

**Missionary Message to Hinduism:
A Critical Study of T.E. Slater's Contribution
to Fulfilment Theology in India**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis constitutes my personal research conducted at the University of Edinburgh and United Theological College, Bangalore. The Work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. All sources used in the thesis are cited in accordance with University of Edinburgh guidelines.

Kiyoung Jin,
15 September, 2008

Abstract

Thomas Ebenezer Slater (1840-1912) was an English missionary scholar who appealed to the educated Hindus of India from 1866 to 1905, based on the idea that the age-long aspiration of Hinduism is fulfilled in Christianity.

The thesis aims to analyse the entire corpus of Slater's writing, in order to come to a scientific assessment of his contribution (a) to interpreting the Christian gospel in relation to Hindu philosophy and 19th century educated Hindus, and (b) to the development of 19th century Protestant fulfilment theology.

The five arguments of the thesis are advanced as following. Firstly, Slater was markedly emerged that fulfilment model was the dominant major model to reach the Hindus in the late 19th century in India. Secondly, Slater not only laid the foundations of 19th century Protestant fulfilment theology, but developed its organised form from 1876 to 1910. Thirdly, Slater pioneered, among Protestant missionaries, an irenic relationship between Christianity and Hinduism, and indigenous Christian theology, based on his application of the *logos* doctrine to the Hindu Vedānta. Fourthly, Slater's theology had a major influence in the preparation of the Commission IV (The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions) of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. Lastly, Slater's theological approach to world faiths was exemplary of late 19th century Congregationalist theology on both sides of the Atlantic, and in India.

Chapter One examines British attitudes to Hinduism in the 19th century, particularly in terms of the time when tolerant attitudes emerged. Chapter Two deals with the life of Slater and his intellectual and religious background, essential in understanding the development of his theological reflections on fulfilment. Chapter Three details Slater's audience, his approach to them and his methodology. The core of this thesis is contained in Chapter Four: Slater's view of Hinduism and his message to the Hindus; divine reason in Hinduism, Christ as the Fulfiller, and Christianity as an Eastern religion. Chapter Five focuses on the distinctive Congregational principles related to fulfilment theology, along with the leading Congregationalists' links to fulfilment theology. Chapter Six investigates Slater's influence on the Commission IV of Edinburgh Missionary Conference. Chapter Seven discusses the criticisms made by J.N. Farquhar, A.G. Hogg, H. Kraemer, R. Panikkar and the Dalit theologians. Finally, the legacy of Slater is suggested as the conclusion.

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Introduction

Research Topic

Formulating a missionary message is an essential and challenging task for those who work in cross-cultural contexts. The tricky issue of mission discernment is further complicated by the fact that the audience does not encounter Christianity from a neutral position, but from within a definitive historical and socio-cultural context. How to deal with the established religious, intellectual and social conditions is thus inseparably related to what the missionary message should be. One of the major 19th century missionary approaches to the native faiths was negative, aggressive and disparaging, since they were recognised as evil or demonic. On the other hand, in the late 19th century when the British governed India, there emerged another major missionary approach which was sympathetic to Hinduism, recognising some common truths as a preparation for the Christian gospel. From this sympathetic perspective, traditional faiths and culture should not be destroyed but fulfilled and corrected by Christ, the Consummator and Fulfiller.

Although there were many precursors of the so-called fulfilment idea both in Britain and India, English missionary Thomas Ebenezer Slater (1840-1912) framed the classical fulfilment theology and promoted it from 1875 in Southern India. Three decades after Slater initiated his work as a fulfilment missionary, John Nicol Farquhar (1861-1929), the well-known representative of fulfilment theology, expressed his first fulfilment idea. Slater was a London Missionary Society missionary who worked for four decades from 1867 onwards in Calcutta, Madras, and Bangalore, particularly seconded for the educated Hindus of India. He was acknowledged by Eric Sharpe as the first educationalist who made use of the idea that the age-long quest of Hinduism could in some sense be regarded as being fulfilled in Christianity.¹ Martin Maw mentioned him as one of the leading fulfilment theologians along with the Scottish missionary J. N. Farquhar.² Kenneth Cracknell considered him as one of eight missionaries who made a decisive contribution to the formulating of the missionary message in relation to non-Christian religions, particularly in 1910 at the Edinburgh

¹ Eric Sharpe, *Not to Destroy But to Fulfil: The Contribution of J. N. Farquhar to Protestant Missionary Thought in India before 1914* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells Boktryckeri AB, 1965), 54.

² Martin Maw, *Visions of India: Fulfilment Theology, the Aryan Race Theory, and the Work of British Protestant Missionaries in Victorian India* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1986), 331.

World Missionary Conference.³ Considering these assessments, T. E. Slater was, without a doubt, a very important theologian within the realm of fulfilment theology in India.

Slater's fulfilment theology was born within a historical context in which Christianity was being attacked as detestable by educated high caste Hindus, not because of Christian faith itself, but because of the implication of becoming Christians: Christianity was rejected as foreign and dishonourable, destroying the beloved Indian faith and culture. Unless the denunciatory attitude was discarded in favour of a perspective which could do justice to Hinduism and Christianity, there could be little meaningful communication between Slater and Hindu leaders. Thus, Slater formulated the fulfilment theology, along with the method of sympathy, for presenting an irenic and indigenised missionary message to the educated Hindus. According to Slater's fulfilment theology, the best ideal in Hindu scriptures and the highest aspirations of the Hindus for the union with God should be preserved and respected, rather than destroyed, since they had been inspired and prepared by the logos, the Christ-within, only to be fulfilled and satisfied by the incarnated Christ, the Christ-without.

Slater's missionary message to the Hindus was that God had not left them without witness and the promise of redemption in the writings of their sages: God sent the historical Jesus as the fulfiller of their aspirations and the redemptive prophecy of God in Hinduism. Importantly, he put his premium in creating his message by excluding the British mould and on Vedāntic colouring which constituted Indian temperament by the work of the logos. Therefore, Slater's fulfilment theology is acknowledged as providing a necessary foundation for getting an irenic and indigenous missionary message across to the Hindus, without compromising the uniqueness of Christ.

Nevertheless, Slater's contribution remains relatively unknown, predominantly overshadowed by the work of Farquhar. The reason why Slater, though having been recognised as a top-notch fulfilment missionary in India, was not recognised as a typical fulfilment missionary by C. H. Robinson, the reporter of Hinduism section in

³ Kenneth Cracknell, *Justice, Courtesy and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914* (London: Epworth Press, 1995), 107.

the Commission IV of Edinburgh 1910 World Missionary Conference, remains a significant question which has theological, political, and practical implications.

This thesis argues that Slater was not just a precursor, but a major player in developing a fulfilment theology, which he formulated throughout his entire missionary career and which he had already articulated it prior to 1903, when Farquhar first published his views on fulfilment. Secondly, Slater pioneered, among Protestant missionaries, an irenic relationship between Christianity and Hinduism, based on his application of the logos doctrine to the Hindu Vedānta. Slater was perhaps the first theologian who appreciated the justification for constructing Indian Christian theology in relation to Vedānta thought. Thirdly, Slater's theology had a major influence in the preparation of the Commission IV (*The Christian Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*) of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference.

This research seeks to make an original contribution to the study of the missionary message to Hinduism, by drawing attention to, and examining the theological explorations of T. E. Slater, demonstrating his significance in the historical encounter between Hinduism and Christianity.

Research Questions

This thesis is limited to an analysis of Slater's theological enquiry into the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity, which would determine the heart of his presentation of the Christian message to the Hindus or Hinduism. The scope is restricted to examining those theological writings which have been published and his letters to the London Missionary Society, primarily in terms of Hindu-Christian relationship.

In order to explore the argument mentioned in the above research topic, this thesis raises a series of research questions.

Firstly, Was Slater just a secondary figure next to Farquhar or a major contributor to the development of fulfilment theology in India in terms of Slater's chronological priority and theological articulation?

This question is related to the significance of Slater's contribution to the foundation and systemization of fulfilment theology and it will be further specified in the following questions.

1) What evidence can be found that the rise of Slater's reasonably articulated view on fulfilment theology pre-dates Farquhar?

2) Can any significant differences be identified in Slater's fulfilment theology in comparison with Farquhar's full-orbed views?

Secondly, how did Slater employ his logos theology to set up an irenic relationship between Christianity and Hinduism, and to formulate his indigenous Christian message? This question is regarding the role of Slater's logos idea which was central to his fulfilment theology and distinctive from Farquhar's fulfilment theology. To clarify the second question, the following questions become significant.

1) Why is the logos idea of Slater vital to the establishment of an irenic relationship of Christians with Hindus?

2) In what respect does the logos idea provide an enduring foundation for presenting the Christian message in indigenous mould?

Thirdly, was Slater just one of many correspondents who wrote papers to Commission IV of World Missionary Conference in 1910, or was he a key figure who had formative influence on the missionary message in relation to world religions at the Edinburgh Conference?

Lastly, was Slater's approach typical of the Congregationalist tradition, or was it just the convergence of coincidences among some Congregationalists? The leading fulfilment missionaries in India such as Slater, Farquhar, J. P. Jones, and B. Lucas were Congregationalists. Why did Congregationalism among many Protestant traditions significantly affect the fulfilment missionaries?

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this thesis is firstly a historical survey, looking at the British attitude to Hinduism and the rise of Slater's fulfilment theology in terms of the contributions of certain major figures in history. In so doing, historical-critical analysis will be employed as part of the methodology in assessing the degree and range of the contribution of the precursors to Slater's fulfilment theology. Secondly, a descriptive-analytical method is employed to review and assess Slater's original writings and his theological content, particularly with respect to his method of sympathy and logos idea which cause the unique features of his theology. In addition,

a comparative methodology will be used in order to assess Slater's contribution to the classical fulfilment theology with respect to Farquhar.

Aim and Contribution

Within the perspective of these research questions and methodology, this research will offer a comprehensive review and critical assessment of the theology of Slater, and will thus redress a major omission in the intellectual history of nineteenth century Protestant theological scholarship in India. Secondly, the thesis aims to suggest the potentiality of Slater's logos theology which might justify relating Indian religious notions to the presentation of the Christian message to the Hindus. Thirdly, in examining Slater's influence on his contemporaries and the 1910 Edinburgh Conference, the thesis will assess his contribution to the development of the modern ecumenical Protestant missionary movement, offering more thorough scholarly interpretation of his thought than has so far been attempted.

Through this research the following outcomes will be expected. To begin with, it will bring to light Slater's corpus of theological writing that shaped the development of 19th century Protestant fulfilment theology from the context of his forty year experience of communicating the Gospel to educated Hindus. In addition, it will contribute to presenting a fuller picture of 19th century Protestant fulfilment theology in India.

Primary Sources

The sources on which this study is based can be divided into two categories: published and unpublished. Slater wrote fourteen books including pamphlets, 49 papers for conferences and periodicals which were mostly found in the library of United Theological College in Bangalore and Madras Christian College, Tambaram. Slater's annual reports to the London Missionary Society provide a valuable source, which is located in the L. M. S. Archive in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

The principal unpublished sources which have been utilized in the thesis are Slater's letters to the L. M. S. and the outgoing correspondence to Slater from the Foreign Secretaries of L. M. S., all of which are available in the L. M. S. Archive. The total number of Slater's letters in the SOAS Library amounts to two hundred and

six, two thirds of which are written in copper plate handwriting. It is noteworthy that a few of letters were written by Slater's critic, the True Friend of Missions.

The other significant sources are the sixty-five manuscript responses given by Indian missionary correspondents, including Slater, Farquhar and A. G. Hogg, to the questionnaire sent by Commission IV of the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. These responses were consulted in the Archive of the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, University of Edinburgh.

Lastly, the family archive of David Firth,⁴ the great grandson of Slater's daughter, Dora K. Slater, was helpful to understanding of the life of T. E. Slater.

Outline of Chapters

This work is divided largely into three parts. Part one, comprising chapters One and Two presents the historical, intellectual, and theological background to Slater's theology. In Chapter One, British attitudes to Hinduism in the 19th century will be reviewed particularly in terms of the time when tolerant attitudes emerged. Eric Sharpe's 'After-Farquhar' claim will be critically challenged by the historical literature which supports the 'Before-Farquhar' position adopted within this thesis. Chapter Two deals with the life of Slater and his intellectual and religious background, essential in understanding the development of his theological reflections on fulfilment.

Part two, comprising chapters Three to Five, discusses the rise of Slater's theology, his missionary message to Hinduism and his Congregational connection to fulfilment theology. Chapter Three examines Slater's audience, his approach to them and his methodology. The core of this thesis is contained in Chapter Four: Slater's view of Hinduism and his message to the Hindus in comparison with Farquhar's. That the logos idea of Slater is vital to the consistency of his theology, thus enhancing the adaptability of the fulfilment theology to the Indian mindset, will be examined in this chapter. Chapter Five refers to the distinctive Congregational principles related to fulfilment theology, along with the leading Congregationalists' link to fulfilment theology.

⁴ David Firth is also the son of C. B. Firth who wrote *An Introduction to Indian Church History* (Madras: Published for the Senate of Serampore College by the Christian Literature Society, 1961).

The last part, consisting of two chapters and the Conclusion, examines Slater's contribution to the Commission IV of Edinburgh 1910, and provides a critical assessment of his theology. While Chapter Six examines Slater's influence, Chapter Seven discusses the criticisms made by Farquhar, A. G. Hogg, H. Kraemer, R. Panikkar and the Dalit theologians. Finally, the legacy of Slater will be dealt with in the Conclusion.

Chapter One

British Attitudes to Hinduism in the Nineteenth Century

Introduction: The Problem Resulting from Eric Sharpe's Study of J. N. Farquhar

When T. E. Slater pioneered and popularised among British Protestant missionaries an irenic relationship between Christianity and Hinduism, he employed the fulfilment idea which was prefigured by K. M. Banerjea (1813-1885) and R. Caldwell (1814-1891), and reinforced by the comparative religions of Max Müller (1823-1900) in nineteenth century Britain and the British-ruled India. It follows, therefore, that before the extent and nature of Slater's contribution to late nineteenth century missionary thought is appreciated, some picture of the backdrop on which he founded the fulfilment theology and interacted with his contemporaries is necessary. Diverse groups' attitudes towards Hinduism will be examined in this chapter whether British and Indian, Catholic and Protestant, Christian and non-Christian.

Former researchers have not yet dealt with the role Indian Christians played in shaping British attitudes to Hinduism. It is argued that the missionaries were not only the givers, but also receivers. Slater was significantly influenced by K. C. Sen (1838-1884), K. M. Banerjea and the so-called 'Calcutta school' of Jesuit missionaries were influenced by Brahmabandhab Upādhyāy's (1861-1907) fulfilment theology on the Catholic side.⁵ In this respect, Indian Christians, as subjects of the British Empire, should not be overlooked in their role shaping British attitudes. The reason for dealing with this broad range of British attitudes lies in the fact that it can provide an extensive and often corrective picture of nineteenth century British ideas of Hinduism in and around India, which may aptly illustrate the rapidly increasing pressure in all directions for missionaries and Indian Christians to adopt a more tolerant approach to Hinduism towards the end of the nineteenth century.⁶

George D. Bearce dealt at length with various British attitudes towards India from

⁵ Based in Bengal, William Wallace, Georges Dandoy, and Pierre Johanns initiated a new attitudes, succeeded by B. Upādhyāy, to Hinduism not merely as something to be tolerated but as containing positive values for Christ and the Gospel.

⁶ The term 'British' is used in this chapter as British citizens along with Indians under the rule of East India Company before 1858 or the Crown after 1858.

1784 to 1858, though he excluded Christian attitudes in his work.⁷ On the other hand, Eric Sharpe wrote exclusively about Christian attitudes to Hinduism after 1858 in his *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil* (1965) and *Faith Meets Faith* (1977). Particularly, Sharpe's understanding of general missionary attitudes to Hinduism in negative terms was crucial to subsequent researchers because he produced the definitive work on the contribution of J. N. Farquhar to fulfilment theology. The observation of Timothy C. Tennent possibly shows Sharpe's influence regarding Christian attitudes to Hinduism and Indian culture in nineteenth century Bengal: 'the general attitude towards Hinduism by 19th C. Christians is negative and confrontational'.⁸ Sharpe firmly believed that 'before the turn of the century those evangelical missionaries who were ready to turn their backs to the negative attitude to Hinduism and follow the sympathetic attitudes of Max Müller and M. Monier-Williams were few and far between'.⁹ In Sharpe's view, fulfilment theology was just in the budding stage; thus, he believed there was no sympathetic appreciation for Hinduism among evangelical missionaries on anything like a wide scale before Farquhar.

It is because, to begin with, he took notice chiefly of some factors strengthening the traditional missionaries' negative view of Hinduism without looking at factors which significantly undermined that view. Secondly, it is because Sharpe underestimated how rapidly and profoundly the evolutionary theory, fulfilment theology and historical biblical criticism influenced the missionaries. In order to give a clearer picture of the nineteenth century and particularly to indicate the dramatic change of British missionaries' and Indian Christians' attitudes to Hinduism from antagonistic to irenic in the late nineteenth century in India, it seems necessary to thoroughly deal with Sharpe's interpretation bearing on this problem before presenting the details of each attitude .

Sharpe identified five consolidating factors in his own analysis for the perpetuation of traditional missionary's denunciatory attitudes to Hinduism: first, English education imposed a total rejection of traditional Hindu culture on the deracinated educated class of India; second, the mission compound mentality separated Indian

⁷ George D. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1961).

⁸ Timothy C. Tennent, *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 82.

⁹ E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, 55-56.

converts from their indigenous community; third, missionaries' concentration on the lower castes lost touch with the higher Hinduism among the neo-Hindu intelligentsia; fourth, the conservatism of the missionary society in the West bound missionaries in a strict orthodox position; finally, the second Evangelical Awakening wave associated with Dwight Moody still drew a sharp distinction between the light of Christianity and the darkness of the world.¹⁰

However, these facts were fleeting rather than entrenched in stone. For example, first of all, even though English medium education seemed to militate against Indian customs and religions for time as pointed out by Sharpe, it is clear that English education ultimately brought about Hindu religious revival and stirred the national spirit. The leading reformers Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), Keshub Chandra Sen, Swāmi Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883), Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), and Swāmi Vivekānanda (1863-1902) were all awakened by English medium education and attempted to rediscover the past golden essence of Indian heritage along with the endeavour to make it relevant to modern India. Thanks to their efforts from the late 1870s onwards, the Hindu renaissance took hold of the mind of educated India across the board.

As Slater pointed out, the national sentiment that had been growing stronger year by year was at the heart of this revival movement in India.¹¹ Most importantly, English educated Christians such as K. M. Banerjea and Lal Behari Day (1824-1894) were responsible for starting the Indian National Congress in 1885. Many Indian Christians, according to G. A. Oddie, enthusiastically supported the National Congress and attended its annual meetings.¹² In this respect J. C. Ingleby rightly pointed out, 'the national movement and its outcome, Indian independence, was perhaps the most obvious example of an unforeseen consequence of missionary education'.¹³ Therefore, contrary to Sharpe's statement, English education resulted both in allowing Indians to rediscover their brilliant Indian heritage rather than to

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-33.

¹¹ T. E. Slater, "Religious Movement amongst Hindus in South India during the Decade", ed. George Patterson and C. Michie Smith, *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (Madras: Lawrence Asylum Press, 1894), 128.

¹² Oddie wrote that 35 Christians out of a total of 607 registered delegates attended the Indian National Congress in 1887 according to the official Congress report. See G. A. Oddie, "Indian Christians and the National Congress, 1855-1910" *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. II, No. 1 (June 1968): 45.

¹³ J. C. Ingleby, *Missionaries, Education and India: Issues in Protestant Missionary Education in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 327.

reject it totally and in creating Indian nationalism among the educated class rather than rendering them 'deracinated'.

Secondly, the so-called 'mission compound mentality' in Sharpe's analysis did not seem to be indispensable in the Indian setting even as a metaphor. For some converts it might be vital, as he suggested, to find a haven from persecution and get a job in the mission compounds. However, the other converts tended to remain among their own local community rather than find their nest in the mission compound in order to maintain their caste identity and privilege. Converts electing to move to the mission compounds effectively lost their caste status and duties, which in turn lost them respect and social intercourse within the wider Hindu community. Hindus would no longer employ them and respectable marriages would be virtually impossible to arrange. That was one of the major reasons why a group of Tanjore converts brought an appeal to Bishop Reginald Heber in 1824 and Bishop Daniel Wilson in 1835 for leniency toward their keeping caste duty.¹⁴

Besides, some converts chose to remain in their community for maintaining an access to their relatives and neighbours for their evangelical purposes. It was not easy for them as Christians to join various local Hindu festivals and keep Hindu social customs which were accused as evil or sin to be shunned by the unsympathetic missionaries. But, for many converts it was still the place in which they had to get married, work and live with their own people. Furthermore, local community was not an evil place to be cut off from, but a holy place to share with the light and love from the Gospel. In addition, obviously, missionaries could not provide all converts with residence and jobs. Consequently, it is fair to say that, though the mission compound mentality, as Sharpe remarked, seemed indispensable in some contexts, it could not and did not hinder Indian converts from rendering Christian life holy within their own community.

Thirdly, while admitting that a greater portion of missionaries worked in mass movement areas by 1900, the influence of missionaries who worked in both higher education institutions and special agencies among the educated class should not be overlooked. Since Thomas B. Macaulay's (1800-1859)¹⁵ aggressive English medium

¹⁴ Duncun B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and Policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (London and Dublin: Curzon Press, 1980), 124.

¹⁵ English politician and historian. A whig MP for Calne, Leeds, and Edinburgh, he became secretary

policy on Indian Education of 1835 was launched, college graduates increased sharply and reached the stage of the so-called educational explosion from 1870s onward in India. In accordance with these special needs, new missionary agencies like the Oxford Brotherhood at Calcutta and the Cambridge Mission at Delhi were supplied and the duty of the Church in respect to them came to be more clearly recognized.¹⁶ That was the reason why Slater himself was seconded as an independent agent for the educated class from the London Missionary Society and many others as well were subsequently recruited by a number of societies.

Meanwhile, most educational missionaries and special agents like William Miller, F. W. Kellett, and Slater were prolific writers who wrote many books, pamphlets and articles in missionary magazines through which they diffused their ideas. They also presented their papers during monthly missionary conferences. Moreover, it should be noted that there was a wide range of newspapers and periodicals published in English and local languages which reflected the Hindu renaissance movement and the emerging nationalism among the educated people.¹⁷ The focus of most of the Indian newspapers was on social and religious reform until 1875, while the newspapers after 1875 became more nationalistic and increasingly negative towards the British presence.¹⁸ Thus, it was unavoidable for most missionaries, contrary to what Sharpe said, to become aware of what was currently happening not only in the mass movement areas but also among the neo-Hindu intelligentsia.

Fourthly, the conservatism of missionary societies varied depending on the theology of the particular mission board, and therefore it cannot be said overall to have exerted a crucial influence on missionaries wishing to turn to more tolerant attitudes to Hinduism. Moreover, it is noteworthy that many leading academics and clergymen in Britain who exerted their influence on missionaries endorsed comparative religions and propounded fulfilment ideas from the mid-nineteenth

at war, and was involved in drafting a new penal code for India and inaugurating a national educational system as a member of the Supreme Council in India.

¹⁶ See Slater's second paper in Bombay Missionary Conference in the *Report of the Decennial Indian Missionary Conference* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1892), 271.

¹⁷ According to T. Tennent in his *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations* (56-58), the *Ārya Samāj* paper in Bengal was circulated with a distribution of over 20,000 copies per week by 1889. And English newspapers of British origin were available such as the *Times of India*, started in 1861, the *Pioneer* in 1865, and the *Statesman* in 1875. Besides, there were English language newspapers and periodicals owned and edited by Indians: the *Hindu Patriot* (1853), the *Bengalee* (1868) and the *Indian Mirror* (1861).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 59.

century onwards. For example, Bishop Brooke Foss Westcott, involved in the initiation of the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, displayed a keen interest from the 1890s in fulfilment theology in that he stated explicitly that the logos providentially operated within the non-Christian religions.¹⁹ Most importantly, Edward White Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1883, should be noted, because as the President of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he conveyed, in the Presidential address of 1892, his very positive view of world religions to the missionaries and missionary candidates. Benson acknowledged that there was much good in the non-Christian religions, and saw them as divinely inspired and ordained, urging his missionaries to study comparative religions carefully.²⁰ Through Benson's influence the sympathetic view of world religions were found to be acceptable and legitimate in the Anglican Church's main line missionary body. In addition, Norman Macleod, the friend of Max Müller, who became the Convener of the Church of Scotland's India Mission in 1864, spoke in the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1872: 'As every Hindu and the whole Hindu system find their fulfilment in Christianity, so caste will be fulfilled in Christian brotherhood'.²¹

The above examples indicate that missionary societies like the Cambridge Mission to Delhi, the S. P. G., and the Church of Scotland's India Mission often encouraged their missionaries to adopt tolerant views of local religions rather than simply prohibiting Christians from associating with them. In the case of Slater, he was placed in a difficult position, not because of the negative policy of L. M. S., but because of a negative attitude of an individual missionary colleague. Ultimately, he was re-endorsed by the society though he did not retreat from his tolerant position at all. Clearly, Slater's case exemplifies that some societies adopted open and tolerant attitudes towards the world religions in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Further Problems with Sharpe's Theses

Along with the above clear factors, the crucial weakness of Sharpe's argument lies in the fact that he severely underestimated the degree, range and impact of new trends, including the theory of evolution, historical criticism, comparative religions,

¹⁹ Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment: A History and Study of Fulfilment Theology in Modern British Thought in the Indian Context* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2001), 195-197.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 223.

²¹ Donald Macleod, *Memoir of Norman Macleod*, Vol. II (London: Daldy, Isbister & Co., 1876), 152.

fulfilment theology, and the anti-Christian Hindu renaissance in the later nineteenth century. Even though Sharpe mentioned some sympathetic Orientalists and missionaries as exceptional cases in his *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, he highlighted them mainly to say that they were attacked by and isolated from the majority of missionaries.²² However, these sympathetic missionaries were only a part of large bulk of missionaries who adapted to the above trends in the context of reaching Hindus.

The new trends consisted of five factors tending to encourage and expand more tolerant attitudes to Hinduism in nineteenth century Britain and British governed India. First of all, the Darwinian idea of evolution laid a foundation for a more tolerant study of religion and fulfilment theology. Darwinism contends that human beings are evolved from the lower forms of life by natural selection and thus provided fulfilment theologians with a key concept, the idea that religions gave way to one another in evolutionary process.²³ As there were different levels of life, or species in Darwin's evolutionary world, so too were there different levels or grades of religions, each being an improvement or fulfilment on that below it. For example, Monier Monier-Williams (1819-1899) used the concept of evolution to describe his fulfilment theology in that 'higher' religions replace 'lower' religions; and that Christianity, as the highest religion, is that which satisfies the needs of all people.²⁴

Ultimately the evolutionary theory brought more tolerant attitudes to religions by providing scientific interpretation on the relationship between Christianity and world religions in similar rather than different terms. In the social evolution scheme, all religions could be arranged in 'stages' corresponding to the 'stages' of biological evolution. In other words, all historical religions are basically the same in terms of religious instincts, while Christianity could be kept as the supreme religion at the moment. However ridiculous the world religions seemed to be, they were at least the primeval stage in the process of religious evolution. Despite claims of uniqueness, Christianity was reduced to one religion among many. Consequently, the theory of evolution lifted up the world religions to a revelation, while it took down Christianity

²² E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, 35-56.

²³ Eric Sharpe (1965), Martin Maw (1986) and Paul Hedges (2001) maintained in unison that the idea of evolution was one of the key concepts of fulfilment theology.

²⁴ E. Sharpe, *Ibid.*, 51-52.

from the status of unique revelation.

The evolution theory, as stated first in 1859 by Darwin, and popularized by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) and T. H. Huxley (1825-1895), with its implicitly negative view of the Creator God in Genesis, could not but severely undermine traditional Evangelical Christianity. A conservative group totally refused to accept the theory, while the other group accepted it in a modified way. However, over the course of time, leading up to 1880, as Sharpe himself remarked, the Darwinian hypothesis was becoming virtually impossible to resist,²⁵ and, according to James Moore, by the end of the century 'with few exceptions, the leading Christian thinkers in Great Britain and America came to terms quite readily with Darwinism and evolution'.²⁶

A closely related second trend in theological thought was historical criticism. The historical critical method was applied to the biblical writings seeking the original meaning in their proper context in history. Its critical result was that the Bible was recognized as a book written by human authors with some unavoidable errors in its historical and cultural settings rather than as verbally inspired by God.²⁷ Hence, the historical criticism along with the evolutionary idea contributed to undermining seriously the foundation of the traditional authority of the Bible. And the pervasiveness of this trend was not limited to the liberal academics at the universities but expanded increasingly to churches at home. Furthermore, according to Slater's experience in the Summer School of Theology that met at Oxford in 1892, overseas missionaries frequently heard a great deal about the higher criticism of the Bible while on furlough.²⁸ Missionaries had to be able to respond intelligently and sympathetically to historical criticism, because they were confronted with quotations from J. S. Mill (1806-1873), H. Spencer (1820-1903), T. H. Huxley (1825-1895),²⁹ S. T. Coleridge (1772-1834), C. Kingsley (1819-1875)³⁰ and any figure whom missionaries knew, by the English educated Indians who had learnt how to reflect,

²⁵ Eric Sharpe, *Comparative Religion A History* (London, Duckworth, 1975), 47.

²⁶ James R. Moore, *Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America, 1870-1900* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 92.

²⁷ Alister E. McGrath, *A Passion for Truth the Intellectual Coherence of Evangelicalism* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996), 98.

²⁸ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, (September 1895): 3.

²⁹ English biologist who enthusiastically advocated Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

³⁰ English author and clergyman.

debate and reply. It is fair to say that those Indians who had such an up-to-date modern thought might be few in number, but simultaneously it seemed quite right to remember that those educated key communicators, in spite of the small number, exerted the enormous influence on both the rest of Indians and missionaries who had to have a keen awareness of their local people.

The third trend to solidify the positive attitudes to Hinduism was comparative religions. Originally, it was called a science of religion by its founder Friedrich Max Müller,³¹ but popularly called the science of comparative religions, studies of comparative religions, or simply comparative religions. This chapter employs the term, 'comparative religions', because it seems simple, popular and preferred by Slater.

'A Science of Religion, based on an impartial and truly scientific comparison of all, or all events, of the most important, religions of mankind, is now only a question of time. It is demanded by those whose voice cannot be disregarded...'³² This was the so-called foundation document of comparative religions addressed in 1870 by Müller, in his *Introduction to the Science of Religion*. Comparative religions, as Müller mentioned, employed the historical, critical, and comparative method, without acknowledging any predilection or premise, to investigate the origin, structure, characteristics, agreements and differences, and the relationship of various world religions.³³ Equality of the objects of comparison was indispensable before the tribunal of scientific investigation. 'Impartial and truly scientific comparison' required that all religions must be treated as being on the same footing: there was no distinction between revealed and natural religion.³⁴

The growth of comparative religions made a huge contribution to the positive assessment of Hinduism. In the first place, comparative religions saw many points of agreement between religions that led to the cultivation of a broader and more generous spirit towards world religions.³⁵ Such a discovery encouraged people to

³¹ Apart from Max Müller, Dutch Egyptologist C. P. Tiele as well might be called 'the father of comparative religion'. However, this chapter deals only with Max Müller because he was the more universal figure and worked in English speaking world.

³² F. M. Müller, *Introduction to the Science of Religion* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1873), 34.

³³ E. Sharpe, *Comparative of Religion A History*, xii.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 46.

³⁵ T. E. Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions: A Present Day of Plea* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1882), 114, 115.

recognize that no religion was wholly bad; that none has a monopoly of the truth.³⁶ Secondly, the comparative religions gave great momentum to the emergence of fulfilment theology, a new interpretation on world religions that functioned to diffuse widely the irenic attitudes to Hinduism in the late nineteenth century. The similarities found by comparative religions would be reasonable to suppose that fulfilment theology provided the best answer in the concept of preparation and fulfilment for many Christians to explain this finding.³⁷

Comparative religions prevailed with more rapidity before the turn of the century than one might have expected. For example, J. Macmillan Brown, an undergraduate in the 1870s, could remember in his personal memoirs that ‘every one of his contemporaries poring over the latest studies in comparative religions, trying to make sense of the myths and rites of far-flung civilizations that apparently prefigured the Gospels’.³⁸ In addition, the World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893 made a powerful thrust towards scattering the principles of comparative religions in British India. One of the main objects of the parliament was to show people, in a most impressive way, what and how many important truths the various religions hold and teach in common.

As the result of this parliament J. H. Barrows, A. M. Fairbairn and Cuthbert Hall visited India and delivered lectures on comparative religions for the Haskell Foundation. They presented in a conciliatory way, ‘the great truths of Christianity, its harmonies with the truths of other religions, and its rightful claims, to the scholarly and thoughtful people of India’.³⁹ Editorial notes in *The Harvest Field*⁴⁰ continued to report all the details on their lectures and expressed warm welcome: ‘The whole body of missionaries will give John Barrows a hearty welcome, and will do their best to make his visit a great success’.⁴¹ This was not just a courtesy greeting but their sincere hope.⁴² The whole body of missionaries welcomed him and wished his

³⁶ T. E. Slater, “Modern Thought and Missions”, 6.

³⁷ Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 22. T. E. Slater, “Modern Thought and Missions”, 6.

³⁸ John Macmillan Brown, *The Memoirs of John Macmillan Brown*, (Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1974). Quoted from Hedges’ *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 220, 221.

³⁹ Slater, “Religious Movements amongst Hindus in South India during the Decade”, 130.

⁴⁰ *The Harvest Field*, published in Bangalore from 1861 onwards, was a record of mission work in India and Ceylon, which specially devoted to missionary topics.

⁴¹ See editorial notes in *The Harvest Field* (Oct. 1896): 399.

⁴² Normally missionaries had fellowship with Barrows after the official lectures in every place: he also met local committees. See Current Mission News in *The Harvest Field* (Nov. 1896): 422.

success heartily because they believed that the rightful claims of Christianity could be secured by a more friendly, harmonious approach to Hinduism. This clearly indicated that comparative religions were widely acknowledged among missionaries as an effective bridge to reach the thoughtful minds of India in terms of evangelism.

The fourth crucial trend that contributed to the spread of more irenic attitudes to Hinduism was fulfilment theology. It endorsed Hinduism as a preparation, a divine witness in the form of universal logos, though Christ was kept as the fulfiller, or full revelation, in the form of the incarnated logos. Fulfilment theology placed Hinduism on a par in terms of a same logos or revelation with Christianity in a theological frame, just as evolutionary theory and comparative religions did in a scientific frame. As mentioned above, Sharpe believed that such a favourable attitude to Hinduism among missionaries was widespread only after Farquhar popularized it. This chapter, however, rejects Sharpe's view that fulfilment theology was a twentieth century phenomenon, agreeing with P. Hedges, who suggested an earlier time for fulfilment theology, saying 'by the 1890s it is probably fair to say that fulfilment theology was the most widely accepted paradigm for approaching the non-Christian religions within British theological thought'.⁴³ The major figures, according to Hedges, who put across fulfilment theology but were excluded by Sharpe were Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1901), Bishop of Durham, Arthur P. Stanley (1815-1881), Dean of Westminster, John Henry Newman (1801-1890), Archbishop of Westminster, Charles Gore (1853-1932), Bishop of Oxford, and Edward W. Benson (1829-96), Archbishop of Canterbury.

Nonetheless, Hedges' examples were not enough to confirm the earlier prevalence of fulfilment theology particularly in the Indian context because he, similar to Sharpe, lacked examples of British missionaries and Indian Christians. Sharpe and Hedges never dealt with the large influence of Indian Christians on missionaries, apart from K. M. Banerjea, Nehemiah Goreh and Brahmabandhab Upādhyāy. Undoubtedly, Indian converts tended to have more positive attitudes to Hinduism than missionaries. Hence, the first major monograph related to fulfilment theology was published by K. M. Banerjea,⁴⁴ one year before Slater wrote his first book *God Revealed*, and it was suffused with the fulfilment idea. Banerjea saw Jesus as the fulfiller of Hinduism,

⁴³ Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 226.

⁴⁴ K. M. Banerjee, *The Arian Witness* (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink and Co., 1875).

following K. C. Sen, who also had a considerable impact on Slater and other missionaries. Furthermore, there were numbers of Indian examples who supported fulfilment ideas in the late nineteenth century, including P. C. Mozoomdar (1840-1905), A. S. Appasamy (1848-1926) and N. V. Tilak (1862-1919). These leading high-caste-background Indian converts extended their influence not only over missionaries but also profoundly over Indian Christians. Even though Sharpe overlooked the high caste converts in terms of their number, it should be noted that the small numbers of high caste Christians had always been key communicators, particularly in the nineteenth century.

Along with the Indian Christians, there were a lot of missionaries who widely shared their fulfilment idea with their contemporaries making the most of periodicals, books, and missionary conferences. Although Sharpe mentioned only five fulfilment missionaries - T. E. Slater, F. W. Kellett, John Robson, William Miller, and G. M. Cobban - many more names could be added to the lists such as Bishop Lefroy, W. Sinclair, J. P. Jones, E. W. Redfern, J. R. Bacon, John Hewlett, Bernard Lucas and W. H. Campbell. Locating the logos theology of the Alexandrian fathers, the heart of Slater's theology, was not rare in the missionaries' writings. For example, John Hewlett wrote in 1885 at the Benares Missionary Conference,

But shall we present to the Hindus the glorious doctrine of salvation through Christ in the dogmatic and denunciatory style of such Latin fathers as Tertullian? Shall we not rather adopt the sympathetic and winning manner of Origen, and the other thoughtful and far-seeing Greek fathers, who endeavoured to persuade the Greeks that all the noblest ideas in their own philosophies were unconscious prophecies of the fuller, and more glorious doctrines of the Gospel of Christ? Truth is truth wherever it is found, whether in Hinduism or in Christianity...Let us adapt our blessed message to the thoughts of the men who feel the partial light and beauty of Hinduism and yearn for more.⁴⁵

Most importantly, even though not many missionaries accepted the pre-Christian logos beyond Judaism, as the editor of *The Harvest Field* insistently portrayed in 1895, 'every missionary' held that there were elements of truth and goodness in Hinduism to say the least.⁴⁶

Lastly, the Hindu renaissance, which was connected closely to Indian nationalism,

⁴⁵ John Hewlett, no title given, *The Evangelical Review*, Vol. XII, (1885-86): 80.

⁴⁶ Editorial Notes, *The Harvest Field* (June 1895): 253.

impelled missionaries to adopt an irenic approach to Hinduism. From the 1870s onwards a spirit of revival was working throughout India, which was apt to border on extremism. In India, Christians were disliked, not because of their beliefs, but because Christians appeared to be synonymous with what was opposed to the honour and independence of the nation.⁴⁷ Besides, Mrs. Annie W. Besant (1847-1933), the ardent British champion of Theosophy, seeking to re-convert India to its Vedic faith, stirred nationalism among Indians and rendered them antagonistic to Christianity. Fitting this new trend, the old denouncing attitude of the missionary to Hinduism was found to be not only worthless as an apologetic weapon and but also dangerous to missionaries. For example, C. M. S. missionary Dixon remarked that the Hindus were 'offended' at his comments, and missionary Edward Dent confessed that 'sometimes I received anonymous letters, which accused me of having vilified their gods and them, and in which I was threatened and warned not to preach in the streets.'⁴⁸ J. Hudson, a critic of Slater, also recognized the strong opposition both from opponents and friends of Christians, saying 'the new national feeling is unfavourable to Christianity as a foreign religion, and hence friends speak less warmly and opponents more bitterly than they did a dozen years ago'.⁴⁹

Hence Slater reported in 1876 to J. Mullens, the Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society, on the overall Indian sentiments in those days, saying 'If you adopt a denunciatory and authoritative tone, they simply will not listen to you, and would consign any book written in such a style immediately to the flames'.⁵⁰ Due to this antagonistic attitude of Indians to the British and therefore to Christianity, missionaries had to alleviate their disparaging attitude and take on a more tolerant attitude to Hinduism. Otherwise, they could not find any access to native people in India, or even survive. Consequently, in contrast to Sharpe's view, from the late 1870s onwards many missionaries, including so-called evangelical missionaries, had come increasingly to recognize the problematic situation or to sense the danger from

⁴⁷ Slater, *Report for 1897 of Work among the Educated Classes*, (Bangalore: London Mission, 1898), 6.

⁴⁸ Robert E. Frykenberg ed., *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500: with Special Reference to Caste, Conversion, and Colonialism* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 166.

⁴⁹ See J. Hudson's letter to the editor of *The Harvest Field* (June 1889): 413.

⁵⁰ Slater's Letters in CWM/LMS Archives in SOAS, South India Tamil Incoming Correspondence (1871-1882) Dated December 14, 1876.

Hindu renaissance and finally had to adapt themselves to the changed context for their own missionary cause.

As seen above, in the last few decades of the nineteenth century, traditional evangelical missionaries were inundated by increasing knowledge of Hinduism, historical criticism, and a universal phenomenon of comparative religions and fulfilment theology along with anti-Christian Hindu renaissance and Indian nationalism. Surrounded by such irresistible trends, many evangelical missionaries modified their traditional view of world religions and pragmatically adopted an irenic view towards Hinduism. Indeed, a few missionaries, including K. M. Banerjea, John Muir, Monier-Williams, Slater, and J. N. Farquhar, demonstrate a clear shift in attitude, from one of intolerance towards Hinduism, through their experience and encounter with the native people. Particularly James Long (1814-87), C. M. S. missionary, should be highlighted for his tolerant attitude to Hinduism and Islam while maintaining an evangelical position. He had a firm conservative theology that salvation was possible through Protestant Christianity alone and there was no salvation in Catholicism or in Hinduism or Islam or in any other non-Christian faith. We do not know if he accepted evolutionary theory or any principles of comparative religions, though he was influenced by Reginald Heber (1788-1826) and F. D. Maurice. Nonetheless, 'Like more tolerant and liberal-minded of his colleagues', according to his biographer Geoffre A. Oddie, 'Long agreed that Hindus and Muslims had some knowledge of the Truth'.⁵¹

Long's case shows that it is not easy to make a clean break between 'Evangelical' and 'Liberal' missionaries, the terms used by Sharpe, particularly in terms of attitudes to Hinduism. Sharpe defined, in his *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, that the Evangelicals accepted, most characteristically, the absolute authority of the Bible. On the other hand, the Liberals were defined as those who rejected the sole authority of Bible and attempted to come to terms with the principle of scientific historical inquiry in the direction indicated by Max Müller and Monier-Williams.⁵² The tricky thing is that there was a third category of missionaries, like Heber and Long, who believed that Hinduism had some commonalities with Christianity or partial revelation while

⁵¹ Geoffrey A. Oddie, *Missionaries, Rebellion and Proto-Nationalism: James Long of Bengal 1814-87* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1999), 189.

⁵² E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy but to Fulfil*, 42, 55.

holding the supreme authority of Christian Bible. Likewise, most missionaries in the nineteenth century seemed to stand somewhere between a belief in Hinduism as a sheer work of the devil or as a limited work of God: towards the centre of this continuance there was not much difference between evangelical and liberal missionaries. It was perfectly possible to be evangelical and liberal, in that middle area, particularly in the last few decades of nineteenth century, accepting a set of beliefs based on authoritative revelation yet encouraging a range of tolerant attitudes towards Hinduism.

Monier-Williams was an exemplary figure who stood in the blurring middle area: he beat the liberal Max Müller in a competition to be elected Boden Professor of Sanskrit by the University of Oxford in 1860 because among the Sanskritists he was a well-known staunch Evangelical Christian who insisted on the absolute supremacy of historical Christianity and the inadequacy for man's salvation in the non-Christian religions.⁵³ Nonetheless, he did much to introduce more sympathetic attitudes to Hinduism into areas in which it was previously little known, areas which would generally be hostile to the liberal tradition by initiating fulfilment theology in Oxford.⁵⁴ The evangelical conscience of Monier-Williams could go hand in hand with the tolerant attitudes to Hinduism as follows: 'It may shock Christians in this Christian country of ours to think of our missionaries placing the Bible on the same platform with the Kuran [sic] and the Veda; but there is really no alternative'.⁵⁵ Yet, as a man located appropriately in the 'middle ground', it is not surprising to see that he rejected the entirety of the fulfilment idea in his later years. How many missionaries were included in this middle area was well exhibited in the previously mentioned remark of the editor of *The Harvest Field* in 1895: 'Every missionary held that there were elements of truth and goodness in Hinduism'.

This chapter divides nineteenth century British attitudes to Hinduism into three periods rather than dealing with it as one predominant period. Sharpe oversimplified the notoriously complex period of the nineteenth century into one negative mass. British attitudes to Hinduism in the nineteenth century, however, could never be described either as simply negative or positive, because they embrace both aspects

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 233.

together. If somebody describes it as negative, he or she is inevitably bound to distort severely the genuine picture of the nineteenth century in which positive attitudes of British India were widespread in missionary literature, particularly in the last three decades of nineteenth century. The reverse also applies. Thus, I argue in this chapter that nineteenth century attitudes to Hinduism had two dominant perspectives divided into three periods, rather than just one dominant point of view in one period as previous researchers have tended to do.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into three sections. Section One exhibits the initial tolerant attitudes to Hinduism of Conservatives and Orientalists in the first part of nineteenth century until 1835, when Anglicist Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Minute on Indian Education* was officially accepted. 'Conservatives' in this section does not belong to the Christian category in terms of a theological position, but to the secular category in terms of political position, supporting the traditional policy on the governance of India, in contrast to the position of liberals who opposed it. It is inevitable to adopt these categorical terms, although confusing, to describe the secular British attitudes to Hinduism. Nevertheless, they are different from the Christian conservatives who did not show toleration towards Hinduism like secular 'Conservatives'.⁵⁶ It is noteworthy to see the function of Conservatives and Orientalists who laid a foundation of the subsequent very tolerant attitude. Promising seeds were planted and grew in the rich ground of Orientalists academically and of Conservatives politically. Section Two will detail the Utilitarians and traditional evangelical missionaries who opposed the commendable attitudes to Hinduism of Conservatives and Orientalists. Although they seemed to sweep the British attitudes to the negative camp, their position was increasingly undermined by the ever expanding influence of evolutionary theory and historical criticism. The third section deals mostly with irenic attitudes after 1870. The impact of the *Science of Religion* through Max Müller will be assessed. The views of Catholics and Indian Christians will be examined, together with those of reflective missionaries. Finally, some reflection on the prevalence of appreciative attitudes will be given at the conclusion of this chapter.

⁵⁶ For the purpose of telling secular 'Conservatives' and 'Liberals' from Christian terms, I will use, instead, 'traditional Evangelical missionaries,' and 'tolerant missionaries.'

The First Period: Initial tolerant Attitudes (1800-1835)

The dominant view of Hinduism in this period by Conservatives and Orientalists was highly favourable.⁵⁷ Their enthusiasm for India began around the 1760s, shortly after the conquest of Bengal, and persisted into the early nineteenth century.⁵⁸

Conservatives

Conservatives arose in response to the political disorder: offensive military operation, corruption, oppressive taxation, economic exploitation under imperialistic governors such as Robert Clive (1725-74) and Warren Hastings (1813-23). In order to calm the disorder, it was necessary to reorganize and regulate Indian administration. In accordance with such changes, the religious policy was taken from the tolerance model of the Mughal ruler, Aurangzeb, rather than the suppressing model from Akbar,⁵⁹ insisting that India should be governed according to Indian culture and tradition. The Indian society, culture, and government, in their view, were excellent and best suited to Indian sentiments.⁶⁰ Furthermore, according to their belief, a highly civilized India would make contributions to the development of world civilization in the future.⁶¹ Most of the negative views on India came mainly from a lack of knowledge and fixed ideas. Thus, many Conservatives attempted to dispel the ignorance and prejudice of people with the policy of leaving Indians as they were.⁶²

Hinduism was highly praised by the Conservatives. For example, Edmond Burke (1729-97), a leading member of the Whigs in Parliament, habitually spoke of the piety of the Hindus with admiration and of their holy religion and sacred functions with awe.⁶³ In his perspective, the Hindus were the most compassionate people who extended their kindness even to the whole animal creation. Not only Hinduism itself, but the social institutions as well, were deeply rooted in the souls of the people

⁵⁷ The Conservatives mostly consisted of civil servants of the East India Company who often became the Orientalists, the enthusiasts for India.

⁵⁸ Thomas R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University California Press, 1997), 63.

⁵⁹ R. E. Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries in India*, 169.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁶¹ At this point, the view of the Conservatives was very distinct from that of Orientalists who did not see Indian civilization as the present impetus for world civilization, though they extolled the ancient wisdom of Indian civilization.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶³ P. J. Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 39.

according to the Conservatives.⁶⁴ If their souls were tampered with, they would be consumed with such anger that British India might again be threatened with disorder. This is the pragmatic reason why officials in the East India Company did not interfere with such institutions, but rather protect and encourage art, literature and religion of the Hindus with utmost care. For example, state endowments had been provided for the support of mosques and temples. Brahmins were employed as weather forecasters; Government offices were kept open on Sundays, but closed on Hindu festivals; and Government records were dedicated to Ganesh, one of the popular Hindu gods.⁶⁵ A tolerant policy towards Hinduism, the legacy of the Conservatives, primarily consisted of the older generation of East India Company's servants, who passed it on to the younger generation who were often influenced by liberal ideas for improvement. Obviously, such a policy of the Company was seriously challenged and criticized by the Evangelicals, pressing hard both from home and India. Nevertheless, the government of Madras did not retreat from the time-honoured policy of taking direct responsibility for the administration and upkeep of Hindu temples and rituals until 1863.⁶⁶ The civil servants of the younger generation kept the policy of religious neutrality until 1858, when the Company was replaced by the Crown, even though they had to allow the admission of Christian missionaries from 1813. From motives of expediency towards the government, the Company had always manifested the most conscientious regard for Indian religions, laws, institutions, and customs.⁶⁷ This clearly illustrates that the Conservatives' legacy of tolerant attitudes to Indian religions was very significant throughout the nineteenth century rather than being restricted to the early nineteenth century.

The Orientalists

The Orientalists in the Indian context were the Indologists, rising during the 1760s, who tended to have enthusiasm for India, studying Indian laws, languages, history, arts, sciences, geography, philosophy and religions in Sanskrit and other vernacular

⁶⁴ Percival Spear, *A History of India* (Marmondsworth: Penguin Books Inc., 1965), 121.

⁶⁵ Arthur Mayhew, *Christianity and the Government of India: an Examination of the Christian Forces at Work in the Administration of India and of the Mutual Relations of the British Government and Christian Missions 1600-1920* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1929), 146.

⁶⁶ Peter van der Veer, *Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 20.

⁶⁷ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 35.

languages. They were fascinated by the ancient civilization and the inspiring sacred writings. Out of adoration, they promoted India and believed that Indian civilization was unsurpassed.

The Orientalists railed against the ignorance and prejudice of travellers or missionaries who represented the Hindus as a race of stupid and gross idolaters. As against the traveller's testimony of the eye, which revealed only the exterior of things, Orientalists believed that they had access, through language, to the deeper and genuine meaning of things.⁶⁸ Thus, in the Orientalists' view, such seemingly ridiculous worship could have the most sublime rational source and foundation.⁶⁹ They found in Indian culture a deep and appealing wisdom, and argued that the Indian people had a way of life that was valid for them, however different it might be from western civilization.⁷⁰ Particularly, the common experiences and religion of the human race found in the ancient writings in Sanskrit was believed, by Orientalists, to confirm the truth of Christian scripture.⁷¹ In this way, the Orientalists had a highly sympathetic understanding of Indian ancient civilization and a tendency to emphasize the common humanity of Europeans and Indians, though they doubted the present potentiality of Indian wisdom for the future development of world civilization.

The view of the Orientalists regarding Hinduism was also highly favourable. According to Thomas Trautmann, in his *Aryans and British India*, the main features of the description of Hinduism by the Orientalists are two: first, Hinduism was basically monotheistic, and secondly, the benevolence of its religion and laws had made India a prosperous and peaceful country before foreign conquest.⁷² It is noteworthy that the Orientalists held that Hinduism was a monotheistic religion, this view being propagated in the later part of the nineteenth century. But, at this juncture, the significant point is that they found a common element and the same truth within Christianity and Hinduism. Such a discovery was particularly indicative of the positive evaluation of Hinduism, though they could not avoid the European sense of superiority over the native religion.

One thing bothering the Orientalists was the ills of contemporary India that were

⁶⁸ T. R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 34.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 64.

angrily rejected by Europeans. For example, the practice of *sati* (burning a widow alive) was a horrible evil from the perspective of Europeans. How could this wicked thing come from the 'good' religion of India? The Orientalists explained this as the outcome of Muslim conquest and despotic rule.⁷³ They believed good things came from Brahmanism, whereas bad things from Muslims, thus arguing that the Indian civilization was essentially brilliant, while Muslim culture had nothing of value to offer.

Among the great British Orientalists, two pioneers are well worth considering in terms of both their positive insight into Hinduism and their lasting influence on modern comparative methodology. John Zephaniah Holwell (1711-98), one of the earliest British Orientalists, argued that all world religions have many points of doctrine in common, however much they differ in the exterior modes of worship. According to him, these fundamental points of religion are the primitive truth, which indelibly impressed itself upon humankind at the period of its creation and which it will never wholly be able to efface, although it has deviated from it owing to the taint of original sin.⁷⁴ Based upon his statement, he appeared to accept God's revealing work outside the Christian revelation. All scriptures in the world form some parts of a jigsaw puzzle, every bit being necessary to shape the full picture of God's revelation in the world. The revelation in Hinduism is extremely important because it preserved the primitive revelation of God intact which would become a key to unlock the hidden meaning of the Bible. Even though Holwell limited the revelation of Hinduism to the category of primitive revelation, it is significant that Hinduism was put on a par with Christianity or essential was considered to it.

Sir William Jones (1746-1794), the father of British Orientalism, though belonging to the eighteenth century, paved the way for the historical method of nineteenth century linguistics.⁷⁵ A. J. Arberry, in his *British Orientalists*, acknowledged Jones as the one who began modern comparative philology.⁷⁶ In his essay "On the Gods of Greece, Italy and India", he refused to try to find either Jewish or Christian influence in Hinduism and attempted to show that Indian and European mythology was

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 67.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁷⁵ Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's the History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 14.

⁷⁶ A. J. Arberry, *British Orientalists* (London: William Collins of London, 1943), 30.

basically the same and to prove that these similarities arose from a common past.⁷⁷ Based on these similarities between Indian and Christian religion, Jones warned early missionaries against the error of regarding Indian religion as inferior to Christianity.⁷⁸ He found great merit in Indian theology, despite the prevalence of superstition in Indian religions. Indian theology, he stated, possessed as elevated a conception of God as Christianity, and Indian ethical conceptions were equally lofty.⁷⁹ That was the reason why Jones and his contemporaries should respect the religious institutions of India.

Sir William Jones was succeeded by Sir Charles Wilkins (1749-1836), Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1836), H. H. Wilson (1786-1860) F. W. Thomas (1867-1956), Alexander Hamilton, John Muir (1810-1888), M. Monier-Williams, and F. M. Müller. These Orientalists were, in several cases, employed either by the East India Company as experts on the Hindu law or by the College of Fort William, established by the Company as academics. Thanks to their position, they gave a powerful voice to the continuation of Company support for native religious and educational institutions.⁸⁰ The Orientalists had extended their influence on missionaries not only through Company links but also by personal choice as Christians. For example, John Muir and Sir Monier Williams challenged the negative view of Hinduism among the Evangelical missionaries by setting forth their tolerant theological position. Importantly, the primary contribution of the Orientalists was their ample research and publication on Hindu literature that laid the foundation of the comparative study on religions.

In conclusion, the British Orientalists made a significant impact on British irenic attitudes to Hinduism in the nineteenth century, for three reasons: first, because they found common truth and similarities in Hinduism that caused people to acknowledge the positive value of Hinduism in the later decades of the nineteenth century; second, because they gave the first impetus to comparative religions through their use of the comparative and the historical method; third, because their complete translation of Hindu literature expanded enormously the knowledge of Indian religions and

⁷⁷ P. J. Marshall, *The British Discovery of Hinduism in the Eighteenth Century*, 37.

⁷⁸ George Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858*, 24.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 22,23.

⁸⁰ P. V. Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 41.

provided enough materials to be used comparatively by people in the nineteenth century.

The Second Period: Antagonistic Attitudes (1835-1870)

Utilitarians and Evangelicals emerged in opposition to the relatively positive views of the Conservatives and Orientalists. The Conservatives rapidly receded in the face of the all-out attacks from Evangelicals and finally from the free admission of missionaries in India from 1813, which was a big success for Evangelicals. Meanwhile, the influence of Orientalists was also severely curtailed by the Liberal Anglicists, when T. B. Macaulay's Minute was accepted in 1835 as the basis of official policy.⁸¹ Consequently, from 1828 onwards, the Utilitarians, Liberals, and Evangelicals took over the determining British attitudes towards India, although Orientalists and Conservatives were not virtually eliminated.⁸²

Liberals

Apart from the Evangelical missionaries, the most negative view came from the secular Liberals. Originally, Liberals such as T. Macaulay and Charles Grant (1746-1823) arose in opposition to what the Conservatives praised. As the Conservatives blamed the Imperialist, the Liberals criticized the Conservatives for their inefficient colonial policy in terms of government, law and trade. They strongly advocated free trade and the massive Westernization of the political system, economic practices, social, intellectual, and religious life of India.⁸³ India was not to be preserved, but to be transformed in total.

For the Liberals, the greatest good for the greatest number was the object of political, economic and social policy, and the standard rod of measuring 'the good' was utility or reason. In this regard, the ideals and philosophy of Utilitarians were correctly identified with those of the Liberals. As the direct heirs of the Enlightenment, the Utilitarians believed in a progressive realization of human happiness on earth through the application of human reason to the problems of society. They were closely connected with Indian affairs: in 1819 and in 1830, James

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 233.

⁸² G. D. Bearce, *British Attitudes Towards India 1784-1858*, 153.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 297.

Mill, followed by his son, John S. Mill, was admitted into the government of the Company as the most powerful man, the Examiner. His books, particularly *History of British India* (1817), became a textbook at Haileybury College in England (the sister college of Fort William College of Calcutta) where the Company's civil Servants were trained from 1809 to 1855.⁸⁴

James Mill fundamentally opposed the sympathetic approach and defence of Indian culture and religions by the Orientalists, for, in his view, it resulted in the 'fond credulity' that was responsible for holding the improvement of India.⁸⁵ For the genuine progress of the Indian society, in Mill's view, Hinduism had to be destroyed,⁸⁶ because Hinduism was a backward religion that polluted the whole society with its harmful priestcraft and the caste system. According to him, at the root of the primitive and barbaric state of society was despotism - vast political and religious tyranny.⁸⁷ Mill blamed Hinduism in his *History of British India* as follows:

And we have seen that by a system of priestcraft, built upon the most enormous and tormenting superstition that ever harassed and degraded any portion of mankind, their minds were enchained more intolerably than their bodies; in short that, despotism and priestcraft taken together, the Hindus, in mind and body, were the most enslaved portion of the human race.⁸⁸

While Mill found occasional lofty and elevated conceptions of God in Indian theology, he did not think such a theology had much of a role in the religion of the people.⁸⁹ Political and priestly despotism in India enslaved and exploited the Indians in the name of divine law. Therefore, it is necessary that government, law and the social system should be reformed and made to operate beneficently for the people.

The Liberal's position was swept along British attitudes before 1870, although it was fully coloured by Western superiority, emphasizing heavily on reason and utility. Considering that nineteenth century was the age of reason and a large country like India was ruled by a small number of the British government, the Liberal's conviction might be easily accepted and shared by the vast majority of people in those days.

⁸⁴ Jacob S. Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Mission: Postcolonial Reflections* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1993), 39.

⁸⁵ J. Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 139.

⁸⁶ P. Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 6.

⁸⁷ Eric Stokes, *English Utilitarians and India*, 53.

⁸⁸ James Mill, *The History of British India* Vol. II (London: Wertheimer & Co., 1858), 132.

⁸⁹ G. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858*, 69.

Although there was a profound gulf on some points,⁹⁰ there was an effective alliance between Liberals and Evangelicals, both turning against the earlier tolerance and respect for Indian civilization, and seeking to liberate the individual from the slavery of custom and from the tyranny of noble and priest.⁹¹ Both agreed that Western education would be the powerful way to liberate India from the ignorance, superstitions, vices and backwardness of society. This alliance helped to expand further the negative attitudes towards Hinduism during the second period of the nineteenth century.

Traditional Evangelical Missionaries

The most negative assessment of Hinduism came from traditional Evangelical missionaries. The vigorous attack was mostly centred on both religious and social practices of Hinduism. In the first place, Hinduism was equated with idolatry in the eyes of traditional missionaries. *The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, in 1858, gave a reason why the missionary should hate idolatry and want to put an end to it: 'In every idol we see God's rival. In every idolater we see a man who takes against God, and supports a system which involves the rankest injustice toward God'.⁹² In their preaching missionaries defined idolatry as a folly and the abominable sin and spoke ill of the objects of idolatry with bitter and contemptuous words.⁹³ Due to the idol worshipping practice, Hinduism was called a 'false religion' a priori, a work of the devil of this world, not of God. In 1870, missionary John W. Scudder vilified, in his 'Spiritual Teaching', Hindu gods for their lies and adultery, and confirmed the widespread creed that Hinduism was demonic in origin and must at all costs be destroyed.⁹⁴ In 1887, William Robinson, a L. M. S. missionary, argued: 'It may be accepted as an axiom that in all error there is an element of truth, but in Hinduism the element of truth is so infinitesimally small that many of us cannot see it. In the face of these facts we are bound to declare that Hinduism is nothing but a 'collection of degrading superstition'.⁹⁵

⁹⁰ Liberals relied human legislation, whereas Evangelicals trusted God, the law-giver.

⁹¹ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, 54.

⁹² Jacob Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Mission*, 63.

