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A COMPARISON OF THE TEACHINGS
IN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

By
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A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SACRED THEOLOGY
in
The Biblical Seminary of New York

New York, N. Y.
April 2, 1949

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Dedicated may this thesis be
To Blossom,
My wife, who shares with me
Life's ambitions,
With our hope in Christian missions.

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INTRODUCTION

A COMPARISON OF THE TEACHINGS
IN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem.

There are two religious masterpieces, representing two different religions which vie with each other for authority. The Gospel of John is of the religion of Christianity, and the Bhagavad Gita is of the highest form of Hinduism. The problem is to make a comparative study of their respective teachings.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine all the teachings of the two books, and compare them. Therefore, only the three main doctrines of God, man, and salvation will be compared. Only that matter which is relevant to the comparison and which is most important, will be treated.

B. Justification of the Problem.

The reason for choosing these two books is made evident through some quotations. First, there are quotations concerning the Gospel of John which show how this Gospel is significant for comparing it to a Hindu scriptural work.

"It is the experience of many missionaries that it is the most acceptable of the Christian Scriptures to thoughtful Asiatic minds, alike in India and the Far East."

"The moral law of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount

appeals more to the ordinary Indian mind; but to the Vedantist and to all inclined to mysticism St. John's Gospel appeals far more than any other part of Scripture; indeed they say they understand it better than we do."¹

Secondly, there are quotations concerning the Bhagavad Gita which show its high standing.

"There is no Hindu Scripture so beloved in India as the Bhagavad-gita, or, to give it its full name, the Bhagavad-gitopanishad, and none which is accepted as so typical of Indian religion at its best."²

"Hindus take the oath on it in law courts to-day; and its spiritual influence has nowhere been better expressed than by Ghandi, who is probably the greatest spiritual force of our time: 'When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the Bhagavad-gita, and find a verse to comfort me, and immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the Bhagavad-gita.'"³

Not only is the problem of utmost importance to Christian missionaries to India who try to convert Hindus to Christianity, but it is also a problem of increasing importance here in the United States. The Vedanta Societies in the United States founded by Swami Vivekananda are continually teaching their doctrines based on the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu Scriptures. The Theosophical Society also draws some of its inspiration from the Bhagavad Gita and other Hindu Scriptures. Besides these

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1. K. Saunders; The Gospel For Asia, A Study of Three Religious Masterpieces: Gita, Lotus, and Fourth Gospel, p. 22.
2. Ibid., p. 20.
3. Ibid., p. 21.

organized societies there are individuals who adhere to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, "President of the American Physical Society, chairman of the technical advisers to the Atomic Energy Commission, and one of the world's top theoretical physicists,"¹ reads the Bhagavad Gita in the original Sanskrit, and keeps a worn copy of it in a prominent place in his Princeton study. On the explosion of the atomic bomb at Los Alamos, "Oppenheimer recalls that two lines of the Bhagavad-Gita flashed through his mind: 'I am become death, the shatterer of worlds.'"² Can the Gospel of John offer more to the brilliant mind of a man than the Bhagavad Gita? There are perhaps thousands who read this article in Time from which the above quotations were made; and many more thousands read of Gandhi's death, and his relationship to the Bhagavad Gita.³ It is the reading of this article on Gandhi that gave the idea for this thesis. Therefore, the problem is of paramount importance not only to religious leaders, but also to individuals.

C. Method of Procedure.

The method of procedure in each chapter will be first to make a systematic study of the teaching in the Gospel of John, then a similar systematic study of the

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1. Time Magazine, November 8, 1948, p. 70.
2. Ibid., p. 77.
3. Time Magazine, February 9, 1948, pp. 25,26.

teaching in the Bhagavad Gita. The two teachings will then be compared and a summary made.

D. Sources of Study.

The source material will be primarily the Gospel of John, and the Bhagavad Gita, with the systematic approaches made to them by such authors as Lowrie, Pratt, and J. Ritchie Smith on the doctrine of the Gospel of John, and Pandya on the Bhagavad Gita. Swami Nikhilananda's translation of the Bhagavad Gita with notes, comments and introduction, has been relied upon for quotations and explanation.

CHAPTER I
A COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD
IN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

CHAPTER I

A COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE OF GOD IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

A. Introduction

The teachings of the Gospel of John and the Bhagavad Gita are primarily centered around their conceptions of God. The Gospel and the Gita alike set about to "relate the Beloved Hero¹ to the Eternal, to show that the Eternal is like him, and that his saving grace avails for all who turn to him."²

Since then the doctrine of God is basic to these two books, a comparative study of their teachings ought to begin with a consideration of their theology.³ It is the purpose of this chapter, therefore, to approach these works in view of the following questions: What is the view of God found in John's Gospel and in the Bhagavad Gita? Is the God of the Gospel of John the same as the God of the Bhagavad Gita, or different?

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1. In the Gospel of John it is Jesus the Son of God, and in the Bhagavad Gita it is Krishna.
2. K. Saunders: The Gospel For Asia, A Study of Three Religious Masterpieces: Gita, Lotus, and Fourth Gospel, p. 80.
3. Here theology is used broadly to include the Incarnations: Christ and Krishna.

Is Christ the same as Krishna? Is Krishna Christ?¹ Or, do Krishna and Christ contradict each other? Are their works and teachings similar or divergent? Do these two books give evidence sufficient to amalgamate the religion of John's Gospel, and the religion of the Bhagavad Gita into one religion; or do they indicate the two religions to be opposed diametrically to each other on the basis of their doctrine of God?

Hence it is the intent of this chapter to make first a study of the teachings of the Gospel of John concerning God. The next step will be to make a similar study in the Bhagavad Gita. Then when both doctrines are thus systematically treated, a comparison will be made of them with final conclusions.

B. God, According to the Gospel of John

In the Gospel of John there are several names ascribed to Divinity. In brief, they may be summarized under the following three headings: God the Father, the Son of God,² and the Holy Spirit. The way that the Gospel treats these indicates three distinct persons, yet they are so identified as to postulate the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.

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1. W. T. Elmore: Is Krishna Christ?
2. The problem of whether Jesus as Son of God may be called God the Son will be discussed later. Post, p. 11.

Since the Gospel of John expresses its doctrine of God under the aforementioned aspects, these will serve as the basis for the following discussion.

1. God the Father.

a. His Personal Existence.

According to the Gospel of John, God exists as a Personal Spirit. While Jesus was talking to the Samaritan woman at the well, He disclosed that God was Spirit, and that any who would worship Him would have to do so "in spirit and truth."¹ This Jesus stated in a context which indicated a belief at that time that God could only be worshipped rightly in certain places.² Hence Jesus says that God is Spirit, implying that God is not material or corporeal, located in any place, or out of reach of any spirit of man who wishes to commune with Him in truth.

This passage also indicates that God is a Person desiring the worship of man.³ In other words God is not impersonal or completely aloof from man. A person is one who is self-conscious, rational, and acting according to a will. As a Person, God loved the world to the extent that He actively participated in the redemption of the world.⁴ Nor could He be impersonal and yet hear and

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1. John 4:24.
2. John 4:20.
3. John 4:23.
4. John 3:16 & 5:17.

answer prayer.¹ In the Gospel of John Jesus always refers to God as a Person. The only conclusion in this respect that arises out of the study of the Gospel, is that God is a Person. As a Person, God is accessible to all who approach Him in the right manner.

b. His Attributes.²

1) Omnipresent. From the fact that God as Spirit and Person is accessible to all at all times, it may be deduced that He is omnipresent.

Yet, the Gospel of John, sometimes quoting the words of Jesus, several times indicates that God is located in heaven.³ However, heaven is not specifically defined anywhere in the Gospel. Physically or mechanically it may be a "place", and also spiritually or idealistically it may be a "place". Now, if God is a Spirit, as has been already established according to the Gospel, His house⁴ would hardly be one of physical or mechanical construction. The only alternative would be a spiritual place. Even when Jesus, looking up to heaven,⁵ prays to the Father, there is no indication that heaven is a

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1. John 11:41, 42.

2. In the Gospel of John, "The attributes of God are rather assumed than defined, and the teaching of the Old Testament is presupposed." J. R. Smith: The Teaching of the Gospel of John, p. 60.

3. John 12:28; 14:2; 17:1.

4. John 14:2.

5. John 17:13.

physical "place". Jesus would hardly look at any physical object as He prayed lest He appear to be idolatrous. When a voice came from Heaven,¹ it was still no indication that God was located in a "place". The only place from which it could come and not be connected to some physical object would be out of "heaven". Therefore, it may be concluded that heaven is a spiritual realm of perfection in which God is supreme. It is from this spiritual realm that God reveals Himself in various ways to human life.

2) Eternal. God is an eternal being. He already was before the beginning, and is eternal in the future. Jesus while praying indicated that God existed before the beginning of the world. He said, "Father, glorify thou me in thy own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made."² Jesus also indicated that God was the eternal source of life when He said, "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me."³ It is also the will of the Father that all who believe in Christ should have eternal life.⁴ Furthermore, God gives eternal life.⁵ Therefore, since God is the source of life and able to give eternal life as the living Father, He is without end.

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1. John 12:28.
2. John 17:5.
3. John 6:57.
4. John 6:40.
5. John 17:2.

3) Omnipotent. Jesus says that God "is greater than all" and no one is able to overcome Him.¹ God has power to attract men to Him;² power to keep and save men from evil;³ power to hear and answer prayer;⁴ power to do wonders and signs;⁵ power over life and death;⁶ and power of judgment⁷ wherein He honors the worthy⁸ and disposes His wrath upon the disobedient.⁹

4) Authority. Because God is omnipotent, He has authority. He presides over the "kingdom of God".¹⁰ He has angels or messengers.¹¹ He sends men,¹² Jesus Christ,¹³ and the Holy Spirit¹⁴ to reveal Himself. He gives Jesus commandment as to what to say and speak, and His commandment is eternal life.¹⁵ The commandment which Jesus gave on the authority of God is, "that you love one another as I have loved you."¹⁶ God's authority is of the nature of love and not despotism.

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1. John 10:29.
2. John 6:44.
3. John 17:11,15; 3:17; 12:27.
4. John 9:31; 11:41,42; 15:16; 16:23
5. John 3:2; 5:17; 9:3,4; 10:25,32,37,38; 14:10.
6. John 5:21,26; 6:57; 11:22; 17:2.
7. John 5:22,27; 8:16,50; 12:48.
8. John 12:26.
9. John 3:36.
10. John 3:3,5.
11. John 1:51.
12. John 1:6.
13. John 3:17.
14. John 14:26.
15. John 12:49,50.
16. John 15:12.

