

or Sāvitrî. This triad of gods presided over the three worlds, the earth, the air, and the sky. The worship of the sun has almost entirely died out in India, for there are very few temples or shrines dedicated to the sun in any part of that country. The most celebrated temple at Konârak (for Konârka, "corner-sun,"), in Orissa, now lies in ruins; while the temple of the sun at Gaya stands neglected. Nevertheless, there are reminiscences of solar worship left even to the present day in the daily prayers of the Hindus, and the most sacred among them is the Gâyatrî. Every pious Hindu of whatever sect pays homage to the rising sun every morning by repeating this brief prayer :

"AUM!

That essence which transcends the sun,
The light divine let us adore.
May of our minds it be the guide!"

The prayer, though still reverencing the sun, points beyond to something greater, to that light which is the guide of our mind and of which the sun is a mere symbol. Visâmitri¹ is named as the author of these beautiful lines; or as the Brahmans would say, its *rishi*, i. e., seer or discoverer; for the poem is divine, it existed from all eternity, but remained unknown until it was revealed to mankind through the prophetic inspiration of Visvâmitra.

At the midday service, another invocation of the sun, the Sûryâ-sûkta,² is repeated by many Hindus, which is considerably longer than the Gâyatrî, and its character may be determined by the following fragment which we quote in Sir Monier Monier-Williams's translation :

"Behold the rays of dawn, like heralds, lead on high
The Sun, that men may see the great all-knowing God.
The stars slink off like thieves, in company with Night,
Before the all-seeing eye, whose beams reveal his presence,
Gleaming like brilliant flames, to nation after nation.
Sûrya, with flaming locks, clear-sighted god of day,
Thy seven ruddy mares bear on thy rushing car.
With these thy self-yoked steeds, seven daughters of thy chariot,
Onward thou dost advance. To thy refulgent orb
Beyond this lower gloom, and upward to the light
Would we ascend, O Sun, thou god among the gods."

India is the classical country of the religio-philosophical development of mankind, and the Gâyatrî is the great landmark on the road from the ancient sun-worship to a purely philosophical conception of the deity.

THE FIRST CHRISTIANS ACCORDING TO F. J. GOULD.³

F. J. Gould is one of the most active authors among the English rationalists of the present day, and the present book shows him at his best. He is not a believer

¹ It is a remarkable fact that Vosvâmitra was not a Brahman but a Kshatriya; he did not belong to the priestly but to the warrior caste, which is an evidence of the truth that progress in a certain line is not always made by the profession but is forced upon the profession by outsiders. Cf. also Garbe's *Philosophy of Ancient India*, p. 57 ff.

² The Sûryâ-sûkta, recorded in the Rig-veda, I., 50, has been translated by Prof. A. Weber in *Ind. Studien*, v. 177 ff. The same hymn described the marriage ceremony of Sûryâ, daughter of the sun, to Soma, here probably the personified moon, which is the reason why it is also used in marriage ceremonies.

³ *The Religion of the First Christians*. By F. J. Gould. Watts & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London. 1901. Pp., 143. Price, 2s. 6d.

in miracles and dogmas, but does not belong to that class of freethinkers who speak only to condemn and write to ridicule. He recognises that we must learn to comprehend the spirit of Christianity and understand its origin and history.

We can do no better than characterise his booklet by extracts in his own words. He says:

"Treat the Gospel, if you will, as an entire legend. It makes no difference. Legend or half-legend, it was conceived in sincerity and believed with passion, and, for that reason, may be accepted as a sure index to the mind and character of its adherents. Our study of Christian origins must take a fresh turn or become unprofitable. A disciplined mind cannot now receive the Christian Gospel as historical; but neither can it remain contented with the mere proof of its mythical beginnings. Mythical structure is not the ultimate fact in the Christian or any other supernatural religion. The ultimate fact consists in the moral sentiment which chose the myth for its vehicle. Assume that Christ never performed a miracle, or rose from the dead. That is not the end of our research. We wish to know why the people came to believe in a Christ who performed miracles and rose from the dead. The Christ-myth is not the essential point of interest. The interest gathers round the people who embraced the myth, or the half-myth. Their religious temper, and not the dogmatic form of their creed, is the final goal of our study. We seek, not the narrow and personal, but the broad and popular significance of the Gospel. What were the social forces which it conveyed? What were the human grief, gladness, and anticipation which it imaged? And because we approach the Gospel as a token of the emotions of a community, and not as a display of individual moral prowess, we shall speak, not of the religion of Christ, but of the religion of the first Christians. Or, to word the question more scientifically, we shall attempt to ascertain the meaning of the Gospel, not as a biography, but as a factor in sociology.

