

# Shree Shree Yeeshu Khrista<sup>1</sup>

This book is gracefully dedicated to the author's late wife and the introduction is written by himself. It is divided into nineteen chapters in which the author discusses the life and teaching of Jesus. He picks and chooses and so omits some of the important and serious parts of both. The language is superb in quality. The choice of words and style of writing leave nothing to be desired. The writing has an easy flow and is expressive. It avoids the ordinary style of the street as well as the aristocratic speech of genius.

In the Introduction the author claims that the book has not been written with the profit motive but for the satisfaction of the departed soul of his wife who used to hear with reverence the story of Jesus read to her. It has been written in joy and for the satisfaction of the reader also, for Bhagwan Shri Yisu was an uncommon *Sanyasi*—one in the galaxy of great men. There is no caste among these.

## I

It may be stated safely that the author has a personal reverence and devotion (*bhakti*) to the person of Christ that will shame many professed Christians. He presents Jesus Christ as one of the *Yugavatars* who appear on earth when there is an increase of unrighteousness (compare the *Gita*, 4:7-8). Thus he misses the mission of Jesus and the meaning of the Incarnation. Jesus is *sansar birakta*—disgusted with the world. This characterization of Jesus perverts the truth that he condemned mammon worship but taught that under God the world is good and real. He never had any contempt for the world as an ideal Hindu *Sanyasi* has. While declaring him to be one of the *Avatars* he rather inconsistently asserts that Jesus is the son of God who alone is the owner or successor of spiritual power coming from God.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a shortened form of the paper presented by Acharyya R. C. Das at the Conference on the Indian Understanding of Jesus Christ organized by the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society at Jabalpur, November, 1963. It examines sympathetically and critically the Bengali book, *Jesus Christ the Beautiful: His Life and Discussion*, by Benode Bihari Bandyopadhyaya, a Brahmin Professor of Literature in Calcutta. The book is available at 'Vidyasagar Bookstall', 41 Shanker Ghosh Lane, Calcutta 6. Price Rs.6.

The author claims and asserts repeatedly that Jesus stood against the beastly temporal power of the great Roman Empire. Now this is a serious misunderstanding of the real cause of Christ's death. This interpretation makes him a martyr and a national hero, which he certainly was not. He died not because of felony but of blasphemy. The real charge of the Jewish religious hierarchy was that he made himself equal to God—a claim which was against their theology. He was also accused of religious subversion. The charge that he was king was superficial, just to force Roman permission for his death. There is no proof in the Gospels that he said or did anything against the Roman rule. By our author, however, Jesus is made a Gandhi of Palestine. Pilate declared that he found no fault in Jesus to be worthy of death and washed his hands to declare himself innocent of his blood. But he yielded to the threatening pressure of the angry show of the religious aristocracy.

According to the author, Christ's real motive was the political liberation of his people, but he devoted himself to strengthening their mind by spiritual truth. This is reversing the truth of Christ's mission on earth. His object was the revealing of the Truth so that, when accepted and wrought out in life, the Truth may bring about all forms of freedom not excluding political liberty. 'Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free' (John 8:32). The author is representing Christ as one who uses spiritual means for political ends—exactly like Gandhiji—which was neither true nor would have been worthy of Christ. Political freedom may be a fruit of spiritual freedom but not necessarily. Spiritual life is essentially independent of mundane forces. This everlasting life was Christ's aim for the world. The author's contention cannot be sustained by an adequate reading of the Gospels.

The author says that Christ did not build a special church (*Dharma Sangha*). This is not correct. Of course his church was not and is not 'special' in the sense of being exclusive or privileged. The church has always been inclusive—universal, racially and otherwise. When Peter gave utterance to the apostolic faith in Him, He said, 'on this rock (of personal and collective faith) I will build my church' (Matthew 16:18). The New Testament is full of references to the church by Christ and his apostles. The church was a reality in his lifetime. He called the twelve, ordained and consecrated them to sacred missions and functions, and especially charged Peter to nourish the little flock (Mark 3:14; John 15:16, 20:21 f.). Within a very short time, in ten days after the Ascension, he sent the Holy Spirit to the hundred and twenty, who then, being filled with power and grace, preached the Gospel, and the church grew by leaps and bounds. It is a very serious mis-statement to say that Jesus did not found a church.

