the bhagavad gita ...

"When the old ways no longer serve to give life meaning"

the bhagavad gîtâ

The translation from the Sanscrit by

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CHAPTER XIII.

THE RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN KSHETRA AND KSHETRAJNA.

THE first six chapters of this book declared the nature of the individual spirit; the six succeeding chapters dealt with the nature of the universal spirit; with this chapter begins the final hexad, which declares the relation between the two to be identity, — the Spirit or Consciousness as itself being one and indivisible.

In the seventh chapter (vv. 4, 5) it is shown that the nature of the Deity is twofold, — that which is composed of the three qualities, the eight-fold divided inferior nature, the cause of bondage; and that which is Consciousness, which is the Spirit of God. By teaching the truth in respect to this twofold nature, the Blessed Lord illuminates the great mystery of the being of the Deity, since the creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe is due to the union and disunion of the superior and inferior nature of the Deity. Further he shows forth the nature of that spiritual knowledge which, joined to the performance of the law declared in the previous chapter (vv. 13–20), makes the devotee eminently dear unto the Lord. It is to be borne in mind that in verse 7 the Blessed Lord said: "For them, with hearts entered into Me, I become, O son of Prithâ, without delay, the rescuer from death-bearing, migratory existence."

How is this done? The Deity, as Himself, is not liable to act. He acts through the mysterious plenitude of power, and salvation from the conditioned life of change is not possible without spiritual knowledge. (Cf. John xvii. 3; 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) Hence in the present chapter the Blessed Lord declares the knowledge of the being of God, who is beyond all comprehension.

THE BLESSED LORD *spoke:*

1. This body,[1] O son of Kunti, is named Kshetra:[2] who knows it,[3] him, those acquainted with both, call the Kshetrajna.[4]

It is not perfect wisdom merely to know the Ego as different from the body.

2. Know me even as the Kshetrajna in every Kshetra, O son of Bharata; that knowledge which realizes the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna is knowledge in my sight.

The Ego is to be known as different from the body, as being the same in all the infinitude of bodies, and also as being identical with the Supreme Spirit. This does not mean by three different chronological manifestations of the Ego, but as being true once and forever. They are three co-inhering identities which, when realized, show that the real nature of God, Consciousness, is incomprehensible, but by the operation of a mysterious power it seems to be dwelling in all creatures as that which they call the self.

3. That Kshetra,[5] what it is,[6] how it is,[7] what it

1 "This body;" the inferior nature of the Deity transforms itself, for the purpose of the enjoyment and experience of the spirit, or the conscious, superior nature, into the inner faculties, external senses, and the material of the body: this assemblage is "this body."

2 "Kshetra" literally means "the perishable," "subject to decay." It also signifies "a field," and in this sense is a fitting name for the body, as the seeds of good and evil sown in the body germinate into new forms of good and evil experiences.

3 "Who knows it;" that is, knows the body completely, and is now receiving instructions about its nature from the Blessed Lord; the Ego in its two aspects, bound and liberated.

4 "Kshetrajna;" the knower of Kshetra enjoys it as the owner of a field enjoys the fruit thereof.

5 "That Kshetra." The body is called Kshetra, because to an ordinary man it represents the whole of nature; a man knows everything only in relation to his own body. To understand the truth represented by the usual division into body and soul, it is necessary to comprehend Prakriti (or Power), together with its twenty-three products, and the manner of their production.

6 "What it is;" that is, it is in essential reality unconscious and objective.

7 "How it is;" that is, it has the power of producing.

produces,[1] and what is from what derived,[2] also who he is,[3] what is his power,[4]—all this hear from Me in brief.

Praises of this knowledge of body and soul, object and subject, now follow.

4. By the Rishis[5] has it[6] been fully[7] sung with discrimination[8] in the Vedic hymns of many kinds,[9] and by words that indicate the Supreme Spirit, and are certain and full of reason.[10]

According to the practice of spiritual teachers, having removed from the mind of the hearer all other things, by declaring that which forms the highest importance of the teachings, the Blessed Lord proceeds to declare the natures of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna. It should here be explained that when the reward of spiritual living is spoken of, the object is not to encourage selfishness, but to remove obstacles from the path of the disciple by quieting the unrest which comes from manifold desires.

1 "What it produces;" that is, all that appears to be comes from it.

2 "What is from what derived;" that is, the relation between the primary and secondary causes.

3 "Who he is;" that is, what, in reality, the Ego or Purusha is.

4 "His power;" that is, through reflection in various objective bases.

5 "By the Rishis;" not only is the sufficiency of the right knowledge of object and subject established by authoritative opinion, but also by the eternal revelation of the Vedas.

6 "It;" that is, the knowledge which the Blessed Lord is about to declare in brief.

7 "Fully;" that is, in many ways, and with greater fulness than is to be found in this chapter.

8 "With discrimination;" the cause of bondage is the want of discrimination between the ego and the non-ego, while the realization of this distinction is liberation.

9 "Vedic hymns of many kinds;" many, because of various schools (çâkhâs) of the Vedas, and also, as one authority says, owing to the various names by which the Kshetrajna is called in the hymns.

10 "Words that indicate . . . full of reason;" that is, not only in the hymns, but also in texts where arguments are used to increase the aspirant's receptive power; such as, "approach the âtmâ;" "he that knows the Supreme Spirit attains the supreme goal;" "he who worships another God, and considers his Ego as one and God another, is like a beast of burden to the gods;" "How can that which is come from that which is not?"

5. The great elements,[1] ahankâra,[2] buddhi,[3] and the unmanifest,[4] — it is even this;[5] the ten indriyas,[6] the one,[7] and the five objects of sense,[8]

Then is declared that which is produced by Prakriti.

6. Desire[9] and aversion,[10] pleasure and pain, coherence,[11] conscious life,[12] recuperative power,[13] — thus has been declared the Kshetra,[14] together with its products.

1 "Great elements;" great because pervading all the products; namely, the ten indriyas, the manas, and the five gross elements.

2 "Ahankâra;" that is, egotism or the Ego, through false knowledge considered as an object of cognition, — the power represented by "I am this."