"The man who can accuse the early Christians of fraud in thus creating an ideal religious figure must be grievously wanting in knowledge of human nature and of history.

"The Christian Gospel was created by the poor, for the poor, and in the language of the poor; and all its details betray the psychology of the poor.

"The poor have the Gospel preached to them,' so Jesus tells the messengers from John the Baptist. Yet more explicitly he says at the synagogue of Nazareth (when quoting Isaiah), 'The Lord anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor.' Elsewhere we read, 'The common people heard him gladly.' It is quite evident that the bulk of the audiences described in the Gospels as listening to Jesus was composed of the poorer folk. It was the poor who drank in his words through the long, long day until the sun set and the evening star closed the assembly. If only we knew how to read the Gospels, not to follow the Son of God on his tour of miracle, but to see the people—the poor fishermen and peasants—we should feel the extreme pathos of their continual hunger. In their prayer they murmur, 'Give us this day our daily bread!' Daily! As if every day dawned in doubt, and the loaf was for ever uncertain. The people dog the Master's steps in order to obtain food. When he provides loaves and fishes, they are anxious to make him a king. He can feed them, and is therefore royal! Plain bread constantly appears as the staple meal, and even the Kingdom of God borrows magnificence from its unlimited supply of bread.

"The Gospels teem with prejudice against the learned and (to use the current phrase) upper classes. This feeling against the upper classes is not a wholesome

democratic conviction that the possession of wealth lays the owners open to special vices of luxury and tyranny. It is an uncritical, sweeping vehemence which includes all rich men and officials under the head of villains.

"Whoever wrote the book of Matthew desired to convey the impression that the doctrines of Jesus were taught in an atmosphere of disease. The Sermon is preceded by an account of immense crowds resorting to Jesus for physical cure. Scarcely was the final word spoken when 'there came a leper who worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.' To the leper succeeds a centurion, who beseeches the Master's pity upon a sick servant. Jesus passed into a cottage, and found Peter's wife lying ill with fever. When even was come 'they brought him many that were possessed with devils,'—it being a superstition, peculiarly liable to adoption by the more ignorant classes, that hysteria and lunacy were caused by the indwelling of evil spirits. Jesus crossed the lake of Galilee, and expelled the devils from two maniacs who haunted the cemetery. He recrossed the water, and a paralytic implored his help. Having begun a discourse on the contrast between the old Pharisaic teaching and the new Gospel, he was interrupted: 'While he spake these things, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.' On his way to the ruler's house, Jesus was delayed by the woman with the issue of blood. Having restored the ruler's daughter from death, he was met by the appeal of two blind men. They departed with opened eyes, and a dumb man was led to the Master. Then, as if to carry the scene to a climax, the writer adds, in one sweeping sentence, that 'Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.' And he closes with the tender passage:

" 'When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers.'

"Nothing so reveals the temper of the founders of the Gospel as their conception of prayer. There is a captivating simplicity in the manner of their approach to God. They come without caution, without balancing the probabilities. They come as children who imagine that their father has boundless storehouses, or as ill-instructed voters who suppose an Act of Parliament is omnipotent to change a social custom. An educated man, or a man sufficiently educated to be a theologian, would frame his prayer with a certain collegiate nicety, as if God were a professor who would carefully revise the terms of the supplication, or scan the prosody of the verse. He would ask Heaven for things in general, and carefully avoid committing himself to particular requests. The collegiate method, if one may so call it, is well enough illustrated in the collect which the Church of England uses on Trinity Sunday:

" 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.'

Now, that is the prayer of a bureaucracy. It has an official polish; it preserves a shrewd equipoise between deference and flattery; it gives more space to eulogy of God than to the business of the petitioner; half of it is a preface; a phrase or two