The author also asserts that Christ's Kingdom is not some visible object—which is only a half-truth. If the Kingdom is

not and cannot be visible, then it is no use to sorrowful and benighted mankind. Then atheistic communism should, and will, take the whole world in its possession. But, thank God, such a fate need not overtake the world. God has through his Son given us a truer understanding of this life and of the world which through his dispensation has become in part a forerunner of the Kingdom. In spite of all her weaknesses, the church is the best instrument in the hands of God and man to visualize even partially the Kingdom here on earth.

## II

Most of the founders of other religions were born in affluent circumstances, as was the case with Buddha and Muhammed. Of all historical persons who have drawn forth worship from their followers, the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ were the most difficult and full of pain. In the case of Christ there is an answer to this. It was divinely designed that his whole life should be one of sorrow. The bearer of the world's sin and pain must be baptized with sufferings, as was foretold by many prophets hundreds of years beforehand. (Compare especially, Isaiah 53).

As a boy Jesus might have come in touch with Buddhism and Greek religion in a superficial way. His teaching, however, bears no impress of it, and to say that he learnt the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* shows utter lack of historical sense.

The rabbis whom Jesus met in the temple at the age of twelve were not the priests attached to the temple. He was surrounded by learned doctors of the law—teachers, *gurus*. Jesus accepted normal human relationships, otherwise he would not have been truly man nor truly incarnate, but he did deny blind attachment to them. The author also stretches his imagination a little too far when he says that Christ did not reduce his teachings to writing because he was always absorbed in God. We must not imagine him as too uncommon. He was not very unlike other men in ordinary affairs of men. As he had a band of disciples to take care of his words, and more especially as he was himself the teaching incarnate, he did not need to write. We should not conceive him fully and solely in terms of Hindu *Sanyas* and otherworldliness.

'Jesus', writes our author, 'was a lover of nature. He preached his Gospel in natural surroundings. He did not preach as Christians do today in a tent set up in a place warm with the exhalation and inhalation of men and with the help of a loudspeaker'. While this reviewer would take the point of criticism here, he would point out that the major part of Jesus' teachings were given, and his healing works done, in towns and crowded rooms and synagogues. Indeed, he loved nature like all saints and sages, and trained his disciples in the loneliness of nature, but he and his modern disciples know also

that so many of God's children live in crowded cities and towns and the Gospel must reach them too. Modern conditions are different with heavy industries and a movement to towns.

'Jesus Christ lost his peace and joy that he derived from nature during his week's stay in Jerusalem before his death'. Yes, but this was only apparent and partial. For his peace he was not dependent on nature, but on his Father. His deepest and most comforting teachings were given during the last week in Jerusalem, as becomes clear when one reads all the Gospels together, particularly St. John, chapters 14-17.

### III

In his exposition of the Sermon on the Mount the author imagines without warrant that Christ gave the sermon on the bank of the Sea of Galilee, and before huge crowds (*janasamudra*—the sea of humanity). Both these ideas are serious misconceptions which mar the very purpose of the sermon.

It was not general teaching but a sermon on a definite subject meant for a limited audience and a special class—his disciples, probably the twelve only. There might have been a few others—serious inquirers after truth. It was a sermon on the *Mount* not on the *Sea*. His special subject was the Law of Christian life—meant specifically for believers—because the generality of men who used to mob him on the plains and sea-side would not have the basis for it in their hearts. That Jesus left the tremendous crowds and even the disciples far behind, down on the plains, and went alone high up into the mountain (a secluded centre) is quite plain from the texts (*see* Matthew 4:25 and 5:1-2). After silent communion with his Father (how long we cannot tell), and when he assumed the seat of the *Guru* (the authoritative divine Master), he called his disciples, and when they came Jesus opened his mouth to teach them. This critic would have been very pleased and grateful if our dear Hindu brother had developed the idea that possibly the Lord Jesus, as a great teacher in the Orient, had a few *ashrams* up and down his country more or less of the Indian type. A few Indian Christians including this reviewer have done some research in this direction.

A few minor lapses in our author's treatment should be noted. He equates mercy (Matthew 5:7) with non-violence (non-killing), but this interpretation cannot be sustained by any proof from the New Testament. Jesus ate meat and fish and once burnt a living tree by his curse. He tolerated the sacrificial system and participated in non-vegetarian national feasts. The author also confuses love and mercy, and supposes that Jesus prescribed self-effort for internal purity. In fact there is no place for self-centred *sadhan* in the Christian life. Holiness is the *sahja phala* (natural fruit) of faith and love. One wonders, moreover, why there is no discussion of the most important

beatitude—'persecution for righteousness and for his name's sake' for those who follow Jesus.