3 "Buddhi" is the producing or determining power of Nature; in individuals it is the intellect or power of judgment.

4 "Unmanifest," is the root-cause, Prakriti, the unseen power of God. "My illusive power, difficult to cross over" (Chap. VII. 14).

5 "It is even this;" that is, my eight-fold, differentiated, inferior nature (mentioned, VII. 4) is thus described here.

6 "Indriyas;" the five senses and the five powers or organs of action. Organs do not here mean the different parts of the body, but the powers which manifest themselves through these various portions of the body, — as walking through the feet, and so on.

7 "The one;" that is, the manas, or reflecting self.

8 "Objects of sense;" that is, the gross elements. The assemblage of all these powers is the Kshetra.

9 "Desire" is the attraction towards an object belonging to the same class as one previously experienced; the concomitant of such attraction is pleasure.

10 "Aversion," with its concomitant pain, is the opposite of desire.

11 "Coherence" is the power by which the senses, organs, limbs, and internal faculties are held together as one.

12 "Conscious life" is not consciousness, which is identical with the Ego, and therefore with the Deity. Conscious life appears to pervade the body as force may be said to pervade matter in which it resides. The buddhi is described as transparent to consciousness, and thus able to produce an image or simulation of consciousness in a being.

13 "Recuperative power" is the energy supplied from within a creature for the purpose of maintaining the organism and its functions. This power revives the senses when weakened by fatigue; it also shows itself as mental and physical endurance. No amount of food could invigorate a man if this power did not exist before eating. Authority and argument prove these powers to be properties of matter, and not spirit. The Vedic text says: "Desire, intention, effort, belief, non-belief, recuperative power and its opposite, shame, intelligence, fear, — all this is but the mind." The Ego not being an object cannot be related to any of these things, which can be experienced and are therefore objects.

14 "Kshetra;" the individual body is one of the groups into which these objects are divided.

This explains the nature of the Kshetra, which is the first of the three topics of this chapter. The others are knowledge and the Kshetrajna, in revealing whom knowledge reaches its consummation and ceases to have further use.

The powers enumerated are products of Prakriti and not properties of the Ego which, united to Prakriti, is declared to be omniscient, almighty, etc. By this distinct statement the philosophy of the Atomist and the Logician are rejected. Sânkhya and Yoga philosophers do not completely follow the Blessed Lord, who is declaring the teaching of the Vedânta, the orthodox philosophy of the Brâhmans.

The Blessed Lord proceeds to declare what knowledge is. Although in the third verse knowledge is not distinctly mentioned as one of the subjects, it is yet impossible to describe the object to be known without giving some idea of the knowledge, or the knower. The true Ego being the object to be known, or realized, the apparent knower is really the knowledge. The buddhi, in connection with the body which answered to the name forming the subject of the statement made by another, "He has attained Nirvâna," is the knowledge.

Spiritual knowledge, in short, is that simple reality which is represented by the instructor, the instruction, and the pupil who receives it. This knowledge is an interior or transcendental reality, while the practical meaning of these three words is included in the Kshetra. Spiritual knowledge is not the product of effort, for no effort can produce that which is absolutely nothing before the effort is made. Nor is it a thing which pre-exists the effort which can be said to establish a new relation between it and the maker of the effort, as is the case with any object of possession, where ownership results from the action of the owner; for spiritual knowledge cannot co-exist with the sense of proprietorship or any other form of egotism.

The question as to who gains the knowledge is based upon ignorance of what the knowledge is. Such questions can only arise in regard to the false nature of the Ego as opposed to its true nature. The traditional reply to such questions as "Who is bound by ignorance, and who is liberated by spiritual knowledge?" is the demonstration of their irrationality. Nothing else so clearly discloses the want of humility which prompts questions on a subject which is [illegible]ied care and thought, as is shown by these questions.

This universe is the false nature of the Ego, and appears as true by the illegitimate ascription to it of the property of Truth. In fact, it is the illegitimacy of the ascription that makes this nature false. The ascriber is also that false nature and no other. As an actor may personate a king without being a king, so the false nature personates the Ego without being it. The actor may pretend to die on the stage and yet his real personality suffers no injury; he remains unchanged when his part is finished. So when the false nature shall finish its pretences the Ego will be itself,—that is, the same it was in the beginning and is now,—having no more parts to play forever and forever. This is the last thought on the stage of the world before the false Ego, or, more strictly speaking, the falsehood about the Ego, finally disappears as the baseless fabric of a dream. "I have done all that is to be done, obtained all that is to be obtained, known all that is to be known,—it is finished." Thus ends the working of the false nature, not indeed by mere lapse of time. As a play does not end from this cause, but by the consummation of the purpose of the play, so by the realization of the purpose of existence, namely, the perception of all that exists, man's destiny is fulfilled; then comes the disappearance of that perception because all things have been perceived, as appetite ceases when a satisfying meal is eaten. Spiritual knowledge is the revelation of this purpose, the completion of the destiny of man. A man hears from those who know what the destiny of man is, and then realizes his own destiny, the purpose of his being. This is spiritual knowledge, to exist no more as a man.

In reality the Ego is as independent of spiritual knowledge as it is of false knowledge. It requires no knowledge, true or false, for a thing to be itself.

7. Want of conceit,[1] want of ostentation,[2] inoffensiveness,[3] forgivingness,[4] sincerity,[5] devotion to spir-

1 "Conceit" is here used for the conscious attributing of merit to one's self.

2 "Ostentation" is the disclosure of one's spiritual condition.

3 "Inoffensiveness," causing pain to no creature by mind, speech, or body.

4 "Forgivingness," want of perturbation in the mind on being injured.

5 "Sincerity," harmony between act and feeling; the sage having no personal motive has no thought as to how he acts.

itual instructors, cleanliness,[1] firmness,[2] restraint of self.[3]

8. Dispassion about objects of sense,[4] absence of pride, and meditation upon the evils[5] of birth, death,[6] decrepitude, disease, and suffering.