5) Wisdom. God is also a God of wisdom. Jesus quotes the prophets who said that all believers shall be taught of God.¹ In other words, God has supreme wisdom above all men. Jesus said that the knowledge and wisdom which He taught was given to Him by the Father.² This teaching of Jesus involves the basic wisdom of the mind and reasoning powers, and the wisdom which is expressed in words heard. In the Greek this is brought out by the two words *λόγος* and *ῥήμα*. The Greek word *λόγος* refers to the inward thought or reason³ and may therefore be understood as wisdom. The word *ῥήμα* is the spoken word or expression.⁴ Thus the spoken words uttered by those who are sent from God are the words (*ῥήμα*) of God⁵ which may be heard,⁶ and which manifest the wisdom (*λόγος*) of God which is truth.⁷ The wisdom (*λόγος*) of Jesus is that of God,⁸ and Jesus orders His life and teachings according to that truth.⁹

6) Truth. "God is true."¹⁰ Jesus heard from God the truth which He teaches.¹¹ Men are to be sanctified

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1. John 6:45.
2. John 8:28; 14:24.
3. J. M. Whiton: Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon Abridged.
4. Ibid.
5. John 3:34.
6. John 8:47.
7. John 17:17.
8. John 14:24.
9. John 8:55.
10. John 3:33; 8:26.
11. John 8:40.

in the wisdom of God which is truth.¹

7) Holy. God is holy and righteous.² He is, in other words, entirely separate from the evil and sinful elements of the universe, and working for its redemption.

8) Love. God is the God of love. As the Gospel says:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."³

The Father (God) loves the Son⁴ because of the redemptive sacrifice which Jesus was to make on behalf of those who would believe, enabling them to enter into the fellowship of God's love⁶ along with Christ, who abides in God's love.⁷

All of these attributes of God seen through the teachings of the Gospel are revealed to His glorification. Jesus came to reveal God or to glorify Him. "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do."⁸ Lazarus was raised from the dead after four days for the glory of God.⁹ In Jesus God was glorified,¹⁰ even in the face of the death on the cross:

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1. John 17:17.
2. John 17:11,25.
3. John 3:16,17.
4. John 3:35; 5:20; 15:9; 17:23.
5. John 10:17.
6. John 14:21,23; 16:27.
7. John 15:10.
8. John 17:4.
9. John 11:4,40.
10. John 13:31.

When Jesus realized that His hour for the redemptive work on the cross had come, He asked God to glorify the name of God and received the answer, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again."¹ This was especially make manifest in the glory of the resurrection.

c. His Fatherhood.

The name by which God is distinguished most often in the Gospel of John is Father. This is the name by which Jesus referred to God. "He often spoke of My Father, yet oftener of the Father."² When Jesus spoke of His relationship to God, He used the word my, but usually He spoke of the Father in the broader sense -- in reference to God's Fatherhood of man.

Lowrie says, "It was not . . . as Creator that God was Father."³ He points out that God as Father because of the creation, is not a Christian idea on the basis that "it is not capable of the depth of meaning which we find attached to God's Fatherhood in the New Testament and especially in S. John."⁴ God did create the world, but He did not "beget" it as a Father. Except as it is used in reference to Jesus, the Fatherhood of God is recognized through a process of redemption. This

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1. John 12:28.
2. J. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 69.
3. W. Lowrie: The Doctrine of Saint John, p. 64.
4. Ibid.

redemption is through belief in the Son of God,¹ whereby men may become children of God. After Jesus' resurrection, He said to His believers, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."² To those who were not believers, God was not a Father, as Jesus brought out in His discussion with the Jews who had thought that descent from Abraham made them children of God. Jesus claimed that they were of their father the devil since they rejected the Son of God.³ Therefore, God is Father of men only in a redemptive sense, or to those who are believers.

2. The Son of God.⁴

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1. John 1:12.

2. John 20:17.

3. John 8:41-44.

4. This thesis proceeds on the postulate that Jesus is the Divine Son of God, or God the Son. The objection is made that Jesus is merely a son of God as are those who are redeemed; and that Jesus is no more Divine than the human being who is awakened to the belief which redeems him. The great difference between Jesus and all other men is merely in intelligence. The answer to the objection that Jesus was not Deity may be found in the Gospel itself. When the doubting Thomas finally believed in the resurrected Jesus, he said, "My Lord and my God!" (Jn.20:28) Jesus answering him said, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." (Jn. 20:29) If Jesus did not claim Deity, He would scarcely ask men to believe in Him as God. If Thomas was wrong, Jesus would have certainly rebuked him. Further answer may be found throughout the Gospel that Jesus is Divine. Cf. Lowrie, op. cit., pp. 77-82. Cf. G. Campbell Morgan: The Gospel According to John, pp. 14-16. Cf. S. W. Pratt: The Deity of Jesus Christ According to the Gospel of John, pp. 22-25. Cf. E. F. Scott: The Fourth Gospel, pp.176-205.

The Gospel of John relates events from the life of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to dwell among men, that those who believed in Him might have life. This is the reason why the Gospel of John was written.¹ This brings to our attention that Jesus is to be believed in because of His nature, and because of His work of revelation.

a. His Nature.

1) In His Pre-existence.

John teaches that the personality of Jesus was pre-existent to the time of His incarnation.² In designating the pre-existent nature of Jesus, John uses the term *ὁ λόγος* -- the Word. *λόγος* means, "the word by which the inward thought is expressed," or "the inward thought or reason itself."² But in the prologue³ of John's Gospel, the term using the above meanings is a description of the personality of Jesus. Therefore, the personality of Jesus as the "inward thought or reason itself" is the personality of causation -- "the life."⁴ As the expression of the inward thought, the personality of Jesus is the personality of revelation -- "the light."⁵ John says that this Personality already existed at the time of the beginning; the personality of Jesus was actively along beside, face

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1. John 20:30,31.
2. John 1:14.
3. Whiston, loc. cit.
4. John 1:3,4,10.
5. John 1:4,5,9,17,18.

to face with Divinity; and Divinity was in all time the personality of Jesus.¹

Jesus also declared His own Divine pre-existence.² Most significant are the words, "before Abraham was, I am."³ The Greek word for "I am" is in the present tense, indicating eternal being, past and future. To the Jew who heard Jesus say that and who knew his scriptures,⁴ Jesus was claiming that He was the eternal God of Abraham and Moses, and of the nation to which the Jews belonged.

On the basis of the above discussion, the following deductions may be made concerning the pre-existent personality of Jesus: 1. He was Divine. 2. He was intimate with God.⁵ 3. He was before the beginning. 4. He was causative in the creation. 5. He was self-revealing. Therefore, the pre-existent Jesus was eternal and He was Divine, yet He was a distinct Person from God the Father. This is especially made clear in the event of the incarnation.

2) As the Incarnate Son of God.

John says that this Divine Personality, the Word, became flesh and dwelt on earth among men, full of grace and truth. Men saw His glory which was as of the only Son from the Father.⁶ It was this Divine Person who took on

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1. John 1:1-2.
2. John 8:58; 17:5;24.
3. John 8:58.
4. Exodus 3:13-17.
5. John 1:18.
6. John 1:14.

the form of man, and revealed¹ to man God's glory. He also became the perfect mediator between man and God² because He was Divine Person incarnate, and performed an act of redemption involving Himself.

Jesus as the Incarnate Son of God was Divine and human in a unique sense as the "only Son" of God.³

a) His Divinity.

As God Incarnate, Jesus was always conscious of His previous glory with God, yet humbled Himself to the extent that He would wash the feet of His disciples, knowing that He would again come into that eternal glory of God after His work was completed. Further, Jesus though He became human still claimed complete identity with God the Father.⁴ Though He humbled Himself to the limitations of His human body, Jesus manifested the attributes of Divinity.

Jesus clothed in the flesh was not an omnipresent spirit. Yet, His life was eternal; and having the power of resurrection from the dead, He was able to offer eternal life to all who believed in Him. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life."⁵ Jesus had power enabling Him

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1. John 1:18.
2. John 14:6.
3. John 1:18; 3:16.
4. John 5:18; 10:30; 14:8-11.
5. John 11:25.

to change water into wine;¹ to heal the sick without being in the presence of the sick one;² to heal invalids;³ to multiply five loaves and two fishes so as to feed five thousand men;⁴ power over winds and waves;⁵ power to heal one born blind;⁶ and power to raise a man from the dead several days after his death.⁷ Such power points to omnipotence.

Jesus as the personification of the Divine wisdom, the Word, came to reveal God's word, and God's plan of redemption.⁸ Jesus' wisdom was such that He had foreknowledge⁹ and tremendous insight into the lives of men.¹⁰

Jesus was the truth.¹¹

Jesus' commandment was one of love, and He set Himself as the example of love.¹²

Jesus was holy and righteous in that He was without sin. He was without sin because He always did that which was pleasing to God;¹³ men could not convict

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1. John 2:1-11.
2. John 4:46-54.
3. John 5:2-18.
4. John 6:1-14.
5. John 6:16-21.
6. John 9:1-7.
7. John 11:1-44.
8. John 14:24.
9. John 1:47-49; 11; 2:19; 18:4.
10. John 2:24,25; 4:16-19.
11. John 14:6.
12. John 13:34.
13. John 8:29.

Him of sin;¹ even the powers of evil had no power over Him.² He was crucified on false charges which were not recognized by the government, for Pilate found no crime in Him, but had Him crucified because he feared blackmail.³

S. W. Pratt sums up the attributes of Christ which indicate His Deity in these words:

"According to John's Gospel, there is given to the Son divine knowledge, divine authority, creative work, revelation of heavenly things, forgiveness of sins, superhuman works, the gift of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the power of the resurrection, the judgment of the world, and heavenly glory."⁴

The above discussion shows that it is possible in reading the Gospel of John, to understand that John is saying that Jesus is Divine, the Son of God, one with the Father, yet distinct from the Father.

b) His Humanity.

There is another title in the Gospel which is used in indicating the nature of Jesus, namely, "the Son of Man." This title shows "his human origin and oneness with man."⁵ In regard to the portrayal of Jesus in the Gospel of John, J. Ritchie Smith says, "His humanity is attested on every page."⁶

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1. John 8:46.
2. John 14:30,31.
3. John 18 & 19.
4. Pratt, op. cit., p.59.
5. Ibid., p. 60.
6. Smith, op. cit., p. 120.

It has already been noted what the Gospel has said concerning the incarnation of Jesus, that the Word took on the flesh of man.¹ This flesh was absolutely human the same as that of any other human being. The Gospel makes no mistake about this. The body, spirit, and soul of Jesus is referred to just as they would be referred to in regard to any other human person.²

Jesus took part in legitimate human activity. He became weary.³ He had hunger and thirst.⁴ He had human sympathies.⁵ He had human brothers and a human mother.⁶ He suffered and died as a man.⁷ The humanity of Jesus is a fact that cannot be explained away. Yet it must be pointed out that Jesus is both human and Divine; and the Gospel indicates no mechanical dividing line between the two natures.

b. His Work.

The primary purpose in the coming of Christ to earth in the form of man was to make known the Father⁸ and redeem the world as the "Lamb of God."⁹

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1. Ante, p. 13.
2. John 2:21; 11:33; 12:27; 13:21; 19:30,38.
3. John 4:6.
4. John 4:6,7; 19:28.
5. John 11:33,35; 13:1.
6. John 2:12.
7. John 18 & 19.
8. John 1:18.
9. John 1:29.

