement of Archbishop William Temple who in his introduction to the Christian Message described it as "likely to supply the principles of missionary policy for our generation".

We have to acknowledge the fact that belief in the uniqueness and absoluteness of the Biblical revelation has not always been accompanied by a denial of revelation in other

(151) Kraemer. The Christian Message. p.299

faiths. Our belief is that other revelations can be recognized and evaluated only in the light of Biblical revelation. (151a) The final revelation in Christ is, in varying degrees, regarded as bringing 'judgement' 'fulfilment' and 'redemption' to other religions.

Now, what is the task of the Christian Apologist? Our simple task is to preach Christ. For the Christian Apologists, what has happened in and through Christ is the centre and source of all ideas of revelation and truth. Can the Christian Apologist effectively convince himself and non-Christians that Christ is the judge and redeemer of all religious life. The main task, then, is to see how the truth of the Gospel can be so interpreted that the non-Christian is able to understand the wisdom of accepting Christ as "the Way, the Truth and the Life" and to find in Christ the truth that judges, fulfils and redeems his own religious life. This involves the presentation of the Christian truth through doctrinal exposition and indigenous expression and through the demonstration of the relevancy of the Gospel to concrete human situations. As a result of our evangelistic experience in India we have come across certain thought forms and indigenous expressions which have been found helpful in interpreting Christ to our people.

151a Cp. H.H. Farmer. Revelation and Religion.

We shall now pass on to consider the development of the Doctrine of Christ in response to the challenge of similar prior conception in non-Christian religions. One of our chief problems in connection with the presentation of Christianity in India, especially in communicating the Doctrine of Christ, is the presence of a very similar conception, namely, the 'Avatar.' This idea of the Avatar is engaging the attention of the students of Christian Theology in India.

The consensus of opinion among Indian Christian leaders is to make use of this Avatar conception as a starting point in our interpretation of the Doctrine of Christ. The word has become fairly well established in many parts of the Indian Church. As a matter of fact the only word that can possibly be used to translate the term 'Incarnation' is 'Avatar'.

The word 'Avatar' means "the descent of the Lord into the world of men and animals" or "the descent of the Divine into human frame".(152) A secondary indication of the word is that in this world the best and the most excellent things are so many forms of the Lord. The most important 'avatara' passage is found in the Bhagavatgita (Chapter 4⁷)

(Sanskrit) Yada - Yada hi dharmasya

Glanir Bhavati Bharata

Abhyutthanam adharmasya

Tada 'tmanam srjamy aham.

"Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of un-righteousness.

O Bhavata (Arjuna) then I send forth Myself".(153)

(152) Radhakrishnan. Gita p.32

(153) IBID p.154

Relevant passages from Vishnu Purana and Bhagavata should also be mentioned in this connection.

"Whenever righteousness wanes and unrighteousness increases the Almighty Lord, Hari, creates himself". (154)

"Whenever there is a serious tension in life, when a sort of all pervasive materialism invades the hearts of human souls, to preserve the equilibrium, an answering manifestation of wisdom and righteousness is essential. The Supreme, though unborn and undying, becomes manifest in human embodiment to overthrow the forces of ignorance and selfishness. (155) As we have already seen, the word 'Avatara' means 'descent' or 'one who has descended'. The Divine comes down to earth to raise men to a higher status. The purpose of the Avatar is to inaugurate a new world. By his teaching and example he shows how a human being can raise himself to a higher grade of life. The issue between right and wrong is a decisive one. God works on the side of the right.

In Chapter 4 and verse 8 of the Bhagavat Gita we see the purpose of the Avatara.

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness, I come into being from age to age".

It is the function of God as Vishnu, to protect the world. He assumes birth to re-establish right when wrong prevails.

(154) Bhagavata 9 24, 56.

(155) Vishnu Purana. Quoted by Radhakrishnan. IBID.

The Gita teaches that Krishna, as an avatar of the Divine into the human world, points out the way for the human souls. "If the world is imperfect and ruled by the flesh and the devil, it is our duty to redeem it for the spirit. The Avatara points out the way by which men can rise from their animal to a spiritual mode of existence by providing us with an example of spiritual life. The Divine nature is not seen in the incarnation in its naked splendour but is mediated by the instrumentality of manhood".(156)

D.S. Sarma, Principal of Vivekananda College, Madras, says that the exact number of Avataras is immaterial and that ten of them are generally accepted for the sake of convenience. (157) These ten are Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Man-lion, Dwarf, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Buddha, and Kalkin. Vishnu incarnated himself as a fish to deliver the 'Vedas' from the demons, as a tortoise to sustain the world on his back, and as a boar to raise the earth when it was dragged down to the nether world by a demon. In the man-lion incarnation he killed a great demon planning to kill his own son; the demon's son showed great devotion to hari (Vishnu) and it was necessary to take this form since the demon could be killed neither by a man nor a beast.