9. Want of attachment to objects and self-identifying interest[7] in son, wife, house, and so forth, and unchanging equal-heartedness on the occurrence of what is favorable and what is unfavorable.

10. Love unfaltering to Me through self-effacement[8] in non-separateness[9] from Me, fondness for secluded spots,[10] and want of pleasure in congregations of men.[11]

1 "Cleanliness," external and internal; the latter is freedom from attachment and aversion, and is gained by impressing upon the mind the unclean character of these qualities.

2 "Firmness," perseverance in working out one's salvation.

3 "Restraint of self." "Self" is here the union of body and the faculties, which produces our present being. Its restraint is in the power to end their natural union, which is manifested as the tendencies of the natural man.

4 "Dispassion . . . sense," that is, want of attraction towards any sensuous object, experienced or unexperienced. This comes by

5 "Meditation upon the evils," etc. "The moment thou art born thou art fated to die; the moment thou diest thou art fated to be again imprisoned in the dark dungeon of the womb, sunk in the foulest impurities, and even while thou livest the body is liable to be afflicted by the most loathsome diseases, and the mind by the intensest sufferings from passions and the uncertainties of life."

6 "Death." The agonies of death are produced by the violent wrenching of the senses and faculties from their normal operations.

7 "Self-identifying interest," etc. The thought that their life is my life, their suffering mine, and so on. This natural force has the effect of making the working out of salvation appear to be an act of personal interest to be compared with the interests of son, wife, etc. A man is thus blinded into the belief that it is unselfish to give up working out his salvation for the worldly well-being of his family and relations. (Cf. Matt. x. 37.)

8 "Self-effacement," or Samâdhi; a state of spiritual exaltation in which consciousness of the present self is completely obliterated.

9 "Non-separateness." There is nothing beside my God, Vâsudeva, and He is my supreme goal.

10 "Fondness for secluded spots;" perception of the Spirit is obtained in such places.

11 "Congregations of men;" in the midst of unregenerate men the eye of the spirit is blinded.

11. Constancy in the pursuit of spiritual knowledge, meditation as to the end of the knowledge of truth,[1]—these[2] are said to be knowledge; ignorance is that which is opposite to this.

The question arises as to how these attributes can be called knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, since they do not define and condition consciousness. It can be observed everywhere that knowledge conditions the object known. This involves reasoning in a circle. It conditions the object known because it is knowledge, it is knowledge because it conditions the object. The truth is, that when knowledge is said to condition the object known, the meaning is that the object is different from other objects not connected with that knowledge; as, for example, the knowledge that reveals a baked earthen jar does not manifest fire.

Hence it is not unjustifiable to speak of these attributes as knowledge of which the object is the Supreme Spirit, meaning by knowledge the concomitant indications of knowledge which is indefinable. The knowledge of the Supreme Spirit is the knowledge "I am He." None can know the "I" as an object; no more can the Supreme Spirit be known as an object. This knowledge in its consummation is Nirvâna.

12. That which is to be known I shall declare, knowing which a man attains immortality,—the beginningless, Supreme Brahmă that is said to be neither Aught nor Naught.

Although the Absolute Deity is so difficult to be known, yet the pursuit of spiritual knowledge is worthy of unfaltering devotion, because the consummation of it is beyond description glorious,—identity with the Supreme Spirit. In order to declare the Absolute Deity, the beginning is made at the highest point of conditioned existence; namely, the cause of creation, preservation, and destruction

1 "End of the knowledge of truth;" that is, liberation. "The truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32). By constant thought about Nirvâna, or eternal life, the mind begins to believe that of all things this is the best, and acquires strength to work for it.

2 "These;" all that has been said in verses 7–11. "These" are called knowledge because they fit one for the reception of knowledge.

of the universe, which is beginningless for all, and unending for those who do not attain Nirvâna, where the attribute of being the cause no longer illusively conditions consciousness. The Supreme Spirit is beginningless and yet itself.

It might at first sight appear that after the promise to declare what is to be known for the purpose of attaining immortality, it is inadequate to say that the Supreme is "neither Aught nor Naught." But it is not so, and is in perfect agreement with all teachings of the Vedânta. It being impossible to make any affirmation about the Deity, — since all that is, is but falsely imputed to Him as His attributes,—negation is the only right method of declaring Him, who cannot be found out by searching.

The Vedas declare, "Now then this commandment, not this, not that, not great, not small, not short, not long, not within, not without, not before, not behind, not sound, not touch, not form, not changing, also not taste;" because a legitimate application of the demonstrative pronoun is not possible in respect of the Deity. How is this different from universal negation? In this; that about which the verb "to be" is used in an affirmative sense exists, and the reverse does not. But the employment of the verb for affirmation or negation is an act of mental operation, which cannot extend to the Supreme Spirit, who is not an object limited by the mind.

Let us take an example in the phrase, "The barren woman's son." The difference between the two cases is this: In so far as the "barren woman's son" can have any importance he must be perceptible by ordinary physical means. When we reject the figment of the barren woman's son, we mean nothing more than this, that our conscious existence, as well as the happiness which existence implies, is in no way affected by that figment. In other words, it is the implied perceptibility of the barren woman's son that gives the mind the feeling of rest in certitude when we negative his existence.

Not so in the case of the Absolute Deity, in regard to whom there is no implication of perceptibility. Being beyond the possibility of experience by the mind, the Deity cannot be the object of the mental function of negation. Therefore the being of the Deity is proved by the word, that is, by the mystery of revelation. That which is not of any advantage to any man (as is an object declared to be beyond the power to experience), no man can or will invent.

Here another doubt arises. Granted that Absolute Deity is not subject to negation, how is it possible to know Him from whom alone eternal life can be inherited? The very consideration of the impossibility of perceiving the Deity through the mind and the senses, which establishes His being, establishes the other truth that immortality is impossible, because we have no means of knowing the Deity. This doubt is not well founded; for the same authority which establishes the being of the Deity as an absolute truth, and therefore not amenable to sense perception or inference, also declares that there is a power called divine grace or spiritual illumination, which makes the Deity known, not indeed as an object, but as the consciousness within us (Cf. Matt. x. 27; John v. 21, 26). Consciousness alone is life in itself, or is self-existent; and the moment it is perceived that I, the Self, am the Spirit or pure consciousness, immortality is achieved.