1) The Revelation of the Father.¹

Jesus revealed the Father in three ways, in His person, by His teaching, and through His works. In His person Jesus revealed the Father by the manifestation of Divine attributes, and by obedience to the will of God.² In His teaching, which was personal, comprehensive, certain and life-changing, Jesus revealed the Father as one whom He knew, and as one who had taught Him what to say.³ Jesus further revealed God in His works.⁴ John called them signs in his Gospel, and actually built the Gospel narrative and teaching around the witness of these signs to the revelation of God.

2) The Redemption of Believers.

God's work of redemption was completed and perfected by Jesus the Son of God and the Son of Man, who was crucified on the behalf of sinful man,⁵ was in the grave three days, and arose from the dead⁶ that man may believe in a resurrected all-powerful Savior who is able to mediate redemption for all who believe in Him, and have eternal life through One who conquered death. This is the good news which Jesus came to reveal to all

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1. Smith, op. cit., pp. 115-140.
2. John 1:14; 5:19-29; 8:29,42; 12:45.
3. John 1:18; 6:46; 8:28; 12:49-50; 15:3.
4. John 5:19; 10:37,38; 14:10,11.
5. John 19.
6. John 20.

who would accept and believe in Him.

Jesus came to save those who would believe in Him, because He came into the world with the positive purpose of saving the world, not to judge the world.¹ However, judgment is the result which unbelievers bring upon themselves because of unbelief and in this respect Jesus becomes a judge to them.² Jesus as a judge came to justify those who sought justification; but those who do not seek it or deliberately shun it do not live up to their privileges and reap judgment as a consequence of their own unbelief. Jesus offered eternal life only to those who would believe in Him.

3. God the Holy Spirit.

a. His Nature.

The first thing to be noticed about the Holy Spirit in the Gospel of John is that He is a Person. The Gospel in the original Greek gives no basis for treating the Spirit as being an impersonal It. Therefore, as a Person, the Holy Spirit³ is also known by the names or titles: ὁ παράκλητος meaning The One Called to One's Aid,⁴ The Advocate, The Counselor, The Helper or The Comforter;⁵

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1. John 3:17; 8:15; 12:46,47.
2. John 8:16; 9:39.
3. John 1:33; 14:25; 20:22.
4. Whiton, op. cit.
5. John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7,8.

Spirit of Truth;¹ and Spirit.²

The attributes of the Spirit closely identify Him with God. He is eternal,³ holy, true, the living water;⁴ and as *ὁ παρακλητος* He has power to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment,⁵ and to teach the disciples and bring to remembrance the things Jesus said.⁶

But the Gospel still more closely identifies the Holy Spirit with God than by a mere description of His attributes. God is holy, and God is a Spirit.⁷ It is from the very Person of God that the Holy Spirit issues (*παρὰ* with the genitive) and proceeds,⁸ being a gift of God,⁹ sent by God and the glorified Jesus.¹⁰ The Spirit could not be received until Jesus was glorified. In spite of the fact that Jesus says He will go away,¹¹ He states that He and the Father will come and make their home with the believer who loves Jesus and keeps Jesus' word.¹² This strongly implies that Jesus and the Father will make

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1. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13.
2. John 7:39.
3. John 14:16.
4. John 7:38,39.
5. John 16:8.
6. John 14:26.
7. John 4:24.
8. John 15:26.
9. John 3:34; 7:39; 14:16.
10. John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7; 20:22.
11. John 16:7.
12. John 14:23.

their abode with man in the Person of the Holy Spirit. Finally then it may be said of the Holy Spirit that He is completely identified with God, yet a distinct Person.

b. His Work.

The Holy Spirit was involved in the inauguration of the ministry of Jesus. Concerning Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist said, "I saw the Spirit descend as a dove from heaven, and it remained on him."¹ Jesus' baptism was the beginning of His active ministry. It was the coming of the Spirit upon Jesus that enabled John the Baptist to recognize that Jesus was the Son of God, and he therefore bore witness to that effect. Jesus was the one anointed by God, therefore, the Messiah.² John the Baptist also pointed out that Jesus was the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.³

Jesus explained to Nicodemus the necessity of rebirth of the spirit. This could be accomplished only by the Spirit of God.⁴ Therefore, the Holy Spirit is the agent of the redemptive process in the soul of the man who will open himself up to the light through belief in the Divine Son of God, and obtain eternal life. It is to such a believer that the Holy Spirit will become the

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1. John 1:32.
2. John 1:41.
3. John 1:33.
4. John 3:1-8.

source of rivers of living water.¹

In His final discourses with the disciples, Jesus gave some specific teaching regarding the work of the Holy Spirit. He calls the Holy Spirit, *ὁ παράκλητος*, indicating to His disciples that the Holy Spirit would be a comforter, advocate, counselor, and helper all in one. He would be the Spirit of truth in them.² He would teach them all things, and bring to remembrance all the things Jesus taught them.³ The Holy Spirit will also bear witness to Jesus.⁴ The Spirit was also sent to:

" . . . convince the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."⁵

The Spirit will lead believers into all truth,⁶ declare to them things that are to come,⁷ and glorify Jesus.⁸

Essentially, the Holy Spirit is to carry on the work of Jesus and complete it in a spiritual scope rather than the physical to which Jesus was limited.

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1. John 7:38,39.
2. John 14:17.
3. John 14:26.
4. John 15:26.
5. John 16:8-11.
6. John 16:13.
7. John 16:13.
8. John 16:14.

C. God, According to The Bhagavad Gita.

In the Bhagavad Gita, God is alone the Real. The universe, all physical objects, and that which we call personality (these all being relative things) are illusion (māyā). Therefore, the claim is made that the Bhagavad Gita teaches absolute idealism.¹

There is a Personal God for the benefit of the illusioned mind of man, but behind the Personal God is the Impersonal Real or Brahman, the Absolute.

Man is under the control of illusion and finds release from it when he realizes that his self (personal) is the Impersonal Self (Ātman) which is one with the Self of the Absolute -- Brahman.

Thus in the Bhagavad Gita there are essentially two views of God -- the Impersonal and the Personal. Or as one author puts it, "The supreme being is called Brahman from a transcendental point of view while he is called . . . personal God from an immanent point of view with reference to relativity."²

1. The Impersonal Brahman.

a. Impersonality.

Brahman, being the Impersonal, is often referred to as "It".³ Pandya, in referring to the teaching of the

1. M. C. Pandya: Intelligent Man's Guide to Indian Philosophy, p. 155.
2. Ibid., p. 131.
3. Bhagavad Gita 5:20; 13:12-17.

Bhagavad Gita, says that the Supreme Being is always Nirguna (Attributeless), which is Its essential nature.¹ Basically Brahman is supersensuous.²

b. Impersonal Consciousness.

Brahman is neither being nor non-being.³ By this the Bhagavad Gita means that Brahman is not an object that may be proved by the senses or words, nor an object that may not be proved by the senses or words.⁴ More simply put, Brahman is neither an object nor a non-object. In other words Brahman is something, and it boils down to being consciousness devoid of physical, sensual things, which are unreal.⁵ Therefore, it is seen that the essential nature of Impersonal Brahman aside from existence is (impersonal) consciousness.

c. The Impersonal Conscious Self.

In each creature,⁶ there is the conscious Impersonal Self (Ātman), Brahman. This Self is eternal, imperishable, incomprehensible;⁷ It doesn't kill, nor is It killed;⁸ "It is never born, nor does It ever die, nor, having once been, does It again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, It is not slain when

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1. Pandya, op. cit., p. 132.
2. Ibid., p. 131.
3. Bhagavad Gita 13:12.
4. Swami Nikhilananda: The Bhagavad Gita, p. 289.
5. Bhagavad Gita 13:13-17.
6. Ibid., 2:30.
7. Ibid., 2:18.
8. Ibid., 2:19.

the body is slain."¹ It is unmanifest and unchangeable.²

d. Timelessness.

Brahman is without beginning.³ It is written, "The unreal never is. The Real never ceases to be."⁴ It is emphasized many times that Brahman is timeless.

e. Absolute Supremacy.

Even though Brahman is beyond human sensory capacity, Brahman has to be spoken of in superlative terms which are within the realm of human sensory capacity.

Thus the word Brahman indicates the Supreme Reality, the Absolute;⁵ and Brahman is variously referred to as The Supreme;⁶ the Supreme Lord,⁷ Spirit,⁸ Goal,⁹ Bliss,¹⁰ Knowledge,¹¹ Self,¹² and by other designations. These show the emphasis upon the absolute supremacy of Brahman.

Brahman on the basis of the above discussion is the supersensuous Supreme, Eternal, Impersonal Consciousness, the only ultimate Reality.

2. The Personalized Brahman: Krishna.

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1. Bhagavad Gita 2:20.
2. Ibid., 2:25.
3. Ibid., 13:12.
4. Ibid., 2:16.
5. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 376.
6. Bhagavad Gita 5:14.
7. Ibid., 13:27.
8. Ibid., 5:4.
9. Ibid., 6:45.
10. Ibid., 6:27.
11. Ibid., 14:1,2.
12. Ibid., 6:7.

Brahman, being supersensuous, is unknowable to the human mind except as the object of metaphysical knowledge. To be known as an object of theological worship, there has to be a Personal God with attributes, who acts as the mediator between deluded man and the ultimate Reality. This Personal God is relevant to the phenomenal world of time, space and causal relations.¹ This God, in the Bhagavad Gita, is Krishna, who in essence is Brahman.

a. His Nature.

1) While Not Incarnate.

Krishna is essentially Brahman personalized. Pandya, after a study of the tenth and eleventh chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, makes the following conclusion: "Krishna is not merely transcendent but he is also immanent and conditioned thus giving a most comprehensive view of the Supreme Being."²

Krishna is Lord of the Universe. In describing his own nature He says:

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, reason, and ego: such is the eightfold division of My Nature. This is My lower nature. But, different from it, know, O mighty Arjuna, My higher nature -- the Indwelling Spirit by which the universe is sustained. Know that these two form the womb of all beings. I am the origin of the entire universe and also its dissolution. There exists nothing whatever higher

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1. Pandya, op. cit., p. 131.
2. Ibid., p. 140.

than I am, O Dhananjaya. All is strung on Me as a row of gems on a thread."¹

Krishna then, is creator, sustainer, and destroyer of the universe. Further, all creation is of the nature of Krishna as mind perceives it. Krishna is the source of everything.² More than this Krishna is everything from Supreme Brahman³ to "all-seizing Death"⁴ and to the gambling of cheats.⁵ He is the Supreme Person, Creator and Lord of all beings, God of gods, and Ruler of the world.⁶ Any attribute or manifestation applies to Krishna as Lord of the universe.⁷

After Krishna expounds Himself as He does in chapter ten, Arjuna says, "Yet do I desire to see Your *Iṣvara*-form, O Supreme Purusha."⁸ The commentary on this explains what is meant by the *Iṣvara*-form: "The divine form as possessed of omnipotence, omnipresence, infinite wisdom, infinite strength, infinite virtue, and infinite splendour."⁹ This then leads the reader to the climax of the Bhagavad Gita, the vision of the Universal Form. This is a terrible vision. It not only portrays Krishna as

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1. Bhagavad Gita 7:4-7, cf. Chapter 13.
2. Ibid., 10:2-6.
3. Ibid., 10:12.
4. Ibid., 10:34.
5. Ibid., 10:36.
6. Ibid., 10:15.
7. Ibid., 10:40.
8. Ibid., 11:3.
9. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 254.

