



TWO OF THE TALKERS.

Frontispiece.





# AT GRIPS

TALKS WITH THE TELUGUS  
OF SOUTH INDIA

BY

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“The world sits at the feet of Christ,  
Unknowing, blind, and unconsol’d;  
It yet shall touch His garment’s fold,  
And feel the heavenly Alchemist  
Transform its very dust to gold.”  
WHITTIER.

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## PREFACE

MANY Indian missionary books have been written ; but very few, the writer of this volume thinks, which tell of the actual conversations of the missionary with the people to whom he goes—the *talks* which, after all, form his main work from hour to hour, in the crowded street or bazaar, in the school or college, in the country village or house veranda.

One criticism will be at once and easily made—the book is so “scrappy.” But even so it represents the essentially scrappy character of the missionary’s usual routine of work. He is a “messenger,” at the beck and call of every one. He knows little of the regular times and plans of the work of an English pastor. His day is a series of “scraps” and interruptions, and his life a series of such days. The reader will be helped to realize this fact by the method of this book.

Readers will perhaps criticize the arguments employed. But it should be remembered that they are, in all cases, such as only came to mind in the moment of conversation. The writer does not feel at liberty to amend them now, much as he would like to do so. It is so easy to be wise after the event !

It is desired and hoped that the record of these “talks” will prove not *only* interesting to general readers, but also useful to those who may be going to India to engage in missionary work.



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# AT GRIPS

## CHAPTER I

### THE TELUGUS AND THEIR COUNTRY

THE Telugu country is that part of the Madras Presidency of Southern India which stretches some 400 miles northwards from Madras, and inland to distances varying from 100 to 200 miles. It includes the districts of North Arcot, Cuddapah, Nellur, and Vizagapatam.

Parts of the country are hilly. The Eastern Ghauts run along the coast, and towards the north, approaching the sea, they assume a bold appearance, here and there forming rocky headlands. Inland also there are irregular chains of hills, varying in height from 1,000 to 3,000 feet. For the most part these are bare and rugged, though there are not wanting stretches of dense jungle and forest.

At the beginning of the hot season every year, in spite of Government precautions, the bush on the hills is fired by the people for the sake of the young grass which afterwards springs up in abundance. The spectacle presented at night by the burning hills is very striking, and in grim keeping with the fierce heat of the country by day.

Vast tracts are flat, and where well watered very productive. One or two large rivers intersect the land, and the streams are numerous; but, of course, these are dry in the hot season. Drought and famine are frequent visitors, but with the extension of the rail and canal systems the country suffers less and less from these calamities.

The scenery is varied. By the seaside there are long stretches of sandy plain, here and there broken by a rising hill. The villages are collections of mud huts thatched with palmyra leaves or grass, and inhabited by farmers and fishermen. Farther inland the country presents a more cultivated appearance. As far as the eye can reach the light green paddy glistens in the water of the rice-fields. Near the villages are groves of mango or acacia trees, and tall tamarinds and spreading banyan trees form a pleasant shade for travellers. Palms—palmyra, coconut, and date—are to be found everywhere, very few of which, however, look at all beautiful; they are so cut about by the people for their leaves or sap that they usually appear pictures of deformity and distress.

A very general and striking impression made upon one fresh to these eastern scenes is the brightness, the vivid colouring, of everything. The brilliant blue of the sky above, the dazzling white or red of the roads, fringed with the green of the trees, the yellows and blues of the houses, the coloured cloths worn by the people, enhanced by the blacks and browns of their skins, make up a picture which fascinates when first seen, and once seen never fades from the memory.

The language of the people (in which most of the following "talks" were held) is called Telugu or Tenugu. It is Dravidian in source and character, and is therefore allied to the Tamil, Kanarese, and other languages of South India. It draws largely upon Sanskrit for religious, philosophic, and technical words. It is somewhat softer in sound than the other South Indian languages, but it is too nasal to be very pleasant to the ear. It is by no means easy to acquire. Most words will have in them some sound different from English. Grammars and dictionaries are now, of course, to be had, and with practice a useful knowledge of the language may be obtained. Very little modern Telugu literature exists, but books of old Telugu poetry, mostly of a Sanskrit form, abound.

The Telugu people are for the most part agriculturists, and hence live scattered about in small villages. The towns are comparatively few. The rural life in prosperous seasons is simple and pleasant. Contentment is the prevailing note.

There is poverty, but the wants are few, and the sunshine is rarely absent. Indolence and careless, dirty habits prevail. Where Brahmans and others of the higher castes live, their influence is strikingly manifest in the intensified apathy and practical atheism of the common people. Otherwise they are an open-hearted folk, kind and friendly.

The caste system, about which so much has been written, but which can only be understood by those who have the opportunity of living amongst the people, is the great hindrance to all true progress. It is, both a social and religious system, heavy penalties being attached to any breaches of its rules. It is founded upon two deep-seated evils of the human heart—pride and the lust of power. Each division of the people prides itself upon its superiority to those beneath it, and it jealously watches against any lapse of its members from its control. It is a social slavery, invented and sustained by a crafty priesthood. Happily the system is beginning to feel the disintegrating effects of the spread of knowledge. Its innumerable and minute rules cannot now be properly obeyed. Some have been altogether abandoned and forgotten, others are only hypocritically obeyed. With the awakening of a new life in the people this evil thing, in company with many others, will be cast out.

In the towns dwell the merchants, shopkeepers, and others of the more well-to-do classes. The shops are just the open verandas of the houses along the streets. Here are displayed the various articles commonly used by the people. Once a week the great bazaar or market day occurs, when the town will be crowded, the village folks coming in for their supplies. The town also is usually the place where the larger temples stand, though here and there many large and important temples are to be found in almost solitary places. Once or twice in the year these will attract thousands to their special festivals.

The moral and religious characteristics of the Telugus will be sufficiently revealed in the "talks" which follow. In brief, the people are pantheists, the pantheism issuing in universal polytheism. •The idea that "God is everything and everything is God" practically takes away the sense of responsibility ;

hence they are without any strong guiding principle, and vice and corruption prevail. The whole universe being, in their conception, a manifestation of the Divine Being, any object may be worshipped. Everything a little strange and uncommon—fetishes and demons, trees and stones, men and gods—all should be propitiated by offerings and worship. Hinduism is often compared by Hindus themselves to one of their own large tanks or lakes, in which there may be found pure water for the thirsty and lovely flowers for those who admire beauty, but in which also there must be weeds and mud and strange forms of life for those who have pleasure in such things.

Those who have never seen idol-worship as it is actually practised may fall into the mistake of thinking that after all it is not so evil a thing as it has been represented. Those, however, who have lived with idolaters know well that it is still "the abominable thing" which an all-holy, all-wise God must hate. There are, of course, sincere idolaters who dimly grope after God, "if haply they may find Him," but in the vast majority of cases it is not so. The sin of the matter lies in this, that the people so often *know* better. They will acknowledge the one true and living God, but refuse to worship Him, deliberately choosing the idols of their own making. There are two main reasons for this choice. The first is the fear that is entertained of the forces of nature around, which are conceived of as demons or gods needing propitiation ; and second, almost all idol-worship is connected with the gratification of the sensual appetites. It means drunkenness for the lower classes, greed and lust with others, and the love of excitement and foolish tamasha with all. When worship at ~~the temples~~ is carried on amidst carved figures of indescribable obscenity, and assisted by women of the dancing caste, who, devoted to the gods, are also devoted to a life of shame, it is no wonder that religion and morals stand divorced from one another, and that vice is common and unrebuked. It has been said that evils of a similar character exist in Christendom. This may be true, but they are there most strongly and persistently reprobated, whilst in India they are scarcely condemned at all, and even receive a semi-religious sanction.

## CHAPTER II

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE TALKS—HINDU FESTIVALS

INDIA, as is well known, is the very home of idolatry. Its pantheistic faith naturally expresses itself in the worship of many deities. Everywhere are temples, many large and imposing ; thousands of them mere huts, or a few stones roughly thrown together. Pilgrimages are constantly made to the many sacred places which the "gods" are supposed specially to favour, and festivals are held in every town and village. To see the worship of the people in full blast one should attend one of these festivals.

