A CASE-STUDY IN "HINDU CATHOLICISM": BRAHMABANDHAB UPADHYAY (1861–1907)[1]

by Julius Lipner

In the turbulent religious, social and political history of a subcontinent marching towards nationhood after a hundred years of increasing British sovereignty, 1861, the year in which the Bengali BHABANICHARAN BANERJEA, later known as BRAHMABANDHAB UPADHYAY, was born, was as deceptively calm as the eye of a hurricane. A few years earlier, in 1857, the Uprisings had brought sharply to the attention of subject and ruler alike, India's potential for political self-assertion.[2] In the mutual recoil that followed, there began to crystallize that perception of a collective Indian identity in the eyes of English-educated natives which precipitated the nationalist movement. Bengal and Bengalis were in the vanguard of this movement. The reason is not far to seek. In the beginning of the century it was chiefly Bengal which proved susceptible, with the expansion of British rule, to the winds of intellectual and cultural change sweeping in from the west. This was only to be expected since the urban complex of Howrah-Calcutta astride the Hooghly in the very bosom of the Presidency was in 19th century the hub of British influence.

UPADHYAY, as a Bengali steeped in his own and in western culture, was both child and father of the India coming to birth. Like other English-educated Indians of the time, he was forced by circumstances to shape his individual identity by combining elements from east and west. This traumatic but creative process is especially manifest in his chequered religious career. At the same time he made a signal contribution to the many-sided formation of his country as a nation. His short life of 46 years – he died in 1907 – spanned one of the most important phases of India's development as a nation. In the course of his activities he encountered some of the "greats" of the nation-making process: his paternal uncle, the "Rev" KALICHARAN BANERJEA, KESHUBCHANDRA SEN and PROTAPCHANDRA MAJUMDAR, RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA and VIVEKANANDA, DEBENDRANATH and RABINDRANATH TAGORE, ANNIE BESANT and AUROBINDO GHOSE, and a host of lesser luminaries.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE characterised him thus: "On the one hand, he was a Roman Catholic ascetic, on the other, a Vedāntic – energetic, fearless, self-denying, learned and uncommonly influential."[3] A Roman Catholic ascetic on the one hand, a learned follower of Vedānta – one of the most important traditions of Hinduism – on the other. This enigmatic juxtaposition of terms takes us to the heart of the matter. We find it difficult to make sense of today; in UPADHYAY's time it seemed a contradiction.

The enigma of his being "Catholic" and "Hindu" at the same time is reflected in the selective way he is usually treated by modern writers. Either the Hindu element comes to the fore and he is regarded as a nationalist, his social or religious concerns being dismissed as secondary, or he is regarded as a Catholic innovator who eventually lapsed into Hinduism again and

misguidedly got involved in politics. UPADHYAY resists neat pigeon-holing; no doubt this is one reason why there is a dearth of rounded, critical studies on the man.[4]

One-sided treatments of UPADHYAY fail to account for a crucial feature of life in mid nineteenth-century Bengal: that it was typical for Bengalis exposed to western ideas to articulate their patriotism by the blending of social and religious concerns. The conviction among the Bengali intelligentsia that the motherland would be fit for self-rule only after the thraldom of caste and religious orthodoxy was abolished, that social and religious reform could be effective only after the reformer first experienced a spiritual transformation, was the legacy of the work of India's first outstanding modern thinker, RAM MOHAN ROY (1772?–1833?).

UPADHYAY was no exception to this conviction. It is the predominance of the religious element and the manner of its blending in his life that are unique. In the field of Hindu-Christian dialogue in general and Catholic-Vedāntic understanding in particular, UPADHYAY was a pioneer. In recent times in India he has been hailed as an inspiration by Christian indigenisers. Indeed, he is in danger of becoming a cult figure. He has been called the Father of Indian (Christian) theology, a prophet disowned.[5] Buildings in seminaries and Theological Colleges – the nursery of Christian officialdom – have been named after him.[6] And all this without the benefit of sufficient serious study of his thought and works. No doubt cult figures are all to the good, but they must be allowed to exercise their influence only after careful scrutiny. So it must be with UPADHYAY. And it may be that in teasing out the religious strands of his career we shall throw light not only on the question as to how relevant UPADHYAY's explorations are for indigenising the Christian faith in India, but also on the principles for translating and adapting this faith in cultures with which it is unfamiliar.

We must begin by analysing the forces which set the scene for UPADHYAY's activities. The period ushered in in Bengal from the 1830s has been described, increasingly glibly in the literature, as a "renaissance". This expression is misleading. What we may call renaissance influences were certainly at work, but so were forces stemming from the Enlightenment. The new India resulted from both.

By the 1850s the research of such Orientalists as W. JONES, H. T. COLEBROOKE, and E. BURNOUF into India's ancient heritage had been interpreted, generally under the lead of the Orientalists themselves, as opening up a vista of a golden past. Classicism was in the air. Before and even after the Anglicist-Orientalist controversy of the 1830s – and in spite of the outcome – the so-called nobility of ancient Vedic ideals was contrasted favourably with the social vicissitudes and superstitious religion of the present. Classical Sanskrit was hailed, as its name implies, as a language of excellence.[7] We must remember that this was an age innocent of the knowledge of the great non-Aryan Indus Valley Civilisation of about 2000 B.C.

Westernised Bengalis accepted this contrast, though often with qualifications. Sanskrit, already the traditional pan-Hindu vehicle of high culture, now

symbolised for them the excellence of Hindu capability and became the repository par excellence of the treasures of Hindu wisdom. Our study of UPADHYAY will give occasion for an appraisal of the crucial role Sanskrit played and indeed continues to play in the business of adapting the Christian faith in India. And if it was not always nor exclusively to the Vedas that educated Bengalis looked for the rebirth of ideals which would purge the corruptions of the present, it was invariably to aspects of a distant age that they thus turned. We shall see that UPADHYAY exemplifies this tendency in classic manner. Thus for the Bengali intelligentsia of 19th century, as cultural brokers who faced the insecurities of forging identities for themselves by a synthesis of east and west, this revisionary appeal to the past was a means not only of rehabilitating a subject race in British eyes but of putting down roots in a native culture from which they were becoming alienated.

So much for the Renaissance; but the Enlightenment was also much in evidence. The spirit of the Enlightenment was a spirit of critical inquiry, unfettered by dogmas of the past. English-educated Bengali youngmen absorbed new ideas streaming in from the west – ideas which fostered social reform on egalitarian principles, called for the emancipation of women from subordinate roles in society, proclaimed the notion of citizens equal under the law, and questioned belief in the existence of God and the observance of traditional religion. Bengali youth avidly read LOCKE, HUME, KANT, A. SMITH, BENTHAM, PAINE and others and sought to implement what they had read by challenging the tired dogmas of their own society and religion. Hindu orthodoxy was dethroned and reason enshrined in its place. Debating societies and study clubs proliferated. Journals and newspapers were brought to life in droves, most soon dying for lack of support. Vitriolic pamphlet wars of one kind or another abounded. As the nationalist cause crystallized with the passing of time, the presses worked harder, churning out publications in English which helped unify the country as a whole, and in the vernacular which enhanced local and linguistic identity-groupings. UPADHYAY had a not unimportant part to play in this whole process. Thus the Bengali intelligentsia of the time were no less heirs of the Enlightenment than children of a Renaissance. If for them "old was gold", it was equally important to follow the dictum: dare to think for yourself (sapere aude). In the main, from the 30s on, they had two instruments for change: the movement known as Young Bengal and the Brahmo Samaj (or Society of God).