God of gods and the whole universe,¹ but also as "world destroying Time"² and then closes exhorting Arjuna to kill his enemies for they are already killed by Krishna.³

Krishna declares that He has a lower nature (often called Prakriti) and a higher nature (often called Purusha).⁴ Prakriti is inert Nature or matter, and Purusha is Soul or Spirit in contrast to matter.⁵ Purusha is the conscious principle of the universe, the Self. Prakriti is not-self.⁶ Purusha is the connecting link between the individual personal soul⁷ and the Self (Brahman) since "It suggests personality within the impersonal."⁸ It is through the union of these two natures of Krishna that all animate or inanimate things are born.⁹ Thus there is the universe.

It must still be remembered that the philosophy of the Bhagavad Gita is absolute idealism. Therefore, the relative universe has to be explained away. This is done by the doctrine of māyā (illusion). Illusion is part of the nature of Krishna¹⁰ and is the principle by which Prakriti is understood. Therefore, since Prakriti is that

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1. Bhagavad Gita 11:13.
2. Ibid., 11:32.
3. Ibid., 11:34.
4. Ibid., 7:4-5.
5. Ibid., 13:19. Cf. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 294.
6. Pandya, op. cit., p. 145.
7. Bhagavad Gita. 13:20.
8. Pandya, loc. cit.
9. Bhagavad Gita 13:26; 7:6.
10. Ibid., 4:6; 7:14,25.

which is physical or material, all such things are illusion (this includes personality).¹

Furthermore, all action is relegated to Prakriti. Purusha, or that of Purusha which is pure soul, is not a doer.² Therefore, Krishna is not acting or working in respect to His essential Self. His work or action is due to the māyā of His Prakriti,³ which is controlled by His unattached consciousness.⁴ Prakriti, being insensible,⁵ cannot act consciously, therefore its actions are of no account for good or evil.

2) While the Incarnate Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita.

Krishna is of course eternal. He always was. In His real Self, He is Brahman.⁶ But, whenever there is lawlessness, He incarnates Himself.⁷ He said, "For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of dharma, I am born in every age."⁸ How this comes about is explained in the following verse: "Though I am unborn and eternal by nature, and though I am the Lord of all beings, yet, subjugating My Prakriti, I accept birth through My own māyā."⁹

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1. Bhagavad Gita 7:4.
2. Pandya, op. cit. p. 156.
3. Bhagavad Gita 4:14; 9:9-10.
4. Ibid., 9:10.
5. Insensible with regard to impersonal consciousness, since personal consciousness is of Prakriti.
6. Bhagavad Gita 10:3.
7. Ibid., 4:7.
8. Ibid., 4:8.
9. Ibid., 4:6.

Hence, even though in the Bhagavad Gita Krishna is introduced as Arjuna's chariot driver, which is a humbled position, it is only because of illusion that He is seen that way. In essence, Krishna is still the great Personal God which has been described above, and beyond that His essence is Brahman.

Even as incarnate, therefore, Krishna is still of the same nature and attributes as described of Him when He is not incarnated; this is made clear throughout the Bhagavad Gita. Even though at one time Krishna is in the form of man, at the same time He is the Universal Self, as seen by the divine sight of Arjuna which was given to him for that purpose.¹

b. His Work.

Krishna's mission is succinctly stated in the following words: "For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the establishment of dharma, I am born in every age."²

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna is giving the "righteous" Arjuna exhortation to go out and destroy the opposing army,³ and while doing this is establishing law (dharma) through the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita. Thus He is fulfilling His mission. The righteous man is the

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1. Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 11.

2. Ibid., 4:8.

3. Ibid., 11:26-33.

one of whom it is said, "Even though engaged in all kinds of action, a man who has taken refuge in Me reaches, by My grace, the eternal and imperishable Abode."¹ The wicked are those who do not take refuge in Krishna or who do not listen to His teaching.

As has been pointed out, Krishna came to establish dharma, the means by which the wicked would be destroyed and the good enlightened or protected.² Dharma is literally "that which holds together", law, duty, religion, righteousness.³ The dharma is embodied in the teachings of Krishna. Saunders says:

"Here the three "ways" of yoga -- karma or action, bhakti or devotion, and jnana or intuition -- are set forth and reconciled; for at the heart of the book is the revelation of Krishna as friend and savior. If all is done as to him, then all ways lead to the goal."⁴

This briefly summarizes the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita given by Krishna. Thus it may be seen that Krishna's words are those which reveal to man a way to reach extinction in Brahman, an escape from the rebirths and the delusions of Prakriti, if they will but follow any one or all three of the "ways". The question arises whether this ever is actually known to occur or not? Those of deluded minds cannot know.

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1. Bhagavad Gita 18:56.
2. Ibid., 4:8.
3. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 70.
4. Saunders, op. cit. p. 6.

D. Comparison.

1. The Personal God of the Gospel of John, and Brahman of the Bhagavad Gita.

The God of the Gospel of John is indicated to be three Persons in One Person: He is not completely supersensuous, but He is supreme, eternal, conscious, and very real. Brahman is the supersensuous Supreme, Eternal, Impersonal Consciousness, the ultimate Reality; all else is illusion.

The only reality of the Bhagavad Gita in essence is Impersonal Brahman. Any Personal God is actually an illusion in relation to relative things. Yet, in the Bhagavad Gita, the Brahmanic system makes room for the conception of a Personal God, and for this reason it can claim a universal and non-sectarian religion.¹ A student of the Bhagavad Gita says, "In worshipping these other deities they are really worshipping Krishna though unconsciously."² The worship of Krishna leads to Brahman. Therefore, the unifying principle of all truth is Brahman, the alone Real.

The Gospel of John gives no quarter to this view that the only reality is Impersonal Consciousness. To the writer of the Gospel of John all things are real from the

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1. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 140-141.

2. Ibid., p. 141.

Personality of God, who is none other than Person, to the created things of the world and its results of cause and effect.

To the one who believes in the theology of the Bhagavad Gita, those who believe in the absolute reality of a Personal God suffer under the ignorance of delusion. To the one who believes in the theology of the Gospel of John, the belief in an Impersonal Consciousness is absurd. How can there be Divine Consciousness without personality? Impersonal Consciousness is a paradox. As long as man is under delusion, he cannot conceive of Impersonal Consciousness. The implications of the Gospel of John that God is a Trinity of three Persons in One is also a paradox. Which of the two views is right depends on further revelation.

In the Gospel of John there is no higher conception of God than God the Father, a real Person. In the Bhagavad Gita, Personalized Brahman called Krishna, is in essence Impersonal and therefore that which is known as Personal is illusory. Personalized Brahman is only an accomodation to explain the relative universe. As has been pointed out previously, the one who adheres to the Bhagavad Gita could eclipse the Personal God of the Gospel of John, but the Gospel of John excludes the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita, since it recognizes no illusion. God is not an illusion, but Krishna is.

The attributes of God the Father may be said to be the same as those of Krishna, but some of the attributes of Krishna do not apply to God the Father. The God of the Gospel of John could never be thought of as the "gambling of cheats", or as "world destroying Time". The God of the Gospel is completely other than the universe and physical nature, and the individual soul. Krishna is identified with the universe and physical nature by reason of His Prakriti, His lower nature. Therefore, Krishna may be thought of in terms of physical things. But, Krishna's higher nature, Purusha, is not to be identified with physical objects or conceptions which are illusory. Hence since He is Spirit, omnipotence, omnipresence, infinite wisdom, infinite virtue, and infinite splendor, etc., He corresponds almost exactly with the God of the Gospel of John. The difference is that the attributes of Krishna's Purusha are illusory and in reality Krishna is the attributeless Brahman. The God of the Gospel of John is certainly infinite to the extent that there are some unknowable things about Him, but it is no indication that He is in essence impersonal.

Jesus taught that God was actively working in the world through His own power and authority. In essence Krishna is not actively working. Purusha is merely the conscious knower that action is going on through Prakriti. The adherent to the Bhagavad Gita can say that this is

also so of the God of the Gospel of John since God in the Gospel doesn't show evidence of action Himself except through messengers, men, and Jesus. The fact of the matter is that Jesus said, "My Father is working still, and I am working."¹

The dominant thought in the Gospel of John which calls God Father is completely absent in the Bhagavad Gita in the sense that it is used in the Gospel. The incarnate Krishna is in no respect subordinate to Himself in non-incarnate form, due to the doctrine of illusion. Furthermore, in the Gospel of John, God is Father in a redemptive sense only with regard to those who believe in Christ who is His only Son. Krishna may be called Father of the universe since He begot the world through the union of His Purusha and Prakriti. The God of the Gospel of John is creator and not begetter except in the case of His Son.

2. The Pre-existent Son of God, and Personalized Brahman.

Jesus gave very strong indication that He claimed to be the eternal God of Abraham, Moses, and the nation to which the Jews belonged. This identified Him as being one with the Father. Therefore, the comparison of God the Father, and Personalized Brahman, would apply here with the addition of the implications involved in

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1. John 5:17.

the doctrine of The Word.

The implications are that the Personality of Jesus was in existence before the beginning, was causative in the creation, and was self-revealing. The Bhagavad Gita according to its teaching would relegate this to its doctrine of Prakriti which is causative¹ and self-revealing because of the illusion of Prakriti. In other words the idea of Krishna includes the idea of the pre-existent Son of God except that the Son of God could never be called impersonal from the viewpoint of the Gospel of John.

3. The Incarnate Son of God and the Incarnate Krishna.

Jesus became flesh as the "only Son from the Father."² Krishna accepted birth through His own illusion.³ Jesus' humanity was real and material. Krishna's humanity was an illusion. The adherent to the Bhagavad Gita would claim that Jesus' humanity was really illusory also, but the Gospel of John can recognize no such claim.

Jesus came to give eternal life to the believer. Krishna came to give protection to the righteous, destruction to the wicked, and to teach the ways whereby men might eventually emancipate themselves from rebirths and find extinction in Impersonal Consciousness.

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1. Pandya, op. cit., p. 157.
2. John 1:14.
3. Bhagavad Gita 4:6.

Jesus came to overcome death and be the resurrection and the life. Krishna revealed himself as being "all-seizing Death". In the Bhagavad Gita there is no doctrine of a resurrection, instead there is the doctrine of rebirths, a thing not to be desired, or the doctrine of extinction in Brahman.