The author's favourite appellation for Christ is *Sanyasi* or *Bhagwan*, but scarcely ever *Paritrata* or *Muktidata* (Saviour). If Christ is anything he is essentially and dominantly a Saviour. His mission in life was saving: teaching was incidental (see Matthew 1:21, 18:11; Luke 9:56; John 12:47).

The very name 'Jesus', given by God through an angel, means 'Saviour'. St. John (3:16) says that God 'gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life'. Jesus saves by giving himself as an atonement for sin, and gives eternal life through faith. The all-embracing mission of his life was salvation.

Terms such as *Sanyasi* and *Bhagwan* are applied to Christ by a few Christians and should be used more widely. But they do not include all of Christ, and when applied merely in a Hindu sense are not enough. For instance, the word *Bhagwan*, which means all kinds of glory (wealth), does not touch the fundamental quality and role of Christ's life. *Sanyas* or *tyag* (renunciation, non-attachment) are too negative for Christ, who is the Love of God in a most positive sense. For Christ the names have to be filled in with richer Christian content.

#### IV

At the end of Jesus' life, though there was a general atmosphere of hate, malice and enmity, it would be unfair to say that all was dark. Christ had a great following among the populace who believed in him, only it did not become articulate at that time. And his Father's face always shone on him. His own inner light shone like a midday sun.

Naturally, the world does not understand or accept the deep sacrificial significance of Christ's death as expressed by himself in his own words used at the institution of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. The Jewish and Vedic background must be understood properly to qualify one to see the secret of his death. The author has also ignored the Upper Room teachings—most intimate and straight from his heart—and has wrongly set the scene of the Last Supper in the Garden of Gethsemane.

When he comes to the Lord's death, the author asks why there should be such persecutions. He then claims that God the Father has not answered this question. In reply we should point out that in the beginning of the Bible (Genesis 3:15) we read that God recognized a conflict between the serpent and the woman's seed, between Satan and man. To help weak-willed man (because of sin), God sent his word through the prophets who in their messianic prophecies foretold the coming of the Man who would finally defeat Satan and his hosts. This Man is represented by Isaiah as the suffering servant of God, in the 53rd chapter of his book. It is a very full and graphic

description of the sufferings of Jesus. All this was designed by God before the foundation of the world, as has been claimed by the apostles (Acts 13:27-29; John 1:29; I Peter 1:19-20; Revelation 13:8). It was God's will and purpose to allow his Son to suffer, though thoroughly unmerited, because that was the only effective way to annul the power of human sin. It was all done through the vicarious sufferings of Christ and the fruit and virtue of that supreme sacrifice was open to all men through faith. So God has not only answered the question after the event of the Cross through the countless men and women of all tribes, climes and ages who have obtained forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, peace and love, but also before the event by carefully laying down his plan of salvation.

The author makes the further astounding comment that both John the Baptist and Jesus were indifferent to death because of their youth. Whatever might have been John's attitude, Jesus was never *indifferent* in the *Gita* sense of *sama*. On the contrary, he was very much troubled at times just as any true man would be. Indifference would have taken away from the meaning, value and virtue of his death (cf. John 11:33, 12:27, 13:21). He experienced the deepest agony of death and guilt of sin when he cried, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34).

The author thinks that Jesus never felt physical pain. This is flying before clear evidence to the contrary. In Pilate's house he was horribly and bitterly persecuted. He could not bear his cross through sheer exhaustion. He fell down again and again. He had a natural body. How can we say that he did not feel the pain? Even before he was arrested he groaned and was troubled in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed his Father thrice to remove the bitter cup. On the Cross he thirsted just like any other ordinary criminal. The truth is that he felt every bit of his excruciating pain, but maintained his calm and was *not overwhelmed* by his grief.

Our author also interprets the mental (or spiritual) pain of separation from his Father (revealed in Mark 15:34, quoted above) as human and natural on the basis of which ordinary human beings can approach him. Thus the principle of the atonement and the truth of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus for effecting redemption is obscured, if not openly denied. The humanity and naturalness of Christ were surcharged with his divinity. Otherwise his sacrifice would lack the power of salvation. So the statement should be modified. There is also a little inconsistency involved. If Christ did not feel the physical pain, if it were all in the spiritual plane, his identification with sinful men would be meaningless and the idea clashes with the thought that the spiritual pain of separation was human and natural. This difficulty arises because of failure to understand that Christ's personality cannot be split; his nature was both fully human and fully divine at the same time.