A very popular one is that called the Dasara. It lasts for ten days, and celebrates the expedition of Rama (said to be one of the incarnations of Vishnu) to Ceylon, in order to rescue his wife, Sita, from the demon Ravana. For some time previously great preparations are made ; every one talks of it, and sweets, fruits, and grain are purchased to be used as offerings to the god and for feasting in the houses. Gigantic images, 20 or 30 feet high, made of bamboo, linen, and tinsel, are erected upon wheels and taken to an open space outside the town ; and there a dramatic performance is given, representing the whole story. The people flock to the place in thousands, and the scene becomes very like an immense fair. Round the images a cordon of bullock-carts belonging to the travellers from a distance is formed ; and upon these and all around them sit and stand dense crowds, watching the movements of the hideous figures. They shout in applause at every action of the god Rama and his wife, while they show their dislike of the demon Ravana by pelting him with anything that comes to hand—



old limes, turf, etc. Just within the ring of carts, seated upon elephants, are some of the English ladies and gentlemen of the station, who also join in the pelting of the images. Processions now and then arrive upon the scene, bringing with them the idols from neighbouring temples, or carrying children, prettily dressed in silk and jewelry, representing Rama and Sita. The grandest of these processions is that composed of soldiers belonging to the Rajah of the place. These men are armed with all sorts of old guns, with bayonets fixed, and dressed in old red coats and black trousers. They are accompanied by a band of fifes and tom-toms, etc. After the soldiers comes a small car, carried on men's shoulders, in which are seated three children representing Rama's wife and her companions. After this again come more children riding in a pretentious car on wheels. They are dressed in green and gold, with spangles, and paint on their faces, crowns of paper on their heads, and bows and arrows in their hands. The children and their cars pass under some of the awnings erected for the occasion; and there the story of Rama and Sita is recited to admiring crowds. Posted at convenient points are guns and small cannon, which are fired at intervals. Riders career about, displaying their skill with restive horses; others ride about on camels. The people generally are gaily dressed and in good humour, passing in groups of families or friends from one scene of amusement to another. As in an English fair, all kinds of attractions are provided. Here are a number of people eagerly engaged in gambling with a whirling wheel; here are others as intent upon a game of cards; some gather around a holy fakir, who lies flat upon his back with his leg twisted under his head, in which position he has kept it so long that it has become completely paralysed and withered; others are listening to singers of the verses in honour of Rama, accompanied by the music of pipes and drums; while others again surround the idols brought from the temples, and present them with offerings. The crafty priests and Brahmans are here in goodly numbers, and gather a rich harvest from the hopes and fears of the ignorant. Shopkeepers too, and sellers of fruit, sweets, and toys, commend their wares to the passers-by

with plenty of noisy zeal. At sunset there is usually a display of fireworks ; and at the end of the festival the image of the demon is burnt amidst the firing of guns, the crackle of squibs, and the flying of fire-balloons, the people retiring to their houses or to rest in their bullock-carts, at a late hour of the night.

Our usual plan on such occasions is to pitch a tent in a convenient spot on the ground, where we display a good stock of books and tracts and welcome any to converse with us. Or, taking our stand in a spot a little retired, we try by singing, preaching, and even by public praying, to draw the attention of the ever-shifting throng to the better things of the gospel of Christ. It is often hard work. Objections of all kinds have to be met ; discussion is often loud and long. There seems but little response to the words spoken. Yet who can tell ? We sow the good seed "beside all waters," a sowing morning and evening, and "we know not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they shall both alike be good."

In the sepoys' lines preparations are being made for the soldiers' celebration of the Dasara. A hut has been built so as to enlarge the little temple of the local goddess, whose image has been placed behind a gorgeously decorated car. On the walls are fixed images of Vishnu ; carpets are spread on the floor, and chairs and benches arranged for the audience. Outside, preparations are being made for fireworks.

Inquiring the reason for all this, we are told that the English officers and their ladies are coming to witness the performance of the drama, with the usual singing and nautch dancing.

"What do you know of Rama and Sita ?" we ask ; "and why are they thus honoured ?"

"Why ask us ?" they reply. "Our officers are our superiors, and they approve. You gentlemen know better than we !"

This leads us to pay a visit to the officer commanding the regiment. He and his wife receive us kindly, and courteously listen to our statement. It is evident that conscience is somewhat ill at ease with them. But they disclaim all responsibility, referring the whole thing to usage and worldly expediency.

"They did not much like going : it was a bore : but just as the native soldiers came and complimented us at Christmas-time, so they returned the compliment by going to their festival ; even if they did not go, it would make no difference, the worship would go on precisely the same : they gave no money to it, they only went to see ; they thought that if the poor men were sincere and lived up to the light they possessed, they would be all right."

We reply that it was well known that the poor men were *not* living up to the light they had ; and that the little light they possessed was *obscured* by just such actions of Englishmen as these of which we now felt obliged to complain.

"The Hindus," we say, "in their best moments, acknowledge the One living God, and think of their idols as foolish imaginings ; but, driven by custom and by a dominant priesthood, they continue to observe these idolatrous practices ; and they are encouraged and supported in them by European patronage, and the missionary's mouth is shut in consequence."

"Well, but we do not join with the Hindus religiously, we only go to their tamasha to show our religious neutrality ; and this is in accordance with the orders of Government."

"Surely," we answer, "religious neutrality does not demand the outraging of our own cherished convictions and the practical declaration that any and every form of religion is right and good, or that we believe the truth to be as little known to ourselves as to the worshippers of idols !"

We were talking to English Telugus, had they but known it !

Another important festival, lasting for more than a week, is in honour of the god Narasimham.

Our preparation for the work of the week is our usual Sunday morning school and worship, followed by the Communion service. Strange it seems to be observing this beautiful rite surrounded by the noisy heathen festival—tom-toms beating, gongs sounding, the great temple walls and towers frowning down upon our little meeting-place ! Just so, probably, the early disciples often met in small companies in the heathen cities of Greece and Rome.

In the evening the streets are thronged with people, many



IN A TELUGU VILLAGE.

IMPERIAL  
11.3 1 2



of whom are busy securing sleeping-quarters for the night, under pandals and porches, on paials (verandas) and house-tops, and any raised places at the sides of the streets. The shops and booths are ablaze with lamps and torches. The Dasaris, or religious mendicants, fantastically dressed and carrying peacocks' feathers and iron lamp-stands blazing with fire, fill the air with the discordant noise of their gongs. The town-criers beat their drums, and yell out notices of various entertainments—magic, marionettes, dramas, etc. Here and there a cripple, either real or pretended, makes piteous appeals for alms. In one place a child is to be seen walking on high clogs and carrying a stinking fire on his head. In another, eight or ten men are engaged in a wild sort of dance, shouting and gesticulating. Every now and then an attendant spreads a long strip of cloth on the ground, and places upon it some greasy lumps of plantain and coconut, when down they all go upon their knees and eat up the stuff with their mouths, like so many dogs. One very holy man, dressed in a dirty sort of nightshirt, and with his hair rolled up in a matted mass over his forehead, walks slowly up the street, attended by an immense crowd, some of whom fall before him and embrace his feet. He keeps his fingers in his ears, refusing either to listen or to speak to any one. I shake him by the arm and ask him what he is doing; he takes his fingers from his ears for a moment, smiles an inane smile, and then goes on as before. His devotion is regarded as something miraculous. One favourite device among the begging class is to lay a child full length in the road and bury its face in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~road~~—a spectacle of misery which does not fail to draw contributions of coin and grain from the pitying crowd.

One evening we give a lantern exhibition in our schoolroom. The attendance is not large, for the rumour spreads that our pictures will infallibly transform the people into Christians! About fifty, however, come, and are greatly impressed. They would like us to go on all night with our exhibition and discourse. Only one man wants to know how the worship of Narasimham can be wrong, seeing that *all the world* engages in it!

On the great day of the festival the idol is placed upon the huge unwieldy car, and very slowly, inch by inch, it is dragged in triumph round the streets. We mount a housetop near the starting-place. The scene passes description. Far as the eye can reach down the streets crowds of people are to be seen all trying to be near, or to see, the car. The car itself is most gorgeously decorated with coloured cloths and flags and surmounted by a red umbrella. At the four corners of it are hideous images, supposed to frighten away evil spirits. By the side of these are fastened young plantain trees. Two figures, representing horses, and a third as driver, are attached high up in front; and above, ugly little images representing the god's attendants. The pujaris, or priests, are here, bedaubing the car (on which are carved various figures, grotesque and indecent) with saffron and turmeric. In front, on the ground, so placed that the wheels of the car will run over it, is a great mess of rice and fruit and ghee, on the top of which a pan of fire is burning. This is the god's refreshment for his journey. The people swarm round the car, throwing up at it and into it plantains and rice, peppercorns and flowers. Hundreds bring coconuts, which are hauled up the side in bags by the priests, broken in two, and half retained, the other half given back to the offerers. Soon after nine o'clock in the morning, the idols brought from the temple being placed in position, and some of the principal inhabitants of the town, with their wives, having ascended the lofty stone platform by the side of the car, and thence stepped on to the car itself, all is ready for the start. A huge rope is placed round it, and trailed out in double line in front. Scores of people lay hold and haul with all their might, but it will not stir. Then a number of men behind place large beams beneath the wheels as levers, on which they stand and jump, shouting with excitement, the police and others, meanwhile, thumping and whacking them by way of encouragement. At last the unwieldy thing moves slowly forward; and then, what a roar from the people! Shouting, clapping of hands, flinging of flowers, bells ringing, gongs sounding, horns blowing, until one is almost deafened by the noise. The car is steered by wedges of wood thrust under the wheels in front;



AT THE FESTIVAL.

To face p 20





but soon after starting it runs foul of a stone doorstep, which has to be smashed with hammers. And so it passes ponderously up the street, followed by the cheering crowds, many of whom carefully pick up any grains of pepper, etc., which may fall from it, to keep as remedies against disease during the year. People on the housetop beside us keep on clapping their hands and doing reverence to the idol; women lift their children, and teach them how to do it too.

Altogether it is a saddening sight—a revelation of the widespread influence of idolatry in the land.

