Chapter - III

The Birth of a Movement

The controversy between Reverend W.W. Hastie and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in the columns of the Statesman constitutes a significant landmark in the history of the development of the ideas of the New Hindu Movement. The ideas began to take shape with the publication of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's third letter (on October 28, 1882) written in reply to Hastie's violent attack on Hinduism. The attack started in the form of several letters to the editor, purporting, in effect, to be so many apostolic sermons delivered by a philanthropic missionary with a heart bleeding for "Bharatvarsha, the once fair daughter of the Morning", - (now) "become the mother of harlots and of the abominations of the earth."¹ Before probing the significance of this attack and of Bankim's rejoinder to it in the larger historical setting of the religious developments in Nineteenth Century Bengal, we should note the immediate occasion of the controversy.

On the 20th of September, 1882, the Statesman of Calcutta published an account of a grand Sradh ceremony that had taken place in the ancestral house of the Rajah of Sovabazar on the 17th. The Sovabazar family was one of the richest, and at the same time, the most influential, families of 19th century Calcutta. It was well-known that this family was a pillar of Hinduism, and a great advocate of the cause.

of Western enlightenment in so far as that enlightenment did not strike at the roots of orthodoxy. It is one of the paradoxes of the social history of Nineteenth Century Bengal that orthodox Hindus like Dewan Ram Kamal Sen and Raja Radhakanta Deb were no less instrumental in the spread of Western enlightenment than thinkers like Rammohan Roy who considered orthodoxy as the root of all social evils in India. Actually the role of the former was possibly of greater effectiveness as the researches of historians like David Kopf and Ramesh Chandra Majumdar are making abundantly clear. These researches show the incorrectness of the popular opinion which would give all the credit for the spread of Western enlightenment in India to the enemies of orthodoxy. What the 'orthodox camp' of the advocates of Western enlightenment lacked was this: It failed to give a rational explanation of their orthodoxy in so far as such rational explanation was rendered imperative by their own acceptance of Western enlightenment. This failure was as true of the enlightened members of the Sovabazar family as of every other member of the 'orthodox camp' of the advocates of Western enlightenment.

Radhakanta Deb (1794-1867), the most illustrious member of the Sovabazar family, defended Hindu idolatry on the ground that, for the masses in India, it served the same purpose as dolls served for children, for it prevented those masses from getting addicted to practices.

that were blatantly immoral. It was with such feeble arguments, conceding almost the whole point to the enemies of idolatry, that members of the 'orthodox camp' of the advocates of Western enlightenment in India persevered in their idolatry, and it was this ambivalence of their attitude that rendered them fit targets for attack by Brahmo as well as Christian propagandists. The Sradh of 1882 was open to attack on an identical reasoning: it would have possibly gone unnoticed had there been not a large gathering of English-educated Hindus in the ceremony, - some of them well-known for their enlightened views on social and religious questions. But Rev. Hastie the Sradh seemed to furnish a classic example of what to him was an undesirable combination of Hindu orthodoxy and Western enlightenment and it was this combination that, in his view, made the ceremony doubly intolerable. To understand the missionary's wrath let us quote the Statesman account of the ceremony as summarised by Jogesh Chandra Bagal:

"The spacious quadrangle of the Rajbari, the various articles, requisite for the Dansagar Sradh, the family idol Gopinathji placed on a silver throne, all these were duly noticed (in the Statesman account). The presence of nearly four thousand Brahman scholars (Adhyapakas) and other guests from all sections of the community was specially mentioned. There was a long list of the English-educated Bengalis who were present at the ceremony. This list included men like Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, Kristodas Pal and Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra."