The Supreme Spirit is proved by the word but not made known. For words can cause us to realize four categories only; namely, class, action, attribute, and relation. The Supreme Spirit is none of these. How then can He be called reality, which is a class containing many members? This use of reality is a mere figure of speech, and has no scientific precision; for the revealed authority, the Vedas, declares, "For Brahmă there is neither clan nor caste." Respecting action it is said, "Without action, peace;" as regards attributes, "He is one only and attributeless;" touching relation it is explicitly declared, "One without a second." In brief, words can only deal with quality and their co-inherence, usually called substance; but the Supreme Spirit is different from all of them, and consequently beyond all words.

From the rejection of the attribution of reality or being to the Deity, it may seem as though He were nothing. To remove this fear it is shown that the existence itself of the limbs, organs, senses, and faculties of creatures affords the proof that they are the powers of consciousness. Disconnected with consciousness they cannot for a moment be, and yet they are not disconnected. Consequently their apparent non-identity with consciousness is not due to any power in them. Nor is it possible to say that they are self-existent. Hence they are and are not identical with consciousness, without any power of their own. This is the same thing as to say that they are the powers of consciousness with which they are identical or not, according to another power which must be regarded as absolute

free-will, or independence of consciousness, — a power not liable to be described. The conclusion is undeniable that the point of view from which reality is attributed to powers cannot admit of the same epithet being applied to the Powerful, but without the Powerful neither attribute nor attribution can be.

The knowledge of the Deity is the realization that the Deity is unknowable by reason of His absoluteness, but being Consciousness, He is that which every creature feels after as the "I." The world being His power is in reality nothing but Himself. The apparent non-identity which gives an apparent reality to the world is an indescribable, unessential something, — a falsehood to be avoided with contempt. Consciousness cannot be known except as that by which and through which all things are known; and no thing can exist that is not known. Consciousness is independent and self-existent, while all things can and do exist only through it. Hence the whole universe is the power of consciousness; in other words, the universe is, and can cease to be, only by the power of consciousness; the power which destroys the universe would itself be destroyed if rejected by consciounesss.

Fully to realize this is to know God with true knowledge. No being can thus know God except those who, thoroughly purified by complete renunciation and perfect resignation, know Him as the Self, — know Him by the knowledge "I am He."

13. That has hands and feet everywhere, everywhere eyes, heads, and mouths, ears everywhere, he remains in the world, covering all.

The bodies and minds of different creatures are really presided over by one consciousness, the Kshetrajna, who appears as though distinct in each creature. But if these illusive forms are rejected, the consciousness which is man, and God, and all beings at the same time, and at all times, remains.

14. Reflected[1] by the functions of all senses and fac-

1 "Reflected;" that is, nothing can exist without consciousness, yet nothing is consciousness; therefore it is said to be reflected, — consciousness appears as though acting. "He seems to rest, he seems to move," says a sacred text. The revered commentator says, "For those devoid of right discrimination when the senses and faculties act, the Ego appears as though the actor; as, when clouds move about, the moon seems as though in motion."

ulties, yet devoid of all senses[1] and faculties, unattached, yet all-supporting;[2] devoid of qualities, yet witnessing all qualities.[3]

15. That is the within[4] and without[5] of creatures, animate and inanimate; it is unrealizable on account of subtlety, and is distant[6] as well as near.[7]

16. That which is to be known, though undistributed is distributed in creatures,[8] and is the support of creatures,[9] as also destroyer and creator.

17. That is the light of all lights,[10] is said to be beyond darkness;[11] the knowledge,[12] that to be known,[13] and that which is known,[14] seated in speciality[15] in the hearts of all.

1 "Devoid of all senses:" that is, in reality the Ego is unconditioned by any organ, limb or faculty. The Scriptures say, "He, devoid of hands and feet, moves and grasps; sees, though without eyes; hears, though without ears."

2 "Unattached yet all-supporting:" that is, though the Spirit is without relation to anything, yet if it were not, nothing would be. Even the seeming reality of the world requires The Reality to be simulated.

3 "Qualities" here used in the technical sense of the Sankhya philosophy, means the three components of nature, fully described in the succeeding chapter.

4 "Within:" to the wise the innermost thing, the Ego, is the Supreme Spirit.

5 "Without:" that is, for those who, being in delusion, take the body as the Ego, the Spirit is the external body from the skin to the marrow. Such is their delusion.

6 "Distant," for the unwise, who search the whole world for it in vain.

7 "Near," for the wise who know it to be the Self. The holy text says, "It moves, it does not move, it is distant, it is near, it is the innermost of all this as well as the outermost of all this."

8 "Distributed in creatures;" in consequence of being considered in reference to each body. As the cause, the Spirit is but One, while in regard to effects it is many.

9 "Support of creatures" during the life of the Kosmos, and at other seasons destroyer and creator.

10 "Light of all lights:" as without the sun nothing can be seen, so the sun himself cannot be seen except through the majestic, self-contained splendor of the Spirit.

11 "Is said to be beyond darkness;" beyond the reach of false knowledge; "said" by the Vedas. (See comment, Chapter VIII. verse 9.)

12 "Knowledge." (See verses 7–11.)

13 "To be known." (See verses 12–17.)

14 "That which is known:" when the truth is realized in a heart purified by the virtues called knowledge in verses 7–11.

15 "Seated in speciality;" as the rays of the sun fall everywhere but are peculiarly seated in transparent media, so these three realities, though all-pervading, are in the heart or buddhi.

The real nature of the Supreme Spirit is incomprehensible. Whoever, knowing this, knows Him as declared in verses 13–16, and perceives that the real nature of the Deity is identical with the true Self in us, knows truly indeed and is immortal.