The day following the car-drawing is the principal day for the shop and booth-keepers. The people now make their purchases previous to returning to their villages. The beggars become more impudent and importunate. The Dasaris place their iron lamp-stands in the middle of the streets, and the people throw their coppers into the dirty oil. Other mendicants lie about on the ground almost naked, their long hair trailing in the dust, each one holding a tray containing a brass image and flowers on his breast, and howling for gifts. Others go from stall to stall, abusing the shopkeepers till, just to get rid of them, something is given. Two horrible-looking wretches, with ropes tied to them like wild beasts that had broken loose, their beards matted and hair dishevelled, howl, and beat their arms, legs, and stomachs; and every now and then, sharpening little knives on the stones, cut gashes in their tongues, or puncture their bodies till the blood runs. Another man lies upon a heap of thorny bushes, and both he and the women whose children are lying with their faces covered with the sacred mud of the place, scream more shrilly than ever their demands for "Money! money!"

The whole scene is terribly sordid—a pitiable spectacle for the glorious sunshine of God's heaven to rest upon!

We preach amongst these moving masses of people "the unsearchable riches of Christ," telling of the rest He gives to the weary and heavy-laden, and are listened to by attentive groups. In the evening we again show the lantern pictures, this time *outside* our schoolroom, and have a splendid gathering, deeply interested in descriptions, first of scenes in English

towns, and afterwards of incidents in the life of Jesus Christ. Many of these simple villagers will go back to their homes with something better to think of than the bustle and excitement, the folly and sin of the idolatrous fair.

The annual festival is kept in remembrance throughout the year by a small daily procession, which passes through the main streets of the town. Tawdry images are placed upon a rough frame and carried by bearers from house to house. The householder comes out, bringing a small tray of offerings of coconut, sweetmeats, and money. These are received by the pujari, or priest, who walks in front of the idols. The offerer also brings his house-lamp, which the pujari lights at the sacred fire and waves for a moment before the god, while the gongs and horns are sounded. The priest then places a brass representation of the foot of the god upon the head of the worshipper, who humbly, with clasped hands, receives it; and immediately, at a haughty sign from the pujari, the procession moves on. "An absent god makes a forgetful people," he says, and so care is taken that the god shall be in daily evidence.

In the villages, festivals are held in honour of the Amma Varu, or village goddess, the representative of what the people regard as the forces of evil in the universe, a cult of fear.

The whole place will be in wild commotion. The noise of the shouting and tom-toming is deafening. The men race round the village, carrying sticks or implements of work which they knock together, and with which they belabour one another in exciting fashion. Two or three who act as leaders are smeared all over with charcoal and colouring-stuff, and look more like demons than men; and they hang about one another in a mad style which threatens strangulation every moment. In the centre of the village is a huge car on wheels, on which is erected a wooden cross-tree, with the larger arm projecting high into the air, a representation, evidently, of the old hook-swing. On the top of this, dressed in fantastic garments, a man is being swung round and round. The whole machine is dragged backwards and forwards through the main street; and as it passes, the people pelt the swinging man with bits of

unripe fruit, and if they succeed in hitting him they consider it a good omen.

"Who is that you are pelting, up there?" we ask.

"God, of course!" is the instant reply.

The dragging of the ponderous machine in the narrow street amidst such crowds of people is very dangerous, and we are told that accidents are not uncommon. Another machine of similar construction is also being dragged about, but this is not so popular. Later on in the evening the figure of an elephant is made, and it is supposed that the goddess comes into it, and offerings are made, and fowls and goats killed in sacrifice to it. These offerings are laid down in the middle of one of the streets and guarded by a wild-looking man, whose almost naked body is daubed over with ashes.

A number of Brahmans, seated in the verandas of their houses watching the tamasha, acknowledge that it is all a foolish performance, but disclaim all responsibility. "The people know no better, and it is good for them. Moreover, the whole of the community is benefited, because the wrath of the 'Mother' is thus assuaged."

The village Amma (mother or goddess) is supposed to manifest her presence in smallpox or cholera, or in disease amongst the cattle. Her anger is greatly dreaded; and hence offerings of fowls, goats, and buffaloes are constantly being presented to her. This bloody worship, associated with all that is low and degrading amongst the people, is evidently the aboriginal worship of the country, and is almost entirely in the hands of the non-caste people—the Pariahs.

Walking into a village, it is easy to see that something special is going on. In the main street are two or three small structures, the principal one made with cloths of various colours, like a little tent. The others are merely big baskets turned upside down. On our approach the villagers bid one of their number not to be afraid, but to uncover the little tent and show the gentleman what is inside. Within are little hillocks of earth, raised in imitation of ant-hills, where usually snakes live, and these are covered with saffron and turmeric powder. Beside them is thrown the skull of the buffalo which had been killed

in sacrifice ; the body lies in the street outside. There are also little lights burning in a coconut shell and some small wooden images. A grand feast is in preparation, and the people are greatly excited.

We pass to the little temple by the roadside, just outside the village. In front of it are placed two sticks, notched at the top like arrows and coloured red and yellow. These sticks are embedded in a bank of clay, and are consecrated to be the representatives of the Amma for the time being. As we approach a man is holding up a fowl, with his hands clasped in a sort of prayer to the goddess ; after which its head is cut off and water poured on it by some women, who keep on saying to it, "*Inkoka paluku !*" ("Another word ! another word !") If the severed head opens its beak once or twice, they consider that the goddess is favourable and speaking to them.

The whole ceremony is gone through without the slightest approach to reverence ; the people stand around, laughing and talking, as though it were the merest play. The instant it is over, the rice, ghee, and flowers laid as offerings before the sticks are removed, and the plucking of the dead fowls commences.

On special days, more particularly when the dreaded scourges of cholera and smallpox are raging, many processions will make their way to these little temples.

Some of the worshippers carry huge oval-shaped flags, made of different coloured rags and paper. One man is dressed up to represent the goddess-mother, with a hideous black face and red staring eyes and bloody mouth, his body painted and decorated with feathers, and brandishing a huge sword while he dances a wild fantastic jig. Every now and then the procession stops, and this man is poked at and questioned ; and whatever he says is taken to be the answer of the goddess, by whom he is supposed to be possessed. Following him come crowds of women, carrying pots and baskets full of fruits and sweetmeats and decorated with flowers. Upon each pot or basket is placed a little vessel of oil with a burning light. Incense is also swung about in small brass vessels. Fowls and goats are carried or led along for sacrifice.



At the temple the scene becomes wilder still. The dressed-up man becomes more and more frantic in his dancing and gesticulating, and the fierce rattling din of the tom-toms more deafening, while the animals brought for sacrifice are slaughtered amidst the shouts and screams of the people, until the ground all about is saturated with blood. As the sun sinks in the west, the yellow lights of the oil-vessels shed a ghastly glare over the scene, and one might easily fancy oneself in the midst of a band of demons broken loose from hell. The shouting and dancing grow more and more violent, until, wearied out, the people, one by one or by twos and threes, leave the place, and wend their way back to the town, carrying with them their dead fowls and animals for a feast at their houses.

A good crowd, however, perhaps remains for a time to listen to us, as we tell of the folly and sin of that in which they thus engage. Most assent to all that we say ; and one or two seem specially moved, and declare to their companions that ours is in truth the way of salvation. They admit that such horrid figures and images can only represent evil spirits, and not God ; "but," they say, "we cannot see God, and so we go to things we can see !"

A Vaishnavaites argues with us very foolishly for awhile ; and at last, making some absurd remark as to its being impossible to tell whether knowledge lies in ignorance, or ignorance in knowledge, he goes off with a jeering laugh, and the solemn hush of night closes upon the scene.

The people living near the coast are very ignorant. The men of the fisher-caste are strong hardy rascals who make the simple country-folk believe that the "goddess" is in their charge, and that her image comes to them out of the sea and confides its secrets to them. Accordingly, when any one is ill, a number of the fishermen enter the house, and, declaring that some demon has got possession of the sick person, they yell and screech and perform all sorts of wild antics, and so frighten their victims into giving them money. Afterwards they run off to the temple and pretend to give the demon a mixture of rice, saffron, and lime to eat. They also throw a

knotted thread down by the temple, over which the demon is said to be unable to pass, and by these means the sickness is cured.

Should these efforts be in vain, and the person get worse instead of better, the fishermen bring pills containing some poisonous substance, which causes eruptions of sores in the mouth and throat and soon puts the poor wretch out of his misery. On the feast-days they bring sand from the neighbourhood of the temple and sell it, declaring it to be sent from the goddess.

Visiting one of these small temples, we find it to consist of a rude hut, sheltering a very large carved stone, evidently a broken portion of some larger ruined temple. Before it are the usual bits of carved wood which act as temporary representatives of the goddess.

Taking one of these in my hand, I ask the crowd of people standing round why they offer worship to such things, which could neither help nor harm them, and go on to tell them of the living God, and Jesus, the world's Saviour. They listen well, and afterwards declare that henceforth they will only worship Him. They also give me leave to carry away one of the little idols, and some eagerly ask further questions about Jesus Christ. After we had left, however, the man who acted as pujari persuaded the people that the goddess had appeared to him in a dream, and insisted upon another idol being put in the place of the one carried off by the missionary. Accordingly this was done.