There is little doubt that it was this display of the idol of Gopinathji and the apparent approval of that display

1. *Bankim Rachanavali: Sahitya Samsad, editorial notes.*
by some of the most illustrious members of the Hindu community, otherwise engaged in spreading the enlightenment of the West in India, that irritated W.W. Hastie. As Principal of the General Assembly's Institution, he must have felt that the mantle of Alexander Duff, his more illustrious predecessor and founder of the Institution, had fallen upon him, and he lost no time in opening his attack. This was a strange mixture of Christian indignation against an idolatrous ceremony, bountiful commiseration for the lot of fallen Bharatvarsha and a respect for the Hindu receivers of Western enlightenment, whose attendance in such a ceremony proved, in the missionary's view, a gross betrayal of that enlightenment. His letters began to be published one after another: the first questioning "the supposed necessity of idolatry", the second inveighing against its 'alleged harmlessness' and the third demolishing 'the ultimate philosophy of Brahmanism.' The supposed necessity was given in Radhakanta Deb's words and was demolished by two arguments, one historical and the other rational. The historical argument was the example of the aboriginal Tribes of India converted to Christianity, who were raised

2. The Statesman, September 26, 1882.
4. "As you Europeans give dolls to your children, so do we Hindoos give these idols to our children, to our uneducated women and common people, who cannot do without them, but we do not really worship them ourselves."
"in a single generation from the grossest idolatry up to the purest worship of God." "If objection be taken to Christian examples" Hastie hastened to cite the case of the Mohammedan masses of India, who dispensed with the necessity of idols without any visible inconvenience. Hastie's rational argument against idolatry consisted in the alleged existence, even in savages, of a "supersensuous reason" which made the necessity of worship through sensible idols superfluous. In the second letter Hastie went a step further, and rejected altogether the alleged harmlessness of the superfluity and blamed on it "all the demoralisation and degradation of India." In the third letter was proposed the demolition of the "inner citadel" of Hinduism which in the missionary's view was the philosophy of Vedanta, especially that version of it which was associated with the name of Shankaracharya. Rev. Hastie thought he had found no less than four unanswerable objections to this philosophy. It was a negative idealism "giving no satisfactory explanation of the existent world and its stable order"; the negativism as a cosmological theory, in its turn, extended to the sphere of morality and practical action; it bred despair and gave "no hope, being without God in the world"; last but not least, it led to the "dogmatic Nihilism of Buddha." Rev. Hastie concluded his third letter by hinting

1. Hastie's letter, the Statesman, September 29, 1886.
that the only hope of Hindus lay in embracing Christianity. At this moment Bankim Chandra Chatterjee spoke out.

His entry into the controversy needs some explanation. Throughout his life Bankim had shown little taste for literary wranglings and would not even respond to criticisms that were from time to time levelled against his own views and his own character. During his long literary career it is only on a single occasion that he is on record as having replied to criticisms directed against his own person, and that too in connection with a religious controversy. This was characteristic of the man, in whose make-up the most dominating quality was his pride - unapproachable in its loftiness and carrying in an unmistakable manner a clear suggestion of imperfectly concealed disdain for unworthy adversaries. But Rev. Hastie had touched that pride at a tender spot by calling in question the sincerity of every English-educated Hindu who did not give battle to idolatry. The missionary also posed as St. Paul whose exhortation to the idolatrous Greeks and Romans of his time he cited for the benefit of the Calcutta literati whose only justification for their "caution" negligence of the idolatrous scourge, lay in his opinion, in the Vedantic

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1. "And as I may yet endeavour to show, a truer and profounder philosophy is demonstrating the all-important fact, that it is only Christianity, with its revelation of the Divine Personality in all the fulness of His self-existent thought and eternal purpose, that can rationally take the place of the falling Brahmanism, so as to reconcile the soul of India in a pure and blessed life, to the universe around them and to ourselves."