The author therefore thinks that the defeat of God on Christ's death may have to be extirpated by the destruction of humanity—which is logically right. But he misses the secret of the redemptive principle—the very defeat of God atones for the sin of man and secures his victory. God's defeat implies loss which is the price paid for sin. God could pay it because he is almighty God of Love. If humanity is to be destroyed for God's defeat, then the very purpose of God would be frustrated. No, instead of being destroyed much of humanity has been redeemed, renewed and given everlasting life during the last two thousand years through the virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. There will be great destruction because of man's continued disobedience and unrepented sin, not because God could not save Jesus. That would be pure revenge on God's part.

## V

The author's treatment of the resurrection is very superficial and light-hearted. He fails to see the seriousness of it and its connection with the Lord's death that happened according to a definite divine plan. He has equated the appearances of Jesus with those of other great men. Even historically, however, the appearances of Christ in quality, purposefulness, in number and persistency covering a period of forty days at a stretch, stand incomparable and unparalleled. The few scattered instances of appearances mentioned in respect to others lack cogent proof and can be easily explained as either illusions or hallucinations. The truth, meaning, and substantiality of the resurrection experiences of the disciples were responsible for bringing them together, removing their despair and sorrow, and reminding them of the age-long plan of God which was finalized through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Regarding discipleship, our author claims that in order to be Christ's disciple one need not accept a Christian label, and even worship in a temple is not necessary. This is quite correct. The disciple of Christ has no labels. It is mentioned, however, that after Christ's physical disappearance, in the largely Gentile church of Antioch in Syria the disciples began to be called 'Christians' by others, possibly in contempt or ridicule. That name has persisted as a name of honour. That the followers of Christ should be called Christians is very natural and appropriate. This is not a self-imposed label. Moreover, among Christians (unlike Hindus and Moslems) there is no sacrosanct idea about a church building. It can be deconsecrated and destroyed, or sold as a building when not required. The idea and custom of a church building came from the necessity of an assembly for worship and a protection against heat and cold. Christians are not attached to the church building in the same sense and in the same way as others are.

But I suppose that the author has other serious things in mind, such as the need for baptism and church membership.

Baptism, like initiation among Hindus, is first a spiritual function, a sacrament (sacred act) necessary for the moral and spiritual start and growth of the life of the initiated. As Christians would put it, baptism is a means of grace. In all religions some such sacred ceremony is customary. But for Christians it has an additional significance which is important. It means confession before men. We remember our Lord's warning, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, I also will confess before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 10:32 f.) (cf. also Luke 12:18, Romans 10:9, 14:11, Philippians 2:11, Revelation 3:5). Confession is absolutely necessary for sound and full growth of spiritual life. Without it faith will soon dry up and will not bear any fruit. To show an example to others, our Lord himself was baptized by John. Absence of confession will breed hypocrisy and cowardice by destroying the religious life. Confession stabilizes the truth in the heart. This is a simple psychological fact.

Membership of the church is in the same way helpful to the growth of Christian life. The church ideally is the Body of Christ—a fellowship—in contrast to the individualistic path of the Hindu. The full effectiveness of human life is always through fellowship. Membership does not necessarily mean sole acceptance of every rule or custom of a denominational church. The church, which is in reality universal, is made concrete in a particular country under the influence of a particular culture. There need be no disloyalty to one's spiritual and cultural heritage. Both baptism (initiation) and the church are supported by Christ's teaching and example. He was baptized and thereby brought the Kingdom of Heaven in line and relation with his own national and religious culture and through it with culture everywhere. He was and is the chief corner-stone and head of the church (Psalm 118:22, Isaiah 28:16, I Peter 2:6, Ephesians 2:20). We confess absolute loyalty to Jesus Christ alone and under that loyalty we respect and obey his ordained servants in the church. So neither the church nor baptism are something very grotesque or unnatural. There are serious reasons for which, and for our good, Christ himself instituted these sacraments.

## VI

Christ is bracketed by our author with Sri Ram Krishna and Sitaram Onkarnath as being co-saviours, each giving the word of assurance against sin. This may be a correct statement as far as it goes. Krishnaji also promised forgiveness from all sins (*Gita*, 18:66). These others gave the *word* of assurance, but Christ gave the *act* of assurance of the Cross. Christ had unimpeachable credentials. On what basis have these others given the assurance? Was there in their life and character the authority and the appropriate deed for forgiveness of sins? Christ actually forgave and saved and transformed scores of men and



women in his lifetime. Millions have received from him the same peace and reconciliation since then. No religion can match this steady, persistent and vast transformation of life that has taken place through the instrumentality of the church, all due to the supernatural activity of the invisible Christ, the Holy Spirit.