Both Jesus and Krishna had the claim of being Divine. They were both Persons. Krishna could claim all the attributes of Divinity which Jesus had, except He could not claim to be the resurrection. Ultimately, to the adherent to the Bhagavad Gita, death to the enlightened is only an illusory experience.

Both the Gospel and the Bhagavad Gita indicate that their incarnation is both divine and human, except that the Gita says the human Krishna is illusion and the Gospel says the human Jesus is real. Both claim that their incarnation is divine and personal, except that the Gita claims Krishna's real Self to be the Impersonal. The Gospel claims no impersonality.

Both Jesus and Krishna came to teach. The revelation of both teachings may be considered personal, comprehensive, and leading to the goal, but the teachings are two different systems. Both may be said to have revealed God, but two different Gods. In the Bhagavad Gita, there were no works which revealed God. In the Gospel of John there are many witnesses to the revelation

which Jesus brought; but in the Bhagavad Gita, there were but two: Arjuna and Sanjaya the reporter.

As to their work, both came to bring salvation. Jesus came to give salvation by being the death-conquering sacrificial Lamb of God, on behalf of sinful man. Krishna came to give salvation by teaching men to save themselves by following certain ways, devoting all the fruits of action to Krishna. Those who don't accept are self-judged according to either book.

4. The Holy Spirit and the God of the Bhagavad Gita.

The Gospel of John makes clear that the Holy Spirit is a Person, whereas the Bhagavad Gita recognizes personality as being illusory. The closest the Bhagavad Gita comes to a doctrine of the Holy Spirit is in the idea of Purusha. However, Purusha ultimately is Impersonal, and therefore cannot compare with the Holy Spirit.

There is nothing in the Bhagavad Gita to compare directly with the Gospel's doctrine of the Holy Spirit. After the passing away of Krishna, all the adherent to the Bhagavad Gita has is the written word and his own intellect, plus the Impersonal Reality. After the ascension of Jesus, His followers have the *παράκλητος*, who is a Personal Spirit carrying out the work of Jesus actively in the lives of men.

E. Summary

In this chapter the Doctrines of God were studied as taught in the Gospel of John and in the Bhagavad Gita. The two teachings were then compared.

According to the Gospel of John, God is a Trinity of three Persons -- God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God the Father exists as a Personal Spirit, with such attributes as omnipresence, eternality, omnipotence, authority, wisdom, truth, holiness, love; and He seeks to be glorified by all. God is the Father of the incarnate Son and those who believe in the Son. The Son of God is both human and divine, and claims to be one with the Father. He revealed the Father and made possible the redemption of believers. The Holy Spirit was to be sent by God as the agent of regeneration, and to continue the work of Jesus in a spiritual scope.

According to the Bhagavad Gita, God is called Brahman. Brahman is the Impersonal It; the supersensuous Supreme, Eternal, Impersonal Consciousness, the only ultimate Reality. However, in order to explain the universe and personality, there is a personal conception of Brahman, called Krishna. Krishna has a higher nature and a lower nature. The higher nature is called Purusha. The lower nature is called Prakriti. Purusha and Prakriti evolve from Brahman. Through the union of these two natures comes all that is perceived by the senses which

are deluded by the māyā of Prakriti. Purusha ranges from Impersonal Consciousness to personal consciousness. Prakriti is illusory. Krishna, being a personal God, now and then incarnates Himself to protect the good, destroy the wicked, and teach law by which men may attain release from the world of illusion and know only Brahman.

The comparison showed that the God of the Gospel of John is a Person whereas the God of the Bhagavad Gita in reality is Impersonal, although there is a Personal concept. The Gospel of John excludes any doctrine of impersonality whereas the Bhagavad Gita may include in its system the Personal God of the Gospel of John as being illusory and therefore it excludes the actual teaching of John's Gospel. The Personal God of the Gospel of John is not an illusion, but the Personalized form of Brahman, Krishna, is an illusion. The attributes of the God of the Gospel of John exclude those attributes of the lower nature of Krishna, but are similar or identical to those of the higher nature of Krishna except for impersonality as being the only reality. The God of the Gospel is the creator of the universe and Krishna is the begetter of the universe. God works actively, but Krishna in essence doesn't work since what His Prakriti does is illusory.

Both incarnations were divine and human, except that Krishna's humanity was illusory. Jesus overcame death and claimed to be the resurrection and the life. Krishna

claimed to be death, but death is illusory; therefore, there is no death to the enlightened. They revealed two different systems. Jesus taught the way of the Lamb of God, and Krishna taught the way of works. They were both Divine, but Jesus was Person, and Krishna in essence Impersonal.

The Bhagavad Gita can offer no teaching comparable with the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

This comparison shows that the great difference between the doctrine of God in the Gospel of John and the Bhagavad Gita is between the revelation that God is in reality a Personal God, and the revelation that God is in reality Impersonal. The personal religion of the Gospel of John excludes the impersonal religion of the Bhagavad Gita. The religion of the Bhagavad Gita excludes the religion of the Gospel of John because it says that personality is illusion.

CHAPTER II
A COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE OF MAN
IN
THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

CHAPTER II

A COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE OF MAN IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA

A. Introduction

In the previous chapter the basis of comparison was the doctrine of God. The doctrine of God would have no meaning if there were not also a doctrine of man, man being the one to whom God is revealed. Therefore, the basis for comparison in this chapter is the doctrine of man, who is next in importance to God as the highest form of creation.

Modern science says that man is essentially of one family the world over even though he does differ in color and outward features. In other words, man is essentially the same psychologically and physically the world over. In connection with this chapter the question arises as to whether the Gospel of John and the Bhagavad Gita agree on this fact of man's sameness?

The previous chapter shows the two books to be contradictory in their teachings about God. The question arises as to whether their teachings concerning man are also contradictory. This chapter will attempt to answer that question. The procedure of study will be the same in this chapter as in the previous one.

B. Man, According to the Gospel of John.

1. The Men of the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John views man from a universal aspect, and depicts him in a narrative of historical life situations. John is somewhat philosophical in that he uses the metaphysical terms light and darkness, but essentially man is viewed as he appears to the senses in everyday living, and is not viewed philosophically.

The men of the Gospel of John are Jews, Romans and Greeks. They have their different offices. Some are professionals, others are those of all walks of life. They are treated equally by the standard of how they believe or do not believe in Jesus. This standard is then given to all men of the world, no matter who they are.¹ Man is treated as a universal being. All men are basically of the same nature.

In life, the men of the Gospel of John are as natural as if they lived today. The birth, life, and death of man is viewed as it is seen.² In life, men may become sick, be blind, lame, and infirm.³ Emotionally, they show love, hate, anger, jealousy, grief, fear, and amazement.⁴ Intellectually, they show rationality, belief, unbelief,

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1. John 1:9; 1:12; 3:16; 4:21-23; 8:12; 9:39; 12:20-48.

2. John 3; 11.

3. John 5:3; 4:46; 10.

4. John 15; 10:31; 21; 11:33; 6:19; 4:27.

doubt, curiosity, and variations of faith.¹ They manifest the natural responses to hunger and thirst, heat and cold, and show natural passions.² Each man is a person with definite individual characteristics, and is thought of as being a person whether in this life or in the life eternal. Ethically, the ideal for man is seen in a positive sense: in love for God and fellow man, rather than escape from our natural physical nature.

2. The Nature of Man.

Man was created by God and placed in the environment of the world.³ John's doctrine of man evidently shows that he was familiar with the first three chapters of Genesis and man is viewed with that in mind. Man, therefore, by reason of the fall, is by nature in need of redemption from the curse of sin, which is eternal death, in order that he might have eternal life. Evil is darkness, and life is light.⁴ Those who are of the world of darkness are children of the Devil, and those who are of the world of light are the children of God.⁵ Each man makes his choice as to whether he will become a child of God by belief in Jesus or remain in the darkness of unbelief.

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1. John 3; 1-12; 20:25; 1:19; 6.
2. John 4; 6; 8; 18:18.
3. John 1:3.
4. John 3:16-21.
5. John 1:9-13; 8:43-44.

a. Flesh and Spirit.

According to the Gospel of John, man's nature is made up of that which is flesh, and that which is spirit. The flesh pertains to the physical nature, and the spirit to the psychic nature.¹ The physical nature is nourished by physical bread and water; the spiritual nature is nourished by spiritual bread and water.² The physical nature dies in the course of natural life, but the spiritual nature if once born of God³ is capable of attaining eternal life.⁴ The person who is not born of the Spirit of God perishes because he is not connected to the life giving source which is found in believing in Jesus, the Son of God.⁵ In the Gospel of John the spirit of man is never thought of as being impersonal.

b. Sin and Righteousness.

Those who commit sin by the telling of lies, plotting murder, and doing the desires of the supreme force of evil the Devil, are the children of the Devil.⁶ These same persons in the Gospel of John are those who do not and will not believe in Jesus. These are the ones who put Him to death on the cross as the ultimate manifestation of their unbelief. On the other hand, those who believe

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1. John 3:6.
2. John 4:13,14; 6; 7:37.
3. John 1:12; 3:3-8.
4. John 6:63.
5. John 3:16-18.
6. John 8:34-47.

in Jesus and receive Him are given power to become children of God, being born of God.¹

Those who continue as unbelievers in Jesus remain in the realm of spiritual darkness² because their deeds are evil and they hate the light.³ As doers of evil they sin⁴ and are slaves to sin in which they are held in bondage unless they find freedom by believing in the Son of God.⁵ Since the Son of God has come and they have seen but not accepted the light, their guilt remains⁶ and they have no excuse for remaining in sin.⁷ In this way of unbelief, judgment is brought upon themselves⁸ and they do not have eternal life.⁹

On the other hand, those who are believers and the children of God are also the sons of light¹⁰ and their deeds are wrought in God.¹¹ The commandment which they keep is the commandment of love.¹² The world hates; the children of God love.¹³ As a reward for believing in Jesus there is not only the gift of sonship¹⁴ but also

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1. John 1:12.
2. Cf. Lowrie, op. cit., pp. 95-112.
3. John 3:19,20.
4. On the nature of sin, cf. Smith, op. cit., pp. 206-220.
5. John 8:34-36.
6. John 9:41.
7. John 15:22.
8. John 12:47-48.
9. John 5:29.
10. John 12:36.
11. John 3:21.
12. John 15:9-14.
13. John 17.
14. John 1:12.

the gift of eternal life.¹

C. Man. According to the Bhagavad Gita.

1. The Men of the Bhagavad Gita.

Saunders, in reference to the Bhagavad Gita, says:

"The Gita has its eye on India alone, and seems never to consider a wider audience. Wide as its scope is, it does not go outside India or even beyond the four castes, two of which in fact it treats rather curtly."¹

This is an important observation. It shows that the Bhagavad Gita was written for a people of a particular social structure, and was not originally intended to be read by the world outside of that structure. The Bhagavad Gita is only universal to the structure of the Hindu caste system; and therefore, strictly speaking, it does not apply to those outside of Hinduism. It is a mistake for any one to try to apply the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to the world of mankind, for even if there are aspects which may be applied universally, it was never intended for that scope.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the doctrine of man is not viewed in life situations. It is viewed philosophically. The Bhagavad Gita is a dialogue between Arjuna and Krishna. The dialogue is reported by a man named Sanjaya, and is written in poetry. That the dialogue ever actually occurred is doubtful.²

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1. Saunders, op. cit., p. 80.