2. To be discussed in Chapter-V.
The Modern St. Paul

Sir,

Will you allow me to suggest to Mr. Hastie, who is so ambitious of earning distinction as a sort of Indian St. Paul, that it is fit that he should render himself better acquainted with the doctrines of the Hindoo religion before he seeks to demolish them? As matters stand with him, his arguments are simply contemptible; and I think the columns of the Statesman might have been more usefully occupied by advertisements about Doorga Puja holiday goods than by trash which renders the champion of Christianity contemptible in the eyes of idolaters. This may be harsh language, but the writer who mistakes Vedantism for Hinduism and goes to Mr. Monier Williams for an exposition of that doctrine, hardly deserves better treatment. Mr. Hastie's attempt to storm the 'inner citadel' of the Hindoo religion forcibly reminds us of another equally heroic achievement — that of the redoubted knight of La Mancha before the windmill.

Let Mr. Hastie take my advice, and obtain some knowledge of Sanskrit scriptures in the ORIGINAL. Let him study then critically all the systems of Hindoo philosophy — the Bhagabatgita, the Bhakti-Suka of Sandilya, and such other works. Let him not study them under European Scholars, for they cannot teach what they cannot understand; the blind cannot lead the blind. Let him study them with a Hindoo, with one who believes in them. And then, if he should still entertain his present inclination to enter on an apostolic career, let him hold forth at his pleasure, and if we do not promise to be convinced by him, we promise not to laugh at him. At present, arguments would be thrown away on him. There can be no controversy on a subject when one of the controversialists is in utter ignorance of the subject matter of the controversy; and if under such circumstances the 'olympians only yawn' and do not assert, Mr. Hastie has only to thank his own precipitate ignorance.

Ramchandra

This letter had the desired effect. Rev. Hastie totally lost his temper, and in a furious letter bearing the caption "The Modern Ramchandra" — it was the pseudonym
Bankim Chandra Chatterjee had adopted in his letter - the angry missionary challenged his respondent with a sample of Vedic verse for a satisfactory interpretation. It was obvious that he himself had a limited command over the Sanskrit language, - not to mention the scriptures of the Hindoo religion in their original. He therefore took shelter behind the learning of European Sanskritists and challenged "Ramchandra Redivivus" to bend the Western Janaka's bow, - meaning by that expression the sample of Vedic verse he had obviously culled from a Western Indo­logist's work. He resented the suggestion that he should take lessons under a Hindu and roundly declared "that both the Sanskrit language and Sanskrit literature are much better understood at this moment in Europe and America than in India." He poured abuses on Ramchandra for trying to belittle the scholarship of European Sanskritists and for what seemed to him a disparagement of the 'intellectual superiority' of Europe. Bankim responded to this letter by the bland assertion that 'the solution of riddles and conundrums' by which he meant the Vedic verse proposed by Rev. Hastie - 'was hardly a fit subject for the columns of the Statesman.' He told the missionary that he had no desire 'to essay his skill in exercises which (the latter) possibly have found beyond the capacity of unpromising students of the General Assembly's Institution.' He then proceeded to consider the charge of disparaging European Sanskritists which the missionary had laid at his door.

1. Letter dated October 14, 1882.
In two elaborate letters he tried to establish the essential irrelevance of all missionary, and in fact, all European criticism of Hinduism and outlined, in a few words, his own sketch of what he called 'rational Hinduism'. 'Actually, without making any verbal assertion to that effect, he announced the birth of the New Hindu Movement, in the sense that it postulated that the Hindus need not any longer cower before European criticism on question of idolatry.

On European criticism Bankim said that it was essentially irrelevant because it was shallow and not founded on sound scholarship. He gladly conceded the intellectual superiority of Europe but asserted that the 'intellectual superiority alone' could hardly 'enable one to dispense with the essential conditions under which alone knowledge can be acquired.' He pointed to the 'traditional and unwritten knowledge in India' transmitted by Gurus to their disciples by word of mouth, of which European scholars were necessarily ignorant. "The rich and varied field of Indian philosophy" the European scholar had 'trod but with a slight step'. "Into the subtle and profound Nyaya philosophy he (had) not yet obtained a glimpse." "Of the great Vaishnava philosophy first formulated in that book of books - the Bhagavata Purana, and developed by a succession of brilliant thinkers, from Ramanuja to Jiva Goswami he (had) no adequate conception." Bankim multiplied these examples by mentioning

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
many other branches of study, and while admitting without 'hesitation' "the decided superiority of the European enquirer in the fields of Vedic literature" he asserted that the "Vedas (did) not represent the living religion of India", their "only interest" being "historical interest" (which was) 'of little moment to the native student, who never displayed any gifts for history'. Under these conditions, Bankim felt, the intellectual superiority of Europe 'could only make a desperate bite at the husk' of Hinduism 'but could not arrive at its kernel.'

