PART II
CHAPTER I

Rammohun Roy and Brahmoism

Brahmoism or the religion of the Brahmos was founded by Raja Rammohun Roy. We shall begin the discussion on Brahmoism with a brief lifestory of its founder.

When the ignorance and superstition of the Hindus were at their highest Rammohun Roy was born in 1774* in a Brahmin family in the village Radhanagar in present Hooghly. His great grand-father Krishna Chandra Banerjee served a Nawab of Bengal from whom he received the title of 'Raya Rayan' which being contracted into 'Roy' became the designation of the family. His grand-father Brajabenode Roy served Nawab Alivardi Khan (1740-1756) with distinction. He also helped Shah Alam II (1759-1806), Emperor of Delhi, when he was in the eastern provinces. Both Krishnachandra and Brajabenode were members of the Vaisnava sect. The name of the fifth son of Brajabenode was Ramkanta Roy. Rammohun was the second son of this Ram Kanta Roy and Tarini Devi who were also devout.

* There is an uncertainty as to the year of Rammohun's birth. The year of birth given in his tomb-stone is 1774. But S.D.Collet on the basis of other evidences fixes the date of his birth at 22nd May, 1772.
Vaishnavas. At an early age he imbibed the religion of his ancestors and revered Vishnu, the god of the Vaishnavas, with so much devotion that he would not even take a glass of water before reciting a chapter of the Bhagvata Purana. But his education and critical aptitude soon led him to change his mind and he openly revolted against the religion of his forefathers.

Rammohan Roy took his first lessons in a vernacular school and then, at the age of nine, he was sent by his father to Patna for higher studies in Persian* and Arabic. There he stayed for about three years and studied the Quran as also Euclid and Aristotle through the medium of the Arabic language. In Patna, he came in contact with some Muslim scholars of the time. It was during this period, we learn from the authority of Nagendranath Chatterjee, one of his biographers, he developed the conviction of the unity of God.¹

After three years of studies in Patna, Rammohan was sent to Benares at the age of twelve to learn Sanskrit. In Benares he acquired proficiency in the Hindu Shastras within a short time. After returning home he engaged himself in the contemplation of religion and began to express doubt about

* Persian was then the court language in India.

¹
the rightness of the prevailing religious practices of the Hindus. This change of belief seems to be due to the acquaintance with the unitarian religion of Islam and the Hindu scriptures which inculcate the doctrine of the unity of God.

During that time Rammohun wrote a book questioning the validity of the idolotrous practices of the Hindus which, however, was not published. Rammohun's criticism of the prevailing form of Hinduism led to a dispute between himself and his father and Rammohun left home approximately when he was 16 years old. Away from home, he travelled through the different regions of India and also went to Tibet. There he incurred the displeasure of the Tibetans by denying that the living Dalai Lama was the creator and preserver of the universe. He, however, received kind treatment from some Tibetan women and this is said to be the cause of his lasting respect for the female sex. After about three or four years of travel, Rammohun returned home on receipt of a message of recall from his father and was well received.

But this cordial relation between Rammohun and his father did not last long. On account of his "altered habits of life and change of opinion" he had to separate himself from his family. After this separation Rammohun lived for some years in Benares and was perhaps engaged in an extensive study of the Hindu scriptures. In 1997, he came to Calcutta leaving his family with his mother Tarini Devi at his village-

* The book has been lost for ever.
home. In Calcutta he engaged himself in money-lending business and dealt in company's papers. In 1799, he purchased two talugs in the district of Burdwan which gave him a steady annual income of ₹.5500/-. Few months after this, he left Calcutta for a tour in Upper India and visited Patna, Benares and other places. He, however, returned to Calcutta probably before the end of the year 1800.

According to S.D. Collet, one of his biographers, Rammohun began to learn English in 1796, but did not attain much proficiency in it by 1801 as testified by John Digby his one-time boss and one of his best friends among Englishmen. During his stay in Calcutta since 1797 he came in contact with a good number of Englishmen and also became well-acquainted with the Chief Kazi of Sadar Dewani Adalat and the moulavis of the Fort William College.

Rammohun's father died in the year 1803 and it is believed that he was present at the death-bed of his father. He had been serving the East India Company's government since 1803. Sometimes he also worked in the private service of English officers. He entered the service under John Digby in 1805 and accompanied him successively to different district headquarters including Rangpur (in North Bengal, now in Bangladesh). Sometimes, he served as Dewan or the Chief native officer under the District Collector. He earned reputation and the confidence of his bosses and was appointed as one of the envoys to settle the
boundary dispute between Coochbehar and Bhutan. In this connection he visited Punakh, the capital of Bhutan. He returned to Calcutta to settle down there perhaps towards the end of the year 1815.

Rammohun published his Tuhfatul Muwahhidin, a Persian treatise with an Arabic introduction, in the year 1803 or 1804 while he was in Murshidabad. In Rangpur he began to collect people for discussion on idolatry. There he also entered into religious discourses with the Muslims who called him 'jabardast maulabi' i.e. very expert moulavi. Then after he had settled down in Calcutta he assumed the role of a social and religious reformer. He published a number of books which include an abridged English translation of the Vedanta Sutra and also the translations of a number of Upanisads in Bengali and English with introductions giving his own interpretation of the same. He also published a number of books entitled Brahmanical Magazines in order to defend Hinduism as he understood it from the attack of the Christian missionaries. He entered into a controversy with the Christian Missionaries of Serampore as to the real meaning of the teaching of Jesus Christ and published a number of books entitled Appeals to the Christian Public in addition to his 'Precepts of Jesus Christ'.

Rammohun Roy sailed for England on the 19th January, 1830 and reached there on the 8th April, 1931. Unfortunately, however, he could not come back to his native country as death overtook him on the 27th September, 1833 in Bristol.

* The other envoy was Krishnakanta Bose.
The first phase of Rammohun's thought was marked by his Persian treatise Tuhfatul Muwahhidin. Without naming any particular religion, in it he took up a stand of rational criticism of all established religions to find out what is true and what is false in them. After making a distinction between the true and false elements in them he directed his attack against the latter.

In the above treatise Rammohun expressed his belief in one Supreme Being who governs the whole universe, but criticised the religious dogmas and their inventors who invented dogmas for perpetuating their names or for gaining earthly authority. The people, Rammohun said, believed their "nonsensical and absurd doctrines" owing to custom and training. He also criticised all those who consider their own religion as the only true religion.

Rammohun wanted free enquiry into the truth or otherwise of creeds and ceremonies and decried the attitude of the people who follow the creeds and ceremonies only on the ground that these were followed by their forefathers. This is not a right attitude as God has endowed every man with intellectual power and senses to ascertain truth for himself.

Referring to the habit of bathing in holy rivers, renunciation of the world and purchase of favour from high priests, he said that these are wrong ways of seeking salvation. It appears that Rammohun did not believe in pilgrimage and renunciation.
Rammohun did not believe in prophets, intermediaries or Incarnations. Revelation is believed to be the basis of religions. But he remarked that revelation was invention. Referring to the discrepancies of different religions Rammohun says that such discrepancies cannot be Divine revelations as the omniscient God cannot be the author of contradictory views.

Rammohun then pointed out that religion is not a bundle of rites and ceremonies. It is not superstition and it is also not blind adherence to tradition or authority. There is also no place of miracles in religion. But is there anything on which religion may rest? Yes, the simple faith of man on which is based all moral precepts inculcated to maintain an orderly government of society. Rammohun Roy believed in God as the Creator and Governor of the world. To this he added the belief in the existence and immortality of the soul. Although the real existence of the soul or other world, he says, is hidden or mysterious, people should be excused for believing in them; for the belief is necessary for the safety of social life and the continuity of social organisation. It generates a faith in reward and punishment in the other world for the actions done in this world. This faith prevents people from the commission of evil deeds.

Rammohun disbelieved what had been opposed to these doctrines, namely, certain useless rites and practices, such as privations in eating and drinking, purity and impurity, auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. Owing to these additions, he said,
these doctrines had become causes of injury and detrimental to healthy social life and also the sources of troubles and be-wilderment to the people.

Rammohun was a rationalist, not a mystic and he did not derive his religious precepts from mystic experience. He based his religion on reason which he has described as innate or intuitive faculty for discriminating true religion from "invented revelation*. The essentials of this rational religion are: A simple belief in One God and a moral code calculated to maintain an orderly government of society. Thus, Rammohun's religion was a clear-cut monotheism - a simple faith without rites, rituals and other paraphernalias. He included in it a moral code which he considered most conducive to meet social necessity. Social morality was considered an important element of religion and religious reform included social and moral reform.

It is difficult, as a matter of fact, to distinguish between the social and the moral conduct of men. The former is expressive of the standard they maintain in relation to one another, while the latter relates mainly to the conduct of the individual. But the social conduct and the moral conduct are closely related to each other and taken together, they indicate the standard of social morality. Strictly speaking, the 'social' falls within the 'moral'. Morality again is closely connected with religion. Each religion has its distinct moral code, even if not adhered to by the followers of the religion concerned.
To Rammohun, morality and religion were inseparable. Both, taken together constitute the religious life. In Tulfatul Muwahhiddin he had stated that religion should consist of belief in One God and a moral code calculated to maintain an orderly government of society. He maintained this view of the relation between religion and morality throughout his life. As a matter of fact, moral and social reform formed part of his programme of religious reform.

The above view of Rammohun on religion can be found in his above-mentioned treatise Tulfatul Muwahhiddin. Rammohun did not make any substantial deviation from the stand he took in the above Persian treatise though about 11 years after its publication he began to publish a long series of books dealing with Hindu and Christian religions. He, however, conceded much on the question of the competence of our reason to give us the full knowledge of Divine Reality and said that we should rely on reason, but as Divine nature surpasses the comprehension of reason we should rely on authority without forsaking our belief in reason. Both reason and authority taken together can give us a true knowledge of Divine Reality. In the introduction to his Abridgement of the Vedanta-Sutra he opines that "the reasoning faculty which leads man to certainty in things within its reach, produces no effect on question beyond its comprehension." In his introduction to the English translation of Kena Upanisad he concluded: "The best method perhaps is neither to give
ourselves up exclusively to the guidance of the one or the other, but to make use of both. It is evident that Rammohun also deviated from the stand he took in Tuffatul Muwahhidin as to the place of authority in religion. Though he never accepted the authority of prophets, doctors of religion and Incarnations, he seems to have had accepted the authority of the Upanisads and the Bible. In this he recognised the value of mystic experience in religious knowledge without being a mystic himself. However, he verified the sayings of the above scriptures by the touch-stone of his reason and had his own way of interpreting them.