In the dwarf incarnation Vishnu assumed the form of a young student and saved the world from the demons. Parasurama was a human incarnation. He is the symbol of militant

(156) Radhakrishnan. Gita. p.156

(157) D.S.Sarma. Article on Hindu Religious Thought.p.55

Brahmanism and is said to have destroyed the Kshathriyas. Rama incarnation represents the noblest ideals of Kshathriya manhood. Balaram seems to have some association with primitive snake cults of India. Buddha also is given a place among the incarnations. Krishnu is regarded as the most important of the Avataras. Kalki, the tenth Avatara is yet to be, when he will appear on the earth mounted on a white horse to destroy the wicked and establish righteousness.

We see that most of these Avatars are extravagant in myth. It should be pointed out that the belief in Divine incarnation in animal and semi-animal forms can not be considered as part of the working ~~faith~~ of any educated Hindu at present.

In the introductory essay to his commentary on the Bhagavatagita, Radhakrishnan discusses the Hindu doctrine of Avatar. He asks: 'How can we identify an historical individual with the Supreme God?' (158) The representation of an individual as identical with the universal Self is familiar to Hindu thought. God is never born in the ordinary sense. The processes of birth and incarnation do not apply to Him. When the Lord is said to manifest Himself at a particular time, on a particular occasion, it only means that it takes place with reference to a finite being.... the avatara is the demonstration of man's Spiritual resources and latent divinity. It is not so

much the contraction of Divine majesty into the limits of a human frame as the exaltation of human nature to the level of Godhead by its union with the Divine".(159)

In the Advaitic philosophy there is no two way traffic. By realization of his true nature, that is to say, Brahman-Atman, man becomes Divine. There is no acceptance of the limitation by the divine, but the discarding of limitation by man to become divine. This is the deification of man. This is an equivalent of 'Adoptionism'.

The answer given by Theism is quite different from the one stated above. Theism makes out that Krishna is an incarnation or descent of the Divine into the human frame.

"Krishna is the human embodiment of Vishnu. He is the Supreme who appears to the world as though born and embodied".

This brings to mind the Docetic heresy.

Radhakrishnan goes on to say that "the assumption of human nature by Divine Reality, like the creation of the world, does not take away from or add to the integrity of the Divine. Creation and incarnation both belong to the world of manifestation and not to the Absolute Spirit".(160) The question we have to ask is: How can the divine reality create or assume human nature if there is no internal and eternal justification within it for doing so? When we say that the Divine Reality creates or assumes human nature, or

(159) Radhakrishnan - IBID. p.31 & 32

(160) Radhakrishnan - IBID. p.32

accepts external limitations to manifest Itself, we assume that in the Divine Reality there is the ground for so doing - that ground is indeed the self-limitation of God in his eternity.

We note two different lines of thought in Radhakrishnan. He moves from Theism to Absolute Monism. In his discussion about the Avatar, Radhakrishnan abandons the theistic view of the 'descent' of God into man, and accepts the Monistic view of a mere 'ascent' of man into God.

Now let us pass on to consider whether we can relate the christian teaching of the incarnation to the Avatar conception in Hinduism. All the Avatars are Avatars of Vishnu who is a personal God. God comes down to the earth of his own accord "I send forth (create) Myself". Gita 4⁷. All the Avatars aim, in some way, at the preservation of the earth from harm either at the hands of demons or men.

We also note the assumption that human nature is not essentially opposed to God. There can therefore be relationship between God and man which is called the Incarnation. Because there is no opposition, human persons can have a place in ultimate Reality and not be annihilated in any way.

Apart from these theological considerations, we have to note that the word Avatar is used to translate the word incarnation, in the Creeds, Litany, and in Christian literature in general. Some people argue that it is enough if we give a new interpretation to the old word just as we use the Hindu

word for God in the Church in India. Bishop Appasamy and other Indian Christian leaders are of opinion that we should use this word ^{Avatar} in our interpretation of the Doctrine of Christ.

We have been considering some of the advantages of the use of the word Avatara. While there are certain advantages we should not fail to see some dangers involved if we make use of the term in our Apologetics and Theology. Most of the occasions for the Avatar manifestations have been trivial and even unethical. Even the noblest declaration of the purpose of the Avatara as given in the Bhagavagita falls far short of the Christian teaching of the Incarnation.

Very often the Avatar is regarded as a partial (Amsa) one. Krishna alone is regarded as the Complete (Purna) Avatar. This division into partial and complete is quite foreign to Christian thought. The Christian doctrine of the Incarnation is not only an idea of 'descent or coming down from above,' but it is the teaching about God who became man. We do not see any concern for historic accuracy in the accounts of the Hindu Avataras, but the Christian Gospel is rooted and grounded in Jesus of Nazareth who suffered under Pontius Pilate.

The apparent similarity between the conception of 'Avatar' and 'Incarnation' can easily lead to Syncretism. There is a possibility that Jesus Christ may be regarded just as one of the Avataras in Hinduism. So it is with great caution that we have to use this prior conception in Hinduism.