The remaining part of Bankim's third letter was devoted to an exposition of what he called 'rational Hinduism', in other words, its kernel without its husk.

In his opinion, "Hinduism like every other fully developed religious system, consisted of, first, a doctrinal basis or the creed; secondly, a worship or rites; and lastly, a code of morals more or less dependent upon the doctrinal basis." "This was the whole field of study" of which idolatry "formed only a subordinate part of the second division" (i.e., the division under the heading worship or rites). According to Bankim, the doctrinal basis consisted of dogmas formulated in a mass of philosophical literature and of Puranic legends growing out of these dogmas. It was however in the 'depths' of the philosophy that the 'foundations of a modern Hinduism' were laid, broad and solid. Bankim took one of the conclusions of

2. Ibid.
that philosophy to explain the worship of Kali and Durga as also the worship of the Hindu Trinity.

He was at pains to point out that the philosophic conception of the duality of Nature and Soul was at the basis of these worships and it was their union — "the love for all that exists" — that formed the Hindu's religion. The conception of the trinity arose from discriminating in the Universal Soul, the three qualities of love, power and justice; that of the other deities from distinguishing the destructive and constructive aspects of Nature. The Hindu worshipped Kali as the destructive energy of Nature — hence her hideousness. He worshipped Durga, as the bright and resplendent embodiment of the constructive energy of the same Nature. Bankim took the legend of Krishna, the cause of so much vituperation in the writings of Europeans and Christian missionaries, as a direct consequence of the philosophic conception. "Krishna is soul, Radha is Nature." Kapila, the possible originator of the philosophic conception had declared the Union of Nature and Soul illicit. But the religion of the Hindu consisted in glorifying that union, because it was this union that was the source of "all love, truth and beauty." The Puranic legend had only retained the conception of illicit union in the tale of Radha and Krishna — but the doctrine of the union of Nature and Soul was certainly not a gospel of sensuality.

On idolatrous worship, Bankim said that, besides forming a subordinat e part of the second division of his subject and by no means covering the whole field of Hinduism (as the missionary was prone to suggest) it hardly stood
in need of the sort of apologetic defence proposed by Radhakanta Deb. "The true explanation (consisted) in the ever true relations of the subjective Ideal to its objective Reality." As the ideal in beauty found expression in human art, so the ideal of the Divine in man received a form from him and that from an image. This to Bankim was the intellectual basis of idolatry and he pointed to the rituals of Pran Pratistha and immersion of the image which distinguished Hindu idolatry from the worship of stocks and stones. Moreover, this idolatrous worship was by no means compulsory for all devotees. "The daily worship of the Hindu—his Sandhya, his Ahnika (was) not idolatrous. The orthodox Brahman (was) bound to worship Vishnu and Siva everyday, but he (was) not bound to worship their images." He summed up with the assertion: "A man may never have entered a temple and yet be an orthodox Hindu."

Regarding the ethics of Hinduism, Bankim said that 'the Hindu ethical system (sought) to regulate the conduct of individuals as well as the conduct of society.' Without going into the details of the Hindu ethical system he pointed out that its social polity was the only one in the world which had ever "succeeded in substituting the government of Moral Power in the place of that of physical power." He however reminded the missionary that the social polity, with its excellences as well as its defects was by no means an essential ingredient of the Hindoo religion. The institution of caste therefore was also non-essential, and the missionary