suffices to give a delicate hint that the speaker expects a gratuity; and the prayer ends with a return to the original theme of compliment. The peasants of the New Testament have never learnt this devout urbanity. They pray as a wounded creature cries, as a desolate woman sobs, as a bereaved parent sighs: 'Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean'; 'Save us, we perish'; 'My daughter is even now dead; but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live'; 'Thou son of David, have mercy on us.' The contrast between the formal and spontaneous is quite clear to the mind of the proletariat. Pharisees have a mannerism which deserves ridicule. When the shallow ritualist goes to the temple, he delivers himself in pompous style, at which the workingman cannot forbear smiling: 'God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I possess.' But the publican, eloquent in his uneloquence, utters only a broken exclamation, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner,' and touches the very heart of Heaven with his plaint. Prayer must be clothed with modesty, and its sensitive fibres shrink from the glare of the public way. He who has anything to beg of God had better whisper. Hypocrites stand at street corners and address speeches to the crowd under pretence of beseeching the pity of the Lord. But the artless Christian retires to a little chamber of his cottage, and secretly murmurs his griefs and hopes. He lisps, as a child might lisp, 'Papa, mamma.' Hunger-driven, burdened with debt to the village merchant, tried by the whims of quarrelsome neighbors, fearful of the mystery of nature and fate, the poor soul lays bare its anxieties, its wants, and its trust. The Lord's Prayer is, in reality, the People's Prayer. Lords receive and grant; they do not implore. The prayer enshrined in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 9-13) is essentially the expression of the poor man's heart. No aristocrat would ask for bread, or vex his mind with the question of debts. He would wish for a greater dignity, a larger tranquillity of temper, a more extensive and philosophic view of life and death. But the plebeian prays thus (and I change the worn and traditional wording in order to display the spirit and suppress the mere formula):

" 'Father dear in heaven; With respect we utter your name; Let the kingdom that we wait for come soon; And we, poor simple folk, will do your bidding quite as honestly as it is done in heaven; Give us bread, for we are hungry; Wipe out our debts to you, as we forgive our neighbors their little debts to us; Do not let the trial of life be too hard for us, for the world has scant mercy on the poor; And save us from the Evil One.'

"There is a pathetic quaintness in this innocent faith. Good fathers anticipate their children's desires; God is a good father; he will hasten to provide all we need,—that is the reasoning of the first Christians. One has only to knock, and the door of the treasury will swing open. If only the disposition be kept sweet and pious, the material world may be trusted to bend itself to the service of the children of God. The disciple should make no calculations for the meals and the clothing of the future. All is planned as surely as the march of the stars and seasons. 'Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.' Such is the placid assurance which the Christian experiences in his blither moods. But, like all untrained characters, he suffers changes from hope to sadness. He then encourages himself with the parable of the persistent widow. By force of repetition, she compelled a callous judge to listen to her story of ill-treatment, and at length he avenged her. And so also will God yield to the suasive tears of his chosen people: 'Shall not God avenge his own elect, who cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?'"

Our author concludes :

"The New Testament will now have an interest for us, not as a picture of Jesus, not as a wonder-book, not as a divine revelation, but as the unveiling of the heart, the grief, the struggles and the hopes of the people in whose breasts the new religion was created. The Gospel is not in the book, but in the life of the people.

"The Christ of the New Testament shows us the first Christians more than he shows us himself. In him, as in a looking-glass, we see a crowd of fishermen, tanners, dockers, dyers, slaves, tax-gatherers, and tear-stained women who had fled from the shame of the harlot's house . . . and Christianity has had to stay here until the world has learned that the poor are members of the human family. . . . It raised them to a feeling of self-respect, and it brought them nearer to each other in fraternal sympathy. It gave value to the soul, not the body; to the spiritual element, not the civic. The poor Christian proudly claimed relationship with God, but did not ask for political freedom and suffrage. The Gospel stamped 'the least of these my brethren' as a thing of living and abiding value in the constitution of the world. Christianity, as such, could do no more. But it was a great work to accomplish."

CONSOLATION.

TO A FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

Once at a funeral I heard, surprised,
 The Minister, in tender, reverent tones
 Which touched all hearts, say: Friends, let us rejoice!
 Let us rejoice that death has lost its sting!
 That one beloved is freed from care and pain,
 Hath gained eternal peace, and joy, and love,
 That e'en the grave is bright with victory!
 And then a breath of that celestial peace
 Seemed to descend and touch the audience
 With an ineffable and holy calm.
 Over and o'er again I have recalled
 The consolation of that place and hour,
 As I do now for thee, though thou hast lost
 Thy best beloved of those most near and dear.
 For she at last has triumphed over pain,
 And grief, and weariness, and suffering,
 And hath become, for so the Scriptures teach,
 One of God's ministers to those who still
 Have duties to perform which keep them here.
 Still softly speaking to thy thought and heart,
 She bids thee lift thine eyes and see the glow
 Of the eternal life upon the hills.
 She waits thee there, and thy remaining days
 Shall not be darker for her absence here,
 But brighter for her smile from paradise.

Be thus consoled, and though to-day be dark,
 To-morrow will be filled with heavenly light.

CHARLES C. BONNEY,