In his effort to reform the prevailing form of Hinduism, Rammohun Roy took his stand on the Upanisads as the authoritative basis of Hindu monotheism. Later, he travelled beyond them and in his controversy with the trinitarian Christian Missionaries he took up his stand on the Bible.

In his interpretation of the Upanisads and the Vedanta-Sutra of Vyasa Deva, he sought to prove that the Upanisadic view of God is unitarian and that the practice of image-worship and polytheism is not in accordance with the spirit of Hindu scriptures. It may be mentioned here that in his writings over the issue, Rammohun, in most places, did not distinguish between image-worship and polytheism and criticised them taking together. So, in our discussion it is not possible to fully separate the two.
At one time image-worship had a significance of its own. Auguste Sabatier has pointed out that human understanding cannot go beyond space and time. The imagination of men cannot go beyond phenomenal images. Sabatier thinks that religious knowledge is, therefore, obliged to express the invisible by the visible, spiritual reality by the sensible images. We are often told that the realization of God is a long process and we shall have to pass through concrete forms and that some seekers of truth may be helped by images as symbols of the Infinite. Ram Mohun informs us that some Europeans of his time felt a wish to palliate and soften the features of polytheism by saying that the images were considered by their votaries emblamatical representations of Supreme Divinity. But Ram Mohun, who observed the Hindu practices very closely, denied the truth of this assertion and said that the Hindus of his time believed in the real existence of the deities represented by the images. It was believed by the worshippers of images that these innumerable gods and goddesses possessed in their respective departments full and independent powers and to propitiate them, not the true God, are temples erected and ceremonies performed. Thus, as Ram Mohun saw, the images were not symbols or representations of Infinite God.

The image-worshippers used to put forward certain arguments in favour of their practice. One such argument, as
Rammohun Roy put it, was that the Vedantic doctrine of the omnipresence of God implies the divinity of all creatures to whom divine respect should be paid. But since practical conformity to such a doctrine is not possible the worship of figured gods should be admitted. As against this argument he pointed out that the omnipresence of God does not mean the divinity of all living creatures. What Vedanta means by Divine omnipresence, Rammohun explained, is that "nothing" is absent from God, and nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God whose existence is the sole support of the conceived existence of the universe which is acted upon by Him in the same manner as a human body by a soul. But God is at the same time quite different from what we see or feel. He quoted the following passages from the Vedanta in support of his interpretation of the meaning of Divine omnipresence. "That being which is distinct from matter, and from those which are contained in matter, is not various, because He is declared by the Vedas to be one beyond description". Again, "The Veda has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding".

Another argument in favour of image-worship was that it purifies the mind. It is necessary, for, according to the shastras, a man cannot have a desire for the knowledge of the Supreme Being if his mind is not pure. Rammohun Roy accepted the second half of the argument, but denied the truth of the first. He said: "I must affirm..."
with the Veda that purity of mind is the consequence of Divine worship, and not of any superstitious practices. He quoted the following passages from the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad in support of his contention. "Adore God alone". "Nothing excepting the Supreme Being should be adored by wisemen. Again, "God alone rules the mind, and relieves it from impurity".

Another argument was that since image worship had been practised for so many centuries, custom justified its continuance. As against this Rammohun Roy remarked: "It is, however, evident to every one possessed of common sense that custom or fashion is quite different from Divine faith. The latter proceeding from spiritual authorities and correct reasoning and the former being merely the fruit of vulgar caprice."

An argument for image-worship was based on the ground that it is difficult to attain knowledge of the Invisible Almighty Spirit. Agreeing that it is difficult to attain the knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, Rammohun said: "But to read the existence of the Almighty Being in His works of nature is not, I will dare to say, so difficult to the mind of a man possessed of common sense and unfettered by prejudice."

In another place Rammohun remarked: "Had it been impossible to attain the knowledge of the Supreme Being, the Vedas and the Puranas, as well as the Tantras would not have instructed
mankind to aim at such attainment, as it is not to be supposed that directions to acquire what is obviously unattainable could be given by the shastras, or even by a man of common sense. 11

Image-worship was defended on the ground that as pictures recall to memory an absent friend, so figures and idols as representatives of true God serve to bring God to one's recollection. In reply to this argument Rammohun said that God, being superior to all creatures, cannot be represented by figures and idols. Rammohun considered such a conception of the Godhead "quite strange and contemptible". 12

It was argued that if God can be worshipped in a church temple or mosque under prescribed forms, why should He be dishonoured if worshipped under the form of an image? In contending the argument Rammohun disapproved the comparison and said that people who worshipped God in a suitable place, like a church or so, did not worship places; but those who worshipped God under the form of an image considered it to be possessed of Divine nature. 13

Rammohun Roy already expressed his belief in one only God and disapproved the Hindu practice of worshipping numberless gods and goddesses. He said that according to the Upanisads and the Vedanta-Sutra God alone is to be known and adored. "None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, and nothing excepting Him should be adored by a wise man." 14 Referring to
the Upanisads Rammohun said: "It is evident from those authorities that the sole regulator of the universe is but one, who is omnipresent, far surpassing our powers of comprehension, above external sense, and whose worship is the chief duty of mankind and the sole cause of eternal beatitude; and all that bear figure and appellation are inventions." 15

In the Upanisads there are many passages of unitarian import. But there are many passages in them which praise celestial deities. This polytheism has to be reconciled with passages which teach unitarianism. Without reconciling the two, one cannot make the conclusion that Upanisads stand for a unitarian view of God. To reconcile the two, Rammohun favoured an allegorical interpretation of some parts of the scriptures. 16

He admitted that certain vedic verses "exhibit allegorical representation of the attributes of the Supreme Being by means of earthly objects, animate or inanimate, whose shapes and properties are analogous to the nature of those attributes and point out the modes of their worship". But he pointed out that in subsequent chapters the verses inculcate "The unity of Supreme Being as the sole ruler of the universe", and direct the mode of worshipping Him. Thus, he concluded, the "doctrines of the plurality of gods and goddesses laid down in the preceding chapters are not only controverted, but also reasons assigned for their introduction; for instance, the worship of the Sun and Fire together with the whole allegorical system, were only
inculcated for the sake of those whose limited understanding rendered them incapable of comprehending and adoring the invisible Supreme Being so that such persons might not remain in a brutified state, destitute of all religious principles.\textsuperscript{17} In subsequent lines, Rammohun made the assertion that if this explanation of reconciliation is not accepted, then the Vedas would be stripped of their authority and intelligibility.\textsuperscript{18}

Rammohun was against all forms of anthropomorphism in religion. Referring to the anthropomorphism of the Hindus of his time he pointed out that the devotees ascribed to their respective deities places of habitation and modes of existence analogous to their own. The devotees of Shiva, for example, "misconceiving the real spirit of the scriptures", as he thought, imagined Shiva as residing in the mount of Kalilash with his wife and children. In the same way, the followers of Vishnu "mistaking the allegorical representation of shastras for relations of real facts",\textsuperscript{19} thought that he lives in the summit of heaven with his wife and attendants. Rammohun said that the same observations were applicable to the devotees of other Hindu gods and goddesses. In Tuhfatul Muwahhidin he had given his opinion against sectarianism by disapproving the attitude of the people who consider their own religion as the only true religion. He also pointed to the sectarianism of the Hindus within the fold of their own religion. The devotees were so much sensitive as to the honour of their respective deities that some times violent controversies between different sections of the Hindus arose in Prayag, Hardwar and other
holy places. From all these it was evident that the Hindus of the time did not regard these deities as instruments, but considered them real objects of worship.  

Another important issue of controversy was whether the observance of Brahmanical rites, that is, the religious rites prescribed by the Vedas and other Hindu shastras is indispensably necessary for acquiring the knowledge of God and for attaining the final beatitude or not. Rammohun did not believe in the efficacy of religious rites and ceremonial paraphernalias. But as it would have not been wise to try to refute what is written in the shastras and as he had to base his arguments on the Shastric books, he tried to show that what is written in the scriptures about rites and ceremonials is not wrong, but put forward the view that observance of rites and rituals is not necessary for attaining Divine knowledge and for gaining salvation. Rammohun pointed out, in this connection, to the stories in the scriptures about many persons who neglected the performance of rites and ceremonies, owing to their perpetual attention to the adoration of the Supreme Being, acquired true knowledge of the Supreme Spirit.

Rammohun also did not admit that the study of the Vedas is necessary for attaining Divine knowledge. He also mentioned the names of Maitrayee, a renowned ancient Indian woman, and Bidur, a renowned ancient Sudra, who acquired the knowledge of God without having the opportunity of studying the Vedas.*

* In ancient times women and Sudras were not allowed to study the Vedas.
It is clear from what we have said about his opposition to image-worship and polytheism that Rammohun was a monotheist. He also showed that Hinduism based on the Vedic literature, particularly on the Upanisads, is monotheistic or, to state more precisely, is an unitarian religion. It believes in the existence of Only one God who is the creator and preserver of the universe.

Rammohun Roy referred to three mysterious epithets of God, namely, Om, Tat and Sat which are frequently used in Hindu religious scriptures. He explained the meaning of the epithets as follows:

**Om** signifies "that being which preserves, destroys and creates".

**Tat** signifies "that only being which is neither male nor female".

**Sat** signifies "the true being".

After explaining the meaning of the epithets, he concluded his Abridgement of the Vedanta with the following words:

"The collective terms simply affirm that one unknown true being, is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe".22

While stating that there is but one Supreme Reality and that It is the only object of worship, he drew the attention of
his readers to some assertions in the Vedanta-Sutra and the Upanisads, such as: "Adore God alone", "Know God alone, give up all other discourse" "None but the Supreme Being is to be worshipped, nothing excepting He should be adored by a wise man". He also pointed to the following assertions in the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad: "Adore God alone" "Nothing excepting the Supreme Being should be adored by wise men." "God alone rules the mind, and relieves it from impurity". We need not multiply the instances.