1. Ibid.
attack on that institution could not touch the kernel of that religion.

Before discussing the implications of this exposition of Hinduism in its historical setting we should round off our description of the controversy by narrating how it came to a close. It is true that the missionary had started by abusing and insulting the Hindoo religion in a provocative manner. But there is no denying the fact that it was Bankim who started the personal vituperation. Hastie's attack had been impersonal; at worst it had been personal to the extent of involving the English-educated gentlemen present at the Sradh, but even then he had mentioned no names but had maintained a pose of philanthropic melancholy, a sort of sorrowful puzzlement at the lot of the benighted children of Bharatvarsha. In contrast, Bankim had started by what amounted to calling the missionary an ignoramus and a fool. His second and third letter were on the surface a bit less hard-hitting, but the master of sarcasm had made some of the most innocent remarks of the missionary the occasions of merciless ridicule. No doubt it was improper on the latter's part to challenge Bankim on the point of Sanskritic scholarship by striking the pose of Janak and advancing, for satisfactory explanation, a sample of Vedic verse. It was neither here nor there, when the point at issue was not any one's linguistic proficiency but the 'supposed worthlessness' of Hinduism. He had provided further matter for ridicule by gladly recognising as pearls of Sanskrit literature certain
books suggested by Bankim, it being obvious from his manner that he had never read them. To crown all, he had discovered Christian influence in these same books, of whose contents he was ignorant. All this had been duly noticed by his respondent whose shafts of biting sarcasm had pierced the missionary in his most vulnerable spots. Actually Rev. Hastie himself was not without some gift of the language and in at least one of his letters — that in answer to Bankim's second rejoinder, — his sarcastic style matched his adversary's in point of effectiveness. But his reaction to Bankim's third letter was one of unmitigated personal vituperation. He had by then come to know of his adversary's identity, and he roundly abused Bankim by calling him "a romancer, not a reasoner, an Anglicist, not a Sanskritist, a poetaster, not a critic." He followed this up by writing two more elaborate letters by way of making a display of his knowledge of Hindu scriptures. The knowledge was as shallow as its display was ridiculous. Bankim took no notice of them, and would have killed the controversy by silence, when Rev. K.M. Banerjee, — probably at Hastie's instigation, — sent a long letter lamenting that the author of Kanalkundala should have made Tantrikism the basis of Hinduism. This was obviously an intentional misinterpretation of a certain passage of Bankim's third letter, and the letter broke his silence in order to remove this misunderstanding. With this the controversy closed — beginning on September 23, and ending on November 14. Rev. Hastie published the whole controversy in the form of a pamphlet called "Hindu Idolatry" and English Enlightenment (1882)."
It would be in order here to note a curious feature of this controversy - the complete silence of both the contending parties in regard to Brahmos or Brahmoism. In the beginning of Chapter-II, we referred to the Brahmo-Christian conflict as having held the stage in the religious drama till the year 1870. The attack on Rammohan Roy by Serampore missionaries during the early twenties in the wake of his Vedantic publications, the tract of Devendranath bearing the title 'Vedantic Doctrines Vindicated', published in the early forties, Rev. Dyson's attack on Keshub Chandra Sen during the early sixties - all these and many other similar missionary attacks and their rebuttals by Brahmos bear testimony to this strange phenomenon of a secondary event coming to overshadow the primary one. For the Brahmo-Christian conflict was, of course, an offshoot of the Hindu-Christian conflict. It had to be so if only because the Brahmos, even in the period of their greatest ascendancy constituted no more than a fringe of the Hindu society in point of numerical strength. But the importance attached to them by Christian missionaries was understandable. It arose from the fact that the secular education of the West imparted by the Hindu College, and later - since the publication of Macaulay's celebrated Minute, by all educational institutions sponsored by the Government and most such bodies set up on private initiative, had a curious effect not wholly anticipated by Christian sponsors of that education. It certainly subverted the basis of the traditional faith in the minds of its recipients. This was predicted by Macaulay
in a letter to his father, but he was sadly deluded in his hope that out of the ruins of the traditional faith in the minds of the Hindu recipients of Western education, would sprout the resplendent sapling of Christianity, gradually to overspread the whole of India. The consequence of the subversion of traditional faith turned out to be not a conversion to Christianity, but a leaning towards Brahmoism, very often resulting in actual conversion to that faith. This was the background of the missionary attack on Brahmoism—a fact which has to be clearly remembered if we want to understand the historical significance of the Hastie-Bankim controversy. The essential point of the controversy was this: It was the first missionary attack directed against the English-educated public of Calcutta that ignored the Brahmos altogether. Clearly, to Rev. Hastie, the bolt of Brahmoism was shot, and it no longer possessed the credentials of a worthy antagonist to Christianity.