⁹³ Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries in India*, 166.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁵ William Robinson, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus?", *The Harvest Field* Vol. VII. No.9

Secondly, Hinduism was blamed for the corrupt social and immoral practices. One of the primary purposes of religion, according to missionaries, was to elevate the ethical life of its adherents. However, Hinduism did not show the fruits of its ethical ideal. Indeed, Charles Grant wrote that India was just like Sodom and Gomorrah.⁹⁶ Many missionaries enumerated the repugnant social evils in India: the oppression of the caste system, *sati*, throwing young children to crocodiles, suffocating sick old people with mud, marrying young girls to old men, temple prostitution and female infanticide. All these practices resulted from the essence of Hinduism: a work of the devil and the false religion devised by man.

The perspective that directed to the above religious and moral aspects of Hinduism came from the normal evangelical missionary's theological conviction that salvation does not apply to 'heathens', until they are saved by faith in Jesus Christ, who died vicariously for their sins and rose again. In non-Christian religions there were no truths, no revelations, no salvation, and no agreement. Hinduism is from beneath; Christianity is from above.⁹⁷ That was the reason why missionary work was necessary and the darkness of the heathen was to be eliminated by the light of the Gospel. Christianity would bring not only a moral and spiritual improvement but also a political, legal and social improvement to India.⁹⁸

It seemed natural for the traditional missionaries to be aggressive and disparaging toward Hinduism, since there was no other evangelical theological paradigm before 1870, apart from the educational model of William Carey (1761-1834) and Alexander Duff (1806-1878). Carey, with his colleagues Joshua Marshman (1768-1837), translated the Bible into local Indian languages, and his method of using vernacular education sought to reach all, regardless of caste and sex. Although he pioneered this progressive educational model, his general attitude to Hinduism was negative, believing it to be a religion of the heathen. The delusions of the people were considered to be born of the devil.⁹⁹ Duff considered Western education as a preparation of the Gospel, aiming to challenge the Indian elites with modern learning

(March 1887): 3.

⁹⁶ Jacob Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Mission*, 33.

⁹⁷ G. Makenzie Cobban, "Christianity and the Hindu Faiths", *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (September 1899): 199.

⁹⁸ G. Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858*, 81.

⁹⁹ Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1964), 264.

in English medium on a firmly Christian basis.¹⁰⁰ His model seemed effective to reach the college educated classes in the 1830s and 1840s. However, he overtly made use of higher education as a missionary instrument for the conversion of high caste students in his firm conviction that Western learning almost imperceptibly would melt away the Hindu world of thought, which was based on a false system.¹⁰¹ With such a strong conviction the evangelical missionaries attempted to destroy not only Hindu religion but also the Indian society itself in which the Indian souls were born and fittingly lived.¹⁰² It never occurred to missionaries that an irenic attitude could be viable for the evangelicals without losing their loyalty to their God and their mission. However, some intellectual, theological and political arrangements were necessary for them to have a keen awareness of other alternatives.

Meanwhile, apart from the missionary attitude to Hinduism, attention should also be paid to that of the Evangelical Christians in the Company and the British government, considering their enormous influence in fashioning British attitudes to India. For example, Charles Grant, Chairman of the East India Company for the periods 1804-6, 1807-10, and 1815-16, argued that the key principle of British policy must be 'plainly the principle of assimilation'.¹⁰³ The general depravity of Hindus, according to Grant's diagnosis, resulted from government, laws and religion. 'The true cure of darkness', he wrote, 'is the introduction of light; the arts, philosophy, and religion of the English'. Grant's Anglicist policy was condoned by the House of Commons and it became 'the official creed of nineteenth-century British India'.¹⁰⁴ Under Grant's influence, the 'pious clause' was included in the 1813 Charter Act which secured the toleration of missionary activity in India.¹⁰⁵ He further succeeded in annulling *sati* and withdrew the governmental patronage of certain Hindu temples and festivals. William Wilberforce, Zachary Macaulay, John Venn, and Samuel Thornton were also people who exerted great influence in forming favourable British policies toward Christianity in British India. Due to their anti-idolatry protest, the

¹⁰⁰ D. Arthur Jeyakumar, *History of Christianity in India* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2002), 31.

¹⁰¹ William Paton, *Alexander Duff, Pioneer of Missionary Education* (London: Student Christian Movement, 1923), 61-62.

¹⁰² Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: the Missionary Impact on Christian Culture* (New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 4.

¹⁰³ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, 34.

¹⁰⁴ T. R. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, 110.

¹⁰⁵ Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings*, 80.

government of Madras was finally forced to retreat from their policies and accepted a new policy of 'noninterference', made into law in 1863, by ceasing to support temples and the non-Christian religious festivals.¹⁰⁶

T. B. Macaulay, an Anglicist and a legal member of the Council in Calcutta, is especially noteworthy, for he decisively defeated the established policy of the Orientalists with his Minute on Indian Education of 1835, greatly encouraged by the success of Duff's educational work that was a powerful argument on the side of those who were trying to persuade the Government to promote English Education. The Minute aimed, through English-medium instruction in the arts and sciences of Europe, to form an elite class that was, to quote Macaulay, 'Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect'.¹⁰⁷ The firm belief of Macaulay was that the English educational system would annihilate Hinduism and wake the Hindus from their Oriental slumber. Moreover, he calculated with confidence that British science would remove all traces of idolatry in India in forty years.¹⁰⁸ Clearly, these highly placed British Evangelicals made a substantial contribution to building the very negative view of Hinduism in British India.

The Third Period: Later Tolerant Attitudes (1870-1902)

The third part of the chapter deals with the positive views of Catholicism, Indian Christians and the modified missionaries in the second half of the nineteenth century. Arguing against E. Sharpe, I suggest that the attitude of missionary toleration of Hinduism was a widespread phenomenon during this period.¹⁰⁹

The first Protestant irenic approach to Hinduism had been brought by German missionary B. Ziegenbalg (1682-1719), who wrote in 1710: 'I do not reject everything they teach, rather rejoice that for the heathen long ago a small light of the Gospel began to shine... one will find here and there such teachings and passages in their writings which are not only according to human reason, but also according to God's Word'.¹¹⁰ Surprisingly, he acknowledged the revealing work of God as being present prior to the missionary endeavour to present the Gospel message, although

¹⁰⁶ P. V. Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 20.

¹⁰⁷ Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India*, 46.

¹⁰⁸ Jacob Dharmaraj, *Colonialism and Christian Mission*, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Sharpe saw those sympathetic to Hinduism as the exception to the norm.

¹¹⁰ A. Lehman, *It Began at Tranqueba* (Madras: CLS, 1956), 84.

this revelation was a small, partial light. He denied a traditional view of Hinduism as one that came only from human reason, approving it as the one that came from God's Word. Because Hinduism was from God, therefore, it followed that common teachings between Hinduism and Christianity could be identified. Importantly, Ziegenbalg rejoiced in them and used them as the stepping stones to present the full light, Christ. This clearly shows Ziegenbalg's positive attitude to Hinduism, although it was not kept by subsequent missionaries.

Roman Catholics

Jesuit missionaries had a long tradition of irenic attitudes to world religions from Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) who was confident that the introduction of Christianity into China would perfect their high sentiments. Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) came to Goa in 1605 and pioneered a new method of adaptation which was adopted later on in the Pope Gregory XV's Propagation of the Faith (1622) which separated social practices from faith.¹¹¹ This caused Catholic missionaries not to equate Indian culture with Hinduism, while Protestant missionaries were inclined traditionally to connect them. Due to these irenic attitudes, Jesuit missionaries seemed more successful in India than Protestant missionaries in certain areas and during certain periods of time.

The first relatively irenic attitude to Hinduism came from Robert de Nobili, a Jesuit missionary to Madurai in India. In his view, Hindus did not need to abandon their caste by becoming Christians. Thus, de Nobili's converts were allowed to retain their tufts, their sacred cord, their customary bathings and food rules, and all the regulations governing social intercourse that were subsequently refused as evil by ordinary missionaries.¹¹² However, de Nobili's view on Hinduism in terms of theology was not far from the confrontational view of Protestantism side. As Duncan Forrester has put it: 'At the ritual and social levels he [de Nobili] followed a policy of accommodation, but on theology he was uncompromising'.¹¹³

A new and more thoroughly positive attitude to Hinduism was set out by B.

¹¹¹ The 1622 Propaganda Fide documents contained six guiding principles. Among them the final, sixth point is the seed for what is later known as the principle of 'Adaptation': 'Adaptation to the customs and practices of the peoples'.

¹¹² Duncan B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity*, 15.

¹¹³ Duncan Forrester, "Christian Theology in a Hindu Context," *South Asian Review* 8:4, (July-Oct., 1975): 349.

Upādhyāy and continued by William Wallace (1863-1928), B. Animananda, George Dandoy (1882-1962), and Pierre Johanns (1882-1955) under the name of the 'Calcutta School'.¹¹⁴ This attitude was not totally new, because it was the rediscovery or revival of traditional Thomism. Thomist theology acknowledges that Grace perfects nature. Seeing Vedānta as nature was discounted thoroughly according to the previous theology, but it became a natural foundation on which the supernatural grace would be built upon from the perspective of the new theology. For Upādhyāy, to destroy the religion of nature and reason meant destroying the foundation for the supernatural religion of Christ.¹¹⁵ Hence Upādhyāy could look at Hinduism as the essential basis through which to know Christ without necessarily conflicting with the Catholic faith.

Animananda became a Catholic convert in 1893 and worked closely with his guru Upādhyāy on the project of indigenising Christianity. William Wallace joined the Jesuit mission after having been a C.M.S. missionary, because he believed that Catholicism was more tolerant in utilizing Indian philosophy to make an acceptable presentation of Christianity to Hindus. In his view, Christianity was a consummation of the ideals of India because Christ provides the spiritual dynamic to achieve this difficult religious end.¹¹⁶

Some conservative Protestant missionaries placed Catholicism in the category of heretics and to say the least they did not like them. However, in fact, Catholic missionaries and Indian Catholics won a greater portion of Indian people to Christianity than did Protestant missionaries,¹¹⁷ resulting possibly from their more tolerant attitudes based on Thomism towards the indigenous culture and religions. It should be noteworthy at this juncture that such receptive views of Hinduism were predominant in the catholic sector.

Indian Christians

Nineteenth century Indian Christian converts had uniformly favourable attitudes to

¹¹⁴ S. Doyle, *Synthesizing the Vedanta: The Theology of Pierre Johanns S. J.*, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis at the University of Edinburgh, 2005, 76-89.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 79.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 87.

¹¹⁷ According to J. N. Farquhar's statistics in *Contemporary Review* (May, 1908), the numbers of Indian Catholics were 1,550,614 in 1901 increased by 817,727 from 1851, while Protestants were 871,991 increased by 780,899.

Hinduism and the Indian heritage. It was an intriguing phenomenon, considering that they might have received very negative interpretations of Hinduism from the traditional missionaries. However, they attempted to reconcile their new faith with their traditional religion for two reasons: first, because they wanted to keep an Indian identity rather than abandon it. Second, because they needed or wished to make the Gospel acceptable to their Hindu relatives and neighbours.

K. M. Banerjea, a Brahmin convert, was one of the Bible students of Alexander Duff. Even though he was taught the negative theology of Duff against Hinduism, he became the first major Christian interpreter of Christianity with irenic attitudes to Hinduism. From 1865 he published some books expounding fulfilment theology. In *The Arian Witness* Banerjea established a positive relationship between Vedic religion and Christianity showing that Christianity not merely displaced Vedic religion but in some essential elements fulfilled it.¹¹⁸ He set about a comparative study of the Bible and the Vedas and showed their parallels, most crucially in the element of sacrifice, common to both, and the Vedic figure of Prajāpati (Lord of creatures), fulfilled by Christ, the true Prajāpati.

It should be noted here that Banerjea was not only an Anglican priest but also professor at Bishop's College, the Anglican theological seminary. This meant that his sympathetic theological position might be well accepted by the Anglican missionaries in those days. T. E. Slater definitely benefited from and was encouraged by Banerjea and his irenic theology, evidenced by his positive comments on Banerjea.¹¹⁹ In addition, another tolerant missionary James Long also seemed to have been influenced by Banerjea, with whom he had a long-term friendship, even sharing his accommodation with Banerjea for some time.

Nehemiah Goreh (1825-1895), an ordained priest of the Church of England, sought to show that the Christian faith fulfils the needs and longings of the Indian mind and heart. Hinduism, in his conviction, was a genuine preparation for the Hindu's reception of Christianity, not in terms of its teaching but rather its spirituality.¹²⁰ For example, Indian experience of *sat-cit-ānanda* was believed a foreshadowing of the

¹¹⁸ M. M. Thomas & P. T. Thomas ed., *Towards an Indian Christian Theology: Life and Thought of Some Pioneers* (Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 1998), 29.

¹¹⁹ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 124.

¹²⁰ M. M. Thomas & P.T. Thomas, *Towards an Indian Christian Theology*, 41.

Christian trinity.¹²¹ Goreh was a well-known critic of Hindu philosophy. Nonetheless, he advocated a continuity between Hinduism and Christianity.

K. C. Sen, a Brāhmo Samāj leader, influenced Slater and many other missionaries with his fulfilment idea. He presented Jesus as the true Asian yogi. He said: 'Behold, Christ cometh to us as an Asiatic... and he demands your heart's affection... He comes to fulfil and perfect that religion of communion for which India has been panting... For Christ is a true Yogi, and he surely helps us to realize our national ideal of a Yogi'.¹²² Further, Sen spelled out a kind of logos theology, saying: 'Christ is already present in you. He is in you, even when you are unconscious of his presence... for Christ is 'the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world'. Through this popular reformer Slater found a wide applicability of fulfilment theology to reach the Hindus: he published Sen's life and works in 1884.¹²³

Lawyer A. S. Appasamy (1848-1926), even after receiving baptism in 1871, kept studying Hindu scriptures and began to see in them a preparation for the gospel.¹²⁴ In his experience he found that Śaivism deepened his understanding of the Christian truth, leading him to assert that a Christian may learn to pray and meditate according to Hinduism. This argument seemed preposterous to the traditional missionaries. Nonetheless, Appasamy was a lay evangelist with a passion for souls who organized the Tinnevely Missionary Society and became its first president. Appasamy's case showed that the tolerant approach to Hinduism could be well combined with an evangelical cause.

Nārāyan Vāman Tilak (1862-1919), a Marathi Christian poet, expounded a very clear fulfilment theology. In Tilak's view Jesus Christ was the Guru of India who richly satisfied the soul's hunger.¹²⁵ He wrote that 'Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil'.¹²⁶ Tilak's most quoted line was his claim that he 'came to Christ over to Tukārām's bridge'.¹²⁷ In this quotation, Tilak showed that the verses of Tukārām, a famous Marathi religious poet, contained a preparation for the gospel message to be

¹²¹ Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 151.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 140.

¹²³ Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Samaj* (Madras: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884).

¹²⁴ M. M. Thomas & P. T. Thomas, *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 99.

¹²⁶ H. L. Richard, *Christ-Bhakti: Narayan Vaman Tilak and Christian Work among Hindus* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1991), 12.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

received by Hindus. According to H. L. Richard, no one ever moved as radically as Tilak in applying the thought of fulfilment into action. His action was so decisive and profound that he assumed that 'it must be considered far in advance of what the fulfilment school itself visualised'.¹²⁸ He assumed that Tilak's fulfilment was far in advance, because in his understanding fulfilment theology was established in detail only after Farquhar. However, as we shall see, fulfilment was already very popular with Slater and many other missionaries when Tilak was baptized in 1895, earlier than Farquhar. Hence, Tilak is recognised as another good example of the nineteenth century's irenic attitudes to Hinduism before Farquhar.

An anonymous Indian native missionary was mentioned by T. E. Slater in his "Modern Thought and Missions," saying 'I was delighted to see advertised lately a little book by an Indian Native missionary entitled *Christ in the Vedas*, which attempts to show how the true doctrines of incarnation and sacrifice were shadowed forth in those ancient times'.¹²⁹ In terms of mission strategy, presenting Christ shadowed in the Vedas must have been very irenic and more appealing to the Hindu sentiments than Christ against the Vedas. That might be one of the major reasons why the tolerant attitude was acceptable and extensive for native evangelism.

In conclusion, the generous attitudes to Hinduism were received positively and thus were popular among native Indian Christians, and thus can be regarded as far more than slogans of pastoral pragmatism, theological seminary teaching and missionary conferences. The Indian Christians believed that favourable approach would open the hearts of people who would much more readily accept their teaching rather than incurring the resistance fostered by intolerant attitudes. Western missionaries could see how the native Christians' positive approach had worked among Indians, and some missionaries like Slater adopted it for their evangelical cause.

Tolerant Missionaries

Now we reach the culminating point which shall indicate the tolerant phenomenon among British missionaries that was completely denied by Sharpe. Tolerant missionaries were, according to Sharpe, rarely located in the nineteenth century apart

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²⁹ T. E. Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 5.

from some exceptions that can be seen only in the views of Slater, Kellett, Robson, Cobban and Miller. But as we have seen so far, the tolerant attitudes were a prevailing phenomenon in the late nineteenth century which significantly affected many missionaries. This section will enumerate many new names which were not referred to by the previous scholars.

The nineteenth century tolerant missionaries can be detailed in the following three groups. First, there was a group of missionaries who put across the positive attitudes without reference to the fulfilment idea. Reginald Heber, a Bishop of Calcutta, was the example of this group who warned his fellow missionaries in one of his sermons in the 1820s to avoid 'all expressions hurtful to the national pride, and even all bitter and contemptuous words about the objects of their idolatry'.¹³⁰ Furthermore, James Long, beyond avoiding the disparaging attitude, appealed for a greater appreciation of the numerous truths which Hinduism held in common with the Christian faith.¹³¹

The second group of tolerant missionaries advocated the fulfilment idea in that Hinduism was viewed as a divine preparation and fulfilled by Christianity. Their sources of fulfilment idea are not known, but obviously came from diverse origins. Among this group of missionaries, G. A. Lefroy, Bishop of Lahore, and later Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of all India, is noteworthy in terms of his influence as a head on the members of the mission. He believed that Jesus' assertion that he came to fulfil, rather than destroy, applied to all religions, not just Judaism.¹³² In fact, Lefroy argued that as all nations were included in this divine providence, so all would find their fulfilment in Christ. He exerted a direct influence on missionaries by imparting his fulfilment theology.

There were other numerous examples that belonged to the second group: G. Mackenzie Cobban, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary; F. W. Kellett (1862-1904), the educational missionary in Madras Christian College; John Robson, a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland; W. Sinclair of Kathiawar and E. W. Redfern. In common they saw Hinduism as a type of foreshadowing of the reality of Christ not to be destroyed but to be purified, transformed, perfected or fulfilled by Christianity.¹³³

¹³⁰ George Bearce, *British Attitudes towards India 1784-1858*, 85.

¹³¹ Graham Houghton, "Late Nineteenth Century Protestant Christian Attitudes towards Hinduism", *The Gospel among Our Hindu Neighbours* (Madras: Partnership in Mission, 1983), 15.

¹³² Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 203.

¹³³ S. Doyle, *Synthesizing the Vedanta: The Theology of Pierre Johannes S.J. Edinburgh University*

Importantly, they were mostly influential writers who published their books and articles. John Robson published *Hinduism and Christianity* (1874) that largely endorsed Müller's ideas and asserted the fulfilment idea;¹³⁴ Kellett wrote the pamphlet *Christ the Fulfilment of Hinduism* in 1896. W. Sinclair, E.W. Redfern, and Mackenzie Cobban frequently presented their articles to *The Harvest Field* and *The Madras Christian College Magazine*.

The third group of missionaries propagated the logos theology of the Alexandrian fathers which was the locus of Slater's fulfilment theology but lacking in Farquhar. Slater revived the Greek fathers who acknowledged the existing value of culture as the preparation for the Gospel by the universal logos rather than Latin Fathers who rejected it. According to him, missionaries should bring the sympathetic and winning manner of Origen and other Alexandrian fathers, who maintained that all the noblest ideas in Greek philosophies and religion were the unconscious emanations from the divine logos.¹³⁵ The common truths in Hinduism were the product of the indwelling God who left the witnesses in India, though the full witness was reserved for Christ. He suggested the origin of commonalities, the noble value and function of world religions and the distinctive need for Christ. His logos theology was expounded for the first time in *God Revealed*, published in 1876 and popularized broadly through a symposium on 'How Shall We Preach to the Hindus' at the February meeting of the Bangalore Missionary Conference in 1887. Slater's positive view of Hinduism, published later on in *The Harvest Field*, was rejected by J. A. Vanes and W. Robinson, while J. Hudson accepted it in a slightly modified form.¹³⁶ Even though there were strong critics from traditional missionaries, his logos concept was most welcomed by Indians and increasingly by some missionaries as well.

E. Just, one of the tolerant missionaries, suggested, in a manner similar to Slater, an apostolic pattern of preaching for Indian missionaries in 1892, asking 'Is there a pre-Christian Logos working in the world preparing it for salvation, and is this confined only to Israel? We reply emphatically to the first question in the affirmative, and to the second in the negative'.¹³⁷ John Hewlett, J. R. Bacon, William Miller also made a

Ph.D. Thesis, 2005, 49.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹³⁵ Slater, "Modern Thought and Mission", 5,6.

¹³⁶ The symposium papers were released in *The Harvest Field*, Vol. VII (March 1887).

¹³⁷ Ernst Just, "The Apostolic Method of Preaching A Pattern for Indian Missionaries", *The Harvest*

contribution to spreading the logos theology. Particularly, William Miller, in his lectures to Educated Hindus on “The Christian Conception of God’s Dealings with Mankind”, published in *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, gave rise to a considerable amount of discussion as to the logos working outside of the traditional Christian countries among missionaries. In his article in 1890 Miller stated that ‘It is part of the Christian conception that God has been always training all men... God has been always seeking to teach each community special lessons. In no land and no community, said St. Paul, did God leave Himself without witness’.¹³⁸ He acknowledged God’s grace developed in other communities as well as Israel without being alienated from God and enslaved to sin. His conception was rejected or accepted depending on missionaries by their personal choices through the consecutive debates in the *College Magazine*. The significant thing emerging from these debates, was that God’s work outside Western Christendom, which was previously denied, received extensive sympathy by missionaries.

Many more missionaries’ names can be added to the list above, if space permitted. Two points must be stressed here: First, tolerant attitudes towards Hinduism were widespread among missionaries regardless of denominations or theological positions. Tolerant missionaries were never isolated from the rest. They presented their ideas freely in the missionary magazines and in the regular missionary conferences, held every month in each missionary’s house. Thus these conferences became the perfect occasion for this new attitude to be discussed and scattered among evangelical missionaries. Moreover, not a few missionaries had followed a course of modern theological education with a sympathetic view of world religions as a requirement. Thus, tolerant attitudes to world religions could be perfectly acceptable as one of the major views among missionaries in the late nineteenth century, while opposing attitudes were held and maintained by the traditional evangelical missionaries.

Second, missionaries’ tolerant views began to surface largely in 1880s and 1890s after a decade of incubation of comparative religions and fulfilment theology ideas. This may come as a surprise for those who hitherto accepted that fulfilment theology was popularized by Farquhar. However, as shown through the examples above,

Field (February 1892): 331.

¹³⁸ William Miller, “The Christian Conception of God’s Dealings with Mankind III”, *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (Dec. 1890): 48.

fulfilment theology had already been popularized by many missionaries, scholars, and Indian Christians, as well as T. E. Slater far ahead of Farquhar, all of whom established it as a relevant model to reach Hindus. It was not secluded within the academic world or liberal circles, but prevailed in much mission teaching and practice. Hence, it may be fair to say that by the end of 1890s the tolerant attitude was the most widely adopted paradigm for approaching Hinduism, or at the very least, it defined one of the two major paradigms in late nineteenth century British India.

Our attention now turns to T. E. Slater, who began to propagate the fulfilment idea from 1875, three decades before Farquhar expressed his initial fulfilment theology. For Sharpe these thirty years were just a short embryonic period in which antagonistic attitudes to Hinduism were dominant, while tolerant attitudes were rarely recognized, isolated from the majority of missionaries. However, this chapter confirms that thirty years was not a little period to disseminate the tolerant attitudes to Hinduism mainly by a variety of the fulfilment missionaries who combined several factors in the rapidly changing nineteenth century. As has been noted, it was a striking challenge of Slater and the other fulfilment missionaries against the stony traditional belief that outside the biblical revelation and Western Christendom exists nothing but fallacy and damnation. By widening the period of tolerant attitudes, crucially from 1870s, along with showing the variety of fulfilment ideas emerging from the ranks and files of missionaries and Indian Christians, Slater's uniqueness in the history of fulfilment theology in India becomes evident. As a result, numerous missionaries, including Indian Christians, expanded their tolerant attitudes towards Indian religions. Hence, Slater emerged as a premier figure along with other contemporary missionaries who propagated fulfilment ideas, ahead of Farquhar, to the extent that the fulfilment model became the dominant model to reach the Hindus, thereby diminishing the importance of Farquhar and showing him rather to be a later popularizer of fulfilment theology.

Chapter Two

Introduction to T.E. Slater and His Fulfilment Theology

In the previous chapter we identified the historical context in which tolerant attitude to Hinduism emerged and became widespread in the late nineteenth century in British- governed India. Chapter Two moves to throw light on the life of T. E. Slater, and the intellectual and religious background to Slater's fulfilment theology. Nobody has written a biography of Slater apart from a very brief memorial sketch in his posthumously published book, *The Problem of Pain and Life after Death*.¹³⁸ A detailed account of his life relevant to the present discussion therefore needs to be constructed.

Slater's fulfilment theology was the integrated product of complicated intellectual and religious thoughts of the nineteenth century in British-governed India. The background of his theology is broadly asserted to be Darwinian evolutionary ideas, the logos theology of the Alexandrian Fathers, the findings of comparative religions initiated by F. M. Müller, G. E. Lessing's educational theories,¹³⁹ and F. D. Maurice's theological formulations. E. Sharpe, K. Baago, M. Maw, K. Cracknell and P. Hedges all agree on the influence of the evolutionary theory over Slater, although only Sharpe, Baago and Maw acknowledged its dominant influence on him. Cracknell set a higher premium on a Maurician influence rather than a Darwinian one, suggesting diverse influences including B. Westcott, V. G. Allen, A. M. Fairbairn, C. Hall, G. E. Lessing and F. Schleiermacher. Cracknell noted Maurice's powerful influence on Slater based on his finding, in Slater's writings, similar views of revelation, hell and judgment, and of God's answer to the needs and aspirations of human hearts. On the other hand, Hedges rejected both the influence of Darwin and Maurice as primary on the ground that evolutionary ideas were not unique to Slater but common religious currency at that time.¹⁴⁰ He also argued that Cracknell overestimated the importance of Maurice

¹³⁸ T. E. Slater, *The Problem of Pain and Life after Death* (Madras and Colombo: Christian Literature Society for India, 1912).

¹³⁹ In *The Education of Human Race*, Lessing argued that the biblical revelation had been used by God as the supreme educator for the completion of humanity. See, K. Cracknell's *Justice, Courtesy and Love*, 112-113.

¹⁴⁰ P. Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 158.

to Slater. Instead he stressed the value of other direct fulfilment sources such as K. Banerjea, R. Williams, R. Trench and Müller.

As all prior studies contend, the evolutionary theory must be regarded as an important background to Slater's theology. However, in my view, as we shall see in detail in due course, it cannot be defined as the nub of his theology nor even a main influence on Slater, because the heart of Slater's fulfilment theology does not lie in the relation of 'imperfection and perfection', but in the relation between 'preparation (or prophecy) and fulfilment', which were driven by the logos and the incarnated Christ.¹⁴¹ The relation of 'imperfection and perfection' tends to end in the replacement of Hinduism by Christianity, the superior religion in missionaries' perspective. Such replacement was argued in the fulfilment ideas of M. Monier-Williams and J. Farquhar, because they lacked the logos theology in which the preparation or prophecy of Hinduism holds good still even after Christ came. In this sense, Hedges' assertion that the chief sources were precursors of fulfilment theology, such as Banerjea, Williams, Trench and Müller is right. Nevertheless, it does not seem right to say that Slater was exclusively influenced by the previous fulfilment sources. As Craknell argued, Slater's theology was indebted to diverse intellectual and religious thoughts, although Craknell missed the more significant influences and emphasized the less significant. Maurice's influence might be included in the one of the earlier fulfilment sources, but Westcott, Allen, Hall, Lessing are irrelevant elements in the formation of Slater's fulfilment theology, because Slater's publication of fulfilment theology was far earlier than theirs. Besides, F. Schleiermacher's influence cannot be traced in Slater's works. Due to Slater's extensive readership, numerous references can be found in Slater's works, but passing reference is certainly no guarantee of the influence on Slater.

In short, Slater's theology was deeply influenced by modern scholarship: evolutionary theory, biblical criticism and comparative religions, along with the Congregational tradition, Alexandrian Fathers, K. C. Sen and *Brāhmo Samāj*, and the earlier fulfilment sources. Although many researchers have discussed the importance of evolutionary ideas to Slater, biblical criticism and comparative religions were mostly overlooked as significant background. Among the main thrusts, the

¹⁴¹ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 125. *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, 3.

Congregational influence has never been noticed, but many leading fulfilment missionaries, including Slater himself and Farquhar, were heavily influenced by the Congregational tradition. Alexandrian Fathers, mentioned only by Maw and Hedges, were no doubt the crucial background, because Slater's theology can be called the resurrection of the logos theology of the Alexandrian Fathers in the nineteenth century. K. C. Sen and his *Brāhmo Samāj* members were the noteworthy inspiration to Slater more than K. Banerjea in terms of the missionary context in that Slater adopted some ideas from Indians in the midst of adapting his Christian message, making it acceptable and familiar to the intellectual climate of his audiences, the educated Hindus. Lastly, many precursors of fulfilment ideas should be mentioned: A. W. Neander, F. M. Müller, M. Monier-Williams, R. Caldwell, and K. Banerjea.

After Slater's background is detailed, some essential concepts of fulfilment theology and the variations of fulfilment theology will be described in comparison with Slater's before we move on to Slater's own theology in detail in the subsequent chapter. They will give not only the comprehensive understanding of fulfilment theology in the nineteenth century, but also evince the unique position of Slater's fulfilment theology.

The Life of Slater: Dedicated to the Educated Hindus

The life of Slater can be divided into largely three stages: firstly, the formative period as a Christian; secondly, the missionary life at Madras as a special agent for the educated classes; thirdly, the missionary life at Bangalore as a fulfilment theologian.

The Formative Period (1840-1871)

Thomas Ebenezer Slater was born on April 10, 1840, at Chesham, a Buckinghamshire town, and lived as a boy in Somerset and Devon.¹⁴² His father, the Rev. William Slater, was a well-known Congregational minister, and became a staunch supporter of his son's task in India. He was called 'always a warm friend of

¹⁴² There is a memorial sketch of Slater in his last book, *The Problem of Pain and Life after Death*.

foreign missions by Slater himself.¹⁴³ Slater's brother was also a Congregational minister and a supporter not only spiritually but materially for Slater's service in India.

In his teen years, Thomas Slater was keen to become an architect, and was articled to an architect in Tunbridge Wells for five years.¹⁴⁴ Oddly enough, however, Slater was attracted to missionary service through the influence of a Christian architect and his missionary brother.¹⁴⁵ When Slater was nineteen, he joined the London Missionary Society and entered Spring Hill College, Birmingham, as a divinity student, with his heart set on becoming a missionary. Spring Hill College, founded in 1838, was firmly rooted in the traditions of Nonconformism, offering a residential course, and trained a few men of distinction and many men of worth under the brilliant Congregational educators Henry Rogers and R. W. Dale (1829-1895).¹⁴⁶ It was particularly significant that Slater met Dale, a lecturer of literature, philosophy, and homiletics at this college, who later became a representative figure in nineteenth century Congregationalism. Slater received no less influence from Dale who argued, influenced by F. D. Maurice, that the possibility of salvation was opened for those who had never heard the Gospel.¹⁴⁷

In this formative period, it is noted that Slater got through days of scepticism. Two questions in particular troubled him. The first one was the contradiction between the suffering creation and the loving God. He recounted in his personal reminiscence, 'Without such a revelation [of redemption] I should have been an atheist long ago. I could not reconcile all the pain and misery of creation with the existence of a good righteous and loving God'.¹⁴⁸ The second question arose from the apparent conflict between biblical statements and science. Biblical issues, for example creation, the flood, and the Exodus, seemed 'irreconcilable' with scientific facts presented in his

¹⁴³ Slater presented his book, *The Philosophy of Missions*, to 'the memory of a beloved and honoured father'. Here, he called his father 'always a warm friend of foreign missions'.

¹⁴⁴ In his *Jottings of a Tour in South India*, some description of a building is found in detail in the perspective of an architect.

¹⁴⁵ Slater, *Candidate Papers*, written on April, 1863 to the Madagascar Committee.

¹⁴⁶ Spring Hill College moved in 1886 to Oxford twenty years after Slater graduated, and was re-established with a new name, Mansfield College. J. N. Farquhar entered this Mansfield College and was educated under A. M. Fairbairn.

¹⁴⁷ David Thompson, "R. W. Dale in Context", *The Cross and the City: Essays in Commemoration of Robert William Dale* (Cambridge: E.&E. Plumridge Ltd., 1999), 23.

¹⁴⁸ Slater, *God Revealed: An Outline of Christian Truth. Being Sunday Afternoon Lectures Delivered to Educated Hindus*, (Madras: Addison and Co., 1876), 92.

day.¹⁴⁹ The first question was answered, according to Slater, by his discovery of the redemption through Jesus Christ, which showed that the divine purpose through human woe and wretchedness world bear fruit.¹⁵⁰ The second was resolved by ‘biblical criticism’ that was widespread in those days. Slater uttered a very positive remark in the above article: ‘These difficulties vanish if we accept one of the proved results of biblical criticism, which has made a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Bible’.¹⁵¹ With the help of biblical criticism he thus did not need to reject the whole faith and the whole Bible. From this experience onwards he seemed to have employed the state-of-the-art modern theology as a powerful weapon for his faith and missions.

After finishing a thorough theological education in the Congregationalists’ academy, he was ordained at Holly Walk Chapel, Leamington on July, 1866 and got married to Mary Sophia Ransford during the same year.¹⁵² Slater then applied for a post in the London Missionary Society. In December 1866, he was sent out to Calcutta to teach in the Bhowanipore Institution in Calcutta, and to be pastor of a small English congregation at the Hastings Chapel in that city.¹⁵³ His apprenticeship to missionary work, unfortunately, was cut short due to his wife’s illness. Forced to return home to England, his wife soon passed away on the voyage. When Slater did eventually return to India, he did not return to Calcutta, perhaps due to the sad memory of his wife.

Missionary Life at Madras (1871-1882)

In 1871, Slater was appointed to take charge of the ‘English Institution’ of the London Mission in Madras. Two years later, he remarried Jane Elizabeth Coles, the daughter of senior missionary Joseph Benjamin Coles. At this time, while he worked as a professor, he was awakened to the interest and importance of the thorough study

¹⁴⁹ Slater, “Modern Thought and Missions”, 4.

¹⁵⁰ Slater, *God Revealed*, 92-94.

¹⁵¹ One of its proved results was, according to Slater, that literal and mechanical accuracy of the Bible in minute details was evidently not aimed at, and has not been attained, and thereby, Slater could avoid the contradiction between the Bible and the known historical facts, for example, in the case of creation versus evolution.

¹⁵² See James J. Sibree’s *Annotated Register of L.M.S. Missionaries 1796-1923* (London: London Missionary Society, 1923).

¹⁵³ Interestingly, J. N. Farquhar also began his missionary career, like Slater, at Bhowanipore College, twenty five years later, as a L. M. S. missionary.

of the problems of Hinduism in its relation to Christianity. He was keenly aware that thousands of Indian young men passed yearly from the colleges with their religious beliefs severely shaken by Western scepticism.¹⁵⁴ Hence, he was beginning to appreciate the urgent need to follow up the college educated classes by an organized evangelistic effort. In response to the urge of the Madras Missionary Conference for the evangelism of the educated classes, Slater was seconded to this special field in 1875, under the appointment of the Board of the London Missionary Society.¹⁵⁵

From that year onwards, he devoted his time and thought to the Christian instruction of the educated classes of the city, by books, lectures, letters, and by constant visits. When he delivered the lectures on religious subjects, there would frequently be between 400 and 500 in attendance. After the lectures, he either visited the Hindus in their homes for the further discussion, or invited them to spend an evening together in social intercourse and entertainment. Through this personal intercourse, Slater encountered widespread perspectives; from sheer religious indifference, up through the gradations of materialism, pessimism, agnosticism, pantheism, and theism, to minds distinctly influenced by the teaching and spirit of Christ.¹⁵⁶ His work did not show immediate results. But his effects were far-reaching, permeating the thoughts of both Hindus and missionaries alike. He was the pioneer of evangelism for the educated classes and he was the promoter of this special mission.

Slater was acutely aware of the growing nationalism and strong antagonism against denunciatory attitudes of missionaries among the student classes. That is the reason why he wrote his first book, *God Revealed*, to set forth the Divinity of Christ in such a sympathetic way as might best commend itself to thoughtful Hindus. On the whole, Hindus and missionaries welcomed it, but some conventional missionaries were angry with Slater's comments.¹⁵⁷ Among those traditional missionaries, 'True Friend of Missions' at Madras sent a letter against Slater to the Director of the London Missionary Society,¹⁵⁸ accusing Slater of having views tinged with the principles of

¹⁵⁴ Slater, *Report of the Decennial Indian Missionary Conference*, 273.

¹⁵⁵ See the Reports 1876 from R. Lovett's *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, Vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1899), 44.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁵⁷ It should be noted that, as Slater said in his letter, his book had received the endorsement of a large body of Christians in India.

¹⁵⁸ True Friend of Missions was an anonymous critic of Slater, who sent a letter from Madras to the foreign secretary of London Missionary Society in 1876.

Unitarians and latitudinarianism.¹⁵⁹ He was therefore called upon to give assurances that he still subscribed to the main doctrines of Evangelical Christianity, to which he had asserted a decade earlier. He was deeply hurt that he could be thought for a moment to be disloyal to Christ, but declared without the least reserve that while holding the same doctrine he held 10 years previously, he would express it differently and view it differently in its relationship to other truths. Most importantly, he found that the spread of Christianity in the country was greatly retarded by the lack of a sympathetic attitude and the thorough study of Hinduism, and made up his mind to present Christianity, not as antagonistic to other religions, but as the consummation or fulfilment of their best ideals and truth. Slater was moving rapidly towards becoming a theologian of justice, sympathy, courtesy and love.

Missionary Life at Bangalore (1882-1912)

Slater did not write any book or article during his six years in Madras. However, his active work as a fulfilment theologian had been unfolding, and his first literary work appeared soon after he was appointed to Bangalore, in 1882. The great range of his thoughts soon became apparent, and his writing covered a variety of topics such as apologetics, missiology, ecclesiology, pneumatology, sociology, history, culture, politics and religion. Most sections had already been delivered in the form of lectures to the educated Hindus. Slater released his papers and reports in the major missionary journals in India such as *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, *The Harvest Field*, *The East and West*, *The Christian World*, and *The Indian Evangelical Review*. Moreover, he discussed his papers pertaining to the fulfilment idea in the monthly missionary conferences and let other fulfilment missionaries like F. W. Kellett, Bernard Lucas, R. A. Hume and L. P. Larsen join his Sunday evening lectures which attracted regular audiences of 400 listeners.

Consequently, Slater was recognized by H. Barrows, the organizer of the Parliament of Religions, in a note to one of Slater's books as follows: 'I know of no other man in India better fitted to interpret Christianity to the Hindus and Hinduism to all intelligent Christians. By training, experience and by the cast of his mind, Mr. Slater has illustrated the true and wise Christian temper in the approach of the

¹⁵⁹ True Friend of Missions, *South India Tamil Incoming Correspondence*, dated March 24, 1876.

Occidental to the Oriental spirit'. Based on Barrows's evaluation of Slater, it is no wonder that Slater was invited to the Chicago World's Religious Parliament in 1893 as the most fitting missionary to 'set forth the accurate and authoritative account of the present condition and outlook of Religion'.¹⁶⁰ However, he did not attend it, because he preferred remaining at his work, though he was in full sympathy with the Chicago Congress.¹⁶¹ Instead, he sent his two papers on "Concession to Native Ideas, having special reference to Hinduism", and "The present Religious Outlook of India". Anyway, due to the close bonds of friendship between Slater and Barrows, The Barrows Lectureship on the relations of Christianity to other religions was initiated in India, which made a contribution to the dissemination of fulfilment theology.

In his later years of service, he was appointed to the Treasurership of the South India District Community (1894), and wrote one of his major works, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*. Slater continued to work even after he retired in 1905 from the front, though he moved to Sydney, Australia due to his weakened health in 1908.¹⁶² He wrote a *Missions and Sociology* (1908), *Illusion* (1909), *The Problem of Pain and Life after Death* (1912), and the one hundred and twenty page letter which was a significant influence on the Edinburgh Conference. He also continued to be a regular contributor to the missionary periodicals right up to the time of his death in Sydney, in 1912.

Slater's Intellectual and Religious Background

Although K. Cracknell mentioned both the influence of F. D. Maurice and A. W. Neander (1789-1850), he saw the Maurician influence as chief and Neander's as secondary. However, in my view, Neander was one of the crucial figures who influenced Slater to adopt the logos theology of the Alexandrian Fathers, the *sine qua non* of Slater's fulfilment theology. Neander clearly showed the core of fulfilment ideas in detail, whereas Maurice gave only a vague image regarding the value of

¹⁶⁰ This was quoted from one of the proposed objects of the Parliament of Religions. John H. Barrows ed., *The World's Parliament of Religions*, Vol. II (London: "Review of Reviews Office", 1893), 18.

¹⁶¹ E. Sharpe wrote in his *Not to Destroy But to Fulfil* (104) that Slater attended the Congress, probably assuming based on two papers in *The World's Parliament of Religions* (1894). See *Slater's Report of Work 1893* (Bangalore: Caxton Press, 1894), 20.

¹⁶² E. Sharpe wrote that Slater retired in 1904 (*Ibid*, p. 101), but the official retirement year for Slater was 1905 according to *Annotated Register of L.M.S. Missionaries 1796-1923*.

world religions. The reason why Cracknell missed the importance of Neander was his lack of awareness of the pith of Slater's theology: logos theology of the Alexandrian Fathers. In contrast to Cracknell, P. Hedges suggested the Alexandrian Fathers both as the precedent in the church history that justified the fulfilment theology and the key figures who influenced many fulfilment theologians on the whole. Nonetheless, Hedges also missed the major Indian influence, K. C. Sen and his *Bramo Samāj* members, because he mainly sought British influence in the history of fulfilment theology, focused particularly on Farquhar.

Along with the above influences, the relation of the Congregational tradition with Slater is noteworthy. Although fulfilment theologians were found to have diverse theological backgrounds, it seems not merely a coincidence for the leading fulfilment theologians like Slater and Farquhar to have had the Congregational influence. Congregationalism provided Slater with the necessary spirit and frame to take a favourable view of modern scholarship and have an open outlook towards the world religions.

I think it is fitting to deal with each group's diverse influence on Slater, rather than limiting research to one or two major influential factors, without overlooking the gist of Slater's fulfilment theology: logos theology.

Modern Scholarship: Evolution, Biblical Criticism, Comparative religions.

As previously mentioned in Chapter One, evolutionary theory, biblical criticism and comparative religions no doubt laid a foundation for fulfilment theology. This foundation is apparent in the theology of Slater as noted by Sharpe, Maw, Baago, and Hedges, although they placed less emphasis on biblical criticism as an influential factor in his work. Let me clarify the influence of each element in Slater's theology.

First of all, the evolutionary theory of Darwin proffered Slater the 'principle of development' in terms of looking at the Bible and the world religions. Recognizing 'gradual development' as the most intelligible explanation of the order of things, Slater interpreted the Bible in striking harmony with the evolution theory and world

faiths, not to be destroyed but to be enhanced in higher forms and richer fruit by Christianity.¹⁶³

Although Slater adopted a principle of continuous progressive development from Darwin, he denied the atheist position of evolution theory, based on his 'Christian evolution', with a designing intelligence behind it.¹⁶⁴ Importantly, Slater did not employ the evolution idea to describe his fulfilment theology, as Sharpe and Maw argued. The notion of evolution might be essential to the explanation of Farquhar's and Monier-Williams' fulfilment theology, but it was only additional evidence, or a supporting principle for Slater's, because he already had the most fitting theological concept from the logos theology of the Alexandrian Fathers: preparation (or prophecy) and fulfilment by the operation of the universal logos and the incarnated logos.¹⁶⁵

Secondly, biblical criticism inspired Slater to keep his personal allegiance to Christ without giving up his scientific mind and it provided him a necessary instrument to communicate his Christian message to the sceptical Indian mind. Under the influence of F. D. Maurice, S. Coleridge, T. Erskine and F. W. Farrar,¹⁶⁶ Slater doubted Moses' authorship of the Pentateuch, and rejected the literal interpretation and mechanical accuracy of the Bible. Nonetheless, Slater viewed the higher criticism in a positive way that delivered him from 'rabbinitism, or enslavement' to the letter of a holy book misinterpreted and idolized.¹⁶⁷ Besides, Slater believed that, if the results of biblical criticism were accepted, many of the difficulties in the Old Testament narratives, such as the literal creation in seven days, the flood, the Exodus and the miracle of the sun standing still, would vanish.¹⁶⁸ By continuously taking the up-to-date results of higher criticism, Slater effectively responded to the challenge of the college educated Indians who demanded the critical investigation of the Bible influenced by Western modern scholarship.

Biblical criticism does not directly relate to Slater's own theology, but it set him free from the letter of the Bible and turned his concern to 'spirit' and 'life' rather than

¹⁶³ T. E. Slater, *God Revealed*, p. 50. "The Old and the New," *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (1883): 12.

¹⁶⁴ T. E. Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 6.

¹⁶⁵ T. E. Slater, *God Revealed*, 57.

¹⁶⁶ Farrar was a dean of Canterbury and one of the most liberal minded theologians in Slater's day.

¹⁶⁷ T. E. Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 4.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

the Bible or creed. Because Slater was not bound with the letter of the Bible, he could freely explore the Greek Father's tradition that acknowledged God's revelation outside the Bible and Christianity.

Third, comparative religions provided Slater with substantial evidence that shows the revealing work of God among the world's people and their religions. Many agreements between world faiths and Christianity that were discovered by comparative religions matched well with Slater's notion of 'preparation' by the operation of the universal logos. By the aid of comparative religions he could confirm that truth is a unity and that the Christian gospels have an affinity and relationship not only to the Hebrew scriptures but also to other non-Christian writings.¹⁶⁹ In this sense, comparative religions gave Slater a significant impetus to hold a tolerant view of Hinduism. F. M. Müller, particularly, played a main role to influence on forming Slater's fulfilment idea, along with M. Monier-Williams, A. M. Fairbairn, M. Burnouf and C. C. Hall (1852-1908).¹⁷⁰

Congregational Education

One of the unknown features of the history of fulfilment theology in the nineteenth century is the Congregational connection to it. Slater and Farquhar, two leading fulfilment theologians, were both Congregationalists who received thorough training from the Congregational institutions. Besides, many other fulfilment missionaries' colleagues such as B. Lucas, R. A. Hume, J. P. Jones were the Congregationalists.¹⁷¹ In this context, the influence of the Congregational tradition on Slater's fulfilment theology should be noted.

As already mentioned in the short biography of Slater, he was brought up under his father, a Congregational minister, was a member of the Congregational Church in

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷⁰ Monier-Williams, Boden Professor of Sanskrit in Oxford University, was a backer for Slater when he was under fire by the True Friend of Mission; Fairbairn, principal of the Mansfield College, was the second Barrows lecturer in India; Burnouf, a French Sanskritist, was the one who wrote *The Science of Religion* quoted by Slater's *Studies in the Upanishads*. Hall, the President of Union Theological Seminary in New York from 1897 to 1908, was the third Barrows lecturer in India and frequently cited by Slater.

¹⁷¹ B. Lucas was evaluated as an important thinker in terms of indigenous Indian theology according to K. Baago (Refer to Baago's *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity*, Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1969, 78-80). R. A. Hume was one of two Indian missionaries who attended the Parliament of Religions in Chicago and an organizer of Barrows Lecture in India. J. Jones was one of the Indian correspondents to the Commission IV of 1910 Edinburgh Missionary Conference.

adulthood, and was educated in a Congregational College, and was later sent as a Congregational missionary through a Congregational mission agency, The London Mission Society, which was principally supported by Congregationalists from 1815. In addition, he got married to the daughter of a Congregational minister missionary who graduated from the same Congregational College.

Importantly, Slater attended at least two International Congregational Councils and presented papers at each one: the first, in 1891 in London, and the second, in New South Wales, Australia in 1910. In his paper in 1891, entitled “the Congressional Idea and Religious Movements in India”, he emphasized ‘Congregationalism, based on a common brotherhood, is the very teaching which a caste-bound land like India needs’.¹⁷² And while acknowledging a far-reaching movement was arising out of the Educational Missions of the L. M. S., Slater highly commended Congregationalists for their staunch support for this mission. The gist of his paper was that the democratic Congregational idea could be most welcomed not only in the Christian mission field but also in the India National Congress, so that foreign missions held an indispensable place in Congregationalist polity.¹⁷³

The essential features of the Congregational idea can be summed up in two points based on the principles of Nonconformity (1834) by J. A. James (1785-1859), Congregational minister of Carr’s Lane Chapel in Birmingham, the predecessor of R. W. Dale.¹⁷⁴ First, the Holy Scriptures is the sole and sufficient authority in matters of religion. For Congregationalists, the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the highest authority for faith, and thus to set up any other authority over conscience than the Word of God, can be regarded as treason against the sovereignty of Christ. The second point is that it is every man’s indefeasible right and incumbent duty to interpret the meaning of the word of God and to follow his own opinion. Due to these principles, Congregational tradition emphasizes the right of individual’s direct approach to God, irrespective of all other worldly or ecclesiastical power.¹⁷⁵ This right necessarily makes Congregationalists the champion of freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom in theology. Congregationalists, based on the above attitude, have an

¹⁷² R. W. Dale, *The International Congregational Council* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1891), 344.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 343, 345.

¹⁷⁴ Gerald Parsons ed., *Religion in Victorian Britain Vol. III Sources* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 131-132.

¹⁷⁵ Albert Peel, *Inevitable Congregationalism* (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1937), 108-109.

openness of outlook that led many of them to theological and social liberalism and to active participation in the ecumenical movement. Consequently, they tended to readily accept the results of modern biblical criticism and Comparative Religions in the nineteenth century, though the extent and manner depended upon personal preference.

Slater's fulfilment theology was primarily born from the above two principles: the sole authority of the Bible and the right of interpreting the Bible in accordance with conscience. Slater held on to the authority of the Bible as 'the spirit' over against 'the infallible letter' all through his life.¹⁷⁶ Consistent with the second principle, he was free to adopt biblical criticism and the findings of comparative religions. Slater never flinched nor hesitated to express clearly what he found from his personal interpretation of the Bible regarding the indwelling God's incessant work preparing for the salvation of people beyond the pale of the Western Christendom. When he was criticized by the traditional 'Friend of Mission', he remained firm in his position, being encouraged by the boldness of conscience as a typical Congregationalist.

Secondly, Slater's fulfilment theology could be spoken of and nurtured in the embracing and tolerant atmosphere of Congregational colleagues. As a matter of fact, Slater's advanced idea of the opportunity for salvation for those Hindus who act according to their highest reason might have seemed liberal and shocking to missionaries. Yet he was not seriously impeached for heresy by orthodox Congregationalists, but encouraged by colleagues such as J. Mullens, Foreign Secretary to the L. M. S. His colleagues agreed he could present his papers at the monthly missionary conference and J. P. Ashton, Slater's colleague of Calcutta, corrected the proofs of Slater's *Higher Hinduism* in his absence, for which Slater thanked him in the prologue. Such an appreciative attitude from his colleagues must have been very helpful for Slater to breathe the air of freedom and develop his theology without being disheartened or depressed. In short, the fulfilment theology of Slater can be said to have been born in the bosom of Congregationalism.

¹⁷⁶ Slater, *God Revealed*, 42.

Alexandrian Fathers

The theology of the Alexandrian Fathers, Justin, Clement, and Origen, is the ultimate source of Slater's fulfilment theology, whether it was mediated by Neander, Müller, or his own independent research. Given that almost every essential term and phrase can be found in the works of the Greek Fathers, his fulfilment theology can be said to revive the theology of the Alexandrian Fathers in the nineteenth century missionary context.

The Greek Fathers of the Church were, in Slater's *Studies in the Upanishads* (1897), highly commended by him in that they understood clearly the Christian truth of the indwelling God, immanent in the world and in the spirit, whereas this truth was sadly obscured by the Latin approach.¹⁷⁷ In his view, the Greek Fathers can be the perfect template for the future contribution of the Church in India to the world's interpretation of Christ, for he expected from India to come many Origenes, or the 'Fathers East' who can fashion independent thought and indigenous theology free from the Western model.¹⁷⁸

Slater only cited Origen's name but certainly he knew Justin and Clement as well; the key contents of Slater's fulfilment theology can be matched to each feature of those Greek Fathers. Justin (100-165) was the first writer among the Fathers to state that God had revealed Himself to the world outside the pale of the Jews. He explained the process of God's revealing work in his term, 'logos', indebted to Stoicism, that all the splendid religious utterances of pagan philosophers were due to the seed of the logos (*logos spermatikos*) that has been implanted in the whole human race.¹⁷⁹ Christ is the indwelling divine logos of whom every race of men is partaker. Consequently, those who have lived in a manner conformed to truth are Christians, even though they have been held as atheists (*Apology.*, i.c. 46).¹⁸⁰ Justin emphasized the utterance of St. John, 'He was the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world', which is Slater's most oft used biblical references.

¹⁷⁷ Slater, *Studies in the Upanishads* (London and Madras: The Christian Literature Society for India, 1897), 25.

¹⁷⁸ See Slater's "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", *The Harvest Field* Vol. XXX, No. 3, (March 1910): 104. *The Higher Hinduism*, 291. Correspondence of Slater to the Commission IV of Edinburgh Conference, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* Vol. XVI (London: Collier Macmillan, 1986-7), 12.

¹⁸⁰ V. G. Allen, *The Continuity of Christian Thought: a Study of Modern Theology in the Light of its History* (London & New York: Ward, Lock, 1884), 29-30.

In addition, Clement (150-215), called the father of Greek theology, was the central figure who stressed the universality of the 'preparation' in the old world for the advent of Christ, which constitutes the key contents, along with 'fulfilment', in Slater's fulfilment theology.¹⁸¹ In Clement's view, Greek philosophy is a kind of stepping-stone, a schoolmaster, and a foreshadowing to bring the Hellenic mind to Christ (*Strom.*, i.c. 5) who is everywhere as Deity indwelling in the world, being the crown and completion of humanity, the fulfilment of the whole creation.¹⁸² The doctrine of indwelling Deity, of the logos, was one of the theological principles in the teaching of Clement. It was his great conviction that God did not leave people to themselves in their search for Him, because God and humanity were bound together in one through Christ.¹⁸³

Finally, Origen (186-254) carried forward and elaborated the Alexandrian school which was initiated by Justin and Clement. Like Clement, Origen believed that philosophy, particularly the rising Neo-Platonism, was a divinely appointed means for attaining the truth. He had a similar logos theology to Justin's and Clement's.

As shown above, the prototype of Slater's fulfilment theology lies in the works of Alexandrian Fathers that provided Slater with a powerful theological instrument to interpret Hinduism in very positive terms, outgrowing useless antagonism against local religions and connecting Christianity to Hinduism. Although there were many stages and refractions between, the ultimate and crucial influence on almost all fulfilment theologians, including Slater, came from Greek Fathers.

Keshab Chandra Sen and *Brāhmo Samāj*

K. C. Sen provided one of the most important influences on Slater's fulfilment theology, along with the Alexandrian Fathers and F. M. Müller, because Sen was both an early indigenous fulfilment thinker, along with K. Banerjea, and one who provided explicit evidence that showed a favourable response from the Indian audience to the fulfilment approach of Slater.

In the first place, Sen was important to Slater as a native source. From 1866 onwards, Slater had watched Sen and the progress of his *Brāhmo Samāj* movement

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 69.

with the deepest interest, and had often remembered them in his prayers. Slater wrote, saying, ‘perhaps more than most missionaries, I have regarded the movement distinctly with favour, and have always spoken of it appreciatively, both here and in England’.¹⁸⁴ As *Brāhmos* attended Slater’s chapel, Slater also often attended *Bramo* services of the Bangalore *Brāhmo Samāj*. He lectured on the Life and Teaching of Sen during the week and finally he wrote a book regarding Sen and his thought, probably the first one from the Christian standpoint.¹⁸⁵ As Slater knew the position of Sen and his *Brāhmos* well, he wisely adapted his message in order not appear strange or antagonistic to their ears.

In his *Report of Work for 1886*, Slater talked about how he was affected by his audiences: ‘In a private conversation with the same gentleman, he defended his position somewhat in this way, a position I find to be taken up by many: ‘There is truth in all religions, we must accept it... we are not in a position to determine the relative superiority of one system over another; we therefore prefer leaving them alone’.¹⁸⁶ Slater also emphasized the necessity in encountering Hindus in such a way: ‘We shall never gain the non-Christian world until we treat its religions with justice, courtesy, and love; ... drawing near to them, getting on common ground with them’.¹⁸⁷ Hence, Slater willingly adopted some significant ideas and approach from Sen and his *Brāhmos*; his partners in religious conversation, which can be found in the comparison of Sen’s and Slater’s writings.

Apart from the common fulfilment idea, Sen acknowledged Christianity, as did Slater, not as a local, sectarian religion but as the universal truth for the benefit of all mankind, Europeans and Asiatics alike.¹⁸⁸ He, along with Slater, emphatically rejected the belief that Hinduism is nothing but a mass of lies and abominations, insisting that it has at its base a residue of truth and purity which one is bound to

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁸⁵ Before Slater, there was *An Historical Sketch of the Brahma Samaj* (Calcutta: Central Press Company, 1873) written by S. D. Colet, who had been an intelligent observer of the movement many years.

¹⁸⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1886*, 5.

¹⁸⁷ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 2.

¹⁸⁸ Sen, “Jesus Christ; European and Asia (1866)”, in Slater’s *Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Samaj: Being a Brief Review of Indian Theism from 1830 to 1884: Together with Selections from Mr. Sen’s Works* (Madras: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884), 4.

honour.¹⁸⁹ Sen stressed, in his lecture in England, the righteous life more than pure doctrine, as does Slater.¹⁹⁰

In 1870, six years before Slater published his first book, *God Revealed*, Sen argued for the possibility of becoming Christian without being either baptized or called Christian: ‘If we have that spiritual communion with God, we are Christians in spirit. Let us not lay too great stress on the name ‘Christian’... I am sure that Christ, if he were to appear among us now, would say that there are many in the heathen world who are real Christians’.¹⁹¹ In accordance with Sen, Slater also does not lay too great stress on the name ‘Christian’ saying: ‘And those who have lived or live according to the highest reason, who make the highest reason the rule of all their actions, are the true Christians, though Christians may call them atheists. For they act up to the light they have; they are true to conscience, true to God’.¹⁹² This is surely very similar to the statement of Sen above. ‘The highest reason’, ‘universal reason’ or ‘logos’ in Slater’s terms, corresponds to ‘Indian God’, in Sen’s terms. There is no big difference at heart between Sen’s sense of being a Christian and Slater’s, although Sen’s perception lacks, in Slater’s view, the full revelation evident in his understanding.

Secondly, Sen and his *Brāhmos* were the litmus paper for Slater’s fulfilment theology: had they not viewed it as reasonable and meaningful, Slater would have had to throw it out or at least totally rework it. Slater, in his *Report of Work 1883*, reported that Sen’s *Brāhmos* had been among his most attentive hearers in his chapel.¹⁹³ And they were the audiences to whom Slater presented his first statement of fulfilment idea and logos theology, before he wrote his first book, *God Revealed*.¹⁹⁴ Encouraged by the appreciative response from the audience, Slater published it and wrote in his letter to J. Mullen, the Foreign Secretary, saying, ‘I have also abundant evidence regarding the value and adaptability of my little book [*God Revealed*], from many in this country (Dated 14, Dec., 1886)’.

K. C. Sen also declared his support of fulfilment ideas very clearly after 1879, although there were already some expressions of fulfilment ideas even before 1879:

¹⁸⁹ Sen, “The Future Church (1869)”, *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁹⁰ Sen, “Nominal Christianity (1870)”, *Ibid.*, 25.

¹⁹¹ Sen, “A Christian (1870)”, *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁹² Slater, *God Revealed*, 57.

¹⁹³ Slater, *Report of Work 1883*, 9.

¹⁹⁴ *God Revealed* was published after having addressed to the educated Hindus as did most Slater’s works.

The doctrine of absorption in the Deity is India's creed, and through this idea, I believe, India will reach Christ. Will he not fulfil the Indian scripture? I am reminded of the passage in the Gospel in which he says, - I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ...Christ is already present in you. He is in you, even when you are unconscious of his presence. For, Christ is 'the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'¹⁹⁵

It is difficult, in this context, to distinguish between the fulfilment idea of Sen and Slater, even though Slater pointed out some deficiencies of Sen's position. Such a clear and frequent usage of the fulfilment idea by Sen certainly encouraged Slater to promote fulfilment theology with firm conviction.

Earlier Sources of Slater's Fulfilment Theology

It is quite surprising to find that there are many direct sources of Slater's fulfilment theology, though he is known as the founder of fulfilment theology. Who was the first source? Who had the strongest influence on Slater? What was the relation between these sources and Slater's fulfilment theology in terms of originality and profundity? The answers to these questions are essential to assessing Slater's fulfilment theology and will provide important background information on him.