Young Bengal grew around its centre, the Luso-Indian HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO (1809–1831).[8] By the time he was 20, this remarkable young man held a lecturing post in Literature and History at Hindu College, founded in Calcutta in 1816 and perhaps the city's premier western-style institution for native youths. DEROZIO exerted enormous personal influence on the young men of the College till his untimely death of cholera at the age of 22. During regular sessions in College and at his home, he encouraged his followers to debate such matters as patriotism, atheism and the meaning of freedom. Young Bengal scandalised Hindu orthodoxy by its response. Hallowed caste and religious taboos were swept aside overnight. As one newspaper report

put it, the Derozians stormed orthodoxy by 'cutting their way through ham and beef and wading to liberalism through tumblers of beer'. Young Bengal was a spent force by the late 1840s. By then, however, its influence, now channelled through DEBENDRANATH TAGORE's Tattvabodhini Sabha (founded 1839) which a number of Derozians had joined, was softening resistance to more temperate ways of social and religious reform. It lived on in the constructive endeavours of not a few – including converts to Christianity – who went on to build the manysided ideology of the new India.

The Brahmo Samaj was perhaps the most powerful temperate instrument for social and religious reform in nineteenth-century Bengal. The Derozians attacked orthodoxy's citadel with a battering-ram; the Brahmo Samaj, however, was the Trojan horse. Started in 1828 as the Brahmo Sabha by RAM MOHAN ROY with the express intention of reforming Hinduism from within, by the late 1850s it was about to erupt into one of the most fertile periods of its history under the leadership of KESHUB CHANDRA SEN (1838–1884). By then it had developed a doctrine of "Vedantic monotheism" informed by a puritan ethic on the basis of which it was agitating for socio-religious reform, for a "pure" religion which eschewed polytheism, priestcraft and discrimination based on sex and caste. By the time UPADHYAY was to join the movement in 1887, much of its creative momentum had been dissipated by ideological and institutional rifts.[9] Yet the Sen faction, to which UPADHYAY belonged, was still an effective force for change, and greatly influenced UPADHYAY's religion. In short, both Young Bengal and the Brahmo Samaj arose as a blend of east and west. Their supporters were Indians who acted as cultural brokers, articulating their commitment to India's regeneration by reference to western notions of patriotism, freedom and equality and western instruments of progress (the press, the debating society, the committee, etc.). The Bengali intelligentsia ate of a tree of knowledge and then found themselves naked; they sought to clothe this nakedness with material synthetised out of indigenous and western elements.

It would be naïve to think that Bengali young men learnt English to imbibe revolutionary ideas. To be blunt, the original incentive to learn English was to get on under British rule. After the controversy between the Anglicists and the Orientalists was resolved in favour of the former for reasons summed up in brilliant fashion by Macaulay's Minute of 1835,[10] upper-caste Bengali fathers saw clearly that the success of their sons' futures depended on proficiency in English (their daughters were to remain subject for many years to more traditional parental aspirations). Many of these men were themselves inclined to traditional values and customs, yet they helped fund the establishment of English-teaching schools for their sons. These schools cropped up all over the Presidency and turned out an increasing number of young men who found employment in the British orbit, in the lower echelons of the Civil Service and as doctors, lawyers, pleaders and teachers.

For reasons already mentioned, Calcutta was the intellectual focus of change in nineteenth-century Bengal, if not indeed in nineteenth-century India. The metropolis, for the same reasons, was also the converging point

for new patterns of physical and social mobility. In the wake of the Permanent Settlement of Lord Cornwallis in 1793, which had a cumulative effect in transforming land revenue, land rights and land holdings in Bengal, Bengalis of the three upper castes – the Brahmins, the Vaidyas and the Kayasthas – increasingly alienated from parcels of land which yielded less and less, headed for Calcutta in search of employment under British patronage. It was Bengalis such as these – later called the "bhadralok", i.e. the "cultured folk" – who demanded the establishment of English-teaching schools and populated them with their sons. From an early age UPADHYAY was subjected to these ideological prejudices with respect to Calcutta so that he eventually made Calcutta the centre of his activities after a prolonged sojourn in Sindh.[11]

We must advert to one more feature of life in Bengal before attending more closely to UPADHYAY. This concerns the nature of Christian allegiance available to the convert in Bengal. With reference to the encounter between Christianity and Hinduism it may not be simplifying too much to distinguish two kinds of Christian approach, both with their home in western Christianity.[12] The one, strongly evangelical in tone, viewed human nature as utterly corrupted by the Fall, its original goodness evaporated, its present bent to sin alone. Of themeselves human probings towards the divine in the various religions of the world were deluded and doomed to failure. Only God's saving revelation in Christ could enlighten and sanctify man. Consequently, in general the theology of non-Christian religions of this approach was confrontational, its intent towards Hinduism in particular uncompromisingly directed to conversion. The old order, root and branch, must give way to the new. For all the well-meaning scholarship it contained, the influential theology of the British Baptist missionaries emanating from the Danish enclave of Serampore near Calcutta from the early 19th century, was a good example of this kind.[13]

The other approach was more conciliatory. Human nature had not been shattered but only deeply flawed by the Fall – there remained a workable base on which God's grace in Christ could act. Consequently non-Christian religious strivings were not to be rejected a priori; they could act as the natural base of God's saving action. Scrutiny of the non-Christian religion would show where grace could perfect nature. Thus Hinduism was not organically evil in principle, but capable of manifesting in places the light of divine grace. It would not be inaccurate to affirm that, individual shifts of emphasis notwithstanding, in the India of the time the first approach represented Protestant thinking, the second Roman Catholic. As a convert to Roman Catholicism UPADHYAY was heir to a not unconciliatory theological approach to his native religion.

BRAHMABANDHAB UPADHYAY was the product and a creative agent of all the forces analysed hitherto. Thus with hindsight we may say that it was in a Bengal pregnant with foreboding that he grew up. For our purposes it will be useful to distinguish three phases of his life: the formative years which culminated in his baptism, the period of Catholic activism, and the final, if

brief, nationalist stage. Of course these are not compartments: we hope to show that a number of unifying threads run through the tapestry of his life.

BHABANICHARAN BANDYOPADHYAY (or "BANERJEA" in its anglicised form) – UPADHYAY's given name – was born the youngest of three sons in a Brahmin home in the village of Khanyan, about 35 miles north of Calcutta. His father, DEBICHARAN, worked for the government in the police force and became well-known as a scourge of the dacoits or bandits that roamed the countryside. It was DEBICHARAN's bhadralok mentality which decided the form of BHABANICHARAN's education from an early age, in various English-style schools in and around Calcutta. We are told that BHABANICHARAN excelled in English in these schools. Also significant, no doubt, as it was in the case of other converts to Christianity during the period, was his exposure to the study of the Bible – a necessary component of the curriculum in educational institutions invariably under the watchful eye of missionary-minded administrators.

But other, more traditional influences, were also to have a lasting effect on the boy. Motherless from infancy, he was put in the care of his grandmother, CHANDRAMONI, in the paternal home. CHANDRAMONI was uneducated by the modern standards of the time, yet by all accounts she was a formidable woman. She was steeped in traditional Hindu lore and proud of her status as a Brahmin. She ruled the household with a rod of iron but had a soft spot for her youngest grandson. She must have communicated an enduring sense of caste to the impressionable boy, with fateful consequences as we shall see. But she also passed on to him her deep knowledge of traditional Hindu culture and Bengali idiom which UPADHYAY in the last phase of his life was to use to powerful effect in the nationalist cause. It was CHANDRAMONI who laid the foundation for the distinctive brand of Hinduism that characterised UPADHYAY's career.

The family's tutelary deity was the goddess Kālī. This could not have been the mild, almost sensual figure the sage Ramakrishna popularised later in Bengal, but the awesome deity current in popular devotion – of frightful countenance, terrible to her enemies but beneficent to her devotees. Towards the end of his life UPADHYAY invoked Kālī-the-Terrible in graphic Bengali as a mediatrix of India's freedom. The family must have been open to the gentler influences of Vaishṇavism too, if BHABANICHARAN's mother's name, RADHAKUMARI, is anything to go by. In any case, as is well known, Vaishṇava influences were pervasive in the Bengal of the time. This must have familiarised the young boy with the life of the Lord Krishna as the focus of popular devotion.

