The purpose of this thesis is not to give an exhaustive account of the various avatars of Vaishnavism nor the Christological controversies in Christianity. My task is limited to examining critically the concept of incarnation in both the religions—Christianity and Vaishnavism—for a comparative study. Many of my predecessors have noticed a number of points of similarities between these two religions. What is left for me is to re-examine the findings of those scholars regarding the nature of these religions of grace and love revealed through Christ and Krishna incarnations, to investigate the inner unity of these two religions on the basis of the inner life of incarnations. Dr. Radhakrishnan states in his 'Brahma Sutra', "To-day the samanvaya or harmonisation has to be extended to the living faiths of mankind. Religion concerns man as man and not man as Jew or Christian, Hindu or Buddhist, Sikh or Muslim ... Samanvaya or reconciliation is the need of our age." (Pp. 244-250)

It is not an easy task to affirm the validity of religion and incarnation in the light of the contemporary philosophy. There is a lot of talk these days about the new religion and new theology. Therefore, it is necessary to reinterpret and restate in modern terms the traditional orthodoxy regarding the concept of religion and incarnations.
tion in particular in the context of recent development in the field of philosophy and theology. The religionists are trying to defend their faith or doctrine. But we are living in an age in which it is becoming very difficult to know what the true defence of faith is. We have come to a stage where we cannot use the word 'God' in the sense it was used in the past. The orthodox faith or doctrine that was framed on the basis of those categories of the past are meaningless in the contemporary language.

In the west a radical change has taken place in theology. Bishop Robinson's book 'Honest to God' has challenged the existing theological affirmations. He might have developed this theology on the basis of the writings of Dietrick Bonhoeffer, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich.

On the contrary, in the east, especially the Vaishnava theologians are still trying to affirm their faith on the basis of Vedanta or Advaita philosophy. The Advaita approach may be helpful to solve some of the Christological problems. Some Christian theologians tried to explain the nature of Christ in terms of Advaita (see Kristadvaita of Robin Boyd).

Under these circumstances to achieve my purpose, my thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter is an attempt to examine the validity of religion in the
light of contemporary philosophy and also to introduce the doctrine of incarnation. During the past 25 years there has been a lot of books published in the west, such as 'The Honest to God Debate', 'Guide to the Debate about God', 'The Death of God Debate', 'The Secular City Debate', and so on. These books indicate what is new in the contemporary religious thinking. Some of the most conspicuous controversies against the traditional religions, such as Logical Positivism, Psycho-analysis, Death of God Theology, and Marxism are critically examined in the thesis.

If religion is not valid, how can we explain the validity of incarnation? However, I have tried to show that religion is still meaningful in the modern world, in spite of the antagonistic tendencies. Philosophers and theologians differ in their views because they can realise only partial truth according to Syadavada. Religion as such is a matter of faith and experience. The concept of incarnation continues to be a living reality, a source of inspiration and divine experience in the lives of millions of people.

The second chapter is a historical survey of the concept of incarnation in Christianity and Vaishnavism. It has been noted that the origin of the concept of incarnation in Christianity is found in the Old Testament. But
it is fully developed as a doctrine, only after the 4th century A.D. Similarly, Vaishnava concept of avatāra has its origin right in the Vedas, especially Rg Veda. But it developed as a system only after the period of Alvars of South India. In both the religions the doctrine of incarnation is fundamental, because the doctrine of salvation pre-supposes the doctrine of incarnation. However, it has become a never ending problem for the theologians and philosophers to explain the possibility and nature of incarnation.

Chapters three and four are devoted to discuss the problems of incarnation in Vaishnavism and Christianity separately. The concept of incarnation in Vaishnavism is discussed in relation to ultimate reality, world, and man. The different theories of avatāra formulated by Vaishnava theologians are critically examined. All these theories are attempting to establish the validity of avataras which are predominantly mythological. The historical aspect of incarnations is not so important for the Vaishnavites.

But in the case of Christian doctrine of incarnation, it is beyond human comprehension to explain the incarnation of God in Jesus. Unlike the Vaishnava theologians, the contemporary western theologians try to start their discussion with the historical Jesus.
Vaishnava theologians explain incarnation in mythological language. But in Christianity, attempt is going on to demythologise the doctrine and explain incarnation from existential stand-point. In India we do not have much contemporary discussion about avatara. But in the west it has become a very complicated issue.

In the fifth chapter the similarities and differences between avatara and incarnation are discussed. A good number of references from the Bible as well as from the Vaishnava scriptures are quoted to show the parallels in these two religions, especially with regard to Krishna of Gita and Christ of the New Testament. There are different views regarding the relation between Vaishnavism and Christianity.

The final chapter is a summary of the work leading to the conclusion.

Though I was interested in the problem of incarnation for a long time, only after I met Prof. M. Krishnan Kutty, Professor and Head, Department of Philosophy, Guwahati University, I could take this work seriously. It was indeed, a great privilege to work out this project under the supervision and guidance of Prof. Kutty. I had long hours of discussion with him on difficult philosophical problems. Now let me take this opportunity to thank him sincerely for all his help.
I am very grateful to Dr. S. Sarma of the Department of Philosophy, Guwahati University, Dr. Shri Nivasa Rao of Madras Christian College, Dr. Thuinra of E.T.C., Jorhat, Dr. Mrs. Miri, NEHU, Shillong, Dr. Tuisam Shishak of Patkai Christian College, Nagaland, Dr. M.M. Thomas, retired Director of Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, Prof. N. Mishra of Bhagalpur University, Dr. O.M. Rao of E.T.C, Jorhat for their valuable suggestions and help in the preparation of this thesis.

I gratefully remember at this time, the library staff of Guwahati University, United Theological College, Bangalore, Madras University, Dr. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, Madras, Gurukul Theological Seminary, Madras. Aikalaya, Madras, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, Eastern Theological College, Jorhat, Serampore College, Serampore, State Library, Guwahati.

Last but not least, I am indebted to my wife for encouraging me to complete this work while I was pre-occupied with the College work and for the long hours she spent in reading the manuscript and typing the thesis making it possible to submit it in time.

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25-11-87