To begin with, the first person who set forth fulfilment ideas in the nineteenth century was August Wilhelm Neander, although Hedges gave priority to F. D. Maurice (1805-72). Maurice's work, *The Religions of the World and their Relations to Christianity*, which included a vague fulfilment idea, was published in 1846, whereas Neander introduced, in 1825, the fulfilment ideas clearly in his *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*. In fact, he wrote 10 volumes of the book in German, translated in English four periods by four different publishing companies in 1831-1839, 1847-1855, 1850-1858, 1853-1872. He was a Jew by birth, but converted into Christianity and went to Halle, there devoting himself to the study of theology under Schleiermacher. He continued his academic career at Göttingen under Planck, settling down at the Berlin University as the Professor of Theology. The central labour of his life was his *General History of the Christian Religion and Church*, a work cited by Slater as one of his sources. Indeed, Neander was one of only

¹⁹⁵ Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen and The Brahma Samaj*, 93-103.

four names Slater cited as influencing the development of his fulfilment theology.¹⁹⁶ Moreover, Slater's essential fulfilment terms and phrases are located in Neander's book such as 'philosophy; a work of God, not a work of devil', 'preparation', 'fulfilment', 'consummation', 'not to destroy (whatever truth lay at the bottom of all religions) but to fulfil', 'the seed of logos', 'He has not left himself without witness', 'divine education of mankind'.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, Neander must be one of the most important figures for Slater's theology in terms of the earliest date, the quality of fulfilment theology and the acknowledgement of Slater himself.

In the second place, F. M. Müller, M. Monier-Williams, R. Caldwell, K. Banerjea belong to the most influential direct source group amongst the many sources before Slater. This group is confirmed as a source by Slater himself: M. Müller, 'Essays on the Science of Religion (1865, 1867)' in *Chips from a German Workshop Vol. I*; Monier-Williams, *Indian Wisdom* (1875); R. Caldwell, *Christianity and Hinduism* (1874); K. M. Banerjea, *The Arian Witness* (1875). Particularly, Müller's and Caldwell's works were cited in Slater's first book, *God Revealed*, in which fulfilment theology was for the first time spelled out while Banerjea's and Monier-Williams' works were cited relatively late. Consequently, Müller, the founder of comparative religions in Britain, and Caldwell, Bishop of Madurai, who devoted great effort to the educated Hindus, seemed to have had the strongest influence on forming Slater's fulfilment theology among the contemporaries.

Although not specifically cited by Slater, there was a second group of theologians, who had dealt with fulfilment theology prior to Slater's contribution in 1876. These included: Rowland Williams, *A Dialogue of the Knowledge of the Supreme Lord* (1856); William Miller, *The Plan of History* (1863); John Robson, *Hinduism and its Relations to Christianity* (1874).

Slater never claimed originality for his work, which implies that he acknowledged his indebtedness to Müller, Caldwell, Banerjea, Sen, Neander and ultimately the Alexandrian Fathers. He confessed in the preface of his first book, saying, 'I am not

¹⁹⁶ Müller, Caldwell were mentioned in Slater's *God Revealed* (1876); Banerjea, Neander in Slater's *The Philosophy of Missions* (1884). Although Monier-Williams and others were also cited in the unrelated context by Slater, these prior four figures are thought to be more significant in relation to the origin of Slater's fulfilment theology.

¹⁹⁷ A. Neander, trans. J. Torrey, *General History of the Christian Religion and Church, Vol. I* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1853), 4-5.

aware that I have advanced any view that has not been held, or is not now held.”¹⁹⁸ Nonetheless, it should not be overlooked that Slater clearly manifested his fulfilment statements systematically in quality and plentiful in quantity, unrivalled in comparison with other previous or contemporary fulfilment theologians in the missionary context, when antagonistic attitudes towards Hinduism prevailed in India.

Fulfilment Theology of Slater and of his Contemporaries until 1910

As mentioned above, there were many prior sources for Slater’s fulfilment theology. Furthermore, numerous theologians and missionaries, after Slater’s manifesto was published in 1876, put forward fulfilment theology in their own ways. What were the commonalities and differences between them? In this section the justification and the essential concepts of Slater’s fulfilment theology will be dealt with before we move on to the main part of Slater’s theology in next two chapters. In addition, the diverse types of nineteenth century fulfilment theology will be compared with Slater’s until the Edinburgh 1910 Conference, and evidence for Slater’s influence on other contemporary missionaries will be presented.

Justification of Slater’s Fulfilment Theology

Slater justified his fulfilment theology from both biblical references and precedents of the Alexandrian Fathers. He cited a wide range of verses from the Bible to support his views of fulfilment ideas, though he did not give any detailed, complete exposition. His Scriptural proof starts from God’s broken heart for the non-Christian people: ‘Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? Saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?’ (Ezekiel 18:23) According to Slater, God does not desire the death of any, but that all should turn and live.¹⁹⁹ The Hindus are not the forlorn children of the devil doomed to be punished in hell, but they are the prodigal sons (Luke 15:11-27), still having a chance to return to their loving father.

The God of love, ‘in the fullness of times’ (Mark 1:15), sent His Son, preaching the kingdom of God, for the salvation of the world.²⁰⁰ As God prepared Greek

¹⁹⁸ Slater, *God Revealed*, preface iii.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 192.

²⁰⁰ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 113.

philosophy and the Roman Empire for the coming of the Gospel, he prepared Hindu sages for Indians. Slater could never imagine that the people throughout the world are placed unattended beyond the pale of God's redemptive work, because the God of the Bible is the father of all nations and not the God of partiality. Thus, he suggests one of his favourite verses from the sermon of the Apostle Paul: 'who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, he left not himself without witness...(Acts 14:16-17)'.²⁰¹ God did not overlook the heathen, rather He sent some witnesses, though their light is faint, broken and partial. Slater believed in the universality of the true light declared in the Gospel of John: 'That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (1:9)'.²⁰² Because of witness being furnished by the indwelling Spirit, heathens have some truth in their faiths though surrounded by superstition and errors from the Christian perspective. That is the reason why he sticks to the verse from Matthew, Slater's other favourite: 'I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them (Matthew 5:17)'.²⁰³ For Slater, the faith of Hindus is not to be overthrown but rather is the unsatisfied desire of all nations to be fulfilled by Christ (Haggai 2:7).²⁰⁴ If the Hindus fear God and live righteously, they will be accepted like Cornelius, the Roman, who was accepted by God (Acts 10:35).²⁰⁵ Consequently, Slater hopes that 'many shall come from the East and the West, from the North and from the South, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 8:11)'.²⁰⁶

The next reference is from the precedent found in the Greek Fathers of the Church. Slater adopted the truth, so well understood by the Greek Fathers of the Church, of the immanence of God in the universe and humanity, and fully disclosed in the Incarnation.²⁰⁷ By the rediscovery of the logos theology of the Greek Fathers of the Church, he strengthened the foundation and the thrust of his theology.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 113. Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", *The Harvest Field*, Vol. XIX, No. 11 (November 1908): 407.

²⁰² Slater, *God Revealed*, 57. "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 407.

²⁰³ Slater, *God Revealed*, 1.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 170.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 49. Here 'many' means probably Christians and Christian-Hindus together.

²⁰⁷ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 140.

Essential Concepts of Slater's Fulfilment Theology

There are three essential elements used by Slater; preparation, fulfilment and logos, which establish a descriptive framework for his fulfilment theology. Slater used these terms, along with additional concepts like foreshadowing, schoolmaster, witness and stepping stone, while other fulfilment missionaries employed only a few of them. In Slater's view, all these terms describe the diverse functions of the world faiths for the local people in relation to their readiness to receive the Christian faith.

Preparation. In Slater's view, the world has been governed providentially in the interests of Christianity. Slater thus wrote in his book, entitled *Philosophy of Missions*, 'In the providence of God the faiths of the ancient world have been constituted preparations and predispositions, for the absolute truth which should afterwards be revealed'.²⁰⁸ By preparation Slater meant that God has been involved in directing the development of the world religions, evidenced for him by the traces of beliefs that are similar to Christianity in the world religions. According to him, 'More than any other Eastern faith, Hinduism abounds in presentiments of the truth, foreshadowings of the substance, promises of redemption, preparation and predispositions of the Absolute Faith'.²⁰⁹ For example, Slater wrote, 'In the same way the Hindu aspiration after immortality is a preparation for the Christian doctrine of Eternal life... Krishnaivism is the best preparation in Hinduism for the Gospel of the Incarnate Christ'.²¹⁰ These agreements between Hinduism and Christianity confirmed for Slater that God is everywhere and works with his Spirit, though His revelation is unfolding at different levels in human history. Slater's preferred expression, 'unconscious prophecy', is also used to indicate divine preparation.²¹¹ Where there is no preparation, there is no fulfilment. Consequently, the fulfilment theology of Slater can be called the theology of 'preparation'.

Fulfilment. Slater held that the world religions display a spiritual hunger and a thirst for a personal God, eternal life and redemption. As such, he believed that human nature was created by God for Christ.²¹² Because they were divinely prepared for Christ, even the loftiest ideal of their religious teaching cannot satisfy their

²⁰⁸ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 124.

²⁰⁹ Slater's paper submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 59.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 78, 86.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

²¹² Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 408.

longing, which Christ alone can achieve. Slater showed some examples of fulfilment of the yearnings of Hindu sages in his book, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*.

Christ will yet satisfy the spiritual hunger and thirst to which the great religious ideas of the East only give expression; and India while retaining and transmitting something of her idealistic and mystic passion and subtle thought, her desire to be liberated from her past and present Karma by entrance into a life that shall dispel the shadows, will surely find the enlightening revelation of the Gospel to be in complete accord with the best sentiments of her best minds, the true realization of the visions of her seers, the real fulfilment of the longing of her sages.²¹³

The fundamental reason why Slater thought that Christ was the fulfilment and answer of the longings of India was his view of Christian revelation.

We are now beginning to discover that our claim to go to the East as teachers of religion is not based on any essential superiority as religious thinkers, but simply on the ground that we have in Christ a unique revelation to present; a revelation whose glory it is, not to destroy, but to correct and fulfil; to gather up and explain and consummate the lessons of all previous revelations. He alone can ever explain them and satisfy them. He alone is the answer to the universal needs, to the deepest convictions of the human soul. Christ is the fullness of the Truth.²¹⁴

In Slater's view, Christian revelation is unique and full, while Hinduism is partial and wanting. Despite such a seemingly patronising attitude, Slater, as a missionary, considered every religious system, apart from Christ, as fragmentary, fleeting, and restless, and thus as aspiring for completion in Christ. Yet he did not anticipate that Hinduism would be destroyed, but fulfilled by Christ as we can see in the following statement:

We should hold up the religion of Christ, not as a destroyer, but, as He himself named it, the fulfiller – the fulfiller of all that is best in their old faith. Our business, as Christian preachers, is not to uproot and destroy; not to slander and trample on the religious convictions of men; but to interpret their faith in the light of Christianity; to show how they witness to Christ; how, apart from Him, they remain comparatively worthless, became unfulfilled.²¹⁵

Logos. The logos idea is not recognised in Slater's well-known work, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*. Perhaps that is a main reason why few subsequent researchers have acknowledged the significance of Slater's logos theology.

²¹³ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, 291.

²¹⁴ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 102-103.

²¹⁵ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 260.

Yet it remains the essential component of his fulfilment theology and is clearly set forth from 1876 to his later days. In *God Revealed*, Slater presented Christianity not as a foreign religion to Indians, but as a natural heritage in them due to the logos in the form of germinal principles as follows.

In this view - and it is the view with which I started - Christianity is thus not something belonging to one nation or one part of the world, and foreign to another; nor something appearing as a new religion at a certain period of the world's history; but something that has had an existence from all time; and by virtue of its essential unchangeable truth, is the natural heritage of all men, as much as are the principles of our common morality. It is not something to be forced on men from without, but something that is already in all men, in the form of germinant ideas and principles, needing only to be quickened and infused with life.²¹⁶

For Slater, Christ is 'the Universal Reason' who provides the good, the light and the highest reason to all men in every time as written in his same book.

Christ is "the heir of all the ages," and His spirit has been the guide and inspiration of the good in every time. When devoutly considered, and in the spirit of a true philosophy, He is the Universal Reason, of which mankind are all partakers. He is "the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." And those who have lived or live according to the highest reason, who make the highest reason the rule of all their actions, are the true Christians, though Christians may call them atheist.²¹⁷

Slater did not argue for universal salvation, but he opened up the opportunity of salvation, by the God of Justice, for the all people who live in accordance with their highest reason regardless of their place, time, race, and even religious affiliations. Living up to the highest reason is not easy, just as living according to the law is not easy for the Jews. Nevertheless, the universal logos makes a solid preparation for the arrival of the incarnate logos. It has its function as the spiritual revealer of God and of truth in the universe from the beginning even after Christ came.²¹⁸ Slater implies that this existence of the universal logos could throw light on the perplexing question of the salvation of those living in pre-Christian times.

²¹⁶ Slater, *God Revealed*, 55-56.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

²¹⁸ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 7.

Variations of Contemporary Fulfilment Theology of Missionary

Various fulfilment theologies were put forward following the significant impetus offered by Banerjea, Müller, Monier-Williams and Slater, although their sources were not necessarily bound to one of the above four, because there were already many other sources.

Nevertheless, Slater's influence on other fulfilment missionaries was remarkable on two points. First, Slater's great popularity and exemplary work among the educated classes helped contemporary educational missionaries and the other independent missionaries to adopt his sympathetic theology as a model for an evangelical cause. It is noteworthy that every week 400 to 500 educated Hindus attended Slater's lecture and there were highly appreciative responses to his sympathetic address. Particularly, Slater's conciliatory and approving attitudes towards traditional faiths, along with the solution of the unsatisfied desires of Indian minds in Christ without emphasizing the Western Christian system and creed, raised a sensational response among educated Hindus. As he was phenomenally popular among the educated classes, he was regularly invited to most main cities in Southern India.²¹⁹ Through his lecture Indians came to hear a new mode of gospel message and numbers of missionaries increasingly agreed with his fulfilment ideas. As a result, under the influence of Slater W. H. Campbell (L. M. S., Gooty, South India), Bernard Lucas (L. M. S., Bellary, South India), J. P. Jones (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Madura, South India) and Henry Gulliford (Wesleyan Missionary Society, Mysore, South India) came to adopt fulfilment theology and became faithful theological supporters and colleagues.²²⁰

Second, Slater popularized fulfilment theology, as the main contributor of a 'fulfilment school' with William Miller, W. H. Campbell, B. Lucas, R. A. Hume, J. P. Jones writing in *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, and *Harvest Field*, along with *The Evangelical Review*, *The Indian Evangelical Review*, and *The East and the West*. Slater released 28 essays from 1883 to 1902 in *The Madras College Magazine*, published particularly for the educated Hindus, and 8 essays in *The Harvest Field*, a Magazine devoted to Missionary topics. Slater's symposium paper on "How shall we preach to the Hindus?" particularly gave strong motivation for missionaries to adopt

²¹⁹ Slater's *Report of Work 1885*, 2,9.

²²⁰ Slater's influence to his contemporary missionaries will be detailed in Chapter Six.

his more sympathetic theology in 1887. From this point onward many leading missionaries such as Principal Miller, Professor Kellett, Campbell, and Hume joined in advocating fulfilment theology by writing consecutive essays in the *College Magazine*. As a result, fulfilment theology became dominant among those attending the missionary conference in 1897 at Bangalore as shown in criticism of the paper of Dr. Rudstil of Madras, entitled "Diverse Seeds", in which he argued that recognizing the teachers of other religions as having equal divine inspiration partook of a crime: 'In criticism of the paper it was urged that there was a universal prevalence of the Spirit of God and therefore elements of truth in all religions'.²²¹

The main argument of Miller, Campbell, Jones, Lucas in their papers was that Hinduism is not altogether false, having some good elements which are witnesses and a kind of training, and these are providentially given by the God of love who takes care of the heathen as well as the Christian world. Eventually all may achieve a mature stage of faith, to fulfil the unsatisfied desire of nations. Apart from this leading group there were secondary contributors such as J. S. Candlish, J. Mackenzie, W. Sinclair, Maurice Phillips, L. P. Larsen, S. Mateer, and J. N. Farquhar. They followed a similar line to Slater's theology, although they reflected only some part of Slater's fulfilment theology.

However, there was one distinctive point between Slater and some other missionaries like John Robson and J. Farquhar, regarding the value of Hinduism after Christ came. Robson and Farquhar saw that 'Disintegrating processes at work in India which must ultimately destroy the old religion of the country'.²²² Figuratively speaking, as the sun shines, the dawn disappears; Hinduism must die. However, in Slater's view, the dawn has its own beauty and function for people, thus the dawn should be kept and left to do its function unless it disappears due to its own weakness. That Slater approved the post-Christian value of Hinduism was featured by his own logos theology that holds the world faiths as the universal logos, Christ-within.

Although there are various fulfilment theologies, one commonality can be found in the typical fulfilment theology: God does operate in the non-Christian world to prepare for their eventual salvation to be fulfilled in Christ. Such a natural theology,

²²¹ See Current Mission News in *The Harvest Field* (Jan 1897): 464.

²²² John Robson, *Hinduism and its Relations to Christianity* (Edinburgh: William Oliphant & Co., 1874), 288. J. N. Farquhar, *The Harvest Field*, (1915): 317.

closely related to the logos theology of Greek Fathers, is the essential component of Slater's fulfilment theology, and one that Farquhar noticeably lacked.

In conclusion, Slater's theology, while fully reflecting modern theological trends, related directly to many fulfilment sources such as Sen, Müller and Neander. The works of the Alexandrian Fathers, and his Congregational tradition were especially important. Despite variations in fulfilment ideas developing from different sources, Slater's theology was unique for three reasons. Firstly, he organized the ideas into a coherent theology. Secondly, he played a leading role as an inspiration among the educated Hindus and contemporary missionaries in his lectures. Thirdly, his prolific publications clearly expounded the justification and the heart of his fulfilment theology in that world faiths are divinely prepared by the indwelling Universal logos to be fulfilled by Christ, the Incarnated logos. Under Slater's impetus, Miller, Campbell, Hume, Jones, and Lucas formed a kind of fulfilment school and promoted their fulfilment model as a new missionary paradigm along with Slater for three decades from the 1870s onwards, one generation ahead of Farquhar. Due to the cooperation with several leading missionaries, Slater's fulfilment model became a major approach to world faiths when he retired in 1905, just five years before the Edinburgh Conference.

The development of our discussion now leads to the detailed content of Slater's fulfilment theology in Chapter Three and Four.

Chapter Three

The Rise of Slater's Theology: His Audience, Methodology and Theological Engagement with Missionaries

The basic frame and core of Slater's own theology was largely shaped during the first decade of his forty years of missionary service, influenced especially by his experience of professional task among college educated Hindus in 1875. It is noteworthy that Slater's theology and methodology were unquestionably conditioned by his audience, the educated classes, who were enormously influenced by their Indian heritage, emerging nationalism and Western ideas. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the significant formative influence of Slater's audience and methods on his theology. Additionally, it seeks to describe Slater's theological engagement with a critical resistance of his contemporary missionaries, rising after he articulated his theology, through which he could confirm and make known his theology.

Slater made his Christian message applicable to his audience in three areas: a secular area permeated by Western scepticism and materialism, an orthodox Hindu area preoccupied with the superiority of Hinduism and a *Brāhma Samāj* area with theistic ideas. The first two areas had an anti-religious or anti-Christian attitudes, while the latter group held a favourable view of Christ and his teaching, although all of them were more or less influenced by the rising nationalism. In order to reach the anti-Christian and anti-British classes, Slater avoided a conventional one-sided disparaging attitude toward Hinduism and adopted a conciliatory, sympathetic approach in which he found common truths in Hinduism and worked out how to build a bridge between Hinduism and Christianity: that is Slater's fulfilment theology. In erecting such a bridge, Slater's encounter with the *Brāhma Samāj* became very significant in terms of stimulating fulfilment ideas for him and of confirming the worth of his approach to Hinduism. In the course of a weekly Bible class with the leaders of the *Samāj*, Slater provided 'the best truths of Brahminism' with the *Samāj*²²² and encouraged their social reform movement.

²²² According to Slater's *Report of Work 1883*, one of the adherents of *Brāhma Samāj* remarked Slater that the best truths of Brahminism were derived from Christianity. Based on this, Bangalore *Samāj*, at the least, must have obtained its best truths from the Christianity construed by Slater.

Slater's methodology seems virtually inseparable from his theology, for characteristics of his theology owed much to Slater's method to reach the educated Hindus. John H. Barrows²²³ designated Slater's methodology in his introduction to Slater's work, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, as 'the method of sympathetic approach' that, in Barrows' view, was 'the only proper method in dealing with the educated non-Christian classes of Asia'.²²⁴ Slater's sympathetic method, according to Slater's own explanation, was to 'judge everything by its best from the standpoint of its own religious books and systems, with sympathy, justice, and love, so as to discern points of agreement even more than doctrines of divergence'.²²⁵ Such a keen awareness of affinity between religions was intended to present the Christian message, not as strange and foreign, but as reasonable and Indian. Standing in another's position on the common ground, Slater did not attempt to destroy the Indian heritage, but to develop and fulfil its best ideals following the ever-working Spirit of God.

Slater's method brought forth his pioneering theology that emphasised life above dogma, affinity and fulfilment, adaptation to the Indian mind, already-moving Spirit of God, and scientific theology. According to Slater, Christian ideas were not to be presented in 'a system or a proposition', but in 'a life' that could move a life of humanity, because Indians needed a life-changing spirituality rather than a system or creeds.²²⁶ By comparing and balancing the considerations of Hinduism and Christianity, Slater found many similar points in Hinduism that might connect to Christianity, although they were still to find ultimate fulfilment in Christ. The sympathetic study of Hinduism inevitably led to Slater's overriding priority on adapting the Christian message fitting to the mind of educated Hindus.

A final thing to be mentioned in conjunction with the method of Slater was his scientific theology. Slater employed the rational, scientific criticism on every field including religions without distinction between Hinduism and Christianity, for he had a firm conviction that scientific facts might bring an authenticity as a revelation apart

²²³ Barrows was Slater's friend who worked as Professor of Comparative Religions in Oberlin College, U.S.A. He became president of the world's parliament of religion and the first lecturer of the Barrows Lectureship (1896-1897) in India.

²²⁴ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, introduction vi.

²²⁵ See Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 407. "How to Reach the Educated Hindus Apart from the Higher Education in College", *The Harvest Field*, Vol. XIV (1903): 219.

²²⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1893*, 9.

from the Bible. That was the reason why he adopted in his works various forms of modern scholarship such as historical criticism, archaeology, comparative religions, biblical criticism, geology and the evolutionary theory.

When Slater published his first book, *God Revealed*, that applied his sympathetic method to conveying his missionary message, most educated Hindus and some missionaries warmly welcomed it with favourable notes and comments in several newspapers and magazines.²²⁷ The Hindu audience was highly attracted to his sympathetic attitudes and his remarkable presentation of Christ having worked in Hinduism, and many open-minded missionaries were pleased to find a well-adapted new missionary apologetic to the educated Hindus in his work. However, his book also provoked a group of missionaries who construed Slater's attempt as a deviation from orthodox Christian tradition, since it risked losing the distinctiveness of Christianity. In the last section of this chapter I deal with two main engagements of Slater with his critics.

First, Slater set forth his detailed justification of his sympathetic approach and his motivation of change in his theological position in response to the challenge of 'True Friend of Missions', an anonymous critic of the works of the London Missionary Society. What Slater had attempted in his series of lectures, delivered to the educated Hindus and published in 1876 was blamed as the way to retard the advancement of the kingdom of God in India. In his letter to J. Mullens, the foreign secretary to the London Missionary Society, Slater reflected upon what he had endeavoured and justified himself officially to the directors and the secretary of the London Missionary Society. It was a hard time for Slater to be doubted regarding his faithfulness to Christ, but it was a meaningful time for him as well by making his theological points clear and sharp. Secondly, Slater proposed the outline of his fulfilment theology in relation to preaching to the Hindus both in the Bangalore Missionary Conference and the *Harvest Field* with four other missionaries. Originally his paper was shared with discussion in the February meeting of the Missionary Conference and it was published as one of the Symposium papers in March 1887. Some leading missionaries challenged by Slater in the conference put forward their critical view of Slater's theological position. Although there was no further subsequent debate in this

²²⁷ Slater provided a long list of people, organization, and the magazines that released their favourable notes on Slater's book in his letter dated December 14th, 1876 to J. Mullens.

missionary magazine, it became a good chance for Slater to spread his approach to the Hindus for the general readers; mostly missionaries. Therefore, 'True Friend of Missions' and the *Harvest Field* Symposium should be noted as relevant sources for understanding of the formation of Slater's theology.

Slater's Audience

It seems not to be an exaggeration to say that Slater's fulfilment theology came largely from a historical context, particularly in the process of adapting his Christian message to his audience, the college educated classes in late nineteenth century India. These classes, which consisted predominantly of higher castes, rooted deeply in their cultural, social, religious heritage and inspired by a patriotic spirit, were not to be approached by the same theology and method that had been applied to the low caste and the tribal people. This section deals with the characteristics of Slater's audience from which Slater developed his own theology and with Slater's influence on the *Brāhmo Samāj* leaders in terms of their social reform movement and of their fuller understanding of Christianity.

Educated Classes

Since Alexander Duff's first English language missionary institution was launched in 1830, and government education followed in 1854, English education and University education tended annually to increase by thousands. According to Slater, English was studied by 353,515 or nearly ten percent of all students in 1892, and there were 136 colleges presenting a University education to 15,589 students.²²⁸ The influence of the educated classes outweighed their numerical strength. Forming the social, intellectual aristocracy of the country, they were everywhere becoming its brain and voice, a powerful factor in the State upon whom other classes looked as the leaders of public opinion in political and social matters.²²⁹ They controlled an increasing number of newspapers and other periodicals, published in English and in the native languages, thus wielding a wide influence by way of the press. The severest attacks both on their own religion and Christianity came from this class influenced by Western scepticism, while some reformed groups, like *Brāhmo Samāj*,

²²⁸ *Third Decennial Missionary Conference Bombay, 1892-1893* Vol. 1, 272.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, 274.

came from this class as well. As Slater knew the significance of this class, he argued: 'If we would carry the fortress and subdue the mind of India, and if the Indian Church is to grow in force and culture and self-reliance, and is to exert a more powerful influence in the land, we cannot neglect the higher classes without faithlessness on our part and a humiliating confession of failure'.²³⁰

Nonetheless, there had been a smattering of high caste converts before Slater, and many missionaries avoided caste people and turned their ministry mostly to the depressed classes. Hence, from 1880 onwards, great masses of outcaste people flowed into Christianity, particularly in the area of South India.²³¹ E. W. Parker from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South Asia Missions detailed the points why missionaries preferred their ministry to the oppressed people.²³² First, these peoples were more accessible to Christian workers than others. Second, it was not so difficult for them to change their religion, because their religion was not, as a rule, orthodox Hinduism. Third, they did not have the pride of caste and they readily received Christian teachers. Besides, whatever was done for these poor people was usually considered as kindness or a favour. J. F. Burditt from the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions contrasted the tangible results of a great success among the depressed classes to 'a perpetually hypothetical one among people of higher social standing'.²³³ Some missionaries like S. Martin naively believed that successful work among the most ignorant classes would make the evangelisation of the more intelligent masses an easier task.²³⁴ However, after the partial success among the high caste by Alexander Duff in the early nineteenth century, the difficulty tended to increase sharply among them during the latter half of the nineteenth century due to the growing awareness of the brilliance of their own religion and rising nationalism. Most missionaries dealing with the Hindus applied the same negative theology and old methods with an authoritative attitude that worked among the depressed classes to the people who had the pride of caste, deeply rooted in the age-old Hinduism with anti-Christian and anti-British sentiments.

²³⁰ Slater, "How to Reach the Educated Hindus Apart from the Higher Education in College", 218.

²³¹ J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Boston: Macmillan Company, 1915), 24.

²³² *Third Decennial Missionary Conference Bombay 1892-1893*, 27.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 5.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

Slater found that the traditional approach was of no use at all and even harmful particularly in reaching the educated Hindus, thus he proposed his own mollifying theology levelled at the educated classes. Slater's theology started from his understanding of the educated Hindus, whose characteristics can be summarised as follows. First, the educated classes, in his view, tended to be antagonistic, stirred by the rising patriotic tide, to Christianity, the religion of the ruling alien race. In his letter to J. Mullens, Slater delineated, as I previously quoted, the psyche of the educated Hindus in the mid-1870s when he started his work among them: 'If you adopt a denunciatory and authoritative tone, they simply will not listen to you, and would consign any book written in such a style immediately to the flames'.²³⁵ Delivering a Christian message with a condemning and overbearing attitude might be for the educated to pour fuel on the fire, for they already had ill feeling towards Christians and missionaries, ironically encouraged by English ideas of nationalism, scientific criticism, and education. Such an animosity, ten years later, was on the rise, enough to identify its impact on any resident in India forcibly.²³⁶ So much literature of a distinctly anti-Christian character being widely read, it became the duty of Christian teachers to guide as far as possible the current of opinion. Slater mentioned an episode of a Hindu preacher, who, in the course of Slater's Sunday evening lectures, regularly took up his position on the steps of a temple on the other side of the road, just as the meeting commenced, and continued to hold forth till after Slater's lecture had dispersed, aiming evidently to disrupt the lecture and to draw away Slater's audience, and attacking mainly Christianity and missionaries in his harangues.²³⁷

In Slater's analysis, Christians were disliked in India, 'not because of their beliefs, but because the term appeared to be synonymous with what was opposed to the honour and independence of the nation'.²³⁸ As Slater knew well such a sensitive feeling of the educated, he avoided the disparaging, authoritative preaching, and adopted a way of discussion and persuasion. Instead of calling Hindus to a Christian gathering particularly in the initial stage, he visited them and developed intimate

²³⁵ Slater's letter dated December 14, 1876, Arrival No. 6929, Madras, London Missionary Archives, SOAS.

²³⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1886*, 2.

²³⁷ Slater, *Report of Work 1889*, 10.

²³⁸ Slater, "Religious Movements Amongst Hindus in South India During Decade", 243.

relations: for example, he joined a Hindu Literary Association, the object of which was mutual improvement by means of books and magazines, intercourse, and meetings for discussion. Slater had forty-five Hindu gentlemen whom he regularly visited during the week. The most hopeful of all methods, in Slater's view, was to deal personally with the educated through which he might get a personal touch and understand their thought and religious opinions.²³⁹ He invited those friends to his Bible class, lectures and ultimately to his home for further discussion and fellowship. Thus, Slater's theology can be called a theology of conversation in which he respected and learned from his audience, while he taught the life and teaching of Christ with humility and love.

Second, the educated Hindus had a strong grip on Hinduism. In the 1830s, when it was resolved to give Western education to the Hindus by means of the English language, it was hoped that Hinduism would shortly become a thing of the past, and that Christianity would soon as a matter of course occupy its place. However, despite having passed half a century, Christianity had little attraction for the educated Hindus, and they repelled any attempt to demonstrate the superiority of that religion. At one time they were in a mood to condemn everything Hindu, but they came back to regard the heritage that they had inherited from their noble ancestors as a thing to be cherished and ennobled. This was attributable, in Slater's observation, to their study of the Vedas and Śāstras,²⁴⁰ to a judicious examination of other systems of religion, and to a closer acquaintance with the religious and moral condition of the people of Europe.²⁴¹ The crusade of Swāmi Vivekānanda (1863-1902), one of the Hindu reformers, in America and his eloquent exposition of philosophic Hinduism, had the effect of stimulating national thought and pride. Annie Besant (1847-1933), the famous London convert from Marxism to Theosophy, visited India and became the idol of the time among the educated Hindus, by imploring her hearers to shun the beliefs and customs of the West, and restoring India to her former greatness on the basis of her pre-eminent spirituality. Likewise, a wave of revival of Hinduism was passing over India in 1890s to the extent of 'bordering on fanaticism, connected to the

²³⁹ Slater, *Report of Work 1884*, 3.

²⁴⁰ Sanskrit Śāstras means 'ancient scriptures on religion, science, arts'.

²⁴¹ Slater, *Report of Work 1886*, 3.

frenzied nationalism', according to Slater's report.²⁴² As a result, animated by the hostile spirit of the earlier Theosophical movement, and armed with the foreign weapons of propaganda, Hindu Tract Societies and rival Hindu Schools did their best to counteract the growing influence of Christian teaching.²⁴³

Third, scientific criticism was dominant among the educated Hindus. Influenced by many scientific minds of the West, they were inclined to doubt the miraculous aspects of religion without proof or a rational explanation. That was why Slater entertained modern scholarship such as historical criticism, biblical criticism, evolutionary theory and the science of religion when presenting Christianity and examining Hinduism. In a sense, Slater's theology was evidently directed to a scientific theology in which scientific facts were considered as one of God's revelations in nature, while the other was in the Bible. Consequently, it was natural for Slater that everything should be consistent with the revelation of science, including religious claims.

Having a keen awareness of the above-mentioned Hindu minds, Slater did not present Christianity as an antagonistic religion, but as the alternative religion for Hindus that might realize and satisfy the noblest and earliest ideas of their sages, and the truest sentiments and yearnings of their hearts. As he knew well the significance of Indian heritage, he respected the faiths of Indians and made an effort to express Christ in relation to Hinduism. It is little wonder that Slater provided scientific justification even in religious matters for the points he might argue as an effective way of appealing to the scientific mind of the educated Hindus.

Brāhmo Samāj

Brāhmo (or *Brāhma*) *Samāj* was the first modern Hindu reform movement in response to the advent of Christianity and Enlightenment, seeking to create a purified form of Hinduism by submitting teachings and practices of Hinduism to the test of rationality and Christian ethics.²⁴⁴ *Brāhmo* is derived from *Brāhman*, the Supreme Being of the Vedānta philosophy, and *Samāj* is a noun meaning 'society'. Hence, *Brāhmo Samāj* means the fellowship of believers of the one true God, which was

²⁴² Slater, *Report of Work 1896*, 4-5.

²⁴³ Slater, "Religious Movements amongst Hindus in South India During the Decade", 242.

²⁴⁴ Thomas J. Hopkins, "Brahmo Samaj", ed. Mercea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 299. Paul Hiebert, "Missiological Issues in the Encounter with Emerging Hinduism", *Missiology* 28 (2000): 59.

founded in Calcutta in 1828 by Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), the so-called father of modern India. In Roy's view, the true spirit of Hinduism is monotheism, while the root of social evils is an idolatry which destroys the texture of society. He believed that Hinduism, if purged of its superstitions, would rest on monotheism, the original faith of all creeds. Thus, he urged his members of *Samāj* to uphold theistic teachings of the Hindu scriptures as well as those of the world religions, and promote unity and universality.²⁴⁵ Roy was enthusiastic in the field of social reforms such as the abolition of *sati*, the custom of burning widows alive, and the advocacy for the rights of women, condemning polygamy of the Brahmins. Importantly, as R. Boyd points out, he was the first Indian leader who dealt seriously and extensively with Christian theological themes, although he adopted the rituals and theologies of his society from both Hindu and Christian scriptures.²⁴⁶ In this sense, Sunand Sumithra, a former secretary of the Indian Theological Commission, criticised him for being syncretistic and Unitarian. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy to remember that he opened a positive evaluation among leading Hindus of Jesus himself and his teachings: at least, some eminent Bengali Christians attributed, according to C. F. Andrews, the sprouting of their faith to the study of Roy's *The Precepts of Jesus*.²⁴⁷

Roy's *Brāhmo Samāj* was succeeded by Debendranath Tagore (1817-1905) who followed his friend Roy in the belief that original Hinduism was a pure monotheism, with the exception that India was in no need of Christ. He was convinced that Jesus offered nothing special and India's cultural heritage was so rich that the *Brāhmas* did not have to look for any spiritual inspiration from the outside.²⁴⁸ He strictly prohibited the doctrine of incarnation or *avatāra* and tried to keep the *Samāj* free from the influence of both Christianity and idolatry. Although *Samāj* became distant from Christ under the leadership of Tagore, it was changed into a religious unit between 1842 and 1865, underlining the direct communion of the human soul with the supreme Spirit by loving God and by performing good deeds.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Antony Kolencherry, *Universality of Modern Hinduism* (Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1984), 21-22.

²⁴⁶ Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1969), 19.

²⁴⁷ C. F. Andrews, *The Renaissance in India: Its Missionary Aspect* (Edinburgh: Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, 1912), 113.

²⁴⁸ A. Kolencherry, *Universality of Modern Hinduism*, 34.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

Keshab Chandra Sen, the third leader of *Brāhmo Samāj*, was born and raised under the family tradition of *Vaiṣṇava bhakti* and had a western education in Calcutta in a Hindu college. Through prayers he found that God is Father and everybody is a brother. Thus, in 1857, he joined the *Brāhmo Samāj* that kept the same principles with him and proved to be an outstanding orator and an organizer of the *Samāj*. However, Sen could not follow Debendranath Tagore's principles which maintained traditional values and customs. He argued that *Samaj* was outside Hinduism and was meant to unite all people in a universal brotherhood²⁵⁰; thus, he advocated abandoning the sacred thread, allowing widow remarriage and inter-caste marriage. In conflict with Tagore, Sen, in 1861, took many of *Samāj* members into a new organization which he called the *Brāhmo Samāj* of India, while the previous *Samāj* was called the *Ādi Brāhmo Samāj* (original society). The essential points of the creed of Sen's *Brāhmo Samāj* of India are as follows:

(i). God is the First Cause of the universe. (ii). The true Scriptures are two, the volume of nature, and the natural ideas implanted in the mind. (iii). God Himself never becomes man by putting on a human body. (iv). The Brahmo religion is distinct from all other systems of religion. It is not hostile to other creeds. What is true in them it accepts. (v). Man must labour after holiness by the worship of God, by subjugation of the passions, by repentance of sins, by the study of nature and of good books, by good company, and by solitary contemplation. This will lead through the action of God's grace to salvation.²⁵¹

In contrast to Debendranath, Sen was a radical advocate of social and religious change, arguing for the eradication of untouchability, the breaking of caste barriers, the education of women, and the ending of child marriage.²⁵² In the field of religious reform, Sen adopted a number of new practices, the sources of which were the *Vaiṣṇavism* of Chaitanya (1486-1543)²⁵³ and Christianity. He began to encourage his members to love God and have faith in him based on Chaitanya's *bhakti* teaching: he included the Christian elements into the sessions of the *Samāj* in fuller way such as the use of Scriptures, meeting on Sundays, earnest prayers to *Brahma*, the starting of

²⁵⁰ Ed. Mercea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 172.

²⁵¹ Frank Lillingston, *The Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj in Their Bearing upon Christianity: A Study in Indian Theism* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1901), 77-78.

²⁵² T. Ainslie, "Keshab Chandra Sen," ed. Mercea Eliade, *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* (N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), 172.

²⁵³ Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was an ascetic Vaiṣṇava monk and social reformer in 16th century Bengal and Orissa. He was a notable proponent for the Vaiṣṇava school of *Bhakti* yoga based on the philosophy of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa and Bhāgavad Gītā. Specifically, he worshipped the forms of Radha and Kṛṣṇa and popularised the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Brāhmo missions. At this time, Sen read a great deal of Christian literature and came more and more under Christian influence.

In the course of years, however, Sen gave up the *Brāhmo* Marriage Act by allowing the marriage of his young daughter with the prince of Kuch Bihar. As a result, the majority of members fell off in 1878 to establish what was called the *Sadharan* (general) *Brāhmo Samāj*, which was meant to maintain catholic and democratic organization but to keep the old theistic teaching and the social service and philanthropy which had initially characterized Sen's *Samāj*.²⁵⁴ What justified Sen was his doctrine of 'Ādeśa (revelation)' which provided him with a divine authority to represent the revelation of God. By the authority of *Ādeśa*, he could not only permit the wedding of his daughter, but also proclaim the *Nava Vidhana* or the Church of New Dispensation in 1881. According to Sen, the first dispensation of the Jews and the second of the Christians were to be displaced by 'the New Dispensation, the latest Revelation of our heavenly Father'.²⁵⁵ In his view, the New Dispensation is 'the harmony of all scriptures and all saints and all sects; the harmony of the Veda and the Purāṇa, of the Old Testament and the New Testament; an explanation of the mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation'.²⁵⁶ Long before Sen died in 1884, the *Samāj* movement became moribund, although the eminent leader, Protap Chandra Mozumdar (1840-1905) succeeded to its leadership.

There are various evaluations of the *Brāhmo Samāj*. Paul Hiebert commented that it was a failed movement due to a lack of producing a viable synthesis that would attract orthodox religious leaders and the common people.²⁵⁷ In contrast to Hiebert, A. Kolencherry (b.1946), an Indian theologian, argued from a different perspective that *Brāhmo Samāj* played the most significant role in the spiritual renaissance of Hinduism in terms of its contribution towards the deepening and strengthening of the Hindu faith by inducing in India many other reforms and counter-reforms like *Ārya Samāj* and Rāmākṛishna Mission.²⁵⁸ T. Hopkins also approved its positive position, saying that *Brāhmo Samāj* fulfilled its role to provide a necessary vision for the leaders and most of the members of the *Samāj*, the English educated non-*kulina*

²⁵⁴ J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (Boston: Macmillan Company, 1915), 55.

²⁵⁵ K. C. Sen, "What is the New Dispensation?", Edited with Introduction by David Scott, *Keshub Chunder Sen: A Selection* (Bangalore: The Christian Literature Society, 1979), 344.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 344.

²⁵⁷ Paul Hiebert, "Missiological Issues in the Encounter with Emerging Hinduism," 250.

²⁵⁸ A. Kolencherry, *Universality of Modern Hinduism*, 131.

(superior) castes of Bengalis who wanted to retain Hindu identity and improve their religious status, while acquiring the benefits of working with the British.²⁵⁹

Regardless of how history might judge the success or failure of the *Brāhmo Samāj*, it seems evident that *Brāhmo Samāj* influenced the development of both Hinduism and Indian Christianity. The two reform movements, *Ārya Samāj* (Society of Nobles) of Swāmi Dayananda Sarasvati and the Ramakrishna Mission of Swāmi Vivekānanda clearly took their cue from the *Brāhmo Samāj*, in terms of monotheism, philanthropy and the acceptance of certain Western ideas. Most importantly in the standpoint of Indian Christianity, *Brāhmo Samāj*, as J. N. Farquhar rightly commented, ‘has done much to open the Hindu mind, to serious monotheism; has helped to break down prejudice against Christ, like John the Baptist, and has prepared the way for Christianity’.²⁶⁰ Furthermore, *Brāhmo Samāj*, according to A. Kolencherry, not only made a preparation for Christianity, but also indicated some significant ways Indian Christians could develop an Indian Christian theology and nationalise Christ in India.²⁶¹

K.C. Sen’s contribution was crucial for the influence of the *Brāhmo Samāj* on Indian Christianity, although it is controversial whether he was a Hindu or a Christian. There is no doubt that he was a pioneer Indian theologian who began to discuss some significant themes in the development of Indian Christian theology. R. Boyd summed up Sen’s contribution in four points:²⁶² First, he began to use the concepts of ‘divine humanity’ and *kenosis* as self-abnegation in relation to Jesus’ thought, ‘I and my Father are one’ to make the nature of Christ intelligible to Hindus. Secondly, Sen was the first thinker to expound the meaning of the Trinity in relation to the famous definition of Brahman as *Saccidānanda* (Being, Intelligence, Bliss). Thirdly, Sen initiated the concept of an ‘Asiatic Christ’ and offered his ‘Church of the New Dispensation’ as an instance of nationalised churches. Fourthly, Sen spoke the concept of ‘fulfilment’ of Hinduism in Christ years before Farquhar, as well as the concept of ‘hidden Christ’ in Hinduism.

²⁵⁹ T. J. Hopkins, “*Brahmo Samaj*”, 299.

²⁶⁰ J. N. Farquhar, “*Brahma Samaj*”, ed. J. Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909), 823.

²⁶¹ A. Kolencherry, 104, 131.

²⁶² Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 28-39.

S. Sumithra saw the positive aspects of Sen in parallel with R. Boyd, but some negative evaluations are also mentioned in his *Christian Theology From an Indian Perspective*²⁶³ First, Sen's doctrine of *ādeśa*, as a unique revelation of God, higher than Jesus Christ, Sumithra considered a major sign of heresy. Secondly, though Sen knew the significance of Christ, he did not commit himself to Christ. Thirdly, Sen did not accept the biblical idea of Christ's death as God's provision for the sins of all humankind. Lastly, Sen's idea of a hidden Christ is different from the biblical fact: 'No one comes to the Father but by me'.

Here Sumithra denies Sen's theology as syncretistic, eclectic and heretical, although he acknowledges his contribution to Indian Christian theology. However, he obviously overlooks Sen's growing awareness of Christ in the course of years. For example, as against Sumithra's criticism, Sen accepted the crucified Christ for his sin, one year before his death:

How true, how sublime the doctrine of Christ's atonement!...He substituted himself for the world...Behold, I am reconciled to all through the blood of him crucified. Fellow-countrymen, be ye also reconciled through him. He has given his precious blood for all of us, whether we believe it or not. We have only to apply it to ourselves.²⁶⁴

Although his theology might be different in some ways from Christian orthodoxy, it needs to be noted that Sen was neither a Christian evangelist nor a trained Christian theologian, but a Hindu seeker on a journey of finding Christ. He became closer to Christ year by year and felt a responsibility to lead his followers to Christ in a way relevant to their Indian heritage. Hence, one may as well see how much Sen approached Christ, as to see how distant he was from orthodox Christian teaching: as well as seeing how relevant his message was to Hindus as how irrelevant it was to Christians.

Slater's work and his theology had a strong connection to the *Brāhmo Samāj* movement in terms of his deep involvement with the educated Hindus. Both Sen and Slater worked among the educated classes; thus, they found their audience from the same groups. Due to geographical distance, Slater rarely met Sen and Mozumdar who

²⁶³ Sunand Sumithra, *Christian Theologies From an Indian Perspective* (Bangalore: Theological Book Trust, 1995), 54-56.

²⁶⁴ K. C. Sen, "Lectures: Asia's Message to Europe," ed. David C. Scott, *Keshub Chunder Sen*, 272,273.

worked mostly in Calcutta, apart from his brief encounter with them during their missionary tour in Madras and Bangalore, but he knew many members of *Brāhmo Samāj*, because, as previously mentioned, he visited Hindu gentlemen diligently enough to know almost all educated gentlemen in Bangalore, including *Brāhmos*. Therefore, it was no wonder that about a hundred *Brāhmos* and sympathisers with the Brahminist movement in Bangalore, if not all, at least quite a number of people, had listened to Slater's lectures. Slater reported that some of his most interesting interviews had been with *Brāhmos*, and they had been among his most attentive hearers in his Cantonment chapel.²⁶⁵ Although there were many *Brāhmos* among Slater's audience, it is particularly noteworthy that a minister and a secretary of *Samāj* attended Slater's Tuesday Evening Bible Class regularly for many years held in the vestry of his Tamil Chapel.²⁶⁶ Conversely, there were times when Slater attended the services of the Bangalore *Brāhmo Samāj* for their encouragement. The leaders of *Samāj*, out of gratitude, gave Slater a promise that they would be glad to meet together there at any time Slater liked, and listen to anything Slater might wish to say. In doing so, Slater obtained friendly access to this class, and exerted his influence for the evangelical cause. Considering the *Brāhmos*' general tendency to disclaim anxiously the help and influence derived from foreign missionaries in connection to their *Samāj*, it indicates a special relation between Slater and the Bangalore *Samājes*.

However, Slater's influence was not bound by geography. Although it was not clear that Slater had any personal relation with Sen, apart from prayers for him and listening to his lectures while Slater worked in Calcutta, Slater had a friendship with Sen's successor, P. C. Mozumdar, who attended the Chicago Parliament of Religion and wrote *The Oriental Christ*. The publishing of his book, *Keshab Chandra Sen and the Brāhmo Samāj*, brought Slater into closer intimacy with some of the Brahminist leaders in the North, more particularly with Mozumdar, in a correspondence, and *pandit* (a Brāhman scholar) Sivanath Sastri, with whom he had much personal relationship when he came on a missionary tour to South India. In 1896, Mozumdar of Calcutta visited Bangalore and gave a lecture in the Hall of the L. M. S. station. After having a religious conversation with Mozumdar, Slater gave him a copy of Dr.

²⁶⁵ Slater, *Report of Work 1883*, 9.

²⁶⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1884*, 5.

Forsyth's sermon on 'Holy Father', that might, in Slater's view, take him into 'a holy-of-holies of Christian thought', which he had not yet entered. Afterwards, Slater had been in correspondence with him, often recommending some books for Mozumdar, or setting forth his view on Christian thought and the works of Mozumdar.

As shown above, Slater's constant interaction with the *Brāhmos* significantly influenced the fashioning of his theology. First, the *Brāhmo Samāj* provided Slater with a confirmation of the work of the Spirit preparing salvation outside the pale of the Christian Church, which was integral to his fulfilment theology. Slater regarded the *Brāhmos* as 'semi-Christians at heart, approaching very near to Christ', although he saw that they failed to grasp him fully, particularly his divine nature.²⁶⁷ The reason why Slater saw Sen in a positive perspective was Sen's claim about himself as the servant of Christ, calling Jesus 'My Christ, my master, the eternal logos, the word of God and the light that lightens every man that comes into the world'.²⁶⁸ Particularly, Slater noted the relationship of Christ with the Spirit as written in his report in 1884: 'The sum and substance of all his teaching is the reception and immediate inspiration of the presence of the Indwelling Spirit through the loving self-sacrificing trust that was in Christ'.²⁶⁹ For Slater, the growing faith of Sen and his followers meant an impressive testimony to the living influence of the indwelling Spirit, and to 'the growing power of the personality of Christ on the mind and heart of the world'.²⁷⁰ If the *Brāhmo Samāj* movement, which had arisen voluntarily from the educated Hindu sector, could be attributed to the work of the living Christ, Slater considered it as the confirmation of his supposition that the Christian God never left Indians and the so-called Western Churches had no monopoly of Christ. Pondering the theological implication of the example of *Brāhmo Samāj*, therefore, might lead Slater to the idea that the universal God works everywhere in the world in His indwelling Spirit for the preparation of salvation regardless of race, region and religion.

Second, the *Brāhmo Samāj* of Sen gave encouragement and inspiration for Slater by arguing the ideas of 'fulfilment', and 'logos', in parallel with Slater's fulfilment theology. Sen, apart from K. M. Banerjea, began to articulate his fulfilment ideas

²⁶⁷ Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Samaj: Being a Brief Review of Indian Theism from 1830 to 1884: Together with Selections from Mr. Sen's Works* (Madras: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1884), 182, 187.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 103, 121, 133.

²⁶⁹ Slater, *Report of Work 1884*, 14.

²⁷⁰ Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Samaji*, preface v.

among educated classes of India. Sen's ideas can be summed up as follows: first, there is a germ of truth in each philosophical system, whether it be Christian or non-Christian, and that truth, though taught by Greek or Indian philosophers, is and must necessarily be a fragment of the logos (universal Christ) or the Eternal Word.²⁷¹ Secondly, Christ does not come to destroy, but to fulfil Indian scriptures.²⁷² These ideas confirmed Slater's viewpoint, when he had made the effort to speak to the educated classes of India. That was the reason why he had a warm heart towards the work of *Brāhmo Samāj*, though he perceived in it the absence of the essential element of Christian faith.

Third, the *Brāhmo Samāj* prefigured a role model for Slater's theology as an interpreter of the Christian message to the educated Hindu mind. As a missionary Slater wanted to lead Indians to Christ. However, it was never easy to win their heart and create a relevant message particularly to the educated Hindus who were hostile to Christianity and deeply rooted in their traditional faith. Slater thus was really impressed by the success and influence of *Brāhmo Samāj*, writing as follows:

It has certainly familiarized India with the name of Christ, and the voices that once blasphemed against him became silent. It has brought Christ nearer to the people...Christians are thus indebted to it as being an interpreter in India of the Christianity of the West, and an interpreter to the West of the best religious aspirations of the East.²⁷³

Through the work of *Brāhmo Samāj* Slater might learn the significance of acquaintance with Indian religious thought and life, of a sympathetic approach to Hindu minds and adopt a way to 'present Christ not in hat and boots', but in Indian clothes.²⁷⁴ Though Slater regarded the teaching of *Brāhmo Samāj* as insufficient, he seemed to think that it would become an indigenous model to copy in his own way, since it proved its efficiency among the educated Hindus he aspired to reach. That Slater sympathised with the vision and method of the *Brāhmo Samāj* could be shown through Mozumdar's reply to Slater's letter: 'You [Slater] do not know what a deep chord in my heart you touch when you speak of an Eastern Church of Christ. I behold

²⁷¹ K. C. Sen, "Fragments of the 'Word' in India," 331.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 93.

²⁷³ Slater, "The Present Religious Outlook of India", ed. John H. Barrows, *The World's Parliament of Religions* Vol. II (London: The Review of Reviews Office, 1893), 1174.

²⁷⁴ See Slater's second paper in 1892 Bombay Conference, 278.

it already arisen in the *Brāhmo Samāj*.²⁷⁵ The interpreting work was, in its essence, the same both to *Brāhmo Samāj* and Slater. As *Brāhmo Samāj* interpreted a partial Christ in Indian terms, Slater attempted to interpret the whole Christ in Indian terms. In this way, Slater's theology was significantly foreshadowed by the *Brāhmo Samāj* of India.

As Slater was influenced by the *Brāhmo Samāj*, however, so too can it be argued that the *Brāhmo Samāj* was influenced by Slater. First, the content of Brahminism was complemented by Slater in terms of its understanding of Christ, particularly for the Bangalore *Brāhmos*. The *Samājes* at Bangalore were the oldest and most vigorous, apart from those at Calcutta where Sen worked. They had, along with all *Samājes* in the South and West, an independent organization that held no official relationship to the parent Societies in Calcutta. Hence, the local *Brāhmos* at Bangalore could take the liberty of developing their own religious view, although the basic principles were in line with those of Sen in Calcutta. To confirm the strong connection between the *Samājes* at Bangalore and Slater, it should be noted that two *Samāj* leaders, as well as other *Brāhmo* seekers, attended Slater's Bible class and lectures over many years. Moreover, Slater himself acknowledges that they were the most attentive hearers among his audience. Why did they study the Christian Bible so faithfully for at least four years in a Christian chapel? Why did they conscientiously seek to hear Slater's Christian teaching? That is because, in contrast to antagonistic missionaries, Slater was fully sympathetic to the theistic ideals of *Brāhmo Samāj*. Accepting them as friends and brothers, Slater appreciated their achievement of familiarising Christ in Indian terms in the Indian mind. Most importantly, the *Brāhmos* at Bangalore could hear Christian teaching, well adapted particularly to *Brāhmos* from Slater, an excellent interpreter of European Christianity to the educated Hindus. Both were the same interpreter of Christ to the caste people, but their base was different: *Brāhmos* mediated between the Hindus and Christ, standing on the Indian heritage, while Slater mediated on the Western heritage. That is why *Brāhmos* needed Slater as a proper interpreter of European Christianity. Slater's influence might be confirmed by the remarks of his adherents to Slater that 'the best truths of Brahminism were derived

²⁷⁵ Slater, "The Present Religious Outlook of India", 1177.

from Christianity',²⁷⁶ which strongly indicated, in my analysis, the Christianity that was taught by Slater.

Second, Slater's influence was not limited to the theoretical area, but extended to the practical area of the social reform movement. Slater was not only a theologian, but also a practical man who applied the spirit and rules of Christ to the social evils of his time. Slater believed that 'all social work was a part of salvation of souls and true character building was the end of Christian service'.²⁷⁷ Slater was deeply involved in the social reform movement particularly in the South, leading a movement for removing the woes and evils of child marriage and enforced widowhood with the leading reformers of Madras and Bangalore, including some *Brāhmo* leaders. Slater maintained that 'social reforms on any general scale might be impossible until the women were taken into confidence, since the deepest and saddest of the social problems of India centred on women'.²⁷⁸ He invited a leading reformer of Madras, the chief minister Bahadur Rangunath Row, to preside over his lecture on child marriage and widowhood in the public square where thousands of people assembled, and later visited scores of Southern cities giving a passion to his lecture. At last, by the inspiration of Slater, a Reform Association was started in Bangalore in 1885, joined by almost all the reformers.²⁷⁹ In 1893, Slater founded a Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, somewhat on the lines of the Y. M. C. A. In his Tamil Chapel, he started Wednesday evening lectures, debates, and talks on religious subjects. In this organization, Slater was the President, and a Deputy Commissioner of Bangalore became the Vice-President, while the minister of the local *Brāhmo Samāj* consented to be the joint Secretary. Likewise, Slater was one of the key figures in the social reform movement in Bangalore, who had much influence in stimulating the indigenous social movement including the *Brāhmo Samāj*.

As shown above, the features of Slater's audiences are found to give a significant influence on creating Slater's fulfilment theology. As he worked among the educated classes with an anti-Christian ethos and a strong Hindu inheritance, Slater's theology was devised on the principles of sympathy and justice, rather than of disparagement

²⁷⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1883*, 9.

²⁷⁷ Slater, *Missions and Sociology* (London: Elliot Stock, 1908), 7.

²⁷⁸ Slater, "Child Marriage and Enforced Widowhood", *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (December 1885): 1.

²⁷⁹ Slater, *Report of Work, 1885*, 9.

and denial, while he kept the distinct value of Christ. A natural corollary was his fulfilment idea in which Indian traditional faiths and Christ were respected and conserved in the relationship of preparation and fulfilment. In this context, particularly the *Brāhmo Samāj* of Sen was significant to Slater in terms of confirming the operation of Christ among Hindus. Sen recognised Christ's presence in Hinduism as 'the logos' (or 'universal Christ'), which was never mentioned by Farquhar in his *Modern Religious Movements in India*, whereas Slater gave a positive assessment of his idea in his *Keshab Chandra Sen and His Samāj*. Following up this idea Sen argued that Indian philosophy prepared the way for Christianity, and was perfected in it.²⁸⁰ Farquhar acknowledged the contribution of the *Samāj* for the preparation of Christianity, and yet he might not agree with Sen's idea that such a preparation had been made by the logos, the indwelling Christ in Hindu philosophy and faiths. In contrast to Farquhar, Slater had full sympathy with the *Samāj*, because he rejoiced to find 'the working of the Christian spirit outside the pale of the sects of Christendom'.²⁸¹

However, S. Sumithra criticised the idea of the presence of Christ in Hinduism for being syncretistic and conflicting with John's Gospel 14:6. Though the idea of Christ's presence in Hinduism shall be detailed in the chapter 4, Slater was not meant to support the idea of multiple ways to the Father, apart from Christ, but to support the God of justice and mercy who shines the light on all people, as written in John's Gospel 1:9. In contrast to Sumithra, who condemned Sen's argument as syncretistic, R. Boyd wrote that 'Sen's idea was not a merely syncretistic one',²⁸² but a result of his 'wrestling to express the meaning of Christ in terms which will be intelligible to his Hindu friends'.²⁸³ In the similar manner to Boyd, Slater looked favourably and hopefully upon the *Brāhmo Samāj*, because he acknowledged that Sen had facilitated India's conversion, and *Brāhmos* were coming closer in the direction of Christ in their journey of seekers for the true light. Nonetheless, since the *Brāhmo Samāj* was in the process of knowing Christ as Slater recognised, it seems inevitable for the *Samāj* to have some errors. What is more, it is noted that Sen selected truth from a variety of sources by his perception of intuition. Such 'eclecticism', the guiding

²⁸⁰ K. C. Sen, "Fragments of the 'Word' in India", 332.

²⁸¹ Slater, *Keshab Chandra Sen & Brahma Sama*, 158.

²⁸² Robin Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 38.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*,30.

principle of the *Samāj*, may also result in errors, as Slater rightly pointed out, since the security cannot be guaranteed against error. Nonetheless, Slater did not apply the possibility of error to Sen's idea of Christ's presence in Hinduism. Certainly, Slater might have too much sympathy with *Brāhmo* seekers, which might allow some syncretistic elements in his unfulfilled hypothetical hope for Sen to attain the orthodox Christian faith.

Method of Sympathetic Approach

Slater's fulfilment theology was the product of his careful and conscientious exploration of proclaiming the Christian message to Hinduism. For attaining this object, Slater adopted an efficient way or procedure known as 'the method of sympathetic approach' that might be contrasted to the traditional way of other missionaries. Although Slater himself did not call his method 'the sympathetic method', he tacitly endorsed it when J. Barrows named it as 'method of sympathetic approach' in the preface of Slater's book, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*.²⁸⁴ Importantly, Slater proposed 'sympathy' as 'the method of first and foremost importance'²⁸⁵ for reaching the educated classes. 'Sympathy' was above all else needed in his dealing with the people of other lands and of alien faiths, since 'it led him to come into touch with the circumstances and interests of others, and besides, only it could give Indians knowledge of Christ, not by a negation or a sneer'.²⁸⁶

In Slater's term, 'sympathy' was not simply the ability to understand and feel the people with other faiths, but also to approve support for, or agreement with other faiths and to share fellow seeker's feelings. It was not a slogan for missionary propaganda, but a theological method to find an appropriate way of reaching thoughtful Hindus who had been difficult to approach by the antagonistic methods of traditional missionaries. Slater's sympathy starts from fair treatment, since prejudiced treatment may tend to close one's heart and sometimes provoke anger. Particularly, conventional missionaries' discriminatory dealing with Hinduism had stirred among the educated Hindus indignation and hostility against Christianity. In their view,

²⁸⁴ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, preface iv.

²⁸⁵ Slater, Second Paper in 1892 Bombay Conference, p. 285. Slater, "How to Reach the Educated Hindus Apart from the Higher Education in College", 219.

²⁸⁶ Slater, *Report of Work 1900*, 14. Slater, "How to Reach the Educated Hindus Apart from the Higher Education in College", 222, 259.

Hinduism was a false religion from below, whereas Christianity was the truth from above. The sermons of such missionaries were meant to disparage and attack against the cherished faiths of Hindus based on the Bible as the definitive words of God, while Vedas were considered as evil. In his letter Slater took an example of a Hindu judge who was considered to be 'the most bitter opponent of Christianity in the city' and who had been impossible to get access at all, due to 'the injudicious way' he had to suffer 'by missionaries'.²⁸⁷ He told the missionaries that he would rather go to hell than go to heaven with them, if he had to believe all they told him. Fortunately, however, after the judge was invited by Slater, he came to Slater's addresses and received a treatment which made his heart open, confessing, 'I will come to you as Nicodemus came to Christ'. After detailing this story, Slater remarked: 'Had he been dealt with in a different manner, he might now have been a very different man'. In the same letter, he notes another instance of a man who had given up attending Christian meetings for similar reasons, who resumed his attendance as a result of Slater's manner during the public discussion. Here Slater's point is that there is a need for a change in the treatment of missionaries toward Hindus and their faiths.