One more apparently seminal religious influence on the child deserves mention: the regular visits of his father's younger brother, KALICHARAN BANERJEA (1847–1907), who became famous throughout India as a leading figure in the nationalist movement, notwithstanding his conversion to Christianity.[14] By the time BHABANICHARAN was three, his uncle had already joined the Free Church faction of the Church of Scotland. We are told that on

a Saturday he would visit the house and often taught BHABANICHARAN his lessons.[15] Thus developed a lifelong friendship – both died within a few months of each other – from which UPADHYAY's religious and cultural ideas were shaped not a little.

So as he grew up the young BHABANI was exposed to that healthy spirit of religious relativism with which so many Hindus are endowed, though his Hindu roots went very deep; this is a not unimportant consideration for assessing his religious career.

At 13 he was invested with the sacred thread, the symbol of initiation into all the responsibilities and privileges of a twice-born Hindu. This reinforced his sense of being a Brahmin, for, about a year later, he decided to abstain from alcohol, fish and meat for the rest of his life. He broke this resolution only twice (where fish and meat were concerned) and then under extraordinary circumstances.[16] He never tasted alcohol. Thus the path of Young Bengal to reform was not his. He took a different route.

But BHABANICHARAN's abstemious diet was never an excuse for an inactive life. He remained a sportsman till late in life. He emphasised physical culture, as it was called, especially in the various schools with which he was involved in one way or another throughout his life, because he believed that it instilled a martial temperament and a sense of teamwork in his wards. This was necessary for achieving patriotic goals. But there was also a personal reason. Bengalis had acquired by the middle of the century a reputation for being physically timid in comparison with the more martial northerners and westerners. BHABANICHARAN wished to counter this image and went to great lengths to do so. Once, later in life, when he was about 40, and collaborating with RABINDRANATH TAGORE in setting up the institution which was to develop into TAGORE's brain-child, Vishwabharati University in Santiniketan (about 100 miles due north of Calcutta), he chanced to hear that a wrestler from the Punjab had arrived. This wrestler had issued a challenge to a trial bout to anyone who cared to take it up. RATHINDRANATH TAGORE, the poet's son, continues the story: "Upadhyayji came running in tights and, with loud slaps on the biceps, as is the custom, challenged the Punjabi giant to a fight. And didn't the Bengali intellectual give a good time to the professional wrestler!"[17] This incident gives a revealing insight into the forcefulness of UPADHYAY's character.

Apace with his western education, he studied Sanskrit. As a teenager he would, of his own accord, regularly cross the Hooghly after school hours near his home to study the Sanskritic tradition at the famous tol or native seminary of Bhatpara nearby. Was he inspired in this by the example of another famous Bengali convert to Christianity nearly half a century earlier? – the Anglican KRISHNAMOHAN BANERJEA (1813–1885), who while imbibing the spirit of free inquiry in Derozio's circle as a student in Hindu College attended the recently established Sanskrit College nearby. KRISHNAMOHAN went on to become a famed Sanskritist and leading nationalist, and prided himself on expressing his Christian identity in terms of both interests. For his part, especially after his conversion, UPADHYAY had a life-long and consequential engagement with the study of the Sanskritic tradition.

By 15 BHABANICHARAN's mind was highly politicised. Though there is no evidence to show that he hated the foreigner's God, it is clear that he hated the foreigner's rule. Around that time, SURENDRANATH BANERJEA, the doyen of those who agitated for Indian representation in Government, started his patriotic lecture tours to the youth of Bengal. UPADHYAY wrote: 'The land was roused by his lectures. I could neither eat nor drink. I was just like the cowherdesses intoxicated at hearing Krishna's flute ... If I didn't hear a lecture I gasped for air, but when the lecture was heard and the clapping done and I was returning home, my life seemed empty and incomplete.'[18] For BHABANICHARAN, now as throughout life, words were not enough. It was necessary to take action.

Twice he played truant from school while still in his teens, journeying with much hardship 700 miles north to the city of Gwalior, the capital of the feudatory state of that name and famed for its martial tradition, there, as he put it, 'to learn the science of war and drive away the foreigner'.[19] On the first occasion he was tracked down within a few days and brought home. By now his mind was being fired by the stirring patriotic tales issuing from the pen of the premier Bengali novelist of the day, BANKIMCHANDRA CHATTERJI. Before long, he journeyed once more to Gwalior, but this time returned of his own accord, disillusioned and dispirited. His political ardour cooled largely because this escapade convinced him that the country lacked the will to expel the British by force. In Gwalior he had discovered that the Raja himself had surrendered in a spectacular mock battle in full view of British representatives so that his breakfast might not be delayed – hardly the dedication expected of the model professional soldier!

By now BHABANICHARAN had decided not to complete his B.A. degree. He resolved, instead, to serve and reform his country as a celibate, using his talents to the best of his ability. Restlessly he roamed the land, searching his soul and visiting hermitages and places of pilgrimage. In the process he was apprised of the cultural and religious diversity of the country.

We find him teaching in 1881, at the age of 20, in the Free Church Institution in Calcutta. Henceforth, till the very end, teaching was to be one of his primary occupations. Soon he came under one of the main guiding influences of his life, the great Brahmo reformer, KESHUBCHANDRA SEN and his religion of the New Dispensation. From KESHUB he imbibed a deep reverence for the person of Christ and the notion that the culmination of all the great religions, especially of Hinduism and Christianity, was a harmonisation of their essential teaching. Through KESHUB he was in touch with the sage RAMAKRISHNA, but without much effect. RAMAKRISHNA's mystical air did not appeal to the young firebrand.

When KESHUB died in 1884, BHABANICHARAN deepened his allegiance to New Dispensation Brahmoism and to a Christ divorced from his westernised context under the tutelage of KESHUB's successor, PROTAPCHANDRA MAJUMDAR. In 1887 BHABANICHARAN was formally initiated as a Brahmo. The next year he travelled to Hyderabad in Sindh in the extreme north-west territory of British

India, to help a Sindhi friend establish an English-style school. He was to sojourn in Sindh for the next 10 years or so, engaging in educational and publishing activities.

Within a year of his arrival in Sindh he was at a turning point in his life. His father lay dying at Multan, a town not far distant. BHABANICHARAN rushed to his bedside, and as he kept vigil chanced to see JOSEPH FAA DI BRUNO'S popular manual on Roman Catholic teaching entitled *Catholic Belief.* This he read through the night. His father was not to survive and when he returned to Sindh, Bhabanicharan took FAA DI BRUNO'S book with him.

Though still formally a Brahmo, BHABANICHARAN was attracted more and more to Christ and the Catholic faith, professing his allegiance to Christ publicly to the consternation of the local Brahmos and Hindus. In August of 1890, a year before his baptism, he started a journal called *The Harmony,* an editorial extract of which survives as an indication of his thinking.

"Our idea of reconciling Hinduism and Christianity" he writes "is the direct fruit of the inspiration of that great man, the man of God, Keshava Chandra Sen. Our belief in Christ as perfectly divine and perfectly human is the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles . . . Some call us Christian and some Brahmo. What are we then? Christian? . . . What a noble thing it is to be a Christian and believe in a loving Father that desireth not the death of a sinner . . . (to) believe in Jesus, the Redeemer of fallen humanity and the source of all righteousness . . . (to) believe in the Holy Spirit who sanctifies the human soul to make it a heavenly abode of the Father and the Son . . . Have we then abjured Brahmoism? Never! We believe that God raised up Keshava Chandra Sen to preach . . . harmony of all religions in spirit and truth. We believe also that it is our humble mission to preach and establish the principle of unity of religions as laid down by Keshava.