2. Edwin Arnold, The Song Celestial or Bhagavad-Gita, p. viii.

The men of the Bhagavad Gita, as was pointed out above, are all Hindus. There are the men of the two armies, some of whom are enumerated in the first chapter. Some of them are mahārathas, or men who are able to fight single-handedly ten thousand archers.¹ Arjuna is one of them, and he is the main human character of the Bhagavad Gita along with Krishna his chariot driver, who in reality is the Supreme Lord. These men of the Bhagavad Gita are viewed as superhuman beings. They are not ordinary men.

Fortunately, the doctrine of man according to the Bhagavad Gita does not deal with these superhuman men entirely, but is broadened to include all the castes in which there are ordinary men. The Bhagavad Gita recognizes that there is birth, life, and death as is seen and experienced by the senses; but it gives them a non-sense interpretation, in that it would indicate them to be merely illusory experience, and not real.² The one who has realized Brahman is unattached to experience.³ This same philosophy is applicable to sickness, infirmity, emotions, natural responses, and to environment.⁴ The intellect (Purusha)⁵ provides the bridge between the physical and the spiritual natures of men, and in reality there is only the Impersonal Consciousness, Brahman. The

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1. Bhagavad Gita 1:4-6. Cf. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 58.
2. Bhagavad Gita 2:19-23.
3. Ibid., 3:3-7.
4. Ibid., 2:14-15.
5. Ibid., 13.

problem is for the Impersonal Self to find release from the sway of *māyā* (illusion), in which man is created.¹

2. The Nature of Man.

a. Matter and Spirit.

Krishna says,

"The four castes were created² by Me according to the division of *gunas* and *karma*."³

These four castes are *brāhmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*.⁴ The explanation of how the men of these castes are not born equal may be found in the following quotation:

"The *gunas* are *sattva* (goodness and harmony), *rajas* (foulness and activity), and *tamas* (darkness and inertia). The *karma*, or action, of a *brāhmin*, in whom *sattva* predominates, is characterized by control of the mind, control of the senses, austerity, etc. (XVIII, 42) The action of a *kshatriya*, in whom *rajas* predominates and *sattva* is controlled by *rajas*, is characterized by heroism, high spirit, etc. (XVIII, 43) The action of a *vaiśya*, in whom *rajas* predominates and *tamas* is controlled by *rajas*, consists of agriculture, cattle-rearing, and trade. (XVIII, 44) The action of a *śūdra*, in which *tamas* predominates and *rajas* is controlled by *tamas*, consists only of service."⁵

Further explanation of the *gunas* is necessary.⁶

They are the three constituent elements of primordial matter, which is known as *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* gives birth to all things, it is a part of Krishna, and it is all under the

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1. Bhagavad Gita 9:8.
2. On the creation, Cf. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 149-152.
3. Bhagavad Gita 4:13.
4. On the duties of the four castes, cf. Pandya, pp. 173-175.
5. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 129.
6. Bhagavad Gita 14. Cf. Pandya, pp. 152-153.

sway of māyā, illusion.¹

On the other hand, there is in man that which is called Ātman, the Self, or Brahman, the only reality -- the Real, and It is impersonal. The Self which exists in all men is without beginning or end. It does not act, nor is It acted upon. It passes from one body to another body when a body dies,² until it is emancipated from births when the Self is realized and divorced from personality distinctions.³ Purusha is the medium through which man may evolve from making distinctions to realizing sameness or unity with Brahman.⁴ Purusha, the Knower, knows from the physical world (Prakriti) to the Impersonal Brahman.⁵ The Gita says, "He who thus knows Purusha and Prakriti, along with the gunas, is not born again, howsoever he may comport himself."⁶

Swami Nikhilananda, in his introduction to his translation of the Bhagavad Gita, says that the Gita apparently accepts three stages of spiritual evolution. The first is when man identifies himself with his body, which dies. The second is when man regards himself as a part of the Universal Life as a living being. The third

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1. Bhagavad Gita 9:7-10.
2. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 161-162.
3. Bhagavad Gita 2:12-30; 5:18,19. Cf. Pandya, pp. 158-160.
4. Bhagavad Gita 13.
5. Ibid., 13:21-22.
6. Ibid., 13:23.

is when he realizes that he is one with the Universal Spirit, beyond time, space, and causality.¹

b. Sin and Righteousness.

The Bhagavad Gita says, "It is desire, it is wrath, which springs from rajas. Know that this is our enemy here, all-devouring and the cause of all sin."² Desire which springs from one of the gunas, rajas, is the cause of sin. From desire and aversion arise the pairs of opposites such as love and hate, pleasure and pain, hot and cold; and men experiencing them are deluded.³ In other words, it boils down to the fact that sin is delusion.⁴

Conversely, those who purify their minds by virtuous deeds are free from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, and their sin is ended.⁵ A man's body has its functions and it will act, but the one without sin incurs no sin through mere bodily activity because he is free from desire, has his mind and body under control, and has surrendered all his possessions in sacrifice.⁶ It is Nature (Prakriti) through the gunas that does work

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1. Nikhilananda, op. cit., p. 3.
2. Bhagavad Gita 3:37.
3. Ibid., 7:27.
4. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 171-172.
5. Bhagavad Gita 7:28.
6. Ibid., 4:21-23.

in action, but the Self does not work, and the one who realizes this incurs no sin.¹

This sinlessness doesn't occur in just one lifetime. It is a process of evolution through many lives in which a Soul gradually achieves emancipation from delusion.²

Under the doctrine that the Self is not a doer,³ and that all action is determined by the gunas and the previous lives of a man, it follows that the man who is emancipated and unattached to his works incurs no sin even if it becomes the duty (karma) of his caste or dharma (the law of his innermost being acquired through his past lives) to commit murder or any other kind of sin. The object of the whole of the Bhagavad Gita is to show Arjuna that he will be sinless even if he kills his relatives in war.

Krishna said to Arjuna, "There are two types of beings created in this world: the divine and the demoniac."⁴ The qualities or characteristics which these two groups have are called treasures. The man who is born with divine treasures has the qualities of fine character.⁵ The man who is born with demoniac treasures is endowed with qualities of very evil character.⁶ The Gita says, "The divine

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1. Bhagavad Gita 13:31.
2. Ibid., 6:41-45.
3. Pandya, op. cit., 175-177.
4. Bhagavad Gita 16:6.
5. Ibid., 16:1-3.
6. Ibid., 16:4, 7-20.

treasures are said to be for the purpose of liberation, and the heritage of the demons, for bondage."¹ It takes many many births for one of demoniac treasures to attain the treasures which will liberate the Self from the relative world.²

D. Comparison

1. The Viewpoint of the Two Books.

In the Gospel of John, man is viewed from a universal aspect, whereas in the Bhagavad Gita man is viewed as being one of the four castes of Hinduism. This indicates that in the Gospel, each man has equal opportunity; in the Gita, a man's opportunity is based upon the merit of his previous lives and the caste into which he is born.

In the Gospel of John, man is viewed in a narrative of historical life situations; in the Bhagavad Gita he is viewed philosophically in a poetic dialogue.

In the Gospel of John, man is viewed as he appears to the human senses without aversion to the physical nature of man; in the Bhagavad Gita, man is viewed as he appears to the senses, but the interpretation given is that the senses are only illusory and to be escaped.

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1. Bhagavad Gita 16:5.
2. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 175-177.

2. The Men of the Two Books.

The men of the Gospel of John are men who are natural to human life. The men of the Bhagavad Gita are idealized to a superhuman level, or categorized according to their birth into a caste into which they are to remain.

In the Gospel, physical actions, ailments, and emotional responses are on a normal mind-body relationship. In the Gita, they are illusory experiences to which the mind is supposed to be unattached if it has realized Reality. The Gospel keeps man on the natural level, and the Gita attempts to put him on an unnatural level; the unnatural level which all men are to reach eventually through many births. The question arises as to whether this ever happens.

In the Gospel of John, men are always thought of as persons whether in this life or the next. In the Bhagavad Gita, personality is illusion to be escaped.

3. Man's Nature in the Two Books.

a. Physical and Spiritual.

The way in which the Gospel of John speaks of the physical nature of man, the flesh, is applicable to all men of the world. On the other hand, the Bhagavad Gita speaks of the physical nature of man as the matter which makes a man one of the four castes of Hinduism. The Gospel of John recognizes no such thing as the gunas of Prakriti which supposedly place men into the categories of caste.

In the Gospel, the spirit of man will perish or have eternal life depending upon whether the person believes or does not believe in the life-giving source, Jesus, the Son of God, whose words or teachings are the way of truth and life. In the Gita, the Impersonal Spirit, dwelling in man, is eternal regardless of what the body does. That which is personal will be reborn in many births until it is realized that in reality it is It, the Impersonal Brahman dwelling in every soul, and all personality distinctions are dissolved.

b. Sin and Righteousness.

In the Gospel of John, men are born in darkness. The Scriptures, John the Baptist, and the signs which Jesus performs through the power of God, point to Jesus as being the light of the world. If men do not believe in Him they remain in darkness, are the children of the devil, are slaves to sin, and they will perish. On the other hand, those who believe in Jesus will become sons of light, children of God, and receive freedom from the slavery of sin, and have as their reward eternal life.

In the Bhagavad Gita, men are born with either divine or demoniac characteristics. Those with divine characteristics are governed by the guna which enables them to find release from the relative world. Those with demoniac characteristics are governed by those gunas which produce desire. Desire is the cause of all sin.

Desire and sin belong to those of deluded minds, and the only hope of the one of demoniac characteristics is that in some future body he will have gained enough merit to have been born with divine characteristics, enabling him to attain release.

The great ethical principle of the Gospel of John is love. The ethical principle of the Bhagavad Gita is to do your caste duty even if it means doing sin, but the Self is to be unattached to the things done, realizing that the things that are done are only illusory.

E. Summary

In this chapter the doctrines of man were studied as taught in the Gospel of John and in the Bhagavad Gita. The two teachings were then compared.

In the Gospel of John, man is viewed from a universal aspect as he is seen in historical life situations. The men of the book are true to life. Their physical natures are applicable to all men in the world. Their spiritual nature is personal, and it depends upon belief in Jesus as the Son of God in order to have eternal life. Sin is unbelief. Unbelievers are in spiritual darkness, slaves to sin, and they will not have eternal life. Believers keep the word of Jesus and His commandment to love. As a reward they are children of God and have eternal life.