In the Indian's eye, missionaries' assertions could be arbitrary, biased and derogatory to their faith. When Slater heard missionaries' statement from the Indian's standpoint, he came to find it patently unfair. Such an unfair approach to thoughtful Hindus certainly might be unacceptable and repulsive in Slater's view. Therefore, Slater thought that 'doing justice' to faiths should be the first and foremost stage to mollify their antagonism and induce their attentive consideration of Christ. The ultimate aim of Slater's method of doing justice was to secure some common ground on which he could share his rich inheritance of Christ in a congenial and respectful atmosphere. He declared his principle in his prominent book, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*: 'We shall never gain the non-Christian world until we treat its religions with justice, courtesy, and love: treat them as a rich man should treat his poorer brothers: drawing near to them, getting on common ground with them, and then sharing with them his rich inheritance'.²⁸⁸

What Slater asserted here confirms that he was not also absolutely free from the 'arbitrary, biased and derogatory' viewpoint of the non-Christian people, when he

²⁸⁷ Slater's letter to J. Mullens, Dated December 14, 1876

²⁸⁸ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 3.

called them 'poorer brothers'. Nevertheless, he deserves to receive due credit for treating them as brothers, not by emotional language, but by his scientific method of doing justice, in the period when they were recognized as firewood of hell. In Slater's well-known motto; 'justice, courtesy, and love', justice was his primary concern for his missionary work. Many missionaries had stressed humility, compassion, and love, but nobody before Slater would have insisted the principle of justice and consistently applied it, like Slater, to their own theology and work, along with other faiths.

Slater did justice, to begin with, to Christianity by applying modern criticism to the domain of the Bible. According to Slater, the Christian message should be stated, 'not in the stereotyped formulas of the sixteenth century, but in living language of today, and in terms consistent with modern thought, and the ascertained results of biblical criticism and science'.²⁸⁹ It should be noted here that Slater lived in an age when the axiom of modern science prevailed; thus, everything should have been first demonstrated as historical reality before it could put in a claim to be accepted as necessary truth. Given the situation, he had a significant cause to insist that the Bible receive the fair treatment in its composition and inspiration and of the Christian faith. In the first place, Slater thought that missionaries should not teach old-fashioned doctrines, but should teach the recent results of modern scholarship; for 'if we do the first, we are now confronted in the East with quotations from Mill, Spencer, Huxley and Hackel, by men who have learned how to reflect and reply; and who do not want our out-grown garments'.²⁹⁰ Moreover, in Bangalore, a pamphlet like *Mistakes of Moses* written by Colonel Inglesol was being circulated, which pointed out how science disproved Genesis.²⁹¹ Particularly, Bishop John William Colenso's book on the Pentateuch did a great amount of harm and shook the faith of many, not only in England but also in India.²⁹² In 1862, Colenso, though an ordained minister of the Church of England, published the first part of a series of volumes entitled, *The Pentateuch and The Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, the notorious section of which was written to destroy what he saw as a deceitful approach to the Bible.²⁹³ He

²⁸⁹ Slater, "How to Reach the Educated Hindus Apart from the Higher Education in College", 219, 220.

²⁹⁰ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 407.

²⁹¹ Slater, *Report of Work 1883*, 5.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹³ Barbara J. Z. MacHaffie, *The People and the Book, A Study of the Popularization of Biblical Criticism in Britain, 1860-1914*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis at the University of Edinburgh, 1977, 103.

drew attention to numerous exaggerations and inaccuracies, employing German biblical scholarship. Although he contributed to spreading certain principles about the Bible and critical studies to British public, he also provoked an intensely hostile reaction to progressive biblical study and as a result he was at that time considered by a majority of fellow bishops as heretical.²⁹⁴ Particularly, his adverse criticism of the first chapter of Genesis had done much to perplex the native Indian mind. Hence, in Slater's thought, it was of no use telling Hindus not to read freethinker's books; they would read them all the more out of curiosity. Based on the reliable results of biblical criticism, Slater acknowledged the misinterpretation of the Bible's infallibility to the sceptical Hindu mind and rather attempted to present the Christian message as scientifically examined. Otherwise, he could not come close to the thoughtful Hindus and might have been regarded as disparaging towards them.

In addition, Slater's justice to Christianity came from his scientific theology in which he believed the operation of natural law in spiritual life in line with Henry Drummond (1851-1897).²⁹⁵ In Slater's view, science was not the enemy of the Bible, rather, it inherently went hand in hand with the Bible, as was maintained in his first book, *God Revealed*: 'There cannot be any real discrepancy between two departments of true knowledge; and science and revelation, are but two compartments of one great fabric raised on the same foundation to the glory of God. There must ever be essential congruity in all truth. No divine revelation, whether in word or world, can utter dissonant sounds'.²⁹⁶ As two sets of knowledge were not different principles, Slater thought that the scientific method was constructive and useful for clarifying spiritual knowledge. Particularly, Slater saw that living Churches in India had been seriously retarded by the propositional theology enforced by traditional authority. In this sense, Slater wrote, 'Indian Churches needs a scientific theology that might ultimately seek to clear divine truths from those accretions of human error that had stopped its own growth, and too often proved stumbling blocks in Hindu brother's way'.²⁹⁷ In Slater's

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 106. Clement C. J. Webb, *A Study of Religious Thought in England From 1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 75.

²⁹⁵ H. Drummond was world famous scientist and evangelist in the late nineteenth century who had a chair of natural science at Free Church College in Glasgow. He declared the crown of evolution (or science) was Christianity. Slater's article, "The Missionary Problem" (*The Harvest Field* XI, 1900, 215-220), introduced Drummond's view of missionary problem.

²⁹⁶ Slater, *God Revealed*, 41.

²⁹⁷ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 7,8.

understanding, traditional Western theology was not divine truth as such, but human interpretation with errors to be corrected intelligibly to the Indian intellectual mind. Hence, it was necessary for Slater to take away human errors in spite of their familiarity to Western Christians, by employing modern criticism. Above all else, biblical criticism, to him, became 'a deliverance from a blind, slavish idolatry of the mere letter of Scripture'.²⁹⁸

Such a treatment of Slater with Christianity might be related to his theological position to put life above dogma; the spirit above the letter. Although dogma might be significant in the Western Christendom, Slater thought that it was 'only an incomprehensible puzzle and stumbling block for Hindus to come to Christ' until it might be reasonably restated in order to be relevant to the Indian intellectual mind. Therefore, doing justice to Christianity by his scientific theology was an essential process for Slater to remove strict literalism of traditional Western theology and to present Christ in an Indian mould.

Second, Slater did justice to Hinduism in terms of having exalted its worth to the revelation of God from human ingenuity. Western missionaries, for the most part, had seen only the corrupt and gross aspect of Hinduism, while they had extolled the best of Christianity. They condemned Hinduism as a human production or devil's work, while they had accepted Christianity as God's revelation. Nevertheless, unfortunately for the missionaries, the educated Hindus saw the wicked and abhorrent aspects of Christianity, while they adored and felt pride in their brilliant heritage of Hinduism. Besides, they revered both their scriptures and Christian Bible as were spoken by God. In the course of becoming aware of the Indian intellectual climate, Slater realised that missionaries would not win the heart of thoughtful Hindus, unless they broke down prejudice and treated them fairly. Based on this observation, Slater suggested how to do justice to Hinduism: 'If we want to judge of [sic] a religion fairly, we must try to study it, as far as possible, in the mind of its founder or chief masters; understand its best ideals, and not see only the depraved and repulsive side'.²⁹⁹ To judge everything by its best was called 'the Christian method' by Slater, since he thought that 'Christians should treat everything fairly as the believer of the God of justice'.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁹⁹ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 2.

³⁰⁰ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 407.

According to Slater, it was quite possible for Christian propaganda to proceed along the line of least resistance, by adopting 'the Christian method', without the loss of a particle of uncompromising fidelity to truth.

Slater's Christian method resulted in a fundamental change in missionaries' attitudes to Hinduism which can be seen in the papers of missionaries from India to the Commission IV of Edinburgh Missionary Conference in 1910. From the standpoint of Hindu sages or their scriptures, Hinduism had shone a light of truth on the darkness of people living in India. It taught and encouraged splendid virtues to Indians in accordance with their social, cultural ethos. Consequently, anything like abuse or ridicule of even popular superstitions might be fatal to success, and harmful in its effects. On the contrary, missionaries might have to sympathetically learn Indian faiths and practice in order to discern points of agreement as the contact points.

The final stage of doing justice is to compare the similarities and dissimilarities between Christianity and Hinduism, and consider the meaning and relation between them. For this purpose he underlined the significance of looking at things from different points of view as written in his book, *God Revealed*:

Let us be willing to look at Truth all round; and to look at any one truth from different points of view. We may be sure we shall never find the whole of any one single truth, if we will not look at it from more than one single truth, if we will not look at it from more than one point of view. We may be equally sure if we do secure one real truth, another will shortly break upon us unexpectedly, and then another, as when new stars appear in heaven: for Truth is ever seeking for kindred truths till the circle be complete - which circle, however, is commensurate with the universe.³⁰¹

Looking at truth from different points aims to undertake a critical enquiry into Slater's own faith as well as his audiences' faiths in order to avoid a one-sided view. Importantly, it might necessarily include the process of interpreting the similarities and the differences between Hinduism and Christianity. His interpretation might lead him into an idea very different from the traditional views, but he was ready to take it out of love for truth. In fact, it is not clear from what process Slater elicited his idea of preparation and fulfilment. However, it seems clear that he saw the similarities as planted by the indwelling Spirit of Christ or the logos, a position which was very different from the general view of missionaries. Many missionaries were reluctant at first to acknowledge even a smack of the commonalities between Hinduism and

³⁰¹ Slater, *God Revealed*, 1,2.

Christianity. However, Slater might presume that such similarities should come from the same God, since truth is truth wherever it may be found in his view and truth cannot come from the devil. If the similarities come from God, he might assume that the truths in Hinduism were planted by His Spirit or the pre-existent logos, because the essential elements of Hinduism were already formed before the Christ came into the world. Once he saw Hinduism from a different point, he could see the Bible verses in different views. He observed that the light shines all the time, not only after the Christ came, and that the light shines to all people, not limited to the Jews nor Western people. Slater's interpretation was also different on the dissimilarities between two faiths: they were viewed by Slater as the partial truths or a preparation to be fulfilled by Christ, the fulfiller and the satisfier, while viewed by other missionaries as untruth to be destroyed or displaced. Slater's attempt to look at faiths from different points led him to have a keen awareness of the Indian standpoint so that he could interpret Christ to some extent in Indian terms.

Slater's method of sympathy was fairly successful to appease the indignant educated classes and draw their favourable attention to Christ by accepting their critique of the Christian scriptures and showing respect for their *Śāstras* (scriptures). Its self-reflective, self-critical attitude, along with its positive way of looking at Hinduism, enabled Slater in some measure to lift the suspicion of the Hindus and get their friendly access to Christian faith. Importantly, his method of doing justice brought him a positive attitude to Hinduism and gave an influence on fashioning his fulfilment theology by discovering the similarities between Hinduism and Christianity which ultimately served him to find a way of connecting each other.

Nonetheless, Slater does not seem to secure exactly the common ground to which he attempted to reach, although he came closer to that ground than had been achieved before. A doubt remains concerning his thoroughness of doing justice to Hinduism and Christianity: if one sees Hinduism and Christianity from the perspective of Indian's chief masters, as Slater argued, would they be happy with Slater's description of Hindus and the Christians in terms of the poor brothers to the rich man's inheritance? Certainly, they would reject Slater's claim about the partial truth of Hinduism in contrast to the perfect truth of Christianity. Though Slater raised the value of Hinduism from the false to the true, he did not raise enough to put it on a par with Christianity. Hinduism, for Slater, was still a partial truth to be fulfilled by

Christianity, the perfect truth. Slater thus might be accused of applying his method to the advantage of Christianity, not taking it in all seriousness. Understandably, Slater had, as a missionary, a personal faith in Christ as the full revelation of God, a final line not to yield. On the other aspect, Slater might be accused of losing some significant parts of his fidelity to truth, perhaps, therefore, doing justice to both Hinduism and Christianity. By adopting biblical criticism, he might lose the infallibility of the Bible and the essential element of Christian faith. Above all else, his theology might become syncretistic by accepting Hinduism as a truth planted by God himself which could blur the line between world religions and Christianity.

Slater's Theological Engagement with His Contemporary Missionaries

Slater's fulfilment theology was formed not only by his sympathetic method but also by his theological engagement with his Hindu audience and contemporary missionaries. As the relation between his theology and his audience has been previously detailed, our discussion shall turn to Slater's theological engagement with his missionary colleagues. Slater was mainly engaged in a theological discussion with other missionaries at the monthly missionary conference and through his papers in the missionary magazines. Through these engagements Slater not only justified his theology but also challenged the traditional thought of missionaries towards Hinduism and Christianity.

Challenge of 'True Friend of Missions'

'True Friend of Missions' was an anonymous missionary critic of Madras who sent a series of letters to the President and the Directors of the London Missionary Society. The writer introduced himself³⁰² as 'the one who took a deep interest in Christian missions, but who was also deeply grieved to find that these missions at least in India were not as a rule conducted to advance the Kingdom of Christ but rather, to virtually retard its progress'.³⁰³ The intention of the writer was to entreat the missionary societies in Britain to suggest that 'they should send the right sort of missionaries and do the right work in the right way and spirit'. The entire attitude of the letter was to

³⁰² Slater was sure in his letter that the writer might be one or two male missionaries who looked askance towards Slater and his work.

³⁰³ True Friend of Missions' letter, Dated March 24, 1876 in SOAS Library Archives.

report ill statement of the missions and indict the improper, disqualified missionaries. The writer's blame can be summed up in three ways: first, the Boy's High School, the Lady's Boarding School, and Medical Mission of the L. M. S. should be abolished, since Bible teaching was neglected in those institutions.³⁰⁴ Particularly, the Lady's Boarding School was repeatedly asked to be abolished, because the majority of their parish girls did not become satisfactorily Christian. In addition, the writer remarked there was no need of an India Christian College, possibly because conversion, or biblical education, was not central to its curricular.

Second, the majority of the contents of the letters targeted a group of unfit missionaries. Many missionaries were condemned as 'unqualified, unhelpful in mission work' as they had not only 'no missionary or minister spirit' but were also 'fully self-conceited and puffed-up'.³⁰⁵ Many more lists of such discredit were piled on the missionaries, including accusations of having an affair, concealing babies, and eloping together. Therefore, the writer demanded that many ill-behaved missionaries should be displaced and recalled. As a matter of fact, however, such accusations seem to be in doubt, since, in the next letter, the writer acknowledged his mistake by stating that 'a certain missionary's criminal intimacy with another missionary's sister-in-law when she was found to be a step-daughter'.³⁰⁶ If not all charges were wrong, alleged inappropriate conduct by some missionaries might be blended with some truths, misunderstandings, exaggerations and the bias of the writer, based on pure guess work or rumour, rather than verified by a face-to face conversation or credible evidence.

Third, the True Friend of Missions raised the problem of missionaries working in Madras who, according to the writer, generally had talked 'nonsense and puerilities' in the monthly missionary conferences, particularly accusing Slater of his attitudes towards 'Unitarians and latitudinarianism'.³⁰⁷ As for the other charges, the writer did not clarify what nonsense among missionaries needed correction, what liberal views were to be discarded by Slater, apart from his mentioning Slater's lecture that was published in 1876, entitled *God Revealed: An Outline of Christian Truth. Being Sunday Afternoon Lectures Delivered to Educated Hindus*. In the writer's view, Slater

³⁰⁴ True Friend of Missions' letter, Dated March 24, 1876.

³⁰⁵ True Friend of Missions' letter, Dated March 28, 1876.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁷ True Friend of Missions' letter, Dated March 24, 1876.

was the missionary whose views were 'tinged with latitudinarian principles and his work among the educated Hindus simply amounted to nothing'. The writer requested that Mr. Slater should be recalled on account of his latitudinarian view.

On the whole, the True Friend of Missions dealt in his letter with criticism of the education of the London Missionary Society in India and many problematic missionaries on various aspects. The writer raised serious doubts concerning the operation of educational missions and the missionary qualities of the L. M. S. in Southern India, although it is unclear whether his criticisms were based on facts or not. Although the directors and president of the L. M. S. might not accept entirely the negative charges of the writer as they were, they could not pass them over without investigating the issues. Nevertheless, most claims of the True Friend of Missions were discounted, based on the fact that there were no records regarding any related resolution of the boards of the directors in the official history of L. M. S.

The challenge of the True Friend of Missions meant for Slater that his personal loyalty to Christ was wrongly suspected by the accusation, and his successful sympathetic endeavour to reach the educated classes inevitably suffered a setback. Unless Slater's principles were officially sanctioned and supported by the base, Slater's new ministry among the educated would be ultimately obstructed and stopped. Therefore, Slater had every reason to write a twenty-four-page letter, beyond mere defence, determinedly setting forth the justification of his change and the necessity of adaptation to the educated Hindus.

Slater's long letter consisted of detailed answers to the two questions asked by J. Mullens instead of the Eastern Committee of the London Missionary Society: the first and main question was to ask him whether Slater's views had undergone such a change from the doctrinal statement he had made ten years ago; the second one was to ask him if he ought not definitely to have informed the Directors of any change of views that had taken to the base and to have asked them whether they approved the change. According to the answers, he had very gradually reached the ground that he then accepted, and the delivery of the lecture in October 1875 had been the first occasion on which he gave a public utterance of his deepest thoughts and convictions.³⁰⁸ Since Slater had very gradually reached the ground that he then

³⁰⁸ Slater's Letter to J. Mullens dated December 14th, 1876, 22,23.

occupied, and the distance did not seem so great to him, he maintained that he did not feel any need of reporting all the intermediate thoughts and conflicts by which his own mind had been led from its former standing to that moment. Besides, Slater took the earliest opportunity of informing the Directors of what had occurred, by immediately forwarding two copies of his lecture, 'without the smallest apprehension of incurring their censure'. Despite such awareness of the Directors regarding Slater's lecture, they had not asked him then to defend precisely what his recent views were.

As to the first question, Slater affirmed that 'while holding the same doctrine he held ten years ago, without the least reserve, he should express it differently and view it differently in its relation to other truths'.³⁰⁹ Essential truths of divine facts, in his view, could not be shaken, but 'he found it impossible to remain just where he was ten years ago'. Slater's unchangeable single object, he asserted, was to reach the people round him in order to spread the knowledge of Christ, the crucified. He testified that he had not surrendered any essential position of Christian truth. Nevertheless, his views had certainly undergone a change in respect to certain theories and statements of Christian truth. Why did he change his explanation of Christian facts in India? What experiences made him undergo certain changes of his theological position in India? These questions are closely related to the formation of Slater's theology.

A change of a theological position is likely to occur, if not altogether but, to some extent, among missionaries who have encountered other faiths and the life of native people, both in a positive, and negative way. This is most notably shown by R. Heber, John Muir, John Farquhar and C. F. Andrews (1871-1940).³¹⁰ Although their challenge and response might be different, it seems significant to reflect the experience and rationale of their alteration. Particularly, what Slater experienced in India was closely related to the formation of his theological beliefs. Slater had three valuable experiences that shone a light on the contemporary problems of Indian mission from which he worked out a new presentation fitting to the educated Hindu

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

³¹⁰ Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, changed his attitude to Hindus from condemnational to tolerant after he worked many years in India. Muir, Sanskritist, changed his position in the course of conversation with Hindus, from a negative evangelical stance to a conciliatory one. Andrews renounced his direct missionary work in preference to dialogue and service after he had seen missionary movement failed. Farquhar accepted a tolerant fulfilment theology from 1903, totally changed from his previous negative position.

mind. The first and foremost experience Slater underwent was that he came into contact with minds of a different society, entering into the feelings and convictions of these minds. He wrote that he had met ‘all the phases of religious opinion and those who feared God and worked righteousness and walked up to the light they possessed’. The more Slater came in to contact with Indian people, their truths and their system, the more he could see ‘there were portions of truth in their faiths’. To his amazement, he found that ‘the religious life and faiths of the Hindus were very similar, at bottom, to those of European Christians’. Such a discovery was firmly confirmed by the remark of a Sanskritist, Monier Monier-Williams of Oxford, who paid a personal visit to Slater in Madras and was quoted in Slater’s letter as follows: ‘There was scarcely an idea and truth in Christianity that did not exist in some form in Hinduism, and I think missionaries as a rule had not taken the pains to make themselves acquainted with such things, and in consequence had greatly retarded the spread of Christianity in the country’.³¹¹

Secondly, Slater saw that ‘a denunciatory and authoritative message of the missionary was likely to run into a fierce resistance by the national people, while a conciliatory and persuasive manner succeeded in being attentively considered by non-Christians’.³¹² However great the truths missionaries had, in Slater’s personal experience, their conventional message had been unattractive to non-Christian people and was unable to get a bearing on them, since missionaries denied all worth to other faiths. On the other hand, Slater found that his new effort worked among the educated Hindus, whenever his lecture was conveyed sympathetically to their cherished faith and life. In the time when the European superiority was dominant, even among missionaries in the nineteenth century, Slater preferred personal contact and religious conversation to reach the native, rather than one-sided preaching or lectures without discussion. In his letter, Slater confirmed the value and adaptability of his new presentation by abundant favourable comments in his book, *God Revealed*, of a number of missionaries and national Christians and Christian journals in India.³¹³

Thirdly, Slater suffered a lot from his encounters with offended or indifferent orthodox Hindus ‘after they had heard unrelated European doctrinal presentations of

³¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 17, 19.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 13-15.

the Christian Gospel'.³¹⁴ Many evangelistic missionaries were inclined to present Christ in a catechetical way and preach the everlasting misery in hell, only bringing burden and enigma to the Indian mind. Slater saw the constant failure of missionaries in communicating the Christian Gospel with the Hindus, whereas he saw the popularity of Christ among the *Brāhmo Samāj*, despite the serious deficiency of its understanding of Christ. Slater found that the Indian people were not interested at all in an alien body of Western doctrine, unless they were touched by the missionary's life and simple facts of Christ.

Based on the above experiences in India, Slater made two essential points in terms of reaching the educated Hindus, which might be closely connected to his changed position and his new presentation of Christ. First, truth of facts and human explanation of facts should be differentiated and the liberty of interpretation might be indispensable for missionaries to set forth the divinity of Christ in such a way as might best commend itself to thoughtful Hindus. In Slater's view, presenting Christian doctrines as truth was not attractive at all to the educated classes, due to its unfamiliar presentation. Therefore, a reasonable explanation was essential in order to reach the Indian ears. The re-statement of Christian truth familiar to Indians might have to follow after standing in another's viewpoint, and seeking meaningful explanations to them. In doing so, the old creed becomes a new living thing by means of the new light that shone upon it.

In fact, however, re-statement frequently might be considered a compromise and a certain human explanation might be enshrined on a par with truth of facts. That was the reason why Slater underlined the distinction between truth of facts and human interpretation of facts. In Slater's thought, 'human formulating of facts and human explanation of facts are necessarily imperfect and progressive'.³¹⁵ Hence, it would be desirable that 'the home base might endure the missionary's different views of his *modus operandi* without mistrusting one another's fidelity to truth'.³¹⁶ In his letter, Slater thus asked the directors at home that missionaries might be allowed the same liberty as was given to brethren at home. He entreated that 'the liberty of thought and to expression' for themselves on all subjects should be granted 'under the Spirit's

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6,7.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 5

guidance'.³¹⁷ As long as missionaries were loyal to Christ, Slater firmly believed that the Spirit would lead them into all truth in the course of fashioning an appropriate restatement of Christ. When more light came, Slater could not remain the same as he was. That was a long process of spiritual journey in which he said that 'he was ready to give up the old explanation on reception of farther light'.³¹⁸

Slater's restatement was interpreted by some Christians as compromising Christ, because Slater did not join their condemnation against other truths 'in a wholesale fashion'. Despite some difference, Slater came to learn that there were great similarities between Christianity and Hinduism. The more Slater saw the portions of truth in Hinduism, the more sensitive and sympathetic he became and the more he would fear to denounce a system totally, 'lest he should lose some truth, and destroy some common ground he would have to establish afresh'.³¹⁹ Unless missionaries gave up denunciatory and superior attitudes towards other faiths, they would lose the confidence and access to Indians and ultimately fail their evangelical cause. Therefore, Slater wrote: 'A sympathetic study of their religious beliefs and practices, their experiences and aspirations is absolutely necessary, if we are to win the people to Christ'.³²⁰

Second, Slater made a point that Indian minds responded well to 'the pure Gospel', preached free from Western colour, presented in an Indian mould. In Slater's view, many missionaries preached 'the Western philosophy, in the Indian eye, rather than the Gospel itself'.³²¹ They did not recognise that their Gospel message would fail to communicate to Indian minds, hidden and repelled by its European outlook. Thus, Slater asserted that missionaries should preach a pure Gospel without thrusting upon Indian minds any Western philosophical and theological system made by European intellectual minds. In his letter, Slater argued his case by quoting Joseph B. Lightfoot: 'Indian Christianity can never be cast in the same mould as English Christianity; we must become as Indians to the Indians, if we would convert Indian to Christ'.³²² As Slater got through the hard time, it would take some pains to become as Indians, but it

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 11, 12.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

³²⁰ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus?", *The Harvest Field* Vol. VII, No 9 (March 1887): 259.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 261, 262.

³²² Slater's letter to J. Mullens dated December 14th, 1876, 19.

might be an inevitable process to gain the heart of Indians and get their attentive consideration. In order to present the pure Gospel in the Indian mould, Slater proposed three points: one was to present the Gospel with primitive simplicity; another was for missionaries to make themselves acquainted with Indian faiths and culture; the final one was to connect faith to life.

As has been detailed above, Slater's experience among the educated classes gave him an insight to perceive the essential issues relating to reach them and enabled him to create his own principles and restatement of Christ in order to fit to the Indian intellectual climate. He knew full well the distaste and preferences of Indians and had a warm love to reach Indians with the knowledge of Christ, and because of this, he could not give a mere conventional assent to a creed because others did. Therefore, Slater, in his letter, honestly declared to J. Mullens what he had formed with firm convictions of his heart. The indictment of the True Friend of Missions caused Slater trouble for being disloyal to his Lord, but this provided a good chance for him to get an official sanction of his thought from the Directors and Eastern Committee of the London Missionary Society. Since Congregationalists did not have a formal dogmatic creed and recognized the right of freedom and variety of expression,³²³ the directors and members of the committee did not intend to bind Slater as long as he kept his personal faith and his colleagues in Madras station did not seriously doubt his position.

In conclusion, Slater justified the necessity of his sympathetic approach to Hindus and of an apologetic restatement of Christ in an Indian outfit in response to the criticism raised by the 'True Friend of Missions'. After his plea was well accepted by the home base, many missionaries in Madras confirmed his fulfilment theology as a useful model to approach Hindus. The missionary circles were small and his response might have spread among them. Though the ordeal was tough, the challenge of the 'True Friend of Missions' helped publicise Slater's theology to the point where it would be noted and later accepted gradually among missionary circles in Southern India. Nonetheless, the accusation of 'True Friend of Missions' provided a significant

³²³ George Machardy, *Handbook of Congregational Principles* (Edinburgh: Congregational Union of Scotland, 1893), 49,56.

category of critique against Slater's theology as 'latitudinarian'.³²⁴ Theological restatement of the Gospel with the spirit of sympathy was indispensable in Slater's fulfilment theology, but the criticism levelled against Slater that he was compromising his Christian faith in dealing with Hinduism, is evidenced by his vulnerability to the critique of being syncretistic.

Slater's Challenge to Missionaries

Formerly Slater was challenged by the 'True Friend of Missions', but Slater rose to challenge his missionary colleagues eleven years later in the Bangalore missionary conference. At this conference Slater presented his paper, entitled, "How shall we preach to the Hindus?" A heated discussion subsequently took place among those missionaries and as a result, his paper was published with other critical papers on Slater's argument in the *Harvest Field*, a magazine specially devoted to missionary topics. According to Slater's judgement, the time came when he should strongly encourage his colleagues to go forward with his sympathetic approach to Hinduism, based on 'a marked change in the mode of preaching to the people'. In Slater's observation, 'it used to be the fashion to attack the religion of Hindus', to revile their gods, and to represent Christianity as 'sounding the knell of doom over all non-Christian nations'.³²⁵ But the chief inspiration of Christian preaching and of Christian missions became the love of God, not wrath: many missionaries came to accept that the Christian message was not to send the Hindus to hell, because they are heathen, but to yearn over them to recover as His lost children. Unfortunately, there was no immediate counter response from Slater; it might have been a timely interaction with the contemporary missionaries that could draw their attention to his efficient approach to Hindus in the fast emerging hostile climate of Hindus towards Christian missions.

Slater's position may be stated briefly in his own words as to how to preach to the Hindus.³²⁶ Firstly, if we are to win the people, we must respect their religious

³²⁴ Latitudinarians were originally members of the Church of England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who subscribed to a school of thought that emphasized the fundamental principles of the Christian religion rather than any specific doctrinal position. Since that time, people who have placed less emphasis on the interpretation of a creed and have been liberal in their tolerance of diverse religious perspectives and viewpoints were called latitudinarians.

³²⁵ T. E. Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 257.

³²⁶ *Ibid.*, 257-265.

convictions: what we have to do is to condemn sin and wickedness in humanity, not so much their religion. Secondly, we should try to discover in the religions around us what amount of truth there is, which is given by the universal immanence of the Divine Spirit. For this purpose, a sympathetic study of their religious beliefs and practices, their experiences and aspirations, is absolutely necessary. Thirdly, our business, as Christian preachers, is not to uproot and destroy the beliefs of others, but to interpret their faith in the light of Christianity; to show how they witness to Christ; how, apart from Him, they remain comparatively worthless, because unfulfilled. Fourthly, if we are to gain much more sympathy from the people, we should represent Christianity in the Indian mould, more as an Eastern religion, rather than a foreign and Western faith. Lastly, we must remove our non-essential doctrines and dogmas for their eternal welfare, and need to preach and teach more the Gospel in its primitive simplicity. Slater diagnosed that the difficulty of missionaries to win the Hindus did not come from the hardness of heart and the ascendancy of the devil in them, but from the fault in missionaries and in their methods of procedure. He thus underlined the sympathetic approach to Hinduism and a well-adapted presentation of Christ to the Hindu mind based on his fulfilment theory.

An entirely opposite critique of what Slater intended was provided by the contemporary missionaries J. A. Vanes (Wesleyan Mission, Bangalore) and William Robinson (London Missionary Society). They denied even the slightest possibility of truth or similarities in Hinduism, and rather declared that Hinduism was nothing but 'false', 'defective', and 'the collection of superstitions'. Hence, they urged missionaries to show how false it was in contrast to Christianity, and preach Christ, not as the fulfiller, but as 'the destroyer'. Vanes illustrated that as the dawn is destroyed when the daylight has fulfilled its promise, Hinduism must be destroyed.³²⁷ They knew well that they might be accused of lack of sympathy, but they rather took the accusation as a compliment, because they identified themselves with the true physician who did not hesitate to probe the wound as a necessary process of treatment. Ultimately, they never allowed any salvific value in Hinduism, while they presented Christ as the only one that is able to bring salvation for the Hindus. Vanes' argument seems to maintain that if the Hindus were encouraged to look to truths that underlay

³²⁷ J. A. Vanes, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? Symposium II", *The Harvest Field*, Vol. VII, No. 9 (March 1887): 307.

their own religion, it would simply strengthen them to adhere to it. Although speaking ill of the faiths of the natives might be a bane for the evangelism of the educated classes, demonstrating the defectives of the popular faiths might be simultaneously one of the effective ways to turn the attention of ordinary congregation to the Christian Gospel in particular places. In a way, Vanes' way of contrast may be still a significant method to reach Hindus who are confused by the similarities claimed by Christians, if, as was illustrated later on by A. G. Hogg, they could have a keen awareness of a new need which is provided only by Christianity. It seems quite fair to raise a following question from the Vanes' perspective: If almost all truths of Christianity are in Hinduism, though details are different, why should the Hindus necessarily look to the foreign religion, while giving up their familiar traditional faiths?

J. Hudson, the Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in the Mysore, took a position of a judicious mean between the preaching mode of Slater and Vanes in the Symposium. He tried to show that while missionaries have a duty to condemn the errors of Hinduism and clearly expose its defects, they have also much to gain by emphasising its truths.³²⁸ In his view, Hinduism was corrupted, but not all of it. He saw, when missionaries denied the entire elements of truth in Hinduism, that young men left not only their own religion, but also all religious beliefs at the same time. Hence, he thought that it is better to remain Hindus than to believe in nothing at all.

In his presentation Christ was proposed not by way of either-or, but as both destroyer and fulfiller. Although he tried to strike a balance, he seems to give a little more weight to Slater's position, since he acknowledged the partial truths in Hinduism which could never be allowed by Vanes' mode. However, on the whole, his position may be closer to Farquhar's rather than Slater's, because he articulated the necessity of destruction which was dimmed in Slater's presentation. Anyway, Hudson may represent a group of missionaries who could not deny that common truths underlay between the two faiths, while they recognised the defects in Hinduism. Although it is not known how many missionaries belonged to this group at the time of symposium, it is apparent that in the course of years the majority of missionaries joined this group. After this symposium, Slater's theology gradually became

³²⁸ J. Hudson, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium", 339.

widespread among missionaries, based on subsequent papers and debates on similar topics in the missionary magazines such as *The Harvest Field*, *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, *The Indian Evangelical Review* and *The East and the West*.

Two significant discussions after the symposium need to be noted in relation to Slater's theological interaction with his contemporaries. To begin with, William Miller, Principal of Madras Christian College and the intimate friend of Slater, released in 1888 a paper on 'a neglected apostolic thought' in support of Slater which, based on Paul's address at Athens, argued that 'those whom we call the heathen - those outside the pale of Christendom, are as really under the care of the Almighty Father as those who are within that pale'.³²⁹ Two years later he again published his series of papers on 'God's dealing with mankind,' in which he argued in the same line with Slater that 'He [God] used means to impart some knowledge that might deliver all men from evil and lead them along the way towards the highest good...amid their corruption, God has been secretly maturing their peculiar elements of good'.³³⁰ His paper brought a considerable amount of discussion among missionaries whether they agreed or disagreed. To some of these criticisms Miller replied in his College Notes and to the editor of *The Eastern Star* in his response to an article from 'an Esteemed Missionary'. Importantly, along with Miller, many leading missionaries like W. H. Campbell, F. W. Kellett, R. A. Hume, J. E. Tracy, J. R. Bacon, and J. P. Jones presented their consecutive papers with a view to diffusing their unified idea in the line with Slater's position. As a result, it may be no wonder to see around 1890s in the monthly Bangalore Missionary Conference that even Slater's critic J. A. Vanes and Dr. Rudisill of Madras had to tacitly approve, at least by the dominant peer pressure, that 'there was a universal prevalence of the spirit of God and therefore elements of truth in all religions'.³³¹ At first, Rudisill read a paper, entitled 'Diverse Seeds', in which he declared that 'there must be no mingling of the good with foreign and evil seed in the sowing of the word'. Besides, he condemned 'those who consorted with the teachers of other religions' and recognised them as 'having equal divine inspiration, partook of the crimes that were chargeable to those systems'.

³²⁹ William Miller, "A Neglected Apostolic Thought", *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (Dec. 1888), 404.

³³⁰ William Miller, "The Christian Concept of God's Dealing With Mankind", *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (Dec. 1890): 405, 407.

³³¹ See H. Gulliford's Current Mission News in *The Harvest Field* (Jan. 1897): 465.

Nonetheless, in response to Slater's criticism, along with other missionaries, Rudisill conceded that 'nothing which I had read in my paper was intended to dispute or deny what had been said in the discussion of it.' The discussion at the Bangalore conference clearly shows that Slater's fulfilment idea was gaining enormous popularity in the late 1890s in the missionary circles by his active scholarly works that were mostly made in the last decade of nineteenth century and the first decade of twentieth century, along with the enthusiastic works of the fulfilment school missionaries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Slater's fulfilment theology was the outcome of his interaction with the educated classes and of his applying a sympathetic method to the study of the Christian message to Hinduism. Slater held a view that theological restatement was crucial for missionaries depending on their audience and context. Many missionaries, according to Slater, had been foiled in reaching higher caste people mainly because they were in ignorance of the faith, culture and national sentiments of Indians, and presented a Christ incomprehensible to the Indian mind in a Western theological frame. Particularly, Slater opposed the traditional antagonistic approach to the faith and life of Hindus from his hands-on experience of the educated classes: they were increasingly hostile towards missionaries and Christianity in contrast to the oppressed people; they were immensely fervent about their faiths, encouraged by the Hindu revival movement; they had a critical mind trained by Western education. While Slater saw the missionaries' disparaging message with an authoritative tone produced angry resistance from the educated, he put forward a simple Gospel message adapted to thoughtful Hindus. In his interpretation of Christ, he removed Western theological impositions and highlighted Christ as the fulfiller of the best ideals and yearnings of Indian sages, not as the destroyer of their faith and culture. Particularly, *Brāhmo Samāj*, part of his most faithful audience in Madras and Bangalore, stimulated Slater to get an insight to formulate a reasonable and friendly model for reaching the educated Hindus. Besides, he gave his influence on making Brahminism of local *Samājes* in Bangalore in terms of their understanding of Christ, and on the social reform movement both of *Brāhmo Samāj* and of other reform groups. Nonetheless, Slater's connection to *Brāhmo Samāj* and K. C. Sen was double-edged: with one edge

he obtained friendly access to the educated classes in Indian mode, while on the other he opened himself up to the criticism of syncretism, similar to the criticism made against Sen.

Slater proposed a method of sympathetic approach to the thoughtful Hindus in that he sought to find common ground on which missionaries might converse, person to person, with Hindus regarding the way to achieve the best ideal of Hinduism. In order to secure common ground and gain confidence, Slater did justice to Christianity by biblical criticism, and treated Hinduism fairly by looking at its best ideal from the standpoint of Hindu Scriptures. He looked at things from different points, comparing and balancing the considerations of different sides, and thereby he connected the above-mentioned affinities to Christ who fulfils the prefigured promises and yearnings of Indians. Such processes led Slater to find valuable elements of truths in Hinduism like in Christianity, though there were still wide gaps.

Slater's method of doing justice appears to respect Hinduism and liberate him from the bondage of Western propositional theology. Nonetheless, it seems fair to say that he got nowhere with doing justice to the very end in placing Hinduism on a par with Christianity. He took credit for attempting to get a common ground with Hindus, but he might not get it, because he would not give up Christ as the full revelation of God, while Hinduism was considered comparatively partial. On the one hand, Slater provided a great inspiration in spite of being a European missionary for making an indigenous theology free from Western theology, but on the other hand, he did not elaborate its content, apart from proposing some general principles. However, one thing may be clear that Slater's fulfilment theology was the corollary of his sympathetic method.

Slater's theology was solidified and widespread by two challenges: one by the challenge of the 'True Friend of Missions', and the other by his own challenge. The charge of the 'True Friend of Missions' was a painful moment in Slater's life, but eventually it caused his theological position and work in Bangalore to be approved and reinforced by the home base in London. Although Slater was named as latitudinarian, he only attempted to set forth Christ, the alien God of a ruling race, bearing on the Indian intellectual, social, and religious climate. Most importantly, Slater challenged his missionary colleagues with an untiring effort to outgrow the old antagonistic attitude to Hinduism and have a sympathetic approach, by his lectures,

papers and books. Particularly, he earned sympathy for the fulfilment approach by his theological engagement with the other symposium presenters. Encouraged by the work of William Miller, W. H. Campbell, R. A. Hume, F. W. Kellett, and J. P. Jones, his fulfilment school secured a respected position among Indian missionary circles, conspicuously from 1890s onwards.

Chapter Four

Slater's Fulfilment Theology

in Relation to Missionary Message to Hinduism

In this chapter I shall examine the heart of Slater's fulfilment theology which marked the missionary attitudes to Hinduism in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in India. At this juncture, it should be noted that Slater's fulfilment theology was born and articulated not in the theological current of the home base, but in the missionary field in which he wanted to communicate his missionary message meaningfully and with friendship towards his particular audience, the leading Hindus of his day. In the view of the traditional Latin dogmatic tradition, it was crystal clear that there was no revelation, no salvific value at all in the world religions outside Christianity. That was why most missionaries had been antagonistic to Hinduism apart from B. Ziegenbalg, R. de Nobili and J. Calmette. However, Slater saw that the total negation of the value of Hinduism, the cherished heritage of Indians, was neither true nor wise, because it would cut off all necessary accesses to the Hindus and ultimately it would seriously impede the progress of the Gospel in India. While approving Christian truths in Hinduism, Slater presented his sympathetic fulfilment theology in the hope of bringing Christ to Hindus, with the conviction that Christ meant not 'the knell of doom' to Hinduism, but rather a bell of hope.

According to Slater's fulfilment theology, Hinduism was like a treasure, 'hidden under a hard shell'. Many Western missionaries tended to devaluate and condemn Hinduism, looking only at its outward surface. Nevertheless, Slater thought that once they looked at the inward elements of truth in Hinduism beneath the surface, they would be compelled to see that Hinduism was a witness-bearer to the Light of the world and the seeds of truth, providentially given by a compassionate and all-pervading God. Hence, Slater commended Hinduism for its role of witness and prophecy to the people seeking union with the unchangeable truth in India. As shall be shown in this chapter, he detailed various shadows of the substance in Hindu thought that should be respected and manifested by missionaries.

Slater's fulfilment theology was mainly expressed and elaborated as a result of his attempts to spread the missionary message across to Hinduism. Three central points

may be identified at the heart of Slater's fulfilment theology. First, God did not leave Hindus but made Hinduism a witness and light with his abiding Spirit. God had always worked not only among Abraham's descendents or Western Christendom, but also among the ancient Hindus and Eastern nations. As God prepared his salvation in the Old Testament, so too had he prepared it in the ancient Hindu scriptures. Secondly, Christ came not to destroy Hinduism, but to fulfil it and satisfy the aspiration of Indians. Although there had been a witness to Indians, the light was not full enough to get rid of their groaning burden of life. That was the necessity of Christ, the revealer and fulfiller of the Indian quest. Slater showed some examples of the fulfilment of Hinduism. Thirdly, Christianity should be presented as an Eastern Religion rather than Western. In Slater's view, Christianity was an Eastern religion in terms of its origin and its biblical culture. Above all, Christianity should be communicated with Vedāntic colouring in order to fit the Indian mind by the providential work of God.

Features of Slater's theology shall be shown in the last section of this chapter, and contrasted with Farquhar's, although many similarities might be found between them. The first characteristic was Slater's concept of the immanence of God, while Farquhar evidently lacked it. The abiding presence of God in the world was essential to explain the source and progress of making preparation for Christ in Hinduism. In contrast to Slater, Farquhar was unable to provide any particular theological justification, apart from, probably, the evolutionary theory and the comparative study of religion, for the Christian truths he found in Hinduism. Therefore, unlike what has been generally known, Slater's fulfilment theology was far better organised and consistent in comparison with Farquhar's. The second characteristic was that Slater saw the continuity between Christianity and Hinduism even after the coming of Christ. Farquhar also acknowledged the continuity between them, but his continuity stopped at the coming of Christ or when Hindus underwent their conversion. In Farquhar's view, there was no post-Christian value in Hinduism, although there are some valuable Christian elements before Christ or conversion. Hence, he maintained that Hinduism must die into Christianity. Slater's fulfilment theology, however, approved the role of Hinduism as a trainer or a special flavour fit to the Indian intellectual and religious mind.

Slater's View of Hinduism

Hidden Treasures

Missionary John Scudder, along with many evangelical missionaries, primarily looked at idolatry, superstitions, errors, defects and weakness in Hinduism, leaving out its positive aspects.³³¹ Hinduism was only a pathetic human quest for God, at best, or a perversion produced by the work of the devil at worst. Ultimately, the destiny of the Hindus was to go to hell. Two assumptions may be identified from this position: one was that Hinduism had nothing to do with the Truth or Christian God, and another was that as a result, Hinduism was entirely false.

In contrast to this position, Slater argued for the common, good, and Christian elements in Hinduism, although he recognized the different and bad elements as well. According to Slater, there is no such thing as a mere superstition. He stated, 'to every lower belief there corresponds a higher and truer belief; and the superstition is the approximate expression of it'.³³² 'Beneath the crust of the false and worthless, back of the thickening superstitions of ages', he found that 'there is at bottom the true, the real, and the good'.³³³ Slater was aware of some resemblances in Hinduism to Christian doctrines, whereby he could respect Hindu beliefs and relate them to the Gospel for the educated. In his view, Hinduism was, figuratively speaking, 'the treasures'³³⁴ and 'precious grains of gold hidden under heaps of rubbish'.³³⁵ As treasures were hidden and seated far back underneath the crust, many missionaries held that all of Hinduism was nonsense, superstitions and falsehood. However, Slater dug the hard ground and found 'the precious stones scattered in different quarries, though it waited to combine in a beautiful mosaic'.³³⁶

Slater's positive assessment of Hinduism came from his theological justifications: first, the best and brightest products of the Hindu spirit were inherently the expression of a true yearning after God, divinely created in human nature. Slater stated this view in his *God Revealed* as following.

³³¹ Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries in India*, 7.

³³² Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 261.

³³³ Slater, *God Revealed*, 192.

³³⁴ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 106.

³³⁵ Slater, *Studies in Upanishads*, 5.

³³⁶ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 3.

The religious instinct in man is an imprint of the Divine finger; and the manifold religions of the world have taken form from that divine instinct, and have expressed, as best they could, the gropings of the human spirit after God. Christianity recognizes and meets the truest yearnings of all religions; it does not stamp out or ignore, but raises, guides, and cherishes the noble and the beautiful wherever it may find them.³³⁷

According to Slater, although humanity has a lower nature tending to be ruled by the flesh after the first sin, they also have 'a higher nature that was given by God'.³³⁸ 'Due to this divine nature', Slater wrote, 'Hindus came to hold their myth that was not arbitrarily invented, but was man's early way of thinking about God, and God's way of approaching man'.³³⁹ He took an example: 'Hindu doctrine of *avatāra* (Incarnation) responded to a deep heart-cry of the people for a religious faith in a personal God, for a God sympathizing with humanity'.³⁴⁰ It expressed 'the desire for a Divine deliver' amid the evils and miseries of life. Such a desire is an imperishable base or 'a preparation' for them to accept the revealer and fulfiller of their heart's yearning.

Second, the Christian God provided humanity not only with the divine instinct, but also with a divine light or divine revelation, although its degree was different from Christianity. Importantly, Hinduism, according to Slater, has a common idea with the Bible that 'a divine revelation, a Word of God, supposed to have been communicated directly to inspired sages'.³⁴¹ Hence, he found in all the best ideals of Hindu philosophy 'a true religious ring' and 'a far-off presentiment of Christian truth'.³⁴² Slater pointed out the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity: 'their finest passages had a striking parallelism to much of the teaching of the Christian Gospels and Epistles and so supplied the Indian soil in which many seeds of true Christianity might spring'.³⁴³ What is more, beyond the similarities between them, Slater approved the strength of the Eastern mind that 'set out from the divine, and sought the union with the human', while 'the Western mind, as unfolded in the mythologies of Greece and Rome, set out from the finite, and sought to unite the human to the

³³⁷ Slater, *God Revealed*, 185.

³³⁸ Slater, "The Fruit of the First Sin", *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, Vol. IV (January 1887): 483.

³³⁹ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 30.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁴² Slater, *Studies in Upanishads*, 15.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, 15.

divine'.³⁴⁴ Slater believed that 'the Eastern form approached decidedly nearer to the Christian idea than does the Western'.³⁴⁵ To sum up, Slater held that 'the imperishable elements of moral truth in Hinduism lighted up the darkness of the pre-Christian world'.³⁴⁶

The central issue here revolves around whether some truths, light, or revelation in Hinduism that was in common with the Bible might come from the same Christian God or not. Many missionaries would not recognise the common Christian elements as such in Hinduism, let alone their divine origin, but Slater believed that 'the Spirit of God alone could be the author of truth wherever found, whether in the Vedas or the Bible, and that no religion had been an accident due to the divine Providence ordering the world and guiding its religious history'.³⁴⁷ Therefore, Slater concluded that the same God who gave the Bible to Western Christendom certainly provided some imperishable truths and light to the people who wandered on for ages in its own way outside the Judaic-Christian tradition. There is no doubt that Slater admitted the divine origin of the revelation in Hinduism, however, he did not believe that Hinduism was sufficient to save people from their destruction and had the significant function of carrying the mind onwards to the acceptance of full revelation in Christ.

Third, Hinduism is a religion fit to the special conditions of Indian people and culture by the providential guidance of the Spirit. According to Slater, world religions should be respected rather than be denounced, because they represented a spiritual heritage that had come down to them through a providential guidance of God. Slater asserted that they have an enduring value, not merely 'because of the amount of truth they have contained', but also 'because of its fitness for the special conditions of race and culture'.³⁴⁸ Depending on the particular thought form and cultural experiences, the Spirit of God instilled the particular revelation and a certain amount of truth to each people. As a result, Slater believed that Hinduism is something to be respected, not to be dismissed.

As shown above, Slater held that much of Hinduism was sublime, beautiful and true. Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to suggest that all aspects of Hinduism were good

³⁴⁴ Slater, *God Revealed*, 70, 71.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁴⁶ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 97.

³⁴⁷ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 260.

³⁴⁸ Slater's papers submitted to Edinburgh 1910 Missionary Conference, 59.

to Slater. Hinduism was not wholly bad and it was not wholly good either. Slater expressed his ambivalent attitudes to Hinduism: 'There is a strange medley of the sublime and the commonplace, of profundities and trivialities, of philosophy and superstition'.³⁴⁹ As he pointed out the strengths of Hinduism, he did not miss the weaknesses of Hinduism at the same time. Slater stated the weakness of Hinduism in three points: first, Hinduism is bound to fail as a social force to make a better order in society. In Slater's understanding, a Hindu in his own circle may be a polytheist, a deist, or an atheist, a believer in his sacred books or a skeptic as to their authority; and yet his position cannot be questioned as long as he conforms to recognized social rules: so that 'Hinduism is practically a purely social system, in which the orthodox observance of certain caste customs, and not the profession of any particular belief, is the distinctive and uniting principle'.³⁵⁰ In Slater's view, if Hinduism functions properly as a social system, the social degradation of Brahmanism like the condition of women or the tyranny of caste should have stopped or improved considerably in a desirable direction. Nonetheless, Slater found that 'the severance of religion from sociology, the failure of Hinduism as a reforming agency, a regenerator of society, an instrument of progress, robs it of half its strength'.³⁵¹ Here Slater pointed out the Hindu separation of theory and practice.

Second, in Slater's view, the Vedānta system, the main philosophical school of Hinduism, does not provide the majority people with liberation at all, except for a few learned male adults, due to its difficult metaphysical concepts. To attain *Mokṣa* or salvation, in *Advaita* Vedānta of Śankara, *avidyā* (lack of knowledge) was to remove by *jñāna* (knowledge), but it was bound to a qualified person. Hence, Slater argued the limit of Vedāntism: 'The great flaw in the Vedānta system is the limit of the highest salvation to an exceedingly difficult process, demanding an acquaintance with metaphysical problems to which the poor and unlearned, the woman and the child, cannot possibly attain'.³⁵²

Third, although Hinduism has some truths inspired by the abiding Spirit of God, it is at bottom a human inquiry after God, starting from Nature, not from God. Slater's close examination of ancient faiths confirms that 'they are defective and, to a great

³⁴⁹ Slater, *Studies in Upanishads*, 6.

³⁵⁰ Slater's *Report of Work 1895*, 11.

³⁵¹ Slater's *Report of Work 1894*, 4.

³⁵² Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 279.

extent, erroneous; leading souls astray, and altogether unfit to be permanent educators of half the human family'.³⁵³ The main errors of Hinduism were, in Slater's view, caused by its lack of the full revelation in Christ, although Hinduism as a Nature contains a revelation of God. He remarked: 'start from God as the Bible does, and all goes right; start from Nature, and interpret God and man through Nature, and all goes wrong'.³⁵⁴ Thus, Slater believed that unless Hindus have the Christian faith as an essential revelation, they alone could never fulfil their ideal and aspiration.

Slater's view of Hinduism as the hidden treasure under heaps of rubbish clearly shows his ambivalent attitude to Hinduism. Slater saw Hinduism both as rubbish and treasure: he did not accept Hinduism only as nonsense, nor did he approve it only as treasure. The primary reason why he saw Hinduism as treasure is his acknowledgement that it is the product of the divine instinct and the divine revelation from the same God. Notably, Slater attributed the difference of revelation between Hinduism and Judaism to the appropriateness for the special conditions of race and culture. Such a view might establish an irenic relationship between the Hindus and Christians. As missionaries do not need to condemn the native religion, they might avoid the unnecessary resistance and tension from the natives in their communication with the Gospel. What is more, national Christians might respect the treasure in their traditional faith and more readily join the community life, rather than separating from it. Nonetheless, one essential question might be raised: If Hinduism is produced by God's revelation and arrangement for each race and faith experience, why did missionaries bother to spread the Gospel to the natives who already had their own faith of the treasure? Slater's answer to this question will be dealt in due course in the discussion.

To size up the proportion of the treasure to the nonsense in Slater's view of Hinduism, it certainly has a large amount of nonsense with a small treasure. The main weakness Slater observed in Hinduism came as a result of the social degeneration of Hinduism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It seems quite right that Slater pointed out the tyranny of the higher classes over the oppressed lower classes and the agony of the widowed, considering the social movement by the Hindu reformers themselves like R. Roy and K. C. Sen. Nevertheless, in contrast to what

³⁵³ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 105.

³⁵⁴ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 35.

Slater said, the social degradation might happen everywhere regardless of religions, and the separation between theory and practice might be also frequently found outside the Hinduism. In addition, it seems untrue for Slater to point out the failure of Hinduism in providing salvation for the uneducated, the child, and the women, because Śankara's *Advaitism* is not necessarily the main Hindu philosophy and the unlearned and the women can be also saved by grace and the faith in personal God based on the popular Hinduism.³⁵⁵ Another significant factor Slater regarded as nonsense is its limited amount of revelation, while he held that Christianity has the full and perfect revelation. It is obviously a condescending attitude that Slater claimed his own faith as perfect, while looking down upon other faiths as imperfect. Although Hindus might claim the same level of revelation, it seems quite understandable that Slater as a missionary confessed faith in Christ as the full revelation.

Witness to the Light

Previously we have seen Slater's general view of Hinduism both as treasure and nonsense in comparison with Christianity. Now, we turn to examine how Slater described the function of Hinduism for the people having lived in India, particularly its role for the reception of Christianity.

First, Slater held that Hinduism had been the role of light and the witness for the Indians. According to Slater, the religious lights of India have been 'unconscious emanations from the Word of God, the spiritual revealer of God and of truth from the beginning'.³⁵⁶ Slater believed that some elements of 'moral truth in Hinduism lit up the darkness of pre-Christian India'³⁵⁷ as Christian truth had lit up the darkness of Europe. He hailed those elements gladly as 'witness-bearers' to 'the Light of the World'.³⁵⁸ He argued that each pre-Christian religion became 'a witness to the Faith' and the business of the missionary was supposed to show 'how Hinduism was a witness to Christ'.³⁵⁹ Although how Hinduism became a light and witness to Christ

³⁵⁵ D. Bharati wrote in his *Understanding Hinduism* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 2005, 252.) 'It is wrong to conclude that the central and chief characteristic of Hindu philosophy is Advaitic. The reality is that monism exists only in theory while in practical life Hinduism is much more influenced by the Bhakti movement than by abstract philosophy'.

³⁵⁶ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 6,7.

³⁵⁷ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 97.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 97.

³⁵⁹ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 261, 262.

will be detailed in the next section, it is noteworthy here that Slater appreciated the positive role of Hinduism to shine in the darkness of the people, and to testify Christian truth despite its limited extent of light and revelation.

Second, Slater utilised the diverse terms to describe the role of Hinduism in relation to the reception of Christian faith. According to Slater, the prominent Hindu ideas such as polytheism, pantheism, incarnation, transmigration, and absorption were not all nonsense, but ‘shadows of the most substantial truth of Christianity’.³⁶⁰ Kṛṣṇa, the legendary deliverer in the Hindu compositions, ‘prefigured’ the historical deliverer to come.³⁶¹ Hinduism has thus ‘anticipations’, ‘presentiment’ and ‘forecastings’ of some of the sublimest facts of the Christian revelation, and faith in the former is in some sense ‘a preparation’ for faith in the latter.³⁶² Hindu faiths were the ‘seeds of truth’, and ‘germs of good’ from which we are enabled to introduce and promote the Christian truths.³⁶³ Much of Hindu sage’s teaching might be taken as ‘an introduction’ and ‘stepping stone’ to the higher truth of the Gospel.³⁶⁴ The belief that the gods can and do come down to people in their extremity contains ‘a promise of redemption’.³⁶⁵ Those promises in the Hindu scriptures had provided Indians with a hope and consolation to get through the days of suffering and unrighteousness. Hence some essential conceptions of the devout Hindu who has been brought to Christ sees in the ancient prediction ‘a prophecy’ of and ‘preparation’ for Christ.³⁶⁶ Even though Hinduism might be seen as crude defects, compared with ‘the crowning truth of Christianity’, ‘the unconscious prophecy’³⁶⁷ should not be overlooked, since there is no fulfilment without the prophecy.

The key role of Hinduism in relation to Christianity might be, in Slater’s view, ‘the preparation’ for Christ. Indeed, Slater’s most frequently used term connecting Hinduism to Christianity was ‘preparation’. According to Slater, the long ages of the old world must not be lost and ‘the honest speculations of ancient minds must not all prove to have been miserable failures’.³⁶⁸ In fact, Slater believed that Hinduism has

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 261.

³⁶¹ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 31.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, 31.

³⁶³ Slater, “The Old and the New”, *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (1883): 12.

³⁶⁴ Slater’s papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 54.

³⁶⁵ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 31. Slater, “The Old and the New”, 12.

³⁶⁶ Slater’s papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 59.

³⁶⁷ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 31.

³⁶⁸ Slater, “The Old and the New”, 12.

well performed the function of the indispensable preparation for Hindus to accept Christian faith as 'Stoical philosophy, with its lofty doctrine of virtue and of humanity, rendered a distinct service as a preparation for Christianity'.³⁶⁹ Moreover, such a preparation might be the useful 'points of contact'³⁷⁰ for missionaries as the greatest power of appeal to the Hindu.

In contrast to the negative view of Hinduism as 'delusions of the devil' by William Carey,³⁷¹ 'an old, pestilent religion' by Alexander Duff,³⁷² and 'the grandest embodiment of Gentile error' by John Wilson,³⁷³ Slater's view of Hinduism as 'a light, witness, prophecy and a sure preparation for Christ' was quite positive. According to Slater, Hinduism was no longer an enemy to be destroyed, but a friend to be respected and a foundation on which missionaries should build the Christian faith afresh. Undoubtedly, such a view might encourage an irenic relationship between the Christian faith and the Hindu faith at the critical time when the antagonistic attitude to Christianity tended to sharply increase in the late nineteenth century. Besides, it must have provided missionaries with many favourable contact points to communicate the Christian faith to the Hindus.

Nonetheless, some doubts may arise as to the reality of the alleged 'preparation for Christianity'. Was Hinduism necessarily the preparation for Christianity? Is there any possibility that it was a preparation for other monotheistic religions, such as Islam? Could it be that Hinduism was far better prepared for Islamism than for Christianity, based on the larger number of converts to the Muslim faith? Why did the higher caste people, who should have been well prepared by Hinduism, according to Slater, show the cold response to Christianity in the late nineteenth century, compared with the non-caste people normally with little Hindu background? Does this fact suggest that Hinduism has never been a preparation for any other religion? If that is the case, it seems fair enough to say that Hinduism was poorly prepared, rather than was 'a sure preparation' for Christ. Besides, if the crust or rubbish was widely held with only a

³⁶⁹ Slater, "Early Christianity and Culture", *The Madras Christian college Magazine* (November 1900): 249.

³⁷⁰ Slater's papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 87,89.

³⁷¹ Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions* (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1964), 264.

³⁷² A. Duff, *Missionary Addresses...with ... Papers on Female Education and the Danish...Mission to India* (Edinburgh: Publishing Company is not named, 1850), 33.

³⁷³ General Missionary Conference, *Report of the General Missionary Conference held at Allahabad, 1872-1873* (London: Printed by C. Foster, Madras, for Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1873), 14.

smattering portion of gem in Hinduism, it might not be relevant to connect Hinduism to Christianity as a preparation.

Meanwhile, it should be also born in mind that many leading nineteenth century Indian Christian thinkers like K. M. Banerjea, B. Upādhyāy and N. V. Tilak³⁷⁴ approved Hinduism as the preparation for the Gospel. Particularly, Nehemiah Goreh (1825-1895) who was a champion of Christian orthodoxy as an Anglican priest and had a generally negative engagement with Hinduism approved Hinduism as a preparation for the Gospel as follows:

I gave up the Hindu religion because I came to see that it was not a Religion given by God. The errors of it I condemn. But I never found fault in an idea with its teaching that God becomes Incarnate. Indeed, many stories of Krishna and Rama, whom the Hindu religion teaches to be incarnations of God, used to be very affecting to us... And thus our countrymen have been prepared to some extent, to appreciate and accept the truths of Christianity.³⁷⁵

Preparatory Truths in Hindu Thoughts

Although it is controversial, Slater believed that Hinduism is a light for the Indians and a preparation for the Christ. Thus he detailed the preparatory truths in Hindu thoughts in his writings. This section deals with some significant examples Slater referred.

Pantheism

Pantheism is the view that everything is of an all-encompassing immanent God, which was typically expressed in the Hindu Scriptures, particularly in *Advaita* Vedānta school of Hindu philosophy. The essence of *Advaitic* teaching, according to B. G. Tilak, can be summarized that the *Brāhman* (Godhead) is real; the world is perishable; the *ātman* (self) of humanity and the *Brāhman* are fundamentally one and the same, not two.³⁷⁶ The difference and plurality that people see in all beings comes from *māyā* (illusion) of the world, which are the cause of *karma* (act) and the burden of *samsāra* (transmigration). The only way to *Mokṣa* (liberation) from the cycle of

³⁷⁴ A Christian poet of Maharashtra. Tilak's most quoted line is his claim that he 'came to Christ over Tukaram's bridge'.