As to this Supreme Being, Rammohun said that He is out of the reach of comprehension and is beyond all description. He made this remark in his preface to the English Translation of the Isha Upanisad referring to the similar view of Vyasdeva as expressed in his Work on Vedanta. Referring to the Upanisads he remarked in the same preface, "It is evident from those authorities that the sole regulator of the universe is but one, who is omnipresent, far surpassing our powers of comprehension, above external sense, and whose worship is the chief duty of mankind and the sole cause of eternal beatitude".

As to the knowability of the Supreme Being he based his view as seen above, on Vedanta-Sutra and the Upanisads. He further said: "That being which is distinct from matter and from those which are contained in matter, is not various, because He is declared by the Vedas to be one beyond description". Again "the Veda has declared the Supreme Being to be mere understanding..."
Rammohun Roy has several times referred to the authority of Sankaracharya. In the title pages of his translations of the Upanisads, he precisely stated that he had followed to the commentaries of Sankaracharya. This has helped to create the impression that he was a follower of Sankara. But a review of his introductory remarks in the above translations, his Abidgement of the Vedanta and other works makes it evident that he did not fully share Sankara's views.

Sankara was an Advaita Vedantin (absolute non-dualist). According to his advaitism, the Supreme Reality which is called Brahman is an indeterminate and impersonal being. It is the sole reality, one-without-a-second. The world is not a reality, it is the product of maya or a false appearance of Brahman. Isvara or Personal God is Brahman in relation to the world. But since the world is not real, Brahman as Personal God or as creator and preserver of the world is not real. One who has true knowledge of the Supreme Being does not believe in the reality of the world or in God as creator and preserver of the same. But it appears from the writings of Rammohun Roy that he regarded the Supreme Being as Personal God which is the creator and governor of the world which he considered real.

Both Sankara and Rammohun were non-dualists. The non-dualism of the former relates to the entire realm of existence. It negates the real existence of every thing else but Brahman. But the non-dualism of the latter emphasizes the non-duality of Divine existence. It negates the existence of any other
deities but the One Supreme God. From Sankara's non-dualism followers the falsity of the world. But Rammohun believed in its real, though dependent, existence. The worship of God is based essentially on a belief in the distinction between the worshipping self and God worshipped. Sankara believes in the identity between the individual self and Brahman. The belief in the reality of the limited self rests on the failure to realize that Brahman is the only reality. Again, God is worshipped as the creator and controller of the world. So, it is bound up with the empirical point of view in which the world appears to be real and Brahman is conceived to be saguna or endowed with qualities. But from the higher or transcendental point of view, the Supreme Reality is devoid of distinction or is nirguna. The self being non-different from Brahman and the world not being real there is no scope for the worship of the Creator in Sankara's philosophy from the ultimate standpoint. The Supreme Being, as conceived by Rammohun Roy, has attributes. He is the creator and governor of the universe. Rammohun believed in the reality of the world as also in the difference between the self and Brahman. This conclusion as to Rammohun's philosophical conviction is based on a review of all his writings taken together. There are many passages in his writings which, if taken in isolation from the rest of his works, will prove to be of Sankarite import.
In the preface to his Bengali translation of the Isha Upanisad, he says: "It will be stated by these Upanisads that God is the only Omnipresent Being who is beyond the reach of our senses and the comprehension of our reason. His worship is the prime duty and cause of salvation. The world of name and form is the product of maya."²⁸

In the introduction to his Bengali translation of Mandukya Upanisad, Rammohun said that this world of name and form appears to be real depending on the reality the Supreme Being. In his Bengali work Bhattacharyar Sahit Vichar, he precisely said that the world of name and form is false.³⁰ In the Brahmanical Magazine No.1 Rammohun Roy said: The resemblance of the bubbles with the world, is maintained by the Vedanta only in two respects: "1st, as the bubbles receive from water through the influence of the wind their birth and existence, so the world takes by the power of God its original existence from the Supreme Being and depends upon Him; and secondly, that there is no reality in the existence either of bubbles or of the world". Again, "the resemblance of the bubbles, in the first instance, lies in point of dependence and unreality". Then, "the Vedanta by comparing the world with the misconceived notion of a snake, when a rope really exists, means that the world like a supposed snake is devoid of independent existence, that it receives its existence from the Supreme Being. In like manner the Vedanta compares the world with a dream: as all the objects seen in a dream depends upon the notion of the
mind, so the existence of the world is dependent upon the
being of God who is the only object of supreme love; and
in declaring that God is all in all, and that there is no
other substance except God, the Vedanta means the existence
in reality belongs to God alone". 31

In the Abridgement of the Vedanta, Rammohun quoted
it as saying: "All that exists is indeed God i.e. nothing
bears true existence excepting God. 32 In the same work, he
pointed to the Vedantic view of the material cause of the
world; "As a rope in an inadvertent view taken for snake, is
the material cause of the conceived existence of the snake
which appears to be true by the support of the real existence
of the rope". 33

The above passages show that Rammohun understood Vedan­
ta in the sense in which Sankara understood it. His appeal to
Advaita Vedanta and the support given to it, it may be mention­
ed, tend to show that he believed in its denial of the reality
of the world.

According to Sankara, as has been stated, Brahman and
the individual self are identical. From some of his observa­
tions it appears that Rammohun Roy also regarded them as iden­
tical. In his Bengali writings, he had frequently used the
term self (Atman) in place of the term Brahman. In Bhatta­
charyer Sahit Vichar he asserted that in view of the falsity
of the world of name and form the duty of a man, according to
Vedanta, is to try to realize himself. In the same book he explained the vision of the self (atmasakshat kara) as the vision of Brahman (Brahmā-saksātkara). In the preface to the Bengali translation of the Isha Upanisad he asserted that, according to the Vedas, the Vedanta and Manu, the contemplation of the self is not only the duty of the sannyasins, but also of the householders.

In the 1st section of the 3rd Mundakam of his English translation of Mundaka Upanisad, it is stated: "Two birds (meaning God and soul), co-habitant and co-essential, reside unitedly in one tree which is the body. One of them (the soul) consumes the variously stated fruits of its actions; but the other (God), without partaking in them, witnesses all events."

"The soul so pressed down on the body, being deluded with ignorance, grieves at its own insufficiency, but when it perceives its co-habitant, the adorable Lord of the universe, the origin of itself and his glory, it feels relieved from the grief and infatuation. When a wiseman perceives the resplendent God, the creator and Lord of the universe, and the omnipotent prime cause, he then, abandoning the consequences of good and evil works, becomes perfect, and obtains entire absorption."

Writing a footnote on the above passages Rammohun Roy said: "The difference between God, the intellectual principle and the soul, the individual intellect, subsists as long as the idea of self-individuality is retained; like the dis-
distinction between the finite and infinite space which ceases as soon as the idea of particular figure is done away."

The view expressed in the above footnote, rightly considered, is that there is no distinction between God and the individual self. Rammohun Roy had also precisely stated in the introduction to his Bengali translation of the Mandukya Upanisad that a man having true knowledge of reality would be absorbed in Brahman after death. Again, in his Brahmanical Magazine No. 1, he wrote: "We see the flame of one candle appearing differently from that of another, but as soon as its connection with the candle is over, each is absorbed into the universal heat. In like manner, the individual spirit returns to the Universal Supreme Spirit as soon as its connection with matter is destroyed."  

As is evident, many of Rammohun Roy's statements tend to assert the falsity of the world appearance, as also the identity of the individual self and Brahman. This appears to be like Sankara's Advaita Vedantism.

There are, however, many passages in Rammohun's writings which will prove that he believed in a Personal God as the creator and controller of the universe which is real, as also in the distinction between the individual self and Brahman. Briefly speaking, these passages will show that he believed in a system of philosophy which leaves scope for the worship of God who is the creator of a real world and of individuals distinct from Him. In the Tuhfatul Muwahhidin, he expressed his
belief in God as the creator and governor of the universe. Such passages are also found in his writings on Christianity. But as we are here discussing whether Rammohun believed in Sankarite advaitism or not, we shall quote passages from his writings on Hinduism and on Hindu scriptures only.

In his Abridgement of the Vedanta, Rammohun explained the Vedantic view as: "The Supreme Being has by His sole intention created the universe". Again, "God is the efficient cause of the universe, as a potter is of the pots". Then, "God is the willful agent of all that can have existence".

In the same work, he pointed to the assertions that "God is all-powerful" and that "it is by His supremacy that He is in possession of all powers". Then he remarked: "What may be impossible for us is not impossible to God who is almighty and the sole regulator of the universe". He also said in the above work that according to the Vedanta, the nature and essence of the Supreme Being is incomprehensible, but added that His existence can be known through His "effects and works". This assertion was repeated in Brahmanical Magazine No.IV. In the former work, the Supreme Being is described as the regulator of the origin, existence and destruction of the universe. As mentioned before, he also mentioned the three mysterious epithets, namely, Om Tat and Sat, used in the beginning of the Vedanta-Sutra and concluded with the following remarks:
These collective terms simply affirm that One Unknown True Being is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the universe.47

From the above passages, it is clear that Vedanta, as Rammohun understood it, maintains that God has created the world by His intention and action. He is the almighty creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. It has been stated that, according to Sankara's advaitism, a man who has true knowledge cannot regard God as the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. 'Intention' and 'action' cannot be attributed to Sankara's Brahman. How did God create the world? Rammohun's answer is: "Without destroying His own nature, Brahman manifests Himself in the universe by the power of His atma-maya".48 Rammohun considered maya an eternal attribute, the creating power of God. This will be evident from the following definitions of maya given by him: "Maya is the creating power of eternal God".49 And, "Maya is the power of God through which the world receives its birth, existence and changes".50

Thus, according to Rammohun Roy, the universe is a creation of God. In his work the Second Defence of Monothestic System of the Vedas he said that "nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God".51 The world was created by His volition. So, it is really existent. Though a product of maya, it is not an illusion as in the system of
Sankara. It is real, since maya is the real creating power of God. The above passages also show that, according to Rammohun, God has attributes and He is a Personal Being. He has attributed to the Supreme Being intention, volition and action. The universe is His work. He is its almighty regulator. Besides, He has also got moral attributes. In reply to the imputation of atheism to Vedanta on the ground that it denies to God His moral attributes, he said in his First Appeal to the Christian Public that he could not "conscientiously coincide with the respected Reviewer in his imputing atheism to the Vedanta system", for, "the Vedanta, in common with the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, from the impossibility of forming more exalted conceptions, constantly ascribes to God the perfection of those moral attributes which are considered among the human species excellent and sublime". To prove this he quoted four passages from the Upanisads. One such passage reads as follows: "He overspreads all creatures, is merely spirit without the form either of a minute body or of an extended one, which is liable to impression or organisation. He is pure, perfect, omniscient ruler of the intellect, omnipresent and self-existent. He has from eternity been assigning to all creatures their respective purposes."