18. Thus has been declared in brief the Kshetra,[1] knowledge,[2] and that to be known; [3] my devotee,[4] realizing this, attains to my state.[5]

From the practical point of view the last verse of Chapter XI. is the most important in the book; as regards philosophy, the foregoing verses of this chapter are incomparably the most important.

The truth fully sung by Vaçishtha and the other divinely illuminated sages in the Vedas, and illustrated by well-reasoned arguments, has been thus briefly declared by the Blessed Lord. Whoever realizes this truth is set free.

The twofold nature of the Deity is declared in Chapter VII. verses 4, 5, and it is also said that these two form the source from which all things come. The subject is resumed here.

19. Know Prakriti[6] and Purusha[7] as both beginningless. Know the emanations[8] and qualities[9] as born of Prakriti.

Prakriti and Purusha are co-eternal and are the power of the Deity by which creation, preservation, and destruction take place. Prakriti is the power by which all work is done, while Purusha looks on. If he did not oversee she would not work; and if she did not work he could not look on, in the absence of anything to be looked at. But yet essentially consciousness is different from the objective; therefore their union, as described, is due to the fact of

1 "Kshetra;" described in verses 5, 6, for the purpose of giving the right knowledge of the individual ego.

2 "Knowledge;" that is, the relation between the Kshetra and the Supreme Spirit.

3 "Known;" that is, the Supreme Spirit.

4 "My devotee;" he who having firmly placed his entire heart in the Supreme Spirit sees nothing but the Supreme everywhere and in everything.

5 "My state;" identity with the Supreme Spirit or liberation.

6 "Prakriti;" that is, the inferior nature of the Deity (Chap. VII. v. 4).

7 "Purusha;" the superior nature of the Deity, or consciousness.

8 "Emanations," such as buddhi and the rest.

9 "Qualities," modifications of nature appearing as pleasure, pain, and delusion.

their being both the nature of the Deity, and is the manifestation of His will. This is the most important thing to impress upon the mind.

The beginningless union of consciousness with matter is due to the free and absolutely unconditioned will of God alone; it is otherwise called illusion or false knowledge, because it is not an object to which the pronoun "this" can be applied, and because it is extinguished on attainment of liberation. The essential nature of will being independence of conditions, the dissolution of the illegitimate union between matter and spirit is also the outcome of the Divine will. This union and disunion do not show any changeableness in the will of God, for the very essence of change, which is Time, does not exist except by the union of Prakriti and Purusha. Hence it is clear that no one can attain liberation or true knowledge of the Deity by mere lapse of time. To accept the doctrine of a progressive development for the immortal Ego is to accept death in preference to life. The Ego is essentially immortal, and therefore at every instant free from the conditions of time. The free growth of this faith is the attainment of the eternal life. This, however, can never take place so long as the lie is given to it openly by unrighteousness of conduct and want of resignation, which has its origin in the belief that the Ego is transitory and limited by personal desires.

Bondage and liberation are really nothing but the two aspects of the Divine will, uniting and disuniting Prakriti and Purusha. The difference between the Sânkhya philosophers and the orthodox Brâhmanical teachers lies in the fact that the former ascribe to Prakriti the power of uniting with and disuniting from Purusha; and although she is unconscious, she appears as though conscious by reason of this power of uniting herself with Purusha.

The orthodox sages attach a different meaning to the term Prakriti. The revered commentator says, "Prakriti is the power of the Deity to create objects; the illusive power consisting of the three qualities." And as no creation can take place except by the union of Prakriti and Purusha, therefore Prakriti is not independent, but is subject to the will of God. The Sânkhya philosophers demur to this, and say that Prakriti is "the rootless root."

The others say that Prakriti, being unconscious, cannot be the First Cause, because such a tenet would be opposed to such Vedic texts as declare creation to be caused by a conscious power.

The Sânkhya philosophers reply that such texts do not impugn

the truth of their doctrines, because by union with Purusha, Prakriti appears as conscious.

The orthodox school rejects this exposition as being too cumbrous and roundabout. But the seeming difference on this point between these two schools altogether disappears when we reflect over the teaching of the Sânkhya school on this point. It holds that the union between Prakriti and Purusha is due to ignorance, which is destroyed by right knowledge, and that, as a great Sânkhya authority declares, "Verily, no one is bound, nor is released, nor migrates: but resting in many forms, Prakriti herself migrates, is bound, and is freed" (Sânkhya Kârikâ, Aph. LXII).

This aphorism removes the apparent conflict between these two schools upon a very important point, — the real nature of the Ego. On a cursory view of the Sânkhya system, it would appear as if it held that the Ego is essentially possessed of the three attributes, cognition, will, and action, at one time, but that at another time, that is to say, on liberation, it is divested of these attributes. It also seems to hold that the distinctness of personalities is due to real distinctness of egos.

But upon a careful examination of this system as a whole, these apparent tenets give way before very different conclusions. It then becomes plain that this school, in common with orthodox Brâhmanism, admits the indescribableness of ignorance, and does not understand it as mere negation of knowledge; it also teaches the essential attributelessness of the Ego, and the consciousness of the First Cause. Nor does it leave any doubt that in truth the Sânkhya school does not maintain the apparent multiplicity of Purushas to be an ultimate reality. (See Sânkhya Kârikâ, Aphs. XVII. and XX.) The difference of teaching as to the order of the evolution of principles is immaterial, since both lead to precisely the same final result.

The school usually called Theistic Sânkhya differs from the orthodox philosophy as to the nature of the First Cause. It maintains that although the Supreme Spirit is the Creator, and has other functions, he is yet eternally pure and unconditioned; while the Blessed Lord teaches that the Supreme Spirit is really actionless and absolute, — the phenomenal manifestations being the outcome of the relation between the two natures or powers.

Here, also, on reflection, it will be seen that the difference is formal and non-essential. This difference may also be found between the Old Testament and the New. Jehovah the Creator is

Absolute,—"I am that I am,"—while in the New Testament the Deity does not create except through His Son, who is not included in the procession of beings. As the union of Prakriti and Purusha is not caused in time, the Son is eternally in the bosom of the Father, "whom no one can see" on account of His absolute majesty.