³⁷⁵ N. Goreh, *Proofs of the Divinity of Our Lord, stated in a letter to a friend*, 1887. Cited from Robin Boyd's *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 55,56.

³⁷⁶ B. G. Tilak, *Srimad Bhagavadgita-Rahasya*, trans. A. S. Sukthankar (Poona: Tilak Brothers, 1986), 336.

rebirth is to have the right knowledge that the individual is non-different from the *Brāhman*.

Slater approved that 'there is the truth in pantheism'.³⁷⁷ He stated that pantheism teaches, 'God is love; and he that abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him' (1John 4:16).³⁷⁸ According to Slater, the Christian, 'like the *Brāhman*, sees God in all things'.³⁷⁹ 'To Christian thought', he wrote in his *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, 'the world is full of Deity: it is the visible garment of God, through which the Divine glory gleams'.³⁸⁰ In other words, Slater believed that God is here and now, although he is far above the Earth. In Slater's view, 'the Christian holds more firmly the truth of the indwelling God immanent in the world and still more in the spirits he has made in His own image'.³⁸¹ Hence, Slater held that the 'immanence of God in Hinduism could be a stepping-stone or a point of contact for the Christian teaching in India. Such a view was followed and elaborated by B. Upādhyāy and P. Johanns³⁸² who endeavoured to construct Christian theology in relation to *Advaita Vedānta*.³⁸³ Although Slater did not detail the *Advaita Vedāntic* thought as a way to express Christian theology, he initiated the positive usage of *Advaita Vedānta* as a preparatory truth in connecting to the Christian truth, in line with Upādhyāy and Johanns.

Nevertheless, Slater might see the pantheistic ideas as the least preparation among Hindu thoughts, since Slater was highly critical of pantheism: first, Slater criticised pantheism for identifying nature, the creature, with God, the creator. Although the Christian sees God in all things, he does not, as the pantheist, see Him in all things alike.³⁸⁴ Second, pantheism, by seeing God in all things, instead of correcting Hindu polytheism, has had the effect of stimulating its extravagances; it has increased the

³⁷⁷ Slater, *Studies in the Upanishads*, 24.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁷⁹ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 111.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 111.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

³⁸² P. Johanns (1882-1921) was a Jesuit missionary who constructed an erudite version of fulfilment theology in India based on Thomism. Refer to Timothy Tennent's *Building Christianity on Indian Foundations: The Legacy of Brahmabāndhav Upādhyāy* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000) and S. Doyle's unpublished Ph.D. Thesis at the University of Edinburgh, *Synthesizing the Vedānta: The Theology of Pierre Johanns S.J.*(2005).

³⁸³ Many Indian Christian theologians, if not all, according to K. P. Aleaz, are slowly recognizing that deeper dimensions of Christian thought on God, humans and creation are manifesting through the aide of Vedānta thought. See Aleaz's *Christian thought Through Advaita Vedānta* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1996), 212.

³⁸⁴ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 113.

number and absurdity of its superstitions.³⁸⁵ Third, the pantheistic idea of the abstract, impersonal God affords no support to the moral life, since it is unable either to explain a moral order or enforce it; but rather, by denying the freedom and responsibility of man, and the distinction between good and evil, leads to the destruction of all morality.³⁸⁶

Whether intentionally or unknowingly, Slater tended to reduce Hinduism to a focal point, Śankara's *Advaita* Vedānta, although Hinduism has a great complexity. Obviously, the pantheistic idea of God is, as Slater said, abstract and impersonal in the *Advaita* Vedānta tradition, and yet the qualified or personal idea of God is also significant in another major *Bhakti* tradition. Hence, although the pantheistic idea of God may not support the moral life, as Slater argued, it is clearly wrong to state that Hinduism thus leads to the destruction of all morality, since the *Bhakti* tradition encourages the deep sense of sin and the moral life to the devotees.³⁸⁷ Besides, the law of karma might serve as the strongest moral valve for Hindus. Anyway, Slater did not seem to consider pantheism so much a helpful preparation as a harmful one. If that is the case, can pantheism be called a preparation in spite of its fatally 'harmful' aspects? Nevertheless, we should give Slater credit for his employment of monistic ideas of Hinduism, in the least, as the preparatory truth for the Christian faith.

Sacrifice

The idea of sacrifice is found in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas (commentaries of the Vedas), as well as in the Upaniṣad. According to R. C. Zaehner, *Agni*, in the Vedas, was the sacrifice related god who, as fire, consumes the sacrifice and, as priest, presents it to the gods above: he was the mediator between gods and humanity.³⁸⁸ In addition, *prajāpati*, the Lord of Creatures in the Vedas, was linked to the sacrificial root of creation either by continually creating living creatures out of the sacrifices to the gods, or as being himself the sacrifice from which life is sustained: '*prajāpati* is

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 122.

³⁸⁶ Slater, "Berkeleyanism, Materialism, Vedantism", *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, Vol. 1 (Nov., 1883): 273.

³⁸⁷ Dayanand Bharati, *Understanding Hinduism*, 209.

³⁸⁸ R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 19.

sacrifice, for he created it in his own self-expression'(Sarapatha Brāhmaṇa 11,1; 8,2).³⁸⁹

Slater saw the Vedic sacrifice as 'the primitive idea of redemption in Hinduism to be fulfilled by Christ'.³⁹⁰ *Prajāpati* was particularly noted by him, since '*prajāpati, puruṣa* (primeval male) begotten before the world, becoming half immortal and half mortal in a body fit for sacrifice, offered himself for the *devas* (emancipated mortals) and for the benefit of the world; thereby making all subsequent sacrifice a reflection or figure of himself'. In his view, the ideal of the Vedic *prajāpati*, mortal and yet divine, both priest and victim, has long since been lost in India.³⁹¹ However, 'the idea of sacrifice', Slater wrote, 'is inherent in human nature, and ought to have been retained, cherished, purified, and realized... and material sacrifices offered to manifold deities have continued, in one form and another, down to the present day, and must continue in India and other non-Christian lands till Christ, the great *Fulfiller* [italicised by Slater] of sacrifices, is understood and accepted'.³⁹²

Slater stated that sacrifice is more allied to Christian thought than to reincarnation and to the doctrine of final absorption.³⁹³ This shows that Slater valued the practice of sacrifice as close to the Christian truth and a useful preparation, while others as distant and unhelpful. As Slater argued, *prajāpati* could be construed as a promise for redemption, but it is perplexing why such promises in Slater's works are barely mentioned in terms of their amount.

Karma and Saṃsāra

According to Zaehner, *karma* (the fruit of actions) in the Vedic belief means both a ritual act in the sacrifice and the secular acts appropriate to the four great classes.³⁹⁴ Actions, whether ritual or secular, invariably produce their own good and evil 'fruits'. Since every action produces an effect or 'fruit' in the temporal world, it follows that unless this chain of cause and effect can be broken, there will be no end to the round

³⁸⁹ John Bowker, *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 759.

³⁹⁰ Slater, "Concession to Native Ideas, Having Special Reference to Hinduism", *The World's Parliament of Religions*, 459.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 459.

³⁹² Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 66,67.

³⁹³ Slater, *Studies in the Upanishads*, 13.

³⁹⁴ R. C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, 59.

of birth, death, and rebirth. Such a birth and death cycle is called *saṃsāra* (transmigration). The Upaniṣad teaches, however, that the human soul in its deepest essence is in some sense identical with Brāhman. This soul, then, must be distinct from the ordinary empirical self that transmigrates from body to body carrying its load of *karma* with it. How to disengage it from its real or imaginary connexion with the psychosomatic complex that thinks, wills, and acts, is from the time of the Upaniṣad onwards the crucial problem facing the Hindu religious consciousness.³⁹⁵

Slater recognised the doctrine of *karma* is in complete accord with the Pauline doctrine that ‘whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap’ (Galatians 6:7).³⁹⁶ According to him, that the soul receives the due reward of its deeds in a body ‘resembles Christian belief, and sharply contrasted with the idea of the ghostly spectres of Greek philosophy’.³⁹⁷ Further, he asserted that there is the important truth in the Hindu belief in *karma* ‘that the belief witnesses to the sense of sin and that sin is inevitably followed by suffering and penalty’.³⁹⁸ In his view, the doctrine of *karma* offers ‘a strong support to the instinct of justice that is innate in human nature; and to that retributive power of action that all religions recognize’.³⁹⁹ As to the doctrine of transmigration, Slater stated that ‘the belief witnesses to the immortality of the soul’.⁴⁰⁰

On the one hand, Slater brought the positive arguments concerning *karma* and *saṃsāra* as witness to the Christian truth. On the other hand, he disapproved these doctrines, since he believed that ‘the doctrine of *karma* clashes most with the Gospel; the doctrine of free forgiveness and salvation through faith’.⁴⁰¹ Slater urged the following objections against the beliefs of *karma* and *saṃsāra*.⁴⁰² First, the doctrine of *karma* is ‘unproved and incapable of proof, unlike the law of heredity’. Second, the doctrines seem to be at variance with other Hindu doctrines: ‘transmigration is difficult to reconcile with Hindu Vedāntism, the system of caste, and the doctrine of *śraddha* (final rites)’. If the individual soul is really identical with the one supreme

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁹⁶ Slater’s Report of Work 1894, 9.

³⁹⁷ Slater, *Transmigration and Karma* (London and Madras: The Christian Literature Society for India, 1898), 7.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁰¹ Slater’s Report of Work 1894, 9.

⁴⁰² Slater, *Transmigration and Karma*, 10-25.

Soul, and its apparent distinction from it and from other souls is only the result of *māyā*, then, in Slater's view, 'transmigration itself is all an illusion'. If certain kinds of food are believed to defile the inner man in the caste system, 'the theory of transmigration proceeds exactly the other way: the soul dominates the body'. If every soul must bear the consequences of the good or evil forces set in motion by the soul itself, Slater asked, 'what right have we to try to interfere with the processes of justice by performing the final rites?' Moreover, according to Slater, 'transmigration is unscientific, unjust and non-remedial'. He pointed out the contradiction of karma and transmigration: 'If a soul never remembers anything of former births and cannot connect those faults with himself, where is the morality of such punishment?' If a person has no memory of the past, 'he can make no confession, he cannot be urged to penitence, because he can feel no guilt'. Slater, then, thought that no moral character of the criminal could be improved. Consequently, Slater asserted that 'the hypothetical and terrifying system is unnecessary'.

Again, we find only a few truths with many refutations in Slater's view of the doctrine of *karma* and *saṃsāra*. That *karma* and *saṃsāra* are not true because they are unscientific does not seem to be convincing in the discussion of faith. Slater's critique of inconsistency of *karma* and *saṃsāra* with other Hindu doctrines might be reasonable, but we should bear in mind that there are some other scholars who maintain their consistency: for example, in the *karma-śraddha* issue, they can be reconciled, because karma and rebirth is not only based on individual responsibility with free will, but also based on collective responsibility as a family and society in a ritual and biological dimension.⁴⁰³

Trimūrti, Avatāra, Idol Worship

In the *Advaita* Vedānta tradition, the *Trimūrti* (triple manifestation) is a concept that God has three aspects or persons of the same God. The three persons of God are Brahmā (the Creator), Viṣṇu (the Preserver), and Śiva (the Destroyer). It is made up of a triunity of essences: *Sat* (existence), *Chit* (thought), and *Ānanda* (bliss). The prominent idea of the later doctrine of the *Trimūrti* is that the three Gods represent forms of one Supreme Being in his threefold activity as Creator, Preserver, and

⁴⁰³ Dayanand Bharati, *Understanding Hinduism*, 213-217.

Destroyer, though Śiva is not only the destroyer, but also the reproducer, or transformer. Slater recognised this doctrine ‘rudely resembles, nominally rather than in reality, the Christian Trinity’.⁴⁰⁴

In Hindu philosophy, an *Avatāra* (descent) is a manifestation of the divine in human form connected primarily with the god Viṣṇu for the purpose of maintaining or restoring cosmic order. In Indian belief there have been numerous *Avatāras*, whereas Christian theology speaks of the Incarnation ‘once for all’.⁴⁰⁵ Slater acknowledged ‘the striking similarities’ between the Hindu *Avatāra* and the Christian Incarnation, although ‘they are superficial’.⁴⁰⁶ Particularly, Slater understood the *Avatāra* as a human longing for the union of the divine and human, although it was ‘incomplete and temporary’.⁴⁰⁷ At these points, the Hindu *Avatāra* becomes a shadow of the substance and a preparatory truth for the Christian Incarnation. However, Slater found the Hindu idea of *Avatāra* was insufficient, since Kṛṣṇa, the eighth and main *Avatāra* of Viṣṇu, ‘laid aside his humanity by returning to heaven; and because of this severance, redemption was left incomplete, and sin and disorder again became rampant’.⁴⁰⁸

Idol worship was a common practice in popular Hinduism. Though it was heavily charged as folly and sin by many missionaries, idols were construed, in Hindu tradition, to ‘represent the invisible spirit of God in personal form, and to be only a means for the concentration and purification of the mind to obtain knowledge about eternal Brahman’.⁴⁰⁹ Slater saw in the idol worship ‘a witness to a great truth and to the natural craving of the heart to have some manifestation of the Unseen’.⁴¹⁰ Slater recognised how difficult it was for Hindus, at the practical level, to form any conception of God without some image. In his view, however, ‘it is not, at bottom, an effort to get away from God, but to bring God near’.⁴¹¹ He interpreted that it is ‘a strong human protest against pantheism, which denies the personality of God, and

⁴⁰⁴ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 29.

⁴⁰⁵ Geoffrey Parrinder, *Avatar and Incarnation: The Divine in Human Form in the World's Religions* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1997), 14.

⁴⁰⁶ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 130.

⁴⁰⁷ Slater, *God Revealed*, 71.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁴⁰⁹ Dayanand Bharati, *Understanding Hinduism*, 196.

⁴¹⁰ Slater, “Concession to Native Ideas, Having Special Reference to Hinduism”, 458.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 458.

atheism, which denies God altogether'.⁴¹² Although Slater held idolatry itself as foolish, degrading, consisting of gross excrescences, he seems to approve the personal-God-seeking idol worship as a much better preparation than pantheism.

As shown above, Slater saw some preparatory truths in pantheism, *prajāpati*, *karma*, *samsāra*, and the Hindu concepts of gods. In Slater's view, they were the promises of Christian redemption, shadows of the substance, and a preparation for Christ. His view was theologically positive to Hinduism in comparison with the negative view of the traditional evangelical missionaries dealt with in the Chapter One. However, Slater seems to describe mostly how they were insufficient rather than how they prepared properly for the Christ. According to Slater the pantheistic idea of God and transmigration did retard the Christian faith a lot, and at the same time, they became a preparation in some aspects for the Christ. If then the preparation in Hinduism was so small, it might be fair to say that his view is also negative on the whole. Nonetheless, it seems right, to say the least, that Slater attempted to find some positive aspects of Hinduism in relation to Christianity, however small this portion was.

Missionary Message to Hinduism

As has been detailed in the previous chapter, Slater's fulfilment theology was born in the course of formulating a missionary message to the educated Hindus who accepted the higher Hinduism. Hence, the pith of his theology would do well to explain its relation to the missionary message to Hinduism. The core of Slater's message is that Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfil what had been prepared by the indwelling divine reason or logos. What is more, Slater insisted that Christianity should be presented as an Eastern religion, rather than Western. In this context, Slater's key ideas of fulfilment theology will be examined in the following three points: Divine Reason in Hinduism; Christ, the revealer and fulfiller; Christianity, an Eastern religion.

Divine Reason in Hinduism

There was a puzzling question for Slater asked by his Hindu audience: 'If the Christian revelation teaches what man cannot find out for himself, why were the

⁴¹² *Ibid.*, 458.

nations left, and why are they still left without it?'⁴¹³ If the nations have been left, Slater seems to think in my view that it would be unfair and cruel to punish them, particularly those who have lived righteously in their own faith, and it would be difficult for a conscientious missionary to declare the justice and mercy of God. Conversely, if the nations never have been left, Slater raises a question: what has he been doing for the salvation of Indian people? Slater's fulfilment theology was his own quest or the answer of what was asked by his Hindu audience.

'On the ground of unfairness and partiality', Slater objected that 'a revelation of spiritual truth should be for so long a time confined to a certain part of the world, and known only to a part of the race'.⁴¹⁴ He was sure that the Indian land, though beyond the pale of an historical revelation, 'has not been outside the sphere of the divine providence; that in the generations gone by God suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways, yet left not Himself without witness'.⁴¹⁵ Slater maintained that the earlier history of the Bible only professed to record God's dealings with a particular nation; but 'that does not exclude His action on the minds of other peoples, since there has been no favouritism, no exclusion, in connection with the Bible revelation'.⁴¹⁶ He believed that if there has been at any time 'selection', it has only been selection for the general good. In this view of Slater, Christianity is thus not something belonging only to the Western religion, but to the universal religion which is already in all humanity, in the form of germinant principles. Ultimately, Slater agreed to the idea that 'Jewish prophecy and heathen philosophy had in different ways prepared for the reception of Christianity'.⁴¹⁷ Hence, in Slater's view, Hinduism was endued with the promises of redemption, preparatory truths and the witnesses to the light that shone to people, even though they did not comprehend it.

Slater traced the naturally implanted knowledge of God and truth in Hindu thought and faiths, though they might be germinant and imperfect, grounded on Paul's Lystra sermon (Acts 14:15-17) and John 1:5. Truths found in Hinduism, in his view, cannot come from the demon, but from the God who shines the light to the world. According to Slater, the scope of the divine purpose is ampler than we dreamed and 'wherever

⁴¹³ Slater's *Report of Work 1883*, 4.

⁴¹⁴ Slater, *God Revealed*, 46.

⁴¹⁵ Slater, *Philosophy of Missions*, 113. Quoted by Slater from Acts 14:16,17.

⁴¹⁶ Slater, *God Revealed*, 49,50.

⁴¹⁷ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 119.

we go, we find that God has been before us in the power and teaching of His all-pervading Spirit'.⁴¹⁸ In Slater's view, Christ and the heathen were not brought together for the first time, since 'the Word of God is already there and the indwelling Spirit of God shines the religious lights to the pagan lands'.⁴¹⁹ For those religious truths that have consciousness, Slater claimed for 'the spiritual Christ who was immanent as grace and truth in human thought prior to the Christ's Incarnation'.⁴²⁰ He identified this spiritual Christ with 'the Divine Reason, or Logos' called by the apostle John, which has been always working in all things and in all humanity as the ideal principle of the world's life'.⁴²¹ As the divine reason could be found everywhere, Slater called it as 'the Universal Reason' in another place, of which mankind are all partakers'.⁴²² Hence, Slater concludes that Christ is 'the heir of all the ages',⁴²³ and His spirit has been the guide and inspiration of the good in every time because of the abiding presence of God. What, then, is the relationship between the immanent Christ as the universal reason and the incarnated Christ in the history? Slater made it clear: 'the Christ within makes the Christ without actual'.⁴²⁴ He continued to write, 'If there is no music in the soul, there is no music for the sense. Likewise, Christ is received, because He is already there'.⁴²⁵

If every human being, as Slater said, has a certain degree of truth in their faiths by the universal presence of Christ, did Slater recognise any salvific value in the world religions? There seems to be a *prima facie* justification for the salvation of the Hindus in Slater's view, considering his statement: 'there is in mankind the Eternal spirit, the saving element in every heart, which responds to the appeal of Jesus'.⁴²⁶ Moreover, as mentioned earlier, Slater asserted that 'those who have lived or live according to the highest reason, who make the highest reason the rule of all their actions, are the true Christians, though Christians may call them atheists'.⁴²⁷

⁴¹⁸ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 6.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 6,7.

⁴²⁰ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 102.

⁴²¹ Slater, "God is Spirit", *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, Vol. XIX (Feb. 1902), 121.

⁴²² Slater, *God Revealed*, 57.

⁴²³ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 113.

⁴²⁴ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 103.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁴²⁶ *Ibid.*, 408.

⁴²⁷ Slater, *God Revealed*, 57.

Nonetheless, Slater's statement must be construed in the context of searching the tricky question as to whether there was salvation or not for the Hindus who lived according to their faiths in the pre-Christian times. Slater was apparently convinced that there was certainly nothing in the Bible that teaches that 'those who depart this life without knowledge of what is called the Christian revelation are totally beyond the pale of salvation'.⁴²⁸ Even though Hindus had not the Law of the Jews, they might be saved by 'the infinite justice and mercy of God', only if they do by instinct what the Law commanded (Romans 2:14). People before Christ, or without Christ, in the view of Slater, would be judged 'according to their works': and 'the standard of such judgment would be the degree of revelation, natural or supernatural, granted them in the present life'.⁴²⁹ Slater thought that 'few things have brought more discredit on the Bible than the attempt to make it countenance the view, that all who do not accept its doctrines, no matter whether they have never heard them, and no matter whether they exemplify their spirit, would perish everlastingly'.⁴³⁰ Slater suggested a Cornelius case which might throw light on the acceptance of God in the pre-Christian times for those who feared God and worked righteousness.⁴³¹ He believed that like Cornelius, those who have lived or live according to the highest reason which was provided by the universal reason, might be accepted and led to salvation, if they act up to the light and conscience they have.

Clearly, Slater did not support the limited salvation, nor did he teach universal salvation.⁴³² Salvation, in his view, does not come facilely from 'the mere assent to certain article of the Christian faith without possessing god-like character',⁴³³ and the Hindus do not necessarily fail to get salvation despite their conscientious life 'according to the highest reason'. Two important things for Slater, in my view, are, firstly, to remember that the standard for salvation should be equally applied to both Christians and Hindus, only depending both on the pure, honest character and on the degree of revelation; and secondly, although Slater acknowledged the saving element⁴³⁴ in every faith based on the universal reason, he believed that the imperfect,

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁴³² Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 406.

⁴³³ Slater, *God Revealed*, 59.

⁴³⁴ This saving element does not necessarily guarantee the salvation.

germinant truth in Hindu faith needs to quicken and be infused with the life of Christ, the fulfiller.

To sum up, Slater's divine reason or logos is in the locus of his theology in terms of supplying the good elements in Hinduism and of making the Christ actual for Indians. God has not left Indians, but remains always as a witness or light with his abiding Spirit. This universal presence of God is the inspiration, guide and driving force for the preparation and reception of Christ among Indians. Religion of Christ is neither strange nor foreign to the nature of Indians, because divine reason is always there. Slater constructed a relatively irenic relationship between Hinduism and Christianity by using the logos idea in communicating the Christian message to the Hindus. Although Slater's appreciation of Christ's presence in Hinduism was shocking to some missionaries, it paved the major positive outlook for most Indian Christians to see their philosophy and faiths as confirmed by what A. J. Appasamy (1891-1970), a leading theologian of the twentieth century in India, said: 'God has been slowly preparing a way for Himself through the ages. Most Christians in India have come to acknowledge that the philosophies and religions of India have not been inspired by the powers of darkness, but that through them all can be seen, sometimes clearly and sometimes dimly, the hand of God leading men on'.⁴³⁵

Christ, the Fulfiller

In the previous section, I argued that Slater approved of Hinduism as having its own light, truth, and even the saving element by the abiding presence of divine reason. If that is true, why does Slater as a missionary attempt to bring Christ to the people who already have the established faiths? Slater justified the necessity of accepting Christ for those who have Hindu faiths based on the following two points. First, Hinduism is a wanting, fleeting, decaying and restless system, apart from Christ. In Slater's view, all other religions wait for their fulfilment in Christ, because they are 'wanting and inadequate to satisfy the longing of the people of the world'.⁴³⁶ According to Slater, the Hindus' destiny of 'endless births into a world of misery, and eternal torments

⁴³⁵ T. Dayanandan Francis ed., *The Christian Bhakti of A. J. Appasamy: A Collection of His Writing* (Madras: C.L.S., 1992), 229.

⁴³⁶ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 106.

could never satisfy themselves and a God of love'.⁴³⁷ Slater, in his *The Philosophy of Missions*, pointed out the weakness of Hinduism that unavoidably urges the advent of Christianity: 'Paganism waits, by a law of its own nature, for its fulfilment in Christianity. There is unrest in every religious system apart from Christ. Apart from Him, they are fragmentary and fleeting system, and this is their weakness and their sadness; their capacity of union with Him is their strength and justification'.⁴³⁸ Although Hinduism has some positive capacity and an element of truth that could settle the agony of people, Slater seems to think that it is simply a partial, temporary solution. It is just a shadow of the substance and the shadow may not stand alone without the substance in Slater's view. Furthermore, Slater diagnosed Hinduism as 'a dying faith', while recognising Christ as 'living and acting'.⁴³⁹ In reality, he saw the Hindus' urgent request for an alternative to remove their unrest, satisfy their aspiration, and revive their flickering hope.

Second, Jesus Christ is the fulfiller of Hinduism and the satisfier of people. The key reason why Slater holds that the Hindus desperately need Christ is his belief that 'Christ vindicates, interprets, and fulfils the central truths to be found in the faiths of the world, and satisfies the spiritual needs of humanity'.⁴⁴⁰ According to Slater, 'Christ satisfies the spiritual hunger and thirst to which the great religious ideas of the East only give expression; the true realization of the visions of her seers, the real fulfilment of the longings of her sages'.⁴⁴¹ Why does Slater think that only Christ fulfils the Hindus' desire and satisfies them? Because, to begin with, he held that 'human nature and the human heart, and the religions they articulate, were made for Christ'.⁴⁴² Hence, Christ alone, as the inspiring author of their noblest idea, can ever explain them and satisfy them. In addition, it is because Slater held a view that 'Christ meets the questions raised in the philosophies of the East, and supplies their only true solution'.⁴⁴³ Ultimately, it is because Christ is the unique revelation and the fullness of the truth as he clearly expressed in his paper:

⁴³⁷ Slater, *God Revealed*, 192.

⁴³⁸ Slater, *The Philosophy of Missions*, 125.

⁴³⁹ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 111.

⁴⁴⁰ Slater, "The Old and the New", 15. "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 107.

⁴⁴¹ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 291.

⁴⁴² Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 104.

⁴⁴³ Slater, "Concession to Native Ideas, Having Special Reference to Hinduism", 459.

We are now beginning to discover that our claim to go to the East as teachers of religion is not based on any essential superiority as religious thinkers, but simply on the ground that we have in Christ a unique revelation to present; a revelation whose glory it is, not to destroy, but to correct and fulfil; to gather up and explain and consummate the lessons of all previous revelations. He alone can ever explain them and satisfy them. He alone is the answer to the universal needs, to the deepest convictions of the human soul. Christ is the fullness of the Truth.⁴⁴⁴

If Christ is the unique revelation for Slater, what is his idea about the relationship of the unique revelation with other revelations? Is Christianity a friend or an enemy of Hinduism? When the unique revelation of the Christ is planted in the old soil of Hinduism, should the traditional faith be destroyed or be preserved? As mentioned in Chapter One, the typical evangelical missionaries like John Scudder defined Hinduism as the work of a demon to be destroyed.⁴⁴⁵ J. N. Farquhar, in his paper, wrote of the relationship between the Hindu community and the Christian Church: ‘At least 95% of the educated men and women of the Hindu community are definitely hostile to the upbuilding of the Christian Church in India... Educated Hindus today detest the Christian movement, regarding it as a foreign force, destroying the beloved ancient faith and culture’.⁴⁴⁶ Such negative attitudes from the missionary Church to the native faith brought a sharp critical response from Swāmi Vivekānanda, one of the most popular Hindu sages in modern India: he said that ‘a convert from Hinduism is not only one Hindu less, but an enemy more’.⁴⁴⁷

The key issue dealt with by Slater in his fulfilment theology concerned the most desirable strategy to build up between Hinduism and Christianity in the missionary context. Slater thus strongly denied the antagonistic relationship and urged the establishment of an irenic relationship between them. He argued that ‘Christians are the friend and not the enemy of all that is best in the Hindu faiths’.⁴⁴⁸ He encouraged missionaries to show that ‘Christ justifies the Hindus’ longing, and worthily fulfils their desire; and thus leads the Hindu brothers from the lower form of worship to the higher, not by uprooting, but by fulfilling, though not ignoring the contrast, in order

⁴⁴⁴ Slater, “The Contribution of the Church in India to the World’s Interpretation of Christ”, 102,103.

⁴⁴⁵ Robert Frykenberg, *Christians and Missionaries in India*, 7.

⁴⁴⁶ J. N. Farquhar, “Hinduism and Christianity in India A Reply”, *The Hibbert Journal* 27 (Oct-July 1928-29): 111, 122.

⁴⁴⁷ Vivekendra, *Religious Conversions: Frequently Asked Questions by Hindu* (Mumbai: Publisher is not known, 1999), 11.

⁴⁴⁸ Slater’s papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 54.

that the brethren of Christ may be won to Him'.⁴⁴⁹ Slater called the fulfilment as the 'Master's way', since he believed that Christ did not come to destroy Hinduism, but to fulfil it. He included the Hindu faiths beyond the Judaic faith in the content of what Christ fulfilled.

Slater justified his expanding of the meaning of fulfilment by providing a historical example of Greek thought, to which the Indian is much in his view akin. According to him, just as the religion of Christ triumphed over the religions of Greece and Rome, 'not by destroying, but by absorbing from Greek philosophy and literature and from Roman jurisprudence and government, all in them that was good and true, so will it be in India'.⁴⁵⁰ The absorption is literally to receive something as part of oneself, as the logos idea of Greek thought was taken into the Christian thought of the Apostle John. In the same way, Slater stated the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity in the perspective of 'absorption' in his book, *Studies in the Upanishads*: 'Every previous revelation flows into the revelation we have in Christ, and loses itself in Him. Christ includes all teachers. All other masters are in Christ. We do not deny the truths they taught; we can delight in all. We can give heed to all the prophets; but every truth in every prophet melts into the truth we have in Christ'.⁴⁵¹ Slater's Christ is clearly not against Hinduism, nor yet for Hinduism altogether. As the Hinduism is a part, in my analysis of Slater's view, its destiny is to be integrated and fulfilled into the Christ as the whole and the consummation. Hence, the Christ might be a friend, helper, guider, refiner, consummator, and fulfiller, neither an enemy, nor destroyer.

The process, however, inescapably, might include losing something significant from the Hindu perspective. If Slater's Christ also has to trim off some parts of Hinduism, how, then, is it distinct from the aggressive Christ of other missionaries? The stark contrast is that Slater's Christ wants to keep the best ideal of Hinduism in Himself, completing it in the highest spiritual, moral plane, whereas other's attempt to destroy it entirely. Nonetheless, it seems true for the Hindus that losing anything valuable to them and being melted into Christianity might be felt more or less equal to the antagonistic attitudes to Hinduism. Besides, a condescending attitude to Hinduism is manifest in his indication of the triumph of Christ's religion over India

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 55-58.

⁴⁵⁰ Slater, *Studies in the Upanishads*, 28.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 70.

that might come not only from his conviction of Christ as the unique and full revelation, but also from his mindset as a citizen of the British Empire, the nation of 'self-proclaimed' civilization.

Lastly, we go on to examine Slater's examples of fulfilment. As mentioned in Slater's view of Hinduism, Slater recognised Hinduism as the shadow or the preparatory truths to be fulfilled by Christ, the substance. Hence, there are many examples of fulfilment in his writings, although the extent of preparation was diverse depending on each doctrine. I will take three distinct examples of Slater's fulfilment: first, Slater held that the idea of the sacrificial acts, ingrained in the whole system of Vedic Hinduism, was ideally fulfilled by Christ. According to Slater, a sense of original corruption has been also felt by all classes of Hindus, as indicated in the prayer: 'I am sinful, I commit sin, my nature is sinful. Save me, O thou lotus-eyed Hari, the remover of sin'.⁴⁵² Slater held that the Hindus, out of longing for exoneration, offered a burnt offering from the first man, after the deluge, whom the Hindus called Manu, and the Hebrews Noah.⁴⁵³ Slater saw that the land had been saturated with the blood of sacrifice in Vedic literature, much more than in Jewish literature. In Slater's view, the secret of this great importance attached to sacrifice is to be found in the remarkable fact that the authorship of the institution is attributed to Creation's Lord, *Prajāpati* himself.⁴⁵⁴ Although *Prajāpati*, both the divine and the sacrifice, was lost for ages in the highest religious thought, it is the best preparation, according to Slater, for the Christ who sacrificed his life for the sin of the world. Thus, he concluded that no other than the Jesus of the Gospels has ever appeared to fulfil this long lost primitive idea of redemption by the efficacy of sacrifice.⁴⁵⁵

Second, along with the concept of sacrifice, the form of Krishnaism is indicated by Slater as one of the best preparations in Hinduism for the Gospel of the Incarnate Christ.⁴⁵⁶ Krishnaism is the pre-eminent *bhakti* (devotion) religion devoted to Kṛṣṇa as the full manifestation of Viṣṇu.⁴⁵⁷ In the Bhagavad Gitā, Kṛṣṇa is seen as the Supreme Person and the highest God (10.15 and 15.19). After he spent a pastoral

⁴⁵² Slater, "Concession to Native Ideas, Having Special Reference to Hinduism", 459.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 459.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 459.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 459.

⁴⁵⁶ Slater's papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 87.

⁴⁵⁷ Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 100.

childhood and youth, he lived a life as a heroic warrior and teacher. In Krishnaism, salvation is attained by the grace of God to whom people respond with *bhakti*. Kṛṣṇa and Christ are not the same in many ways, and yet Slater was convinced that ‘Christ is the perfect fulfilment of Kṛṣṇa who was the best prepared and most promising soil for the production of a strong type of Christian character and devoted service, presenting by the remarkable form of religious feeling known as *bhakti* worship’.⁴⁵⁸

Third, the Christian doctrine of eternal life is the fulfilment of the Hindu aspiration of immortality. Though generally not seen as a permanent place, yet in Gitā 16:18-21 there is a clear reference to the ‘lowest way’, which is final and from which there is no escape.⁴⁵⁹ In addition, the Purāṇas and Epics, the influential literature to the worldviews of popular Hindus, gave a graphic picture about hell and heaven. Slater stated that the Sanskrit word for son, *putra*, literally means one who delivers from hell.⁴⁶⁰ Hence, in his view, when the sons perform *śraddha* (final rites) for their parents, they express their hope for the eternal life of their parents that is fulfilled in Christ.

Slater made the additional lists of the examples of fulfilment such as the Indian’s passion for the union with God and the doctrine of *saṅnyāsa* (renunciation). In fact, every truth in line with Christianity could be the preparation more or less that is fulfilled and satisfied by the Christ.

Christianity, an Eastern Religion

Slater’s fulfilment theology had a profound influence on making the content and modes of his missionary message to the educated Hindus. As he recognised that Indian thought form and the faith were providentially prepared by the immanent Spirit of Christ, he did not attempt to destroy them, but to present Christianity as the fulfilment of their faith and ‘the Eastern religion, rather than a foreign and Western faith’.⁴⁶¹ His missionary message was focused on how to make the universal Christianity localised and naturalised in order to gain much more sympathy.

Slater illustrates why the missionary is not to carry the same form of message to every land. ‘When a missionary reaches his field’, Slater stated, ‘his duty is to find

⁴⁵⁸ Slater’s papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 87.

⁴⁵⁹ Dayanad Bharati, *Understanding Hinduism*, 220.

⁴⁶⁰ Slater’s papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 79.

⁴⁶¹ Slater, “How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I”, 261.

out what God has grown there already, for there is no field in the world where the Great Husbandman has not sown something'.⁴⁶² Slater suggested the main business of a missionary: 'instead of uprooting his Maker's work and clearing the field of all the plants that found no place in his small European herbarium, he should rather water the growths already there'.⁴⁶³ Here watering means the promotion of Christ, the fulfiller and satisfier of the aspiration of the Indian consciousness. However, the Christianisation of the Indian consciousness, in Slater's view, should be done very carefully 'not to transform it into the likeness of the West, since the oriental world will still be oriental; and will never become Christian after the Western mould'.⁴⁶⁴ According to him, Western Christianity does not appeal to the East; and 'there must be an interpretation, a naturalising and nationalising of Christianity in the light of the thought and temperament of the Orient before it can win and hold the oriental world'.⁴⁶⁵ The great hindrance to naturalising is to 'transplant British or American or German theology, or any exotic, to the Indian soil: it would end in only a calamity, because that is strange to the Indian nature'.⁴⁶⁶

In order to present Christianity as an Eastern religion, Slater needed to exhibit that Christianity is the universal religion inextricably related to the Indians as well as to the Jews. In his lecture on 'The Old and the New', Slater showed that 'all the truth which Hinduism offers or suggests is to be found in Christ, together with much else that makes Christianity the religion of all time and all races'.⁴⁶⁷ Seeing that 'truth is a unity', Slater asserted that 'Christianity is no local religion simply with the Hebrew *śāstras* (Hindu scriptures), but is related in the way of affinity and fulfilment to those of other races'.⁴⁶⁸ Most importantly, as he saw that 'the Divine Reason has sucked the marrow of the ancient world and assimilated it', Slater argued that 'just through this power of assimilation and expansion, the Gospel has established its right to be the universal religion'.⁴⁶⁹ Slater's view of Christianity as the universal religion is well expressed in his poem: 'In Christ there is no East, nor West, In Him no South, nor

⁴⁶² Slater, "The Missionary Problem", 217.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*, 217.

⁴⁶⁴ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 104.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴⁶⁷ Slater, *Report of Work 1883*, 12.

⁴⁶⁸ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 6. Slater's second paper in 1892 Bombay Conference, 285.

⁴⁶⁹ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 26.

North, But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth. In Him shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find; His service is the golden cord close binding all mankind'.⁴⁷⁰

If Christianity could be not only a European religion, but also an Indian religion, as Slater suggested, how did he describe what Indian Christianity should be like? Slater wrote in his article that the Christianity of India would undoubtedly be influenced by Hinduism, as that of Japan by Buddhism, and that of China by Confucianism.⁴⁷¹ According to Slater, it is surely destined, under the guiding hand of God,

not only to stamp its own national features on an Eastern Church, but, by an illumination of the nobler forms of its national faith, to give a new expansion to the historic Christian consciousness, and a new enrichment to the true Catholic Church; to contribute to the life and thought of Christendom, new forms of piety, new modes of Christian experience, new manifestations of spiritual power, new aspects of doctrine, new interpretations of the Christ.⁴⁷²

What Slater suggested as the new enrichment, and new modes of Indian Christianity may be summed up as the following 'four Indian Christian Gospels': 'The Contemplative Life, the Presence of the Unseen, the Aspiration after Ultimate Being, Reverence for the Sanctions of the Past, are the four Gospels with which a Christian East may evangelise the West, giving back to it the spirituality of the First Days'.⁴⁷³

Slater argued the possibility of the future contribution of the Indian Church to world Christianity:

the capacity of people for transcending the finite has been more marked in India than in any other land; that continuous and concentrated thought, as a religious exercise, is almost unknown among the Christians; and that the Church in India should contribute something very beautiful and new on the side of meditative worship and the mystic passion.⁴⁷⁴

Particularly, Slater acknowledged that 'the Christianity of the future would of necessity take a Vedāntic colouring',⁴⁷⁵ since the Vedāntic thought is so thoroughly Indian. Slater was convinced that if the best minds in India embrace the Vedānta, they would relate the message of the Gospel in some fashion with the findings of

⁴⁷⁰ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 143.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 104.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁴⁷⁵ Slater, *The Higher Hinduism*, 290.

philosophic thought. Hence, he maintained in the hope of making indigenous Indian Christian theology:

One of India's greatest needs is a sanctified native Christian scholarship that would think out these subjects for itself; develop the religious resources of India and bring out her hidden treasures; interpret the East to the West, and the West to the East; not continue to simply echo the shibboleths of Western missionaries and transplant to the East all the historic and dogmatic types of Christianity; guide forward such a movement and foster the growth of a natural Christianity.⁴⁷⁶

It needs to be noted here that Slater appreciated, possibly for the first time in India, the possibility and the significance of constructing Indian Christian theology in relation to Vedānta thought. As he encouraged, there emerged a number of theologians who developed Christian thought in the context of Vedānta, such as B. Upādhyāy, R. V. De Smet, S. J. Samartha, K. P. Aleaz, and R. Panikkar.⁴⁷⁷ Nonetheless, Slater did not provide any clue about how Christianity could be connected to the *Advaita* Vedānta that does not recognise the personality, which is the dividing line between Hinduism and Christianity in Slater's view.⁴⁷⁸ He might indicate the direction and the principles to go forward, and yet he did not detail what the naturalised Christian message would be like in the Indian mould.

Features of Slater's Theology in Contrast to Farquhar's

Slater's fulfilment theology has been explained to a great extent in relation to his missionary message to Hinduism, and yet it might be distinctly presented when contrasted to that of J. N. Farquhar, the subsequent well-known representative. In essence, both theologies are very much similar, as becomes apparent when comparing Slater's *The Higher Hinduism in Relation with Christianity* and Farquhar's *The Crown of Hinduism*. The appreciation of evolution and comparative relation, citation from Max Müller and Monier-Williams are the same, although the passages are different. The sympathetic approach instead of the antagonistic approach, the emphasis on morality and personality, the concept of fulfilment, preparation and the ambivalence towards Hinduism are similar, so much so that their two books seem to

⁴⁷⁶ Slater, "The Present Religious Outlook of India", 1175. "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 106.

⁴⁷⁷ K. P. Aleaz, *Christian Thought Through Advaita Vedanta* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1996), vii-xii.

⁴⁷⁸ Slater obviously knew that Rāmānuja's viśiṣṭādvaita school, the other major Vedānta school, acknowledged the personality and qualities of ultimate reality. Yet he held that Hinduism, on the whole, does not recognize the personality of the ultimate, for, according to his information, of a hundred Vedāntins seventy-five adhere to Śankara, while only fifteen believe in Rāmānuja's philosophy.

be twin books under different titles. Nonetheless, there are two major differences between them. One is that logos theology is central in Slater's theology, whereas it is obscure in Farquhar's. Another is regarding the post-Christian value of Hinduism: Slater acknowledged the function of Hinduism as an educator, a small lamp and a complementary way of exploring God's abundance, while Farquhar demanded the giving up of Hinduism once it was fulfilled in Christ. This section aims to show not only the features of Slater's theology, but also the well-grounded form of fulfilment theology, in contrast to Farquhar's unbalanced theology.

Logos theology

Slater's logos theology is inseparably related to his concept of fulfilment: there is no fulfilment, without preparation; and there is no preparation, without the logos. Logos, according to Slater, is the principle of the world's life and the impersonal way of God's involvement in human history which directs towards the incarnation of Christ. Slater explains:

The Divine Reason and Power - the ideal principle of the world's life - manifested at every point, which the Apostle calls the Divine Word or Logos, have been always working in all things and in man. 'Through the ages an increasing purpose runs'; and God has been always entering more and more fully into the world and into our human life. This is the divine movement in history... Until the Incarnate Christ appears as the personal organ of the Divine Spirit, it is only impersonally that God has as yet entered into the world's life: and the tendency of all pre-Christian thought towards the impersonal, points to this conclusion.⁴⁷⁹

In Slater's view, no religion has been an accident, since religions everywhere have been ordered and guided by 'a divine Providence'. He holds that he is bound to recognise what is true in the Hindu books, although he does not approve of everything in it. 'Not to recognise such truth', Slater wrote, 'is not to recognise the Spirit of God, who alone can be the author of truth wherever found, whether in the Vedas or the Bible.'⁴⁸⁰ For Slater, logos is necessary to provide truths in Hinduism, witness to the light of God, and elicit a positive response among Hindus to the appeal of Jesus.

⁴⁷⁹ Slater, "God is Spirit", 399-340.

⁴⁸⁰ Slater, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium I", 259.

And so being bound to call truth "truth", wherever found, and virtues "virtues," and not "splendid vices," we are not realizing with the Apostle that there has been a "Light which lighteth every man," that God has never "left Himself without witness," and that there is good in all religions because of the abiding presence of God in His world. Now it is this fuller recognition of the universal presence of the Divine Spirit, of the immanence of God in the universe and man - a truth so well understood in India - the beginning, if not the end, of all spiritual religion, and the avowed basis of modern theology, though probably quickened in the West through contact with the East; it is this great truth that gives an entirely new justification of foreign missions, because we are realizing that the religion of Jesus, which is "spirit and life": appeals to the race on this very ground, that there is in mankind the Eternal Spirit - the saving element in every heart - which responds to the appeal of Jesus, as soil to seed.⁴⁸¹

In this sense, it seems quite right for Paul Hedges to claim that 'fulfilment theology cannot stand alone without a congenial theological context that must, for a classical form of fulfilment theology, validate the religious experience of the non-Christian religions'.⁴⁸² Furthermore, Slater found that logos gave the highest motive to his missionary work and an answer to the perplexing question of the salvation of humankind in pre-Christian times, as seen in his writing.

Must it not also afford the very highest motive and stimulus to missionary toil - fire our ardour and confirm our faith - to know that God has "never left Himself without witness"; that the scope of the divine purpose is ampler than we dreamed; that wherever we go we find that God has been before us in the power and teaching of His all-pervading Spirit; that we do not bring Christ and the heathen together for the first time; but that the religious lights of pagan lands have been unconscious emanations from the 'Word of God', the spiritual revealer of God and of truth from the beginning? And does it not throw light on the dark, perplexing question of the salvation of the heathen in pre-Christian times?⁴⁸³

Slater's fulfilment theology should be understood as accompanying the logos idea, which makes clear why truths can be found in Hinduism. Unless the logos is recognised, there can be no way to explain how the preparation and fulfilment could happen, other than by accident. Therefore, an appreciation of the logos theology seems crucial to a well-balanced expression of fulfilment theology.

J. N. Farquhar's prominent book, *The Crown of Hinduism*, was a successful promoter of fulfilment theology, probably due to its impressive title and the well-organised presentation of his thesis. In the same way as Slater, Farquhar argued that

⁴⁸¹ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 407-408.

⁴⁸² Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 42.

⁴⁸³ Slater, "Modern Thought and Missions", 5-6.

the conceptions of higher Hinduism serve to prepare the way for Christ.⁴⁸⁴ Even if the connection is not so close between Hinduism and Christianity, in Farquhar's view, 'there is sufficient material of a healthy type in Hinduism that may be used for the doctrine of fulfilment, and that on a number of points Hinduism presents a richer preparation for Christ than Judaism'.⁴⁸⁵ Furthermore, Farquhar construed that 'the Bhagavad Gitā is a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ, and the hearts that bow down to the idea of Krsna are really seeking the incarnate Son of God'.⁴⁸⁶ He concludes that 'Christ provides the fulfilment of each of the highest aspirations and aims of Hinduism; He is the Crown of the faith of India'.⁴⁸⁷

Almost all ideas regarding the fulfilment theology of Farquhar can be found in Slater's. Nonetheless, Farquhar totally left out the logos theology that is the key component of Slater's fulfilment theology. Farquhar nowhere employed the logos to describe his fulfillment idea; he simply mentioned the name of Greek Fathers in terms of their contribution in acknowledging Greek philosophy as the tutor for the reception of Christian Gospel.⁴⁸⁸ In a way, a very vague implication of logos idea might be detected from Farquhar's statement in his *Gita and Gospel* that 'Gita is a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ'. If the Gitā is the prophecy of Christ, as he argued, Christ could be supposed as the inspiration or the provider of Hinduism that validates the preparatory truth in the Hindu faith. However, he never explained how Christ could bring his prophecy into the Gitā, which was composed before the historical Jesus lived.⁴⁸⁹ That is the reason why P. Hedges argued with regard to Farquhar in line with my view, that, 'while he gave the most famous account of fulfilment theology, his expression of it fails, precisely because he fails to place it in the context of a logos theology'.⁴⁹⁰

In my analysis, Farquhar, instead of employing a form of the logos theology, explained the process of bringing some good elements in Hinduism by an

⁴⁸⁴ J. N. Farquhar's papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 39.

⁴⁸⁵ Farquhar, "The Relation of Christianity to Hinduism", *International Review of Missions*, Vol. III (1914): 425.

⁴⁸⁶ Farquhar, *Gita and Gospel* (Madras: Christian Literature Society, 1906), 84.

⁴⁸⁷ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), 457, 458.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 53. Here Farquhar just cited Clement briefly: 'Clement of Alexandria writes: philosophy tutored the Greeks for Christ, as the law did the Hebrews'.

⁴⁸⁹ The date of composition of the Gitā is uncertain, somewhere between the fifth to second century B.C.E. Though some scholars have claimed the influence of Christian on the Gitā, there is not sufficient evidence to accept it.

⁴⁹⁰ Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 37.

evolutionary scheme: for example, Farquhar said, in his letters to the Commission IV of the Edinburgh Conference: 'But if all religions are human, and yet men can in the long run hold only Christianity, clearly it must be, in some sense, the climax of the religious development of the world, the end and culmination of all religions: it is the fulfilment and crown of each religion'.⁴⁹¹ Hence, Robin Boyd made a remark concerning the driving force of the religious development of Farquhar: 'It was Farquhar's belief that there is an evolutionary connection between Hinduism and Christianity, as of lower to higher, so that what is only foreshadowed in Hinduism is fulfilled and perfected in Christianity'.⁴⁹² Evolutionary theory seems to provide an inadequate explanation for the theory of fulfilment. This can be supplied only by an adequate theological context, which seems missing in Farquhar's positive evaluation of the preparatory elements in religions. Understandably, Farquhar, as a historical scholar, might lack theological consistency in his fulfilment idea, because his concern mainly focused on tracing the historical development of Hinduism. However, since he does not utilise a concept of logos, Farquhar ultimately fails to provide the necessary justification for his fulfilment theory as applied to the world religions.

In contrast to Farquhar's viewpoint, Slater's theology appreciates the divine work of logos in the life and religious beliefs of the world. In Slater's view, missionaries had made the fatal mistake of bringing to India a Christ from outside, foreign and Western, one set in their own theological systems rather than one that can appear naturally from its own religious soil, as the flower of all its thinking, the crown of all its seeking. In order to appeal, intelligently and convincingly, to the religious nature of the Hindus, Slater believed that missionaries must seek to connect their message with India's religious past; and present it, not as something foreign to their thought, but as the true completion of what they themselves have been earnestly seeking. In Slater's attempt to connect the Christian message with India's religion, logos was indispensable in identifying the work of God in Hinduism in preparation for Christ, as Slater underscored in the following statement:

And in seeking to do this, should we not show that, while our God must be eternally personal [underlined by Slater himself] in His nature, yet, to the world, the Impersonal has ever been becoming the Personal; the Divine ever finding fuller

⁴⁹¹ Farquhar's papers submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 13.

⁴⁹² Robin H. S. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 90.

expression, till it reaches its fullness in the Christian Incarnation; when God as Son, who had been impersonally immanent in the world as the Divine Idea or Logos, became personally present and active in its life? This at least we know that the world was not sure of the nature of the personality till Christ appeared. Such a view throws considerable light on the pre-Christian religions. It is, at any rate, very necessary to show that the Christian Incarnation was not, as the people are inclined to suppose, an isolated historical fact, but the natural culmination of the whole Divine working in the world; a continuation and completion of the work of God as the Logos or Spirit, or Divine Principle of creation.⁴⁹³

By this work of logos or Spirit, the world religions come to have the unconscious prophecy or preparation for the reception of Christian faith as their fulfilment. In this way, logos theology is essential to express and develop Slater's theology. Therefore, I can safely argue that Slater's theology is a well-grounded systematic fulfilment theology, whereas Farquhar's is an incongruous and immature form of theology.

Continuing Role of Hinduism

As Slater and Farquhar spoke with a similar voice regarding the preparation and fulfilment, people tend to overlook the striking difference between them. One issue is the logos, while another is about the continuous function of Hinduism after the Christ is accepted. Slater has a positive attitude to the post-Christian value of Hinduism, whereas Farquhar has a negative attitude to it.

Farquhar emphasised, in the same line with Slater, that 'Christ did not come to destroy the old civilization, philosophy and faith, but to fulfil and restore the national heritage'.⁴⁹⁴ Besides, he also recognised that 'the Church in India would necessarily be influenced in some degree by Hindu thought and Hindu practice'.⁴⁹⁵ Nevertheless, it needs to be noted that Farquhar repeatedly argued that 'Hinduism must die into Christianity',⁴⁹⁶ whereas Slater never mentioned the necessity of the death of Hinduism. Obviously, Slater as well as Farquhar, diagnosed in unison that Hinduism was a dying faith, and yet, they did not believe that Hinduism would eventually vanish.

In contrast to Slater, Farquhar held that in the very idea of fulfilment there is the implication that the old religion must be terminated; and that whoever recognises

⁴⁹³ Slater's paper submitted to Edinburgh Missionary Conference, 110-111.

⁴⁹⁴ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1913), 54.

⁴⁹⁵ Farquhar, "The Relation of Christianity to Hinduism", 421.

⁴⁹⁶ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 51.

Christ as the Consummator will necessarily renounce his old religion. In his letter to the editor of the *Harvest Field*, Farquhar made a remark on his conviction about Hinduism: 'Hence it is my conviction that, the Kingdom of God having come to India, Hinduism must pass away, that it is the duty of the Hindu to give up Hinduism, so that Christianity may take its place, and may thereby fulfil all that is in it of good. This is clearly expressed in the *Crown of Hinduism*'.⁴⁹⁷ Hinduism, in Farquhar's view, is no longer needed, for Christianity fulfilled everything valuable in Hinduism and apart from Christ, Hinduism cannot be a healthy religion for India. For example, according to Farquhar, the tragic wickedness of Hindu families such as infanticide, *sati*, concubinage, child marriage, the enforced ascetic life of Hindu widow, are fundamentally related to the Hindu faiths. They cannot be carried out without abandoning the religious foundation of the Hindu family. Farquhar thus believes that 'the only satisfactory solution of the difficulty is the disappearance of the old beliefs'.⁴⁹⁸ Ultimately, Hinduism, in his view, has 'a sort of temporary validity until the greater light of Christ reaches them'.⁴⁹⁹ He knows very well that 'the last thing Hindus wish missionaries to say is that it is necessary to give up Hinduism and accept Christianity', and yet he insists that 'it should be the very foundation of the principle of fulfilment'.⁵⁰⁰

In contrast to Farquhar, Slater's foundation of fulfilment is the logos who inspires, guides, and quickens the Hindus so as to find the fulfilment in Christ, whether they are aware of the Christ or not. Hinduism is both the human search and the production of logos for Slater, while it is only a human religious instinct for Farquhar. Slater insists that, instead of uprooting his Maker's work, 'missionaries should continue the work at the point where the spirit of God is already moving'.⁵⁰¹ Because of continuity between Hinduism and Christianity and of the Indian characteristic made by God, Hinduism has an enduring validity even after the Hindus may accept the Christ. Slater carefully noted that the law of the Old Testament still functions as the trainer, while Farquhar recognised that the role of law died in the New Testament. Figuratively

⁴⁹⁷ Farquhar, "The Crown of Hinduism: To the Editor of the Harvest Field", *The Harvest Field*, Vol. XXXV (Aug. 1915): 317.

⁴⁹⁸ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 115.

⁴⁹⁹ Farquhar, "The Relation of Christianity to Hinduism", 424.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 428.

⁵⁰¹ Slater, "The Missionary Problem", 217.

speaking, in Slater's view, the lamp is still needed inside the room, although there is the sun outside; both lights have their own use.

In the same manner, Slater recognised the post-Christian value of Hinduism in terms of the native way of understanding and expression of Christ, and of a moral and religious teacher fit to the Indian nature. For example, Slater recognised that 'naturally spiritual, meditative, mystic, other-worldly, and the self-renouncing of Hinduism is quite able to grow a very rare and beautiful plant of its own in the Indian Christian character'.⁵⁰² In addition, Slater maintains in his quotation from Charles C. Hall (1852-1908)⁵⁰³ that 'the pantheistic inheritance of the Indian Christians could apprehend and interpret the deeper mysteries of the Christian faith to an exceptional degree, while the Western mind has largely lost the mystical conception of the nature of Christ, in favour of an external and formal appreciation of His words and works'.⁵⁰⁴ Ultimately, Slater believes that Hinduism still has something significant to give a new interpretation of Christ, to contribute to new aspects of doctrine, of Christian life and of worship as the Eastern way of the quest for the whole round of Christian truth that is essential to the world's advance in truth and virtue.

Slater's appreciation of the continuing role of Hinduism is very significant for the consistency of his fulfilment theology. If Hinduism must be destroyed within the Christian community after conversion as Farquhar maintained, Farquhar's Christ may end in a Christ who does come, ultimately, to destroy it, although He respects the faith of Hindus prior to their conversion. Destroying the Indian cherished heritage is the chief reason why the Hindus have a fear of Christianity and revolt with hatred against it. Uprooting the Indian culture within the Church may not help in communicating Christ to the Hindus. What is more, such an attempt might separate the Christians and their community from their own people, and denationalize them, which ultimately might fix the Indian Christianity as the religion of the outcaste or the lowest cast only. Hence, Slater encourages Indian Christians with Hindu backgrounds to find the hidden resources of Hinduism and develop them to contribute to the world's interpretation of Christ. Not by abolition, but by a continuation of that already begun, Slater wants to create the most natural and permanent modes of life,

⁵⁰² Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 107.

⁵⁰³ Charles Hall of New York was the third lecturer on the Barrows Foundation.

⁵⁰⁴ Slater, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 139.

rather than one entirely abnormal and foreign. In so doing, Slater leaves a lasting influence on formulating indigenous Indian Christian theology in parallel with the Indian Christian thinkers like B. Upādhyāy, N. Tilak, V. Chakkarai, Sunder Singh, and R. C. Das who strove to present Christ in Hindu thought form and faith, although they held the unique value of Christ.

Conclusion

Fulfilment theology served Slater to get a missionary message to Hinduism. As a missionary Slater faced two significant issues while he communicated the Christian message to his high caste Hindu audience. The first is regarding the attitude to Hinduism: is it an evil to be abolished, or good to be kept? Slater acknowledges that the Hindu philosophy, faith, and culture are not necessarily bad, although of course not entirely good. Hinduism, in Slater's view, has treasure, to some extent, of the divine instinct and divine revelation, while, at the same time, it apparently has the nonsense of human speculation and a search after God. According to Slater, the divine revelation is not confined to a particular place, race and faith, rather it is the natural heritage found all over the world beyond the region of the Western Christianity, based on the impartiality and the love of God. He holds that Hinduism serves two useful functions for the people having lived in the land of India; firstly, as a lamp and a witness to the true light, secondly, as a preparation for the reception of Christ.

It seems controversial that Hinduism is the preparation for Christianity based on the similarities between them, since there are many significant points of difference as Slater recognised. In the view of Hindus, some similarities could be the proof of the preparation not only for Christianity, but also for Hinduism. Even though Hinduism is conceded to the preparation for Christianity, it might be scarcely sufficient, considering the dissimilarities. Nonetheless, it seems also true in the view of the Christians that Hinduism, based on the Christian truths in it, could be construed as a preparation for the Gospel of Christ as is accepted by K. M. Banerjea, B. Upādhyāy, N. V. Tilak, and N. Goreh as well as Slater. If Hinduism prepared the way to the Christ, Slater believed that missionaries should not deny it altogether but respect and connect it with communicating the Christian Gospel.

The second issue Slater dealt with is regarding how to connect the Hinduism to Christianity. The link between the two seemingly different faiths are the Christian truths found in Hinduism: the problem is how to justify the Christian truths in Hinduism. How was Hinduism possibly to have had Christian truths within it, long before Christ came to the Earth? Slater explains it by employing the idea of Logos, or the divine reason that is universally diffused by the indwelling Spirit of the Christian God. According to him, God has not left the Hindus without a witness and the preparation for the Christ. Slater's acknowledgement of Christ's presence in Hinduism seems irrelevant and unacceptable within the Protestant tradition. However, natural theology that recognises the knowledge of God outside the Bible may not be altogether wrong in the biblical justification presented by some evangelical scholars like J. Calvin, T. Hammond and J. Barr as we shall detail in Chapter Seven.

Although Slater argued that Hindus already have Christ's presence in their faiths, his attitude to the salvific value in Hinduism is rather ambiguous. He did not approve it nor deny it, for he believed that the Hindus might attain salvation by acting according to the conscience and revelation that they were given by God, while the Christians might fail to get salvation by disobeying the will of God. What Slater valued was the God-like character and a life living up to the extent of revelation that was granted to each person regardless of religions, which could be a fair criterion both for the Hindus and the Christians. Ultimately, Slater's logos provides the justification and the driving force for the preparation of the Gospel by inspiring the Hindu sages' philosophy and faiths that have been accepted by the leading Indian theologians, B. Upādhyāy, N. Tilak, V. Chakkarai, Sunder Singh, A. J. Appasamy, and R. C. Das, although it might be uncomfortable in the Western evangelical tradition.

Slater's way to connect Hinduism to Christianity is completed by presenting the Christ as the fulfilment of what the logos has prepared in Hinduism. According to Slater, Christ comes not to destroy it, but to satisfy, fulfil and build it afresh. Slater, from the missionary standpoint, built a friendly relationship between Hinduism and Christianity, instead of the bygone days which adopted an aggressive stance. Nonetheless, Slater's idea of fulfilment and absorption might also cause some sort of tension and intimidation to the Hindus, since some Hindus like S. Vivekānanda argued that Hinduism fulfils a Western Christianity weakened by materialism and

secularism. In fact, Slater was not able to get away from the condescending spirit of the age in which the empire of Great Britain ruled the Indian subcontinent. However, it should not be overlooked that he made his contribution to constructing the irenic relationship between them within the missionary circles where antagonistic attitudes prevailed.

The additional thing Slater underlined in relation to connecting Hinduism to Christianity is his emphasis on presenting Christianity as an Eastern and national religion rather than a Western and foreign one. In Slater's view, by sucking the marrow of Hinduism and being assimilated into it, the divine reason produced a Christianity naturalised and nationalised to the Indians. Thus the duty of missionaries was to finish off what had been done, by bringing a Vedāntic coloured Gospel rather than exotic British or Western one. Slater seems to provide the Hindu background Indian Christians with the theological justification of making a Christianity in accordance with their own cherished heritage, although it is questionable to what extent the Christianity was assimilated into Hinduism and whether Indian Christianity was ever naturalised and nationalised to the view of the Hindus. Importantly, Slater made a contribution to opening the theological work of presenting the Christian faith in relation to the Vedānta thought in parallel with the subsequent works of B. Upādhyāy, R. V. De Smet, S. J. Samartha, K. P. Aleaz, and R. Panikkar.