In the Bhagavad Gita, man is viewed in a philosophical dialogue from the Hindu aspect of the four great castes. Some of the men are idealized to a superhuman level, but the philosophy of the book deals with the ordinary men of the four castes. Their physical natures are described according to the Hindu system and regarded as illusory. Their spiritual nature in reality is impersonal. The Impersonal Self never dies. Sin is delusion. Those of demoniac character who are most deluded can find release only after many births. Those of divine character are so endowed that they may find release and not have to suffer rebirth. They become emancipated from the world of relativity.

The comparison shows that the Gospel of John has universal application whereas the Bhagavad Gita is particular. In the Gospel, man is seen as he is, whereas in the Gita, man is seen superhumanly and theoretically. In the Gospel, man's physical and spiritual nature is regarded as it appears to the senses. In the Gita, man's physical and spiritual nature is regarded as illusion when the Impersonal Self is realized. In the Gospel, sin is a reality that can be overcome through belief in Jesus and his commandment of love. In the Gita, sin is delusion, and if it is one's caste duty to commit sin, he must do it in order to attain release or better birth. The Gospel of John offers immediate hope to the believer.

The Bhagavad Gita offers a remote hope, and it gives no positive witness of its doctrine of release from the world of illusion, of its doctrine of rebirth, or of the reality of an Impersonal Self. In reality it has nothing to offer but beautiful words of poetry without any surety. The Gospel of John offers proof of resurrection from the dead and life eternal from one who was able in Himself to claim to be the resurrection and the life, and who proved it by His own resurrection.

CHAPTER III
A COMPARISON OF THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
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A. Introduction

In the first chapter, the doctrines of God were studied and compared. In the second chapter, the doctrines of man were studied and compared. In this chapter, the doctrines of salvation will be studied and compared, using the same procedure as was used in the previous two chapters.

The previous chapter showed that in the Gospel of John, man was portrayed as in need of salvation from the world of darkness in which he was enslaved. The previous chapter showed that in the Bhagavad Gita, man was set forth as in need of emancipation from the delusion of the relative world in which he was enslaved to constant rebirth. The interest of this chapter is to show how the Gospel of John says man may be saved, and how the Bhagavad Gita says man can be emancipated, and then to compare the two doctrines.

The two major questions which will concern this chapter are first, the part God plays in the redemption of man, and the second, the part man plays in his own redemption.

B. The Doctrine of Salvation
According to the Gospel of John.

1. The Means of Salvation.

a. The Part of God.¹

Each person of the Trinity plays a vital part in the salvation of man. It is the will of God the Father to provide for the salvation of man. This is provided for through the atonement of the Son and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

1) The Will of the Father.

The will of God in providing the means for the giving of eternal life to the believer was motivated by love for the men of the world.² The free gift of God the Father was His only Son through whom man may have living water and the bread of life.³

God the Father also attracts men to Him.⁴ Those who are not attracted to truth and God, the author of truth, are not in a position to accept truth; but those who do put themselves in search of truth and are ready to believe when they find truth, are those whom God has given to become followers of Jesus and are those who will have eternal life.⁵

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1. Smith, op. cit., pp. 224-240.
2. John 3:16.
3. John 4:10; 6:33-35.
4. John 6:44.
5. John 6:37,65; 10:29; 17:2,6,9.

2) The Atonement of the Son.

The atonement of the Son is at once the means of judgment (death), and of salvation (life).¹ Unbelievers share in the crucifixion of Jesus; believers share in His resurrection to eternal life. Death is the triumph of unbelief and life is the victor over death.

Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me."² Jesus is the way by which man may come to truth; truth leads to eternal life. On the other hand, the way of untruth does not lead to the Father, and there is no eternal life in it because it is false. Jesus was crucified by unbelievers in the truth, and He arose from the dead because He was truth.³ It is those who continue in the word or way of Jesus who will know the truth which will make them free from the sin which leads to death.⁴

In the Gospel of John, great emphasis is put on the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus' life and ministry led to the cross, and His resurrection is His triumph over His death on the cross. The cross and the resurrection are the great work of Jesus. The cross was experienced voluntarily,⁵ on behalf of helpless man.⁶ Jesus' crucifixion

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1. John 3:14; 12:31,32.
2. John 14:6.
3. John 18, 19, 20.
4. John 8:31-37.
5. John 10:18.
6. John 10:11,15.

is regarded as a sacrifice for sin. John the Baptist, using the Old Testament figure of the sacrificial lamb of atonement, said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"¹ Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. He was God incarnate -- Divine and human, yet He died because of human sin. In dying for human sin He took upon Himself the sin of the world. Thus He died for man that man by faith in Him may receive forgiveness for sin of which the consequence is death. Jesus pointed to His cross as the means by which the sinner who believed in Him could have eternal life.² Thus, to the believer, the death of Jesus expiates sin, and the resurrection from the dead gives positive evidence of the promised eternal life.

3) The Regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

John the Baptist said that Jesus was the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. John had baptized with water.³ John with water, baptized those who repented of their sins. Jesus with the Holy Spirit, would baptize those who believed in Him and who had repented.

With John the Baptist it was more of a symbolic act, but with Jesus the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a regeneration of the spirit of man.⁴ It is in believing

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1. John 1:29.
2. John 3:14; 10:11-18; 12:32.
3. John 1:32,33.
4. John 3:3-6.

in Jesus that men are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and become the children of God.¹ Regeneration is the process by which the desires of man which were in accordance with the powers of evil are redirected to be in accordance with God's will for man.

b. The Part of Man.²

Thus far it is seen that in the salvation of man, man cannot of his own will come to God except as it has been provided for in the will of God. Man also is dependent upon the atonement of Jesus; and without the Holy Spirit, there is no regeneration. Yet, there is a part that man takes in his salvation. Salvation takes both God and man. Man's part may be summarized under knowledge, belief (faith), repentance, and devotion.

1) Knowledge.

Jesus says that man has eternal life if he knows the true God, and Jesus whom God has sent.³ This knowledge of which Jesus speaks comes by experience.⁴ The knowledge of experience came to the people of the Gospel by the signs which Jesus performed and through His words. The signs were seen by many witnesses who saw and believed.⁵ Jesus'

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1. John 1:12,13.
2. Smith, op. cit., pp. 240-251.
3. John 17:3.
4. Smith, p. 241.
5. John 2:11,23; 20:29.

words were heard and believed.¹ This knowledge was to be digested by belief as food in the spirits of men, and it would give them eternal life.²

2) Belief.

Closely connected to knowledge is belief. Belief in the Gospel of John is not only intellectual knowledge, but also faith. Belief involves man's total thought, feeling and will in acceptance of Christ and His way.

The great emphasis in the Gospel of John is that people should believe in Jesus as the Christ. This is the stated purpose of the book.³ Intellectual knowledge without belief is superficial. Some believed certain things Jesus said, but they didn't accept other things. This attitude excluded them from eternal life.⁴ That belief which brought men into fellowship with Jesus and God was one which accepted Christ as He was made known to them to the extent that men kept His word.⁵ Those who were actual witnesses of the words which Jesus spoke were to pass them on to others so that they too should believe Jesus' word.⁶ Those who believe are to be dependent upon God to keep them from the world of sin.⁷

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1. John 4:42; 6:69; 10:14,27.
2. John 6:27-69.
3. John 20:30,31.
4. John 8:31,45.
5. John 8:51,52.
6. John 17:20.
7. John 17:6-26.

3) Repentance.

This word is not used in the Gospel of John, but it is strongly implied in reference to the baptism of men and the attitude of believers. Baptism was the sign of repentance.¹ Both John the Baptist baptized, and also the disciples of Jesus baptized.² At one time Jesus specifically tells a man to sin no more.³ Those who were slaves to sin could not turn to the truth unless there was an attitude of repentance enabling them to be set free.⁴ With unbelievers, there was no such attitude; but with believers, there was.

4) Devotion.

Man's part in his salvation includes devotion to God. The believer is to keep Jesus' word.⁵ The believer is also to abide with Christ and bear fruit.⁶ His devotion to God includes keeping the commandment of love.⁷ He serves and follows Christ.⁸

2. The Goal of Salvation.

In the Gospel of John, the goal of salvation is eternal life. This eternal life begins in the present life

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1. Mark 1:4.
2. John 3:22-4:2.
3. John 5:14.
4. John 8:32,34.
5. John 8:51,52.
6. John 15:1-11.
7. John 13:34,35; 14:15-24; 15:12.
8. John 12:26.

and continues throughout eternity.¹ This life is in God, but each one exists as a person. In eternal life each one will have a place.² The body of this life dies, but there is to be a resurrection to eternal life.³

C. The Doctrine of Salvation
According to the Bhagavad Gita

1. The Means of Salvation.

a. The Part of God.

Emancipation is given as a reward by the God of the Bhagavad Gita. Krishna came to the world only to protect the good and destroy the wicked that there might be establishment of law which would enable men to lead a spiritual life.⁴ His greatest offer is that those who worship Him and take refuge in Him will by His grace reach emancipation from the processes of birth, pain, decay, and death, which deluded souls must go through.⁵ Here it must be remembered that each man has that in him which is the same as Krishna -- the Impersonal Self. It must also be remembered that what man is trying to receive emancipation from is the illusion (maya) belonging to Krishna, which Krishna himself has thrown upon them.⁶ This amounts

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1. John 6:47.
2. John 14:2,3.
3. John 6:45; 11:25.
4. Bhagavad Gita 4:7,8,11.
5. Ibid., 18:56,62,65,66.

to the fact that Krishna is trying to emancipate himself by His own grace.

b. The Part of Man.

In the Bhagavad Gita, it is man who plays the starring part in his emancipation from the relative world of illusion. It is a doctrine of works and discipline. He is nothing but a machine sent out to do what he has to do, helpless under the sway of illusion.¹ If he is attached by desire to his illusory experience, he remains unemancipated. If he disciplines himself (that is if he is born with qualities which afford him the ability to do so) by the means of knowledge, devotion, and right action, he may attain emancipation.²

1) The Way of Knowledge.

Knowledge is Ultimate Reality.³ Ultimate Reality is Brahman. The one who knows Brahman comprehends Brahman only,⁴ and is unattached to the pairs of opposites and the fruit of action which belong to the relative world. He is always established in sattva,⁵ the guna which gives evenness of mind and enables one to attain knowledge of

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1. Bhagavad Gita 9:8; 18:61.
2. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 162-166.
3. Bhagavad Gita, chapter 2.
4. Ibid., 6:30.
5. Only Brahmins are established in sattva and one has to be born a Brahmin -- he can not become one by changing caste. Ante, p. 50.

