Chapter V
The Brahmo Reaction

An immediate consequence of the labours of Bankim and Vivekananda was a considerable weakening of the hold of Brahmoism on the minds of the English-educated Hindus of Bengal. That it was the New Hindu Movement which was the most powerful factor in the decline of Brahmoism has to be emphasized because Brahmo historians, and following in their footsteps, the generality of the historians of the atheistic school, have sought the cause of that decline in the rise of Revivalism. As they have used it, 'revivalism' is an omnibus expression under which they have chosen to include beliefs and practices so diverse as those held by different schools such as the schools of Sasadhar, the pseudo rationalist, Annie Besant, the Theosophist, Bankim, the humanist-rationalist and Vivekananda, the Neo-Vedantist. It is relevant here to point out that contemporary Brahmos clearly understood the nature of the threat created for this movement by the ideas propagated by Bankim and Vivekananda. The charge they levelled against Bankim was not one of revivalism. On the contrary, they called Bankim an atheist—a positivist of Auguste Comte's school. As regards Vivekananda, they refrained from attacking his ideas, but sought the more convenient expedient of character-assassination. It is only fair to add that the

Brahmo Samaj which included men so famous and great as Rammohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen, - not to mention a host of other persons of unquestioned piety and purity of character, could not as a whole be guilty of such scurrility which was confined to small sections of the Brahmo public. But this infamous libel on Vivekananda's character was spread by no less a person than Pratap Chandra Mojumder, the biographer of Keshub Chandra Sen and the leader of his congregation since his master's death. Shibnath Sastri, likewise, in his celebrated historical work on the Bengal Renaissance (Ramtanu Lahiri 0 Tatkalin Banga Samaj) introduced a sentence, which insinuated that in point of excellence of character, Bankim fell short of Keshob Chandra Sen, who was Sivnath's erstwhile spiritual guide, and also of Dwarakanath Vidyabhusan, who was his(Sivnath's) uncle. Needless to add, Sivnath did not care to substantiate his charge by citing any actual instance of Bankim's deficiency. Clearly, Brahmoism was in desperate straits and was in search of scapegoats on which to blame its own dying influence on the new generation of educated Hindus seeking spiritual sustenance in the writings of Bankim and Vivekananda. An opinion has gained ground, that Bankim and Vivekananda, were, in some unethical way, instrumental in the weakening of the hold of Brahmoism. The truth is just the reverse. Brahmoism had been dying a natural death since the promulgation of the Native Marriage Act in 1872, when it professedly dissociated itself
from the Hindu fold. The ideas of Bankim and Vivekananda destroyed its claim to intellectual superiority and severely weakened it. The attacks on Bankim and Vivekananda in a way recoiled on Brahmoism and hastened its downfall. We chronicle below some of these attacks in the actual order they had taken place.

(a) The Attack on Bankim

It may be in order to recall how Bankim defended the prestige of his religion (Hinduism) when Rev. Hastie attacked Hinduism in the columns of the *Statesman*. In the controversy that followed, the birth of the New Hindu Movement was registered and Bankim's attempt to view religion from the rationalist standpoint was indicated. The spread of western education followed by the inflow of western ideas, the birth of the Brahmo movement and two successive schisms, the first in 1866, the second in 1878, within the Brahmos and the persistent attempt to defend Hinduism by the orthodox Hindus—all these led the educated Bengalis to take an active interest in the religious debate of the time. The Hastie-Bankim controversy indicating new lines of interpretation of Hinduism by Bankim and the newness of Bankim's arguments must have created a sensation amongst the educated public of Calcutta.