The feature of Slater's fulfilment theology can be distinctly revealed in contrast to J. N. Farquhar's. To begin with, similar Christian truths in Hinduism are construed by Slater as the preparation made by the logos, the indwelling Spirit of Christ, while Farquhar, though he finds similarities such as the preparation or the prophecy of Christ, does not provide any author nor the driving force of it, apart from the theory of evolutionary explanation. Additionally, Slater acknowledges the continuing role of Hinduism as a moral and religious teacher complementarily with the Bible, perhaps in a very appealing way to the Indian nature, while Farquhar wants Hinduism to be uprooted after conversion, as he believes that it makes a bad impact on all aspects of Christian life. It seems important for Farquhar to cut off all the residues of Hinduism in the Christian life after conversion to live an ethical life fit to his standard of the Gospel, although he ultimately visions the destruction of Hinduism, which might put Christianity back again into the antagonistic relationship with Hinduism, and jeopardise his initial sympathetic approach to the Hinduism only for the purpose of

conversion. In contrast to Farquhar, Slater argues for the coherent theological justification of the Hindu background Christians to live an ordinary life, without necessarily being separated from their community, while holding Christ, the fulfiller.

Chapter Five

Slater's Fulfilment Theology and Congregationalism

Introduction: Nineteenth Century Congregationalism

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Slater's prominent religious background, nurtured through his Congregational education, provided him with a life-long influence on his thought and faith. It is remarkable to find that Congregationalism stood behind the fulfilment theology of leading missionaries like J. N. Farquhar, B. Lucas, J. P. Jones and R. A. Hume, as well as Slater. How did Congregationalism become closely involved in the fashioning of fulfilment theology? Why particularly did Congregationalists perform a significant role in it, other than Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, or Baptists? Which ideas in Congregationalism inspired and encouraged the fulfilment theology of Slater? In relation to these questions, this chapter attempts to investigate the integral connection between fulfilment theology and Congregationalism. For this exploration, a general overview of nineteenth century Congregationalism on both sides of the Atlantic is necessary.

Congregationalism has its origin among the English Separatists in the late sixteenth century, initiated by Robert Browne (1550-1633) who denied any human authority as a head of the Church over the supremacy of Christ. Congregationalism in the New World can be traced back to the 'Mayflower' Separatists who were persecuted under Elizabeth I and settled in New England via Holland in search of religious freedom in the early seventeenth century. Justifying their separatism, the earliest leaders of Congregationalism were 'more concerned with an ecclesiastical problem' than with other theological issues.⁵⁰¹ They highlighted 'the rights and responsibilities of each congregation to make its own decisions about its own affairs without recourse to any higher human authority', along with an emphasis on the sole authority of the Bible and the freedom of conscience, arising from the sovereignty of God and the priesthood of all believers.⁵⁰²

Thanks to the emphasis on religious autonomy in Congregationalism, the British Congregationalists, also called Independents, gradually modified their Calvinistic

⁵⁰¹ W. B. Selbie, *Congregationalism* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1927), 164.

⁵⁰² Daniel Jenkins, "Congregationalism", ed. Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. XVI (London: Collier Macmillan, 1986-7), 42.

position. Hence, while the Independents claimed themselves as Calvinists, they adopted the Arminian view of Dutch scholar Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) that the atonement of Jesus is for the salvation of all humanity, not only for the few 'elected'. Such 'a modified form of Calvinism', according to W. Selbie, became 'the distinctive feature of Congregational theology', and was 'very widely accepted up to the middle of the nineteenth century'.⁵⁰³ Besides, although an American Congregationalist, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), fiercely opposed Arminianism, the next generation of New England theologians, including his son J. Edwards Jr., and Joseph Bellamy took 'the much more definitely Grotian doctrine, while still claiming to be Calvinistic'.⁵⁰⁴ In 1865, the Congregational Churches of America furthered this tendency and welcomed the Arminians into their membership.

While modified Calvinism had the overall characteristic of Congregational theology through the centuries, the current of nineteenth century Congregationalism shifted markedly into the phenomenon termed as the decentralisation from Calvinism. Due to the strong emphasis on freedom of conscience, the Independents put no less priority on reason than on the Revelation of God. They attempted to reconcile science with Scripture, reason with faith, adapting accordingly to the modern world. They no longer acknowledged the infallibility of the Bible, since they were influenced by higher criticism of the Bible and evolutionary theory. Furthermore, the debarred Congregationalists from the national universities turned, understandably, to the universities of Germany and Holland, and became much more sympathetic towards historical criticism and comparative religions than did the Anglicans.⁵⁰⁵ Besides, as the Independents suffered religious intolerance, they might be very attracted to the universal love of a Father God who wishes to save all humanity rather than to the God who limits His salvation to the few chosen people and throws the rest to eternal punishment. Hence, they welcomed the Arminian soteriology and rejected a limited covenant, a limited atonement, and a limited salvation. In this way, nominal adherence to Calvinism disappeared and was replaced by the so-called 'New Theology', which means modern theology in contrast to the traditional Calvinistic

⁵⁰³ W.B. Selbie, *Congregationalism*, 164-165.

⁵⁰⁴ Truman J. Spencer, "The Contributions of British Congregationalism in the Field of Religious Thought: Our Present Strength and Weakness in That Field", *Volume of Proceedings of the Fourth International Congregational Council* (New York: The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, 1921), 422.

⁵⁰⁵ H.C. Carter, *Congregationalism Through the Centuries* (London: Independent Press, Ltd., 1937), 91.

theology, particularly of Robert W. Dale (1829-1895) in Great Britain and of Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) in America. Both were representative Congregationalist pastors and theologians in the nineteenth century who broke completely the Calvinistic connection to Congregational theology. According to the report of the fourth International Congregational Council Commission on Congregationalism and theology, the primary doctrines of the New Theology were 'Divine immanence, Incarnation, continuous creation, and progressive revelation'.⁵⁰⁶ In addition, it is noteworthy that the New Theology revitalised the Greek theology which was directly related to Slater's logos theology.

Slater viewed 'The New Theology' in his paper, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", presented to the International Congregational Council, as inextricably related to the missionary enterprise. According to him, the New Theology is 'a liberalizing and humanizing movement of religious thought and life', which represents 'a method or temper rather than a complete system'.⁵⁰⁷ It provides a new justification of foreign missions, in Slater's view, in terms of 'the immanence of God in the universe and humanity which responds to the appeal of Jesus'.⁵⁰⁸ He sees that there is good in all religions because of 'the abiding presence of God in His world', as a result of his conviction that 'Father God of love takes care of every race and faith in the world'.⁵⁰⁹ While God makes the revelation in world religions enlarge, God finally 'corrects and fulfils' by the incarnation of Christ 'what he has promised and witnessed with his Eternal Spirit-the saving element in every heart'.⁵¹⁰ Hence, Slater's fulfilment theology can be said to match exactly the late nineteenth century Congregational way of thought and was grounded upon it.

This chapter is going to detail the core principles of nineteenth century Congregational theology, such as freedom of conscience, universal atonement, and the immanence of God. Certainly, these ideas are not peculiar to Congregationalism, being partially found in its nearest neighbours: the Methodists, the Baptists and the

⁵⁰⁶ Commission Report, "American Congregational Theology", *Volume of Proceedings of the Fourth International Congregational Council*, 255.

⁵⁰⁷ T. E. Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise," ed. John Brown, *Volume of Proceedings of the Third International Congregational Council* (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1908), 509.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 510.

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 512.

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 513.

Presbyterians. However, none of them put the three elements together with the same level of emphasis as the Congregationalists. In addition, the ideas of leading Congregationalists, R. W. Dale, A. M. Fairbairn, and H. Bushnell, will be described in relation to fulfilment theology. Dale and Fairbairn were the teachers of Slater and Farquhar in their college days and the most influential Congregational preachers and thinkers in nineteenth-century Great Britain, while Bushnell was a highly significant figure, not only in the Congregational circle in America and Britain, but also in the wider Christian areas in both countries.

Congregational Ideas Related to Fulfilment Theology

This section does not deal with the general ideas of Congregationalism, but with the nineteenth century ideas, particularly in the second half of the century, when the new era of Congregationalism dawned under the influence of R. W. Dale and H. Bushnell. This new era was grounded on the principle of freedom of conscience and blossomed with the ideas of universal atonement and the immanence of God, propelled by modern scholarship such as biblical criticism, comparative religions and evolutionary theory. Among many ideas of Congregational theology, freedom of conscience, universal atonement and immanence of God are the formative constituents of modern Congregationalism in which the fulfilment theology of Slater and Farquhar was born.

Freedom of Conscience

In his paper on Congregationalism, Charles W. Elliot remarked, 'If we asked to express in a single word the outcome of the whole movement called Congregationalism, should we not all choose the one word 'Liberty?''⁵¹¹ Indeed liberty can be said not only of the outcome, but also as a prominent principle and a powerful driving force of this movement over the centuries. Elliot was among the majority of Congregationalists who placed it as one of the leading ideas of Congregationalism. Joseph Bainton writes, in the *Congregational Handbook*, that the liberty of conscience in interpreting the Bible is 'a distinguishing principle of

⁵¹¹ Charles W. Elliot, "Congregationalism and Education," ed. Eugene C. Webster, *Volume of Proceedings of the Second International Congregational Council* (Boston: The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States, 1900), 243.

Congregationalism', along with the sole and sufficient authority of the Bible.⁵¹² R. W. Dale also points out 'the most perfect liberty of conscience' as one of the main Congregational principles that Congregationalists are willing to declare.⁵¹³

Why then was the idea of the freedom of conscience so significant in the Congregational way of thought and faith? First, it is because freedom of conscience vouches for the right of the Independents to 'judge and act for themselves in the concerns of religion', without imposing human coercion or control on them.⁵¹⁴ Unless they secure a perfect liberty, they cannot live up to the truth in what they are confident and cannot escape from the distress with the existing order under control. Freedom of conscience is a necessity for a voluntary religious life, not forced by any other human authority.

Second, it is because freedom of conscience is essential for the Independents to investigate the truth of God by rounding the truth off from human ideas and practices. They had suffered from the creeds, theology, traditions, or practices that were demanded to take as orthodoxy against their conscience, though, if not in total, they were the products of humanity rather than truths. Hence, they wanted to have 'the utmost freedom in criticism both of doctrine and the human side of the Bible'.⁵¹⁵ Moreover, freedom of conscience is important for the Independents to explore all truths of God, since the prescribed confessions and doctrines frequently impede the inquiry into the truth of God. For this reason, the Independents require the maximum freedom in their search for religious truths as follows: 'In the investigation of Christian doctrine a man should have the widest freedom, subject only to the sacred claims of truth'.⁵¹⁶

Third, the Independents need the freedom of conscience for adaptation to the changing times. It seems odd for them to adapt their understanding of truth to the varying needs of the times, for they claim to have concern only for the truths of God. Nonetheless, they simultaneously have concern for the truth that 'cannot be kept

⁵¹² Joseph Bainton, *The Congregational Handbook: Being a Guide to the Administration of a Congregational Church*, London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1897), 23.

⁵¹³ R. W. Dale, *A Manual of Congregational Principles* (London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, 1884), 185.

⁵¹⁴ Thomas Scales, *Principles of Dissent* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1831), 24.

⁵¹⁵ G. Barret, "Address," ed. R. W. Dale, *The International Congregational Council Authorised Record of Proceedings* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1891), 98.

⁵¹⁶ Joseph Bainton, *The Congregational Handbook*, 3.

always in the same light and bounded by the same limits', because they believe that the human knowledge of 'God in Christ ought to grow clearer and grander'.⁵¹⁷ It seems fair enough to secure the freedom of conscience for the capability of manifold adaptations.

Freedom of conscience made an enormous impact on Congregational theology and practice. Due to this freedom, 'the Congregational Churches moved forward', according to Selbie, 'to a sounder and more intelligent interpretation of the Christian facts' which inevitably brought the positive attitudes towards 'the results of modern biblical criticism'.⁵¹⁸ The freedom also allowed the Congregationalist to have a highly 'flexible polity fitted to be of immense advantage in dealing with the changing circumstances of society, and with the changing demands which each age or locality makes upon the Congregational Church'.⁵¹⁹ Hence, Albert Peel argued that 'the Congregationalism' became 'inevitable' due to 'this power of adaptation to the needs of the times'.⁵²⁰ It is true that freedom of conscience makes the Congregationalist freely interpret the Bible and brought freedom both in theology and ecclesiastic polity. Nevertheless, in contrast to these positive aspects, the freedom yielded diverse theologies, tending to be liberal, which led to the ultimate breakdown of Congregational Churches in the twentieth century, though this was by no means the only reason.⁵²¹ And yet, nobody denies that the freedom of conscience is the essence of Congregationalism which is backed up by the belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Independents do not hesitate to exercise their widest freedom in the belief that the Spirit leads them into all truths.

Freedom of conscience is likewise an essential principle of Congregationalism, which had an underpinning influence on fulfilment theology. Because of this strong legacy of Congregationalism, all fulfilment missionaries accept the modern scholarship such as biblical criticism, comparative religions and the scientific discoveries culminating in the theory of evolution as part of the fabric of fulfilment theology. Importantly, most of them stand in the front line of the progressive religious thought thanks to the Congregational freedom in terms of their positive attitudes to

⁵¹⁷ David G. Watt, *On the Adjustment of Congregationalism to Changes in Religious Thought* (Maidstone: Kent Congregational Association, 1873), 5.

⁵¹⁸ W. B. Selbie, *Congregationalism*, 176.

⁵¹⁹ J. Bainton, *The Congregational Handbook*, 22.

⁵²⁰ Albert Peel, *Inevitable Congregationalism* (London: Independent Press Ltd., 1937), 62.

⁵²¹ At least, Albert Peel thought so in his book *Ibid.*, 115.

world religions, the working of Spirit in the heathen and the view of the errors in the Bible.

Universal Atonement

In the second half of the nineteenth century Congregationalism held the popular idea of universal atonement which affirmed that the death of Jesus Christ is available for all humans. According to the old Calvinistic tradition, the atonement of Jesus takes effect only on the elected, while he leaves the rest to punishment in hell. However, the New Theology pays attention to the deserted part of mankind wholly out of the reach of Christ's redemptive grace, and to the Fatherhood of God who is willing to take care of his lost children in the heathen. Hence, it teaches that God wants all mankind to be saved, and that Christ died for all, regardless of race, though conditioned by faith.

One of the leading English Congregationalists in the early nineteenth century Ralph Wardlaw (1779-1853) proclaimed atonement which was sufficient for all people in his book, *The Extent of the Atonement* (1830), though it could only become efficient in the case of the elect.⁵²² Such a Calvinistic connection was however entirely cut off in the theology of McLeod Campbell and James Morison of Scotland who preached the universality of the atonement and the love of God for all humanity, which resulted in their expulsion from the Church of Scotland and the secession Church.⁵²³ Particularly, John Kirk, Congregational minister of Hamilton, was the most outspoken opponents of Calvinism in Scotland: he contended in his book, *The Way of Life Made Plain* (1842), that the Spirit of God strives with all people alike, and that the saved are they who yield to Him, while those who resist are the unsaved.⁵²⁴

Also in America, similar attempts to combine the Calvinistic theology with Grotian's view of atonement passed over into the process of the complete break from the limited atonement. Charles Chauncy, in his *Salvation of All Men* (1784), remonstrated against the harsh doctrine of eternal punishment and argued for the universality of redemption.⁵²⁵ In 1770, universalism emerged as an independent

⁵²² W. B. Selbie, *Congregationalism*, 167.

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁵²⁵ Commission Report, "American Congregational Theology", 247.

movement in America by John Murray, based on the doctrine of universal atonement, although it became liberal and Unitarian later on.

As the numbers of world Christians grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, the limited atonement lost its edge of persuasion, while the idea of universalism increased enormously both at home and abroad. David L. Ritchie from Newcastle-upon Tyne affirmed in his Congregational Council address that Christianity was the absolute religion: by that he meant that 'it was the religion for all men and for all races; men needed it, and it was the only religion that could satisfy man's heart and had a right to get that'.⁵²⁶ Particularly, the overall missionaries simply could not accept that God left the local people in His salvific work to whom they were fully committed overseas. If the effect of Christ's death may reach only to the elected few, they cannot find the justification for their missions and the God of love in the world. Hence, missionary Justin Abbot of Bombay objects to the idea that the Christian world has had a monopoly of God's love or the monopoly of his guidance in redemptive history. He views the thought that God has revealed his truths to the Westerns only, as a chosen people, and that all who are outside the Christian Church are outside God's special care and love, and without any revelation of himself, as 'one of those fundamental errors that has been a curse to the Christian church'.⁵²⁷ Neither one nation, nor one group of people, but all humanity make up God's chosen people in his view. One thing to be noted here is that the references I made from the International Congregational Council documents is not meant to use as the proof texts from any random texts, but as the relevant sources which were read in the Council, along with Slater's paper on fulfilment idea.

The idea of universal atonement is closely related generally to the missionary enterprise and particularly to fulfilment theology. Universalism is clearly an integral part of fulfilment theology. Unless there is love of God for the world people, there is no preparation of salvation in the world of philosophy and religions. Unless there is effect of atonement on the world people, there is no fulfilment of Christ among them. Hence, Farquhar acknowledges that the system of Christ is 'truly universal,

⁵²⁶ David L. Ritchie, "Address", *The International Congregational Council*, 494.

⁵²⁷ Justin E. Abbott, "The Attitude of the Missionary to Native Beliefs and Customs," *Third International Congregational Council*, 535.

applicable to all races of man, to all countries, and to all times'.⁵²⁸ For Slater, clearer than Farquhar on this point, the Fatherhood of God has never left Himself without witness to every race. In his view, Christ is the light not only for the Europeans, but the light which lightens all humanity. Therefore, the Congregational idea of atonement can be said exactly matched with that of fulfilment theology.

Immanence of God

Immanence of God is defined as God's presence throughout the universe everywhere, contrasted to transcendence of God existing outside the created world. In the old Congregational tradition until the first half of the nineteenth century, the transcendence of God was emphasized at the expense of His immanence, although both conflicting attributes are shown together in the Bible. However, in the so-called New Theology of Congregational Church, the latter quality has laid weight to strike a balance. R. W. Dale beautifully depicted, in a mild note, the work of indwelling God everywhere in the world in his sermon preached before the Directors of the London Missionary Society in 1864 as follows:

In whatever land we preach the gospel, we are surrounded by the proofs of His presence and the signs of His mighty and beneficent activity. If we take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, we find that He has been there before us. The heathen to whom we bear our testimony, though strangers to us, are well known to Him; before we reached them, He had been watching their sleep by night and protecting them from harm by day, mourning over their sins and longing for their salvation.⁵²⁹

In a stronger tone, A. Goodrich pushed the doctrine of immanence to the extreme pole: he wrote, 'There is no revelation to us, only a revelation in us. There is no Christ who outside knocks at the door, but only a Christ within.'⁵³⁰

It is noteworthy that the personal immanence of God was signified by the doctrine of the Spirit as told by George Harris of Andover Seminary.⁵³¹ Traditionally, the Holy Spirit had had a significant status in Congregationalism, not only in interpreting the Bible, but also in ecclesiology: the primary agent in church foundation was not

⁵²⁸ J. N. Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1913), 59.

⁵²⁹ R. W. Dale, *The Living God The Saviour of All Men: A Sermon* (London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, 1864), 40.

⁵³⁰ A. Goodrich, "Modern Tendencies: Their Effect on The Church Idea of Independency", *Volume of Proceedings of the Third International Congregational Council*, 114, 115.

⁵³¹ George Harris, "Fundamental Principles in Theology", *Volume of Proceedings of the Second International Congregational Council*, 35.

human but God's Spirit. The work of Ralph Wardlaw and James Morrison was a good example that began to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit, while reducing the teaching of the Fatherhood of God. Particularly, nineteenth century Congregationalism laid emphasis on the belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit who governs the life of the churches and leads them into all the truth. The Spirit is deemed, in a soteriological aspect, the acting director who prepares, governs and attains His redemptive work in the heart and mind of every human being.

According to the Council Commission Report of American Congregational Theology, the doctrine of Immanence was advanced not only by Congregationalists, but also by Unitarians and other liberals.⁵³² Nevertheless, the immanence of God was largely a theological assumption of the nineteenth century Congregationalist theology which explained God's salvation work beyond the place, time and race. The idea of an indwelling God is a very important component of fulfilment theology which enables the preparation of the Gospel in the philosophy and faiths of the world people. Although it is a bit vague in Farquhar's terms, he also presumed the work of the indwelling God in Hindu faiths, when he argued that *Gitā*, one of the Hindu Scriptures, was 'a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ, when rightly read'.⁵³³ In Slater's terms, immanence was the truth that should be kept firmly by the Christians, particularly that they might be well understood in India, though he differentiated the Christian immanence with Indian pantheism. The idea of immanence of God served for Slater a significant function as a foundation on which the promise of redemption, fulfilment of Christ and the response of the natives to the appeal of Christ can be worked out.

Based on the development so far, we find that the freedom of conscience, the idea of universal atonement and the immanence of God of the nineteenth century Congregational tradition made an important contribution to building the fulfilment theology. Although they were hidden under the ground, fulfilment theology could not have been initiated without being undergirded by the key ideas of Congregationalism.

⁵³² Commission Report, "American Congregational Theology", 255.

⁵³³ J. N. Farquhar, *Gita and Gospel*, 84.

The Leading Congregationalists and Fulfilment Theology

While the previous section dealt with the Congregational connection to fulfilment theology in terms of the main ideas of Congregationalism, this section seeks to connect fulfilment theology with prominent Congregational figures. Although the above mentioned ideas of Congregationalism are reflected partially in the theology of the leading figures who are supposed to describe it, this section examines their significant connections in detail. There were many Congregationalists who made a contribution to building or supporting the fulfilment theology in diverse ways. Among them, R. W. Dale, A. M. Fairbairn and H. Bushnell seem to be the key figures in terms of their theological contribution and personal influence on Slater and Farquhar.

R. W. Dale

Robert W. Dale (1829-1895), according to W. B. Selbie, was the greatest figure among Congregationalists in the nineteenth century in England. He was described, by A. J. Grieve, the principal of Lancashire Independent College, as the representative figure of Congregationalism. Alan Argent viewed the Congregationalism of Dale as the yardstick against which all others judged theirs. Above all, in the perspective of the history of fulfilment theology, Dale was the lecturer at Spring Hill College who laid a Congregational foundation on which Slater was to build his fulfilment theology later. He was an eminent pastor at Carrs Lane, Birmingham from 1859 until 1895. In 1891 Dale was chairman of the first International Congregational Council and Chairman of the Mansfield College Council and Principal Fairbairn's right hand man.

Dale laid great stress on the fact of the living Christ who can be experienced by a society, consisting of those who have received the divine life and who are endeavouring to live in the power of it.⁵³⁴ However, his main contribution to Congregational theology was the *Congregational Union Lecture on the Atonement*, published in 1874, which marked the final breach with the Calvinistic view of soteriology.⁵³⁵ He proposes, in this series of Lectures, to show that there is a direct relation between the death of Christ and the remission of sins, and to investigate the

⁵³⁴ R. W. Dale, "The President's Address", *The International Congregational Council Authorised Record of Proceedings 1891*, 34.

⁵³⁵ W. B. Selbie, *Congregationalism*, 169.

principles and grounds of that relationship.⁵³⁶ According to the analysis of Council Commission Report, Dale's view of Christ's atonement can be summed up as follows: First, Christ as the eternal logos is that very lawgiver against whom man had sinned. He is therefore more peculiarly interested than either God (the Father) or man in the rehabilitation of moral law. Secondly, Christ as eternal logos is already, antecedent to incarnation, the brother of the universe to serve as their Redeemer. Thirdly, Christ does not transfer the penalty to a third party. He, the injured Divine being, Himself bears that penalty which alone can vindicate eternal righteousness. And fourthly, out of this great act of love and sacrifice spring new moral energies which redeem the human soul and the entire race of mankind.⁵³⁷ Christ, in Dale's view, is the eternal logos, the redeemer of the whole universe and the entire race of mankind. Therefore, Dale strongly argued that Christ's death was inseparably related to the remission of sins of the world, not for the chosen few.

Dale's justification for the salvation of all human beings was given fully in his sermon to the Directors of the London Missionary Society in 1864, a few years before Slater was sent to India. In this sermon he mentioned the religious history of India as the hunger of the human soul for the Divine. Although Indian's hunger was partially satisfied by their faiths, he said that only God's historical revelation in Christ could satisfy the thirst of the soul for God.⁵³⁸ He did appreciate the faint light in the world religions to be satisfied by Christ, the full historical revelation. In his view, the Indians were not the hopeless forlorn destined to be punished, rather children of God to be retrieved, grounded on what St. Paul said in the Epistle to the Romans: 'It is God's will that all men should be saved, and come unto the full knowledge of the truth'. Dale found a hope for the heathen, hence he proclaimed, 'The Living God is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe'.⁵³⁹ Although the effect was conditioned by personal faith, Dale was convinced that God's love itself really covered the whole human race, and that He desired and willed the salvation of every human soul. He went on to criticise the doctrine of original sin and natural depravity. He viewed that although human beings were corrupted, they still had a bit of good

⁵³⁶ R. W. Dale, *The Atonement: The Congregational Union Lecture for 1875* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1874), 19.

⁵³⁷ Commission Report, "The Contributions of British Congregationalism in the Field of Religious Thought: Our Present Strength and Weakness in That Field", 425.

⁵³⁸ R. W. Dale, *The Living God the Saviour of All Men: A Sermon*, 7, 10.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

will to act on the light amid the darkness. Above all else, his preaching on the heart of God towards the whole population of the heathen impressed the Directors of the London Missionary Society who supported the missions in the heathen world:

Every separate soul of all the millions living in every pagan land, is at this moment the object of His thought. At this moment He is pitying the sorrows, grieving over the sins of every individual included in the awful total of the population of the heathen world. God remembers that the blood of Christ atoned for all the sins of the heathen. They, too, are capable of beholding His face, of loving Him with filial love, and enjoying the peace and the honour which it is His delight to confer on His children.⁵⁴⁰

Dale's thought was directly related to Slater's calling for missions and his fulfilment theology on three points. First, Dale and Slater shared the same idea of Fatherhood and universal atonement. Slater opposed limited atonement and strongly emphasised the fairness of God who did not favour a particular nation and race in His redemptive scheme. Slater's understanding of God who provided the saving element with His eternal Spirit in the souls of Indians is the same God of Dale's understanding who desired the salvation of all human beings. For both Dale and Slater, the heathen were the lost children of God to retrieve rather than the fuel of hell. Second, Dale's Christology emphasizing the divine life in Christ seems similar to Slater's 'simple Gospel' in which he wanted to share the living experience in Christ and the moral regeneration resulting from it, other than just conveying systems, creeds and doctrines of Christianity. Third, Dale's view of world religions was in a way parallel with that of Slater in terms of his positive attitudes to them. Dale saw the 'twilight' in the faiths of Indians, however weak it might be. Theirs might be mostly a human quest or a feeling of hunger for the divine being, and yet they had a small light, a partial revelation, although not enough to satisfy the needs of people. Though Dale never mentioned things like fulfilment of world religions in Christ in the same terms as Slater, he implied it in obscure form in that the Christ of the Europeans had the full historical revelation, while the rest of the world had only partial revelation. It may thus be argued that Dale's emphasis on the hunger of the heathen for the Christ who could satisfy it, influenced Slater's decision to travel to India as a missionary.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 34.

A. M. Fairbairn

In contrast to the relationship with Dale, Slater had no personal relationship with Fairbairn and H. Bushnell. Nonetheless, both of them had a considerable influence on Farquhar's and Slater's theology, whether directly or indirectly in his ministry in India, because Slater was fully sympathetic with their thought which was in the vanguard of modern theology in their times. Andrew Martin Fairbairn (1838-1912) was a Scottish philosopher and Congregational pastor of the Evangelical Union Church belonging to the denomination of James Morison who was independent of the secession Church, advocating the universal love of God and Christ's atonement for the salvation of all humankind. He went over to Germany to study at the University of Berlin where he learned the significance of harmonising theology and philosophy which was later became a characteristics of his theology. Fairbairn was certainly, according to Selbie, the first to give its proper place to the comparative study of religions, frequently corresponding with Dutch and German pioneers of the comparative study of religion, C. P. Tiele, F. M. Müller, Chantepié de la Saussaye, and Lodewijk Fauwenhoft.⁵⁴¹ He was appointed the second Haskell lecturer because of his reputation in the comparative study of religion.⁵⁴² In 1877 he was called to be Principal of Airedale College for English Congregationalists. In 1883 he was Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. In 1886 he became the first Principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, which was moved from the previous Spring Hill College at Birmingham. According to Alan P. F. Sell, his major works are *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (1893) and *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (1902), from which he traces the idea of Christ as a normative for Christians through history and justifies the place accorded to Christ in relation to religion in general and Christianity in particular.⁵⁴³ A. Sell pointed out in his article that Fairbairn's key theological ideas were that of the Fatherhood of God and of the immanence of God.⁵⁴⁴

Fairbairn was known to Slater only by books and the one-off visit to India for the Haskell lecture in 1898-1899. Slater rejoiced when he heard Fairbairn was invited to

⁵⁴¹ W. B. Selbie, *Ibid.*, 171. Kenneth Cracknell, *Justice, Courtesy and Love: Theologians and Missionaries Encountering World Religions, 1846-1914* (London: Epworth Press, 1995), 75.

⁵⁴² Kenneth Cracknell, *Ibid.*, 77.

⁵⁴³ Alan P. F. Sell, "Andrew Martin Fairbairn," *The Dictionary of Nineteenth Century British Philosophers* (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 2002), 365.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 366.

India, expecting that Fairbairn could show Hindus 'how Christianity absorbed into itself the philosophic systems of classical antiquity, both unitising and ennobling them, as he had shown others'.⁵⁴⁵ It is not known whether Slater found what he had expected from the lectures of Fairbairn, but certainly Fairbairn emphasised, in parallel with Slater, the importance of looking at religions by their positive force and behaviour, not by their philosophical speculation.⁵⁴⁶ On the other hand, Farquhar was inspired by Fairbairn's sermons in his adolescent days at St. Paul's Street Evangelical Union Church and was under the direct guidance of Principal Fairbairn at Mansfield College, Oxford. It was in reference to Fairbairn that Farquhar subsequently offered his service to the London Missionary Society. Hence, he must have been influenced by Fairbairn in terms of modern scholarship and Fairbairn's contribution to the field of comparative religious studies.

Fairbairn's key thoughts can be summed up in relation to fulfilment theology as follows. First, Fairbairn considered religions in harmony with reason and science. In the late nineteenth century, not a few British people became critical of their traditional faith in the development of geology, evolutionary theory and the historical study of religions. The growing general assumption of people in the nineteenth century was that faith contradicted reason. Nonetheless, Fairbairn sympathised with it and recognised that no Church had any right to ask people to believe what they cannot rationally conceive, or what contradicts ascertained and certain truths. Hence, he attempted to make Christian faith credible to living minds; he argued that if the truths of religion are eternal, they must be in harmony with the no less eternal truths of nature and mind.⁵⁴⁷ For example, Fairbairn, in his article "Theism and Science" (1881), construed theology as the mother of all modern sciences which formulated for the first time a theory of development. Rightly understood, according to him, evolution mightily strengthens the argument for the being and continued activity of a Creator God, since nature is formulated not made once for all, but as a system which has been developed through a process of growth or evolution.⁵⁴⁸ In other words, evolution is God's way of creation, God's principle in his guidance of nature. In

⁵⁴⁵ T. E. Slater, Report of Work 1897, 4.

⁵⁴⁶ A. M. Fairbairn, "Race and Religion in India", *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 51 (August 1899): 173.

⁵⁴⁷ A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God: A Series of Discussions in Religion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1892), 4.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

Fairbairn's theology nature or science is the place where God's providential work of revelation is revealed, rather than indifferent to it. That is the reason why faith and reason are in harmony, instead of in conflict.

Second, Fairbairn employed modern scholarship like historical method of research, scientific evolution, and comparative study of religions in his theological enquiry. In his view, the new theology comes to a doctrine throughout history, while the old came to history through doctrine.⁵⁴⁹ As one who works on the new theology, Fairbairn makes it his task to achieve harmony of belief with history, due to the growth of the historical spirit in his time. In this sense, he explores the recovery of the historical Christ, that is to say, historicizing theology in his book, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*.⁵⁵⁰ According to him, the new historical method has led to two things: on one side, to the recovery of the Holy Scriptures and, on the other side, to the recovery of their great historical person.⁵⁵¹

Fairbairn's view of religion was significantly affected by evolutionary theory and comparative religions. According to him, the human search after God is a thing of nature, for God makes them to be satisfied by Him only.⁵⁵² Hence, religions are natural and necessary for humanity. As the origin of religions lies in God, there is no good and bad between them except the level of revelation; even a faith called bad is better than none.⁵⁵³ The function of the missionary is to make people conscious of their need and quicken the longing of the spirit after the Divine Father: here is the ultimate basis of all missionary enterprise.⁵⁵⁴

Third, in Fairbairn's theology the immanence of God in the world functions as a central idea to open a new reality in religion and a new inspiration in the exploration of Christian theism, Incarnation and soteriology, though not excluding transcendence. In Fairbairn's view God is the thought that is diffused through all space and active in all time: God dwells in both nature and humanity and works through both.⁵⁵⁵ The fact

⁵⁴⁹ A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1868), 3.

⁵⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁵¹ A. M. Fairbairn, "Address I", *The International Congregational Council 1891*, 96.

⁵⁵² A. M. Fairbairn, *Man and Religion: Preached before the London Missionary Society* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1879), 78,79 .

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁵⁵⁵ A. M. Fairbairn, *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1902), 58, 171.

that God as power is immanent in nature and Spirit is immanent in people is, according to Fairbairn, closely related to Christ's Incarnation: 'Without the action of His immanence, the Incarnation would be but an isolated intervention, marvellous as a detached miracle, but without universal or permanent influence'.⁵⁵⁶ Not only Incarnation, but also salvation needs the indwelling God who should bring the permanent effect on all humankind. Fairbairn considers that even Calvinism is in essence not far from pantheistic, for being the immanence of God essential to make God the one will and one power that governs the entire universe.⁵⁵⁷ Particularly, Fairbairn's idea of God's immanence seems connected to his theistic evolution. Creation, according to him, is a continuing process which God works in and over the world, through and for all, as 'the eternal Presence or Energy or Will', not as 'a Spectator or skilful Mechanic', whose work is done when He has built the world.⁵⁵⁸ Hence, the evolutionary perspective offered by Fairbairn can be said to be the scientific expression of the theological term; the progressive work of the indwelling God in nature and people.

Fairbairn's thoughts and methods were the typical of nineteenth century Congregationalist thinking which permeated into the fulfilment theology of Slater and Farquhar. For Slater, Bible and science are two different realms of one set of God's revelation and they should not conflict with each other, since they are both from God. Modern scholarship is commonly found in the theology of Slater and Farquhar. The immanence of God is essential to the logos theology of Slater, though Farquhar does not lay stress on it.

H. Bushnell

Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) was an American Congregational minister and theologian considered to be the father of Liberal Theology in the United States. In 1831, he entered the Yale Divinity School, and in 1833, he was ordained pastor of the North Congregational Church of Hartford, Connecticut, where he remained until 1859. He was a controversial figure due to his very different view from the orthodoxy of his day in terms of his view of the Bible, the Trinity, the atonement, conversion,

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 488.

⁵⁵⁷ A. M. Fairbairn, "Address II", *The International Congregational Council 1891*, 213.

⁵⁵⁸ A. M. Fairbairn, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1893), 72.

and the relations of the natural and the supernatural. According to Donald A. Crosby, Bushnell made a contribution to his times by the following four traits of thought: the first, its high degree of originality; second, a mediating theology which seeks grounds of consensus that could allay the spirit of divisiveness; third, an experiential doctrine that can lead to the transformation of life and character; fourth, a new awareness of the language of religion filled with analogy, metaphor, and symbol which need an imaginative skill instead of reason for its interpretation.⁵⁵⁹

Bushnell, as a highly influential Congregationalist had something to do with Slater. Particularly, Bushnell was frequently cited in various pages of Slater's books, articles, and work reports. Bushnell's book, *The Character of Jesus*, had been regularly studied in the weekly class led by Slater with the students of the Government College in Bangalore.⁵⁶⁰ It was a reprinted version of the tenth chapter of Bushnell's long treatise, *Nature and the Supernatural*: Slater thought that it was very relevant to communicating the divinity of Christ with the educated classes. Hence, based on Slater's report, Bushnell must have been thoroughly studied not only for Slater's personal preference, but also for evangelism.

Some modern Congressional ideas of Bushnell are found in his theological writings to share with the fulfilment missionaries. First, he initiated an experiential theology in which religious feeling and experience are of primary concern instead of reason and dogma, for he was sure that religion should appeal ultimately to the heart and to feeling. According to Ernest T. Thomson, Bushnell, in the parallel line of F. D. Schleiermacher (1768-1834), oriented his theology in America about moral intuition, religious feeling, the facts of religious experience, over against the prevailing dogmatic interpretations of Scripture taken as literal scientific fact, logical deductions arrived at from unexamined assumptions, and metaphysical speculations remote from life.⁵⁶¹ William A. Johnson also made a point that Bushnell underlined the superiority of intuition over reason and spirit over form and dogma: his theology was not built upon words and logical concepts, but on merely a symbolic, analogical truth, mixed

⁵⁵⁹ Donald A. Crosby, "Horace Bushnell," ed. Mircea Eliade, *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (London: Collier Macmillan, 1986-7), 584.

⁵⁶⁰ T. E. Slater, *Report of Work 1884*, 6.

⁵⁶¹ Ernest T. Thompson, *Changing Emphases in American Preaching The Stone Lectures for 1943* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943), 44.

with inevitable error.⁵⁶² Bushnell's emphasis on religious experience, intuition, and spirit came from the result of his theological work to harmonise his Christian faith with reason, and the truthfulness of the Bible with ascertained scientific facts. Although he acknowledged the authority of the Bible as the words of God, he attempted to make his argument toward the authentication of the Bible in a way that avoids the insuperable difficulties of the question of a punctually infallible and verbal inspiration.⁵⁶³ Bushnell observed that people's sticking to the verbal inspiration rather reduced the reliability of the Bible in the times of science; thus, he accepted biblical criticism and interpreted the creation faith in terms of the poetic language, appealing to the religious feeling and the experience of the transformation.

Slater and Farquhar were also free, like Bushnell, from the infallibility of the Bible and the literal accuracy in minute details. Furthermore, they both underlined the significance of moral life and the transformation of Christians in their social life. Both maintained Christianity as a religion of life rather than that of the book as was emphasised by Bushnell. The reasons why they highlighted life instead of dogma was related first to their target of the ministry, the educated Indian classes who shared the critical modern scholarship with Westerners; second, to their mission strategy that the Gospel would best appeal to the caste Hindus not by the doctrinal superiority, but by the transformation of life, morally and spiritually. In this sense, the modern Congregationalism of Bushnell was fitted to the theology of the fulfilment missionaries particularly within the nineteenth century Indian context.

Second, Bushnell recognised that nature had a proper place in God's revelation and His presence, being part of one system of God, along with the supernatural. The traditional New England theology did not include nature or reason as a realm of God's revelation. There was a tension between the natural and the supernatural: frequently science or reason was considered as conflicting with the Christian teaching in the nineteenth century. However, Bushnell called nature as 'the grand revelation', which had a function of quickening thoughts, the wonders and broad truths, although its function was subordinate or instrumental to the supernatural.⁵⁶⁴ He included both of them as the divine function in the one system of God: nature is the realm of things,

⁵⁶² William Alexander Johnson, *Nature and the Supernatural in the Theology of Horace Bushnell* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1963), 227.

⁵⁶³ H. Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural* (London: Strahan & Co., Publishers, 1872), 15.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 189.

while the supernatural is the realm of powers. This inclusion meant for Bushnell an attempt to stop the increasingly dualistic currents in that the Christian faith tended to be isolated from the ordinary life of people.

Bushnell's 'two realms under one system' was closely related to his positive attitude to other world religions. He wrote that all faith that sought after Christ was 'a visible preparation of human history' which was governed supernaturally in the interest of Christianity.⁵⁶⁵ Because nature or human history is one of the fields in which the divine purpose governed, revealing the divine presence in various degrees, he conceived natural theology to be fundamental to the Christian schools.⁵⁶⁶ Hence, he held that professing Christianity in the most orthodox manner could not exclude pantheism as a proper realm of God's revelation, though its degree was less.⁵⁶⁷

Appreciating nature as a part of one divine revelation was an essential justification for fulfilment theology in the affirmative approach to other faiths. According to fulfilment missionaries, God's revelation was not confined only to the Christian faith, but extended to world faiths and science. The fulfilment view of nature was exactly matched to that of the modern Congregational Theology of Bushnell.

Conclusion

With three representative Congregational theologians on both sides of Atlantic studied so far, some commonalities can be found among them. They had common ideas, common issues to tackle, and common methods as late nineteenth century Congregationalists. Slater and Farquhar in their ingenious insight and pioneering spirit, did not fail to catch up with the other leading Congregationalists' thought and scholarship, and explored a new inter-faith experiment in India, with similar ideas, theology, and methods.

First, the freedom of conscience and thought in Congregationalism enabled Slater and Farquhar to put forward their sympathetic view of Hinduism and their fulfilment hypothesis without fear in spite of the constant criticism among the traditional missionaries. Every Protestant tradition has their own religious freedom to a certain degree; thus, many individual missionaries in the nineteenth century accepted the result of Darwinism, biblical criticism, and comparative religions, regardless of

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 291, 292.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 356.

⁵⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 357.

denomination. Nonetheless, it seems that Anglicans, Methodists, and Presbyterians tend to be controlled ultimately by the higher human or organizational authorities, while Congregationalists are completely free from the above human authorities, as long as the consent of the local congregation is secured. Although other missionaries come to have a sympathetic view of Hinduism, they might be under strain in harmonising their conscience with the orthodox view of their higher authority. For example, M. Monier-Williams, an Anglican academic at the University of Oxford, rejected in his later days the fulfilment theory on which he insisted in his earlier work. When he visited India, he encouraged Slater to uphold his fulfilment position against opposition,⁵⁶⁸ but he himself could not maintain his own in the course of years. This implies a tension which Monier-Williams suffered from encountering the conservative people within his denomination.⁵⁶⁹ In contrast to him, Slater's pioneering view was strongly supported by his colleagues, the Foreign Secretary, and Directors of L. M. S. who shared the principle of freedom of conscience and thought with Slater. Farquhar also came through much criticism encouraged by the Congregational principle which guaranteed the freedom of adapting to changing world.⁵⁷⁰

On the other hand, Baptists are expected to enjoy the same extent of freedom to Congregationalists, since they also value autonomy of each congregation excluding any authority outside it. Nonetheless, they require, in terms of creed, a believer's baptism by immersion, while it does not matter in essence to Congregationalists although they prefer infant baptism by aspersion, in fact. In this sense, Congregationalists seem to have greater freedom of thought than neighbour denominations. In summary, the self-governing principle of Congregationalism is recognised to cause a unique difference between the Congregational missionaries and the rest of Protestant missionaries in terms of providing maximum freedom in creating theology.

Second, universal love and immanence of God in nineteenth century Congregationalism ran through the fulfilment theology of Slater and Farquhar. If they were raised up with the time-honoured idea which preordains salvation only for the

⁵⁶⁸ Slater's letter to J. Mullens, a Foreign Secretary to the L.M.S. dated December 14, 1876.

⁵⁶⁹ E. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy But to Fulfil*, 52.

⁵⁷⁰ J. N. Farquhar, "The Crown of Hinduism To the Editor of the Harvest Field", 316.

elect, they might not have put forward such a bold idea that Christianity is the natural heritage of all humanity, existing regardless of time and region. Although the universal atonement and universal love of God was adopted from the Arminian concept of salvation, it is no doubt a significant feature of nineteenth century Congregationalism which can be clearly located in the chief fulfilment missionaries.

Universal love is closely related to the immanence of God. It is hard to say the universal love of God for mankind without acknowledging the immanence of God, because the indwelling God prepares and guides the world people to know the love of God. Hence, Dale, Fairbairn, and Bushnell underlined, as one of their key ideas, the immanence of God which underpinned the fulfilment theology of Slater and Farquhar. Slater called the indwelling God as the Christ-within, while the Incarnated Christ as the Christ-without. Although the concept of Christ-without appeared to work predominantly in the Western world, the Christ-within did not leave the entire world without the witness. The salvation for all humanity works only by the cooperation between the Christ-within and the Christ-without. Therefore, Slater's idea of 'Christ-within' is certainly the exemplary of the immanence of God in the Congregationalism.

Third, the nineteenth century Congregational view of nature as one part of revelation, along with the historical Christian revelation, made it possible for fulfilment missionaries to look at world religions in a positive sense. Fairbairn and Bushnell hold that faith and reason, nature and the supernatural do not contradict each other, because they are co-factors of one system, although their functions are different. This idea can be clearly detected in Slater's view of Hinduism as 'the hidden treasures' and 'witness to the Light'; in Farquhar's view of Hinduism as 'the prophecy of Christ'. As Fairbairn and Bushnell harmonised the faith (the revelation) with reason (a part of revelation), Slater and Farquhar harmonised Hinduism (a preparatory truth) with Christianity (the full truth).

As we have seen above, the other Protestant neighbours of Congregationalists had some common principles and ideas to conceive fulfilment theology. Thus, it seems unfair to attribute the birth of fulfilment theology predominantly to Congregationalism. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that the church polity of Congregationalism was a distinctive element which impregnated and fertilized fulfilment theology. In terms of universal salvation, there seems no difference between Methodism and Congregationalism, but Congregationalism might have been

a better seedbed to nurture fulfilment idea in terms of its independent type of church government in a different manner with Methodism. When we take account of three elements, vital to the rise of fulfilment theology, in total, Congregationalism certainly provides the best environment with fulfilment theology. That is the reason why the leading fulfilment missionaries in India emerged primarily from within the Congregationalist tradition.

Chapter Six

Slater's Contributions

to the Commission IV of Edinburgh 1910

There was an epoch-making World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910 in which 1200 members attended, representing 160 different world Churches and organisations. Before Edinburgh 1910, even bigger international missionary conferences were held at London in 1888 and New York in 1900, and also after Edinburgh 1910, a number of great international missionary conferences were convened. Nevertheless, the assessment of the Edinburgh Conference has been clearly distinguished from that of others, as best summarised by Andrew Walls: 'It [The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910] was a landmark in the history of mission; the starting point of the modern theology of mission; the high point of the Western missionary movement and the point from which it declined; the launch-pad of the modern ecumenical movement; the point at which Christians first began to glimpse something of what a world church would be like.'⁵⁷¹

The Edinburgh conference was designed as a consultative assembly of experts in solving common missionary problems and achieving the evangelisation of the world in its day. For this purpose, eight commissions were entrusted to prepare a thorough study in advance and to report for an in-depth discussion in the forenoon and afternoon sessions. The eight subjects for enquiry and study were as follows: Commission I Carrying the Gospel to All the Non-Christian World, Commission II The Church in the Mission Field, Commission III Education in Relation to the Christianisation of National Life, Commission IV The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions, Commission V The Preparation of Missionaries, Commission VI The Home Base of Missions, Commission VII Missions and Governments, Commission VIII Co-operation and the Promotion of Unity. Among these, the subject of the Commission IV, The Missionary Message in Relation to

⁵⁷¹ Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (New York and Edinburgh: Orbis Books and T&T Clark, 2002), 53. K. S. Latourette called the Edinburgh 1910 Conference 'a great landmark in the history of the church' (Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill ed., *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948*, London: SPCK, 1954, 355) and R. Rouse characterized it as 'possibly the most significant missionary event of the twentieth century' (*The World's Student Christian Federation: A History of the First Thirty Years*, London: S.C.M. Press, 1948, 128).

Non-Christian Religions, is directly related to the assessment of Walls regarding the Conference; 'the starting point of the modern theology of mission'.

Slater's contribution to the Commission IV in Edinburgh 1910 has been almost unknown, while that of John Farquhar was recognised, particularly by C. H. Robinson and D. S. Cairns, the writers of Commission Four Report, as a typical representative of fulfilment theology which generated a massive influence on the mission theology of most missionary correspondents who responded to the questionnaires sent by the Commission. K. Cracknell, however, recently appreciated the fact that Slater was quoted substantially on eleven of the fifty-seven pages of dealing Hinduism in the Commission Four Report,⁵⁷² although he did not further elaborate Slater's influence. It seems not untenable that Slater, cited eleven times, wielded no less influence on the Conference than Farquhar, cited four times, at least arithmetically. Moreover, a careful investigation proves Slater's pervasive influence on the correspondents, and the Conference delegates beyond the realm of India Mission. This chapter uncovers Slater's hidden influence on a number of correspondents, speeches in the discussion of the Report, and the evening message. Significantly, an analysis of correspondences and the Commission Four Report confirms Slater's huge contribution to the formation of the missionary message of Commission Four. Slater's contribution will be detailed in comparison with that of Farquhar and A. G. Hogg in the Edinburgh Conference.

Slater's Influence on Commission IV Correspondents

The success of the Edinburgh Conference was to depend upon the thoroughness of the preparation carried by eight Commissions which were to gather up and present the results of the wealth of experience and best thoughts of missionaries in the field. Each Commission consisted of twenty members who had had extensive missionary experience and the Chairman of each Commission guided its procedure and had the final decision of all questions which might arise. The executive members of the Commission resident in the same country as the Chairman determined a carefully drawn set of questions fit to the subject of each Commission and sent them to a large number of missionaries in all parts of the world.

⁵⁷² Kenneth Cracknell, *Justice Courtesy and Love*, 118.

Commission IV also, with the intent of investigating the realities of the situation and the attitudes of missionaries toward non-Christian religions, issued a list of questions, and received an impressive response. In all 184 responses were submitted, including a mass of printed material to illustrate points made. For the efficiency of dealing with the huge amount of material to be studied, its Executive Committee divided them into five sections, corresponding to the five fields of Animistic Religions, Chinese Religions, Japanese Religions, Islam and Hinduism. Thereby, five sub-committees were constituted and each committee was to report its findings through the committee chair: W. P. Paterson (University of Edinburgh, Scotland) on Animism, George Owen (University of London, England) on Chinese Religion, C. F. D'Arcy (The Bishop of Ossory, Ireland) on Japanese Religions, A. E. Garvie (New College, London) on Islam, and Charles Robinson (Editorial Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, London) on Hinduism.

The views and positions of every correspondent represented in the papers sent in were carefully examined and constantly cited in the five sections of the Report. Although the conclusion of the Report was open for the writer to take liberty of developing his own theology, the sectional report should be entirely drawn on the answers of the correspondents by which the judgement and the attitude of the Commission might be decided and stated, shown in the introduction as follows:

We have endeavoured to illustrate the general results by significant quotations.... Every paper sent in has been carefully studied, and those from which no special quotation has been made have contributed vitally to the formation of our judgment on the questions discussed, and also to general statements as to the distribution of the evidence on the particular points noticed. ...Having been thus compelled to abbreviate the evidence, we have agreed that the main portion of our Report should consist of an abstract of the replies in five sections.⁵⁷³

Since the main portion of the Report was based on the replies of the correspondents, it was fully expected that the theology of the Commission IV Report be subject to that of the correspondents. Therefore, if there was any significant element to have influenced the correspondents, it should be noteworthy in relation to the formation of the missionary message of the Commission IV. In this sense, Slater's personal and theological influence on a number of missionaries needs to be highlighted below.

⁵⁷³ World Missionary Conference, *Edinburgh 1910: Report of Commission IV The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1910), 4.

Links Between Slater and Correspondents

Slater was retired in Sydney, Australia, when the Conference was held, and yet he sent a 123 page-paper which contributed substantially to the Commission IV Report. Apart from this detailed paper, Slater's voice echoed through the scores of correspondents who had organisational, denominational, regional and theological links with him.

First, the L. M. S. link. There were four London Missionary Society colleagues of Slater among 64 correspondents in the Hinduism section. To begin with, W. H. Campbell (Gooty, Southern India) was a L. M. S. missionary belonging to the South India District of which Slater was a treasurer from 1884 to 1905. Slater made payments to Campbell for the salary, famine relief and sundry credits by the authorisation of R. Wardlaw Thompson, Foreign Secretary of L. M. S. at that time.⁵⁷⁴ To be noted, Slater visited Campbell's station regularly, giving lectures for the educated Hindus, and helped him to commence similar work there during the year.⁵⁷⁵ Importantly, through constant discussion with Slater, Campbell turned into a steadfast member of the fulfilment school,⁵⁷⁶ supporting Slater by publishing several papers in *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, in that he appreciated, in the same way as Slater's theology, a truth in Pantheism, yet to be complemented and satisfied by the higher and fuller revelation of God.⁵⁷⁷ As a correspondent of the Edinburgh Conference, Campbell raised a similar voice as Slater that Hinduism was a 'preparation for Christianity' and a 'step towards the realization of the higher truth revealed by and in Christ'.⁵⁷⁸

Bernard Lucas (Bellary, Southern India) was perhaps the person who articulated most closely, among Slater's L. M. S. colleagues, a logos theology in line with Slater.

⁵⁷⁴ A letter of R. W. Thompson to Slater, dated January 1st, 1897.

⁵⁷⁵ In his *Report of Work 1885* (p. 2) Slater was gratified when he heard the news that Campbell began similar lectures during the year.

⁵⁷⁶ In this thesis, the fulfilment school means a group of missionaries who worked in India mainly from 1875 to 1905, the period when Slater engaged in a pioneering work as a fulfilment theologian, closely linked with him by supporting and diffusing his fulfilment theology. Characteristically, the key members of this school had a Congregational background, working mostly in the South India and released their papers based on Slater's fulfilment theology in *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, *The Indian Evangelical Review*, *The Harvest Field*, and *the East and the West*.

⁵⁷⁷ W. H. Campbell, "Man and God," *The Madras Christian College Magazine* (July 1887): 89. "Vemana-A South Indian Poet", (1898): 537.

⁵⁷⁸ W. H. Campbell's correspondence, 10. Transcripts of the responses are archived in six boxes in New College, Edinburgh University library.

Slater called him 'my friend' and found him the most faithful supporter to his fulfilment theology.⁵⁷⁹ Lucas often attended, at the request of Slater, the monthly Bangalore missionary conference, and presented a series of lecture at Slater's Sunday evenings.⁵⁸⁰ Slater also frequently visited Bellary and gave a number of lectures for the educated Hindus in association with Lucas. Their close cooperation in the ministry was greatly encouraged by the theology they shared. In the *Christ for India*, Lucas holds that Christ is 'the realised ideal of Hinduism' and 'the fulfilment of Hindu religious aspiration'.⁵⁸¹ He maintains in his Edinburgh paper that religion, wherever found, is the evidence of the working of the 'Divine Spirit' and not destruction but fulfilment is the task of missionaries.⁵⁸² It is noteworthy to find the logos theology, in the Commission IV papers, echoing through Lucas, a confident of Slater.

Another correspondent heavily influenced by Slater was J. Mathers of the L. M. S. who was placed at Bangalore in Slater's stead in order to do the same kind of work.⁵⁸³ He became not only a successor, but proved also a disciple of Slater whose theological views matched with those of Slater. In his correspondence to Edinburgh, Mathers called attention to the motto of Christ to present the Gospel in relation to Hinduism: "I am not to destroy, but to fulfil".⁵⁸⁴ Particularly, he elaborated the 'Christ as an Eastern', in parallel with Slater, for indigenious communication of the Gospel with Hindus.

Although Edwin Greaves worked in Benares, North India, far remote from South India, he had a strong link with Slater in his work for the educated classes as well as to the L. M. S.⁵⁸⁵ From 1881, Greaves emerged as a Hindi scholar and a new specialist for the Hindu intellectuals in the North India district of the L. M. S., while Slater's work was already well established in the Southern district. Though they worked at a distance, Greaves read the publication of Slater and learned his verified

⁵⁷⁹ Slater, "Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise", 403. Lucas worked at the Bellary L. M. S. station where Slater's wife and his father-in-law worked over several decades and thus Slater became acquainted with him through his frequent visits. Refer to John O. Whitehouse, *Register of Missionaries and Deputations 1797-1877* (London: Yates and Alexander, 1877), 255, 168.

⁵⁸⁰ Slater, *Report of Work 1900*, 16.

⁵⁸¹ Bernard Lucas, *Christ for India: Being a Presentation of the Christian Message to the Religious Thought of India* (London: Macmillan, 1910), 399.

⁵⁸² Bernard Lucas' Edinburgh correspondence, 12.

⁵⁸³ A Letter of the Secretary of the L. M. S. to Slater, dated February 21, 1902.

⁵⁸⁴ J. Mathers' Edinburgh correspondence, 28.

⁵⁸⁵ E. Greaves' Edinburgh correspondence, 18.

method, and found that Slater's fulfilment approach was useful to get to the college students. Hence, he gave a similar voice as Slater in his answer to the Edinburgh Conference: "I have learned to accept more fully the fact that God has been operative in the whole of history, and that he has spoken in other ages and in other lands".⁵⁸⁶ Greaves' appreciation of the divine work in the writings of Hinduism indicates a logos-theological link with his senior, Slater, rather than that of Farquhar, though Greaves was geographically close to Farquhar.

Second, a Congregational link. As already illustrated in the previous chapter, late nineteenth century Congregationalism tended to take a positive attitude to the redemptive work of God in world faiths beyond the so-called established Christian countries. It is thus no wonder to see that many leading fulfilment missionaries came from the Congregationalists on both sides of the Atlantic. Moreover, ever since the International Congregational Council launched in 1891, the British and American Congregationalists fostered a sense of solidarity, which was able to place among Slater and the American Congregationalists in India; R. A. Hume (American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Bombay) and J. P. Jones (A. B. C. F. M., Madura, Southern India).

Hume and T. E. Slater together, along with one more India missionary were officially invited to the World's Parliament of Religions of 1893, and Hume made a complimentary remark afterwards in the *Harvest Field* to Slater's papers sent in.⁵⁸⁷ Although they worked far apart, they had sympathy with each other's attitude to Hinduism. Hence, Hume recommended his missionary colleagues to use some of the truths in the ethnic religions as a preparation for the gospel,⁵⁸⁸ and Slater used Hume's booklet as a text for the educated Hindus.⁵⁸⁹ The Edinburgh paper shows that Hume had his own terms, 'the older dispensation' for the best phases of Hinduism, and 'the new dispensation' for the fuller and simpler truth of Christianity,⁵⁹⁰ and yet, on the whole, he agreed with Slater's idea that both dispensations are given by God and that the new one came not to conquer, but to fulfil the older. Although Hume had

⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 18. 28.

⁵⁸⁷ R. A. Hume, "Indian at the Parliament of Religions", *The Harvest Field* (May 1895), 177.

⁵⁸⁸ R. A. Hume, "The Parliament of Religions from a Missionary Standpoint", *The Harvest Field* (March 1895), 93.

⁵⁸⁹ Slater used Hume's *The Simplicity of Christianity*. See Slater's *Report of Work 1900*, 11.

⁵⁹⁰ R. A. Hume's Edinburgh correspondence, 13.

his own terms to describe his fulfilment theology, but his basic idea was certainly similar to Slater and prompted by him.

J. P. Jones was also an A. B. C. F. M. missionary, and yet, from time to time, he invited Slater to offer his lectures in his place. Slater made a regular evangelistic tour beyond his own L. M. S. stations and Madura was one of them.⁵⁹¹ Through these lectures and fellowship, Jones and Slater were well connected with each other, making them co-workers in the cause of the fulfilment theory. As a member of the fulfilment school, Jones presented a similar fulfilment idea to Slater in *The Madras Christian College Magazine* and *The Evangelical Reviews*, though slightly in different terms.⁵⁹² In Jones' view, Christianity is not a supplanter of Hinduism or of any other religion, so much as it is the fulfiller of the best that these religions possess. A figurative term, the 'broken lights' from God, is used to indicate Indian ethnic faiths, while Christian faith is analogous to a 'full orb'.⁵⁹³ Based on the logos theology of Slater, he argued, in his correspondence, the vital importance of conserving the traditional faith, and even urged that an element of Hindu truth should be taught by the Christian teacher.

Third, a regional and ministerial link. Among 65 India missionary correspondents, only 21 are from South India, where Slater belongs. Missionaries definitely in favour of the fulfilment idea are 23 according to M. Maw and myself, although my lists are a bit different.⁵⁹⁴ Among the 23 positive correspondents to fulfilment, 9 by Maw or 10 by me (almost half) are from Southern India, while 13 or 14 among 44 correspondents (almost 1/4) are from the rest of India.

Why is it that the Southern correspondents adopted fulfilment theology in greater numbers of correspondents from the other areas? A highly plausible explanation is that the thirty years' tireless lecture tours of Slater, along with his extensive publications, were to prepare the ground for advocating fulfilment theology among

⁵⁹¹ Slater's *Report of Work 1885*, 9.

⁵⁹² Refer to J.P. Jones, "An Oriental Interpretation of the Bible: A Factor in Christian Progress in India", *The Evangelical Reviews*, Vol. VIII (1882), "Preaching to Non-Christians", (Oct. 1889), "The Religious Ideals of the East and the West", *The Madras Christian College Magazine*, (Oct., 1899).

⁵⁹³ J. P. Jones' Edinburgh correspondence.

⁵⁹⁴ As P. Hedges said in his *Preparation and Fulfilment* (p. 263), it is tricky to tell an individual attitude to fulfilment theology, and yet such a classification seems inevitable for an assessment of Slater's influence on the correspondents. In my own synopsis of the numbers of pro-fulfilment theology-correspondents, I included only the persons who used the following key terms: 'fulfil(fulfilment), completion, consummation, supplement', along with 'preparation, prepare'.