At the time of the November full moon, in many villages a special festival is held. On the evening before, a clay image is made and gaudily painted, surrounded by clay images of snakes and by little oil-lamps, and so carried through the streets on men's shoulders, amidst shouting and singing and beating of drums. The noisy crowd jostling along seems half afraid, half contemptuous of the goddess they are supposed to be honouring.

We stand on one side of the narrow street and watch for a

while the strange scene. Nothing that might be called worship in our sense of the word is to be observed. Noise, laughter, evil talking, and quarrelling instead. One of the flaring torches carried in front of the image happens to fall upon the head of some one in the crowd, to the infinite delight of the rest ; and while the poor man is woefully rubbing his burnt head and swearing energetically, others are pushing forward to see the fun, or to get fire from the torches for their cheroots.

We try to speak to some of the people, but it is useless work. They are evidently a little ashamed that a white man should see what they are doing ; but this only makes them speak at random in reply to what we say. Gradually the noisy procession passes down the street, out of the village, to a neighbouring tank, into which they pitch the image—a sort of intimation to the goddess that it would be well for her to keep them well supplied with water during the year—and quiet once more reigns.

The following evening, as night falls and the moon rises in calm splendour, flooding the village with light, a curious sight presents itself. Before each hut door little enclosures are made, constructed with the people's rude bedsteads hung around with cloths ; and in the centre of each enclosure the family rice-mortar is placed as a sort of altar, and on this are arranged little oil-lamps surrounded with flowers, toy boxes of turmeric powder, beads, bits of vegetables, and rings representing the moon. Underneath this altar incense is kept burning, the smoke of which envelops the whole. The general effect is very pretty, as though children were playing at some quaint game in the moonlight. It is strange to see with what care every little part of this worship is observed ; the fear that the great god (the moon) will be angry at any neglect is very real. We are greatly pleased, however, to see that none of it is being carried on at the houses of those who have recently professed themselves to be believers in Jesus ; and one man is eager to point out his house to us unilluminated and quiet.

It is well we are in the village at the time of this festival. Our presence strengthens the courage and faith of the few



who have accepted our teaching, and it rebukes and shames the idolatry of the heathen. A sort of deputation from the converts visit us, with the request that we will let them know what is expected of them. "Does the missionary, after teaching them a little about Jesus Christ, intend to desert them? Will he build them a small schoolroom or meeting-house, and send them a teacher? If they get into difficulties with their high-caste neighbours, will he not help them?"

We have a long and cautious talk with them, humouring the lower motives which we know are not absent, and trying to strengthen the good motives which we hope and believe are present. It is painful work, yet not without its joy. We seem to be with Christ Himself, going down to the lowest depths of ignorance and sin, combating the evil and trying to evoke the good in the very worst and most despised of men. Face to face with the powers of darkness, we yet feel ourselves to be side by side with the Prince of Light. God only knows what pain this means; and He too only knows its solemn interest and joy.

## CHAPTER III

### TALKS WITH TELUGU YOGIS, OR ASCETICS

THERE are always to be found, either wandering about the country or taking up their abode in caves or in small temples picturesquely situated amongst the hills, men who profess special sanctity, and ostensibly practise austerities of various descriptions, though in fact they often live lives of self-indulgence. They are called "Yogis," and are held by the people in great veneration, or rather fear. They subsist upon the offerings which are brought them, and threaten with their curse those who refuse to give them what they require. We only occasionally come into close contact with these men, and it is with difficulty we can converse with them, owing to their peculiar habits.

While preaching in the town bazaar, one of these devotees passes along the street, followed by crowds of people. His appearance is ghastly—his whole body and face whitened with ashes, his eyelids dyed black, and his hair hanging in matted ringlets over his shoulders. Every few yards he stops, and groans out one of the names of the god Siva, moving from one foot to another in a grotesque fashion as he does so.

Being in front of the Rajah's palace, we speak of the great Rajah called "Sin," whose wages is "Death," and of the gift of God—eternal life. We are at length interrupted by the coming out of the courtyard of the palace of a *Kilu-gurram*—a curiously jointed wooden horse, moved by men placed within it, which draws off the people from us. Then we observe, a short distance off, a Yogi, or ascetic, sitting under the shade of a tree upon a board of spikes, with his bare feet resting upon

similar spiked stools. His hair is woven into plaits, more than a yard long, which hang down round his shoulders, and his body is "sealed" (as he calls it) with the marks of a hot iron, consecrating him as a devotee of Vishnu.

He says he does not travel in this way to be looked at and to obtain money, but that he has been to Benares and bathed in the Ganges, and is now on his way to the Godaveri and other sacred rivers. It is evident, however, that this is his method of making money, for the people are profuse in their gifts. No doubt the Rajah would give him a handsome present. This Yogi is attended by two of the most evil-looking men I ever saw.

We speak to the people on the subject of penances and austerities, and tell of the great sacrifice which has been accomplished for us by the Lord Jesus Christ, rendering all such works on our part unnecessary. Many hear us attentively, and are very angry with one man who persists in interrupting us with the words, "Is it the way of Wisdom or of Unwisdom which you have come to teach?"

Another follower of the Yogi asks whether God has not become incarnate in Vishnu as well as in Jesus Christ, and, if so, what need there is to believe in Jesus Christ.

We ask him what the incarnations he knew of had done for him—for all of us. He is unable to say, and we then tell of the manifestation of God's great love given to us through Jesus Christ.

A wild-looking ascetic then bursts in with, "Tell me, where is God? Is He in me, or is He not?"

"I can't say yet," I reply. "What do you think?"

"Yes, He is! and He it is who looks out at my eyes, and moves my hands, and speaks with my tongue."

"No!" I answer, "this cannot be; I cannot believe you, for your face does not show the glory of a holy God, nor is this wild rude manner worthy of Him!"

He is a little abashed at this, and I further say, "Leave such vain reasoning and think of yourself as a sinner. You know that you are a sinner, do you not?"

"No, I am not," he replies.

"Then Jesus is no Saviour for you ! But," I proceed emphatically, and laying hold of him, "I tell you, you are a sinner, and by your sins are perishing ! Yet God loves you, and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem you from sin. If you turn to Him in faith, it will be well with you ; if not, you will be for ever lost ! "

Near a small village temple a good congregation gathers, and for some time listen to us well. Then a peculiar-looking man, with shaven head and bushy black beard, who professes to be a Yogi, and able, by drawing himself up into a heap and shutting his eyes, to see God, comes forward and does his best to interrupt us. He is very insulting, declaring, amongst other things, that Christians kill and eat animals, and therefore are the greatest of sinners. We explain that even Hindus destroy life in eating vegetables, etc., and that this teaching is only taken from later Hindu books, which contain many absurdities, as they themselves acknowledge.

The Yogi then tries to make the people laugh by ridiculing the atonement made for sinners by Jesus Christ, about which we had been speaking. He says that Jesus tried to bear the sins of the Christians, but found it impossible, and so when He was crucified He died ; and so forth.

On our urging him to be a little more sincere and just in his talk on such solemn themes, he seems a little moved, but is evidently a man hardened in evil.

One evening we see a queer figure sitting cross-legged upon the veranda of a house, leaning his arms upon the short crutch usually carried by these holy men. He is an old devotee, with scarcely a rag of clothing on him, his white hair and beard sticking about in all directions, his body covered with ash-marks, and his neck surrounded with prayer-beads and the lingam (the symbol of Siva). He is nearly toothless, and speaks with difficulty. His bleared and bloodshot eyes betray the opium or hemp-eating habit, but he seems of mild and gentle disposition and ready to converse.

I ask him why he assumes such a fearful guise ; to which he

evasively replies that he does so for the same reason that I dress as I do.

I reply that he cannot possibly say that I present as fearful an appearance as he does ; and then he admits that he acts in this way to indicate that he is a devotee of Siva.

I point out to him, and to the crowd which has gathered round, first, that such terrible and cruel shapes as Siva and his followers assume cannot truly represent the pure and holy God ; and, second, that in the person of Jesus Christ the beauty and grace of God had been wonderfully made known, for Jesus had come to us "the express image of God's person."

The people admit that what we said might be true, but the poor old Yogi sinks back again into his usual condition of inane unconcernedness.

One day we visit the residence of one of these holy men. It is situated in a most picturesque spot at the foot of some hills. From a distance the place is very pretty : behind stands a rocky hill ; in the foreground, trees and shrubs and coconut palms, half hiding the pointed tops of two small temples. A nearer view, however, dispels the idea of beauty ; you rather begin to fancy you have come upon the residence of a lost spirit, so weird and strange is it. A little winding path leads past an overhanging rock into a sort of courtyard, formed on one side by the fronts of the two temples, on another side by the hut of the Yogi, and at the back by gloomy caves, in which various idols are placed.