We do not, however, have enough evidence to ascertain the exact reaction of the Brahmos to this controversy. But this controversy with a missionary gave a new turn to Bankim's
literary career and within two years he started a systematic exposition of his ideas regarding religion in general and Hinduism in particular. Bankim's exposition of Hinduism unlike that of Sasadhar Tarkachudamani, was not grounded on orthodox, pseudo-rational and pseudo-religious foundation. It was the rationalism of a profoundly erudite person well-versed in western thoughts and ideas. For the last few decades the religious scene of Bengal was dominated by the Brahmos, while orthodox Hinduism was on the defensive. The Brahmos then considered rationalism and western ideas as their special preserves. So, when Bankim, the most noted exponent of the New Learning " openly attempted a re-examination, a re-interpretation and a re-adjustment' of (the old Hindu theology) and ethics in the light of the most advanced modern thought and in accordance with the new rules of literary criticism and scriptural interpretation that had been so powerfully influencing current religious life and thought in Christendom itself".\textsuperscript{1}

the Brahmos took alarm. They had treated the attempts of Sasadhar and Krishnaprasanna with contempt, rightly feeling that any controversy with Sasadhar's brand of pseudo-rationalism was not worth while. With the entrance of Bankim into the religious arena, they instinctively felt that a new era of Hinduism was coming which could well presage the extinction of Brahmoism. They now began to accuse Bankim of being an atheist and a notorious advocate of Comte's philosophy. Actually, this controversy between the New Hindu thinkers and the Brahmos was inevitable. The reasons are not far to seek.

\textsuperscript{1} Bipin Chandra Pal : Memories of My life and Times, Vol-II,XXXVI.
Since the time of Rammohan, the Brahmo religious views and activities came in opposition to those of the orthodox Hindus. From Rammohan to the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, the Brahmo movement had undergone many doctrinal changes through successive stages, their rallying points being the monotheism of the Vedas and the Upanishads and the attack on Puranic religion and idolatry with all its elaborate rituals and sacrifices. The orthodox Hindu community also offered resistance to the Brahmo movement in varying degrees through all these years. With the entry of Keshub Chandra Sen in the Brahmo Samaj, the character of the Brahmo movement became militant and Brahmoism, so far a mere reforming or protestant move, turned to be a separate religion with doctrines and precepts directly opposed to traditional Hinduism. Of course, the members of the Adi Brahmo Samaj were quick to declare them Hindu and tried to keep Brahmoism, its rites and practices as close as possible to the basic principles of Hinduism. These varying colours of the Brahmos and Schisms amongst them weakened the movement and it began to lose its hold on the younger people. The worst of it was, as Sivnath Sastri also admitted, the popular impression that Brahmoism was Christianity in another guise. The regard of the members of the Samaj for western ideals and methods and their aversion to those of the Hindus gradually resulted in their isolation from the generality of the public. The orthodox Hindu reaction so long weak and sporadic, made an organised effort to reassert Hinduism. The Sanatan Dharma-rakshini Sabha (Society for the preservation of Traditional Religion) founded by Kamal Krishna Deb and Kali Krishna Deb of Sovabazar organised
lectures on Hindu religion, rites and customs and attempted new interpretations and expositions of the Hindu Sastras, re-establishment of Sastric rites and offered felicitations to renowned Brahmin scholars etc. During the late seventies of the nineteenth century, this Sabha became very popular and a move to re-assert traditional Hinduism gathered momentum. Practically, the decline of the Brahmo movement set in and so when Bankim's interpretation of rational Hinduism incidentally questioned the theoretical basis of Brahmoism, the Brahmos in general raised a hue and cry against Bankim. As we pointed out, the theoretical basis of Brahmoism was Intuitionism as expounded by Keshub and adumbrated in Dwendranath Tagore's formula of 'a pure heart irradiated by knowledge' as the basis of religious truths. Bankim's exposition of 'a natural, a physical' basis of religion was powerful enough to alarm them.