Southern missionaries. While Farquhar spoke for the fulfilment idea in North India from 1902 onwards, Slater propagated it in South India from 1875. It is noteworthy that Slater moved his station from Madras, after 12 years, to Bangalore, working there for 23 years: it means that he would have a wider acquaintance with missionary colleagues in these key Southern cities. Importantly, not only did he fix his work in these two cities, but he also frequently visited many other Southern cities for the educated classes there, 'on an average, the delivery of three lectures every month, all the year round'.⁵⁹⁵ For example, Slater reported his lectures at other places as following:

In February, I paid a visit to Madras, ... and two lectures were delivered. In July, I went to Coimbatore and gave two lectures, with very successful results. The same month I accompanied the Rev. E.P. Rice to Hosur... addressed in English. In August, I paid a lengthened visit to Bellary, and delivered a course of seven lectures, concluding with a two hours' public discussion. ...In September, I paid a second visit to Madras, where a good attendance is always to be secured, and delivered four lectures.⁵⁹⁶

Every annual report of Slater's work was drawn regarding his regular visits to other places, which resulted in similar work in other stations.⁵⁹⁷ Since the large audience of his lecture were educated Hindus, he presented his Christian message, employing his regular fulfilment theology: he acknowledged some noble truths of Hinduism to keep, although he touched the unfulfilled longing and agony of the Hindus, which, he argued, could be best satisfied by Christ, the revealer of God and the satisfier of humanity. A wide range of subjects was dealt with in Slater's lectures in conjunction with his fulfilment idea in one way or another: an outline of Christian truth, religion and morality, Keshab Chandra Sen and *Brāhma Samāj*, the Christian mediation, studies in the Upaniṣad, transmigration and karma. Slater's lectures were held normally by the arrangement of the local missionaries who also attended his lectures and gradually turned into the champion of fulfilment theology as typically illustrated in the case of W.H. Campbell and B. Lucas.⁵⁹⁸ Unless the local missionaries agreed

⁵⁹⁵ Slater's *Report of Work 1883*, 36. Whitehouse, an Acting Foreign Secretary of L.M.S. also approved that Slater had 'considerable experience in travelling to and from India' (L. M. S. Outgoing letter, dated January 26, 1883).

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 35, 36.

⁵⁹⁷ Slater, *Report of Work 1885*, 2.

⁵⁹⁸ The local L. M. S. missionaries sent from time to time favourable reports of Slater's lectures in various places, according to a letter of R.W. Thompson, a Foreign Secretary of the L. M. S., dated February 11, 1884.

with his theology and saw how it powerfully worked among the fastidious high caste Hindus, they would have not kept calling in Slater during the three decades.

The cities Slater visited were most strategic in Southern India such as Madras, Coimbatore, Bellary, Cuddapah, Salem, Gooty, Madura, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, and Kombakonam. Particularly, it needs to be noted that Slater visited not only the stations of his own London Missionary Society, but also other stations of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Church Missionary Society and Wesleyan Missionary Society. For example, he delivered his lectures in Trichnopoly, Tanjore, and Kombakonam, outside his own agency, with the help of missionaries of the S. P. G. Mission.⁵⁹⁹ It was no surprise for Slater to work in cooperation with missionaries from other agencies, considering the wide range of friendship between him and Southern India missionary colleagues established earlier.⁶⁰⁰

Another good example was a literature missionary Henry Gulliford (Mysore, Southern India), one of the Edinburgh correspondents who, though being a member of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, was frequently invited to deliver a lecture at the Slater's Sunday evening lecture in Bangalore and at the Wednesday evening gathering for the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, organized by Slater himself.⁶⁰¹ No doubt Slater visited Gulliford's station at Mysore and delivered lectures many times. Every year Slater sent his annual report of work to Gulliford, the chief editor of the *Harvest Field*, the Methodist magazine for the missions in India, and Gulliford consistently made complimentary remarks about Slater's work among the educated classes. More than nine papers of Slater related to fulfilment theology were published in the *Harvest Field* from 1887, while Gulliford was in charge as the chief editor. Considering the interaction between Gulliford and Slater, it is not odd for Gulliford to put forward a similar argument to Slater that the preacher should have sympathy with the spiritual aspiration and Jesus fulfils it in many ways.⁶⁰²

Slater worked with other Methodist missionaries as well, such as W. Picken, H. Haigh, W. W. Holdsworth, E. W. Thompson. Particularly, missionaries from

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁰⁰ According to Slater's *Jottings of a Tour in South India in May and June, 1873* (Calcutta: Christian Spectator, 1873), Slater visited more than 23 Southern cities of India during his holiday with Dr. William Elder of the Edinburgh Medical Mission in Madras. At that time he visited L. M. S., S. P. G., and C. M. S. stations and made friendship with many British and American missionaries.

⁶⁰¹ Slater, *Report of Work 1893*, 10-12, *Report of Work 1894*, 13.

⁶⁰² H. Gulliford's Edinburgh correspondence, 9.

Bangalore and Madras gathered together for a monthly missionary conference for many years, regardless of denomination and agency. Through joint lectures, reading papers and religious discussion in the conference, Slater's fulfilment theology pervaded through many Southern India correspondents such as Duncan Leith (Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Madras), George S. Eddy (A. B. C. F. M., Madras), John Lazarus (Danske Missionselskab, Madras), Anna M. L. Smith (Bangalore). Another correspondent, Francis Kingsbury (South India United Church) of Madura where Slater regularly visited for his lectures, needs to be noted in terms of the exact same voice of Slater in his Edinburgh paper as following:

In the different systems of Hinduism, there are noble and deep truths as well as rubbish and falsehood. He[missionary] should be broadminded and large-hearted not only to appreciate but even to welcome truth, no matter where he finds it. He should be a man who will be glad to find that God has not left Himself without a witness even in India; to admit that there have been sages and saints among the Hindus, men who have known God and have lived with Him, men who have walked according to the measure of light vouchsafed unto them. Those who take such a view, will, of course, present Jesus, not as a destroyer of Hinduism, but as its Fulfiller and Fulfilment.⁶⁰³

Not only his idea, but also some phrases are the same as Slater, which implies Slater's strong impact on Kingsbury.⁶⁰⁴ Slater might be not necessarily the sole source of the fulfilment theology of Kingsbury and that of the correspondents listed above, and yet, he was undoubtedly a prominent inspiration to them, by Slater's regular visits to their stations, through his lectures and papers, and the constant interaction between them during monthly missionary conferences.

Speeches in the Discussion of the Report

Slater's influence did not remain within the parameter of the correspondents but extended over the discussion of the Commission IV Report through the participation of his colleagues and the members of his fulfilment school in the discussion of the topic 'The Missionary Message in Relation to Hinduism'. G. E. Phillips (Madras), another successor of Slater and J. P. Jones (Madura) of American Board of

⁶⁰³ F. Kingsbury's Edinburgh correspondence, 14.

⁶⁰⁴ Kingsbury adopted a logos idea, as seen in Slater, that the Hindus had had some measure of light before Christ came to the Earth. Furthermore, Kingsbury's expressions of his theology; 'Hinduism as a noble truth as well as rubbish', 'welcomes truth, no matter where it finds', 'God has not left Himself without a witness', 'not as a destroyer of Hinduism, but as its Fulfiller', are entirely matched with those of Slater's theology.

Commissioners for Foreign Missions, spoke in the session discussing Hinduism and R. A. Hume (Bombay) of A. B. C. F. M. uttered in the discussion on the topic 'General Questions Applying to all Religions', though their speech was limited to seven minutes due to limitations of time.

Among 14 speakers in the discussion, G. E. Phillips asserted a fulfilment approach to Hinduism in the loudest voice, along with that of Principal Mackichan (Wilson College, Bombay). Phillips, B. A. of Mansfield College, Oxford, was appointed by the Directors of L. M. S. to be Slater's successor, four years before Slater retired, along with J. Mathers in Bangalore.⁶⁰⁵ Even though he was allotted to the Madras station, this location provided full opportunity of becoming familiar with work among the educated Hindus under the care and guidance of Slater. What Phillips inherited from his predecessor was Slater's method and theology, as well as the same kind of work. That was the reason why he laid an emphasis on the fulfilment approach as 'the most effective appeal' to the hearts of modern Hindus.⁶⁰⁶

Originally, the discussion was neither designed to draw a common conclusion nor make a resolution to follow in unison, because the participants came from a diverse theological and denominational backgrounds. Each speaker gave his pre-written address in which they normally made one particular point, without engaging further discussion with other delegates. Even though there was no serious discussion on a common subject among speakers, the most recurrent issue was related to how to deal with points of similarity and contrast between Christianity and Hinduism in the presentation of the Gospel to Indians. John Morrison (Church of Scotland, formerly of Calcutta) stresses the significance of communicating a distinctive message with the native Indians under the strong influence of Hinduism to catch on the impressiveness of the Christian gospel.⁶⁰⁷ W. A. Mansell (Methodist Episcopal Church, India) points out a lack of sense of sin which does not exist in India.⁶⁰⁸ William Dilger (Basel Missionary Society, formerly in India) also puts an eternal life through Jesus Christ in striking contrast with annihilation of self-consciousness by the union with an abstract

⁶⁰⁵ Slater, *Report of Work 1901*, 24.

⁶⁰⁶ World Missionary Conference, *Edinburgh 1910: Report of Commission IV*, 312.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁶⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 314.

concept of the Supreme Hindu Deity, although he acknowledges the initially useful and welcoming contact points between them.⁶⁰⁹

In contrast to the view of Morrison, Mansell, and Dilger, F. J. Western (Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Delhi) recognised some similar points in Hinduism as ‘a *paraeparatio evangelica*’,⁶¹⁰ and K. C. Chatterji (Punjab, ex-Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of India) remarked that all that is good in Hinduism should be fully acknowledged and respected.⁶¹¹ Principal Mackichan (Wilson College, Bombay) saw Hinduism as a failed desire and unfulfilled longing which can be satisfied by Christ working in their lives.⁶¹²

J. P. Jones and R. A. Hume did not speak much about this particular issue in their speech, because they intended to utter what they did not mention in their correspondence. Yet, G. E. Phillips referred to his attitude towards Hinduism and how to relate the similarities of Hinduism to the Christian gospel. To begin with, he illustrates an old way of preaching the Gospel which creates needless antagonism, and loses the hearts of modern Hindus. In his view, Hindu belief in idols is never to blame, since it is a human instinct, thirsting for a personal God, which can be answered in the personality of Jesus Christ who is the image of God. In the Tamil country he sees that there are many points of contact with Christianity. Hence, he avers, ‘we can present Jesus Christ today with wonderful force in India as the fulfiller of all that is best in the past of India’.⁶¹³

As shown above, it should be noted that Phillips, in the discussion of the Commission IV Report, performed a leading role in drawing attention to fulfilment theology which provided a significant outlook of presenting the Christian gospel, while avoiding antipathy of Hindus and respecting their faiths. In so doing, he evoked what should be the key missionary message in relation to Hinduism, which can be confirmed in the discussion by the concluding remark of C.H. Robinson, the writer of the first draft of the Report on Hinduism, as follows:

The Report is based upon the assumption that the work of the Christian missionary, if it is to follow the lines laid down by he founder of Christianity, must be

⁶⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 317, 318.

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 313.

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, 315.

⁶¹² *Ibid.*, 319,320.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*, 312.

constructive, not destructive. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness we believe, but in order to prepare for His complete manifestation we have not got to extinguish the stars which have helped to illumine the darkness of the non-Christian world but to guide seekers after the truth in their search for God.⁶¹⁴

Slater and the Home Base Bibliography, Harada's Evening Message

Slater's influence can be traced not only through Commission IV correspondents and the participants of the discussion, but also through his major books on the list of the Home Base of Missions Bibliography and through a special evening message delivered by President Tasuku Harada. Such a bibliography and quotations by an influential evening speaker proves Slater's weight among the Conference delegates beyond the field of India mission. Although Slater was not present in the Conference, his fulfilment idea resonated through the delegates by his books and evening message.

The Report of Commission VI, the Home Base of Missions, provided the delegates with a list of books which might guide them to get access to up-to-date publication related to world missions. On this list, Slater's four main books imbued with his fulfilment theology; *Philosophy of Missions*, *Missions and Sociology*, *Influence of the Christian Religion in History* and *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity* were placed, along with brief information about the books and the author. The first three books are included in a general category for missions, although they are focused on an Indian context, while the last book belongs to the category of non-Christian religion. Slater's topics are as diverse as philosophy, sociology and history, and yet, the Home Base Bibliography shows that he is recognised as the specialist in interpreting philosophic Hinduism from the Christian missionary viewpoint. Putting four books on the Home Base list is no small number, particularly when compared to Farquhar, who had only one article, "Field Training for Missionaries" included in the Report of Commission V Bibliography of Literature on the Qualifications and Preparation of Missionaries.⁶¹⁵ The fact that four books of Slater are in the Bibliography indicates how highly he was recognised by the Editorial Committee of the Conference, as confirmed in the editor's remark on Slater: 'a well-known

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 320.

⁶¹⁵ World Missionary Conference, *Edinburgh 1910: Report of Commission V The Preparation of Missionaries; with Supplement: Presentation and Discussion of the Report in the Conference on 22nd June 1910*, Appendix XVI (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1910), 291.

missionary of the London Missionary Society', and 'a scholarly and experienced missionary to the educated classes of India'.⁶¹⁶

An important thing is the resounding effect of being listed in the Conference Bibliography. Nobody knows how many delegates read Slater's books listed and how deeply the books influenced the readers, and yet, there is an illustration by President Tasuku Harada (A. B. C. F. M., Japan) who quoted Slater's *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity* in his evening address. The evenings of the Conference were allotted to 'special addresses', because an evening meeting is the only time when the entire body of delegates were able to gather together, while the day sessions were fully given to sectional meetings of the eight Commissions. In addition, J. R. Mott, an American member of the Conference Executive Committee, and J. H. Oldham, Secretary of Conference, intended to arrange 'the best possible speakers' for the evening meetings which 'would be widely reported in the press'.⁶¹⁷ As was planned, 'the best speakers' were selected such as the Lord Balfour of Burleigh, President of the Conference, for the Opening Address, the Archbishop of Canterbury, many other continental representatives and J. R. Mott for closing address.

Tasuku Harada delivered his address on Sunday Evening, 19th June, titled, 'The Contribution of Non-Christian Races to the Body of Christ'. This message aims to present how the Indian, Chinese, and Japanese Christians contributed to world Christianity with their own religious and national qualities. For example, Harada argues that a substantial contribution is able to be made by the reflective spirit and the intense spirituality of the Indian, by the practicality and the patience of the Chinese, and by the loyalty and the admiration of great characters of the Japanese. He points out that all these ethos are born and built by the valuable influence of their religious heritage such as Hinduism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. Hence, he had a deep sympathy with those faiths which, according to him, made a necessary preparation for himself to accept the Gospel and to enjoy the Christian life.⁶¹⁸ Particularly, as he sees the non-Christian faiths and races as 'God's own', he

⁶¹⁶ World Missionary Conference, *Edinburgh 1910: Report of Commission VI The Home Base of Missions; with supplement: Presentation and Discussion of the Report in the Conference on 23rd June 1910* (Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson, & Ferrier, 1910), 552.

⁶¹⁷ Keith Clements, *Faith on the Frontier: A Life of J. H. Oldham* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 89.

⁶¹⁸ World Missionary Conference, *The History and Records of the Conference*, 283.

encourages people to follow the 'Master's' policy; 'not to destroy, but to fulfil'.⁶¹⁹ Significantly, in his conclusion he quoted Slater's thesis as follows: 'Just as the religion of Christ triumphed over the religion of Rome, not by destroying, but by absorbing all that was valuable in the older faith', so the appropriation of all that the ancient culture of the Orient can contribute will be for the glory of God'.⁶²⁰

Harada named Slater twice and quoted Slater's passages four times. Presumably, there was quite a chance that Harada had read Slater's recent article, "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", published just three months before the Conference, considering the similar title and content.⁶²¹ In his address, he mentioned his visit to India four years previously, hence, he might have met Slater personally and had the opportunity to receive Slater's book, because Harada was also a Congregationalist connected to American Congregational Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Yet, more importantly, Harada's message really impressed the delegates by giving a remarkable insight, not from a missionary viewpoint, but from a native viewpoint, that it is reasonable to absorb or fulfil the traditional Asian faiths, rather than deny or destroy, since Asians and their faiths are inseparably related and highly valuable to them. By witnessing how Japanese religions provided him with a preparation for his personal faith in Christ, he made well known to his audience the value of Slater's fulfilment theology for missionaries in relating the Christian gospel to the national faiths.

Slater's Influence on Commission IV Report

As examined above, Slater's influence was quite powerful on some of the correspondents, the discussion speakers, and an evening lecturer, although it was indirect on the Commission IV Report. The most important was his direct influence by his Edinburgh correspondence on the writing of the Commission IV reporters: C. H. Robinson (Chairman of Sub-committee, Hinduism, S. P. G.) and D. S. Cairns (Chairman of Commission Four, United Free Church College, Aberdeen). Slater wrote the longest detailed answers (123 pages) which were quoted eleven times in the Hinduism section by Robinson, while J. N. Farquhar (80 pages) and A. G. Hogg (66

⁶¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶²⁰ This passage is quoted from Slater's *The Higher Hinduism*, 291. See *Ibid.*, 288.

⁶²¹ See Slater's "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ".

pages) were quoted only four times each. Looking at Slater's significant quotations across almost all the questions, as well as his reputation as a leading fulfilment missionary, it seems no wonder that he was expected to be on the leading lists of the fulfilment missionaries in the Report. Yet, he was not recognised as a typical representative of fulfilment theology, while J. N. Farquhar, a less known junior missionary than Slater, was written of as such by Robinson. It seems odd that Robinson did not include Slater in typical fulfilment missionaries, while he highly appraised Slater in terms of his frequent quotation including a significant passage related to fulfilment theology. In addition, Robinson emphasised Hogg's marginal theology opposite to the fulfilment method by quoting Hogg's particular publication, while he overlooked Slater's works which were very relevant to prevailing fulfilment idea. Such an imbalanced assessment indicates that a tension existed between the major fulfilment school and the opposing school, and that there was an ambivalent attitude by Robinson towards Slater and Farquhar.

Before Slater's contribution to the Commission IV Report is examined, we need to clarify what the key contents of the Report were, particularly focussing on the section on Hinduism. Once the main missionary message of the Commission IV is identified, Slater's involvement in it will be discussed subsequently. First of all, the writers of the Report should be carefully noted, since their own theology and personal relationship could have something to do, directly or indirectly, with the Report. It was incumbent on them to draft their writings, grounded on the evidence shown in the correspondences, and yet, it was understandable for them, within their rights, to put more weight on a preferred figure or a theological view, although based on the same evidence. Such a case applies unquestionably to D. S. Cairns who, in the deep sympathy and close teamwork with A. G. Hogg, a chief critic of fulfilment theology, circulated a copy of Hogg's articles to the members of Commission IV,⁶²² possibly as a sort of 'an antidote to the certitude of the fulfilment theologians' as pointed out by M. Maw.⁶²³ Robinson also referred to Hogg's article, 'Karma and Redemption', in parenthesis, apparently influenced by Chairman Cairns, his closest colleague. The Report will here be examined in relation to the evidence collected from field

⁶²² James L. Cox, *The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith: Its Significance for the Tambaram Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1938*, Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1977, 115.

⁶²³ Martin Maw, *Visions of India*, 377.

responses, to determine the influence of the authors on the nuance and content of the Report. As Robinson and Cairns frequently claimed that their Report was written based on the evidences, it is clearly justifiable to compare between the evidences and their Report.

According to the Report, the aim of Commission IV was to study the problems and challenges involved in the presentation of Christianity to the minds of the non-Christian peoples. Particularly, the commissioners wished to enquire into the conflict of faiths in the non-Christian lands, the attitude of missionaries towards it, the effect of the whole upon the theology of the Church at home, and suggestions for the training of missionaries.⁶²⁴ Presenting the Christian gospel in non-Christian lands inevitably had accompanied a clash between Christianity and the local faiths. Many Christian preachers, according to H. Gulliford, saw the devil in the non-Christian religions,⁶²⁵ while the national people saw the same devil trying to destroy their age-long heritage and faith through the missionary message.⁶²⁶ Cairns recognised such a head-on confrontation between two opposing religious forces as 'emergency' and 'peril' to be essentially addressed in his Report.⁶²⁷ As it had been keenly aware of this hostility, the Committee was to investigate the heart of the reality and the view of missionaries on the non-Christian religions in order to work out the applicable missionary message in irenic relation with them. In this way, the missionary message of the Report was integrally related to the sense of the situation of the Commissioners which was reflected in the ten-points-questionnaire sent to the missionaries in the field.

If we read carefully the overbearing ten points of the Commission IV questionnaire for fashioning the missionary message, we can find an underlying awareness of the Commissioners; their sense of the reality of the non-Christian lands that a traditional and formal form of non-Christian religions was taken in earnest and was prized as a religious help and consolation, and thus, it had the power of keeping people back

⁶²⁴ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 1.

⁶²⁵ H. Gulliford explained, in his correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, to the old attitude of many missionaries fifty years ago to the non-Christian religions in that everything of Hinduism was of the devil.

⁶²⁶ Slater wrote in his correspondence (pp. 4, 15) to the Conference that Christianity was considered a foe that must be fought and that there was a great anti-Christian movement among the leading classes of India.

⁶²⁷ *Ibid.*, 293.

morally, intellectually, and socially, as well as spiritually, from Christian faith.⁶²⁸ As the Commissioners understood the living force of the national faiths, they held the view that it would be desirable to present points of contact with Christianity, possibly as a preparation for it, rather than put Christianity at variance.⁶²⁹ That is the reason why they asked missionaries what attitude the Christian preachers 'should' take toward the local religion, rather than simply asking what their attitude was.⁶³⁰ Furthermore, they proposed the final question on the assumption that a missionary's encountering the local religions might alter, in a greater or lesser degree, his or her own understanding of the Christian gospel.⁶³¹ The questionnaire was not designed to force the view of the Commissioners onto missionaries, but to investigate the situation of their mission field. Nonetheless, the questionnaire itself, reflecting already the general view of missionaries and missionary realities, stimulated and guided the response of the correspondents in the direction, not of conflict and discontinuity, but of agreement and continuity, which constituted the key elements of the missionary message of the Commission IV in relation to non-Christian religions.

Among ten questions, the fifth and sixth are particularly pivotal to the Commission IV Report. There had been a remarkable change in the missionary attitude towards Hinduism, along with increasing missionary knowledge of it, and the rising anti-Christian movement in India electrified by Nationalism and the Hindu renaissance during the last five decades before the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. The base of the change was built, according to Robinson, on self-examination by missionaries that more harm had been done in India than in any other country by missionaries who lacked the wisdom to appreciate the nobler side of the religion which they had laboured to supplant.⁶³² Many correspondents pointed out that the traditional iconoclastic attitude, disparaging everything in Hinduism, without a thorough

⁶²⁸ Refer to the questions number 1-3. 1. Name the non-Christian religion or religions with which you have to deal in your missionary work, and say with what classes of the population you yourself come into contact. 2. Can you distinguish among the doctrines and forms of religious observances current among these classes any which are mainly traditional and formal from others which are taken in earnest and are genuinely prized as a religious help and consolation? 3. What do you consider to be the chief moral, intellectual, and social hindrances in the way of a full acceptance of Christianity?

⁶²⁹ Question 6. What are the elements in the said religion or religions which present points of contact with Christianity and may be regarded as a preparation for it?

⁶³⁰ Question 5. What attitude should the Christian preacher take toward the religion of the people among whom he labours?

⁶³¹ Question 10. Has your experience in missionary labour altered either in form or substance your impression as to what constitutes the most important and vital elements in the Christian gospel?

⁶³² World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 171.

understanding of it and respect for it, was only to lose the heart of Indians and create a lot of antagonism towards Christianity. Thus, they tended to insist on casting off such a harmful attitude. Robinson well summarised in his Report regarding the response to the fifth question, although a little bit overemphasised: 'The replies, one and all, lay emphasis upon the necessity that the missionary to Hindus should possess, and not merely assume, a sympathetic attitude towards India's most ancient religion'.⁶³³

In the minds of correspondents, possessing 'sympathy' meant doing justice to the Indian religions by looking at the nobler aspects of them, and looking up to them as truths. Robinson reported that the writers of the Edinburgh papers were keenly alive to the necessity of 'doing the fullest justice' to the religions of India. Without a doubt, it was great progress for missionaries to attempt to 'do the fullest justice' to Hinduism in contrast to the previous derogatory attitude to it. Nevertheless, this showed a totally condescending attitude of the correspondents from the Indian perspective, because they were keen simultaneously to advance the necessity of 'conserving the supreme place of Christianity as that which absolutely supersedes Hinduism by absolutely fulfilling all that is noblest in the ancient faiths'.⁶³⁴ Missionaries failed to do justice to Hinduism, by looking at the good and bad sides of Hinduism, while looking at only the good aspect of Christianity. They did not put Hinduism on a par with Christianity, but put it underneath the so-called 'absolute' Christian truth, as a lower degree of truths to be displaced. Yet, in a sense that progress can be achieved by process, it was a momentous step for the Edinburgh correspondents to look at the good side of Hinduism with the bad side, rather than look at the bad side only as had been predominantly done in the previous days.

By virtue of the self-examination and doing justice to Hinduism, the correspondents got rid of their former hostile attitude towards it. Hinduism was no longer accused among the correspondents as of the devil, but was partially appreciated as truths from God, or a human aspiration for God, at least. Such a changed view is found in the typical forms of Slater and Farquhar: Hinduism was viewed as a mixture of the divine and the human being by the former, while viewed as a human production by the latter. Slater acknowledges that each great religion is the manifestation of a human need,

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

and yet, he lays greater emphasis on the work of the abiding presence of God.⁶³⁵ By the presence of the 'logos', 'Christ-within', Hinduism is believed to have been inspired, although the extent of revelation is less than the Christian revelation. Hence, Hinduism, for Slater, is not only a prophecy for Christ, but also a prophecy of Christ. In parallel with Slater, C. Hermon (Basel German Mission Evangelical Society, Calcutta) asserted in his correspondence, 'It should be therefore, well considered that such [similar] elements in the said religions are not human made, but to be taken as the greatest evidences for the wonderful dealings of the Almighty God towards a fallen race'.⁶³⁶ Particularly, W. E. S. Holland (Church Missionary Society, Allahabad) attributed all of good everywhere to the logos, 'an outshining of the light of the Eternal Word who lightheth everyman'.⁶³⁷

On the other hand, Farquhar viewed Hinduism from the perspective that all religions are 'genuine products of man's religious nature' and interpreted the long history of Hinduism as 'an age-long yearning' for such a faith as Christianity.⁶³⁸ He was not keen to see Hinduism as a divine production, beyond 'the highest aspirations of the people', or 'a human search after God'. Therefore, Farquhar held Hinduism not as a preparation *of* Christ, but simply as a preparation *for* Christ, although he gave such an expression once, outside his correspondence, that *Bhagavad Gītā* is 'a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ'.⁶³⁹ If the religious nature reaching after God is said to be given from God, Farquhar's 'human aspiration' largely belongs to the category of a divine production. Moreover, if a preparation for the Gospel does not happen by accident and requires a planner or an organizer, Farquhar's concept of 'a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ' inevitably implies the presence of God who prepares and fulfils the prophecy of Christ among the world faiths. Nonetheless, he never mentioned any divine presence in the preparation of Hinduism for the Gospel in his correspondence. Some correspondences were found to stand in the parallel line with Farquhar: L. B. Chamberlain (Arcot Mission, Madanapalle) held Hinduism as the production of 'the innate religious nature of Hindus' and Bishop J. E. Robinson

⁶³⁵ Slater's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 72, 53.

⁶³⁶ C. Hermon's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 6.

⁶³⁷ W. E. S. Holland's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 11.

⁶³⁸ J. N. Farquhar's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 13, 19. Farquhar, in his *Gita and Gospel* (1906), also argues that *Bhagavad Gita*, one of the main Hindu scriptures, is one of the most eloquent possible proofs of the fact that 'the human heart cries out' for an incarnate Saviour (p.84).

⁶³⁹ Farquhar, *Gita and Gospel*, 84.

(Methodist Episcopal Church in the U. S. A., Bombay) saw it as the expression of 'human religious aspirations'.⁶⁴⁰

No particular attention was paid in the Report to the above issue about the divided evaluation of Hinduism, since the main concern of most Indian correspondents was to replace the old iconoclastic attitude with a sympathetic one, and the assessment supported the common positive attitude towards Hinduism. Yet, C. H. Robinson, the Commission IV reporter on the Hinduism section, spoke for Slater's view, as mentioned earlier, on Hinduism as 'the stars which have helped to illumine the darkness of the non-Christian world but to guide seekers after the truth in their search for God'.⁶⁴¹ He held Hinduism as a source of illumination, coming from God, in contrast to the corrupted human nature which caused the darkness of the non-Christian world. Particularly, D. S. Cairns, in his General Conclusion, wrote that one of the remarkable agreements among the correspondents was that 'the higher forms' in the non-Christian religions 'plainly manifest the working of the Spirit of God', although he acknowledged 'the nobler elemental need in the human soul'.⁶⁴² In fact, there seems no such general agreement in terms of the divine work in Hinduism. Based on my investigation, half of the correspondents followed Slater's view, while the rest of them followed Farquhar's. Nevertheless, it is significant that both reporters advocated Slater's view, approving the divine presence in Hinduism, along with the higher elements in the human aspirations.

The most relevant question to the fulfilment theology was the sixth which enquired into the specific elements in the non-Christian religions which could be determined as points of contact with Christianity. Most correspondents took for granted that contact points were necessary to present the Gospel to the Hindus. That was the reason why the Commissioners who already recognised it asked what elements were in the non-Christian religions which present points of contact with Christianity, rather than asking whether contact points with Christianity were needed in presenting Christ. Yet, by acknowledging contact points, it was not entirely clear that these points could be regarded as a preparation for Christianity. The common instances, given by a number of writers, such as the divine trinity, the *avatāra*, sacrifice and various kinds of ritual

⁶⁴⁰ L. B. Chamberlain's correspondence, 3. J.E. Robinson's correspondence, 9.

⁶⁴¹ He included Hinduism into a source of illumination, although the stars are less shining than 'the Sun of Righteousness, Christ'. See World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 320.

⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 267.

in Hindu conceptions might be a preparation for the Gospel or a hindrance to it. The major correspondents were very clear about the utility of the contact points, but some were not. Nevertheless, it is not wrong that there was a general agreement as to the elements in the religion of India which might be regarded as a preparation for Christianity as Robinson reported.⁶⁴³

Preparation is necessary to the concept of fulfilment, since fulfilment presupposes a preparation such as promise, prophecy, or planning. That was the reason why many correspondents put forward the concept of fulfilment in conjunction with a preparation. Although some correspondents as W. R. James (Baptist Missionary Society, Calcutta) and D. G. M. Leith (Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, Madras) were hesitant to use the term, 'fulfilment', simply admitting contact points as a helpful preparation, or a tutor, a vast number of missionaries among the correspondents who recognised a preparation in Hinduism took the view that Hinduism was fulfilled and completed by Christianity. Robinson reported that 'the writers are keenly alive' that 'Christianity supersedes Hinduism by absolutely fulfilling all that is noblest in the ancient faiths'.⁶⁴⁴ Cairns also confirmed the powerful influence of fulfilment theology on the papers of the correspondents: 'One massive conviction animates the whole evidence that Jesus Christ fulfils and supersedes all other religions, and that the day is approaching when to Him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father'.⁶⁴⁵

While many correspondents, along with the Commission IV reporters, supported the fulfilment theology, what it meant differed between them. For example, W. Bonnar (Rajputana) saw Hinduism as a corruption of God's truth, originally given to man, hence fulfilment meant for him that God retrieves the original truth and completes the distorted and corroded germ in Hinduism.⁶⁴⁶ In contrast to him, Francis Kingbury (Madura) regarded Hinduism as a witness, inspired and illuminated by God, thus he used fulfilment to mean that God carries out the promise and achieves the testimony.⁶⁴⁷ In a slightly different perspective, Farquhar understood fulfilment as the

⁶⁴³ *Ibid.*, 177.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁶⁴⁶ W. Bonnar's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 8.

⁶⁴⁷ F. Kingsbury's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 11.

satisfaction of the highest religious aspirations of the people and the crown of their faiths to be discarded by Christianity,⁶⁴⁸ whereas Slater interpreted it as the fulfiller of the best of Hinduism and its promise to be absorbed in Christianity.⁶⁴⁹ What Robinson and Cairns meant by fulfilment in their Report seems closer to Farquhar in terms of the continuing value of Hinduism, considering their repeated usage of ‘supersede’ which was a key characteristic of Farquhar’s fulfilment theology. It is not clear whether they had any keen awareness of the difference between Slater’s fulfilment theology and Farquhar’s. Yet it seems true that they certainly preferred Farquhar’s position, based on the fact that they exhibited considerable concern for ‘the supreme place of Christianity’⁶⁵⁰ which appeared clearer in Farquhar’s than Slater’s. The above observation could give a clue to the reason why Robinson dubiously took to Farquhar, rather than Slater, or along with Slater, at least, as ‘a typical representative of the view’ that Indian theism and philosophy are fulfilled and superseded by Christianity. Obviously, Slater was a well known top-notch senior missionary and the leader of his fulfilment school in India, publishing many works including his *magnum opus*, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, while Farquhar was a junior missionary who had begun quite recently to release his fulfilment view, publishing a booklet and a few articles related to his fulfilment theology excluding his well-known masterpiece, *The Crown of Hinduism* (1913).⁶⁵¹ As shown in the footnote 652, Slater was not an old-timer in the academic circle of India at the time of the Edinburgh Conference, rather, he published his works keenly as he did in his missionary service in India, including his 123-page Edinburgh papers. Importantly, as mentioned earlier, Robinson quoted Slater 11 times in almost all major points of the questionnaire, the most frequent quotation among 65 correspondents, while he quoted Farquhar only four times. Particularly, it needs to be

⁶⁴⁸ J. N. Farquhar’s correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 13.

⁶⁴⁹ T.E. Slater’s correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 59.

⁶⁵⁰ See World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 176, 268.

⁶⁵¹ What Farquhar published before the Edinburgh Conference was *Gita and Gospel* (1903), *Permanent Lessons of the Gita* (1903), “The Most Fruitful Apologetic Methods among Hindu Students” (1908) “The Hindu Conception of God and the World”(1910), “Christ and the Religions of the World” (1910), “The Crown of Hinduism” (1910). Slater’s published works related to fulfilment theology only after 1901 were as follows: *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity* (1901), “Transmigration” (1902), “God is Spirit” (1902), “How to Reach the Educated Hindus apart from the Higher Education in College”(1903), “The Attitude of Educated Hindus towards Christianity”(1903), “The Meaning and Supremacy of the Bible” (1904), *Missions and Sociology* (1908), “Modern Theology and Missionary Enterprise” (1908), “The Contribution of the Church in India to the World’s Interpretation of Christ” (1910).

noted that Robinson did not quote Slater in the most important sixth question which was directly related to fulfilment theology. Instead, he dealt with Slater's fulfilment theology in the seventh question, which enquired into the greatest power of appeal and opposition in elements in the Christian gospel. What Robinson introduced in the response to the seventh question was Slater's logos theology in that Christ, 'impersonally immanent in the world as the Divine idea or logos', completed what the Hindus themselves had been earnestly seeking.⁶⁵² Slater's logos idea seemed good for missionaries to connect their message with India's religious past and present, not as something foreign to their thought, but as familiar, and yet, from Robinson's point of view, it might be not good enough to conserve the 'supreme place of Christianity', due to Slater's too-strongly-identified 'immanent Christ' with India's religious heritage. Hence, Robinson might have every reason to call Farquhar as a typical representative of the view that Hinduism was fulfilled and superseded by Christianity, excluding Slater's fulfilment theology as a variant. It was no wonder the Commission IV reporters affirmed the 'supreme place of Christianity', considering the prevailing spirit of conquest among the Conference delegates, in terms of not only politics but also religion, as explicitly declared in John Mott's Closing Address.⁶⁵³

Still, it is not clear why Farquhar among so many fulfilment missionaries was called a typical representative of fulfilment theology, although he was certainly one representative. R. A. Hume, J. P. Jones, B. Lucas, F. W. Steintal (Y. M. C. A., Calcutta), were the leading fulfilment missionaries, ahead of Farquhar, who certainly deserved to be identified as the representatives of fulfilment theology. Apart from Hume, Jones, and Lucas in a similar line with Slater, Steintal was a significant figure who put forward fulfilment theology in parallel with Farquhar. He was quoted nine times in the Report by C. H. Robinson, the most frequent next to Slater. He found in Hinduism the longings of the soul and some truths which were to be realised and fulfilled by the message of Christ.⁶⁵⁴ Particularly, he pointed out the danger of compromise by a few older highly experienced missionaries who, in his view, had been led too far through their studies of Hinduism.⁶⁵⁵ Why was Farquhar, instead of

⁶⁵² World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 194.

⁶⁵³ Mott addressed in his message, speaking, 'The end of the Conference is the beginning of the conquest'. See George Robson, *The History and Records of the Conference*, 347.

⁶⁵⁴ F. W. Steintal's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 18.

⁶⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

Steinthal whose fulfilment theology was not different from his own, referred to as a typical representative of fulfilment theology? There is a high probability, as E. Sharpe suggested, that Farquhar was benefited by the resources of the American Y. M. C. A.⁶⁵⁶ Particularly, in the Conference, Farquhar had the immediate chief and a personal supporter, John R. Mott, a mastermind of the Edinburgh Conference, who recommended Farquhar as Student Secretary, representing the Indian Y. M. C. A.⁶⁵⁷ Such relations proved very influential for Robinson in designating Farquhar as a typical representative of fulfilment theology in a situation where no outstanding figure had emerged, apart from Slater, the architect of fulfilment theology in India.

Fulfilment theology was certainly a significant theology which occupied the mind of many missionaries and yet, we should not fail to acknowledge that many other missionaries certainly did not agree with fulfilment ideas, although they recognised some contact points and a preparation in Hinduism which might be interpreted as a potential for fulfilment in Christianity. Therefore, it is to go beyond the evidence to say that fulfilment theology received 'an official sanction' at Edinburgh.⁶⁵⁸ In my analysis, there were three groups in relation to fulfilment theology: the first major group was keen on it and the second major group, holding similar numbers with the first group, did not articulate it, although this group was not against it. The third group was small in number but important, because they spoke against fulfilment theology and received strong support from D. S. Cairns, Chairman of Commission IV.

Although most correspondents recognised some contact points in Hinduism, a minority doubted the sixth question itself which presumed some similarities between Hinduism and Christianity. Although H. Whitehead (Bishop of Madras) recognised some element of truth which may be regarded as a preparation for Christianity, he strongly insisted that the main object of Christian preaching should bring home to the conscience of the people the great differences between Christianity and their own religion rather than show similarities.⁶⁵⁹ He was persuaded that people would not be converted to Christianity because Christianity was so like their own religion, but because it was so different. A. Schosser (Basel Evangelical Mission, Magalore), from

⁶⁵⁶ Eric J. Sharpe, *Not to Destroy But to Fulfill*, 104.

⁶⁵⁷ Eric J. Sharpe, *John Nicol Farquhar: A Memoir* (Calcutta: Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 1963), 30,46.

⁶⁵⁸ P. Hedges wrote that fulfilment theology received some sort of 'official sanction' at Edinburgh (*Preparation and Fulfilment*, 278).

⁶⁵⁹ Bishop of Madras' correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 28.

a slightly different perspective, opposed fulfilment theology, because he believed that it led to compromise.⁶⁶⁰ Particularly, he felt sorry that many, especially English and American missionaries, considered the heathen world as the minor child and not as the lost son. He stated that to make concessions to Hinduism at the expense of the truth would weaken the position of missionaries and, ultimately deprive them of their right of existence out there, to some extent at least.

The chief critic of fulfilment theology in the Report was A. G. Hogg (United Free Church of Scotland, Madras Christian College) who set forth a cogent justification for his 'method of contrast'. He denies the strategy of seeking similar points of contact between Hinduism and Christianity as the starting point from which a preparation and its fulfilment are related in the fulfilment theology, because, according to J. L. Cox, to stress the similarities inevitably results in the confirmation of what the Hindu already believes, that all religions should be left to themselves to follow their own pathway to God.⁶⁶¹ Most importantly, the Hindu has no needs which the Christian gospel provides and is satisfied largely with his or her own faith. Therefore, he proposes for Christian preachers to consider not what elements in Hinduism present points of contact with, and constitute a preparation for Christianity; but where one can most readily create in the Hindu consciousness points of contact with the Christian consciousness, and thereby prepare the way for the emergence of an Indian type of Christianity.⁶⁶² 'This may be done', Cox writes, 'by presenting the Christian message as that which is intended to disturb Hindu religious equilibrium and thereby arouse the Hindu mind to a new sense of religious need'.⁶⁶³ Hogg summarised his way of presenting the Christian message in contrast to the way of fulfilment, saying, 'Inspire the Hindu mind with the sense that its ideal is too narrow, that its attainment leaves the world too full of misery and wrong, and you have prepared the way for the Kingdom of God'.⁶⁶⁴

Although Hogg was a representative of the minority view, he was uniquely highlighted in the report on Hinduism by C. H. Robinson who referred the correspondents and delegates to the book of Hogg, *Karma and Redemption* which

⁶⁶⁰ A. Schosser's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 15.

⁶⁶¹ J. L. Cox, *The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology*, 105,106.

⁶⁶² World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 185.

⁶⁶³ J. L. Cox, 45.

⁶⁶⁴ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 185.

was the only one he drew their attention to. It was no wonder that Robinson made a special reference to Hogg's book, considering that he was a close colleague of D. S. Cairns, Chairman of Commission IV and a close family friend of Hogg's, who had circulated a copy of Hogg's articles on "Karma and Redemption" and "Christianity as Emancipation from This World" to the members of Commission IV.⁶⁶⁵ Cairns, admiring Hogg's theology, included Hogg's ideas in the Report of the possibility of miracles occurring today which was necessary to the Kingdom of God as consisting not only in inward deliverance from the power of sin, but ultimate deliverance from the evil of the world.⁶⁶⁶

Nevertheless, as rightly observed by P. Hedges, what most people found in the Report, in spite of their considerable efforts, was the fulfilment theology and similar points of contact which might be regarded as a preparation for Christianity, and Hogg's contrasting method and the particular agenda of Cairns were almost overlooked.⁶⁶⁷ Although Cairns devoted many pages to the Christian supernaturalism in his Report, it was certainly fair for him to draw conclusions based on the evidence that the missionary should seek for the nobler elements in the non-Christian religions and use them as steps to higher things, and that all these religions are to be fulfilled by Jesus Christ.⁶⁶⁸ Particularly, it is meaningful that Cairns, in his General Practical Conclusions, recommended missionaries, referring to an expert who has studied the entire correspondence, to be trained in the art of teaching – 'an art which has, as one of its first principles, the finding of the true point of contact with the hearer'.⁶⁶⁹

The above observation of the evidence and the Report arrives at the conclusion that Slater was undervalued due to his logos theology which was different from the ethos of Commission IV reporters' and to the power game played by Cairns and Robinson who used their leverage of writing the Report for their preferred figure and theology, although limited within the parameter of their liberty. Nonetheless, Slater's contribution to the Commission IV Report was enormous: first, Slater was

⁶⁶⁵ J. L. Cox, *The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology*, 115.

⁶⁶⁶ J. L. Cox made a comment that the idea of the possibility of current miracles was the main theme of the collaboration between Cairns and Hogg in drafting the Commission IV Report (Cox, 119). D.S. Cairns stressed in his Report the supernatural essence of kingdom of God introduced by a German theologian Julius Kaftan and Hogg (World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 251).

⁶⁶⁷ P. Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 264.

⁶⁶⁸ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 267,268.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 270.

undoubtedly the best promoter from 1875 of 'sympathy and respect' which was the universal agreement among the Edinburgh correspondents of the attitude towards Hinduism, although sympathy became an overriding principle around 1910. After three decades, Slater got through the days when tolerance was condemned and diffused his famous motto: "We shall never gain the non-Christian world until we *treat its religions with justice, sympathy, courtesy and love.*"⁶⁷⁰ As shown by this motto, Slater may be identified as a pioneer, stressing the significance of doing-justice-method to world religions which was, according to Robinson, keenly alive among the writers.⁶⁷¹ If there is anyone to attribute the phenomenon of sympathy in the Edinburgh Conference, Slater should be the one on its top list, at least in India.

Second, Slater made a huge contribution in India to building fulfilment theology which was the clear-tongued major theology at the Edinburgh Conference, although there were some critics against it and many missionaries were undecided. The contribution of Slater to the Conference can be identified in regard to two things: to begin with, his theological influence was noteworthy on many leading fulfilment correspondents such as Campbell, Jones, Lucas, and Mathers. His fulfilment theology echoed through the voice of a Japanese evening messenger and his disciple delegate who joined the discussion of the Commission IV Report. Importantly, his fulfilment view was constantly cited, at least three times directly and indirectly in 11 quotations. Although Slater was thrust aside by Farquhar with the clout of J. R. Mott, he set forth a logos fulfilment theology which was different from Farquhar's in terms of continuity between Hinduism and Christianity.

⁶⁷⁰ Slater's correspondence to the Edinburgh Conference, 46. The italicised letters were emphasised by Slater himself.

⁶⁷¹ World Missionary Conference, *Report of Commission IV*, 176.

Chapter Seven

Criticisms and Assessment

This chapter aims to show what criticisms were made against Slater's fulfilment theology both in his day and afterwards. Although Slater had interacted with his critics while he was at work in India, he did not confront during his lifetime with his major critics who emerged towards the end of his life. The major critics who shall be dealt with in this chapter were J. N. Farquhar, A. G. Hogg and H. Kraemer. Although Farquhar held a similar position to Slater, he never acknowledged the logos idea of Slater's fulfilment theology. As a representative of the conservative fulfilment school, Farquhar remained totally silent on that idea, which implied that he was highly critical of Slater's liberal position.

Hogg, a Scottish missionary theologian at Madras Christian College, criticised the general features of Farquhar's fulfilment theology which might also apply to Slater's, apart from the logos idea which was relevant to the issue of a 'finding' in Hinduism in Hogg's terms. He was given little direct attention during the 1910 Edinburgh Conference when the similarities were stressed to arrest the enquiring attention for the Hindus. However, Hogg was increasingly highlighted after 1910, when the similarities were rather recognised to strengthen what Hindus already believed and cause them to lose concern for a characteristic Christian message. By articulating his contrasting method and the distinction between faith and faiths, Hogg emerged as the chief opponent of fulfilment theology.

However, fulfilment theology received a fatal blow at the Tambaram Missionary Conference in 1938 as a result of Dutch missionary theologian, H. Kraemer, and the contribution of Hogg. Kraemer effectively evinced people how fulfilment theology, a natural theology in his view, constituted a failure or an error in terms of biblical revelation in Christ. As he pleaded for 'an evangelistic approach',⁶⁷³ outgrowing the aggressive attitude of the traditional missionary, while rejecting the sympathetic approach of the fulfilment missionary to the world religions, his detailed thesis

⁶⁷³ Kraemer's evangelistic approach was the way to announce 'the message of God which is not adaptable to any religion or philosophy' but which also aims at a presentation of this message 'in a persuasive and winning manner so as to evince the real Christian spirit of service to God and to man;'. See Carl F. Hallencreutz, *New Approaches to Men of Other Faiths* (Geneva: Wm. Carling & Co., Hitchin, Herts, 1970), 23.

against the natural theology based on K. Barth's theology was most welcome to many missionaries and exerted a significant impact on India, although it was challenged by the Rethinking Group⁶⁷⁴ thinkers like P. Chenchiah and V. Chakkarai, who published their book, *Rethinking Christianity in India*, in preparation for the Tambaram Missionary Conference.

Ever since the Tambaram Conference, fulfilment theology, in fact, has never been highlighted on the chief theological scenes whether in the affirmative terms or in the critical terms, apart from the 1960s when it has once again become popular primarily in Catholic circles, as indicated by Robin Boyd, under the influence of the 'dialogue' approaches. Particularly from the 1980s onwards when Dalit theology emerged, fulfilment theology has been considered as totally irrelevant and transcendental, as it is associated with the classical Brahmanical religion and the high caste by the Dalit Christians who occupied the Christian majority within the Indian churches. In this respect, the criticisms of Dalit theologians against the traditional Christian theology needs to be noted in relation to fulfilment theology.

For the purpose of methodological analysis, research will be restricted to the thoughts of R. Panikkar, K. P. Aleaz, S. Clarke, whose criticisms of Slater's fulfilment theology are particularly pertinent to this thesis.

Major Critiques of Slater's Fulfilment Theology

Slater's theological restatement adapted to the thoughtful Hindus in the category of fulfilment theology prompted immediate criticism as well as favourable comments from various quarters of missionary circles.⁶⁷⁵ Many of the comments were expressed in the form of brief notes, or discussion papers in the diverse missionary magazines, but the most detailed criticisms among the remaining materials are found in the book review of Slater's *God Revealed* and in *The Harvest Field* symposium which was prompted by Slater's paper presented, as previously mentioned in Chapter Three, in one of the monthly Bangalore Missionary Conferences, entitled, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus?" These earlier criticisms were certainly made from a different historical context and different theological terms with the subsequent major critics

⁶⁷⁴ Rethinking Group is named after the title of their best known publication, *Rethinking Christianity in India*.

⁶⁷⁵ Slater's Letter to J. Mullens, the Foreign Secretary of L.M.S. dated 14th, December, 1876, pp. 13-16.

and yet, it seems not far wrong to acknowledge that there are some similar points between the former and the latter. That is the reason why I set forth the major criticisms by coupling the earlier criticisms together.

J. Hudson and J. N. Farquhar

Missionary J. Hudson, Chairman of the Wesleyan Mission in Mysore, India, as detailed in Chapter Three, engaged in a discussion with Slater in the Bangalore Conference and subsequently presented his paper in *The Harvest Field* symposium on the way to preach to the Hindus. His position had agreements with Farquhar on three points⁶⁷⁶; firstly, it acknowledged Christ as fulfiller or consummator of some truths in Hinduism which lay much common ground between Christianity and Hinduism. Secondly, it also accepted Christ as destroyer of all accumulated evils and falsehood in Hinduism. An approval of a part, according to his position, must not neglect the duty of the missionary to attack the error of Hinduism and clearly expose of its defects. A problem of Hudson's position at this point is that in fact, there are found quite a number of aspects in Hinduism which warranted immediate destruction. Farquhar was clearer than Hudson on this point, arguing, 'I hold that in the very idea of Fulfilment there is the implication that the old religion must pass away. Whoever recognizes Christ as the Consummator will necessarily renounce his old religion'.⁶⁷⁷ Although some gleam of light is visible in 'the evil practices' of Hinduism, Farquhar is sure that it cannot justify them, because they come from the fundamental weakness in their faiths and creeds which fatally undermine the whole system of Indian religion and society.⁶⁷⁸ Lastly, Hudson, along with Farquhar, never recognised the work of the indwelling divine spirit, or logos which was distinct within Slater's fulfilment theology.

Although Hudson and Farquhar belonged to the same category of fulfilment missionaries, their positions were quite different in some critical points from Slater's fulfilment theology owing to his logos idea. Thus, effectively, two schools of fulfilment theology had coexisted among fulfilment missionaries until 1910 Edinburgh Conference as indicated in the previous chapter; the rate of missionaries

⁶⁷⁶ J. Hudson, "How Shall We Preach to the Hindus? A Symposium", 339.

⁶⁷⁷ J. N. Farquhar, "The Crown of the Hinduism To the Editor of the Harvest Field", 317.

⁶⁷⁸ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 446, 456.

who followed the logos theology of Slater and Farquhar's fulfilment was half and half at least amongst the correspondents to the Commission IV. Yet, after the Conference, fulfilment theology excluding the logos idea seems to become dominant among missionaries through the influence of Farquhar, losing the balance between two schools, although there were at least some missionaries like E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973)⁶⁷⁹ and Nicol Macnicol (1870-1952)⁶⁸⁰ who clearly expressed their logos related fulfilment view. Hence Hogg and Kraemer, the major critics of fulfilment theology, levelled their criticisms not against Slater, but against Farquhar. Not only the effect of the Edinburgh Conference,⁶⁸¹ but also the changed theological current⁶⁸² might have preferred the conservative position of Farquhar to the liberal position of Slater. Here the significant thing to note is that Farquhar's school came to be recognized as solely representing fulfilment theology around the 1920s and 1930s. Since then Hogg, Kraemer and almost all subsequent critics, such as E. Sharpe, and M. Maw, have assumed Farquhar's theology as the typical fulfilment theology, without normally considering the other major school of Slater.

Such a predominant status of Farquhar's theology resulted, as shown above, from some complicated elements in terms of missionary politics, historical context, and theological trends. However, what should be noted here, along with these elements, is Farquhar's criticism of Slater's theology, which has failed to be noticed thus far. It is

⁶⁷⁹ One of the most outstanding missionary evangelist in India in the twentieth century for the educated Hindus. He began Sat Tal Ashram which electrified the subsequent Ashram movement. He wrote about his logos-related fulfilment approach to the high caste Hindus, "Hence we can go to the East and thank God for the fine things we may find there, believing that they are the very footprints of God. He has been there before us. ... That scattered light which lighted every man that came into the world was focused in the person of Jesus." (E. Stanley Jones, *Christ of the Indian Road*, Lucknow: Lucknow Publishing House, 1925, 154.)

⁶⁸⁰ A United Free Church of Scotland missionary in Poona, India, and a renowned scholar in Hinduism. He expressed his logos-fulfilment view in his preliminary paper on Hinduism drawn by the asking of the Jerusalem Missionary Conference organizers. He wrote in his paper, 'If Hinduism will let Christ enter within its ancient walls, then it will be found that he is no stranger, but one who has sojourned there before and who will find within it those who will recognize His Lordship and set him upon its throne'. (See Nicol Macnicol, "Christianity and Hinduism" in *The Christian Life and Message in Relation to Non-Christian Systems*. Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council (JMR), I, London: Oxford University Press, 1928, p. 41.)

⁶⁸¹ I mean the Conference effect that junior missionary Farquhar dramatically came into view as the typical representative of fulfilment theology, leaving out many well-known senior fulfilment missionaries, after the Edinburgh Conference by the boost of J. R. Mott who recruited Farquhar into the Y. M. C. A. Secretary from the L. M. S.

⁶⁸² The 19th century liberal theology which was initiated by F. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and encouraged by biblical criticism, comparative religions and Darwinism was significantly challenged by the rather conservative theology which clung to the unique value of the biblical revelation in Christ heralded by K. Barth from the early 20th century.

true that Farquhar remained completely taciturn regarding Slater and his theology except one remark that Slater's *The Higher Hinduism* is 'on the right lines' in a footnote of his book, *Missionary Study of Hinduism*.⁶⁸³ Apart from this remark, Farquhar offered no critical assessment of Slater's theology. That is the reason why Farquhar's criticism has been overlooked so far. If Farquhar were engaged in the discussion with Slater in one way or another, Slater's logos theology would have been remembered as one of the significant schools of fulfilment theology in comparison with Farquhar's school. In addition, Farquhar, as a historian, could have dealt with the logos theology to offer an overall view of Slater's theology as an introduction at least. Yet, Farquhar did not. His way of criticism was very powerful 'silent' criticism; silent on the points he objected, but speaking forcefully on the points he favoured. Farquhar was totally silent on Slater's logos idea which provided explanation regarding how preparation could be provided in Hinduism by the indwelling work of the divine logos.⁶⁸⁴ Silence is a very effective way of criticism which can totally deny the presence of an opponent. It is sometimes more powerful than engaging verbally in argument with an opponent. Whether Farquhar intended it or not, his silence resulted in diffusing his own school of theology by entirely ignoring Slater's logos theology.

What particular implication then does this 'silent' criticism carry? Farquhar remained muted, as his literature shows, regarding the presence and the work of the divine reason or logos. The reason why he criticised Slater was certainly that all religions, according to Farquhar's view, are 'human', 'reaching after God'.⁶⁸⁵ In Farquhar's view, human religious nature is not to be referred to the production of God, nor of Christ, although it is neither wholly bad, nor demonic. The highest religious aspiration in Hinduism can be recognized as the preparation *for Christ*, but never as the preparation *of Christ*. Farquhar was undoubtedly muted in his objection to Slater's identification of the 'incredible' human religion with the divine product.⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸³ This significant footnote was quoted from Farquhar's annotated *Missionary Study of Hinduism*. See E. Sharpe's *But to Fulfil*, 208.

⁶⁸⁴ As previously mentioned only one exception can be found in Farquhar's *Gita and Gospel*, 84. In this book Farquhar acknowledged the work of Christ in Hinduism, saying, 'Rightly read, the Gita is a clear tongued prophecy of Christ'.

⁶⁸⁵ Farquhar's paper submitted to 1910 Edinburgh Conference, 13. *Gita and Gospel*, 31.

⁶⁸⁶ Farquhar's paper submitted to 1910 Edinburgh Conference, 13.

Based on Farquhar's view of religion, Slater might be accused of the following: if religion derives from the indwelling God not from human beings as Slater argued, how could he explain the 'evil practices' and 'idolatry' in Hinduism? As a corollary, Slater's Christ is unavoidably responsible for allowing such evils. In addition, if Christ provides the preparation in Hinduism for the gospel, why had he not provided a better preparation, by trimming off the evil part? In contrast to Slater, Farquhar held that the evils as well as the highest longing for God came from human nature. Human nature is the place where both the good and the bad spring out. Human beings, thus, not God, are to blame for the degradation and idolatry. The 'fundamental weakness' and the insufficient preparation of Hinduism for the gospel are the crucial proof of its origin from human nature,⁶⁸⁷ not from Christ, although some sublime aspiration for God in human religious nature should not be denied.

The second possible criticism from Farquhar is that Slater spoke clearly about the issue which the Bible does not detail clearly. Farquhar was muted to the presence and the work of God, particularly the preparatory work of the indwelling logos in Hinduism outside the Old Testament and the New Testament, because he believed that the Bible did not elaborate it. Nevertheless, Slater argues that salvation is open to the Hindus who act up to the light of logos and that Hinduism is the prophecy and promise of Christ. This is certainly unacceptable to Farquhar; thus he remained silent about it, ignoring it completely.

Nobody could know how Slater would respond to the above silent criticisms of Farquhar. Nonetheless, based on the Slater's position already evidenced in his literature, the following answers might possibly be offered. The first criticism of Farquhar misunderstands Slater's view of religion: every religion, according to Slater, is the product of both the human search after God and the work of the indwelling divine spirit. Although there is the good in human nature given by the Creator God, it became seriously damaged through the disobedience of human beings, losing communion with God. That was the reason why they needed the work of God to know him and recover the previous relationship with him. The way of God he chose was to reveal himself progressing by the logos, the Christ-within, and to fulfil ultimately the previous promise and prophecy by the incarnate Christ-without. What

⁶⁸⁷ See Farquhar's *The Crown of Hinduism*, 133, 152, 446.

Farquhar misunderstood was that the existence of evils could not be attributed to Christ himself, but to a lower human nature. The sin of the human being is to blame, rather than God, because God provided the human being with 'twofold nature'; 'a higher and lower', but humans became slaves of their lower nature through disobedience.⁶⁸⁸ Slater's corrupted twofold nature explains well the evils and idolatry in Hinduism, while it has the highest expression of longing for God. Farquhar's explanation of human nature seems right, but certainly he left out the aspect of being damaged by the first sin in contrast to Slater.⁶⁸⁹ Most importantly, Slater's logos theology provides the origin for how the preparation of the gospel was made, while Farquhar does not offer any such origin, apart from human religious nature, or perhaps the evolutionary impetus.⁶⁹⁰

The second accusation of Farquhar, that speaking clearly about which the Bible does not speak clearly, applies as much to Farquhar as it does to Slater. For example, Farquhar obviously included Hinduism in 'them' when he maintained that 'Christ came not to destroy them but to fulfil them' (Matthew 5:17), although 'them' means the laws and prophets of Judaism in this context. We cannot entirely exclude the possibility of Hinduism being included in 'them' and yet, certainly the Bible does not speak of it clearly in this verse. As a matter of fact, almost all fulfilment theologians tend to speak clearly beyond the grey area where the Bible does not speak clearly regarding the salvation of non-Christian people and the work of God among them particularly before Christ and outside the Christian church. The reason why the fulfilment theologians appear to be less concerned with what the Bible does not detail is that they work and fashion their theology primarily to reach the non-Christian people. The Bible deals with the story of God's redemptive work mainly among the chosen people, Israel, as the first priority, although their selection is for the service of the salvation of the world people. The amount of biblical texts thus dealing with the people of the world is extremely limited. Nevertheless, they had to answer the following tricky question of their audience: "Was there any chance of salvation for

⁶⁸⁸ Slater, "The Fruit of the First Sin", 483.

⁶⁸⁹ As E. Sharpe rightly pointed out, 'there is no treatment of sin and its effect, on man's relationship with his Creator, no real treatment of the themes of atonement' in Farquhar's presentation of Christianity. See Sharpe's *Not to Destroy but to Fulfill*, 345.

⁶⁹⁰ Refer to Farquhar's Edinburgh paper, 16.

our forefathers before Christ came into the history? Did God forsake the Indians who were born in Hindu family and had no chance to hear the gospel?"⁶⁹¹

Slater answered such a question based on God's justice and impartial love for the whole creature on the earth, saying, 'Christ has not left his people without witness. He has been inspiring and guiding the sages of Hinduism in history to live according to the light he shone with his indwelling spirit and finally sent Christ, the fulfiller, and consummator, for the salvation of humanity'.⁶⁹² It is certainly not true that there are sufficient biblical justifications for Slater's claim about God's providential work among the non-Christian world, but at the same time, it seems also not true that Slater's claim can be proved entirely wrong with sufficient biblical proofs. The reference of God's revealing work among the non-Christian people had been primarily made in the church history by the Alexandrian Fathers such as Justin, Clement and Origen. The question of God's providential work among the pre-or-non Christian people was to raise and answer for the converts from the non-Christian faiths and for the missionary who worked among them, although the text evidence is insufficient.