But people here understand by the term *Christian* a man who drinks liquor and eats beef, who hates the scriptures of India as lies and her inspired men as impostors. If we are called Christian in this sense of the term, we are not Christian.

Also many think that the New Dispensation of Keshava is incompatible with the belief in Christ as the Redeemer of fallen humanity and the Source of all righteousness. If this be the New Dispensation, we are not of the New Dispensation.

This is, in short, our position. Let us be called by any name. We mean to preach the reconciliation of all religions in Christ whom we believe to be perfectly divine and prefectly human."[20]

Note here especially BHABANICHARAN'S description of a Christian as someone "who drinks liquor and eats beef, who hates the scriptures of India as lies and her inspired men as impostors"; in short, as someone alien and unsympathetic to Hinduism. In characterising the Christian thus, BHABANICHARAN was evoking the image of the typical missionary. His mentor, P. C. MAJUMDAR, no enemy of the Christian faith, had already given a classic description of this unrelenting image in his famous book, *The Oriental Christ.*[21]

Now the obverse of the alien Christian was the denationalised convert: the convert who, like the foreign missionary, despised Hindu ways and Hindu lights, absurdly dressing up in a culture for which he was ill-fitted. The term "denationalise" did not necessarily carry a political connotation; it did however imply a lack of patriotic sentiment. To be *denationalised* was a favourite description of, indeed charge against, the Christian convert, especially in the latter half of 19th century. *Denationalisation* was decried by patriotic Indian Christians, their Hindu opponents and their Hindu well-wishers alike. KRISHNAMOHAN BANERJEA deplored it. Its condemnation was a favourite theme of BHABANICHARAN'S famous uncle, KALICHARAN BANERJEA. It became a preoccupation with BHABANICHARAN himself till the end of his life.

It is important to note that implicit in the passage quoted from *The Harmony* is a distinction not only between Christ and Christianity, Christian doctrine and western culture, but between Brahmo, in effect, Hindu belief, and Hindu ways. These distinctions were still somewhat amorphous in BHABANICHARAN'S mind and required a concrete commitment and guiding philosophy to take shape. He was to find both when a year later, in 1891, after absorbing as much as he could of Catholic thinking from the local Catholic library, he felt impelled to be baptised a Roman Catholic at the age of 30. Bhabanicharan was now on the threshold of the next stage in his life: that of his Catholic activism.

After baptism, a militant fervour took over and BHABANICHARAN became a propagandist for the Catholic faith. He launched into journalistic activity, published tracts and went on lecture tours, attacking Brahmoism, aspects of traditional Hinduism, the ARYA SAMAJ (a revivalist anti-Christian Hindu movement recently established in the area), Theosophy,[22] and Protestant Christianity. He based his approach loosely and largely on Catholic neo-Thomistic thought,[23] upholding the divinity of Christ against the Brahmos, (Roman)Catholic doctrine against the Protestants, and what he took to be the right interpretation of traditional Hindu and Christian teaching against the Arya Samajists and the Theosophists.

Some of these campaigns could be quite exciting. Once during a lecture in Karachi, the speaker, who was Principal of the C.M.S. High School there, goaded by BHABANICHARAN'S recent attacks on LUTHER, publicly accused him of unduly influencing a young man to embrace Catholicism. In a flash, BHABANICHARAN, who was present, rose to his feet and demanded a retraction, which he received to the cheers of the audience. No doubt a good time was being had by all.

In January of 1894, he started from Karachi what he described as a monthly Catholic journal, called *Sophia*; this was to run for over 5 years. The *Sophia* acquired some popularity, and not only in Catholic circles.[24] Its aims were to discuss impartially the nature and end of man, Hindu and Christian (especially Catholic) belief with a view to arriving at "the true knowledge of the True Religion", and "social and moral questions affecting the well-being of Indians". It was to steer clear of politics. In the pages of the *Sophia* we can follow the development of its editor's thought as the period of Catholic activism gave way to the final nationalist phase.

In December of 1894, the following announcement appeared in an editorial: "I have adopted the life of Bhikshu (i.e. mendicant) Sannyasi. The practice prevalent in our country is to adopt a new name along with the adoption of a religious life. Accordingly, I have adopted a new name. My family surname is Vandya (i.e. praised) Upadhyaya (i.e. teacher, lit. sub-teacher), and my baptismal name is Brahmabandhu (Theophilus). I have abandoned the first portion of my family surname, because I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Man of Sorrows, the Despised Man. So my new name is Upadhyaya Brahmabandhu." Since BRAHMABANDHU can be thougth to strike too familiar a tone in meaning *"God's friend"*, later, without drawing attention to it, a change was made to the more respectful-sounding BRAHMABANDHAB, which has the same sense.

Soon after baptism, UPADHYAY sold all his possessions and sought and won episcopal permission to attend Church services in the traditional ochre robe of the Hindu saṃnyāsin or renunciate, as an earnest of his spiritual and cultural commitment. Only an ebony cross hanging from his neck marked his Christian allegiance. He retained this form of dress till shortly before his death.

The publication of *Sophia*, which was set up with Jesuit assistance and was tolerated by the local Bishop though it bore no imprimatur, and UPADHYAY's Hindu apparel, soon attracted the attention of the highest authority of the Catholic Church in the land, the Papal Delegate, Mgr. L. ZALESKI. Though there is no evidence that the two ever met, there now began one of the bitterest conflicts of UPADHYAY's life. A few years later, it led, as we shall see, to another turning point in his career. ZALESKI was a cultured man and has one or two notable ecclesiastical achievements to his name, such as establishing nearly 100 years ago, the Papal Seminary in Kandy in Ceylon (later transferred to Pune in India[25]), for the training of native priests. Nevertheless, he was an authoritarian and looked askance at the unprecedented prospect of a Brahmin convert, in the garb of a Hindu monk, professing to discuss publicly and without proper credentials, Catholic doctrine with special reference to the relationship between Hinduism and Christianity.

To be fair to ZALESKI, UPADHYAY's appearance did to some extent upset both Hindu and Catholic popular sentiment. This was hardly conducive to the stability of the Church in the Indian empire and of his new seminary in Kandy. It is worth noting that at this stage there is no record of the political authorities taking any interest in UPADHYAY's activities. This dispassionateness was not to last.

Earlier we cited evidence to indicate that even before baptism UPADHYAY was groping towards a mechanism whereby he could affirm Christian belief while remaining culturally a Hindu. Not long after baptism this mechanism had clarified in his mind and is given classic expression in an article entitled *Our attitude towards Hinduism* in the January (1895) issue of *Sophia*. Here UPADHYAY is at pains to show that unlike Protestant theology "which teaches that man's nature is *utterly* corrupt" so that Protestant missionaries are "incapable of finding anything true and good in India and in her scriptures",

the Catholic Church "does not believe in the utter corruption of man". On the contrary, the Church teaches that "Man, fallen man, can reason rightly and choose what is good, though he is much hampered in his rational acts by the violence of his lower appetites". He refers to CARDINAL MANNING, POPE CLEMENT XI and St. Paul (in that order) in support of the view that God's illumination "in the order of nature" is given to every person and that "every man . . . partakes of the universal light of Theism which reveals to him that he is an imperfect image of a Perfect Reason, Holiness and Goodness".

In fact, the light of "universal Theism" which accords with Catholic teaching is reflected "even in the most corrupt faiths of the lowest race". And, UPADHYAY affirms, "nowhere has that true light shone forth so brilliantly as it has shone forth in India" – except perhaps, in ancient Greece. Quotations from the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgītā about the nature of the supreme being follow in support of this thesis, and most importantly, he concludes: "The religion of Christ is *supernatural*. All the doctrines of Christ, the Holy Trinity, the Atonement, the Resurrection, from beginning to end, are beyond the domain of reason . . . The truths in Hinduism are of pure reason illuminated in the order of nature by the light of the Holy Spirit. They do not overstep reason . . . though the religion of Christ is beyond the grasp of nature and reason, still its foundation rests upon the truths of nature and reason. Destroy the religion of nature and reason, you destroy the supernatural religion of Christ. Hence a true missionary of Christ, instead of vilifying Hinduism, should find out truths from it by study and research. It is on account of the close connection between the natural and the supernatural that we have taken upon ourselves the task . . . to form . . . a natural platform upon which the Hindus taking their stand may have a view of the glorious supernatural edifice of the Catholic religion of Christ."