It is interesting to note that the Adi Brahmo Samajists responded at once to the writings of Bankim. Not to speak of the other group of the Brahmos, even the orthodox Hindus did not welcome Bankim's interpretation. The Adi Brahmo Samaj led by Debendranath Tagore and Rajnarain Bose had so long been steering a middle course in their attempt to restore national glory as well as to follow a policy of reform. They had no radical programme of social reform. They concentrated on Vedantic monotheism and eradication of idolatry believing that the Brahmoism they followed and preached, was in consonance with true Hinduism and, that this should be followed by all enlightened Hindus. Thus, they argued, they were the real preservers of all the glories of the Hindus. Both the new reformists and the old conservatives, according to them, were equally in the
That was why no anti-Hindu ceremony or ritual would get their approval or patronage. They neither supported Keshub Chunder's Intercaste Marriage Bill nor approved of widow remarriage that Vidyasagar tried to introduce. Despite all these, new Hindu thinkers like Bankim did not recognise their claims to be the preservers and followers of true Hinduism. While reviewing Rajnarain Bose's treatise "Hindu Dharmer Shresthasta" in Sangadarsan, Bankim showered praises on the author and welcomed such writings, but (he) differed on the main purport of Rajnarain.

Bankim wrote, "It can be easily inferred that the author should make an attempt to establish the superiority of what he himself considers to be the Hindu Religion. Hindu Dharma, according to him, consists in the worship of Brahman and therefore, worship of Brahman is the best Religion, and his end in view must be to establish the superiority of this Dharma and it cannot be his aim to establish the superiority of the Dharma (or Religion) in general of the country. He says, Hindu Dharma is the best Dharma, but he does not agree that the religion as it is extant among the people in general is not the best religion. The worship of Para Brahma - the Highest Being, is the very essence of all religions."

Bankim continued, "The Religion, he (the author) upholds, is to be found deep down in the Hindu Sastras and there is no doubt about it. But, that is only a part of Hindu religion and a small part of it. To equate the part of a thing with the whole of it is anything but truth. Almost all things have something of it that is praiseworthy. The Worship of Brahman alone cannot be termed as Hindu Dharma."

Evidently, Bankim did not accept the monotheism of the Vedanta as preached by the Brahmos as the essence of Hinduism. Hence a clash between New Hindu thinkers and the Adi Brahmo Samajists was inevitable. It came about some twelve years after the publication of Bankim's review of Rajnarain's work.

The immediate occasion for such a controversy was supplied by the publication of two periodical papers *Navajiban* and *Prachar*. *Navajivan* was edited by Akshoy Chandra Sarkar, a writer of some fame and a friend of Bankim's. *Prachar* was edited by Bankim's son-in-law, but Bankim was, from the first, its guiding spirit. Both these papers started their career in 1291(B.S.)- 'Prachar' following *Navajivan* by only a fortnight. The Adi Samajists were provoked by a somewhat slighting reference in the opening number of *Navajivan* to Tattwabodhini, their own organ. Akshoy Chandra, while speaking of Tattwabodhini, clearly implied that Tattwabodhini was fighting a losing game, and, - to make matters worse- indicated that a re-examination of Hindu thought was made inevitable by the fruits of the New Learning published in such journals as Vanga Darshan. He also indicated that the work of this re-examination would be taken up by the writers of *Navajivan*. The Adi Samajists took this to be an attack on their religion, and they were quick to start, under the guise of anonymity, a campaign of scurrility against *Navajivan* in the columns of *Sanjivani*, a noted Brahmo periodical of the day. It is interesting to note that young Rabindranath Tagore who was then the Secretary of the Adi Samaj, participated in this controversy and went to the extent of describing as 'lowborn' the Navajivan writer, Chandranath Bose, although Chandranath was the first to use that epithet against the anonymous correspondent of Sanjivani, who had started the altercation.

Thus for Bankim himself was not attacked by name, But it was well-known from the first that *Navajivan* and *Prachar* would primarily be the vehicles of his ideas, and a campaign against
him was now only a matter of time. Actually it began with the publication of the very first articles he contributed to 'Navajivan' and 'Prachar'. In the opening number of 'Navajivan', Bankim contributed an article under the caption 'Dharmajignasa' (An Enquiry into the Meaning of Religion), clearly indicating his preference for a humanistic definition of Religion, and quoting with approval the definition proposed by Auguste Comte, the founder of Positivism. In 'Prachar', likewise, he wrote an article entitled 'Hindu Dharma' (The Hindu Religion), in which, following the same humanistic approach, he asserted that 'that alone was true religion which furthered the cause of human development—physical, mental and social.' According to Bankim, the essence of Hinduism (and not everything that currently passed for Hinduism) approximated to this definition closely enough to necessitate a re-examination of the Shastras in the light of that definition. The only sentence in this article that might provoke the Brahmos—although the sentence was not provocative at all—was this: "Brahmoism is only a branch of Hinduism, and it betrays no symptom that could make one presume that it would in future be generally accepted as a social religion."  