In the introduction to his English Translation of the Kena Upanisad, Rammohun described God as the Almighty Power

* Rammohun did not mention from which Upanisads he had quoted the passages.
and expressed the opinion that in our effort to improve our intellectual and moral faculties we should rely on His goodness for that alone enables us to attain what we earnestly seek for. He had expressed the same view in his work Religious Instructions Founded On Sacred Authorities. In it, he said that the worship is due to the "Author and Governor of the universe". Explaining the meaning of worship he said in the same work: "Worship implies the act of one with a view to please another; but when applied to the Supreme Being it signifies the contemplation of His attributes."

From the above discussion, it is clear that the Vedanta and the Hindu scriptures, as Rammohun explained them, believed in a Personal God who has attributes and who is the creator and preserver of the world which is real. This view differs from the view of Sankara and on this ground it may be maintained that in his explanation of the Vedanta and the Upanishads, Rammohun did not follow the commentaries of Sankaracharya.

This view of Rammohun as to the nature of the Supreme Being has been corroborated by what he had said in his writings on Christianity and the Trust Deed of the Brahma Samaj founded by him. In his introduction to the Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness, he described God as "a Supreme Superintending Power, the Author and Preserver of this harmonious system who had organised and who regulates such an infinity of celestial and terrestrial objects."

The Trust Deed
of the Brahmo Samaj laid down that the Brahmo Church was to be used "for the worship and adoration of the Eternal unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the universe". Evidently, such a Saguna Brahman, a Supreme Being who is the creator and preserver of the universe cannot be accommodated in Sankara's philosophy. Rammohun, thus, cannot be regarded as a follower of Sankaracharya.

We have already seen that in his Bengali works, Rammohun Roy frequently used the term self (ātman) in place of the term Brahman. But, it may be noted, by this simple conversion, he did not consider Brahman as identical with the individual self (jiva). In his Vedanta Grantha, he precisely said that though the individual self is non-different from the Supreme Self (Paramatman), the latter is not to be considered non-different from the former. In a different place of the same book, he said that God and the individual self are different from each other, for the being of God is not dependent upon the being of the individual self, though the being of the latter is dependent upon the being of the former. Explaining the Vedantic view in his Abridgement of the Vedanta, Rammohun said that the soul is not the Lord of the universe, for the Veda declares that God resides in the soul as its ruler. The Vedantic view is that the sentient soul is different from the Being who rules the universe.

It is thus evident that Rammohun's conception of the Vedantic view of Brahman and the individual self (jiva) differs
from that of Sankara.

The passages of Sankarite import must be reconciled with the passages of monothestic import found in Rammohun's writings so that a conclusion as to his view may be reached. As shown, some passages make him appear as a follower of Sankara, while some other passages clearly indicate that he is a believer in monotheism. Like Sankara, he said that the world is a product of māyā, but by māyā he understood the real creative power of the eternal God. In the Vedanta Grantha, he explained māyā as the sport (līlā) of eternal God. In Brahmana Sevadhi Rammohun stated that māyā means, primarily, the power of God to create the world and secondarily the product of this power (i.e. the world). God has the power of creating the world and the world He has created must be real. Thus, when he said that the world is a product of māyā or that it is false (mithyā), he did not mean that it is not real. He only meant that it is not real in the sense in which God is real. The assertions that "existence in reality belongs to God alone" and "nothing else can bear the name of true existence" means God alone has independent existence. In Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Vedas he said that God is "the only existence amidst all dependent existences" and nothing bears real existence except by the volition of God."
As has been mentioned, Rammohun Roy did not consider Brahman as identical with the individual self. In his Bengali writings he had used the terms 'ātma-sāksātkār' and 'ātmopāsanā' which tend to show that he did not distinguish between the Brahman and the atman. But, as a matter of fact, in using the term Atman he simply meant the Supreme Being without any implication as to the identity or difference between the Supreme Being and the individual self.

In advocating the unitarianism of the Upanisads, Rammohun Roy did not make himself a protagonist of Hinduism. He was above religious sectarianism. As in the Tuhfatul Muwahhidin, so in his writings on Hindu scriptures, he advocated a simple belief in Supreme Being as the creator and governor of the world and a form of worship without the rites and rituals of any particular religion. His belief in God had nothing to do with dogmas. Naturally he did not distinguish between the unitarian thought found in Hindu scriptures and that found in Christian scriptures. In the teachings of Jesus Christ he found a simple religion. As a rationalist and as an exponent of Hindu unitarianism, he had already showed a leaning towards the moral side of religious life. Here in the teachings of Jesus he found the moral precepts best calculated to bring peace and happiness to the people in society. That was why he was attracted to Christianity and appeared as a great non-Christian exponent of Christian unitarianism. In a letter written in 1817 to his friend John Digby, Rammohun informed the latter that by
religious researches he had reached the conviction that the religion of Christ was more conducive to moral principles and more conforming to reason than any other religion known to him. 63

Rammohun Roy made a compilation of the precepts of Jesus omitting the dogmas and historical narratives from the books of the New Testament ascribed to the four evangelists and published it in the year 1820 under the title The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness. In the introduction to the above work, he remarked: "A notion of the existence of a Supreme Superintending Power, the Author and Preserver of this harmonious system, who has organised and who regulates such an infinity of celestial and terrestrial objects, and a due estimation of that law which teaches that one should do unto others as he would wish to be done by, reconcile us with human nature and tend to render our existence agreeable to ourselves, and profitable to the rest of mankind." The former can be derived from tradition and instruction or from a survey of the "skill and contrivance displayed in the works of nature"; but the latter, he said, although "partially taught in every other system of religion", "is principally advocated by Christianity". 64 The moral teachings of Jesus, he said, are "more likely to produce desirable effect of improving the hearts and minds of men of different persuasions and degrees of understanding". 65
But because of this compilation of the precepts of Jesus, Rammohun had to enter into a prolonged controversy with the Baptist missionaries of Serampore. The missionaries thought that Rammohun, by separating the moral precepts from the dogmas and historical narratives, had injured the cause of truth.

In reply to criticisms, Rammohun admitted that he had separated the moral precepts from "some of the dogmas and other matters chiefly under the impression that they alone were a sufficient guide to secure peace and happiness for mankind at large". He claimed that his position was founded on the authority of Jesus Christ - "a denial of which", he thought, "would imply a total disavowal of Christianity." In support of his contention that the precepts compiled by him, according to Jesus himself, can independently of the dogmas lead to salvation, he quoted the following passages among others from the New Testament.

"Jesus said unto him, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. This do and thou shalt live." By the words 'law' and 'prophets', Jesus meant, according to Rammohun, all the commandments ordained by Divine authority and the religion revealed to the prophets. Rammohun
maintained that the fact of Jesus Christ's declaration that the commandments would afford perfect means of attaining eternal life and his direction to men to follow the commandments show that no other doctrine is necessary.

As to the rites and ceremonies Rammohun said: "It was the characteristic of the office of Christ to teach men, that forms and ceremonies were useless tokens of respect for God, compared with the essential proof of obedience and love towards him evinced by the practice of beneficence towards their fellow creatures." 68

The missionaries expressed the view that remission of sins and the grace of God cannot be obtained by following the moral precepts alone and that the strength to overcome passion cannot be acquired without the knowledge of the dogmas and historical narratives. Rammohun Roy replied that the moral precepts, apart from dogmas and historical narratives, "contain not only the essence of all that is necessary to instruct mankind in their civil duties, but also the best and only means of obtaining the forgiveness of sins, the favour of God, and the strength to overcome our passions and to keep his commandments." 69 According to Rammohun it is not necessary to take refuge in the doctrine of the cross, that is, the doctrine of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus on the cross as an atonement for the sins of mankind. Rammohun challenged the missionaries to find out a single passage pronounced by Jesus enjoining refuge in such a doctrine as all-sufficient or
indispensable for salvation. In his view, the only means of securing forgiveness of sins enjoined by Jesus is repentence.

It may be mentioned here that the above mentioned Christian missionaries were trinitarian Christians, while Rammohun was a unitarian. Christianity is a historical monotheistic religion. Jesus Christ was its founder. Trinitarian Christians, however, attribute divinity to Jesus Christ who is called the son of God in the New Testament and believe in the existence of Holy Ghost, a mysterious spirit mentioned therein. According to them, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are distinct persons in one Godhead. Trinitarianism, thus, is the doctrine that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, namely, God the Father, Jesus Christ, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Christ, God the Son, who came down to earth for the salvation of man, was begotten of Virgin Mary by God the Holy Ghost. God was in Jesus, reconciling the sinners to Himself. After the Son departed from the earth, the Holy Ghost came down to guide the Apostles and their successors. Jesus Christ is equal to God the Father. The Holy Ghost is also equal to the Father and the Son and is to be worshipped with the same Godhead.