The same must have been the feeling of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee whose silence regarding the Brahmos has to be interpreted in the same manner. It however differed from the missionary viewpoint in this: whilst the latter was ignoring the Brahma-Christian conflict in the changed historical context of the early eighties, Bankim was ignoring the Hindu-Brahmo conflict. That this was not actuated by a desire to avoid unpleasant sectarian wranglings becomes clear when we consider the essential point of Bankim's new exposition of Hinduism. His insistence on the 'kernel' of the Hindu faith as distinguished from the mere 'husk'—in which category he
included the Hindu practice of idolatry and the institution of caste, points to an essentially new direction in Hindu thought, - and this new direction indicated not an antagonism to the faith of the Brahmos, but to its redundancy in the changed historical circumstances. It is true that in the exposition addressed to Rev. Hastie, this redundancy is expressed only in a negative manner, by pointing to the necessity of discriminating between the 'husk' of Hinduism and its 'kernel'. We shall see at once that there was a positive side to it even though that positive side is somewhat overshadowed by the discourse on the philosophic basis of the worship of the Hindu Trinity or of the deities, Kali and Durga. But positive or not, Bankim's discrimination of the kernel of Hinduism from its 'husk' - the 'non-essential adjuncts', as otherwise called the external forms of Hinduism, - foreshadowed his whole later doctrine as also that of Swami Vivekananda, who, as we shall see later, started as Bankim had done years before him from the 'eternal varieties' of Hinduism as his point of departure. The departure is brought into a sharper focus if we compare Bankim's defence of idolatry with that of Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, the orthodox adversary of Rammohan. Mrityunjay's tract of 1817, was intended to demolish the Vedantic monotheism of Rammohan by appealing to the orthodox argument that Vedantic worship was for Sannyasins, - the worship of idols being the basis of the religion of all householders. Bankim's argument was of a totally different order, since he pleaded that no mere

1. Ibid.
form of worship constituted the essence of Hinduism, - that essence was the doctrine of the Soul's union with Nature and the ethical corollary of that doctrine - the code of 'love for all that exists.'

In the exposition of 1882, that essence, the positive side of Bankim's husk-kernel discrimination, is not sufficiently emphasized. At any rate nothing is said about the doctrine of selfless action (Nishkama Karma); of the knowledge of God and His creation; of that sort of Bhakti for which such selfless action and such knowledge would be the proper expressions as distinguished from time-honoured rites and rituals, not excluding the time-honoured forms of worship. We shall see that these constituted the cornerstones of the edifice embodying Bankim's exposition of Hinduism. But as these doctrines were inherently linked with the doctrine of the Soul's union with Nature and its ethical corollary, the exposition of 1882, should be looked upon as heralding the initial phase of the New Hindu Movement. It also weakened the doctrinal basis of the Brahmo movement, not by attempting its demolition, but by silently making room for it while denying that mere revolt against Hindu social institutions or a replacement of its popular form of worship by another could be any substitute for the essence of Hinduism, which was to be sought not in Vedantic monotheism but in its own proper 'kernel'.

The method of discovering that kernel was Rationalism, - and in this regard Bankim's application of the phrase
'rational Hinduism' was of the highest significance. What he meant by the epithet 'rational' is not made sufficiently clear in the Statesman letters. But as his insistence on the rationalistic method was Bankim's chief contribution to the religious debate of nineteenth century Bengal, we should do well to anticipate his later discourses by examining the implication of the epithet.