It does not seem to be provocative in tone, however it did provoke the Adi Brahmo Samaj leaders so much as to make them...
start a regular campaign against Bankim in which sober criticism was mixed with vulgar vituperation. The sober criticism was furnished by Dwijendranath Tagore, Devendranath's eldest son and the then editor of *Tattwabodhini*. Dwijendranath questioned the humanistic approach to Religion and argued that furtherance of happiness, which in Bankim's approach, was to be the ultimate test of religious truth was not an adequate test. Incidentally Dwijendranath attributed atheism to Bankim and said, "According to Bankim Baboo God and Life after death have no necessary connection with Religion."

This is sober criticism, though it is clear from what we have seen in Chapter-I?, that Dwijendranath was misled by Bankim's humanistic approach to suspect him of atheism which was furthest from the case. But Dwijendranath was hardly to be blamed, because, his criticism, being based on the first instalment of Bankim's contributions to *Navajivan*, could not anticipate the complete development of Bankim's humanistic approach. But Dwijendranath's sober criticism was accompanied (in the same number of *Tattwabodhini*) by an article by Rajnarain Bose, the then President of 'Adi Brahmo Samaj, which was far from sober criticism. It is interesting that Rajnarain accepted Bankim's humanistic test of a religion("that which contributes to man's development-physical, mental and social"), with his whole heart but claimed that Brahmoism alone passed that test fully. But he accused Bankim

1."A writer of the Prachar, a fellow-journal of the'Navajiban,' wrote, what helps the true progress of man, his physical, mental, social and an all round development, is religion. We endorse it with all our heart." Quoted in *Bankim Jibani* : Sachis Chandra Chattopadhyay.
of being a follower of Comte and reviled him with the title "an infamous follower of Comte!" (an alternative meaning of this expression is "a follower of Comte's infamous doctrines.) Also he called Bankim an 'atheist'. Rajnarain in his anger, overlooked the fact that in his acceptance of the humanistic test he was giving Dwijendranath's case away, but in protesting against Bankim's test of "happiness", while accepting the test of "human development", he was involving himself in a philosophical contradiction, which his enthusiasm for the Brahmo cause did nothing to resolve. As we saw in chapter-IV, there was no such contradiction in Bankim's exposition. His conception of 'happiness' was indissolubly connected with his doctrine of "the fullest development of human faculties in a state of balance."

Very soon Rajnarani was followed by an article in 'Navya Bharat' by Kailash Chandra Sinha, the Assistant Secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj at the time. Kailash Chandra's article was thoroughly scurrilous. In fact, it seems to have been inspired by malice since it did not criticise the religious views of Bankim at all, but attacked a historical piece 'Infamy of Bengal' contributed by Bankim to Prachar. But the undercurrent of religious hostility was betrayed in Kailash Chandra's slighting reference to 'Mange Jharsan', 'Navajivan' and 'Prachar'. Kailash Chandra's vituperative style reached
the limits of virulence in the concluding passage of his article where he addressed Bankim thus:

"Oh Bengali writer! if you intend to write history, first of all study thousands and thousands of books. Examine with care the texts of verses discovered (by scholars), but don't you depend on anybody's translation blindly. No purpose will be served by licking the feet of scholars like Wilson, Weber, Maxmuller and Cunningham. Nor should you enter the garden cared for by Muir, Bhao Daji, Mair, Mitra and Hunter to undertake the pursuit of a thief. Take up independent research. If you are incapable of that, desist from posing as a teacher."