This last conception is in perfect accord with orthodox Brâhmanism, in which Içvara stands for the Son. Içvara is possessed of all powers, yet is not absolute; because whenever any power is exercised he is the exerciser of that power, and is thus conditioned by it, while the Father "judges no man." Light will be thrown on the limitations of the Son by the will of the Father through such declarations as these: "Verily, verily I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things that Himself doeth, and He will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. . . . For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John v. 19, 20, 22).

"I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father that has sent me" (John v. 32).

"And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xx. 28).

It is to be noted here that the word Son is expressly rejected by the father of orthodox Brâhmanism of modern times—the revered Sankarâchârya—owing to its implication of a derived and yet independent reality. The Spirit of God, consciousness, is the real nature of the Son as of all creatures. The only real nature of the universe, animate and inanimate, is the Supreme Spirit.

In so far as the Father of the universe is said to do anything, it is done by His mere being, and without even the least liability to being conditioned as the exerciser of power. In order to indicate the absoluteness of the Deity, it is often said that all things are done by His Word. The Word of God eternally uttered contains within itself the totality of phenomenal manifestations. The universe is nothing but the meaning of this Word.

There is a class of interpreters who put a different construction on this nineteenth verse by rendering the original word for beginningless as "not the beginning," in the sense of the ultimate; but

this is not to be accepted. Because if God, as Himself, is taken as the First Cause of all things, then Prakriti and Purusha must have been created by Him. Consequently, before their creation God's lordly power would have been absent, and this power being absent, He could not have been the Lord. If the Deity creates, as Himself, without these two instruments, then this universe would have been as real as Himself, and eternal life would have been a mere alternative expression for annihilation; there would have been no bondage or liberation, and all revealed Scriptures and doctrines would have been purposeless and void.

By admitting the co-eternity of Prakriti and Purusha, and the independence of the Absolute Deity, and His identity with consciousness under whatever apparent conditions manifested, all this is avoided. The same truth may be stated by saying that the will of God is the mysterious union between matter and spirit, which are respectively His false or exterior and real or interior nature. The wise words of the great commentator are: "God being eternal, His two natures must also be eternal, because they form His divinity. Through them He creates, preserves, and destroys the universe."

Another misconception must also be removed. It is not reasonable to think of any cause prior to Prakriti and Purusha, for that only leads to a *regressus in infinitum*. The truth is, that to deny the eternity of the powers of God, called Prakriti and Purusha, is to deny the existence of God; because God without His nature and His independence of nature is nothing. It is distinctly to be stated that God really or interiorly is the Absolute.

20. In the production of cause and effect, the cause is said to be Prakriti:[1] in the production of experiencership of pleasure and pain, Purusha is said to be the cause.[2]

"Cause" may here be interpreted in two ways; either as meaning the five senses, five organs, manas, ahankâra, and buddhi, or as

[1] "Cause is said to be Prakriti;" that is, the initiating cause of all action in the universe. "Is said" refers to Kapila, the divine sage, with whom were born righteousness, knowledge, dispassion, and power. The Blessed Lord says, "Among the perfect I am Kapila" (Chap. X. v. 26.)

[2] "Purusha is said to be the cause." Purusha does not here mean the Supreme Spirit, but the Ego as connected with Kshetra, by the connection called ignorance (âvidyâ). He is the cause by reason of this connection.

the seven secondary causes; namely, buddhi, ahankâra, and the five subtle elements. The connotation of "effect" will depend upon that given to "cause." If this term is accepted in the former sense, then "effect" would mean the gross physical frame; in the other case it would include the sixteen non-producing products of root-nature as accepted by Sânkhya philosophers; namely, five senses, five organs, manas, and five gross elements.

These two powers are the cause of the universe; because, without the productive capacity of Prakriti, and the cognizing power of Purusha, the universe cannot exist. But the universe is the connection called ignorance, existing between the objective Prakriti, which contains cause and effect, and the subject Purusha.

The experiencing of pleasure and pain is the perceptible universe, which is only another expression for the bondage of the Ego. According to the Sânkhya philosophers, Prakriti, being unconscious, cannot be the experiencer; but there is no objection to her being the agent, only performing action when cognized by consciousness by relation to her through the mysterious power of ignorance. It is observed that the teats of the cow exude milk when the calf is near; thus by the rational, not spacial, proximity of Purusha, Prakriti works, — in the same way as a blind man makes his way out of a forest even if a cripple mounts upon his back to direct him.

The experiencership of Purusha has been mentioned. To what is it due?

21. Purusha seated[1] in Prakriti[2] experiences the qualities born of Prakriti: the cause of his birth in good and evil wombs is self-identification with qualities.

The acceptance of the experience of pleasure and pain and indifference existing in Prakriti as belonging to the Ego, is the chief cause of birth, disease, and death. The sacred authority declares, "What he desires, that becomes a determination; and what he determines here, that he becomes on passing away."

Two causes of birth are here mentioned, — self-identification with qualities, and Prakriti, in which the Ego is seated. Prakriti is the material cause, and supplies the material for the construction of this

1 "Seated," that is, accepting Prakriti as the Self.

2 *Prakriti*, in the sense of avidyâ, or the binding and not the liberating aspect of Prakriti as explained by Sânkhya philosophy. (See Sânkhya Kârikâ, Aph. XLIII.) In the latter aspect she is Vidyâ, or spiritual knowledge.

"baseless fabric of a dream." Self-identification with qualities is the instrumental cause in this construction.

The mention of the extremes, good and evil wombs, includes birth as a god, a human being, or an animal. The ego, said to vary in one body from that in another body, is celestial, terrestrial, or bestial, according to the attributes with which it is identified. Stripped of the "muddy vesture of decay," it is none of these, but pure consciousness, which is the spirit of God. Upon the birth of a creature upon the earth, the ego does not start from absolute nothingness, but it was in the purpose and design of God from beginningless past time. The purpose and design of God is Prakriti, which is ceaselessly at work. An ego dwells in Prakriti by undergoing endless incarnations until it knows what Prakriti is; in other words, until it knows the Divine purpose of its existence. When this is realized Nirvâna is attained.