The Doctrine of Christ is central to Christian Theology and the Church in India takes special care to avoid any false teaching that may creep into the Church as a result of the indiscreet use of a prior similar conception. The fact that the word 'Avatara' is already in use is no argument for its continuance. The Church in India should feel free to coin a new word expressing the idea that God became man.

We have been discussing the problem of accommodation to prior similar conceptions in Hinduism, especially in the use of the word 'Avatar' in connection with our teaching on Christology. We have seen that there are certain advantages as well as disadvantages in the use of the term and that the Church in India must take special care to avoid any possible misinterpretation of the Doctrine of Christ by very clearly defining the term 'Avatar'. We have also seen in the light of the discussion that on account of the possibility of misunderstanding of this vital doctrine, it would be advisable to discontinue the use of the term avatar in Christological discussions. The problem of accommodation to prior similar conception in India today throws considerable light on the problems which the early Church had to face. The primitive church from very earliest days had worshipped Jesus as Lord and the title could make an immediate appeal to the religious aspiration of the Graeco - oriental world; to the devotees of many pagan cults the ascription of the title 'Kyrios' to Jesus meant that he was one who claimed their worship and

their loyalty.

The use of the title Kyrios was one of the earliest ways in which the Church tried to solve the problem of making contact with the gentile mind, but it led to a more serious difficulty. In the pagan world there were 'lords many' and "gods many" and there was a danger that in the prevailing religious hospitality Christ should be accepted into the pantheon or even identified with other "lords" in a new Syncretism. So the Christian missionaries had to define in some way the relationship of Christ the Lord to all those other deities that made claims to lordship. This they tried to do in three ways.

They dismissed pagan religions as idolatry (Acts 14:15), 17:29). Secondly, they made an assertion of the unity of God (1 Cor. 8:6) And thirdly, they proclaimed that the age to come had already broken in upon the present age and that Christ had already vanquished the principalities and powers, who were in revolt against God (1 Cor. 15:25). It was in this way that the Church defined the relationship of Christ the Lord to all other deities. My point here is to show how the Church made use of a word which was in common use, namely, "Lord" and how the Church defined the relationship of the Christian concept of the 'lord' as applied to Jesus Christ, in her attempt at accommodation to a prior similar conception. One of the important prior similar conceptions we have to consider in this connection is the idea of the 'Logos'. Our

problem of communication of the Christian message to the Hindus in his language and thought-forms brings to mind the serious problem the Early Church had to face when it came in contact with Greek philosophy. Our missionary experience in India illuminates the problems connected with the development of Logos Christology.

Let us briefly consider the philosophic background of the concept of the Logos. To those who had been educated in Greek philosophy a belief in one God presented no difficulties, for the whole course of philosophy had been an attempt to discover the unity behind the plurality of nature. But to the philosopher 'Theos' had come to mean something very different from what it meant to the Jew or the Christian. "'Theos' was the rational principle or pattern underlying the manifold phenomena of the sensible world, the universal within the particular. The divine Logos of the Stoic, for example was but the universal counterpart of the logos or rational faculty which is found in human nature. (Sen. Ep 65. 24)" (161)

The word 'Logos' has an extremely extensive range of meaning. The Stoics distinguished the 'Logos' in the mind' and 'the uttered logos', - i.e. "thought" and 'word' "Behind it (Logos) lies the idea of that which is rationally ordered, such as 'proportion' in mathematics or what we call 'law' in nature". (162)

(161) G.B. Caird. The Apostolic Age. p.100

(162) C.H. Dodd. The Fourth Gospel. p.262

It is not necessary for our present purpose to trace the history of the Logos - concept backward through the history of Greek philosophy to its alleged source in Heraclitus (who, it appears, may not have meant what the Stoics and early Christian commentators supposed him to mean). It is also alleged that the Logos idea has its antecedents in Egyptian or Iranian religion.

Philo of Alexandria held that the Stoics were right in finding in Logos the principle both of reality and of knowledge and that they were wrong in identifying Logos with God for the Logos proceeded from God. Philo was familiar with Wisdom theology, according to which God first created wisdom and then through her created the world. We see in Philo an attempt to understand Logos in terms of Wisdom.

According to Philo the Logos is the image of God, and His Seal stamped upon creation. In personal metaphor, Logos is described as the first born Son of God. Logos is the medium of the creation and government of the world. It is not only transcendent in the mind of God, but also imminent in the universe which was created through it. It is 'the captain and steersman of the universe'. It is the agent of God's gift to the world. It is set by God over his flock like the vicegerent of a King. In all respects the Logos is the medium of intercourse between God and this world. (163)

"Logos in Greek philosophy" says Paul Tillich, "designates

the reasonable word which grasps being itself, its true, essential nature, its form and structure. The word, in order to do so must carry the truth of things in itself; being and the speaking of being or being and the thought in which the being is grasped are the same. Reason in things and reason in mind are identical. This universal reason, which is objective in things and subjective in the human mind is called Logos". (164)