In his concluding chapter the author makes the typical modern Hindu claim that the essence of all religions, the life and message of all great men, is the same. Raja Ram Mohan and other leaders of the Brahma Samaj first announced it in modern India. Sri Ram Krishna and the *math* and Mission emphasized it. It has now become the slogan of all educated Hindus who come in contact with Islam and Christianity. Let me here merely suggest a few points which one must consider before accepting the dogma that all religions are essentially one or the same.

It is, one may suggest, an instance of wishful thinking on the part of some interested parties rather than a well-reasoned theory based on historical phenomena. All religions of Semitic origin, such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity, reject the position outright. The religions of Aryan origin, now known as Hinduism (and not even all of them), and particularly those inspired by the *Bhagawat Gita*, have declared the oneness of religions. The reason is that the Aryan soul is rather mystically inclined, while the Semitic mind is historically alert and logically keen. So the Hindu mind accepts all, but judges or rejects nothing or little.

Who is to say what is the essence of a particular religion? Obviously the devotee of that religion, who has the heart experience thereof. An outsider has no authority to say anything conclusively. Many attempts have been made both by Hindus themselves and also at the instance of others to define the essence of Hinduism. But there has been no common reply. Great Hindu saints and scholars have been woefully at variance, confounding the average man. The reason is that Hinduism is not one religion. Many religions are covered by a meaningless term, 'Hindu'. There are different theologies based on various creeds propounded by numerous founders. Even then there are certain common elements in all these. Buddhism has two clear positions. Islam is strictly one in all main doctrines and practices, and so is Christianity and the religion of the Jews. The wishful thinking of the equality of religions betrays an unconscious longing for one true and all-embracing land-religion.

## VII

For every teaching of Christ the author quotes a more or less similar teaching from one or other of the numerous Hindu *Rishis*, *Jnanins* or *Avatars*. Much of this quoted teaching is modern or chronologically post-Christian. Such parallelism, however, leads to several possible conclusions. (a) It may mean

that Christian teaching has no originality or uniqueness. (b) It may mean that the teaching is more important than the teacher. (c) It may mean that what is scattered in Hinduism is centred in Christ.

We may note the implications of these conclusions. (a) If Christian teaching has no originality or uniqueness, then it is not necessary for India—as so many Hindus have claimed. The answer to this has been given by the character and experience of persons like Narayan Vaman Tilak, Pandita Ramabai, Sadhu Sundar Singh and countless others. Modern India, both secular and religious, has been largely moulded by Christian principles. Our constitution is based on the principles of human dignity and freedom of conscience, as opposed to caste ideas. Tribute to the character-building effect of missionary work has been voluntarily paid by Hindu leaders. In his little book, *Precepts of Jesus—a guide to Peace and Happiness*, Raja Ram Mohan Roy said, 'Of all the faiths that have come to my knowledge, Christianity is most conducive to the moral and spiritual welfare of mankind.' One could multiply arguments and proofs. But let me stop by saying that some of the teachings of Christ stand out and alone in the world, both as regards their idealism and their practical power on life. The golden rule of the Christian life is, 'Do unto others as you would that others do unto you' (Matthew 7:12): 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you' (Matthew 5:44). Christ's teaching is always positive, dynamic, creative and direct as compared to that of the *Gita* and of the Buddha. The latter is negative and abstract, and sometimes very abstruse.

(b) If it is true that the teaching alone is all-important, to the exclusion of Christ himself, then Christianity falls. But the church has always, and rightly, given to the person of Christ much more importance than to his excellent and even unique teaching. Without the grace and power of the *Sadguru* (true teacher), his *Satshiksha* (true teaching) is ineffective. All the teachings of Christ are illustrated in his life, and this much the author has admitted. St. Paul knew little of his teaching, but confronted *him* personally and learned afterwards. Thus man's personal relationship to Christ in faith is the crucial thing. One could almost say that if the Bible and all other Christian literature were lost to the world, Christianity would still live on, because the church is there as a result of personal faith in Jesus the Person. This is not only a matter of his teachings. The early church, which is regarded by all as the model church, was the direct product of his creative acts and personal relations with his disciples, as well as his living Word.