Rammohun tried to prove by quoting a long array of scriptural authorities that the attribution of divinity to Jesus and the Holy Ghost, two supposed persons in the Godhead, is wrong. In the case of Jesus, Rammohun, on the one hand,
tried to show the invalidity of the ground on which the doctrine of his divinity is based, while on the other hand, he sought positively to prove his humanity. As to the Holy Ghost which is also called Holy Spirit, Rammohun gave the view that it is nothing but the guiding spirit of God which need not be personified.

Besides, the controversy over his compilation of the Precepts of Jesus, Rammohun had to enter into a second line of controversy with the missionaries of Serampore over their attack on Hindu scriptures. This controversy started in the year 1821 and in the wake of this, he published his Brahmanical Magazine with its Bengali counterpart Brahmana Sevadhi to defend Hinduism from the attack of the missionaries. The Fourth and the final number of this was published in the year 1823. It should, however, be mentioned that he defended not the idolatrous and superstitious Hinduism, but only what he considered the pure Hinduism of the scriptures. While defending Hinduism he also assailed the trinitarian dogmas of the missionaries. Rammohun described the trinitarian missionaries as polytheists, for their view that there are three persons, equally possessed of omnipotence, omniscience and infinite mercy.

In spite of the controversy with the missionaries, it should be mentioned here that Rammohun at no time lost faith in the religion of Jesus as he understood it. The motive of his criticism of the trinitarian dogmas was to help the revival of the pure teachings of Jesus.
It is clear from our discussion that Rammohun was not a protagonist of any particular religion. He conceived of a religion which would be acceptable to all men, and would be based on a belief in the Supreme Being as the creator and governor of the universe together with a moral code calculated to bring peace and happiness to men. In the teachings of Jesus, as he understood them, as well as in the teachings of the Upanisads, he found the foundation of such a religion. This explains why he devoted his energy to the exposition of both the Christian and the Upanisadic doctrines at the same time. It may be noted here that Rammohun attached much importance to the social and the moral value of religion. A moral code conducive to social well-being was, to him, a part of religion. One purpose of religion, he thought, is to bring about the social and the moral amelioration of the people.

Rammohun, as stated before, thought that a simple belief in God along with a suitable moral code was sufficient to bring peace, happiness and salvation to men. This he considered to be the essential tenet of the religion of Christ as well as of the religion of the Upanisads. Morality, according to him, is an indispensable element of the religion of Christ. This, he thought, is true of the religion of the Upanisads. His explanation of the teachings of the Upanisads in this respect was given in his Abridgement of the Vedanta in the following words: "A command over our passions and over external senses of the body
and good acts are declared by the Veda to be indispensable in the mind's approximation to God. They should, therefore, be strictly taken care of and attended to, both previously and subsequently to such approximation to the Supreme Being. Ram Mohun also made the following remarks about the pure morality of the Vedas: "A desire of indulging the appetites and of gratifying the passions is common to man with other animals. But the Vedas coinciding with the natural desire of social intercourse implanted in the human constitution, as the original cause of sympathy with others, require of men to moderate those appetites and regulate those passions, in a manner calculated to preserve the peace and comfort of society and secure their future happiness so that mankind may maintain their superiority over the rest of the animal creation."

Rammohun conceived a universal religion the essence of which consists in (a) a simple belief in One God as the creator and governor of the universe and (b) a moral code calculated to bring peace, happiness and salvation to mankind. He found that this is the essence of the religion of Jesus Christ as well as of the religion of the Upanisads.

Rammohun naturally did not distinguish between the Hindu and the Christian unitarianism. This explains why, while he was engaged in a strenuous effort to revive the unitarianism of the ancient Hindus, he was also trying to revive the unitarian religion of Jesus Christ and while he was defending the Vedantic doctrines against the attack of the Christian missionaries, he
was also attending the Unitarian Church run by William Adam who was a Unitarian Christian. Rammohun explained why he attended the Unitarian church in the following words:

"Because the unitarians believe, profess and inculcate the doctrine of divine unity—a doctrine which I find firmly maintained by the Christian scriptures and by our most ancient writing commonly called the Vedas". 72

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to refer to the history of the religious societies founded or patronised by Rammohun. In 1815, Rammohun founded the Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends) for the dissemination of religious truth and for the promotion of free religious discussion. The proceedings of the weekly meetings of the Sabha included recitation of texts from the Hindu scriptures which inculcate the unity of God and chanting of theistic hymns. Atmiya Sabha however was discontinued in 1819.

In 1821, the Calcutta Unitarian committee was founded by some English and Indian gentlemen. Rammohun was its chief supporter. Conversion was not the aim of the committee. It was meant to preach the religion of Christ and arrange for Unitarian worship. The services of the Unitarian Church were conducted by William Adam. Among others, Rammohun and his disciples used to attend the services which, however, were given up after sometime. The activities of the Unitarian committee were renewed in 1827 and Rammohun took a prominent part in its
renewal. Adam began to conduct services again on August 3, 1827. This is said to be Rammohun's second attempt to find his church under the auspices of Unitarian Christianity. Attendance to the unitarian church, however, soon came down almost to zero and it was finally abandoned in 1828.

Rammohun wanted the revival of Hindu Unitarianism. With equal zeal he desired the revival of the unitarian religion of Jesus Christ as he understood it. Here we find a man, who devoted his whole life for the revival of Hindu Unitarianism, was also hopefully looking for the day when "the mission of Christ will universally prevail." 73

After the abandonment of his second attempt to find a unitarian church under the auspices of Unitarian Christianity, he established a new theistic church on the 28th August, 1828. That was the origin of the Brahmo Samaj. There are two stories as to the cause of the establishment of the Samaj:

(a) On the failure of the Unitarian Mission, William Adam suggested the establishment of a church for the Hindu Unitarians as a substitute.

(b) Tarachand Chakravarty and Chandra Sekhar Deb, two disciples of Rammohun, suggested to him the desirability of attending a Unitarian Church entirely suited to their views and principles. Rammohun took the suggestion to his heart and established the above mentioned church.
Whatever might be the cause of the origin of the Samaj, there is, as Collet points out, no real discrepancy between the two accounts. The point is that Rammohun realized the necessity of a unitarian church which would suit the Indian mind and that realization was the cause of his founding the Brahmo Samaj. The inaugural preacher of the Samaj was Ramchandra Vidyabagish who, quoting extracts from Hindu scriptures, emphasized the necessity of worshipping one God—without-an-equal discarding all outward ceremonies and urged that worship should consist in self-discipline, self-realization and services to others.

The mode of worship did not differ materially from that followed in the Atmiya Sabha. The only addition was the exposition of the scriptures. Some texts of the Hindu scriptures were expounded by Brahmins in a side-room screened from the view of the congregation and also exposition of some extracts of the Upanisads was made in the congregation-room. It was followed by singing of theistic hymns. In the side-room mentioned above only Brahmins were allowed.

The new Samaj attracted an increasing number of adherents who came to constitute a new community. A permanent building for holding the services of the Samaj was constructed at Chitpur in Calcutta and a board of trustees was created on the 8th January, 1830 for conducting the affairs of the Samaj.
The trust deed is a notable theological document which contains a statement of the religion of Rammohun and of the Brahmo Samaj founded by him. It shows that the purpose of the Samaj was the "Worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable Being who is the Author and Preserver of the universe". It laid down that the worship of the Eternal Being should not be held "under or by another name, designation or title used for and applied to any particular Being or Being; by any man or set of men whatsoever". The deed further laid down that there should not be any use of image or anything like it and that there should not be any offering of sacrifice or ablation of any form. The trust deed also said "that no sermon, preaching, discourse, prayer or hymn be delivered, made or used in such worship but such have a tendency to the promotion of the contemplation of the Author and Preserver of the Universe, to the promotion of charity, morality, piety, benevolence, virtue, and strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds". The trust deed while enunciating the principles of the Brahmo Religion, further laid down "that in conducting the said worship and adoration no object animate or inanimate that has been or is or shall hereafter become or be recognised as an object of worship by any man or set of man shall be reviled or slightingly or contemptuously spoken of or alluded to either in preaching praying or in the hymns or other mode of worship that may be delivered or used in the said messuage or building."
It has already been stated that Rammohun Roy conceived a religion which would consist of a belief in a Supreme Being as the creator and preserver of the universe along with a moral code conducive to social peace and happiness. The trust deed confirms this view of his religion. It was his aim to found a universal religion acceptable to all man. Such a religion must be above any sectarian mark. That his religion is really universal in character is shown by the fact that, while providing for the worship of One Eternal Being, the trust deed laid down that any name, designation or title applied to any particular Being or Beings by any man or set of men should not be ascribed to this Eternal Being. This non-sectarian or universal character of his religion is also evident from the injunction of the trust deed that nothing which is recognised as an object of worship by any man or set of men should be reviled, slighted or alluded to in preaching, praying or any other mode of Brahmo worship.

Rammohun thought that the universal religion of his conception can be based on scriptural authority also. He found it in the Bible containing the teachings of Jesus Christ and in the Hindu scriptures known as Upanisads. This is why he spent so much energy in explaining the teachings of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Upanisads. He saw no essential difference between the religion of the Upanisads and the religion of Jesus Christ. As mentioned, this was why he was drawn from his...
discussion on Hinduism based on the Upanisads to the compilation of the Precepts of Jesus Christ.

We have already described the essentials of Rammohun's universal religion. Now, as to its external form we may mention here, that the mode of worship adopted in the Brahmo Samaj founded by him was a congregational form of worship. This was the form of worship adopted before in the Atmiya Sabha. The Mohammedan mode of worship is also congregational. But the entire structure of the external form of Rammohun's religion clearly shows the Christian influence. We have already described the mode of worship followed in Rammohun's Brahmo Church.