The Logos conception was a distinctive feature of Greek philosophy. This idea of logos, which is 'reason in things and reason in mind' ^{is} ~~and~~ the organ of communication between the Supreme source of all being and the universe. When the Christian teachers came across this concept they seized upon it eagerly. "Here" they said "is the same fundamental truth as we are trying to expound. This is our Christ, our word made flesh, 'by whom all things were made'. Our Christ, then, need not be foolishness to you Greeks. Your own greatest thought reaches out to the truth. But the Logos you postulate has been revealed in Jesus. He is the Christ. He is the Logos".(165) Principal Slater, who was a Missionary in Burma and India, points out how the missionaries striving to express their faith in a foreign language and in terms from another religion with which they are imperfectly acquainted know the danger of such a situation. The borrowed term may

(164) Paul Tillich -- The Protestant Era. p.29

(165) R.H.L. Slater. God of the Living. p.270

have a meaning to the converts which the missionary may not know. When a new word is brought to the service of the Church, it may distort the truth or fail to give full expression to the original idea. More than this, it may bring with it associations incompatible with the new faith.

We have been considering the advisability of using the Avatar conception in our interpretation of Christology in India. It is a very similar problem that we see in ^{the} discussion about Logos Christology in the Early Church. In Christian thought Christ was the manifestation of divine activity in the world. In Greek philosophical thought, the Logos was the substitute for this activity.

Of course there is a difference of emphasis. Behind the Christian belief in Christ was the belief in a living personal God. Behind the conception of the Logos was the concept of the "One" unchangeable. This philosophical conception of the One, remote and apathetic, influenced not only pagan philosophers but also some leading teachers of the Church like Origen.

We shall now pass on to an examination of the development of the Logos Christology in the Early Church. Let us begin with the Apologists.

A reader of the Apologists cannot but be struck with the remarkable difference between the forms in which they state Christian doctrine and the phraseology of the New Testament. This change can be historically accounted for by the new

environment into which the Christian message was carried. Christianity responded to its new surroundings by adapting the terminology used in its preaching to the Gentile modes of thought. Graeco-Roman thoughts and words were taken up and incorporated in the missionary propaganda.

The most important of the early Apologists was Justin Martyr. He insisted that Christ came from God. He did not identify Jesus with God. Justin was not a dualist as many Platonists of his day were, but he agreed with the Platonists in conceiving of God as a transcendent being, who could not possibly come into contact with the world of men and things. To suppose that he was born of a woman and finally died upon the cross seemed absurd. This, however, did not prevent him from thinking of Christ as a divine being, but he could never identify Christ with the supreme God. "To have admitted that Christ was one of the number of divine beings like Gods of the Greek pantheon and that he had come on his own authority and initiative, would have been to admit that the revelation he brought had no peculiar worth and was not the supreme philosophy as Justin insisted it was".(166)

Justin speaks of Jesus Christ as the only Son of God. "Moreover, the Son of God called Jesus, even if only a man by ordinary generation, yet on account of His wisdom, is worthy to be called the Son of God".(167) Jesus Christ is the only

(166) McGiffert. A History of Christian Thought. p.108

(167) The First Apology of Justin. 22 The Ante-Nicene Fathers. p.170

proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His word and first begotten, and power".(168) Justin evidently thought of the Spirit as the Spiritual nature of God in which both God and Christ shared. "It is wrong, therefore, to understand the Spirit and the power of God as anything else than the Word, who is also the first born of God, as the afore-said prophet Moses declared", (169) Jesus Christ is also called the Word or Logos. "But since they (law-givers and philosophers) did not know the whole of the Word, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves".(170) "For next to God we worship and love the Word who is from the unbegotten and ineffable God, since also he became man for our sakes".(171)

It is pointed out that generally speaking the Apologists used the term Logos as "a certain rational power". "Their doctrine of the Logos falls short of the genuinely Christian estimate of Christ. It is not God that manifests Himself in Christ, but the Logos, a depotentiated God, a God who as God is subordinate to God Most High".(172) Mackintosh says that "Justin may be said to have anticipated Arius", as moving too much on the cosmological plane". And when Athanasius came to the discussion a century later, he was forced to put Logos Christology aside".(173)

(168) IBID

23 IBID p.170

(169) IBID

33 IBID p.174

(170) The Second Apology of Justin. 10 Ante-Nicene Fathers.P191

(171) The Second Apology of Justin. 13 Ante-Nicene Fathers.P193

(172-3)Mackintosh. Person of Jesus Christ. p.144

Irenaeus. Irenaeus starts from the historic Jesus, the God-man, not from the Cosmic Logos, and his central problem is why did Christ descend?(174) Our Lord passed through every age of human life. "Not despising or evading any condition of humanity". "He came to save all through means of himself - all I say, who through Him are born again to God -- infants, and children, and boys and youth and old men".(175)

Irenaeus expressed clearly that in Christ very God himself has come to us. "Through the Word Himself who had been made visible and palpable was the Father shown forth, although all did not equally believe in Him; but all saw the Father in the Son: for the Father is the invisible of the Son, but the Son the visible of the Father.(176) "For His thought is Logos, and Logos is Mind, and Mind comprehending all things is the Father Himself".(177)

Irenaeus had no need of a Logos to mediate between God and the Universe. His interest was not philosophical. His use of the expression 'incarnation of Logos' rather than of God is only due to tradition.