But Kailash Chandra's attack, was not the last, to be aimed at Bankim. The most virulent attack came from Rabindranath Tagore who was at that time the Secretary of the Adi Brahmo Samaj. In the article entitled, 'Hindu Dharma' which as we have seen was one of the targets of Rajnarain's attack, Bankim had inserted a sentence which indicated an utilitarian conception of truth, implying that the good of humanity was the standard by which truth or falsehood was ultimately to be judged. Such a standard was certainly one that lent itself to philosophical criticism, and Bankim had, in fact, worded his conception in language that was far from satisfactory. While contrasting a certain orthodox Hindu of the old type, who observed all shastric rites but was thoroughly unprincipled in point of true morality, with another Hindu whose deficiency in shastric observances was made up by the excellence of his morals, Bankim had written, "This man never tells a lie, but if he does tell one, he does so when the good of humanity makes a lie imperatively necessary, according to a saying of Krishna's in the Mahabharata, that is to say, when lie becomes the truth."

It is obvious that Bankim's sentence was ambiguous enough..."
to make one uncomfortable as to his notion of truth. Tagore made it the plea for an attack on Bankim's exposition of religion:

"Our greatest writer has publicly, shamelessly, fearlessly placed truth and falsehood on the same pedestal. When everyone is quarrelling about the form of worship—idolatrous or otherwise—the basis of religion is being attacked unobserved. No one is coming forward to protect religion and society from that attack. Had cowardice and falsehood not got mingled in the blood of our veins, could our chief writer dare pronounce a single word against truth with such arrogance by taking his stand in the middle of the street?"

With the publication of Tagore's lecture Bankim broke his silence.

(b) Bankim's Rejoiner

It was characteristic of Bankim that, amidst this fury of assault on his character and his religious views, for which he had not given the slightest of provocations, he held his peace with impenetrable dignity. But when Tagore, who, as a valued friend and a younger contemporary, had paid him a great many visits since the publication of his Prachar article without ever breathing a word of uneasiness on the score of his (Bankim's) conception of truth, suddenly came out in the open to attack him as a "destroyed of the basis of religion", he decided on a reply. It was characteristic again that in his reply he strained every effort to avoid discussing the personalities of his calumniators but regarded them as representatives of the viewpoint of their sect. But he was wounded at his most sensitive spot by the violence of Tagore's attack,—Tagore who at twenty-three was one of the most "brilliant sons of Bengal"
and, for him personally, "an object of generous affection, care and praise". His reply was a mixture of wounded pride, unstinted affection, and highminded solicitude for the avoidance of sectarian frenzy. Also it breathed unutterable scorn for such calumniators as Kailash Chandra Sinha, and supremely polished sarcasm for such fanatics as Rajnarayan; it was, in short, a masterly production of the literary art, and, remains to this day, the best thing in Bengali literature in the polemical vein.

The reply itself - or rather the operative part of it could thus be summed up. Bankim thanked Dwijendranath for the kindness and sobriety displayed in his criticism but pointed out that had Dwijendranath waited for the full development of his (Bankim's) thought, he (Dwijendranath) would have seen that he (Bankim) was far from being an atheist. To Rabindranath he said that his reference to the saying of Krishna involved an instance where truth would lead to murder and thus his acceptance of the utilitarian test (namely, the good of humanity) of truth did not really amount to placing truth and falsehood on the same pedestal, as Rabindranath had implied.

At this point, it is worthwhile quoting Bankim's general address to the Adi Brahmo Samaj, which he inserted at the close of his reply. It brings out with unmistakable clarity his attitude to sectarian frenzy in religious discussions. It ran:

"I cherish a special regard for the Adi Brahmo Samaj. I am aware that this society has done quite a lot for the betterment of religion in our country and that it is doing so still. I cherish (no little) hope that, from the society, of which Babu Devendranath Tagore, Babu Rajnarain Bose and Babu Dwijendranath Tagore, are the leaders, we shall learn many (useful) lessons."
But we can hardly hope to learn them through quarrels and altercations. In particular, I believe that the Adi Brahmo Samaj writers have been, and are still being, instrumental in the development of Bengali literature - a literature, for the cause of which we have dedicated our lives. Certainly I am but a small man, and I quite recognise that not anything that the Adi Brahmo Samaj writers would count of any consequence has been, or can be, achieved by me. But no man's sincere effort goes utterly futile. However small the result, quarrels and wranglings can only lessen its output. Even small men achieve great things by helping one another. I say then: Let the Adi Brahmo Samaj writers cease to indulge in such quarrels. For myself, I stop here finally and permanently. They will no doubt do as their own conscience advises them.