In contrast to the previous dealing with the silence of Farquhar which implies a strong criticism against Slater, we are going to deal with Farquhar's volubility on the destruction of Hinduism which was totally muted in Slater's theology. In *The Crown of Hinduism*, Farquhar proves, chapter-by-chapter, fundamental weaknesses of Hinduism, arguing that it is fatally disintegrating, and he concludes, 'Hinduism must die in order to live. It must die into Christianity'.⁶⁹³ As I already dealt, in Chapter Four, with the sharp difference between Farquhar and Slater on this point, I will not provide further details, apart from suggesting one key point which Farquhar might object against Slater's position on this issue: how could Slater reconcile his acknowledgment of the enduring validity of Hinduism with the New Testament idea that Judaism must pass away, and that it is in taking the place of Judaism that Christianity fulfils it?⁶⁹⁴ Figuratively speaking, who would not turn off the lamp, if

⁶⁹¹ One of Slater's Hindu audiences asked this question. See his *Report of Work 1883*, 4.

⁶⁹² Refer to Slater's *The Higher Hinduism*, 3, 111.

⁶⁹³ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 51.

⁶⁹⁴ In his letter (p. 317) to the editor of *The Harvest Field*, Farquhar argued that whoever recognizes Christ as the Consummator must renounce his old religion, on the ground of the New Testament idea that Judaism must pass away after Christianity fulfils it.

the greater light such as the sun reaches him?⁶⁹⁵ From the view of Farquhar, the duty of the Hindu is to give up his or her old religion and that must be the very foundation of the principle of fulfilment⁶⁹⁶ which is totally lacking in Slater's notion of fulfilment.

It is a good point for Farquhar to recognize that Hindus do right in following Hinduism until they find Christ as the fulfiller in comparison with the negative attitude of the more conservative missionaries. Moreover, it seems not unnatural, from the missionary perspective, that Farquhar demands the converted Hindus to renounce their old faith as they realise that all the best ideals of the old faith are fulfilled in Christ. Yet, such a temporal validity of Hinduism is certainly not acceptable from Slater's point of view, because Hinduism still has a function as the Old Testament remains as a component of the Bible for Christians, and the laws of the Old Testament still function as an ethical trainer for Christians. Figuratively put, although the greater light reaches, a lamp needs in the evening time and inside the room. Furthermore, Farquhar's denial of the enduring validity of Hinduism seems to conflict with his previous saying, 'He did not destroy the old civilization, philosophy, literature, and art. Everything of value that the old world contained has been preserved and has flowered once more in Christianity'.⁶⁹⁷ Slater's enduring validity of Hinduism seems more suitable than the temporary validity of Farquhar to the cause of fulfilment, 'not to destroy but to fulfil'.

One final point to clarify here is that Slater did not intend that Hindus might remain Hindus without conversion, although he recognised the continuing role of Hinduism as a master. Masters could be many and helpful even after Hindus are converted, but Slater emphasised that the guru who could fully satisfy their aspirations and fulfil the revelation in Hinduism is only Christ.⁶⁹⁸ Slater approved the constant function of Hindu masters, while Farquhar insisted the cessation of their function after conversion.

⁶⁹⁵ In his paper ("The Relation of Christianity to Hinduism," *International Review of Missions*, Vol. III, 1914, 424.), Farquhar, using a figurative speech, urged Hindus to stop following Hinduism after a greater light of Christ reaches them.

⁶⁹⁶ Farquhar, *Ibid.*, 428.

⁶⁹⁷ Farquhar, *The Crown of Hinduism*, 53.

⁶⁹⁸ Although there are many teachers, according to Slater, Jesus is a unique teacher who taught himself; he is the desire of all nations, an abiding Presence, a lasting Revelation of God (Slater, *God Revealed*, 144, 170). Christ includes all teachers; All 'other masters' are in Christ (Slater, *Studies in the Upanishads*, 70).

J. A. Vanes and A. G. Hogg

J. A. Vanes (Wesleyan Missionary, Bangalore) was another participant, along with J. Hudson, who engaged in the discussion with Slater and presented his paper to *The Harvest Field* symposium. His policy was to destroy the whole fabric of Hinduism and rebuild Christianity on the ruins of it, because he looked to Christ as the great destroyer of evil. His view of Hinduism and approach to it were very different from A. G. Hogg: firstly, Vanes denied Hinduism as a means of salvation, while Hogg approved a saving communion with God in Hinduism. Secondly, he saw the committed Hindus as the children of the devil, while Hogg held them as the children of God. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Vanes emphasised the method of contrast in his presentation. Vane's method is also very different from Hogg's selective contrast method and yet, both methods seems to have two common points at least in terms of their conviction that there are no similarities at all between Hinduism and Christianity and the best presentation for Hindus is to show them by way of contrast, not of fulfilment. In this respect, Vane's method had a faint but significant connection to the method of Hogg who has been known as a chief and serious critic of Farquhar's fulfilment theology. As Hogg's criticism targeted Farquhar's thought on fulfilment, his attack may not be entirely relevant concerning the points where Slater was at variance with Farquhar. Even so, it is true, on the whole, that Hogg also proposed a number of organised criticisms against Slater's fulfilment which we should now address.

To begin with, we need to know that Hogg did not express only wholesale condemnation against fulfilment theology. He acknowledged some good points in it, although they were extremely limited. First, its chief benefit is that it delivers missionary preaching from the error of condemning all non-Christian religions.⁶⁹⁹ Second, the idea of fulfilment might prove helpful to a convert who wishes to form certain analogies between his former beliefs and his new stance of faith.⁷⁰⁰ Third, this approach has the advantage of permitting Hindu religion to be regarded not as

⁶⁹⁹ See James L. Cox, "The Development of A. G. Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith", 107.

⁷⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 147.

seeking only but as partial finding.⁷⁰¹ These approvals indicate that Hogg agreed with fulfilment theologians that condemnation must be avoided in missionary preaching for non-Christian people, that fulfilment might be useful to the convert for the continuity of their faith, and finally that Hindu religion is to be regarded in terms of a finding beyond seeking, although the degree might be differently termed.

Yet, fulfilment theology came under fierce criticism, and Hogg highlighted several defects. First of all, the similarities on which fulfilment is grounded are ‘superficial’ and ‘unhelpful’, whereas ‘contrast’ is a true successful method to ‘arrest enquiring attention’ of Hindus and to ‘lead them into an awareness of Christian sense of religious need’.⁷⁰² The attempt to communicate the gospel by stressing the similarities proved a failure as demonstrated in the case of Paul at Athens.⁷⁰³ It is only to strengthen what Hindus already believe and only to confuse the real differences between Hinduism and Christianity.⁷⁰⁴ As Hindus are normally satisfied with their religious experience, missionaries should disturb their religious equilibrium, rather than identify with the similarities, and arouse a new religious need which can be resolved only by Christ.

Second, the claim that Christ fulfils the longings of the Hindu seems ‘far-fetched’, because ‘he leaves out so much of what was in Hinduism, and he fulfils so much of what was never in Hinduism’.⁷⁰⁵ For example, Christ does not satisfy the desperate aspiration of the Hindu to escape from the never-ending rebirths, and Christ satisfies the longing for the authority of forgiveness of sin of which the Hindu rarely has. The Hindu desire is very different from what Christ can satisfy. If fulfilment theology is right in its claim, Hogg says, then ‘India ought always to have been hungry for Christ. But the reason why mission work is so slow of success is that missionaries have to first make India hungry for Christ before they can give Christ to her’.⁷⁰⁶

Third, the foundation of fulfilment theology which describes the history of Indian religion as the pursuit of a vain quest is unsure and fatally undermined, because it has

⁷⁰¹ See Hogg’s paper to Edinburgh 1910 Conference.

⁷⁰² Hogg’s Edinburgh paper, 25. J. Cox, “The Development of A. G. Hogg’s Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith”, 107, 150.

⁷⁰³ Hogg, *Ibid.*

⁷⁰⁴ J. Cox, *Ibid.*, 106, 147.

⁷⁰⁵ A. G. Hogg, “The God That Must Needs Be Christ Jesus: Four Studies”, *International Review of Mission*, Vol. VI (1917): 71.

⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 71.

been ‘a finding’ as well as a seeking.⁷⁰⁷ If Hinduism is treated as having no religious experience of saving communion with God, it is the result of ignorance and untrue to the fact. There are still Hindus who have genuine religious experience which includes fruition as well as yearning,⁷⁰⁸ although the intellectual explanation differs depending on religious traditions.

The last point is that the fulfilment approach to the Hindu might cause antipathy due to its condescending position. Hogg writes, ‘We think that the message, ‘You need Christ now’, is really more telling than ‘Christ fulfils your old religion’. The latter message can hardly be freed from condescension’.⁷⁰⁹ Morally speaking, the attitude of fulfilment is arrogant, since it assumes the obvious superiority of Christian over Hindu beliefs, although it cannot assume as such.⁷¹⁰

Apart from the last moral criticism which has been frequently made by other subsequent critics, the rest of the criticisms are unique to Hogg based on his selective contrast method and the distinction between faith and faiths. Before we assess Hogg’s criticism, Hogg’s missionary method and his fundamental distinction between faith and faiths need to be considered briefly for the benefit of our discussion. To begin with, Hogg’s selective contrast method was the meticulously designed missionary method for the religiously satisfied Hindu to be broken down and to be awakened to a new sense of Christian need by suggesting one pair of selected contrast where Christianity most disturbs the Hindu, and where at the same time it offers the missionary message as the logical resolution to this disturbance.⁷¹¹ In Hogg’s view, the doctrine of *karma*, along with its connected doctrine of transmigration, is the point where the Hindu feels most dissatisfied, whereas the Christian message of redemption from the world is a new and satisfying answer to India’s age-long craving of release from the phenomenal.⁷¹² Through this point of contrast Hogg aimed to educate Hindus ‘out of their hunger for release from the world and into a hunger for release from guilt’.⁷¹³

⁷⁰⁷ Hogg’s Edinburgh paper, 27.

⁷⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁷⁰⁹ A. G. Hogg, “The God That Must needs Be Christ Jesus”, 51.

⁷¹⁰ J. Cox, “The Development of A. G. Hogg’s Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith”, 106.

⁷¹¹ *Ibid.*, 46, 48.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, 148.

⁷¹³ *Ibid.*, 149.

Hogg's missionary method was based on his distinction between faith and faiths. He defined faith as a 'simplicity of assurance that the supreme religious reality is humanly satisfying', an assurance founded on the conviction that 'God is light and in him is no darkness at all'; he defined faiths as varying beliefs through which the religious man comes first to experience faith and then to understand, verbalise, and intelligibly communicate its meaning.⁷¹⁴ According to this definition, faith enables individuals to enjoy the experience of communion with God within every religion, although they develop their own beliefs depending on the region and the varying situation. Based on this relationship, Hogg could offer, he believed, a successful presentation of the Christian beliefs in which the Hindu can experience Christian faith in a far superior way which led into his selective contrast method. Moreover, in Hogg's definition, a genuine experience of communion with God, in other word, salvation, can occur everywhere beyond the Christian faith, although he believed that Christianity alone could make the best interpretation of God worthy of man's complete surrender and trust.⁷¹⁵

Now it seems only fair to consider the justification of Hogg's criticisms, since they alone have been presented above. First, Slater's fulfilment method and Hogg's selective contrast might be in the relationship of 'both-and' rather than of 'either-or' in reaching to Hindus. Hogg's contrast method should be necessary to Hindus who affirm that they see no important difference between it and their own religion.⁷¹⁶ It might be a successful method for those who are generally satisfied with their religious life, those who hold that the two religions are in essentials the same. Yet, it seems also true that there are still other Hindus who feel dissatisfied to a greater or less degree with their own religious life, while they see, with indifference and antipathy, a number of alien elements in the practices and faith of Christianity. They are a group of people who are rather attracted to the contact points, not to the points of contrast. Slater's fulfilment approach was formulated exactly for this group of people to identify some similarities in Hinduism which leads, by way of stepping stones, into Christ who can fully satisfy what they longing for. Both methods thus might be helpful and successful for the different groups of people who show different

⁷¹⁴ J. Cox, "Faith and Faiths: the Significance of A. G. Hogg's Missionary Thought for A Theology of Dialogue", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 32 (1979): 241, 242.

⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁷¹⁶ A. G. Hogg, "The God That Must needs Be Christ Jesus, 65. See also Hogg's Edinburgh paper, 30.

responses to their own religion, and they should be complementarily used in reaching them.

In addition, I would like to make a point in relation to Hogg's selective contrast method: Hogg's quotation from Paul's address at Athens (Acts 17:22-31) seems to show, in reverse, a biblical example of adopting the fulfilment method, although his intention was to prove Paul's method 'comparatively a failure'. The so-called Failure Theory⁷¹⁷ is quite possible from a purely historical point of view; but, as James Barr, a renowned biblical theologian, rightly pointed out, the text itself shows that the attempt was not at all a failure, in numbers at least.⁷¹⁸ By Paul's magnificent oration, a few men became followers of Paul and believed, including Dionysius, the Areopagite who was a distinguished Athenian citizen and certainly not a 'god-fearer' or one already loosely attached to the synagogue and partially trained in Judaism. Yet, regardless of the consequence of the debate on the Failure Theory, is it not true that Hogg acknowledged biblical support in Paul's adoption of fulfilment approach in his following remark? :

Sometimes one meets the suggestion that the missionary may present himself as one who has found that which India throughout the ages has been seeking. In Acts XIII the Apostle Paul is represented as adopting such an attitude in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch. There it was markedly successful. ... When Paul, however, adopted a similar attitude at Athens, representing himself as the bringer of a revelation which the Athenians had been making shift to do without, the method proved comparatively a failure.⁷¹⁹

Second, Slater's claim that Christ fulfils the longings of Hindus seems not greatly far-fetched, considering that Christ does not leave out, but fulfil so much of what was in Hinduism, although emphasis is different in both religions. Hogg maintains that the Christ of fulfilment cannot satisfy the desires of Hindus, because their need is entirely different from Christians. Yet, the difference might be not completely different; it may be partially different, but partially common in basic human needs, only with the difference of emphasis or difference of terms. For example, although Christianity does not use the terms like karma or transmigration, J. Cox can be absolutely justified

⁷¹⁷ In this theory, the approach carried out by Paul described in Acts 17 was a momentary lapse or mistake on his part. Paul made the attempt to argue from natural theology, but the attempt failed, and afterwards he abandoned it as evidenced in certain remarks in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.

⁷¹⁸ James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology: the Gifford Lectures for 1991 Delivered in the University of Edinburgh* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 29,30.

⁷¹⁹ Hogg's Edinburgh paper, 35.

in his analysis of Hogg's approval of the Christian message as the satisfaction of Hindus' longing: 'Christian message of redemption from the world would be a new and satisfying answer to India's age-long craving from releasing from the phenomenal'.⁷²⁰ As Cox wrote, Hogg admitted the Hindu's sense of sin and the need of forgiveness, although minimised in comparison with the Western soul: 'The sense of sin is present, but the Hindu does not feel helpless in the face of it... In short, the Hindu does not share the helpless shuddering at sin characteristic of the awakened Western soul'.⁷²¹ He is not convinced that the helpless shuddering at sin is the exclusive character to Western souls, while Indian souls completely lacked of such character. In this respect P. Hedges' remark seems quite right: 'If he [Hogg] maintains that the Hindu temperament is different from that of the West, then he has to reconcile the fact that the 'unawakened' Western soul no more shares the helpless shuddering at sin than does the Hindu'.⁷²² It seems thus fair to say that a sense of sin is present both in Indians and Westerns; it is not integral to both religions.

Hogg previously disproved the claim of fulfilment theologians, based on the retardation of mission work, that India has been always hungry for Christ. Yet, he failed to notice that Hindus with the hunger for Christ did not necessarily go to Christ for their satisfaction. They have the hunger, but there are many ways to satisfy it. That is the reason why missionaries are needed: their duty is, according to Slater's position, is to lead Hindus into Christ who is the true satisfaction and the fundamental solution. This duty is never easy to any missionaries and it applies to Hogg as well as Slater. According to J. Cox, Hogg's missionary duty was to awaken new needs within the Hindu so that he may find Christ as a solution to his new religious search.⁷²³ I cannot find the ultimate difference between Slater's and Hogg's, while I can find that either the hunger for Christ or contrast method does not guarantee the success of mission work, though they might quicken the process more effectively.

Third, Hogg's 'finding', the critical point by which the foundation of fulfilment theology could collapse, seems dubious because the faith that enables finding in the

⁷²⁰ J. Cox, "The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith", 148.

⁷²¹ A. G. Hogg, "The Presentation of Christ to the Hindu", *The East and the West*, Vol. VIII (1910), 262.

⁷²² See P. Hedges' *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 358,359. Hedges took an example, quoting McLeod, 'The need to awaken a sense of sin in the unbelieving Westerner was as characteristic of missionary work in Britain as it was in India in the nineteenth-century (*Religion and Society in England in 19th Century*, 141 ff).

⁷²³ J. Cox, "The Development of A.G. Hogg's Theology in Relation to Non-Christian Faith", 107.

genuine religious experience could be different in all religions. The central problem of Hogg's distinction between faith and faiths was raised by his critic, M. M. Thomas in his review of the reprint of *Karma and Redemption* in which he argued, 'Faith is not the same in all religions'.⁷²⁴ Hogg's definition of faith as the assurance that 'God is light' seems too simple and abstract, as J. Cox rightly pointed, to describe the actual experiences which we identify as examples of faith. A careful consideration thus of diverse experiences of God poses an essential question of identification faith between religions. Of course, such diversity in the God-experience can be also explained in terms of Hogg's 'beliefs' with which our religious experience is determined. Nonetheless, it might be also explained in terms of different faith which can be found in the actual experiences of God, a factor which is missing from Hogg's abstract definition. If faith is not the same in all religions as Thomas said, different faith might produce different levels of finding which can confirm Slater's partial finding. Therefore, Hogg's finding does not necessarily seem to prove the foundation of fulfilment theology as erroneous.

Lastly, Hogg's charge of condescension is inescapable, although it is applicable to any orthodox missionary position. As shown particularly in Chapter Three and Four, Slater's fulfilment theology was made for an apologetic purpose to reach the educated Hindus. From this perspective, Hogg's charge seems the most damning accusation against Slater's overbearing view of Hinduism as an inferior or imperfect preparation to be consummated by Christ. Nevertheless, one thing to note is that Slater's fulfilment approach was widely welcomed in his day by Hindus, even if not by all, since his was relatively very mild and irenic in contrast to many belligerent evangelical missionaries who assumed Hinduism as the devil's to be destroyed. In his Imperial day it might be not bad and yet, Hindus might find it hard to overlook his arrogant attitude in this post-colonial era.

In spite of the moral drawback of his theology, we should not fail to notice that a missionary to preach Christ as the supreme status, as long as he seeks to convert others to his own religion. In this respect, Hogg also has every reason, in his illustration of the need for conversion, to suggest the condescending analogy of a

⁷²⁴ See M. M. Thomas, "Review of *Karma and Redemption*", *Religion and Society*, 18, 1 (1971): 92-4. Quoted from J. Cox's "Faith and Faiths", 248,249.

sleep-walker who is crossing a chasm on a narrow plank.⁷²⁵ According to this analogy, the Hindu is a sleep-walker who walks on the narrowest and most crooked of doctrinal bridges. Even if he may achieve and maintain his trust in God, it is the experience of a dream, not reality. Once he meets Christ, he sees that by 'no other bridge than the cross of Christ' can he win again the joy and peace other than through believing. Does it not strike us, therefore, that Hogg and Slater share the same patronising position on Hinduism? Hogg's case shows that it is never easy to work out an apologetic way to Hindus, without offending them to a certain degree.

K. S. Macdonald and H. Kraemer

K. S. Macdonald, in parallel line with H. Kraemer, was an editor of *The Indian Evangelical Review* who wrote, in 1876, his book review of Slater's first book, *God Revealed*. Macdonald summarised Slater's attempt in his review as following:

The aim of the lecture was not to present Christianity as an antagonistic religion among other religions of the world, not as a knell sounding the doom to non-Christian nations, but, in the firm persuasion that all are *by nature* [italicised by Macdonald] Christian, to hold it up as that in which Hindus would find realized and satisfied the noblest and earliest ideas of their sages, and the truest sentiments and yearnings of their hearts.⁷²⁶

He pointed out the danger of Slater's work, writing, 'The danger of such attempts is that the dividing lines between what the Christian world regards as true, and so also between what even the author himself regards as positively true, and partially true views, will be obliterated or neglected'.⁷²⁷ Slater was further criticized on the ground that in several places he indicates that he does not accept in full the common views of some Bible doctrines; for instance, the idea of the final salvation of only a few, or the salvation of only those within the Christian pale, or the endless misery of any.

Macdonald's position was to keep well the dividing lines between what the Christian world regarded as true, particularly the lines between Christianity and Hinduism. In his view Hinduism was under God's judgment outside the Christian revelation and salvation. The standard of his position was the common views of biblical doctrines, and thus the harmony with 'devout and worthy thoughts of God

⁷²⁵ J. Cox, "Faith and Faiths", 246.

⁷²⁶ K. S. Macdonald, Book Notices, *The Indian Evangelical Review*, Vol. 4 XIII (July 1876): 127.

⁷²⁷ *Ibid.*, 127.

and of the universe'. Based on these common views, he accused Slater's unorthodox views in terms of the doctrine of the limited salvation and the unique revelation in Christ. He was very critical of Slater's fulfilment claim that all are by nature Christian and that Christ can be presented as the realization of the noblest idea and yearnings of Hindus, because he considered Slater's attempt as non-biblical, and beyond the orthodox views. In this respect, Macdonald's criticism might be identified, in some degree at least, with H. Kraemer's criticism against fulfilment theology made six decades later.

Fulfilment theology was badly damaged under critical fire, culminating in the 1938 Tambaram Missionary Conference, led by the Dutch theologian Hendrik Kraemer (1888-1965).⁷²⁸ Although Slater was not an existing opponent of Kraemer, it seems significant to deal with Kraemer's criticism against fulfilment theology in terms of exploring its biblical justification for the educated Hindus. Kraemer was commissioned to put out a clear statement on the Christian faith and on an evangelistic approach to non-Christian religions in preparation for the international missionary conference at Tambaram, India. In accordance with the request, he published his book, *The Christian Message in A Non-Christian World*, which dominated the discussions about other faiths for several decades. His criticism of fulfilment theology is located in the former book and also in the post-Tambaram volume *The Authority of the Faith: International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram*.

Kraemer made many points to criticize fulfilment theology, but all of them do not need to be dealt with in the present discussion, since some of them have been noted through previous critics already detailed. Thus, I will leave out his charge of condescension, and his critique in line with Hogg and P. Chenchiah,⁷²⁹ writing, 'The supreme longing of the Hindu after escape from *samsāra* is not satisfied by Christ.

⁷²⁸ After Kraemer worked as a missionary in Indonesia (1922-1937), he became a professor at Leiden University (1937-1947), and finally he served as the first director of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Institute at Geneva (1948-1955). His theology, which reflects the work of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner evoked strong opposition in liberal circles and among Indian theologians. From 1938 to 1961 he dominated the scene in mission theology. See Gerald Anderson's *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 322.

⁷²⁹ Pandipeddi Chenchiah (1886-1959) was one of the original Indian lay theologian belonging to 'the Rethinking Group', from the title of their best known publication, *Rethinking Christianity in India*. He presented, in this book, an Indian reply to H. Kraemer's *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*.

'The gift of Rebirth as offered by Christ does not appeal to the Hindu. On the contrary, Jesus kindles new hopes not felt before and kills some of the deepest and most persistent longings of man'.⁷³⁰

Kraemer's attack on fulfilment theology focused on the following points. First, fulfilment theology is a failure and an error from the standpoint of revelation, because there is no revelation outside God's revelation in Christ.⁷³¹ Kraemer defined the Christian understanding of revelation as inaccessible except through faith, a divine gift and human act. On the other hand, he included fulfilment theology in the category of natural theology which is the doctrine of a union of man with God existing outside God's revelation in Jesus Christ, based on the definition of K. Barth.⁷³² In his view, natural theology of that sort, which conceives the Gospel as essentially the fulfilment, the highest development and budding forth of the religious forces and seeds in mankind, overlooks the *sui generis* character of the revelation of Christ.⁷³³ Such an intellectual conception is, Kraemer believes, a denial of the existential and dynamic character of biblical revelation.⁷³⁴ Fulfilment theology is to be rejected as false, because the revelation in Christ is our sole standard of reference and no systematised general revelation, of whatever kind it may be.⁷³⁵

Second, fulfilment theology failed to notice the significance of biblical realism in which the sinful man is in his total being confronted by God to take decision. He coined the term 'biblical realism' in order to express the idea that the Bible, the unique revelation of God in Christ, consistently testifies to divine acts and plans in regard to the salvation of mankind and the world, and not to religious experiences or ideas.⁷³⁶ From the perspective of biblical realism, human religious aspiration is unbelief and rejection of God; men seek God, while at the same time they flee from God.⁷³⁷ The world is thus lying under the wrath of God through the cross of Christ,

⁷³⁰ H. Kraemer, *Religion and the Christian Faith* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1956), 215, 216.

⁷³¹ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World* (London: Edinburgh House Press, 1938), 115.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, 69. K. Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. II (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1957), 168.

⁷³³ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 123.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁷³⁶ H. Kraemer, "Continuity or Discontinuity", *The Authority of the Faith: International Missionary Council Meeting at Tambaram* (Oxford University Press, 1939), 1,2.

⁷³⁷ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 22.

although it is simultaneously under the love of God through the cross.⁷³⁸ For Kraemer, ultimately, Christ is the crisis of all religions, thus they are not to be kept and fulfilled, but to be discarded and to be returned to faith in God.⁷³⁹

Third, the quest of fulfilment theology for producing some points of contact in every religion is apparently 'a misguided pursuit', although the insistent demand for concrete points of contact is a quite natural desire to reach people with the message. Such a list of contact points based on similarities between Christianity and non-Christian religions, for example, on such subjects as the idea of God and man, the conception of soul or of redemption, the expectation of an eternal life, is an impossible thing.⁷⁴⁰ The reason why Kraemer objected to all similarities and points of contact is that they 'become dissimilarities in the illuminating light of the revelation in Christ'.⁷⁴¹ If there were no such light, some similarities might be found between the world religions. Nonetheless, Kraemer had a conviction that once the revealing light shines and exposes the reality of all religious life, it is sure to find itself laying 'under the divine judgment', because it is 'misdirected'. According to him, there is only one point of contact; the disposition and the attitude of the missionary.⁷⁴² If that one point really exists, then he believes that there are many points of contact through the humility and love of missionary who lives with his neighbours.

The immediate response and criticism against Kraemer's thesis came from the Rethinking Group contributors whose ideal was that the Indian Church should think, express and act for itself, and make Christianity an indigenous movement.⁷⁴³ P. Chenchiah (1886-1959) and V. Chakkarai (1880-1958), the central figures in this group, were quite sympathetic to fulfilment ideas, although they did not fail to point out some critical points. In Chakkarai's view, the danger of fulfilment theology is that the modern eclectic spirit of the Hindu may rest content in the similarities and neglect the revolutionary ideas of Christianity as similarly held by Hogg.⁷⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Chakkarai recognised 'Christianity as the Crown of Hinduism' as 'a welcome

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, 23, 123, 126.

⁷³⁹ H. Kraemer, "Continuity or Discontinuity", 20.

⁷⁴⁰ H. Kraemer, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, 134.

⁷⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 137.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 140.

⁷⁴³ D. M. Devasahayam, A. N. Sudarisanam ed., *Rethinking Christianity in India* (Madras: Hogarth Press, 1938), preface III.

⁷⁴⁴ V. Chakkarai, "The Educated Hindu and Christianity", ed. P. T. Thomas, *Vengal Chakkarai*, Volume II (Bangalore: The United Theological College, 1992), 4.

contribution' to presenting the gospel.⁷⁴⁵ Moreover, he expressed a similar perspective to Slater's logos theology in his writing: 'It is the same *paramātman*, the Supreme, that was in the *ṛṣi* (seer) of old and by whom they spoke at different times and degrees, who is the secret of the Christian consciousness. There are aspects of His being that were beyond their dreams as they lived before the Incarnation of the Lord'.⁷⁴⁶

Chenchiah also criticised fulfilment theology, since he held that non-Christian religions not only register longings and aspirations but also satisfactions. In addition, as previously mentioned, he thought that Christ does not satisfy the supreme longing of the Hindu. Nonetheless, Chenchiah did not agree with the summary dismissal of the fulfilment theory which it had received in the hands of Kraemer.⁷⁴⁷ Despite his approval of satisfaction in Hinduism, he recognised 'a residue of unfulfilled desire' in all religions which corresponded to Jesus who 'stands in definite relation to the residuary problems' of other religions.⁷⁴⁸ Chenchiah also believed that Hindu *śāstras*, instead of the Old Testament, should be regarded as God's chosen *praeparatio evangelica* for the people of India. His claim that similar prophecies of the coming of Christ could be found in the Hindu scriptures⁷⁴⁹ does not seem to be far removed from Slater's. Above all, Chenchiah's 'new cosmic energy' (the Holy Spirit) who works for the cosmic redemption and the transformation of the world by way of incorporating the whole creation into Christ seems to have a similar function, at least partially for the redemptive work, to the logos of Slater.⁷⁵⁰

Chenchiah, in his *Rethinking Christianity in India*, criticised Kraemer primarily on his over-dependence on Barth's crusade against relativism and his absolutist understanding of the revelation which made nonsense both of incarnation, which Chenchiah saw as abiding presence with mankind, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, understood by Chenchiah as God's continuous work in man towards a new creation.⁷⁵¹ In Chenchiah's view, Kraemer interpreted Christ in a wrong perspective

⁷⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷⁴⁶ V. Chakkarai, *Jesus the Avatar* (Madras: C.L.S., 1932), 160.

⁷⁴⁷ P. Chenchiah, "The Christian Message in A Non-Christian World: A Review of Dr. Kraemer's Book, *Rethinking Christianity in India*, 41.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁷⁴⁹ R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 158.

⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁷⁵¹ Wesley Ariarajah, *Hindus and Christians: A Century of Protestant Ecumenical Thought* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Amsterdam, 1991), 74.

by elevating him who should be on earth as a remedy for our ills, into heaven. Significantly, Chenchiah rejected the fundamental assumption of Kraemer that Jesus is the crisis of all religions. According to him, Jesus is not God, the absolute, who operates vertically and in crisis, but God as standing in relation to man: he feels the nearness and intimacy of Jesus rather than His absoluteness and unattainability.⁷⁵² He saw that the meeting of God and Jesus and his disciples, though critical, was never a crisis ultimately. Based on such harmony and intimacy of the relationship between God, Jesus, and his disciples, Chenchiah repelled Barthian adjectives.⁷⁵³

Although Chenchiah leaned toward the humanity of Christ and overlooked his judgement, he pointed out well Kraemer's extreme stress on the absolute difference of Christ and the crisis which is brought against all religions by Christ. Both Chenchiah and Kraemer seem to be partially right, but untrue to the whole biblical picture, because the Christian Bible holds both divinity and humanity of Christ, and judgement and grace together, without losing its balance. One important thing to find in Chenchiah and Chakkarai was that they rejected Kraemer's claim that Indian religions are to judge and discard, and that they cherished the religions as a perfect old creation to be transformed as a new creation. Although their terms were different, they do not seem greatly different from Slater's terms in that Hinduism was to be kept and consummated by Christ.

Although Chenchiah reduced the degree of crisis and stressed the significance of the intimacy of Christ and the continuous work of the cosmic energy for the whole creation, many missionaries still believed that the Bible belongs to 'revelational' theology and is a principal channel of divine revelation to humanity, favouring thus Kraemer's approach which rejects the value and the points of contact of natural revelation in world religions. This is certainly one of the primary reasons why fulfilment theology lost its place in the main theological scene since the Tambaram Conference. Nevertheless, there are some scholars who asked in a serious manner: 'What if the Bible itself sanctions, or depends on, or implies natural theology, or at least something that had an affinity with natural theology?'⁷⁵⁴ In line with this, we may ask whether Kraemer's rejection of natural theology was really based on biblical

⁷⁵² P. Chenchiah, "A Review of Dr. Kraemer's Book", 17.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷⁵⁴ James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*, 21.

exegesis. As Kraemer rested his claim entirely on the revelation of the Bible, if the justification for the value and positive function of natural revelation in the Bible is secured, fulfilment theology would not set aside as unbiblical or non-revelational theology. In this respect, the recent work of an eminent evangelical and biblical scholars such as T.C. Hammond, James Barr, Bertil Gaertner⁷⁵⁵ are to be highlighted.

To begin with, natural revelation is currently viable within evangelical thought, as shown in the work of T. C. Hammond, the principal of Moore Theological College. In his book, *Reasoning Faith: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, Hammond argues, 'To condemn the perpetual human blindness to the light, so as to leave it no intelligence in anything, is repugnant, not only to the Divine word, but also to the experience of common sense, for some desire of investigating truth can be perceived in the mind of human beings'.⁷⁵⁶ Importantly, he provides justification for the revelation mediated through nature in the following analogy: 'If the message of God, which has been mediated through fallible men, is indeed a message even when it falls on deaf ears, it is not easy to discover why this feature should be denied to a message of God mediated through nature'.⁷⁵⁷ As he argued, if the message of God has been revealed to fallible, sometimes rebellious and unfaithful Bible writers like Moses, David, Peter, and Paul, in a certain period of their life or a particular event, why should we not assume that God had revealed also, if not fully but partially, to the same fallible, rebellious and unfaithful Hindu sages?

James Barr recently sought to construct a case for natural theology on the basis of scripture and biblical scholarship in his Gifford lectures for 1991. Barr's lecture provided fulfilment theology with a significant implication, as shown in the following points. First, Barr argued from the historical perspective that natural theology had a strong tradition of support within conservative and evangelical Protestantism.⁷⁵⁸ According to him, Calvin and Luther, the major Reformers, sometimes made a guarded and conditional use of it. Barr took an example of Calvin who used natural

⁷⁵⁵ Gaertner wrote a full-length exegetical study on *The Areopagus Speech and Natural Revelation* (1955) in which he argued that Paul's Areopagus speech was not only dependent on Greek ideas, but also on Hebrew and Jewish ideas.

⁷⁵⁶ T. C. Hammond, *Reasoning Faith: An Introduction to Christian Apologetics* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 1943), 88.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁷⁵⁸ Barr included in this category the reformers, Luther and Calvin and the nineteenth century neo-Calvinism of the Princeton theology of the Hodges, and previously mentioned T.C. Hammond in the twentieth century.

theology to prove the impossibility of atheism based on an innate religious instinct, which might not mean much on Kraemer's terms. William Bouwsma wrote, 'Respect for the religious instincts of the natural man, even after the Fall, is also implicit in Calvin's belief in the superiority of Greek religion to other expressions of ancient paganism... Degrees of natural insight imply, in principle, the validity of natural theology'.⁷⁵⁹

Second, Barr wrote that Karl Barth's rejection of natural theology was never really based on biblical exegesis.⁷⁶⁰ Barth wrote about fifteen pages of small print on the sacrifice of two birds plus various goats in Leviticus, and approximately thirty on details in the story of Saul and David. Nevertheless, nowhere did he provide a full-length exegesis of Acts 17 which is highly relevant to natural theology. This fact shows that Barth liked stories that told about election; he did not like stories that led towards natural theology. This is because, according to Barr, he did not build his theology on the Bible as it is, but on modern theology and biblical scholarship of his time.⁷⁶¹

Barr suggested Paul's approach as reported in Acts and Romans is entirely contrary to what any Barthian approach could have been.⁷⁶² In his Areopagus speech, Paul believes that God did this [made every nation of men and determined the times set for them] so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him (Acts 17:27), but God overlooked such ignorance in the past, although now he commands all people to repent (17:30). Paul never used any history, the laws and the experience of Israel, rather he cited a verse from 'a Greek poet'. When he said, 'As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring'(17:28), he identified himself and the people of Athens together with the offspring of the universal 'his God', which is

⁷⁵⁹ James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*, 110. Quoted from W. J. Bouwsma, *John Calvin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 103. In his book Barr meant 'natural theology' as that, just by being human beings, men and women have a certain degree of knowledge of God and awareness of him anterior to the special revelation of God made through Jesus Christ, through the church, through the Bible. It is this pre-existing natural knowledge of God that makes it possible for humanity to receive the additional 'special' revelation. It should be noted that natural theology does not necessarily deny special revelation in his definition.

⁷⁶⁰ Barr, *Ibid.*, 103.

⁷⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 118. Barr argued that Barth followed the trends and developments in modern theology, philosophy, and society, particularly that he depended on certain positions which were the result of historical-critical scholarship. Significant one of these was the alienation from natural theology as most biblical scholars did at least for the last century.

⁷⁶² I will not describe all the details of Barr's points, apart from Paul's Areopagus speech, for this is not the purpose of this chapter.

almost certainly Zeus. Paul did not attack Greek God or Greek thought, but he was on friendly terms with it. His address, as Barr said, without a doubt, depends on, supports, and involves some sort of natural theology.⁷⁶³ John Ziesler also confirmed this in his *Pauline Christianity*: 'The natural theology of Paul's Areopagus speech is akin to the attempts of people like Justin Martyr in the second century to discover a preparation for Christ in pagan philosophy and religion'.⁷⁶⁴ Not only the New Testament, but also the Hebrew Bible provides the basis, according to Barr, upon which a natural theology might be built, and out of which some natural theology did in fact grow.⁷⁶⁵

By Barr's contribution, we come to find that K. Barth's rejection of natural theology was not exactly based on the Bible, and that the natural revelation recognized in fulfilment theology has a firm biblical foundation. It is true that many evangelicals, impressed by the power of sin over the 'unregenerate' human heart, as did Barth and Kraemer, are against natural theology and deny that it has any biblical basis. Yet, Barr's conclusion based on the extensive biblical grounds is that in any case, admitting some complications and possible exceptions, the point he argued must remain true, and natural theology had a strong tradition of support within conservative and evangelical Protestant circles also. If it is true therefore that natural theology in some way underlies the Bible, if it is used and supported by some significant parts of the Bible, Kraemer's rejection of natural theology including fulfilment theology must be erroneous. Even if the elements of fulfilment are considered as a somewhat minor constituent within the Bible, the functions of these elements remain essential to the Bible.

Further Criticism

We have examined the criticisms made prior to the 1938 Conference by three major critics against Slater's fulfilment theology from the intellectual, biblical, and moral point of view. As previously mentioned, ever since then, fulfilment theology has not been particularly noted in current major theological scenes, apart from the Catholic

⁷⁶³ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 27. Quoted from John Ziesler, *Pauline Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 130.

⁷⁶⁵ Barr, *Ibid.*, 101. Barr used Psalm 104, 19 and 119 as the proof texts, along with the prophets (say, Jeremiah 34:8ff, Isaiah 5:8f) and Hebrew Laws (Exodus 18, 2:28ff, Numbers 27:1ff, 36).

thought, although it has been still a useful apologetic instrument to reach Hindus. Nonetheless, there are two significant theological trends to look at in relation to further criticism of Slater's fulfilment theology. The first was the dialogue approach popularized in the 1960s towards the non-Christian faiths encouraged by the Vatican Council Declaration which dealt with natural theology, opening the possibility of salvation outside the Christ and the Catholic church. Raymond Panikkar, a well-known proponent of inter-religious dialogue, developed the seminal idea of the Vatican II documents into more elaborate theological forms. The second was Dalit (the oppressed) theology which emerged during the early 1980s when A. P. Nirmal, then a faculty member at United Theological College employed the idea of 'Shudra theology'. As the traditional Indian Christian theology predominantly became a vehicle to serve the high caste interests, marginalizing Dalit' faiths, Dalit theology manifest itself as a counter-theological movement.⁷⁶⁶ In this context, fulfilment theology was rejected, along with the European missionary movement and traditional Indian Christian theology, as 'metaphysical speculations' having nothing to do directly with the history and existence of the marginalized majority within the Indian church.⁷⁶⁷ This section shall deal with the recent criticisms made by R. Panikkar and the Dalit theologians.

Raymond Panikkar

Panikkar, born in 1918 to an Indian Hindu father and a Spanish Roman Catholic mother, dedicated his life to interfaith dialogue. According to him, dialogue seeks truth by trusting the other in meeting the different religious symbols and traditions together.⁷⁶⁸ Panikkar suggested in his most popular book, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* (1964), how to correlate two distinct faiths while he kept alive the differences between them. *Isvara*, true revealer and personal aspect of *Brāhman*, agent of creation, origin of grace, seems totally different from Christ and yet they can be interpreted and encountered together in terms of the same function of mediator

⁷⁶⁶ George Oommen, "The Emerging Dalit Theology: A Historical Appraisal", *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. XXXIV. No. 1 (June 2000): 19.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷⁶⁸ R. Panikkar, *Myth, Faith and Hermeneutics: Cross-cultural Studies* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 6.

between God and the world of men.⁷⁶⁹ As a Catholic priest, he saw the hidden presence of Christ within Hinduism and concluded that *Īsvara* is no other than Christ, the logos.

Panikkar held in his book, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, that fulfilment theology characterized Hinduism and Christianity as potential-actual; seed-fruit; forerunner-real presence; allegory-thing in itself; desire-accomplishment; symbol-reality; or the Christian dynamism of death-resurrection. He acknowledges that such an analogy is fair, despite its patronizing attitude, and sees its admission in the positive viewpoint that Hindus have access to genuine ultimacy. However, he objected to the analogies of fulfilment theology in the following ways.⁷⁷⁰ First, he rejected the analogy of desire-accomplishment, because such a special definition of Christianity is an unwarranted over-interpretation that might remove the relationship between Christianity and Hinduism from the plane of the ordinary definition of Hinduism. The second objection in relation to the analogy of potential-actual, forerunner-real presence is that if Christianity alone offers the fullness of the theandric reality to men on earth, the proper theological place of Hinduism in the economy of salvation is denied. The third objection is that if a thing is only a potential, it must be unable to function as the actual economy of salvation. Fourth objection to the potency-act model is that the idea not only appears patronizing on the part of Christians and hence distasteful to Hindus but also fails to produce valid argumentation. Panikkar anticipates two kinds of reaction from the Hindu: Either they will say that the boastful claim of Christianity is not true, because all religions are equal and more or less equivalent, or they will turn the Christian statement the other way around, affirming that Hinduism is the end and fulfilment of Christianity.

In response to Panikkar's objections to the dynamic Christian analogies the following answers can be offered from the perspective of fulfilment theology. First, the analogies of relationship between Hinduism and Christianity as desire-accomplishment and potency-act can be justified by Panikkar's own assumption that Christianity embodies the fullness of God's revelation and that no other religion has the fullness. As Panikkar objected to the belief that only Christianity has the fullness of

⁷⁶⁹ R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 225.

⁷⁷⁰ R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1981), 90-95.

God's revelation and saving power,⁷⁷¹ he appeared to reject totally the fullness of Christian revelation. Yet we may question this assertion. It needs to be noted here that he acknowledged a special status of Christian revelation as fullness or final, while he believed the saving power within Hinduism and Christianity. That is the reason why hundreds of millions of Hindus for millennia, according to him, has been led and inspired, not by *Ísvara* or *Brāhman*, but by the 'Logos himself', and *Ísvara*, for Panikkar, is none other than 'Christ, the Logos'.⁷⁷² R. Boyd's analysis of Panikkar agrees to this point:

It is in Christianity, however, that Christ is fully revealed, and so the work of the Christian mission is that of unveiling 'the hidden Christ of Hinduism', and the relationship of Hinduism to Christianity can be spoken of as that of seed to fruit, of desire to accomplishment, above all of death to resurrection, for it is in dying with Christ and rising in Him that Hinduism will find its true meaning, since 'risen Hinduism' will in fact be Christianity.⁷⁷³

W. Ariarajah also pointed out Panikkar's lopsided position from the Hindu perspective: 'And yet, for the Hindu, Panikkar would appear to be as imperialistic as Rahner, for both of them, in the last analysis, insist on the finality of Christ in one sense or another'.⁷⁷⁴ If Panikkar, as Boyd and Ariarajah said, admits the fullness of God's revelation in Christ, the above-mentioned dynamic analogies must be valid.

Second, the 'potency' in Panikkar's analogy can be identified, as against his assumption, as an actual economy of salvation in Slater's fulfilment theology. Hinduism as potency, in Slater's terms, functions not only as a preparation for salvation but also as an actual economy of salvation for the Hindus who have lived or live according to the reason or the light they have.⁷⁷⁵

Third, Panikkar's logos which inspires the sages of Hinduism as well as the prophets of Israel and is at work in Hindu prayer is none other than Slater's logos. His emphasis on the universal salvific will of God as present and active in all religions was based, as for Slater, on Acts 14:16-17, 'He left not himself without witnesses'. Panikkar's thesis, 'Christ's presence in Hinduism' was thus clearly overshadowed

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁷⁷² *Ibid.*, 1. R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 223.

⁷⁷³ R. Boyd, *Ibid.*, 222, 223.

⁷⁷⁴ Wesley Ariarajah, *Hindus and Christians*, 211.

⁷⁷⁵ Slater, *God Revealed*, 57.

almost one hundred year ago by Slater's logos, the Christ-within, although the terminology 'unknown Christ' was not used in Slater's terms.

Farquhar's fulfilment theology was given considerable attention and revived in the early 1960s, along with the emergence of the dialogue approach, due to its positive approach to other faiths. However, his fulfilment theology was found, in the course of time, insufficient in an age when dialogue was inevitable and urgent, because everywhere in the world Christians are living in a pluralistic society and are faced with the challenge of living peacefully together as human beings.⁷⁷⁶ That is why Panikkar criticized the fulfilment theology, more accurately, Farquhar's theology in terms of its negative view of the salvific value in Hinduism, but he was enormously influenced by the logos theology which enables him to acknowledge the horizontal relationship between Hinduism and Christianity. R. Boyd thus rightly remarked that the fulfilment approach foreshadowed that recently made by Raymond Panikkar in *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* with his idea of Christianity as Hinduism which has died and risen again transformed.⁷⁷⁷ It is noteworthy that Panikkar's criticism was primarily made against the denial of the salvific experience in Hinduism a point made earlier by Chenchiah, and yet, they share with Slater the logos, Christ himself who inspires and speaks to all men and all religions, although their emphasis and terminology are different.

Dalit Theology

Dalit theology has been very critical of fulfilment theology in a form different to Panikkar, ever since it surfaced in 1980s. Sathianathan Clarke, a prominent Dalit theologian, takes a note of two fundamental problems of traditional Indian Christian theology: that it tends to be exclusionary by turning a deaf ear to the religious resources of the Dalits; that it tends to serve the interest of the dominant caste community rather than of the Dalits (the oppressed).⁷⁷⁸ Clarke thus urges for Indian Christian theologians to take the responsibility of dealing with the culture and religion of a significant portion of its subaltern members. Dalit theologians on the

⁷⁷⁶ World Council of Churches, *Christians in Dialogue with Men of Other Faiths: The Zurich Aide-Memoire* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1971), 33.

⁷⁷⁷ R. Boyd, *An Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, 89.

⁷⁷⁸ Sathianathan Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity: Subaltern Religion and Liberation Theology in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1, 21.

whole were of the opinion, according to Clarke, that the theological and cultural domination of *Brāhmanic* traditions within Indian Christianity, excluding and ignoring the rich cultural and religious experience of the Dalits had to be ignored, if not rejected completely.⁷⁷⁹ George Oommen also wrote about the tendency of the Indian church in rejecting the traditional Indian Christian theology of the 20th century as metaphysical speculation far removed from the every day existence of the marginalized majority. He thus viewed the Dalit theological movement as a corrective to the hegemonic and institutionalized traditional theology.⁷⁸⁰

K. P. Aleaz, Professor of Religions at Bishop's College in India, introduces a new attempt, in line with the above trend to seek to correct the classical Indian theology, to present Christ as 'drum' among the Paraiyars, those claiming to be the original inhabitants of the land and who have been socially, culturally, and religiously oppressed through a long history.⁷⁸¹ As historically Dalits have been prevented from using the 'sacred' mode of the written word, their rich communal religious reflectivity is expressed in non-textual/non-scriptive forms, i.e. music, painting, dance, weaving, song, and architecture. The religions of the Paraiyar cannot be interpreted without an imaginative look at the drum, a central religious symbol in communicating with the divine. The drum symbolizes the mediating and empowering presence of the divine which protects the Paraiyar from the caste community.⁷⁸²

Clarke also, in his extensive research on the divine sound of Paraiyar community, presented a drum as the 'Christic presence' that reaches out to the interiority of subaltern communities, connecting them together through being immediately present to them.⁷⁸³ He wrote how the drum works among the Dalits: 'The drum, which mediates this Christic presence to the Dalits, assures them that there was and is no time in which they were or are without the presence of the immanent God. It is through the medium of the drum that the immanent presence of God (the Christ) penetrates all realm of human living space'.⁷⁸⁴ Based on this analysis, he contends that the Paraiyar by means of the drum both establish their human identity in

⁷⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷⁸⁰ George Oommen, "The Emerging Dalit Theology: A Historical Appraisal", 26.

⁷⁸¹ K. P. Aleaz, "In Quest of a Dalit Theology", *Religion and Society*, Vol. 49, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2004): 82-87.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, 86.

⁷⁸³ S. Clarke, *Dalits and Christianity*, 183.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 188.

interrelationship with other caste groups through their common participation in the ritual community and reiterate their particular authority as human mediators and controllers of sacred powers with which the caste communities need to be reconciled.⁷⁸⁵

Clarke's research successfully turns the traditional view of Dalit religions as a breeding ground for the forces of the demonic into the field to experience the presence of the Christian God. Moreover, Clarke's interpretation of the Paraiyar's drum clearly shows how it can function as the dynamics of emancipatory resistance and emancipatory reconciliation for the Dalit community. One thing to be noted here is that we may find that the drum, the Christic presence, appears similar to the logos of Slater. As is the logos of Slater, the drum works for the redemption of the Dalit community at all times. The drum has the function to mediate the answer to the questions and aspirations of the community people.⁷⁸⁶ Although a drum is not enough for telling the full story of redemption, it works as a good complimentary preparation for Christ. In Clark's presentation, the drum might be connected to the 'witness and promise of redemption' of Slater which testifies the Christ's presence, the immanent God in the Brāhmanic religion. Although Clark's attempt was to suggest a counter theology to the traditional Indian Christian theology, it shows that fulfilment theology that was presumed to be bound in Brāhmanic religion could be, in a way, an instrument for presenting the Christian message in relation to Dalit faiths through the logos idea of Slater. Such a possibility of creating an applicable fulfilment theology to the interest of the emancipation and redemption for the Dalits should be done hopefully, although this would be a new project to deal with in the future research.

In conclusion, assessment of Slater's fulfilment theology is polarised depending on the theological position of critics, their understanding of Hinduism, and fields of their theological work. If the old faith is viewed as no longer functional after conversion to Christianity, as argued by Farquhar, or if Christianity is held as the 'revelation of God' and Christ is held as the crisis of all religions, as argued by Kraemer, then fulfilment theology is considered pessimistic. Those who see that Hindus are satisfied with their faith, having very different desires from Christian faith, will be highly

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 193.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 184.

supportive of Hogg, denying the fulfilment theology of Farquhar and Slater. Particularly, Dalit theologians strongly object to fulfilment theology or ignore it, since it has been assumed as being employed in the service for *Brāhmanic* hegemony and indifferent to the faith and everyday life of the marginalized majority of Indian Christians.

Slater's fulfilment theology, however, is identified as optimistic, if old faith is believed to hold a continuing role for the converts, and if natural theology is viewed as having a firm biblical foundation as illustrated in Barr. Those who believe Christian faith has the answer to the aspirations of Hindus find the sympathetic method of Slater proper and effective in appealing to the Hindus, rather than Hogg's contrast method. If anybody wants to acknowledge, like Panikkar, a saving experience in Hinduism, while holding the special status of Christ, the logos idea of Slater might be identified as valuable. As against the assumption of Dalit theologians, Slater's logos theology seems quite applicable to both *Brāhmanic* and Dalit theology.

To be noted here is that Slater's fulfilment theology might be sympathetic, unlike the fulfilment theology known through Farquhar, even by opposing critics, owing to his logos idea. Hogg's 'finding' in Hinduism, Panikkar's 'unknown Christ' in Hinduism seems well matched with Slater's 'logos', the Christ-within. Chenchia's 'new cosmic energy' for the transformation of the world and Chakkarai's '*paramātmān*' who has prepared men's heart for Christ, does not seem incompatible with Slater's logos. The 'drum' symbol of Aleaz and Clarke might exhibit a potentiality of Slater's logos theology to connect to Dalit faith as well as *Brāhmanic* faith.

Conclusion

The Legacy of T.E. Slater

Some historical missionary literature and the analysis conducted in this research identify Slater's critical contribution to fulfilment theology. Such an assertion redresses the fact that Slater's work in the realm of fulfilment theology has been overshadowed by Farquhar and omitted for almost over a century. In the course of exploring the research questions through the chapters, the following statements can be drawn here as a conclusion. Firstly, Slater markedly emerged as a definite figure who not only initiated fulfilment model but also promoted its well-organised form by the end of 19th century, earlier than normally alleged, to the extent that the fulfilment model was the dominant model to reach the Hindus in India. The fulfilment model rose under the influence of Slater as a major missionary approach to the non-Christian religions even before Farquhar advanced his fulfilment model for the first time in 1903. Secondly, Slater pioneered, among Protestant missionaries, an irenic relationship between Christianity and Hinduism, based on his application of the logos doctrine to the Hindu Vedānta. Slater's logos theology provided, by defining Hinduism as a preparatory work of the logos, Christ-within, a ground of irenic relationship between Hinduism and Christianity, and a significant theological justification for creating indigenous Indian Christian theology in relation to Hinduism. Thirdly, Slater's theology had a major influence in the preparation of the Commission IV (*The Christian Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions*) of the 1910 Edinburgh Conference. Lastly, Slater's theological approach to world faiths was exemplary of late 19th/early 20th century Congregationalist theology on both sides of the Atlantic, and in India.

While Slater's fulfilment theology has had its critics both in and after his time and its acme in 1910 Edinburgh Conference passed away, it is far from being dead. The fact that the fulfilment idea of the Alexandrian Fathers of the second and the third century was quickened by Slater in the late 19th century and it was once again invigorated in 1960s under the influence of dialogic ethos evinces the strength of the fulfilment idea. The belief that Indian religions are fulfilled by Christianity might cause an affront and distaste to Indians in the pluralistic Indian context in which the

diverse religious convictions should be respected. Moreover, fulfilment theology in close association with Brāhmanic religion and the high caste appears utterly irrelevant and unhelpful to the oppressed majority of Christians within Indian churches. Nonetheless, it is true, as P. Hedges remarked, that the notion of fulfilment remains not just an attractive, but also, in one form or another, an extremely compelling option particularly for those who wish to advocate Christian superiority yet also acknowledge the good to be found within the non-Christian religions.⁷⁸⁷

Particularly, Slater's fulfilment theology with the logos idea is still seen as applicable and performing its role on the Indian Christian theological scene, while Farquhar's theological perspective might be outdated, or discarded in this age of dialogue. In this respect, Slater's fulfilment theology is acknowledged not only as a 19th century model, but also as a contemporary model. Thus, the following legacy of Slater can be appreciated. First, Slater was perhaps the first missionary who, while he did not condemn Hinduism but recognised its positive value, formulated a preparation-fulfilment model in an organised form to present the Christian gospel to the Hindus. Traditional evangelical groups of missionaries were likely to condemn and attack Indian faiths, or if not at all, at least deny any continuity in them as could be seen in H. Kraemer. The distinctiveness and superiority of Christian faith might be well kept in this group, but the Indian faiths and cultures fall to the category of something to discard and they can no longer be related to express the Christian gospel. On the other hand, another group of Christians accept the Indian faiths as they are, without keeping the special value of Christian faith. This is approving to dialogue and fraternity and yet, it deprives them of the characteristic element with which they can share for the non-Christian people.

Slater sublates both poles: he recognises that there is much good in Indian religious and cultural traditions, while he keeps the supremacy of the biblical Christ. His model of preparation and fulfilment embraces both elements together and because of its ability to juggle these two elements, it is accused of not being strict enough, or arrogant from both sides. Nonetheless, this model cannot be wrong unless Christian missionaries renounce their conversion ministry or they bring a cessation to the attempt of making the Christian gospel feel at home to the ear of Hindus. In this

⁷⁸⁷ P. Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfilment*, 394.

respect it is worth noting that fulfilment theology has always provided the dominant apologetic avenue, at least, for the evangelicals who worked for the high caste Hindus, such as Sundar Singh (1889-1929), A. J. Appasamy (1891-1975), R. C. Das (1887-1976),⁷⁸⁸ and Paul Sudhakar.⁷⁸⁹ Therefore, whoever wishes to communicate the Christian message in the mould of Indian philosophy, without losing the supremacy of Christ, may certainly find Slater's fulfilment theology as still relevant and useful in their approach to the higher castes.

Second, Slater might be the first missionary who recognised the significance and possibility of Vedānta thought through which Christians can interpret and communicate the gospel. Due to the lack of emphasis on the sinful nature of the human person, the impersonal nature of God, and the ultimate loss of individuality of a person in the Absolute, the *Advaita* Vedānta system had been rejected by missionaries as a means to express Christian truth. Nevertheless, Slater foresaw that the Christianity of the future would of necessity take a Vedāntic colouring, since the Vedāntic thought is so thoroughly Indian. He thus made his audience aware of the greatest need of India to raise up the native Christian scholars who could construct Indian Christian theology in relation to Vedānta thought, independent from Western missionaries. Considering his influence through active publication work, it seems no coincidence that B. Upādhyāy (1861-1907), a Catholic fulfilment theologian, formulated, in Slater's day, the Indian trinity out of the Upanisad' concept of *sat-cit-ānanda* (Being-Intelligence-Bliss) and the Christian doctrine of creation from *māyā* (illusion or creative power) in Śankara's writings. Starting from Upādhyāy, there emerged a number of theologians who developed Christian thought in the context of Vedānta, such as R. V. De Smet, S. J. Samartha, K. P. Aleaz, and R. Panikkar. It is significant that such pioneering work was done by many scholars notably in line with Slater's fulfilment theology, for example; P. Johanns, S. Abhishirktananda, B. Griffiths and R. Panikkar, as well as B. Upādhyāy.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁸ Das was a founder of the Christian Society for the Study of Hinduism and the former long-time representative of National Christian Councils. He was indisputably the central figure, according to H. L. Richard, in the field of Christian evangelism among Hindus in the 20th century. See H.L. Richard, *Evangelical Prophet for Contextual Christianity* (Bangalore: ISPCCK, 1999), 1.

⁷⁸⁹ Sudhakar's date is not clear. He is the best known recent Hindu convert to Christianity and he worked within the Evangelical Fellowship of India. Refer to Paul Sudhakar, *Evangelism among Hindus* (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship), 1975.

⁷⁹⁰ K. P. Aleaz, *Christian Thought Through Advaita Vedanta*. 211, 212.

Third, Slater was one of the pioneers of inter-faith dialogue in today's terms and lived a model of the way of dialogue in his life and work. Slater's lectures always accompanied the native chairperson and the ensuing discussion time, along with personal one-to-one conversations; thus K. Cracknell described his work as 'mission as dialogue' rather than mission as proclamation.⁷⁹¹ More importantly, Slater offered a method of doing justice which aimed to gain some common grounds and trust considered essential in his encounter with his Hindu neighbours. Doing justice for Slater meant that the Hindu faiths and cultures must be judged not by its worst, but by its best from the standpoint of its own religious books and systems, that Christians as well as Hindus need to identify themselves as seekers after the ultimate truth, and that Christians should learn from Hindus as well as teach them. Doing justice both to Christians and Hindus caused him to study Hinduism in-depth, find four Indian Gospels with which a Christian East may evangelise the West,⁷⁹² and to find the Hindu scriptures as a revelation of God rather than just human ingenuity. Slater told his contemporaries, 'We shall never gain the non-Christian world until we treat its religions with justice, courtesy and love'.

Although Slater strived to treat his Hindu neighbours with fairness, he could not be entirely free from the biased and superior attitude of a British missionary in the colonial era. Nonetheless, nobody before Slater had insisted on the highest principle of justice and attempted to apply it consistently, like Slater, to their own theology and work, as well as to other faiths. Slater's ideal of doing justice and his sympathetic approach to Hinduism gave overwhelming influence on his contemporaries in terms of reducing the mutual antagonism and encouraging the appreciative attitude to Hinduism as was clearly seen in the papers of the Indian missionaries to the Commission IV of Edinburgh World Missionary Conference in 1910. Therefore, K. Cracknell's credit seems quite right that Slater was a model for interfaith dialogue in which all religious traditions must be approached with 'justice, courtesy and love'.⁷⁹³

Fourth, Slater employed the logos idea, in his presentation of Christian message in relation with the higher Hinduism, which enabled him to justify and anticipate a

⁷⁹¹ K. Cracknell, *Justice, Courtesy and Love*, 114.

⁷⁹² The four Indian gospels Slater found were 'the Contemplative Life, the Presence of the Unseen, the Aspiration after Ultimate Being, Reverence for the Sanctions of the Past'. See Slater's paper on "The Contribution of the Church in India to the World's Interpretation of Christ", 107.

⁷⁹³ K. Cracknell, *Ibid.*, 119.

variety of indigenous Indian Christian theologies later on, although their terms and points of emphasis are different. Slater's idea that God has not left himself without witness, the presence of the logos in Hinduism, provides the theological justification for presenting Christian thought through the Hindu thought. Unless Hinduism is appreciated, nobody could properly formulate indigenous Christian theology utilising Indian terms and thought forms. Slater's logos theory serves as a theological validation for the world faiths as witness to the Christ, and formulating Christian theology in indigenous form. That is the reason why the logos idea lies beneath Sundar Singh's 'Indian vessels' for the 'Water of Life', A. J. Appasamy's adoption of Rāmānuja's philosophy as the best Indian instrument for the Christian message, Chenchiah's *mahāśakti* (great power) as 'the new cosmic energy' for the whole creation and V. Chakkarai's *paramātman* (the Supreme) who revealed himself in India as he speaks in the Christian Bible. In this respect, contemporary indigenous Indian Christian theologies owe much to Slater's logos theology as the basis on which they could build their own structures.

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Box 11-12.

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