Gift of Author

the Self (Brahman).¹ He regards all things alike.²

Krishna says,

"That man who lives completely free from desires, without longing, devoid of the sense of 'I' and 'mine', attains peace. This is the Brāhmic state, Attaining it, one is no longer deluded. Being established therein even in the hour of death, one attains final liberation in Brahman."³

Delusion is consumed in the fire of knowledge.⁴

Knowledge is the raft that takes one over all sin.⁵ The sin that veils knowledge and hinders in obtaining realization is delusion.⁶ Delusion may be overcome and knowledge realized by control of the senses.⁷ The following verses say:

"The senses are superior, they say; superior to the senses is the mind; superior to the mind is the understanding; superior to the understanding is He. Therefore know Him who is superior to the understanding, control the self by the Self, and destroy, O mighty Arjuna, the enemy, who comes in the guise of desire and is hard to overcome."⁸

The knowledge which gives liberation is an intuitional experience.⁹ This is achieved through renunciation and meditation.¹⁰ Of those thousands who do this there are but few of them who come to realization.¹¹ One must also

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1. Bhagavad Gita 2:45.
2. Ibid., 2:38.
3. Ibid., 2:71,72.
4. Ibid., 4:10,19,23,37.
5. Ibid., 4:36.
6. Ibid., 3:38-41.
7. Ibid., 4:41.
8. Ibid., 2:42,43.
9. Pandya, op. cit., p. 165.
10. Bhagavad Gita chapters 5 & 6.
11. Ibid., 7:3,19.

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know that which is said concerning the Imperishable Brahman, the way of sovereign wisdom and mystery, the Divine manifestations, and the Universal Form.¹ This way of knowledge is an exceedingly hard discipline, and then no one can be sure of emancipation unless at the time of dying he still knows only Brahman. That is, he must not be conscious of anything else but Brahman.²

2) The Way of Devotion.³

Devotion may be to either Krishna as a personal God or to the Impersonal Brahman.⁴ The greater emphasis is upon devotion to Krishna as a personal God, with the ultimate goal of Brahman in mind. The devotee with wisdom is the object of Krishna's love. He is deemed to be Krishna's very self, and he will cross over the veil of māyā.⁵ This type of person is very rare.⁶ Devotion is manifested in loving and worshiping Krishna, and leads to knowledge.⁷

3) The Way of Action.

The Bhagavad Gita says, "Even the man of knowledge acts in accordance with his own nature. All beings follow their nature; what can restraint do?"⁸ This action

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1. Bhagavad Gita chapters 8, 9, 10, 11.
2. Ibid., 2:72; 7:30.
3. Pandya, op. cit., pp. 140-145.
4. Bhagavad Gita 12:2-4.
5. Ibid., 7:14-19.
6. Ibid., 7:19.
7. Pandya, p. 144.
8. Bhagavad Gita 3:33.

or work is to be done without attachment, and if done without attachment he attains the Supreme.¹ The way in which action can be done without attachment is by complete devotion of the fruits of action to Krishna.² A man attains perfection through worshipping Krishna through the unattached performance of duty.³ Unattachment comes through knowledge. Arjuna's duty was to go and kill his relatives in war. While doing so, he was to be free from desire, with body and mind controlled, possessions surrendered to Krishna, and in doing this, even though he should kill, he would incur no sin through mere bodily activity.⁴

2. The Goal of Salvation.

In the Bhagavad Gita, the goal of the process of salvation is emancipation from the realms of delusion, and realization of oneness with the Supreme Goal, Brahman. This is the realm of Supreme Bliss, where no desire is known, and there are no persons.⁵ This state of mind is to be reached in this life, and when the body dies of one who has reached this state, the Self (Ātman) is not ever born again into another body.

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1. Bhagavad Gita 3:19.
2. Ibid., 18:56,57.
3. Ibid., 18:46.
4. Ibid., 4:21.
5. Ibid., 2:71-72.

D. Comparison.

1. The Part of God in the Salvation of Man.

The God of the Gospel of John is an active participant in the salvation of man. In the Bhagavad Gita, the God of the Bhagavad Gita is a passive participant, if God is considered other than man. If He is seen as the God in every person, He is seen actively participating in His own salvation from delusion.

In the Gospel, God the Father, motivated by love, has given the Divine means of salvation as a free gift to those who are attracted to Him. In the Gita, each person is left to work out his own emancipation according to his prescribed duty given to him by his previous life. If his prescribed duty is such as will give him the ability to achieve emancipation, Krishna gives him emancipation as a reward.

In the Gospel, God's Son was given to men as the way, the truth, and the life. His death was atonement for sin, and his resurrection to prove power for giving eternal life to the believer. In the Gita, Krishna taught ways in which man could achieve emancipation. He made no atonement.

In the Gospel, the Holy Spirit regenerates the spirit of the believer. In the Gita, regeneration comes only through human effort.

2. The Part of Man in His Own Salvation.

In the Gospel of John, the knowledge which is involved in the process of salvation is a preparatory knowledge which comes out of sensual experience, and a final knowledge which comes out of a vital belief which unifies man with the way, the truth, and the life through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. In the Gita, the knowledge which is involved in the emancipation of man is also a preparatory knowledge which comes out of experience and intellectual thought; and a final knowledge which comes out of an intuitional experience through a discipline of renunciation, meditation, and a mystical experience of realization. In this state of knowledge, there is no desire, longing, or sense of being a self. In the Gospel, knowledge does not destroy desire which is natural, nor does it destroy the sense of being a self. In the Gospel, desire is redirected by regeneration to be in accordance with God's will for man.

In the Gospel of John, belief is the key to salvation on man's part. Belief makes knowledge effective, and determines repentance and devotion. In the Bhagavad Gita, belief is not emphasized as a means toward emancipation, although it is understood. In the Gospel, belief is exercised as a volitional act. In the Gita, belief is imposed by one's previous life and controlled by the dominating guna (fate).

In the Gospel of John, repentance is a doctrine strongly implied in baptism, and demonstrated in the transition from unbelief to belief. In the Bhagavad Gita there is no possibility of repentance, since action is determined and repentance is a volitional act.

In the Gospel of John, devotion to God involves keeping the word of Jesus whose commandment is love for fellow man and for God. In this way man serves Jesus and abides in the way, the truth, and the life. In the Bhagavad Gita, man is to work out his emancipation by dutifully doing the work or action prescribed by his previous life. He is to be unattached to results of this action by surrendering it all to Krishna and by being established in the knowledge of Brahman. His devotion is to be in love and worship of Krishna or Brahman.

E. Summary.

In the Gospel of John, both God and man take a vital part in man's salvation. God, through love and mercy, has provided the means of salvation. It is God's will that whoever avails himself of the means of salvation will be saved. God sent His only Son to teach the way, the truth, and the life, and make atonement for sin with the promise of eternal life rather than eternal death. The baptism of the Holy Spirit regenerates the soul of man, giving it eternal life through Jesus. Man accepts

the means of salvation by knowledge and belief. In the process of knowledge and belief there is repentance and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Man's devotion to Jesus keeps him in salvation.

In the Bhagavad Gita, emancipation or liberation is achieved through human endeavor, and merely given as a reward by Krishna. The three ways which lead to liberation are the way of knowledge, the way of devotion, and the way of action. These three ways can only be followed by those who are endowed with favorable qualities bestowed upon them for the merit achieved in a previous life. Those who are able to attain liberation are rare and few. Those who have tried to the best of their innate ability and have failed in this life, may by the merit gained be able to have the qualities which will enable them to attain liberation in the next life. Liberation is not demonstrated in the Gita. It is only a believed theory.

The comparison shows that the God of the Gospel of John has provided the means whereby men may be saved by accepting what God has done, and by living accordingly. The God of the Gita rewards men for what they do in their own salvation. In the Gospel emphasis is upon what God does and how man accepts it. In the Gita, emphasis is upon what man does, and how Krishna rewards it.

In the Gospel, man is given the helping hand of God without which he is helpless. In the Gita, man is struggling with himself in his attempt to escape from

the world of delusion. In the Gospel, man's effort is dependent upon God. In the Bhagavad Gita, man's effort is dependent upon a previous life he is supposed to have lived.

In the Gospel, salvation is a positive reality demonstrated and witnessed. In the Gita, salvation is theoretical, being undemonstrated, yet believed in.

CHAPTER IV
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

CHAPTER IV

GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It was the purpose of this thesis to study and compare some of the teachings of two religious master-pieces, representing two different religions. The one is the Gospel of John representing Christianity, and the other is the Bhagavad Gita representing Hinduism. There are missionaries trying to convert Hindus on the basis of the Gospel of John and there are Hindus and cultists trying to convert Christians on the basis of the Bhagavad Gita. Therefore, this thesis is of value to either Christian or Hindu.

The procedure was to limit the study of this thesis to a comparison of three main doctrines, the doctrine of God, of man, and of salvation. A study of any one of these doctrines would have been a thesis in itself, so this thesis has used only that material which was most important towards making a comparison of the two books as wholes. The first step in a chapter was to study the teaching as found in the Gospel of John. After that, the teaching was studied as found in the Bhagavad Gita. The two teachings were then compared and finally a summary was made.

For detailed yet brief summaries of the chapters, it would be best for the reader to consult in this thesis the summaries at the end of each of the first three

chapters.¹ To repeat them briefly here would be inadequate.

The main findings of this thesis may be stated as follows: 1. The God of the Gospel of John is essentially a Person whereas the God of the Bhagavad Gita is essentially Impersonal, and all else is illusion. 2. Man in the Gospel of John is seen in historical situations and the doctrine of man may be applied universally without qualifications. In the Bhagavad Gita, man is seen superhumanly and theoretically. Man is seen as belonging to the Hindu caste system, and therefore the Gita's doctrine of man is not universally applicable. 3. In the Gospel of John, salvation is achieved through the work of God and man. It is efficacious to any one who believes in the Christ as He revealed Himself. In the Bhagavad Gita, salvation is the work of man alone. Krishna only rewards or teaches the ways by which man may work himself up to emancipation. It is efficacious only to those who are born with the qualifications which enable them to do the required disciplines which will enable them to achieve emancipation.

In studying these three chapters as a whole, the following observations may be made. In the Gospel of John, the doctrines of God, man, and salvation, fit into a logical whole. In the Bhagavad Gita, the doctrine of God may be seen to be logical. The same may be said for the doctrine

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1. Ante, pp. 39-41, 57-59, 75-77.

of man and of salvation. But, when it is seen that actually it is Krishna who is seeking emancipation from His own illusion, the reason for it all falls into a hopeless question. (Here it must be remembered that Krishna is both illusory matter and Spirit, and that the universe is made up of the union of these two natures of Krishna.) The question also arises, How does personality evolve from the Impersonal? Personality is an illusion; if so, how can illusion evolve from the Real? Such questions are liable to reduce the Bhagavad Gita to a mere figment of human imagination rather than revelation.

The Gospel of John offers the facts of history for which there are many witnesses. The Bhagavad Gita offers poetry making up a dialogue to which there were only two witnesses to the revelation given. One of these witnesses, Arjuna, had superhuman qualities which relegate him to the literature of mythology.

This thesis has been a comparison of the best scriptural work the Hindus can offer, and one of the best that the Christians can offer. May the truth be propagated.

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