The bondage of the ego is neither essential nor accidental, but false, being due to ignorance or illusion. The ego thus bound is liberated by the realization that in truth it is not subject to such bondage. The thinking principle is the cause of bondage as well as of liberation. When operating in relation to objects it is bondage; when not operating in relation to objects by reason of the perception of their falsehood and the reality of the ego alone, it is liberation.

22. The Purusha in the body is supreme,[1] is upadrashtâ,[2] anumantâ,[3] bhartâ,[4] bhoktâ,[5] Maheçvara,[6] and also called[7] Paramâtmâ.[8]

1 "Supreme;" that is, superior to Prakriti.

2 *Upadrashtâ;* that is, the innermost in us, as well as the witnessing spirit; in other words, that which is the centre of all, body, mind, and intelligence, and at the same time is not an object, but is absolute consciousness. The term also implies that the spirit is merely the on-looker, and is not concerned about the body and its acts.

3 *Anumantâ;* that is, producer of satisfaction in the doer of an act, though not himself concerned in action, still appearing as such; witnessing the work of all, and never forbidding any.

4 *Bhartâ;* that is, the true consciousness which is reflected as the consciousness in the assemblage of the body and the interior faculties; hence, "the supporter."

5 *Bhoktâ;* the consciousness which, pervading the buddhi as units of consciousness, appears as conscious beings.

6 *Maheçvara*, "the great Lord." Consciousness as connected with the whole universe. "This is the Lord of all, the great master of all things, this the ruler of worlds," says the sacred text.

7 "Called," in the Vedas.

8 *Paramâtmâ;* the âtmâ, or spirit as the consciousness in the First Cause. The term is explained in Chapter XV. verse 17.

Know that which thou callest "I" and blindly givest attributes to is the Absolute Emperor of the universe, the Creator, Destroyer, and Preserver of all. The being within thee which experiences objects is the personal ruler of the universe; the true Self is the consciousness which manifests this knowledge, and therefore identical in all but name with the consciousness in the First Cause. Existence as man and its good and evil experiences are entirely false. Die to the falsehood and thou shalt live in truth. The realization or true knowledge of this annihilation before God is liberation or eternal life.

23. Whoso thus[1] knoweth Purusha and Prakriti,[2] together with the qualities, he, though engaged[3] in everything, is not born again.

"Again" refers to the time after the dissolution of the present body. What happens to his beginningless past Karma, as well as to that of the present and of the future time in which the existence of the body continues? The sacred authority says, "His Karma is destroyed by realizing Him who is the superior as well as the inferior nature."

Does death of the body then follow the attainment of spiritual knowledge? No; as in that case no spiritual teacher could have existed; and without spiritual teachers the acquirement of knowledge is quite impossible.

What Karma is it, then, that keeps him alive? The Karma that was in operation at the time when knowledge was attained. It is difficult to understand how this residue is left on the consumption of Karma by the fire of knowledge. The explanation is that all acts done by the sage, after his illumination, are not done by him, because he knows himself to be the unknowable consciousness which is identical with the Absolute and Actionless Spirit. Consequently such acts produce no change or effect in him such as could be the seed of future Karma.

1 "Thus;" that is, directly realizes Purusha, — "I am he."

2 *Prakriti;* owing to this realization he destroys avidyâ, together with all its modifications, by vidyâ. "As light destroys the mass of darkness, so vidyâ, avidyâ," says the revered commentator. When the darkness is destroyed there remains no further use for the light, and then the ineffable life in God, the true Self, is found.

3 "Though engaged," etc.; even if he does things that are enjoined or prohibited by scriptural authority.

The stored-up Karma is destroyed because its root, avidyâ, and desire are destroyed by knowledge and dispassion. But the Karma already in operation is not destroyed, because it is not perceived by the sage, as his body is to him like a shadow, or as one of the illusions created by avidyâ and previously considered as himself. He now realizes that his body has nothing to do with him, the Ego, or true Self; but as knowledge is no impediment to the operation of illusion in regard to others, so in the case of the body its acts are perceived by them to continue as begun.

An illustration may be given. A man is surprised in the night by a robber, as he thinks. He shoots at the untimely visitor, and instantly sees, by a flash of lightning, that he had mistaken a friend for a robber. He throws down his weapon, but that does not prevent the shot discharged from wounding the friend.

In the first twelve chapters the conception of the individual spirit and of the universal spirit is purified; in this chapter their identity is declared. "Know Me to be even as the Kshetrajna." The Blessed Lord now proceeds to unfold the various ways of realizing this life-giving truth.

24. By meditation[1] some realize the âtmâ in the heart by the buddhi;[2] others by Sânkhya Yoga,[3] and others again by Karma Yoga.[4]

The condition of the very lowest is next considered.

25. Others, again, not knowing this,[5] worship assiduously,[6] hearing from others, even they go beyond death,[7]

[1] "Meditation," which consists in withdrawing all the senses from their objects and merging them in the mind, and then the mind in the individual spirit. This is appropriate for the moderately spiritual, who cannot perceive the truth from its simple declaration, but must quiet all disturbing influences by concentration of mind on the scriptural declarations about Truth which is the real nature of the Spirit.

[2] *Buddhi;* the purified inner faculties.

[3] *Sânkhya Yoga;* realization of the Ego as distinct from the three qualities which constitute avidyâ. There is no reference here to the philosophy of Kapila. This is possible to the most spiritual only.

[4] *Karma Yoga;* the dedication of all action to the Deity. Fit practice for those incapable of the others.

[5] "Not knowing this;" that is, unable to believe in it from personal examination of the Scriptures, they receive it on the authority of others.

[6] "Worship assiduously;" that is, meditate on it constantly.

[7] "Go beyond death;" that is, escape from conditioned life by slow degrees.

making the hearing of the Scriptures[1] their supreme goal.

26. Whenever the least thing, animate or inanimate, is born, know that to be from the union of the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna.