The Yogi himself is squatted inside his hut, and at our approach he rises and comes forward to meet us. He is a filthy-looking man of about fifty years of age, almost naked, with horrid matted locks coiled up round his head, and a countenance which, with its bleared eyes and evil expression, makes one shrink from him in disgust. Near him stands an attendant, not quite so ill-looking, to whom he gives some directions. In response, the servant fetches a small round clay box, something like a large thimble, which is filled with burning bhang and tobacco. Wrapping round this a little bit of dirty



A YOGI ON HIS TRAVELS

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rag, the Yogi applies it to his mouth and inhales the smoke two or three times. This seems to rouse him somewhat, and we endeavour to converse with him; but he is very unwilling to talk, answering between the whiffs of his pipe, in a queer mixture of Hindustani and Telugu, something to the effect that "he did not want to know anything. Vishnu was his God, and there was nothing else. But even Vishnu was all rubbish!" This last he says with an ugly leer and a hoarse laugh, twisting up his dirty beard in contempt.

Another of his attendants (disciples, he calls them) shows us the gloomy interiors of the caves and temples, casting, as we go along, many deprecating glances at our boots, which he evidently thinks will defile the holy places. In one cavern are some tawdry coloured images, which the man says are the sons of Siva. Before them are placed brass pots and pans containing offerings of fruits and flowers. In the temple dedicated to Siva is a stone figure of a bull with a bell hanging over it. In Vishnu's temple there is carved out of an overhanging rock the form of a cow's udder, and beneath this a lingam: when it rains water trickles out of the udder, and this is said to be water from the Ganges. Near this is a deep hole in the ground, into which they say the Yogi enters at times and disappears, saying that he goes to visit Benares. In a second cave is the Amma, or goddess of the place, also with flowers placed before it as offerings. In a third there is an image of Jagannath. One cave is empty, and the attendant coolly informs us that the god who used to be worshipped there is dead!

Altogether it is a sad picture. The dank dirty caves and temples, inside so gloomy, and outside carved with ridiculous and indecent figures, with this vile old man and his attendants moving noiselessly about them, seem to us like an ante-chamber to hell; and we feel an indescribable sensation of relief when we find ourselves outside again, breathing the pure air of heaven, looking upon the glorious sunshine sparkling on the foliage, and hearing the birds singing in the trees.

One asks with astonishment, How is it possible that any one should be deceived by such a wretched creature, smoking his opium in such a horrid den and surrounded by his miserable



attendants? One would think that a single glance at his evil cunning face would warn all honest seekers away.

But, alas! the Hindus have long been in bondage to a religion of terror; and the whole of what they see in such a place—its caves and temples, its idols and its Yogi—frightens them. Hence, to avert the wrath of these half-understood, fearful-looking things, and ward off the curse of the “holy” man, they bring their propitiatory offerings.

Before we leave we try again to reach the old man’s conscience, by speaking of death, and God, and judgment to come; but it seems useless. He smilingly says that I have done him a great honour in calling to see him, and he wishes me a hundred years of life, and many sons and daughters. Yet from his manner when he talks alone with the native preacher it is plain that it is only fear of me as a white man that keeps him from breaking out in anger, and sending us out of the sacred precincts with every mark of hatred and contempt.

The bhang or ganja used by these men, and by many of the lower classes, is a preparation from the hemp plant (*Cannabis sativa*).

The place where the drug is sold for smoking purposes is a small dirty shop in the main street of the town; and when we enter there are one or two customers present, purchasing small quantities. They very readily give me answers to my questions.

“Yes, sir,” says one man, “we are all ‘passed candidates’ in this sort of thing.”

The keeper of the shop, an elderly Mubammadan, formerly in the Company’s Police, says he pays thirty-two rupees a year for his licence, and that he sells four annas’ (4d.) worth of ganja every day. This estimate, however, is immediately corrected by his customers into “from eight to ten annas’ worth” every day. He buys the small branches of the plant, with the leaves and flowers, from the farmers, who cultivate it in their gardens with other produce. He merely strips off all the useless parts (the wood, etc.), and keeps the remainder in a basket for sale. The purchasers buy a few pies’<sup>1</sup> worth, rub it with a drop of

<sup>1</sup> A pie is  $\frac{1}{16}$  of an anna.

water in their hands until a hardish lump is formed, dry it with a pinch of tobacco-powder, and then put it into a clay tube and smoke it. The immediate effects of the drug are soothing and cheering, and it is preferred by many to the drinking of toddy or arrack, because the latter makes a person noisy and quarrelsome. The after effects of ganja-smoking, especially in excess, are very deleterious, the body wasting and the mind becoming imbecile. The habit seems to be more easily broken off than is the case with opium ; though, of course, it strengthens with indulgence.

The growth of the plant in some districts seems to have increased of late years, owing to the action of the Government in taxing it. The salesmen, in order to make more profit, now push the sale much more than they used to do.

## CHAPTER IV

### TALKS WITH TELUGU MUHAMMADANS

THERE are many Muhammadans in the Telugu country, but it is not often that we come into close contact with them. They hold themselves to a certain extent aloof, and seldom attempt to argue. They generally prefer abuse, and seem ready to settle all questions by knocks and blows.

A crowd gathers and listens quietly to us for some time. Then a number of Muhammadans close round, and wish to hear Mr. Aziz (a Muhammadan convert) speak in Hindustani. We ask him to go with one of the Hindu preachers to a little distance, leaving us free to proceed with our Telugu work ; but he objects, fearing violence. Mr. Aziz then speaks for a short time, but is very soon interrupted, and that in the rudest fashion. A dozen men at once commence abusing him, calling him a pork-eater, bidding him go and put on a hat and black coat, and so become a European ; asking him also foolish questions, as, "Who is God's wife ?" and so on. Not one of them seems able or willing to say anything that by courtesy could be called argument. The sight of one of their number in the ranks of the Christians rouses them to fury, and they simply refuse to hear him speak at all.

The only question seriously asked is, "As you profess to follow Jesus Christ in all things, why do you not wear beards, as He did ?"

We reply that Jesus Christ did not occupy Himself with such trivial things as the wearing or not wearing of beards. He had greater teaching than that to give. Which was better, to prescribe to a man what sort of shoes he ought to wear, or to tell him the way in which he ought to go ?

The great Muhammadan festival of the country is called the Mohurru. Properly this should be a fast, and is so observed by all respectable Muhammadans. It has, however, degenerated into a most outrageous carnival, in which both Muhammadans and Hindus take part. It is a matter for surprise that the Muhammadan authorities do not make some attempt to put a stop to the tomfoolery and barbarous absurdities which characterize these occasions ; but the fact is that the Muhammadanism and Hinduism of the common people have now become strangely mixed together, and many belonging to each community can give no intelligible account of either religion.

On one occasion, the hut where we are staying for the night is very close to the spot where the Mohurru revelry is proceeding ; and, unable to sleep because of the shouting and drumming and squeaking of pipes and horns, we get up and go out to see what is going on.

The only things we observe which appear in any way to connect the proceedings with Muhammadanism are the bamboo and tinsel shrines which have been brought on men's shoulders from the town, and are exhibited in a little shed at the back of the ground. These are supposed to represent the shrines of some of the old Muhammadan saints. In front, and at the sides of the ground, which is thronged with people, are huge pits, in which fires of wood have been made ; and these are now masses of glowing, fiery, sparkling embers. By the light of these fires and of the torches carried by many, one can see the people dancing and rushing about, beating sticks together or clapping their hands, and hear them yelling out certain words and songs, some of them very indecent, while the drums thrum and pipes squeak in concert. Now and then the chief performers carrying the shrines will, amidst the frantic screams of the people, pass through one of the pits of fire, walking with their naked feet on the burning embers, which are scattered about in all directions, and this apparently without suffering the slightest pain.

The whole scene is infernal in its weirdness and wickedness. Some are dressed up as tigers and give horrid exhibitions of their brutal strength by lifting up sheep with their teeth and

flinging them backwards over their heads. Others are dressed, or rather undressed, as corpses or corpse-bearers ; others again as hideous old hags—nothing is wanting to complete the gathering of grotesque horrors. Truly, the evil one has a fearful sway over the people of the land !

Asking some of them what all this scene of foolish riot means, they reply, " This is the worship of God ; it is in God's honour." One comes away feeling appalled, and with dark questionings arising in the mind, which are only hushed to silence by remembering the Saviour's words, " Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world ! "

One day, a number of Muhammadans gathering to hear us and commencing as usual to abuse, we asked them to stop abusing and to try an argument if they could. Accordingly, one of them, after a preliminary talk, admits that Jesus is a true prophet of God.

" If so," I say, " we ought to accept His words ; and He has said that He was the Son of the living God, who came to give His life for sinful men, and that all men, without exception, should trust in and obey Him. How is it that Muhammadans do not obey and trust Him ? "

" No," they say, " we trust rather in Muhammad, because he is the Comforter promised by Jesus."

" Muhammad," I answer, " could not be the Comforter promised by Jesus ; for Jesus said plainly that the Comforter should be God's Divine Spirit, who should come to enforce His teaching ; whereas Muhammad, though a teacher of some true and good things, expressly contradicts many of Christ's teachings."

Leaving this argument, our opponents go on to justify the use of force against unbelievers, urging that it must be right to use violence to save persons from danger and harm.

This I deny ; " for," I say, " if this were allowed, the whole world would soon become one scene of strife and misery ; each religious sect believes itself to be right, and if each were allowed to try and force others into its own belief, universal fighting would result."



In a picturesque part of the country is a collection of ancient-looking buildings, forming a mosque. Walking into the outer enclosure we meet a party of old Muhammadans, one of whom volunteers the following story about the place.