The philosophical writings of neo-Thomists and others, which he continued to study, far from militating against this natural-supernatural divide, affirmed it.[26] So here UPADHYAY had the device which he was henceforth to deploy theoretically and practically so that he could *believe* as a Catholic but *behave* as a Hindu. The ways and methods of Hinduism would encompass the natural level, the doctrines of the Church the supernatural. Properly understood the natural here complements the supernatural and can act as an appropriate cultural medium to express the supernatural, both intellectually and behaviourally. It was in this fashion that the Roman Catholic faith could retain its much vaunted universality and yet exist in close partnership with Hindu particularity.

Restating his programme in *Sophia* later (January 1896), he announced that it was his express aim "to baptise the truths of Hindu philosophy and build them up as stepping stones to the Catholic faith", and again he says: "we are Hindus so far as our physical and mental constitution is concerned, but in regard to our immortal souls we are Catholic. We are Hindu Catholic" (*Sophia*, July 1898). Certainly in religious matters – and his remained a primary concern till the very end – the remaining years of UPADHYAY's life were a commentary on the natural-supernatural distinction with respect to Hindu-

Catholic encounter. As he continued to re-work and implement the dichotomy, the content of its natural complement changed, as we shall see, but the distinction itself remained intact as the basis for his thought and activities. Thus though the implementation of UPADHYAY's strategy was new, the underlying principle was not. In one form or another, it was a corner-stone of Catholic thinking of the time, ratified by Vatican I under Pius IX. UPADHYAY took it over second-hand but in perfect working order.

Let us now consider his major experiments for adapting his Catholic faith to his native culture. A detailed analysis is not necessary, for these are but variations of the same theme.

Already in October 1894, in the first year of *Sophia's* publication, UPADHYAY mooted the idea of the Bishops combining "to establish a central mission" from which itinerant missionaries would travel the length and breadth of the land, disputing with the teachers of Advaita Vedānta, Theosophy and other "anti-theistic religions". He writes: "People have a strong aversion against Christian preachers because they are considered to be destroyers of everything national. Therefore, the itinerant missionaries should be thoroughly Hindu in their mode of living. They should, if necessary, be strict vegetarians and teetotalers, and put on the yellow Sannyasi garb . . . The central mission should, in short, adopt the policy of the glorious old Fathers of the South.[27] The missionaries should be well-versed in Sanskrit, for one ignorant of Sanskrit will hardly be able to vanquish Hindu preachers."

After making his proposal in 1894, UPADHYAY seemed content to let the matter lie. Then in 1896, the *Sophia* ran several articles on NOBILI's South Indian mission and converts apparently as a prelude to raising once more in February 1897 the idea of training itinerant Hindu-Catholic missionaries. "A score of (such) learned and zealous missionaries" UPADHYAY wrote, "can . . . transform the face of educated India within a few years". This time Upadhyay actively cast about for support, eventually obtaining the approval of the Bishop of Nagpur to set up his monastery in his diocese. By 1899 a house had been made available and two or three Brahmin converts recruited, but within a few months the experiment was wound up. ZALESKI, who had been apprised of UPADHYAY's plans, had received Rome's sanction to quash the project. The Bishop of Nagpur reluctantly fell in line. UPADHYAY was advised to fight his case in Rome personally and made preparations accordingly. But shortly before he was due to set sail he fell ill and then abandoned the project altogether.[28]

But all seems not to have been lost. In 1950, over 50 years after this fiasco, the French monks JULES MONCHANIN and HENRI LE SAUX (later known as SWAMI ABHISHIKTANANDA) established, with official permission, the now famous experimental Hindu-Catholic ashram at Shantivanam in south India, with UPADHYAY's ideal expressly in mind. ABHISHIKTANANDA donned the saffron robe, as does his successor BEDE GRIFFITHS. A number of other Christian ashrams dot the landscape of the country. We shall comment briefly later on the import of this phenomenon.

By the turn of the century, UPADHYAY was giving theoretical consideration to a theme which concerned the content of the "natural" component of the key distinction described earlier. This had to do with the contrast between Hindu and European modes of thinking. The Hindu mind, he argued, thinks intuitively and one-centredly (ekniṣṭhataḥ), searching for one principle underlying plurality. The European mind, on the contrary, thinks analytically and pluralistically (bahuniṣṭhataḥ), synthetising relations into a unity. Though the laws of thought are universal, the Hindu and European modes of understanding differ in the way described. Thus it is not distinctive of Hindu thinking to hold to any particular doctrine or sets of doctrines among the great many views that have been proposed in the history of Hindu thought. It is distinctive of Hindu thinking, however, to think in a certain way, to think one-centredly, i.e. so as to converge towards a principle of unity.[29]

As this idea developed, UPADHYAY located the high point of Hindu intuitiveness in the apparently monistic philosophical theology stemming from the great Vedāntin ŚAṂKARA (ca. 8th. century C.E.).[30] Now, his opinion of Śaṃkarite monism or Advaita had by this time altered radically. At first, in the mid 1890s, like many before him, he turned to the early portions of the Vedas as best enshrining, in what he termed Vedic Theism, the natural truths of Hinduism. Vedic Theism comprised the belief in a "Supreme Being, who knows all things, who is a personal God, who is father, friend, nay, even brother to His worshippers, who rewards the virtuous, punishes the wicked, who controls the destinies of men, who teaches the Rishis (seers), who watches over the welfare of His creatures, temporal as well as spiritual". (*Sophia*, April 1896)

But at the beginning of the new century, it was ŚAṂKARA's or rather the Śaṃkarite non-dualistic system (Advaita),[31] earlier dismissed as "Pantheism" and the "prevailing Hindu error" (*Sophia*, January 1895), which he regarded as the quintessence of Hindu thought. UPADHYAY went on to claim that Thomism (rather, the neo-Thomism of 19th century as it turned out to be[32]) – for him, in its reasonings about God, the acme of European natural theology – was in essentials inferior to Advaita as the natural base of supernatural truths. The Advaitic doctrines of māyā and of Brahman, which concern the provisional reality of the world and the supreme being as "sat-cit-ānanda" ("being-consciousness-bliss") respectively, are the best philosophical underpinning available of the doctrines of creation ex nihilo and the Trinity. In fact, familiarity with 19th century neo-Scholasticism shows that UPADHYAY was re-interpreting the Advaitic teachings about māyā and Brahman in (neo-)-Thomistic terms. Indeed, rather than his Thomistic analysis of Advaita, UPADHYAY's most original Sanskritic theological contribution to the Church is his beautiful and theologically pregnant hymn to the Trinity – "Vande Saccidānanda" – composed in 1897.[33] This hymn, though its potential has never been developed doctrinally, is still sung in Indian Roman Catholic and other Christian churches today.

From 1900, after he had settled in Calcutta, UPADHYAY encountered mounting hostility from ZALESKI, who forbade the reading of his English publications to the Catholic public. UPADHYAY's writings were becoming

increasingly political and anti-British. He was growing disillusioned with his Hindu-Catholic aspirations. He made one last great effort to disseminate his ideal, journeying in 1902 to the mother-country of the Empire, to attempt in England what a few years before SWAMI VIVEKANANDA had done in the United States, viz. championing the cause of Hinduism, especially Advaita. But this he set out to do with a difference. It was central to his mission to show that Catholic belief was compatible with Hindu culture. To this end he wrote in *The Tablet* that the Faith must not denationalise the convert; it seemed "too . . . mixed up with beef and pork, spoon and fork, too tightly pantalooned and petticoated to manifest its universality" (January 3rd., 1903).