Unions are usually of two kinds: 1. Like the union of the rope to the water-jar round the neck of which it is tied; 2. Like the union of blackness and an object, together forming a black object. The "union" here spoken of is different from these; it consists in the ascription of the properties of one to the other. The Ego is absolutely different from the non-ego, yet a relation between them is perceived. This is due to the ascription of objectivity to the Ego and of consciousness to the object. This false knowledge disappears when it is perceived that consciousness has no relation to objects. The result of this realization is the disappearance of objects; namely, the universality of the universal spirit and the individuality of the individual spirit, and then liberation is accomplished, suffering is extinguished, and the Truth is known. He who once attains this knowledge is deluded no more, whether he lives or dies, and whatever he may do. He is free as the air, bound by no laws of any kind. (Cf. John iii. 8.)

The extinction of false knowledge is further treated of in order to impress us with the fact that this is the supreme consummation of existence.

27. Whoso sees the supreme Lord[2] remaining equal[3] in all creatures, undestroyed in the destruction of them all,[4] sees indeed.

28. Perceiving the Lord as differenceless, existing equally everywhere, he does not destroy the Self by himself, and therefore goes to the supreme end.

1 "Hearing of the Scriptures," etc.; hearing includes all requisites of proper study. This is the chief expedient for the lowest.

2 "Supreme Lord;" from the standpoint of the consciousness dwelling in "union" with the body.

3 "Equal;" although the Supreme Spirit is in all creatures, it still has no differences.

4 "Undestroyed in . . . them all;" destruction includes all the six changes to which every creature is subject. To be destroyed, a creature must have passed through birth, existence after birth, growth, decay, and change of substance.

The Deity is differenceless since he is the one and secondless consciousness; there is nothing either similar to or different from the Deity. It must not be forgotten that in the Deity the idea that "I am and nothing but I am" does not exist. The meaning of the saying that "the Supreme Spirit is one and secondless" is the negation of such an idea, which would imply a searching for something, and then feeling that the impulse to search finds rest without finding anything. This, being a mental process, is to be negatived with regard to the Deity, who is "without life and without mind," according to sacred authority.

The Deity is the plenitude of bliss, is unconditioned consciousness, the absolute perfection, and therefore devoid of all impulse of any kind which, being the invariable sign of want and imperfection, do not belong to the real nature of the Deity.

"Existing equally everywhere" is a paradox; for "everywhere" implies differentiation, and "equally" is the negation of all differences. All that is, is the Supreme, yet the Deity is nothing but the Deity. There is no simile for the wide expanse of the heavens, nor for the waters of the ocean; how much less can there be a simile for the unsearchable God, whose image the universe cannot hold, in search of a perfect representation of whom Brahmâ is said to be eternally creating and abandoning creation in despair. Here lies the great difference between Truth and Pantheism. The Pantheist says, "Nothing but God is, and He is the Universe." The true devotee says; "Nothing but God is, and He is not the Universe." The great commentator says, "The Supreme Spirit is different from the universe. Besides that Spirit nothing is; that which is different from the Spirit is a false seeming, like a mirage of the desert."

"Does not destroy the Self by himself." It is well known that even the most foolish do not consciously injure themselves. The wise man who knows his identity with God does not seek to kill himself by casting out God.

The unwise, who do not know that the Self is identical with God, are guilty of suicide, and must therefore wander in the utter gloom of unrest. The Scripture says, "Sunless are those spheres, wrapped up in blinding gloom, whither repair after death the creatures who are murderers of the Self," meaning in the above sense.

It has been said that "the Lord is equally everywhere." How can this be harmonized with the observable differences in personalities?

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

answers, "Nature only acts;" nature being the same as avidyâ (Chap. V. v. 14).

The freedom of the Ego from action and attachment is explained by illustrations.

32. As space, though all-pervading, is not attached, by reason of its subtlety, so the âtmâ, though seated in all kinds of bodies, is not attached.

33. As one sun manifests all this world, the Kshetrajna manifests all Kshetras, O son of Bharata.

The illustration of the sun applies to the unity of the Kshetrajna in spite of the variety of Kshetras, and also to its want of attachment to conditions. The sun manifests this world with its mountains and valleys, sea and land; but the sun does not thereby become many, nor is the sun defiled by the impurities it brings to sight.

If we take the sun as the Ego, and consider a number of saucers full of water as human beings, then it will be seen that although there is one sun in reality, yet each saucer seemingly has a sun of its own. While the reflected sun is taken for *the* sun, the motion of the water from the breezes will give a seeming motion to the sun. If the saucer is broken and the water runs out, then a man who has never known the sun except by attributing reality to a reflection, will think the sun is destroyed; but not so the man who recognizes the sun in the saucer as merely the reflection of the blessed sun in the heavens. As a child may imagine the sun to be extinguished when clouds prevent his seeing the sun, so when the knowledge within us is veiled by ignorance we imagine non-identity with the Deity.

The chapter concludes with a summary of its contents.

34. Those who, with wisdom's eye,[1] thus perceive the difference between the Kshetra and the Kshetrajna, and also the extinction of the nature of objects,[2] go into the Supreme.[3]

[1] "Wisdom's eye;" the instruction of Scriptures and preceptors. The Vedas are called the eye of the ancestors, gods and men.

[2] "Nature of objects;" avidyâ, the illusive power which brings into existence objects essentially unreal.

[3] "Go into the Supreme;" escaping from the wheel of migratory existence, attain Nirvâna.

Thus ends chapter the thirteenth, called "RIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF THE DISCRIMINATION BETWEEN KSHETRA AND KSHETRAJNA," in the blessed BHAGAVAD GÎTÂ, the sacred lore, the divine wisdom, the book of divine union, the colloquy between the blessed KRISHNA and ARJUNA, and contained in the Bhîshma Parvan of the blessed MAHÂBHÂRATA, which is a collection of one hundred thousand verses by VYÂSA.

By the realization of objectivity and its distinctness from the Ego, which is in reality pure unconditioned consciousness, not different from the Supreme Spirit, all and every suffering comes to an end, and the crown and consummation of being is reached.

Salutation to Krishna, who is that truth which separates the Kshetra from the Kshetrajna.