It was, he said, more than seven hundred years old, and was at first a Hindu temple. An old Muhammadan saint, however, had given to his disciples, on his death-bed, a twig of a tree which he had used for cleaning his teeth, and told them to plant it wherever they chanced to stop of an evening ; and in the place where the twig sprouted, there they were to remain and bury him.

The disciples wandered about for some time until, at last, in this temple court, the twig took root and sprouted, and they therefore determined to stay. This, of course, the Hindu authorities would not allow, and made every effort to dislodge them. But as they had succeeded in burying the body of the old saint there, and as the twig had at once sprung up into a good-sized tree, forcing its way right through the temple buildings, the Hindus feared that some invincible spirit had come to reside there, and offered but little further opposition. The Rajah did indeed make one final effort, and sent some men with orders to dig out both the body of the saint and the tree ; but as they dug they came upon nothing but sugar—and had to abandon the attempt. (Some sugar is brought and presented to us in token of the truth of this.)

Then the Hindus tried to starve their unwelcome visitors out ; but the Muhammadans calmly cut up the sacred stone bull which lay before the temple entrance and dined upon that, and they fared so well that the Hindus were more frightened than ever.

Afterwards a very old Hindu guru suddenly made his appearance, to whom they referred the dispute. He ordered them to seize both the Hindu chief priest and the Muhammadan *moulavi*, place them each in a kind of cemented coffin, and throw them into the lake. "The survivor," he said, "will be the true leader, and him you must obey !" This was done, but only flowers came floating to the surface of the water, which each party claimed as signs of victory. While they were

disputing the Muhammadan *moulavi* appeared, coming down the hill-side, and said, "Here I am ! I am the true teacher !" and the Muhammadans' claim was established once for all.

The buildings certainly have the form of an old Hindu temple ; and there is the tree—a tree unknown in these parts—growing through them and splitting them up in a curious fashion. There also is the shrine of the old Muhammadan saint ; and above all, there is the sugar ! What can we say ?

One afternoon we are invited to meet an old Muhammadan *moulavi*, or priest, who professes to be anxious to know how to send a message to her Majesty the Queen.

We find him seated upon a raised platform under an awning, and surrounded by a large number of friends and disciples. He courteously invites us to be seated, and immediately propounds some questions in Hindustani, interpreted for us into Telugu by a fine, intelligent-looking young Muhammadan.

"Did not the Bible say," he asks, "that Jesus declared that some great Teacher should come after Him ? And did it not say that certain signs should follow those who believed ?" Well, he desired to send a letter to the Queen, informing her that they, the Muhammadans, were alone the true followers of Jesus Christ, since they alone were able to perform the "signs" referred to by Jesus Christ ; and asking permission to appear before her, to prove their possession of this power. After that the Queen was to issue a proclamation ordering all the missionaries now engaged in India amongst Muhammadans to stop their work.

The *moulavi* apparently does not wish then to argue the matter with us ; but after ascertaining from us the chapter and verse of the above quotations, and the method of procedure in forwarding a petition to the Queen, he dismisses us as politely as he has received us.

As we are leaving, one or two ask us how it was, if we were all God's sons, as Christ was, we did not worship one another ; but they at once admit that we are right in saying that there is only one sinless Son of God, and that was Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER V

### TALKS WITH TELUGUS OF THE LOWER CASTES

THE headman of the village sends the crier round with his drum to announce that "the Christ-gentleman had come and would make known some good teaching, under the Polamma tree, at a certain hour."

When we arrive at the place we find a crowd assembled. Beneath the tree is a stone, roughly carved, which is called Polamma, one of the many names given to the village goddess. We stand upon the raised platform on which the image is placed; I even resting my foot upon a part of it which conveniently projects. Some of the people evidently think this very daring, expecting something dreadful will happen. For a long time we stand thus preaching to the crowd, most of them admitting the goodness of our words ; and eventually they all sit down and invite me also to sit and talk with them further about these matters. This I do, quietly turning over the stone image and sitting down upon that. After a while one of the men who has throughout been very hostile to us suddenly jumps up, and angrily demands that I should get up from the stone, which, he said, was their goddess. I do so at once, saying that I do not wish to hurt any one's feelings, but that I am astonished to find, after our conversation, that any of them should regard that stone as a goddess. Then one or two suggest that as we had turned it over we ought to put it right again ; but this we refuse to do, saying that if it really were a goddess it could surely take care of itself. They seem very much ashamed at this ; and at last, after much talking, request some passer-by to put the stone back in its place. Afterwards we go on talking, and many are evidently deeply impressed



with a sense of the folly of worshipping a block of stone in place of a living God.

One man is specially in earnest, and speaks out so strongly on this point—much more so than we could venture to do—that the man who has most violently opposed us hangs his head in shame.

“Well!” they say at last, “let us only believe in and worship *Bhagavantudu* (the Blessed One).”

Again we explain to them who “the Blessed One” is, and tell them all He has done for the salvation of sinful men.

The man who seemed so much in earnest afterwards visits us. Our hearts go out to him in a great longing to be able to draw him away from the doubts in which he is sorely struggling! He appears so helpless, leaning against the wall and hanging down his head in sorrowful silence as we appeal to him to make a bold stand, and to lay hold on the eternal life which is offered in Christ Jesus. He is unable to urge anything in reply, yet seems held back from decision by unseen forces. We all of us pray for him as he stands there, and he is greatly moved: but at last he takes refuge, where so many do, in procrastination, saying, almost in the words of Felix of old, “I must wait for a more convenient time!” and so leaves us.

Stay-at-home study critics would perhaps condemn any rough interference with the idolatrous customs of the people such as is just related, and it may be conceded that it is not often advisable or expedient. Yet an occasional expression of indignation and surprise of this nature does no harm; it sets the people thinking, and disturbs the stagnant waters of custom and habit in which they live, or rather die.

Returning from the village along a tank bank, overlooking a lovely scene of water on the one side and golden fields of grain on the other, we pass a small place of worship in which are more than twenty stones of all sizes and shapes, gorgeously coloured with saffron and turmeric powder, arranged in a little hollow. Seeing a number of people working near, I speak to them on the folly of paying reverence to these stones, when they knew that it was God who had sent the rain and given the bountiful harvest.

They say in reply, half afraid, that they do not know ; but I repeat that they do, and ask what good or what harm could these stones do them. " Even were they kicked," I say, " they would say and do nothing ! "

" Yes ! if any one should kick them, he would lose his sight instantly ! "

" Should I ? " I ask.

" Yes."

I immediately walk up and give the stones a kick, and then ask them to see whether I have lost my sight. It seems a rough way of rousing the minds and consciences of the poor people. But good is done by it, and a great " talk " takes place in the village over the whole matter.

In individual cases of sickness, application is made to the goddess in the following way.

At one of the villages a young woman is ill, and thought to be tormented by being possessed by the goddess : so at night her friends bring her to a spot where two paths intersect, and laying her on the ground, mark out with chalk, saffron, and turmeric a very prettily coloured and ornamented circle. It looks like a small piece of some very curiously patterned carpet. In the centre of the circle stands a queer little image, dressed like a woman, with a cloth round its body, bangles on its arms, etc., and holding in its outstretched hands a couple of limes. Placed before it are the two halves of a coconut, some betel leaves containing seeds, or peas, with a small coin in each, a number of limes cut in two, and a pile of cooked rice. Four blazing oil-lamps also stand in front of the figure. Incense is burning upon a potsherd.

All this is an offering made on behalf of the sick girl to appease the anger of the goddess. It must have cost much time and pains. The belief is that others walking along the paths distract the attention of the Amma, and so give the patient a chance of recovery.

Worship is frequently paid to the spirits of women who in former times died on the funeral pyre of their husbands.

This circumstance once caused us some difficulty in securing a piece of ground on which we had decided to erect a house for a village teacher. We had got through all the preliminary negotiations for the purchase of the land, and were engaged with a number of men in levelling it, when a man comes up, and pointing to a small heap of dirty-looking masonry which stood a few yards from one end of it, says, "And are you going to dig this up too?"

"Yes; why not?"

"Because that is a *gundem*," he said (a place where, long years ago, a woman burnt herself with her dead husband). "The family come here once a year, and also on marriage occasions, to worship the spirit of the woman. You must not remove it."

I sent for the man who was said to be the chief one concerned, and who proved to be no easy party to deal with. He was evidently a sort of *pujari*, or priest—an old man with his face hideously painted with the Vaishnava marks. He made a great uproar, yelling out that for two hundred years the place had been in the possession of his family, and that the heap of bricks was sacred, and in no case to be touched. I took him to the native sub-magistrate; but he only shook his head dubiously, and advised me to go to the agent of the man from whom I had bought the land. The latter ridiculed the claim; but said that custom had given them the right to go and worship at the site, and so we had better give up that bit of the land.

This at length, after much talking, we considered best to do; the more so as it disarmed the hostility of this particular family and pleased the village people, who appealed to us "for mercy," as they put it, in the matter. Moreover, the spot being so near the residence of our teacher, opportunity would be afforded him, whenever the people came to "worship" the "spirit" supposed to haunt the bricks, to speak to them of a better way.