- (174) Irenaeus Against Heresies. II 14:7. Ante-Nicene Fathers. P378
- (175) Irenaeus Against Heresies. II 22:4. Ante-Nicene Fathers. p. 391
- (176) Irenaeus Against Heresies. IV 6:6. Ante-Nicene Fathers.
- (177) Irenaeus Against Heresies. II 28:5. Ante-Nicene Fathers.

In the doctrine of 'The Two Hands of God' Irenaeus expounds the connection of God with the world and provides a rationale of the Incarnation. "This seems in strict logic to preclude the use of the Logos-doctrine", says Lawson, "for if the living God be in intimate contact with the world of men one may well ask what need there is for a mediator of creation and revelation. On the other hand, the Logos-theology is in Christian tradition the language typical of precisely those who have felt the need of such a mediator. A strong feeling that an intermediary between God and the world is necessary is presumptive evidence that consciously or unconsciously God is being defined as the eternal and impassible Being remote and unmoved, rather than the living God".(178)

To Justin Logos was a hypostasied Divine Reason. On the other hand Irenaeus held that Logos was the revealed God. When Irenaeus speaks of Logos or of God the Son, he always thinks of Jesus, and therefore does not identify the divine element in Christ with the world-idea or reason of God.

According to Irenaeus Christ was no human frame inhabited by a higher divine presence. He was both Logos and man. In Christ very God Himself had come to us, and not only a portion of the Godhead or an inferior God. Irenaeus insisted that it was one and the same person who created the world, was born as man, and suffered and ascended to heaven, still man as well as God.

Irenaeus starts from the historical Jesus and not from the Cosmic Logos. He says that the Logos became man and that Jesus Christ was both man and God. It can be truly said that Irenaeus laid the foundation of Catholic Church and Catholic theology.

The Alexandrian Theologians. In the time of Clement, Alexandria was the most important Greek city in the Empire and the intellectual metropolis of the Hellenistic world. It was in a world filled with religious and philosophic influence that we should picture Clement and Origen. The Gnostics had brought theology into general disrepute. Clement differed from the heretical Gnostics in making Christianity primarily a matter of faith, not of knowledge.

Clement shared in the faith of Irenaeus and Tertullian. With all his admiration for Greek philosophy and intense sympathy with its noble and inspiring characteristics, he never wavered in the conviction that Christ had brought the highest and best revelation of God. Clement interprets this revelation by means of the Logos doctrine. This has led to a partial depersonalizing of the historic Saviour. Clement's two diverse conceptions of God, one religious and the other philosophical, seem quite inconsistent with each other. But he tried to reconcile them in his doctrine of the Logos. "In the Logos the abstract becomes concrete, the absolute enters into relations, and God creates the world and reveals himself to men".
(179)

Clement's idea of the Logos was made up of Platonic and Stoic elements. It is a combination of the Platonic 'supreme idea' or 'archetype' and Stoic idea of 'seminal principle' or 'resident forces' which constitute all life. So Logos is both above and in the world of men and things. He is at once transcendent and immanent. God, in Himself is so transcendent that neither creation nor revelation is possible to Him nor can men attain to a knowledge of Him. But through the Logos and the Logos alone, God creates all things that exist and through the Logos he makes himself known to men and is known by ~~them~~ (180) It is the Logos that Governs the world. "The Logos is divine; he is God himself, not a secondary or a subordinate divinity. ~~Clement refers to him as~~ Clement-~~He also~~ calls him 'the truly most manifest God'. But although the Logos is God he is not the absolute; rather he is God in relations".(181) It is through Clement that the philosophical absolute entered Christian theology.

The Word came into the world fashioning his own humanity. Our Lord is described as God and man. "This Word then, the Christ, the cause of both our being at first (He was in God) and of our well-being, this very word has now appeared as man, He alone being both, both God and man".(182) The Lord's

(180) Stromateis 11: 16

(181) McGiffert. A History of Christian Thought. p.205

(182) Exhortation to the Heathen.1; Ante-Nicene Fathers.
Vol: 11. p.173

humanity is pictured as a garment, "He ate not for the sake of the body, which was kept together by a holy energy, but in order that it might not enter into the mind of those who were with him to entertain a different opinion of Him". "He appeared in a phantasmal shape (). Statements like this bring element to the verge of docetism; nevertheless he was assured of the unity of Christ.

Origen (185 - 254) a pupil of Clement is supremely the great name among the divines of the Christian East. In the second chapter of his book De principiis, Origen calls attention to the distinction between the divine nature of Christ, by virtue of which he is the only begotten Son of God, and the human nature which he assumed when he appeared on earth. The Son of God was needed for creation. There must be an intermediate step in the process from absolute unity to the multiplicity and complexity of the created universe.