It is only necessary to add that the Adi Brahmo Samaj writers' response to Bankim's plea was both honourable and dignified. In particular Rabindranath's later reference to this incident was one of gratefully recollecting the elder writers' forbearance and forgiveness once the controversy was over. The only discordant voice was perhaps that of Kailash Chandra Sinha, he who increasingly indulged in scurrility. But Kailash Chandra was of course a man of little consequence in the field of religion or letters. He was a non-entity.

(C) The Extent of Western Influence on Bankim

This is the place to attempt an assessment of the extent of western influence on Bankim's religious thought. We have just seen how Rajnarain reviled Bankim with the epithet "an infamous follower of Comte". But Rajnarain was perhaps only the first to insinuate, by using such language, that Bankim's Hinduism was not Hindu enough to deserve respectful recognition by "true Hindus." The fact of the matter was that Rajnarain had
a personal axe to grind: in his view, "true Hinduism" was the doctrine followed by the 'Brahmos' led by Devendranath. Later detractors of Bankim, with far less excuse than Rajnarain, have repeated the allegation. Some of them have said that he was a follower of John Stuart Mill, others that his master was not Mill but the now-forgotten British essayist Selly, some have been gone to the length of seeking the seeds of his humanism in the writings of Eeshub Chandra Sen. What, however, such detractors of Bankim have attempted to establish is not the falsehood of his Hinduism— in fact it is his very Hinduism which they find the most objectionable feature in Bankim's thought. Their criticism implies that he was not westernised enough to shed the last vestige of his Hindu ancestry. It aims at showing that he was not an original thinker, but a mere follower of his European masters.

We have already seen (in Chapter-IV) how Bankim's conception of humanism came close to the Greek model. But in chapter-IV, we did not discuss Bankim's debt to utilitarianism. Tagore's criticism of the utilitarian test of truth made Bankim clarify his stand with regard to that doctrine; he indicated very clearly the place of utilitarianism in his exposition of religion. But first of all we need to say something about Auguste Comte's influence on his religious thought.

(i) Positivism and Bankim

Comte was possibly the first philosopher to use the expression, Religion of Humanity, to describe an atheistic doctrine
in which the abstraction named Humanity was to be worshipped in place of the super-sensible 'external God' worshipped by the followers of Christ. But Humanity is of course not a personal Being and we have seen that the whole point of Bankim's religion was that the God envisaged by Hindus was emphatically a personal Being "who pervaded all creation" and thereby avoided the objection raised against the "External God" of Monotheism. We have designated Bankim's theology as Personal Pantheism, which is the notion of Personal God combined with what may be called Pure Pantheism. Neither of these features is to be found in Comte. The distinction between positivism and pantheism is clearly indicated by Bankim himself. Let us quote his words in full:

"A second answer (to the problem of religion) is that of Auguste Comte and his disciples. We know that the Universe exists, and that it is governed by laws. Beyond these laws we know nothing and can know nothing; laws may be self-existent for aught we know. We do not know that they are otherwise ........ This alone, strictly speaking, is atheism.

3) The third answer seeks to reconcile the other two.

(The first answer
It grants that there may be a first cause, and it admits Nature and her laws, if not exactly to be self-existent, but what very nearly amounts to the same thing. Granted, there is a First cause, but why should we seek it beyond Nature? Is it impossible that the cause of the Universe should be in itself? God, it says, is in Nature; and all phenomena his manifestations. This is Pantheism." 1

These extracts clearly show that 'positivism' has little, if any, connection with Bankim's religious views. What then was Comte's influence on Bankim's religious exposition? What was it

that roused Rajnarain's ire? If we analyse Comte's definition of religion which Bankim quoted with approval in the 'Navajivan' article, we see it is a similarity of approach to religious questions, which characterise both these thinkers. The definition in question is this:

"Religion, in itself expresses the state of perfect unity which is the distinctive mark of man's existence both as an individual and in society, when all the constituent parts of his nature moral and physical, are made habitually to converge towards one common purpose."