Besides the worship thus offered to a *sati* (a virtuous woman), divine honours are often paid to men who have distinguished themselves in any special way in time past.

At one village is the tomb of the poet Vemana, who lived some two hundred and fifty years ago (it is supposed), and whose verses are known and quoted with respect all over the Telugu country.

One of these famous stanzas runs thus :—

Kashi, Kashi, yanutsu,  
Kada vedkato poduru ;  
Andu kalugu Devudindu lede,  
Andu yindu kaladu,  
Hradayambu lessaina.

It may be translated thus :—

Kashi ! (Benares) they cry, to pilgrims dear !  
But Kashi's God, is He not here ?  
Yes ! there *and* here, to hearts sincere !

He was a reformer of his people's religious ideas and social customs, and as such was disliked by the Brahmans, but esteemed by the lower classes. Now that he is dead, he is exalted into a kind of God ; and at his tomb, and at various other places, small temples are built, images of him are kept, and regular worship carried on. His descendants act as his priests, and travel the country over in the interests of the annual festival which is held in his honour.

We find the tomb enclosed in a small compound by a high wall, within which also are the houses of the people who care for the shrine and attend to the daily *pūja* or worship. They are very friendly, bringing out chairs for us to sit on, and readily entering into conversation on the subject of their "religion." When we point out that in worshipping Vemana, calling him Swami (Lord), etc., they are doing precisely that which Vemana himself forbade in his poetry, they acknowledge that it is wrong, and one man at once promises to give it up. A woman is the chief person in charge, and is much more intelligent than the others. She seems to understand well all that we say, but pleads the power of custom ; and even as we are talking, as the sun is setting, off she goes to the shrine, sees to the lighting of the lamps and the burning of the incense,

and starts the usual evening music, the din of which compels us to go away. It is strange that the perversity of men will change their very good into evil!

Preaching to the people of the village close by, we are listened to very attentively, but only receive in return the well-disposed, but most disconcerting and helpless answer, "*Atla kaniyandi!*" which might be translated "We're very glad to hear it, sir!"

Here comes one of Vemana's travelling priests! He is a tall gaunt man, riding a small pony, carrying an immense sword, and wearing peculiar marks on his forehead. A man goes on before him, beating a tom-tom, to give notice of his approach.

We ask him whence he comes, and he replies that he comes from Vemana's shrine at Katarapalle and is going round the villages to collect money for it. A small crowd gathers, and I ask him how it is that they do not follow the good teaching given in Vemana's verses, and worship the one true God only.

To this some of the people reply that they do so.

"No," I say; "I fear not; for the worship I have seen in the little temple at Katarapalle is certainly not the worship of God, the Great Spirit."

Meanwhile the priest begins to look most awfully solemn, and slowly descending from his pony, draws his long sword from its sheath, and having turned first to the east and then to the west, he kneels down in front of his pony, and rests his head for a few moments upon his sword on the ground, as if in prayer.

I ask what all this means, but he vouchsafes no reply. Some of the bystanders, however, explain that he is going to show us the power of his Mahatma.

The man then slowly rises, and after a few solemn passes and flourishes with the sword, swings it round with tremendous force so that the flat of it strikes him with a heavy thud upon the stomach. This he repeats a dozen times with the greatest composure, until I say:

"Enough! I don't see much Mahatma in this!" when he stops, and as solemnly sheathes his sword, remounts his



pony, and goes on his way, evidently a bit chagrined that we are so little impressed by his wonderful performance.

An annual festival is held in honour of Vemana at several of the principal villages in the neighbourhood of Katarapalle. On one of these occasions a young man, an earnest inquirer, went to the temple, and there boldly declared that Vemana was not God at all, but that Jesus Christ was the only true Saviour.

Upon this the priest and others said : " Well, if there's no truth in Vemana, you hold up this umbrella [a heavy thing used in the processions], and we'll see."

He agreed, saying, " If I hold it up, what will you give me? "

" If Vemana doesn't cause you to swoon, we'll give you a hundred rupees ; but if you do swoon, you must give us ten rupees. You shall try for an hour—that's a wager ! "

The young man accepted these terms, and lifted up the umbrella. The priest and others then prayed to the idol, shouting out, " O Vemana ! thou art here ! This man says thou art no god : knock him down ! " They also took large swords, and with the flats of them beat themselves, offering incense, and making a frightful uproar. The young man, undismayed, kept on praying, " O Lord Jesus ! Thou who treadest down the power of Satan ! give me strength ! " The people every now and then asked, " Now, is not Vemana God ? " to which he loudly replied, " No, he is not ! "

This continued for an hour or more, after which they began to be ashamed and to say, " After all, Vemana is nothing ; he is but an image ! " They, however, refused to pay the rupees.

The sun and moon also are constant objects of worship. Every morning the people stretch out their arms towards the bright orb of day, either in silent adoration or with some words of invocation. In the evening, when the lamp is lighted, the flame is paid a humble reverence.

Pointing to the sun a man says, " There's the god we worship ! He is all-pervading, all-powerful, and, above all, visible ! "

" Suppose," I say, " that I am the Governor, and you visit

me at night when a lamp is burning before me, would you salaam to me or to the lamp?"

"To you, of course," says a small boy standing by.

"There!" I say, "even this little boy will teach you to worship, not the sun, which is only God's lamp, but God Himself!"

The ideas entertained by the people as to the meaning, use, and benefit of the multitudes of their gods, and the worship connected with them, are often very strange.

A number of shopkeepers and others, after talking awhile, seem to perceive something of the beauty of God's plan of salvation—all of them listening quietly and assenting.

Then one of them uses the illustration that, as there are many cows of many colours yet all giving good white milk, so there may be many gods, yet all bestowing salvation.

"Yes," we reply, "but you know milk when you get it, and so you would salvation; but if a cow should give you some poisonous liquid instead of milk, you would not keep it. Siva and others of the gods you worship give you poisonous doctrine, foolish and evil stories [as they readily admit], and they cannot therefore be honoured as saviours."

Climbing a so-called sacred rock, we meet a number of men who say they have come from Benares and are visiting all the holy places.

We ask them how the visits thus paid to Rama and other gods could benefit them.

They reply that the benefit they received was similar to that obtained by the prisoner who, when condemned to be beheaded for his misdeeds, requested to be allowed to visit certain friends before his execution. This being granted, he went to some powerful lords or kings, and laid before them his distresses, requesting their intercession on his behalf. Pleased and flattered by this appeal, they agreed to do all they could to help him; and so negotiations were set on foot, even hostilities arose between the kings, and meanwhile the prisoner was forgotten, and so escaped.



"Ah!" we say, "these are just the wrong ideas men get of the Blessed One, when they turn to idols. They are led to fancy that He can be kept in special places and temples; that He is a being half lion, half man; that He can be pleased by the dancing before Him of bad women; that His favours can only be dispensed by these *pujaris*, or wrung from Him by austerities, and so on; all erroneous thoughts of the true and living God who is everywhere and at all times with us."

"You may be right," they reply, "but your way of thought is too hard for us; our way of 'devotion' is easier."

Naturally, material good is that which is craved and sought in this worship.

"Well," says a farm labourer, "let us give up the worship of these gods and think only of Jesus, and let us see if our fields will grow more rice and our stomachs be better filled!"

"Nay, brother," says another, a more intelligent man, "it is not for such things they want us to believe in Jesus, but for the salvation of our souls."

"Oh!" replies he, "I cannot look so far forward as that!"

"Yes, you can," we say; "do you not sow your fields, looking forward, knowing that the harvest will come? In a similar manner, you know that you will have to reap the fruit of your actions, both good and bad."

"Yes; but meanwhile there is the world to please!"

"But what can the world do?" we ask.

"Oh, our women will laugh at us."

"But cannot you stand a little laughing at?"

"No, it would be too much! I'll tell you what! Go and get the Rajah to believe; then send a tom-tom notice all round the town and villages that the idols and their worship must be abolished, and then everything would be changed."

"But," we reply, "force work of that kind would not change the minds of the people. We want you willingly to turn to the truth."

"Well, it is impossible for us to come one by one. Make all to turn at one time, and the thing would be accomplished."

"No!" we say, "this is a matter for individuals. We do

not all die together. When you die, can the Rajah or any one else come to your help? We must each answer for himself to God, as we have each one for himself gone astray from Him."

"All your words are true, Father; but we *cannot* come; we cannot stand against the world!"

"Yes, you can, if you will only seek the help of God. Are you not afraid of being lost, and getting away from the Divine help altogether?"

"No," he replies; "this is hell where we are now, and I don't fear anything worse or want anything better."

"But see, by acting in this way you are grieving God, who is your Heavenly Father!"

"What!" he laughingly asks; "can't God take care of Himself? Why, Rama is able to take care of himself very well!"

The people often greatly enjoy listening to the Indian preachers when they dwell on the folly of idol-worship. They laugh heartily when they hear songs which contain contemptuous references to the idols.

"They have eyes, but any buffalo sees the road better; mouths, but even if you strike them, they will not speak; the Brahman says he gives them life by his mantrams, but if so, why didn't he first give life to his own dead son?"

The fact is, the people fear and hate their gods and goddesses, and often would willingly be rid of them, if they but dared to give them up.