Bankim's rationalistic method sharply differed from that of European Rationalists, and he argued that the adoption of the rationalistic method was quite compatible with the retention of basic religious beliefs. Banicim stressed it particularly in view of the fact that in Europe spread of rationalism tended largely to undermine religious beliefs. Since the introduction of English-education in Bengal, it was evident, all along the line, that young people who received that education were apt to become atheists. This was predicted and observed by Macaulay during his sojourn in India, but he drew from it the erroneous conclusion that their atheism was due to their dissatisfaction with the religion of their ancestors, and that the light of the Gospel would soon show them a better way by rendering them converts to Christianity. His conclusion was shared by all Christian missionaries as also some of the Brahmos. Not even their close acquaintance with the Derozians, not all of whom had rendered allegiance to Christianity or Brahmoism, but had become pure atheists, could succeed in giving them the insight that European Rationalism had let loose a force which
did not stop short at alienating its recipients from Hinduism, but inevitably led to a loosening of the grip of all religious sentiments from their mind. The Brahmo response to the challenge of European Rationalism remained confined to that part of the challenge which involved a question of idol worship, but never faced the larger question whether religion had any satisfactory answer to the sort of rational skepticism that questioned the very basis of religion. Bankim was the first to grapple with this larger question, because in his early years he was not free from such skepticism himself. In the third letter to Rev. Hastie he made the significant statement:

"Hinduism does not consider itself placed on its defence. ....... And on the bar of Christianity, which itself has to maintain a hard struggle for existence in its own home, Hinduism also pleads want of jurisdiction."

This statement is extremely significant, although Bankim in 1882, did not elaborate on the facts that had given rise to 'the hard struggle' he attributed to Christianity 'in its own home.' Bankim's rationalism was calculated to furnish religion (not merely the Hindoo religion or the religion of Europeans, but any and every religion whatever) with a weapon that might lead the battle to a successful issue. Needless to add, Bankim wanted religion to come out victorious in this struggle. But the battle with rationalism required arms that would themselves draw upon the resources of the rationalist's arsenal. It was primarily to this end that the development of Bankim's religious thought was directed.

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1. Emphasis added.
We shall devote the fourth Chapter to an exposition of that development. But before passing on to that Chapter we must take note an element of religious thought which was wanting in the exposition of 1882, and its absence detracts Bankim's discourses from its worth in the background of the Bengali religious scene of the eighteen seventies. The exposition of 1882 said nothing about religion as showing a way to personal illumination: it was, in fact, an exercise in arid intellectualism, calculated, perhaps, to appeal to the intellect, but with little prospect of influencing the generation that was experiencing the spiritual unrest we have described in Chapter-I. We have seen that Brahmoism had failed to satisfy the hunger for personal fulfilment through religion, and by reason of that failure had involved such earnest seekers as Keshub Chandra Sen and Bijoy Krishna Goswami in ecstatic excesses that outstepped the healthy restraints of a rational faith. The variants of rational, and not infrequently pseudo-rational faiths, furnished by Pandit Sasadhar, Swami Dayananda and Olcott - Blavatsky combination, - not to mention lesser worthies like Parivrajak Krishna Prasanna Swami and others, had failed to provide an acceptable alternative to Brahmoism. Nor was Bankim's exposition of 1882 calculated to do so, so far, at any rate, as the question of religion as a means of personal illumination was concerned. We shall see how Bankim gradually filled this void in his religious thought, but we need only mention here, it was left to Vivekananda to show a way out of the
spiritual unrest of the 1870's, by the example of a life, which surpassed that of Keshub Chandra Sen in its tragic intensity but would not fritter itself away in search of a purely private vision; but would find satisfaction in some sort of a social programme. Bankim paved the way for such a programme, even though his version of the way to attain personal illumination could not satisfy a soul like Vivekananda's.