The point of this definition is that it is both rationalistic and humanistic. An approach to religion may be called theological when it starts with the question of the existence of God. It may be called scriptural when it starts with an exposition of revealed truths. Bankim's approach was neither. He, like Comte, started with the search for the rational unity of man's existence "as an individual and in society." This is clear from his definition of 'happiness' which includes "individual pleasure" as also "service of humanity."

Again, like Comte, he also started with the 'constituent parts of man's nature, moral and physical' and sought their 'convergence' not in an abstract "Humanity" (as Comte did) but in a "Personal, Pantheistic God." Also his notion of the "convergence" of man's "physical and moral nature" was hardly a Comtean notion, and his doctrine of "the fullest development of human powers in a state of balance" was essentially a Greek doctrine.

It is certainly true that since the Italian Renaissance, educational thought in Europe has been largely moulded by the idea of 'culture' which is the result of developing human
powers in a state of balance. The 19th century "doctrine of culture" (subscribed to by such thinkers as Matthew Arnold, and Seely,) sought to replace Religion by such 'culture'. Bankim mentioned both Arnold and Seely as he mentioned Comte. But what his detractors have failed to notice is that his indebtedness to all these thinkers in his approach to the religious question was of the same order as their indebtedness to the Greeks, and that even to the Greeks his indebtedness did not extend to anything more than the notion of "developing the faculties" and the notion of 'balance'. Neither in his classification of the "human faculties" nor in his conception of their development did he follow any western thinker, ancient or modern. To show this, we need only consider his description of the "active faculties", the chief amongst which, in his opinion, was Bhakti, - a faculty, which has never been seriously discussed by any western thinker even in the purely human form of "Bhakti to one's parents." What is of far more importance in this connection is that humanism with Bankim was only an approach to religion. It was not, as in any western thinker before him (and, for that matter, in any western thinker to this day) a self-supporting doctrine. The balance of the faculties in their fullest development was sought by Bankim in Bhakti towards a Personal Being who pervaded all creation. This was the essence of his religious views, and for this he was indebted to no western thinker.

1. Supra Chapter-IV.
(ii) Utilitarianism

It is thus reasonable to say that Bankim's debt to Comte and Positivism was minimal. The same cannot be said of the doctrine of Utilitarianism, which he actually used in "Dharmatattwa" to supply a gap in Hindu thought. We have already seen how, in the controversy with Tagore, he used the utilitarian test for truth where truth led to murder. This train of thought he developed in his essay on Krishna, where, he showed that Krishna's definition of religion as that which "contributed to the good of humanity" that which held the society led to the application of the test of utility in all cases of special action. In Dharmatattwa he supported the sort of social legislation that required the punishment of a "thief who was in distress" and spoke against an uncritical application of the doctrine of love for all creation, which would let the thief off. This legislation was of course based on the principle of the "greatest good of the greatest number." According to Bankim's method this principle was required to balance the faculty of love and obviated an uncritical expression of that faculty in complete disregard of the good of society and self. It was part of Bhakti, because, the "preservation of God's creation" by preserving self and society, required its application. The utilitarian test was thus a part of Religion, though a very small part, calculated to discriminate in certain cases, what course of action was right under the

1. Krishna Charitra: Section VI, Chapter VI.
2. Dharmatattwa: Chapter XXII.
circumstances. Bankim specified the influence of utilitarianism on his conception of religion in these words: "Utilitarians make the mistake of supposing that the whole field of religion is included within their doctrine. Actually, it occupies only a very small part of that field. The place I assign to it covers no more than the part of a corner in the whole field spanned by my discourse" — This is the best commentary on the role of utilitarianism in the shaping of Bankim's religious thought.