Origen marked the distinction between God and the Son of God. The former he called ὁ Θεός and the latter 'θεός! (183) He says "God is the father of His only begotten Son, who was born indeed of Him". (184) Both God and the Son of God are alike divine but the latter is subordinate to the former and in some sense less than he. "And although we may call Him a 'second' God, let men know that by the term 'second God' we mean nothing else than a virtue capable of including all other

(183) McGiffert. IBID p.217. (Quoted De Principiis. l 2:2)

(184) Origen De Principiis l.2. Ante Nicene Fathers. Vol:1V. P.246

virtues, and a reason capable of containing all reason.
 Whatsoever which exists in all things".(185) Again Origen calls him the Son of God's Will. "Nor, seeing He is called the Son of (His) love, will it appear absurd if in this way He be called the Son of (His) will".(186) God and the Son are of one substance not of different substances as God and the created universe are. Being generated by God, the Son possesses the divine nature. Son is also eternal because he is always and continuously produced. "The Father did not beget the Son once for all, and let him go after he was begotten but he is always begetting him".(187) Origen's phrase,"the eternal generation" of the Son has become classic in Christian theology.

Origen was very much interested in the Incarnation."With respect to His having descended among men, He was 'previously in the form of God'.....He becomes as it were flesh, speaking with a literal voice, until he who has received Him in such a form is able, through being elevated in some slight degree by the teaching of the Word, to gaze upon what is, so to speak, His real and pre-eminent appearance".

The divine Logos could not directly assume a human body "it being impossible for the nature of God to intermingle with a body without an intermediate instrument".(189) Therefore the Logos united with one of the created spirits who by his pre-eminent virtue had proved himself worthy of the honour. This

- (185) Origen Contra Celsum 5:39. Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol:1V p561
 (186) Origen De Principiis. 4:28. Ante-Nicene Fathers. Vol:1V p376
 (187) Origen's Homily 1X on Jeremiah. Sect. 4 (Quoted by McGiffert (p.219)
 (188)
 (189) De Principiis. Bk. 2:3 Ante Nicene Fathers Vol. 4 p.282

Spirit, joined to the divine Logos, took on a human body, thus becoming a human soul, and advanced step by step until he attained complete divinity. This person is known as the Son of God. Origen uses the term 'Son of God' in two senses, to denote the Logos, divine from all eternity, and the human being who became divine by a life of perfect virtue.

Many of his opinions failed to secure approval and Origen was condemned, by more than one council, centuries after his death, despite his sharp distinction between the faith necessary to be believed and ideas that might be deduced from it.

The Heresy of Arius. Arius was more of a nationalist than a mystic and his controlling interest was intellectual rather than religious. Arius maintained that God is one in substance and in person. His nature cannot be shared by any other being. The Son of God was made out of nothing to be God's agent in the creation of the world. He is not eternal. He was created in time by an act of God's will. God is immutable; the Son of God is subject to change. The Son is the first of all creatures and belongs to a higher order of being than any others, whether angels or men. He became incarnate in Jesus Christ, being born of a virgin and taking on human flesh but not a human soul. The soul of Christ was the Logos; only his body was human.

Arianism introduced a mythological element into Christianity. Prestige points out that "Arius, though he recognized the divine Son as an inferior deity, reduced the Logos to an

impersonality; and by worshipping Christ whom he regarded as a demi-God of different substance from that of the Father, he put himself in the same position as the Polytheists".(190) We see that behind all expression of Arian thought there was the hard and glittering syllogism that God is impassible, Christ, ————— was passible; therefore Christ was not God.

Athanasius. In his book entitled "On the Incarnation of the Word of God", Athanasius declared that God Himself entered human history. The immortal Word took human flesh and gave his mortal body for us all. If Christ were not truly God and truly man, how can we be certain of Salvation? "We men should not have profited had the Logos not been true flesh anymore than if he had not been truly and by nature the Son of God". (191)

Athanasius drew a sharp distinction between the nature of God and the nature of man. He condemned Arianism as Polytheism. He taught that in Jesus Christ there was incarnate the very nature of God himself. It was the Son and not the Father who became incarnate in Christ. In becoming man Christ assumed not only a human body, as Arius claimed, but integral human nature, soul as well as body.

The Nicene Council. The Emperor Constantine summoned a General Council which met at Nicea in 325. Bishops alone formed the Council. Arius and Athanasius were present but took no public

(190) G.L. Prestige. God in Patristic Thought. p.147

(191) Athanasius - Second oration against Arians - 70. (P.253 Quoted by McGiffert).

part in the deliberations. At the Council an attempt was made to draw up a doctrinal statement which should represent the mind of the Church on the matters in dispute. The Arians presented their Creed, but it was rejected by the Council. Eusebius of Caesarea proposed the adoption of the Baptismal symbol of his own Church in Caesarea. The symbol ran as follows: "We believe in one God, Father Almighty, the maker of all things visible and invisible, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Logos of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Son only-begotten, first born of every creature, before all ages from Father begotten, through whom also all things were made, who for our salvation became flesh and lived among men and suffered and rose again the third day and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge the quick and the dead. And we believe also in one Holy Spirit".(192)

This symbol was revised and accepted by the Council. The term 'Logos', possibly on account of the ambiguity that had long attached to it, was omitted. The Words 'first born of every creature, before all ages from the Father begotten' were also omitted, since it had an Arian sound. The statement "Was made man" for "lived among men" was substituted with the evident purpose of strengthening the teaching about incarnation. The following words were added "true God from true God",

"not made" after "begotten", "from the substance of the Father" (the most important change according to Athanasian teaching) and "of one substance with the Father". All these changes were made with a view to make clear the reality of the Son's deity. The enlarged creed shut out Arianism completely.

