

free, and powerful. He is distinct from His works. He is one being,—the universe is something else, and something different. All that and more is involved in the first verse of our Bible. But the Hindus had not that much of a true Bible. They did not know that fundamental truth. And so when they began to think about the world and its origin, their thinking took a wrong start at the beginning and they never reached the grand truth that God created the world. This is the conclusion they came to as the result of their attempts to find out God : God is Himself the world and the world is God. Brahm, the Supreme Spirit, is the only true existence, and nothing else whatever exists, or has existed, or ever will exist. It is true that some of the six subtle systems of philosophy acknowledge God as a former, an arranger, of the universe, not as a creator, and some of them deny his existence altogether, but the Vedantic philosophy, which is the most popular and the most prevalent, and which underlies and colours the religious thinking of the great mass of the Hindus, identifies the framer of the universe, the universe itself, and human souls with God, who is called Brahm. This being, known as Brahm, is regarded as the only thing that has any real being. Everything else that appears to exist is only ignorantly imagined to exist. There are, say these Hindu philosophers, three kinds of existence—*true*, *practical*, and *apparent*. Of Brahm, alone, can it be said that he truly exists. He is pure existence, truth and joy, but without any qualities or attributes.

One of their sayings is “Brahm is true, the world is false, the soul is Brahm and nothing other.” He is void of all qualities, of all acts. He neither knows nor can be known. It cannot be said of him either that he is weak or that he is almighty, either that he knows nothing or that he knows all things. He has no beginning and no end, he is unchangeable and indivisible. That is Brahm, that, too, is the soul. Only because our intellects are overspread by ignorance or illusion we do not know it. By reason of this overspreading ignorance we imagine that we are independent personal beings, and we imagine that the world about us is real also. But this is a mistake. The world has only a *practical* or *apparent* existence. The very things that we think most