It consisted of reading of some extracts of Hindu scriptures, exposition of the Upanisads and singing of theistic hymns. The Christian influence on this mode of worship has been clearly described by Dilip Kumar Biswas and Prabhat Chandra Ganguli, the editors of S.D.Collet's, The Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy in the following words:

"The reading of the Vedas, explanation of the Upanisads, and songs, would correspond exactly to the reading of the Bible, the sermons and the singing of hymns of Christian worship". 76

This external form of Christian worship is really universal in character. If the Bible is replaced by the unitarian scriptures of other nations, it can well suit the unitarian worship of the people of any part of the world. It has been already pointed out that after the failure of the Unitarian
Church under Christian auspices, Rammohun founded the Brahmo Samaj to provide the Unitarians among the Hindus a Church suited to their mind. In making this change he replaced the Bible by the Hindu scriptures. This gave the external form of his religion a Hindu touch. But this by no means ruined its universal character. In its essence and form of worship, Rammohun’s religion still remained universal in character.

The universal essence of his religion consists of the belief in One God as the creator and preserver of the universe as also of the belief that this God, though incorporeal, yet personal with attributes.

Besides being the founder of a universal religion, Rammohun was a great reformer of the Hinduism prevailing in his time. A question may arise: What is the connection between founding a universal religion and reforming Hinduism? It may be pointed out that Rammohun wanted to reform both Hinduism and Christianity; for the essence of Hinduism and Christianity, according to him, does not differ from the universal religion of his conception. He wanted to bring Hinduism and Christianity back to their original forms. However, he was born in a Hindu family in India where the corrupted form of Hinduism posed a great problem. So, the reform of Hindu religion became a great mission of his life and by no means he could afford to neglect it. So, he was required to adjust the mode of worship in his Church to the liking of the Hindus as
far as possible. This perhaps explains his act of allowing Brahmins alone to enter into the side-room, mentioned before and to read Hindu scripture from that room. In the Hindu society of that time Brahmins alone had the right of performing religious rites and reading the Vedas. Probably, Rammo- hun thought that it will be difficult to make the Hindus accept a non-Brahmin preacher. Later on, we shall see that even in the fifties of the last century, a section of Brahmos refused to allow non-Brahmins to occupy the pulpit of their church. In this connection, we may refer to S.D. Collet's view that Rammohun always liked to follow a policy which would evoke the least resistance from the people whose religion and social customs he wanted to reform. The privileged position given to the Brahmins in his church might be the outcome of that policy. It is reasonable to believe that he did not conceive it as a permanent feature. That Rammohun did not really believe in Brahmins' exclusive right to read the Vedas is evident from his act of publishing the Bengali translations of some of the Upanisads so as to bring them within the reach of all sections of the Hindus. It is also difficult to believe that Rammohun who translated the Upanisads into English and also organised and attended the Unitarian Church under Christian auspices, would believe in Brahmins' exclusive right in making the sermons. This concession to orthodoxy, it seems reasonable to conclude, was given so as to make the superstitious Hindus take a step towards reform.
The Brahmo Samaj fell into a moribund condition after the death of its founder Ramraohun Roy. The number of supporters of the Samaj gradually fell. They were attracted to the Samaj either for their intellectual sympathy with Brahmoism or by the personality of its founder. Most of them were idolators at home. So, on the death of the founder it lost its vitality. But the Samaj entered into a new phase of life when Devendranath Tagore joined it in 1843.*

Though brought up in the lap of luxury, Devendranath's mind was diverted to God. In the boyhood he was trained in idolatry by his grand mother, but he was himself converted to monotheism through contemplation of the mystery of nature and the destiny of man. He also became convinced that the immutable creator of the world, the formless God, cannot be represented by an image. He read the history of Western Philosophy, and Locke, Hume and some other philosophers in original, but his mind was not satisfied. One day a stray leaf of a Sanskrit book passed by him by the wind. He picked it up and Pandit Ramchandra Vidyabagish explained its meaning to him. In it was written the following:

"God is immanent in all things, in whatsoever lives and moves in the universe: enjoy therefore, without being attached, Covet not the wealth belonging to others."

* Devendranath Tagore was the eldest son of Dwarakanath Tagore, Ramroohun's close friend and collaborator, and was born in the year 1817. It is believed that before leaving the country Ramroohun expressed the hope that Devendranath would be his successor to the sacred office though the later was a mere boy at that time.
It is the opening verse of Isa Upanisad. It was a great message to Devendranath. Ramchun's influence over him also asserted itself during that time. After this, Devendranath learnt Sanskrit and studied a number of the Upanisads. He thought that he had got the light of truth and felt inspired to preach it. In 1839, he founded a society with the aim of disseminating the truth of the Upanisads. The society was called Tattwaranjani Sabha, but subsequently it was called Tattvabodhini Sabha (Truth-Teaching Society) at the suggestion of Ramchandra Vidyabagish, the minister of the Brahmo Samaj who was appointed the minister of the Tattvabodhini Sabha also. Papers were read and discussed at the meeting of the Sabha held once a week. Religious service was held once a month. Devendranath Tagore also established Tattvabodhini Pathshala or a Theological School in the year 1840, to train a number of youngmen in the principles of monotheism. Akshay Kumar Datta, a well-known figure of the nineteenth century literary history of Bengal, was appointed a teacher of the school. A journal of the Sabha called Tattvabodhini Patrika was published in 1843 with Akshay Kumar Datta as its editor. The aim of the journal was to preach the religion of the Upanisads. The Tattvabodhini Sabha and the Brahmo Samaj came closer to each other and Devendranath formally joined the Samaj in 1843. On joining the Samaj he set before himself the task of its reform and reorganisation. By that time some evils had entered into it. Pandit Iswarchandra Nyayaratna, assistant
to Ramchandra Vidyabagish, was one day found by Devendranath to preach the doctrine of the incarnation of Rama from the pulpit of the church. The old rule of excluding non-Brahmins from the side-room, where passages of the scriptures were read, was still retained. Devendranath put a stop to these practices. He also felt the necessity of turning the Samaj into a well-knit organisation. As has been stated, most of the members of the Samaj practised idolatry at home. Devendranath framed a covenant which provided the performance of daily worship of Brahman by means of the Gayatri-mantra. A member was required to accept the covenant and make a declaration that he would conform to the rules of religious life laid down by the Vedanta. No caste-distinction was recognised at the time of initiation. A Brahmin was required to forgo his sacred thread during the ceremony of initiation. He was, however, free to use it after going home. The covenant was kept on the whole to the lines laid down by Rammohun Roy. Later, the rule of worshipping God by means of the Gayatri-mantra was relaxed. While a member was free to stick to the Gayatri, he was simply required to make the declaration that he would worship Brahman every day with care and devotion. These relaxation was made for those who were spiritually less advanced and found it difficult to understand the import of the Gayatri-mantra. In 1843, Devendranath Tagore with twenty other young men took initiation from Ramchandra Vidyabagish and signed the covenant. This was the first attempt to bring the adherents of the faith within an organised spiritual
fraternity. It is known from Ramchandra Vidyabagish that the organisation of such a spiritual fraternity was the aim of Rammohun Roy.

A regular form of service was also introduced into the Church at that time by Devendranath Tagore. The new form included thanksgiving, praise and prayer. The old form consisted merely of the exposition of the Upanisads attended with sermon and hymn. Steps were taken to preach the religion of the Samaj far and wide. The Tattvabodhini Patrika as mentioned above, was started that year. The Tattvabodhini Sabha took up the charge of preaching Brahmoism. A number of preachers were engaged and many new branches of the Samaj sprang up in different towns of Bengal.

In connection with Devendranath Tagore's religious activities, it may be mentioned that he joined hands with the orthodox Hindu leaders in resisting the conversion of Hindus to Christianity. At this the missionaries directed their attack against the Brahmos and criticised their belief in the infallibility of the Vedas. To this the Brahmos retorted that the Vedas contained revelation. However, a section of the Brahmos headed by Akshay Kumar Datta could not reconcile themselves with the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas. Devendranath Tagore sent four students to Benares to study the Vedas. He himself visited Benares in 1847 to know about the Vedas. The reports of these students and his own discussion with the
pundits of Benares made Devendranath doubt the infallibility of the Vedas. After much discussion he agreed to reject the doctrine and the cancellation of it was formally announced in the anniversary of the Samaj in 1851.

After the abrogation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas, Devendranath felt the necessity of a book on which Brahmoism must be based. So, he compiled a number of passages from the Upanisads which inculcate monotheism in a book entitled Brahmo Dharma. This book is not a mere compilation, but also contains the truths Devendranath realized through intuition. He only used the language of the Upanisads to express his own realization. He enunciated the principles of Brahmoism under the title of Brahma Dharma Bija. Devendranath Tagore also framed a new covenant to replace the old Vedantic covenant.

The religious thought of Devendranath Tagore was the fulfilment of the religious thought of Rammohun Roy. In giving the Brahmo Samaj a definite shape Devendranath set before himself the task of keeping it free from the influence of Advaita Vedanta and Christianity on the one hand and idolatry on the other. He thought that India's spiritual ideas are so rich that the Brahmos need not look towards Christianity for inspiration. But his unitarian religion is not opposed to Christian Uniterianism. So, in containing Christian influence he only opposed the Christian dogmas and its unlimited
influence which might lead to the Christianisation of the Brahmo Samaj. Besides, the Christian conceptions of heaven and God appeared to him to be anthropomorphical.

In his conception of God and in his opposition to Advaita Vedanta he did not go beyond Rammohun Roy. Devendranath’s God like that of Rammohun was a Personal Being with attributes. In the Brahma Dharma, God was described as a Personal Being. In the Brahma Dharma Bija (Seed-Principles of Brahmism), God has been described as the creator of the universe. In the method of worship, prescribed by Devendranath and followed by the Brahmo Samaj, also God was conceived as the ordainer. In his Autobiography, Devendranath said that he could not accept Advaita Vedantism as it identifies Brahman and the individual self. In his Brahma Dharma he described God as the creator of the selves. Rammohun Roy often indicated that he followed Sankara in his interpretation of the Upanisads. Sankara was a great apostle of Advaita Vedanta which Devendranath opposed. But actually the philosophical views of the two did not differ. As has been noted, in our discussion on Rammohun’s philosophy, his support to Sankara was limited to the extent of believing in the existence of only one Reality taking existence in the sense of independence. He differed from Sankara in that he admitted the dependent existence of the phenomenal world, distinct, though dependent, existence of the finite self as also
in the personal and saguna nature of the Supreme Being. Sankara was held in high esteem by the people. So, the example of his belief in one Reality was set before the people by Rammohun. As the people were idolatrous and polytheistic, putting forward the example of Sankara's belief in one Supreme Being was considered useful. But during the time of Devendranath Tagore a large number of educated people had come to believe in One God. So, it was possible for Devendranath to proceed a step further to reject Advaitism and to proclaim that Brahmoism differ from Advaitism.