Constantinople. The matter did not end at Nicea. The new Creed was not popular. *Σπουδαίος* was a new word. It was unscriptural. It was also felt that the new Creed was Sabellian in doctrine. ~~Athanasius was~~. Other Creeds were put forth, not by a General Council but by a powerful group. The struggle continued for fifty years.

"Our present Nicene Creed, which is not identical with the one adopted at the Council of Nicea was formerly supposed to be a revision of that Creed framed at the Council of Constantinople in 381.(193) Scholars are now agreed that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is not the revision by a Council. It was probably the baptismal symbol of the Church of Jerusalem. In its revised form it was apparently presented to the Council of Constantinople by Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem. The Anti-Arian Anathemas are omitted, and it is more comprehensive than the original Nicene Creed.

We have been following the development of the Doctrine of Christ in response to prior similar conceptions both in India and in the Early Church. We have reviewed the attitude of the Church to non-Christian religions. Then we examined the merits of similar prior conceptions in Hinduism, especially the concept of 'Avatar', and have seen that there are advantages and disadvantages in using the word in our Christological discussions.

We then passed on to examine the development of the Doctrine of Christ in response to the challenge of a prior similar concept, namely, Logos. The Fathers of the Church tried to build up a Christology based on the Logos conception, but the Church refrained from using the term on account of the ambiguity that had been long attached to it. At the Council of Nicea the term 'Logos' was omitted from the Creed.

Our present situation in India helps us to appreciate the gravity of the situation which the early Church had to face. In each case, Logos and Avatar, we have a background of beliefs concerning divine nature and human nature. In Hindu thought 'Avatar' was the manifestation of divine activity. In Greek philosophical thought Logos was the substitute for this activity. And in Christian thought Christ was the manifestation of God's activity in the world. When we come across a similar concept in Hinduism, we have to point out clearly the difference in meaning. We have to show the relationship of the Christian teaching of the Incarnation to the Hindu idea of Avatar.

Just as Irenaeus started his interpretation of the Incarnation with the Jesus of history, we too should stress the historic

nature of our faith. Then we have to point out that even the noblest declaration of the purpose of the Avatar as given in the Gita falls far short of the Christian teaching. Incarnation is not only God 'coming down from above' but it is the teaching of God becoming man. The Christian Gospel is based on an event which happened in history. In meeting the challenge of non-Christian religions, the Church in India feels that she has to base her teaching on the life of our Lord, as recorded in the Bible. This experience helps us to understand the position taken by Irenaeus and his emphasis on the historic character of the Christian faith. As we have already seen Catholic theology starts with the Biblical theology of Irenaeus.

The stress on the historic revelation of God in Jesus Christ is the answer to syncretism and prior conceptions in India. This stress on the historic character of our faith, in the light of Biblical revelation was the answer given by the early Church to the challenge of Gnosticism and philosophic speculations. Our experience in India throws considerable light on the circumstances under which the Doctrine of Christ was formulated in the early Church in answer to the challenge of Gnosticism and prior similar conceptions.

Chapter 4

Conclusion.

In this concluding chapter I propose to sum up the discussion and show how our missionary experience in modern India throws light on the development of the Doctrine of Christ in the Church of the early centuries, especially in the ante-Nicene Church. I have pointed out that Christianity is not a system but a life. Christian doctrine grows out of the life of the Church.

I have pointed out that the essential content of the Christian faith is the same for all times, places and circumstances. It is the expression, interpretation and application that must grow out of, and meet, the actual situation. We have seen in our study that it is quite necessary to bear this fact in mind.

In Chapter 2 we have seen a comparative study of the situation in India with that of the Church of the early centuries. While pointing out the similarity between the two situations we have also seen that there are certain significant contrasts. We have seen that political unity was provided by the Roman Empire, and a common language (Greek) was a real help for the spread of the Gospel. So it was in India, that the British Government gave to the people of India a central administrative system, a common language and a sense of unity. In the Republic of India, too, we have a strong central Government, and a common language (now English and Hindi) and a real sense of unity.

While there are many substantial differences between the circumstances and environment surrounding the early Church and the Church in modern India, the political, social and religious situations in both cases have been very similar. Our experience in India to-day helps us to appreciate the challenge of the circumstances under which

the early Christians had to live and proclaim the Gospel in their non-Christian surroundings.