He visited Oxford and Cambridge where he impressed many. In Cambridge he won support for a proposal that Hindu thought be taught in the University; in the end this fell through because of complications mainly on the Indian side. UPADHYAY had returned to India in July 1903, a disappointed man. His various efforts to further the Hindu-Catholic cause were meeting, especially in the Church, with opposition and apathy. His old political leanings reasserted themselves. The nationalist movement, after the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885, had developed apace. Without disavowing his faith he allowed the mounting ferment of contemporary politics to engulf him. We are now in the final and briefest period of his life.

During the earlier stages of his Catholic activism, UPADHYAY, like other converts, had tolerated British rule, regarding its principles of law and religion as the providential condition for social and religious reform in his country. But gradually, as pleas for more Indian representation in Government fell on deaf ears, his opposition to the British increased. After his return from England, he fell ideologically into the extremist camp of the Congress, though he did not belong to any of the terrorist secret societies which sprung up in Bengal. He never explicitly advocated violence as the means to expel the British, though on occasion he seemed near to doing so. The output of his Bengali writings on social and religious topics increased. The style is direct and elegant, but not ornate. I opine that the reader, if ignorant of the author's religious allegiance, could not tell that a Christian was writing. UPADHYAY wrote as a Hindu would for Hindus, drawing upon Hindu images and experiences.

Socially, he argued for the retention of the four-tiered caste system (varṇāśramadharma) comprising Brahmins or priests, Kshatriyas or rulers, Vaishyas or traders and Shudras or serfs, which he interpreted according to an idealised account of life in ancient India. He justified the caste system on the grounds that "It was framed on the basis of the human constitution . . . The working class represents the organs of work; the trading or the artisan class represents the senses, inasmuch as they minister to their comforts; the ruling class corresponds to the mind which governs the senses; and the sacerdotal class, whose function is to learn and teach the scriptures and make others worship, is a manifestation of buddhi (or intellect). The psychological division of man and society is the natural basis on which this ancient system

of social polity was framed."[34] Again the natural-supernatural divide is invoked. The Church which rightly teaches that there is no distinction between human beings where ministrations of the spiritual life are concerned, should not interfere in the matter of social relationships which are confined to the natural plane. Caste practices and caste sanctions are a human affair, outside the jurisdiction of the Church. Moreover, it was caste which gave Hindu society cohesiveness down the ages, preserving it from the depredations of the Buddhists and the Muslims.

Thus the UPADHYAY who after baptism had nursed all and sundry at the risk of his own life during the great Karachi plague of 1896, now justified racial and social apartheid on the grounds that it was the natural instrument of the preservation of Hindu society and did not militate against divine teaching. Did not racial segregation between black and white obtain in the United States? Was not segregation between Jews and non-Jews divinely endorsed in Old Testament times, and did not the Church herself tolerate the practice of caste among her converts, especially in south India? In his later Bengali writings, to justify caste and ethnic segregation, UPADHYAY writes offensively about the aboriginal peoples of India, and uses ad nauseam the pejorative (racial) term "Firinghi" to refer to the European.

In religious matters too, the natural-supernatural distinction did yeoman service. Though he did not visit temples to take part in regular image-worship, and though he observed feasts such as Easter till the end, he wrote movingly in Bengali of the social and psychological if not theological value, of Hindu festivals and image worship. An incident late in life reveals his thinking. In 1902, with his close Christian friend and disciple Animananda, he had started a small school in Calcutta for upper-caste Hindu boys; it was called the Sarasvat Ayatan (the Abode of Learning). The day to day running of the school fell largely on the devoted Animananda. In 1904, some time after his return from England, UPADHYAY gave permission in due season for the festival of Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning and the school's namesake, to be celebrated. This was to involve the worship of SARASVATĪ's image. ANIMANANDA objected to what he regarded as the practice of idolatry, but UPADHYAY justified his action on the grounds that violence should not be done to the religious sensibilities of his Hindu wards;[35] as a Christian himself he regarded SARASVATĪ and her icon as but an acceptable cultural expression, on the natural level, of the divine wisdom, and there was no wrong in this.

In a remarkable lecture given in Bengali in the same year before a Hindu audience in Calcutta,[36] UPADHYAY spoke of Krishna as the Hindu reality par excellence symbolising the divine concern, throughout the course of history, for India's destiny among the nations. The lecture was undertaken mainly to counter the missionary, J. N. FARQUHAR's, claim that "Rightly read, the (Bhagavad) Gita is a clear-tongued prophecy of Christ, and the hearts that bow down to the idea of Krishna are really seeking the incarnate son of God".[37] It affirms Krishna's historicity, and his permanent and central role in Hinduism as the focus of God's (Īśvara's) activity among the Hindus and the synthetiser of diverse religious teachings.[38] There is here a "high avatarology"

analogous to a high Christology in Christian doctrine. UPADHYAY avers: "Some sectaries are of the opinion that the avatar's humanity (manuṣ[y]atva) is not real, but only a kind of superficial inducement (to belief). This is a grave mistake. God controls ignorance (avidyā) in order to loose the veil of ignorance. If that control were not real what would be the point of his coming down? The synthesis (samanvaya) of knowledge and action is brought about by the power of the union of divinity and finitude (īś[v]arat[v]a o jībat[v]er milanprabhābe). Hence we say that God's coming down is the real assumption of humanity (manuṣ[y]at[v]er bāstabik aṅgīkār). Since in fact God has come down in human form, by this we are to understand that he whose form is universal has become a real human being. He has created himself in the particular form of a person possessed of senses, intellect and body (manobuddhidehasambalita)... Again, if the avatar were just like a natural individual, the descent would still be fruitless. The avatar's personhood (vyaktitva) is in fact non-natural (aprākṛta) and divine. Whilst it duly engages in action, it does not fall under action's sway. It is adorned with knowledge and love yet transcends (the process of) discipline and accomplishment (leading to both)"[39] and so on.

In the lecture and subsequently UPADHYAY was at pains to point out that there was a fundamental difference between the doctrines of the avatar and of the Incarnation, a difference hinging in effect on the Christian teaching of the Atonement. Integral to Christian belief in the Incarnation is the belief that God became human to redeem mankind from its sin – there is nothing like this in the avatar doctrine. Thus when challenged by a Christian acquaintance after the Krishna lecture that he had abandoned his faith, UPADHYAY is reputed to have denied the charge vehemently. For him belief in the Krishna avatar could co-exist with belief in the incarnate Logos. According to this view Krishna would function as India's saviour in the order of nature, the focus of Hindu cohesiveness and natural understanding of the deity, while Christ would act as India's saviour in the order of grace, redeeming her people from their sins. In public discourse, UPADHYAY never made these distinctions explicit, and it is not difficult to understand how by its vibrant and deeply sympathetic Hindu tone the Krishna lecture led many, Hindu and Christian alike, to believe that he had forsaken Christ for Krishna. His Catholic faith which he never repudiated became an increasingly private affair, while his Hindu profile came into high relief. He plunged into nationalist politics, taking a leading role in the anti-British agitation over the partition of Bengal in 1905.

About 2 months before he died in 1907, UPADHYAY bewildered the remnant of his Christian friends by undergoing, in the public eye, the Hindu penitential rite (prāyaścitta) by which the outcasted returned to the fold. There is enough evidence to show that this was intended as no more than a social gesture, but by and large he was thought to have finally apostatised from the Christian faith. His writings in the *Sandhyā,* a popular daily Bengali newspaper he had started in 1904 as its editor, became virulently anti-British. Eventually one of his *Sandhyā* articles led to his arrest for sedition. During his

trial an old hernia complaint reasserted itself requiring immediate treatment in hospital. Post-operational complications set in, and on October 27th, while still under arrest, he died in great pain of tetanus, having repeated the word "ṭhakur" ("Lord"), by which he was wont to refer to Christ. A Catholic priest who came to perform the last rites was denied access, and the body was disposed of according to Hindu custom amid the pomp befitting a national leader.