There is, however, an important difference between the two great leaders of Brahmoism. This difference lies in their approach to religion. Rammohun Roy was a great rationalist and his conception of religion was rational. But Devendranath Tagore's approach to religion was both intuitional and rational. He seemed to have realized the truth of monotheism by the intuition of his heart. After the renunciation of the infallibility of the Vedas, intuition became the basis of Brahmoism. As Brahmoism could not be based on scriptures, Devendranath Tagore thought that it could be based on the intuition of the heart. He accepted the teachings of the Upanisads as per as they conformed to the intuition of his heart. It appears from his Autobiography that Devendranath Tagore developed his religious views through contemplation, reflection and intuition before he studied the Upanisads from which
he only got the confirmation of his views. According to him, God is revealed to intuition aided by undoubting intellect. He got support to his view, he thought, in the following verse of the Svetasvatara Upanisad: "That God, the maker of all things, the great self, ever seated in the heart of creatures is framed by the heart, by the thought, by the mind, they who know that become immortal."

In the Brahmo Dharma, as has been mentioned, Devendranath Tagore expressed in the language of the Upanisads what truths he came to know by intuition. He said that truth was revealed to his heart by the grace of God. It was not known by his intellect or reason.

Rammohun Roy never said that he had heard any divine command. But Devendranath, being guided by a divine voice (which he felt to have heard), appointed Keshub Chunder Sen a minister of the Brahmo Church. He had an inclination towards contemplation of God. His sadhana was to have a direct communion with God and like a mystic he seemed to feel such communion with Him. Thus, Devendranath Tagore introduced intuitionism into Brahmoism and gave it a fully religious character. A religion, though it may originate in rational reflection, cannot sustain itself without an element of feeling and intuition. A true religion calls for an intuition of the Divine presence. It is in this respect that Devendranath Tagore enriched Brahmoism.
The Brahmo Samaj as a whole came to believe that intuitive religion is superior to the scriptural. This is evident from the fact that the Tattvabodhini Patrika went on publishing the following passage at its head from 1847:

"The Rik Veda, Yajurveda, Sama Veda, and Atharva Veda and Siksha, Kalpa, Vyakaran, Nirukta, Chanda, Jyotish are inferior; that is only superior that enables a man to attain the Eternal and the Immutable Being."

It may be mentioned here that renunciation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas is an advance upon the post-Rammohun phase of Brahmoism, not an advance upon the view of Rammohun Roy who never thought that any religious scripture can be infallible. He accepted the Upanisads and the Bible as far as they conformed to his reason.

Amongst other principles, it may be mentioned here, Brahmoism of the time of Devendranath Tagore did not believe in asceticism. Devendranath and his followers could not believe that God who has provided man with all their necessities could desire mortification of the body as a mode of religious life. They also did not believe in renunciation of the world. God has given men the instinct to live in society. He has also given them the emotions of sympathy, kindness, love and affection. This makes it clear that renunciation is not a religious duty. These principles were no innovations of Devendranath. Rammohun himself did not believe in
asceticism and renunciation. He also did not believe in pilgrimage and external ritualism. In this respect also Deven- 
dranath and his disciples followed the founder of Brahmoism.

Our discussion on the Brahmo movement of the period will not be complete if we donot mention the views of the rationalist section of the Brahmos headed by Akshay Kumar 
Datta. Akshay Kumar Datta did not recognise the necessity of prayer. He was not in agreement with the views expressed in the Brahmo Dharma. According to him, religion consists only in obeying the divine law. The Brahmo rationalists founded a society called Atmiya Sabha (Society of Friends) and decided important religious questions, such as the nature and attributes of God, by counting votes. They were more interested in social reform than in religion.

The Brahmo Samaj entered into a new phase with Keshub Chunder Sen joining it in 1858. Keshub became the leader of the younger section of the Brahmos. This section established a society called Sangat Sabha and discussed religious and moral questions in the meeting of the Sabha. They started missionary activities with much enthusiasm and new branches of the Samaj sprang up in different places.

* Keshub Chunder Sen was born in a well-known family of Calcutta in 1838. His father and grandfather were Vaisnavites.
The Sangat Sabha developed the doctrine of God in conscience. Conscience is the guide in right moral and social behaviour of man. A man of right religious belief must be morally pure. Moral purity is indispensable for right religious life. The young followers of Brahmo Samaj thus sought to put their faith into practice. This led to certain questions of social reform. A man believing in Brahmoism and seeking to be varacious and honest should not wear Brahmanical thread in deference to a prejudice. A man who does not believe in caste-distinction should be willing to inter-caste matrimonial relationship. A Brahmo should give up orthodox religious forms. A spirit of reform pervaded the members of the Sangat Sabha. This led to a split of the Samaj. The older section of the Samaj was averse to any innovation. The younger section insisted upon the removal of thread-bearing Brahmos from the post of assistant ministers of the Brahmo Church. But this was not conceded to by the other section headed by Devendranath Tagore. The Samaj was divided into two camps in the beginning of 1865, but formal schism took place in 1866. The Calcutta Brahmo Samaj, the parent body, came to be known as the Adi Brahmo Samaj. The dissidents founded a new Samaj called the Brahmo Samaj of India.

It should be mentioned here that Devendranath Tagore was not opposed to social reform. He was opposed to caste-distinction and thought that wearing Brahmanical thread was
not in consonance with Brahmoism. He expressed the view that he alone is a true Brahma who in his domestic ceremonies clings to his faith. He was not opposed to inter-caste marriage. He, however, thought as there is no broad agreement between the Brahmos over these issues the question of social reform should be left to individual inclination and taste. He did not also regard social reform as indispensable for Brahmoism as a religion.

The two sections of the Brahmos differed also on the relation of Brahmoism to Hinduism. Devendranath and his followers sought to keep Brahmoism in line with Hinduism. But the youngers insisted that Brahmoism is catholic and universal. They put Hinduism on the same footing with other great religions as to its relation with Brahmoism.

In a lecture on great man Keshub Chunder Sen expressed the view that God manifests Himself in history through great men who are sent for the benifit of mankind. This view appeared to the Adi Brahmo Samaj as a step towards the revival of the Doctrine of Incarnation. To some it appeared as a mode of self-seeking.

After the schism, the Brahmo Samaj of India published a book with compilation from different religious scriptures of the world including Hindu scriptures, the Quran, the Bible and the Zend-Avesta. This compilation was named Sloka Sangraha the title page of which declared the following motto :
"This wide universe is the holy temple of God. The heart is the shrine of pilgrimage. Truth is the scripture everlasting. Faith is the root of religion. Love is its supreme realization. Asceticism (vairagya) is the death of the self. So declared the Brahmos".

At the consecration of the temple of the new Samaj, Keshub described God as perfect, infinite, omniscient, omnipresent and creator of the universe. Worship of image or any created object was forbidden. He also declared that no hymn was to be chanted or prayer offered in the name of any one except God.

Keshub Chunder Sen and his followers leaned more and more to Christ and Christianity. Keshub spoke of the superhuman greatness of Christ. Their attitude towards Christ was half-mystical and half-historical. Under the influence of Christian ideas the Brahmo Samaj of India developed two characteristics - a sense of sin and a spirit of repentance. Prayer for remission of sin became customary with them. They sought to save the new sinners by preaching the new gospel. Soon the influence of the bhakti-cult also pervaded the Samaj. Bhakti or devotion is a way of realising God. A devotee can enter into communion with God through devotion or love. Hinduism recognises it as one of the ways of attaining salvation. The bhakti-cult is, however, specially connected with Vaishnavism. After the schism the members of the new Samaj became spiritually dry and restless. Their
heart found the much needed rest in a bhakti-movement. Keshub took up Sankirtan and singing-procession which are specially connected with the name of Chaitanya as effective means of preaching Brohmoism. It is a characteristic mode of expression of the attitude of bhakti. The spirit of universal theism, as Sivanath Sastri remarks, turned the Vaisnava sankirtan into Brahmo sankirtan.

The Adi Brahmo Samaj condemned sankirtan and singing-procession as marks of degradation of Brahmoism. The members of the Brahmo Samaj of India were also divided over it.

Two streams of religious influences, Christian and Vaisnava, mingled in the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj of India. A passion for devotion seized many men and women of the Samaj. The sense of sin developed under Christian influence led to the idea of intercession. Keshub was looked upon by many as the intercessor. Devotion for God led to devotion for the intercessor and fellow-believers. Some followers of Keshub began to fall in each other's feet, specially at the feet of Keshub Chunder Sen. Prayers were offered to Keshub for intercession on behalf of the sinners. The immediate followers of Keshub Chunder Sen made him an object of great reverence. The superhuman honour paid to him almost verged on man-worship.

Rajnarain Bose of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and many of the members of the Brahmo Samaj of India itself protested against
it. Difference of opinion also arose on the question of the constitutional control of the church. Keshub and a number of his followers were averse to constitutional control. The constitutionalists organised themselves into a group called Samadarshi in 1874 and started a journal of the same name. The difference widened over Keshub's giving in marriage his minor daughter to the minor prince of Cooch Behar. Another grievance of the Samadarshi group was that the marriage ceremony was not performed strictly according to Brahmo rites.

There was difference of opinion on doctrinal points also. Many of the members of the Brahmo Samaj of India did not share Keshub's views on great man, bhakti, asceticism, inspiration and special dispensation.

The doctrine of inspiration means that besides the general revelation of God through intuition he reveals His will or command on special occasions in a special manner. Keshub claimed that in his important activities he had been guided by such commands. The doctrine of special dispensation teaches that the chief systems of historical religions are divine dispensations. They are revealed through chosen man who should be revered by the Brahmos.