Then we passed on to consider the effect of the situation on the interpretation of the Doctrine of Christ. We examined the biblical foundation of the Doctrine of Christ, and found that the foundation of the whole Christian faith is Christology. It is quite necessary to define clearly the relationship of the Jesus of history to the eternal God.

On the basis of our study of New Testament writers we have seen that no sharp differences exist among the writers of the New Testament. We see that there is an evolution of thought in the New Testament, and we are assured that they are talking about one and the same person.

In the pages of the New Testament we come across two different - and in a measure - opposite lines of thought. On the one hand we see Jesus not only as an instrument but also as a personal agent of God's great act of love, manifested in the redemption of the world. On the other hand we see that Jesus was pictured as the perfect representative of human righteousness and obedience to God's will. When we consider these two points of view side by side we are confronted with the theological problem which the Church defined as two natures in one person. After following the trend of thought concerning the person of Christ we have seen how the interpretation of the Person of Christ was made necessary as an answer to the challenge of the various schools of religion and philosophy confronting both the Church in modern India and the early Church. It is important to note that the necessity

to develop and state the doctrine arose only because evangelistic work was undertaken by the Church.

In our discussions we have seen that the attitude of the Hindu mind has resulted in a syncretistic view of life. The belief that all religions are in essence one, has almost become an axiom of thought. If by the term 'Christ' we mean the universal religious principle, the Hindus are prepared to think of Jesus as the hope of the world.

We have observed that syncretism takes various forms. In some cases we see the unconscious acceptance of certain values and practices by one religion from others, and in some other cases there is the conscious appropriation of the practices or values. We also come across cases of some religions formed by the purposive blending of elements taken from various sources. These are all characteristics similar to Gnosticism.

The Church in India meets the challenge of syncretism by reasserting and emphasising the facts of history upon which it stands or falls. The special revelation which Christianity claims to possess was mediated through a long process of events in Jewish history which culminated in Jesus Christ.

The challenge of syncretism in India brings to mind the challenge of Gnosticism in the early Church. Both syncretism in India and Gnosticism in the early Church advocated escape from the cosmic machinery, a way of salvation from a world which is evil and illusory. Both are regarded as a way of salvation by knowledge. Again both systems represent a 'flowing together' of religious and philosophic doctrines. Finally, both syncretism and Gnosticism have tried to compromise with Christianity. They are prepared to incorporate some elements from Christianity

into their own systems.

After a consideration of the development of the doctrine in response to the challenge of non-Christian religions, we passed on to consider specially the development of the Doctrine in response to the challenge of similar prior conceptions in Hinduism.. We have been following the development of the Doctrine of Christ in response to prior similar conceptions both in India and in the early Church. We have reviewed the attitude of the Church to non-Christian religions. Then we examined the merits of similar prior conceptions in Hinduism, especially the concept of 'Avatar', and seen that there are advantages and disadvantages in using the word in our Christological discussions.

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The Church's contact with non-Christian religions tends to produce two different reactions on the theological thinking and missionary approach. Bishop Appasamy of the Church of South India and a group of Indian Christian leaders feel that the Church in India should make all possible efforts to relate the Christian message to the prior conception and thought forms of Hinduism and take advantage of the religious and cultural heritage of India.

This point of view is becoming very popular in India. My purpose in this study is to point out clearly the dangers involved in such an attempt. Our missionary experience in India brings to mind the attempts made by the Fathers of the early Church, especially Clement of Alexandria and Origen. The other reaction on the Church as a result of its contacts with non-Christian religion is an attitude of separatism. In our non-Christian surroundings we feel that we should avoid any

possible misinterpretation of the Christian message. We can do this only if we base our teaching on the Holy Scriptures.

This reminds us of the position taken up by Irenaeus in his fight against Gnosticism. The Biblical Theology of St. Irenaeus is a great guide to the Church in India. Of course our situation in India, and a widespread feeling that the Church in India should be built up on Biblical foundations, is influenced by the efforts of the Anglo-Saxon and continental scholars.

In this study I have endeavoured to point out that, in spite of certain contrasts, the situation in India to-day is very similar to the one in which the early Church found herself. While the social evils and idolatrous practices in contemporary non-Christian religions of India deserve the condemnation of the Church, we have no right to assume an attitude of hostility to other religions.

While acknowledging the fact that our Lord provides the fulfilment of the highest aspirations of the Hindus, we have to take special care in making use of prior similar concepts, especially the concept of the 'Avatar' in our interpretation of Christology. As I have already pointed out this term 'Avatar' is very widely used in the Church in India to translate the word 'Incarnation'. So this can be used as a point of contact, and then we have to define very clearly the relationship of the Lord Jesus Christ to this prior concept in Hinduism.

However, I am convinced that the position taken up by St. Irenaeus is the one we have to take up in India, and to build up our theology on Biblical foundations. I am also convinced that our missionary experience in India throws considerable

light on the problems connected with the development of
the Doctrine of Christ.

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