(c) If all the good and effective teachings of other religions are centred in Christ, he becomes a much more powerful personality than all others. In him all the aspirations of mankind find fulfilment and satisfaction. He is the Desire of all nations in whom converges the destiny of man.

I think that the most important topic on which a few brief words could be said here is the author's rather carefree assumption (natural to a man of *bhakti* in India who overemphasizes the role of the heart over that of the head, failing to reconcile *bhakti* and *jnanam*—truth and grace) that Jesus Christ is just one instance of a widespread type. It is an assumption rather than a deliberate claim, based on proper study of historical facts, psychological phenomena and spiritual apprehensions in a scientific spirit and by rational methods, that Jesus Christ is one of the many great *Rishis* (saints and sages), or *Avatars* (divine descents) and prophets. He may be the best—the perfect one—yet one of many; Christ possesses nothing that would place him on a pedestal unoccupied by others or in a category by himself. In this connection a little leaflet by Bishop Badley, *The Solitary Throne*, and R. C. Das's *Christ the Unique* may be helpful to inquirers.

Jesus Christ has many things in his life, character, and teachings in common with others. But he is uncomparable and unique on the following unchallengeable grounds:

(a) Christ is *sinless*, as his Father is, whereas other Great Souls in the world have some defect or other in their life, character or teaching. The ethical excellence of his personality or his dazzling moral purity is unquestionable. In fact the author accepts this in so many places. Jesus had no consciousness of his own sin. He could challenge the Pharisees with the question 'Who can convict me of sin?', and there was no answer (John 8:46). When the so-called leaders of religion brought charges against him, Pilate declared him innocent. He always abided in truth, love and God. He came out of the bosom of God. How could there be sin in him? Sin is not just some external fault, non-observance of some law. It is the evil power within, over which Christ had constant victory. The Tempter could not deflect him. The Musalmans and Unitarians declare him sinless. The Brahmo Samaj is silent on this point.

(b) His conception was unique in that it was through the operation of God's Holy Spirit. He was a Holy Child from the beginning. While all others, including great men, share the depravity of the human race, Christ being sinless made appropriate expiation for it in others.

(c) His life was unique in that it was a perpetual relentless struggle for truth and love against hypocrisy and hate, with perfect peace and serenity of soul 'that passeth all understanding'.

(d) His death was unique in the manner that he died and in the cause that he died for. He never deserved that death. 'The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45). In many words and ways he slowly revealed the mission of his death. The Cross stands high, lonely, one, incomparable and unsurpassable.

(e) His resurrection cannot be paralleled in the religious history of mankind.

(f) Jesus Christ claims to be the Judge of all mankind—here and now, and at the end.

(g) Christ was truly universal and also final in spite of his immediate local limitations which are not important. He was born and brought up and played his part at the centre of the world and at the confluence of cultures, civilizations, races and roads of the world.

(h) Christ is alone in being Saviour of all, because he alone atoned for the sins of all. He not only preached forgiveness and salvation. He actually forgave and saved—not just one or two, but hundreds in his lifetime and, since his ascension, through the power of the Holy Spirit, thousands and millions through the ages, who have been serving like their Master the fallen, the downtrodden, the depressed, the oppressed, the poor, the wretched, the disabled, the sick, the underprivileged, the dispossessed and the sinning. Is there a comparison? And Jesus Christ is the source of the perpetual flow of this love and power.

In many other ways it can be shown to the satisfaction of any sincere seeker of truth that Christ is supreme, sovereign, superlative and final. But one must stop for the sake of brevity.

## VIII

Professor Bandopadhyaya has an astonishing amount of reverence, and love for, and faith in Christ—not to be found among many professing Christians. Nobody who even glances through the book can miss it. I am persuaded that he has done the kind of work among Hindus for Christ that John the Baptist did for the Messiah among the Jews. In this he has been preceded by others like Ram Mohan, Keshab Chandra, Rabindra Nath and Gandhi. Possibly our author has gone a little further because of his personal loyalty of *heart*. In the end John the Baptist's mind was beclouded with doubt: he apparently did not fully recognize and acknowledge the Messiah. Our Lord's word, rather painful but true, is applicable to many who prepare the way for the King of Kings. In Matthew 11:11 the Lord says, 'Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.' Mohammad Ali once said to Gandhiji that the least Muslim was superior to the Kafir, because he professed the truth of One God and One Humanity (Biblical verities). There is a grain of truth in these two statements which our Hindu friends would do well to ponder over.

I cannot judge my brother and fellow man. But there is one Judge, and his judgment is unerring and just.

R. C. DAS

Varanasi