The opponents of Keshub Chunder Sen seceded from the Brahmo Samaj of India and founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. The new Samaj was blessed by Devendranath Tagore and Rajnarain Bose of the Adi Brahmo Samaj among others.
Keshub's followers were spiritually restless and wanted something new. So, in 1880, Keshub declared that a New Dispensation had come down on the Brahma Samaj. A series of special services called 'pilgrimages' to saints was one of the new things introduced. It was meant to make the congregation feel communion with great men and to imbibe the special lessons they taught. Such pilgrimages were made to Moses, Socrates, Buddha, Rishis, Christ, Muhammad and Chaitanya. Some new rites and ceremonies were also introduced. They were taken from Hinduism and Christianity. A few may be mentioned. In 1880, a vernal festival was performed in imitation of the Hindu festival of doljatra. In 1881, 'arati' was performed around the flag of the New Dispensation in the manner in which the 'arati' is performed by the Hindus around the images of their deities. In imitation of the ancient Hindu practice, the New Dispensationists performed a Hom ceremony. An address was made to Agni (Fire) and ghee was poured on it. This was believed to be symbolic of the burning of propensities, lust, evil desires and sins. They also introduced a new sacramental ceremony and a baptismal ceremony believed to be taken from Christianity and verses from Luke were used to be read in such ceremonies. Keshub also developed a conception of God as Mother. This he was believed to have had borrowed from Ramakrishna, a contemporary Hindu saint and religious teacher.

* Great Hindu saints of ancient India were called Rishis.
Keshub Chunder Sen's religious practices show a clear influence of Hindu idolatry. The performance of arati around the flag of the New Dispensation clearly indicates that the flag was elevated almost to the status of a deity. In fact, Keshub entered upon a spiritual interpretation of idolatry by calling an idol a Divine attribute materialised. The rite of arati and the Vernal festival were borrowed from Hinduism. His prayer to "Mother Ganges", the Moon, Agni and Varuna also shows an influence of Hindu polytheism. These were not described as deities, but the language of the addresses made to them shows that these were revered almost as deities. The prayer to the Ganges, for example, was opened with the following words:

"Mother Ganges, we will not forget thee. We are all indebted to thee. Mother Ganges, thou speakest not, but speakest to the devotee". 87

Devotion is not a peculiar feature of Hinduism. A devotional element is present almost in every mode of religious life. But the modes of the manifestation of the devotion of Keshub and his followers are definitely Hindu modes. The New Dispensationists did not regard asceticism as an end of religious life, but they practised it for the sake of detachment. However, it shows the influence of popular Hinduism as also the ideal of a section of the Hindus, of the mortification of
the body for the salvation of the soul. Sacramental ceremony and baptismal rite were adopted from Christianity. It was meant to give his religion a catholic form.

The New Dispensation was meant to unite the followers of all previous dispensations. God sent prophets and dispensations at different times, but the followers of the prophets and dispensations have quarrelled. The New Dispensation aimed at uniting all these dispensations by harmonising all prophets and scriptures in a synthesis. The flag of the New Dispensation engraved on the front page of Keshub's journal of the same name embodied in itself the Hindu trident, the Christian cross and the Muhammadan crescent. The first issue of the above journal laid down the principle of One God, one Scripture and one Church.

Keshub Chunder Sen and his followers considered the New Dispensation a universal religion. But the universality of the New Dispensation differs from the universality of the religion of Rammohun Roy. As has been mentioned, the essence of Rammohun's universal religion consists in (a) a simple belief in One God as the creator and governor of the universe and (b) a moral code calculated to bring peace, happiness and salvation to mankind. These are also the fundamental and common elements of other great religions. The unifying mission of the New Dispensation, however, consists not merely in discovering the fundamental unity of all religions, but in observing and assimilating the spiritual teachings and external manifestations of all
religions. Kesumb compared his religion to the sting of a gar-
land of pearls. There are many religions and the New Dispensa-
sation is the sting underneath them. It was meant to be the com-
mon faith of mankind. His aim was to lay the foundation of a Uni-
versal Church. But, as mentioned, it was not on the basis of
the essential unity of all religions, as P.C. Mozoomdar thinks
it to be.

The New Dispensation is really an eclectic religion.
An eclectic religion which consists of the fundamentals as well
as historical traditions and external manifestations of all re-
ligions cannot be universal. Kesumb wanted to bring all nations
into one brotherhood without interfering with their respective
religious systems. This means that the Church of the New Dis-
pensation was meant to be a super-church over all other churches
which would be allowed to function in their own ways.

It appears that all men may come into one brotherhood
without abandoning their respective religions. It also appears
that the church of the New Dispensation seemed to have been
conceived as a super-church over the existing churches. It fol-
loows that the religion of the New Dispensation is an all embra-
cing religion within which there may be other sectarian reli-
gions. The New Dispensation is not sectarian, but an all-com-
prehensive church.

In the sphere of social reform also Kesumb Chunder Sen
retreated a step from what he stood for in the period of the
above mentioned Sangat Sabha. He was not against inter-caste marriage, but he preferred caste-marriage. He disliked the seclusion of women, but believed in their retirement. He established institutions for the education of women, but was against women being taught as men. He also did not like the higher education of women. The Sadharan Brahmos, however, stuck to the principle of reform which the Sangat Sabha stood for.

Keshub Chunder Sen had a central position in the church of the New Dispensation as its founder. In the Brahmoism of Rammohun Roy the founder had no special position. He was its founder and leader. Rammohun reached his religious views by reason and reflection. Any one of his followers could reach the same conclusions by similar reason and reflection. There was nothing in his religion which could make it centre round him. Devendranath Tagore based his religion on intuition. Religious truths were revealed to his intuition. But he did not claim that truths were revealed to his intuition alone. He was recognised as the leader of the Brahmo movement, but not as a God-appointed teacher. Every religion has a tendency to make its founder a messenger or Incarnation of God. This characteristic of religion was not present in Brahmoism. But in the New Dispensation Keshub was considered a God-appointed minister in the sense that it is through him that God chose to reveal the new religion. In this sense he was considered a messenger of God. The New Dispensation is a revealed religion and the revelation was made through its founder.
Keshub did not consider himself a Moses or a Chaitanya. He also considered himself inferior to Christ. But he did not consider himself an ordinary man. He considered himself a "singular man". He meant to say in his lecture on 'Am I an Inspired Prophet?' that God has made him a chosen vessel for revealing His will. Keshub enjoined his disciples to accept everything he taught as directly coming from God.

Naturally, Keshub did not favour the idea of a constitutional Church-government. A God-appointed minister is not expected to be guided by the views of his followers. He is the only authority in the affairs of the Church. Keshub's paper the Sunday Mirror of November, 1881 said: Religious leaders are expected to speak with authority—an authority received from heaven. Our opinion is that church should be eminently aristocratic and not democratic.

The Sadharan Brahma Samaj followed the catholic religion of the old Brahma Samaj of India. It may also be said that it followed the religion of Ram Mohun Roy in its broad outline. It believed in one Personal God as the creator and preserver of the universe. It did not approve the worship of image or any created object. It did not consider any book or person as infallible. It also assimilated the development of Brahmoism under the leadership of Devendranath Tagore. It believed in the doctrines of intuition and revelation which had been made the cardinal principles of Brahmoism during the time of Devendranath. Revelation, however, should not be taken in its
ordinary sense or in the sense in which Keshub and his dis-
ciples accepted it. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj believed that
spiritual truths are revealed to the intuition of individual
devotees. It also considered communion with God as an impor-
tant mode of spiritual culture. Living communion with God is
an important principle of Brahmoism since the time of Deven-
dranath Tagore. The Sadharan Brahmos did not believe in the
doctrine of Incarnation. In this they followed their predece-
sors since the time of Rammohun Roy. Sivanath Sastri, a leader
of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, had made the following remarks on
the doctrine of incarnation: "The doctrine of the perfect pu-
tting on imperfection, the Infinite putting on Himself the robe
of finitude, the formless Reality putting upon Himself the li-
mitations of flesh and blood, is a doctrine inconceivable, un-
tenable and unnecessary. Nay, such a doctrine is mischievous
inasmuch as it draws away men's minds from the essence of spi-
rituality, which is loving communion with the Supreme, into what
is called faith, i.e. belief and implicit trust in the narration
of a historical event." Loving communion with the Supreme is
the essence of spirituality. Man craves for peace and spiritual
strength. These are attained by a loving communion with God, by
a feeling of Divine presence around himself and his soul. A
direct intercourse with the Supreme Being is necessary. An In-
carnation has nothing to do with it. Man's spiritual craving
cannot be satisfied by hearing that God incarnated as man at
a particular time. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj did not believe
In intercession or mediation between man and God. In this they followed the lead of Rammohun Roy and Devendranath Tagore. The Sadharan Brahmos maintained that the voice of conscience and the individual spiritual light can inspire a man in his religious life. A man can establish a direct relationship with God by his contemplation and receive spiritual and moral revelations from Him. The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj looked upon society as a Divine ordination. It attached considerable importance to the duty of creating good social life.

An important contribution of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj to the development of the Brahmo conceptions of religion and church is the idea of constitutional church-government. In this it followed what was implicit in Rammohun’s conception of church. A revealed religion preached by an Incarnation, prophet or heaven-appointed teacher tends to make the church aristocratic. But Rammohun’s religion being rational had nothing in it which could make its church aristocratic. It should be mentioned in this connection that as the founder of Brahmoism Rammohun had done nothing to establish his singular authority in the affairs of the church. He did not make himself the minister of the church. The secretary of the Samaj was also a different man. The management of the church was vested in a board of trustees consisting of some of its active members. Devendranath made himself the minister of the church and exerted authority in appointing minister and assistant ministers. But this he did as the trustee
and as a leader who commanded the confidence of his followers. The renunciation of the doctrine of the infallibility of the Vedas after discussion among the members of the Samaj during the time of Devendranath Tagore indicates the presence of democracy. In opposition to Keshub Chunder Sen, the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj followed and developed that tendency.