Very briefly, and only by way of providing pointers for discussion, what evaluation are we to make of UPADHYAY and his work? I hope that this essay has revealed a man of flesh and blood, of sinew and fire, rather than a cardboard cutout – a man of great integrity if restless purposes. Perhaps he lacked the singlemindedness necessary to accomplish his goals, but he belonged to a Church in a time unsympathetic to inter-religious dialogue. Today, not a little stimulated by UPADHYAY's example, Catholic theology in India presses towards the indigenisation of the Faith, mindful that homo Christianus cannot develop in a social and cultural vacuum.

UPADHYAY's work was influential in a number of respects, but in some ways it is yet to bear fruit. We have already noted his Indian Christian contributions in theory and practice – the Sanskrit hymns, the Hindu-Catholic ashram, the Sanskritization of propaedeutic religion in terms of Vedāntic categories of thought. Yet the problems these efforts generate in the indigenising process have still to be worked out. What price Sanskritization in the translation and adaptation of the Faith in India? The tendency to Sanskritize, rooted as it is in the pioneering work of nineteenth century converts,[40] dominates the indigenising process among Christian theologians in India even today. Yet for many in the margins of society Sanskrit, for all its great importance as the matrix of Hinduism and numerous vernaculars, remains the vehicle of the "great tradition", the symbol of high-caste privilege and oppression. As a medium of expression it leaves no room for an Indian Christianity arising from non-Brahminical sources (such as the adivasi, the Muslim and the low- and out-caste).

Again, may not the indigenising practice of Hindu-Christian ashrams be regarded as subversive of inter-religious dialogue in the end? On the one hand, does not such practice generate a justifiable suspicion in the minds of ordinary Christian layfolk that by it the distinction between Christian and non-Christian identity is being whittled away? On the other hand, does it not give rise to offence in the eyes of Hindus by apparently traducing their sacred symbols and scriptures in the Christian cause? Finally, what are we to say of the natural-supernatural distinction UPADHYAY deployed so extensively? Remember the conclusion to which it led in his defence of caste. Still an important feature of Catholic thinking in some circles, this distinction is being supplanted by the view that rather than thinking of the supernatural as being superimposed on the natural like the visible part of a building being added to its foundation, it is more appropriate to regard divine grace as *animating* the "natural" or rather the "finite", bringing the natural to a transformed fruition from within.

Perhaps UPADHYAY's greatest contribution to the Catholic, it may be the Christian, Church in India with repercussions even beyond, is that he ushered in a new mode of thinking. He gave Indian Christians the impetus to reassess their faith in a new light, to search for a religious identity rooted in their native culture. By encouraging Indian Christians to be authentically Indian, his example helps them to be the surer witnesses of their faith. A number of daring ventures in this vein, both as to theory and practice, owe inspiration to Upadhyay.[41] UPADHYAY led by example; he was not afraid of exploratory action in spite of mistakes and opposition. In seeking a native home for the Christian faith, the Church in India today may well have to follow this lead.

[1] This article is dedicated to my colleague, the Rev. BRIAN L. HEBBLETHWAITE – lecturer in the philosophy of religion, Divinity Faculty, Cambridge University and Dean of Queens' College, Cambridge – as a token of continuing friendship. It is also an adaptation of a lecture given in the series, *Catholicism and Culture: Translations and Adaptations,* at St. Edmund's College, Cambridge, in March 1986 and the earnest of a major study on UPADHYAY now in preparation. As the title suggests, I have focused on UPADHYAY's religious concerns; they were central to his life's goals.

[2] For further reading in this regard, see Anil Seal: THE EMERGENCE OF INDIAN NATIONALISM (Cambridge University Press, 1970).

[3] Tini chilen romān k(y)āthlik sann(y)āsī, apar pak(ṣ)e, baidāntik – tejas(v)ī, nirbhik, t(y)āgī, bahuśruta o asāmān(y)a prabhābśālī: in the original Preface to *Cār Adh(y)āy.* The Bengali translations in this essay are my own. Where Bengali proper names are concerned I have followed conventional rather than critical spellings, e.g. Bhabani*ch*aran rather than -*c*aran. Hence Bengali proper names are not given diacriticals.

[4] The best source we have to date is Animananda's *The Blade* (abbr., BL.), published in 1946 by Roy and Son, Calcutta. ALFONS VÄTH's, *Im Kampfe mit der Zauberwelt des Hinduismus* (Berlin & Bonn, Ferd. Dummlers Verlag, 1928), had an ulterior motive: the defence of Catholic hierarchical authority in its dealings with UPADHYAY. Finally, the handful of Bengali studies available are either unable to come to terms with or forbear to analyse his Christian commitment. See e.g. UPĀDHYĀY BRAHMABĀNDHAB O BHĀRATĪYA JĀTĪYATĀBĀD by U. & H. Mukhyopadhyay (Calcutta, Firma K. L. Mukhyopadhyay, 1961) and M. Guha, BRAHMABĀNDHAB UPĀDHYĀY (Bardhamān, Śri Sādhanā Bhattācārya, Śikṣā Niketan, B.E. 1383) respectively.

[5] For the first description, see K. P. ALEAZ's *The Theological Writings of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay Re-examined,* in: *The Indian Journal of Theology,* vol. 28, April–June 1979, p. 77; see also, *A Prophet Disowned* by C. FONSECA, s.j. in: *Vidyajyoti,* April 1980.

[6] E.g. in the Papal Seminary in Pune, which is a part of what is now called Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Institute of Philosophy and Religion, formerly the Pontifical Athenaeum of Poona, and in the United Theological College (of the Church of South India), in Bangalore.

[7] "Sanskrit" is an anglicised form of "samskṛta" which means "perfected, accomplished".

[8] For more on Derozio, see *Derozio and Young Bengal* by SUSOBHAN CHANDRA SARKAR in: *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance* by ATULCHANDRA GUPTA (ed.), (Jadavpur, Bengal, National Council of Education, 1958, pp. 16–32).

[9] Further information on the Brahmo Samaj of the time is available in: DAVID KOPF, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton University Press, 1979) and F. L. DAMEN, *Crisis and Religious Renewal in the Brahmo Samaj (1860–1884)*, (Dept. Orientalistiek, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 1983).

[10] Key extracts of which appear in *British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance, Part II,* this being vol. X of *The History and Culture of the Indian People,* under the general editorship of R. C. MAJUMDAR (Bombay, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965; see. pp. 81f).

[11] BL. describes the Sindh period; cf. pp. 31f.

[12] The Syriac Christianity entrenched in the South was not a live option in Bengal.

[13] See *Resistant Hinduism* by RICHARD F. YOUNG (University of Vienna, Indological Institute, 1981; pp. 33–37) and *British Baptist Missionaries in India (1793–1837)* by E. DANIEL POTTS (Cambridge University Press, 1967).

[14] On Kalicharan Banerjea see *Kali Charan Banurji: Brahmin, Christian, Saint* by B. R. BARBER (London, Madras & Colombo, The Christian Literature Society for India, 1912).

[15] BL., p. 10.

[16] The fish-incident is given in a work by ANIMANANDA written prior to BL., i.e. *Swami Upadhyay Brahmabandhav: A Sketch in Two Parts* (Calcutta, publ. by Animananda, 1908; see Part I, p. 6); the story of UPADHYAY's eating meat is recounted by UPADHYAY himself in an autobiographical piece, *Āmār Bhārat Uddhār* (abbr. ABU) (Chandanagore, Prabartak Publishing House, 1924, p. 17–18); see also BL., p. 19.

[17] RATHINDRANATH TAGORE, *On the Edges of Time* (Calcutta, Visva-Bharati, 1981[2], p. 51).

[18] Lekcāre lekcāre deś mātiyā uṭhila. āmār ta khāo[y]ā dāo[y]ā nāi. ś(y)āmer bāśī śuniyā jeman gopījan unmatta āmio tadbat . . . lekcār nā śunile prāṇ hāpāiyā uṭhita, kintu lekcār śuniyā hāttāli diyā jakhan bāḍī phiritām takhan mane haita prāṇṭā jena khāli khāli, bhare nāi. ABU, p. 1–2.

[19] Juddhabid(y)ā śikhiba, phiriṅgi tāḍāiba. ABU, p. 4.

[20] Taken from BL., p. 38–39.

[21] See the extract given in POTTS, op. cit., pp. 208–209.

[22] There was a notable showdown with ANNIE BESANT, the Theosophy leader; see BL., pp. 1–4.

[23] UPADHYAY's close association with the Jesuits during the time of his conversion and the increasing popularity of neo-Thomism in Catholic thinking after Leo XIII's encyclical, *Aeterni Patris* (1879), turned him in this direction. The writings of CARDINAL NEWMAN were also an important influence.

[24] The *Sophia's* popularity seemed chiefly to be in south India the cynosure, at the time, of caste-based Indian Christianity. From January 1898 *Sophia's* place of publication varied between Calcutta, Hyderabad in Sindh and Karachi.

[25] See note 6. The idea was Pope Leo XIII's.

[26] Cf., e.g., B. BOEDDER, *Natural Theology* (Manuals of Catholic Philosophy, Stonyhurst Series, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1891, Introductory). UPADHYAY often consulted the Stonyhurst Series, which was well under way. See also CARDINAL NEWMAN's *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (New York etc., Longmans, Green & Co., 1947, first published in 1870, ch. X, p. 294–295).

[27] A reference to the famous 17th and 18th century Italian Jesuit missionaries, ROBERTO NOBILI (1577?–1656) and JOSEF CONSTANTIUS BESCHI (1680–1747). Both settled in South India, mastered Sanskrit and Tamil, dressed like saṃnyāsins and exercised a promising ministry for some years among upper-caste Hindus. The experiment petered out, however, for lack of ecclesiastical support, its effects being dissipated in the sands of time.

[28] See BL., pp. 80–82. Some dates for fixing the chronology of this affair are wanting.

[29] For the locus classicus of this position see *The One-centredness of the Hindu Race,* being a translation of a Bengali article by UPADHYAY (viz. Hindujātir ekniṣṭhatā) by the author in *Vidyajyoti,* October 1981, p. 410f.

[30] In the aforesaid article UPADHYAY is at pains to show this.

[31] As expressed for instance in the Pañcadaśī (ca. 14th century), attributed to Mādhava and probably in part at least to Bhāratītīrtha Vidyāraṇya. UPADHYAY thought highly of the Pañcadaśī and started an English translation with comments; he published no more than 14 verses (less than 1 % of the text). This came out in 1902.

[32] See note 26.

[33] For a fine analysis of this and another Sanskrit hymn to the Incarnate Logos by UPADHYAY, see G. GISPERT-SAUCH, *The Sanskrit Hymns of Brahmabandhav Upadhyay,* in: *Religion and Society,* vol. xix, 1972.

[34] The *Sophia* weekly, August 25th, 1900. After the *Sophia* was discontinued as a monthly, a weekly version started on June 16th, 1900 and ran till December 8th of that year. It was subtitled, "A weekly review of Politics, Sociology, Literature and Comparative Theology" and was published from Calcutta. As can be imagined, it was not calculated to endear UPADHYAY to Mgr. ZALESKI.

[35] This incident led to ANIMANANDA's leaving the school but not to his breaking friendship with UPADHYAY. Eventually ANIMANANDA embarked on his project of writing *The Blade* as an apologia on behalf of his "guru's" life.

[36] The lecture was entitled *Śrīkṛṣṇatattva,* i.e. *The Essence of Krishna* or *The Krishna-reality.* Shortly after, UPADHYAY gave a public lecture in English – substantially the same as the Bengali, it is implied (see BL., p. 123) – apparently to show to those among the English-speaking public who were capable of judging, that his views on Krishna as avatar did not confound orthodox Catholic teaching about Christ as incarnation. Since the full English version seems not to be extant, there is no way of comparing the Bengali original with its English counterpart. The full Bengali text is available in Sāhitya Saṃhitā, Āśvin-Kārttik, 1311, B.E.

[37] From *Gita and Gospel,* quoted by UPADHYAY in the published text.

[38] UPADHYAY was keen to refute FARQUHAR because he thought that the latter's view that belief in the Christ as incarnate Lord fulfilled Hindu belief in Krishna as avatar, if accepted, would fatally undermine Krishna's standing as a rallying symbol of Hindu natural religion and nationhood.

[39] Op. cit., p. 336. kono sāmpradāyikerā mane kare je, abatārer manuṣ(y)t(v)a bāstabik nahe; kintu ekṭā lokdekhāno prarocanāmātra. ihā ek ghor bhrānti. abid(y)ār ābaraṇ unmocan karibār jan(y)ai īś(v)ar abid(y)āke adhikār karen. jadi sei adhikār bāstabik nā hay tāhā haile abataraṇer sārthakatā kothāy? īś(v)arat(v)a o jībat(v)er milanprabhābe j(ñ)ānkarmmer saman(b)ay sādhita hay. sutarāṅ, manuṣ(y)at(v)er bāstabik aṅgīkārke īś(v)arer abataraṇ kahe. īś(v)ar, manuṣ(y)arūpe abatīrṇa haiyāchen balile, bujhite haibe je, jini biś(v)arūp tini bāstabik mānuṣ haiyāchen. tini āpnāke manobuddhidehasaṃbalita ek biśeṣ b(y)aktirūpe sṛṣṭi kariyāchen . . . ābār, jadi abatār kebal prākṛta jīber n(y)āy han, tāhā haileo abataraṇ niṣphal haibe. abatārer b(y)aktit(v)a aprākṛta o īś(v)arat(v)amay. uhā jathārīti karmme nijukta hay, karmmer baśe āse nā. tāhā j(ñ)ān o preme bhūṣita, kintu sādhan bā siddhir atīta.

[40] On this see the author's *A Modern Indian Christian Response,* in: *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism,* H. G. COWARD (ed.) (State University Press of New York, 1987).

[41] For example, on the theoretical side, we cite the publication for 24 years (Oct. 1922–Dec. 1946) of the pioneering Catholic monthly *Light of the East,* edited from Calcutta by G. DANDOY with the collaboration of P. JOHANNS. This was probably the first Christian periodical at the time in India which set out, consistently, to show Hindu

thought in the positive light of a fulfillment theology. The *Light of the East* exerted great influence in formulating a new approach to Hinduism among Catholic thinkers in India. In the course of its career it ran favourable articles on UPADHYAY and his followers and in the January 1945 issue revealed, in an obituary on ANIMANANDA, that "it was in Animananda's Boys' Own Home . . . that this paper was born . . . when the plan was mooted of a review whose main purpose would be to present Christ to India in a way adapted to her culture and mentality . . . his casting vote was given at once in favour of this new proposal" (p. 18). ANIMANANDA's approval and indeed the proposal itself were the result, of course, of the impact of UPADHYAY's ideals which were never far from ANIMANANDA's mind and intentions. As an example on the practical side are the Hindu-Catholic ashram in Shantivanam, which we have already mentioned, and more importantly perhaps, the life and works of the ashram's co-founder, SWAMI ABHISHIKTANANDA, and their continuing influence.