Some of the women are very intelligent, and understand what is said, laughing about the village 'lols and saying they are of no use. They anxiously try to learn the name "Jesus"; and when we say that the name "Saviour" (*Raksha-kudu*), with which they are familiar, will do as well, one woman, pointing to a little new-born baby, asks if they may call it "Saviour," and so be always able to keep the name in mind.

"Yes, by all means; only trust in the Saviour of whom you have heard, and not merely in the *name*, or in the *baby*!"

There are two castes among the Pariahs of the country—the first, known as the Malas (who form the more respectable community), and those called Madigas, who are workers in hides and leather, an occupation despised by the Telugus generally. As is well known, these non-caste people are terribly ignorant, oppressed, and degraded. Their ignorance of even the commonest decencies of life is often appalling; they are carrion-eaters and drunkards, and their social condition is practically slavery to the land-holding classes above them, who rob and cheat them in every way, and even get bonds from them by which, for the sake of an advance in money or grain, they sell themselves, and their children after them, into a state of servitude from which there is little hope of escape. The Government has been memorialized upon the sad condition of these poor people, and efforts are being made to redress some of the grievous wrongs from which they suffer.

Going into a Mala village, we ask the chief man to call them all together that we may preach the Gospel to them. How terribly degraded they seem, emerging from the holes in their little round huts like wild beasts! only the wild beasts would have the advantage of being more cleanly and decently clad.

We ask if any of them can read.

"Read, Father! How can we read or know anything? We are only buffaloes!" And they go on to talk in speech which is interlarded with obscenities.

The chief, who is a man about fifty years of age, is quite unable to remember anything for two minutes together, and becomes quite angry at our trying to teach him. He has the idea in his mind that the Government, whom he calls "the Company people," have printed the Hindu books, and that therefore they must have instituted the Hindu religion; nothing would move him from this belief.

Another man, however, acknowledges that we must be right and they wrong, seeing that we evidently knew something of our worship, whereas they knew nothing of theirs; and he takes us to the temple in the main street, which consists of four mud walls enclosing a stone pillar, on the base of which are some rudely carved figures. It not being known, he says, what

these figures represent, the people are accustomed to bring their offerings, and, placing them upon the top of the walls or within the enclosure, to say, "These offerings are for the village goddess, *whoever she may be*."

The people are victims to the most absurd fears and fancies. They tremble at the noises made by owls and dogs at night ; new clothes and implements are rubbed with saffron and propitiated with a kind of worship ; no kiln can be lighted or well dug or field ploughed without first the blood of a sacrifice dyeing the ground close by. Charms of all descriptions are worn and charm-words uttered to ward off sickness ; the evil eye and cursing words spoken even in jest are greatly dreaded. Anything of a strange or inexplicable appearance at once finds worshippers.

Going to a village one afternoon, we find it almost deserted, and on inquiring the reason are told that the people are all away to a small temple on a rising ground in the middle of the neighbouring valley for the *saiganam*. The guru of the temple has come, who pretends to be able, by interpreting the cries of a certain bird in the groves of trees close by, to tell the people whether their petitions are favourably responded to or not.

We proceed to the spot and find a number of people, mostly women, sitting about on the large stones or broken-down wall surrounding the temple, waiting for the cries of the *chinna gudlaguba*, or little owl, which should come in answer to their prayers. The priest has gone away on our approach, apparently fearing we might expose him, so we do not learn what his procedure exactly is.

It is a beautiful spot selected for this peculiar ceremony, and one can readily understand how the simple, ignorant people would be persuaded into believing in the bird-given omens. Some of them declare that the prophecies of the priest often come true. The blessings they ask for are the usual gifts of children, health, good crops, and plenty of cattle ; there is no thought or desire for anything higher.

One of the women was a widow, who was said to be possessed at certain times by the spirit of her dead sister. She was a stout, ugly-looking dame, very fair of skin, of a most desperate



temper, and evidently mad. The evangelist with us, who had seen her before, said she was very mild in her behaviour on this occasion ; but if this was mildness, it must be something fearful indeed to see her when angry. She spoke at the very top of her voice and made the most violent gestures, apparently declaring that she herself was the village goddess. Yet she was not without a certain "method in her madness," following us about, asking intelligent questions, and exhorting the villagers to listen well to our preaching.

In some parts of the country the weaver class are almost as low and degraded as the Pariahs. They are *lingaits* and wear the *lingam* (phallus), or symbol of the god Siva, either in a silver box suspended from the neck or tied round the arm. They wear this for the most part as a charm handed down to them by their parents, knowing nothing of what it means or of the god they profess to worship. They say it was originally given them by their gurus, or teachers, and that it is worn because it is the custom—that is enough for them.

Talking to these people in a simple way, we find them ready to admit the truth of what we say ; "but," they urge, "if we openly walk in the Christian way, our people will not come near us, will not allow us to draw water from the wells, will not help us in any way ; we should die."

Others speak of the imperious demands made upon their time by their work and everyday needs. One boldly says, "We *must* lie and cheat, otherwise we can't get a living."

One man asks the question, "Is it not God who prompts our every action, so that whether we worship Jesus or Siva the prompter of our thoughts is God?"

"No," we reply ; "in the nature of things, God must be holy, and therefore cannot be the author or inspirer of anything unholy."

They readily admit that the images and representations of Siva show him to be, if anything at all, a sinful being, but again refer to all-dominant "custom," in excuse for their worship of him.

One man says, "I might face any other trouble, but I could not meet the curse of my mother."

A little Christian lad who is with us whispers to him, "God's curse is worse than a mother's!"

"Yes," he says helplessly, "I suppose it is."

Occasionally these people will be rudely kind. Soon after breakfast one morning a number of them visit me in my tent. Many of them are fine-looking men, though their faces betray cunning and greed. They sit down on the floor, looking at the books and tracts, and ask, what is my age, what salary, am I married, etc. Even when my dinner comes they do not go, but stay to see what they say they have never seen before—"a dorra [gentleman] taking his rice!" To aid my digestion they send for some of their own vegetables and pickles, and other very hot condiments, which I taste to please them, but cannot go in for with the heartiness they desire. They are astonished that I eat so little rice. One of them also presents me with a little wild "eared cat," as they call it—a hare; and then, as spokesman for the rest, demands something from me in return. They have cast longing eyes upon one of my table-knives, and say I ought to give them one; they would wear it, and on grand occasions exhibit it as the gift of the great dorra who had come to their village. I say I really cannot spare a table-knife, and offer other things instead; but no, nothing else will do: a knife, and this knife in particular they must and will appropriate.

In the neighbourhood a new house is being erected which will cost a very handsome sum of money. We inquire about it, and are told that it is being built by a servant of the neighbouring zemindar. Knowing that this man holds but a low position and receives a very small salary, we express surprise at his being able to build such a fine house.

"Well," they explain, "he makes plenty of money out of the funds he handles, writing down fourscore where he should fifty, and so on."

"Ah!" we say; "we shouldn't like to live in a house built on such a rotten foundation!"

"Oh ! he must be all right, for God has shown His approbation of him by giving him five fine sons !"

In times of famine, as may be supposed, the people of the lower castes suffer terribly. Droughts are frequent in all parts of the country, and the people often know what starvation means. There may be no lack of grain in the district, but under a system of free-trade in a country which is, after all, despotically governed, and where there is no such thing as an enlightened public opinion, two things develop—prodigious greed and prodigious waste. The merchants buy and store up the grain, and refuse to sell, even though the people die at their doors ; while in the endeavour to get the grain into the affected districts where high prices are obtained, tons and tons of it are lost.

At such times we often feel that what we should take to them is food for the body, rather than mere teaching for the mind.

"We know that what you say is true ; but see here ! While we are at home in the house, it is *kadupu manta* [burning hunger] ; when we come sweating from our work, it is with 'burning hunger' ; we eat the little rice we have, and go to bed with 'burning hunger' ; we rise up in the morning with the same. If Jesus Christ can give us a little more rice, we will call Him a good Swami, and worship Him."

"Here comes the missionary, who lives on two fowls a day and comes to teach us who can only get a little gruel."

"Well," I reply, laughing, and pointing to his prominent stomach, "you seem to fare better on your gruel than I do on my fowls."

This raises a shout of laughter and puts them all in good humour. A large crowd assembles and listens to us for a long time, as several of us address them.

One of the evangelists takes as his subject "The Prodigal Son," one which never fails to attract and interest. This time the story is given so graphically, more especially describing the difficulty the poor young man had with the pigs, that when at



length the preacher tells how the prodigal resolved to give the business up and return to his father, the chief listener most anxiously bursts in with, "But, I say, what became of the pigs?"

A Mala man, after listening to our preaching for awhile, sits down in front of us and spreads out, in separate little heaps, his betel nut, betel leaves, tobacco, and lime—the materials of his usual "chew." He then asks which of these four is the one which can be said to produce the desired red-coloured juice. "No one can tell," he cries, "and yet if you leave out any one of these ingredients the effect is spoiled. So," he continues, "is it with regard to the worship of our many gods and goddesses. We cannot get what we want by worshipping one or another; but when we worship a number of them together, the needed blessing will come."

It is not easy to find suitable times in which to gather the Pariahs and other low castes together. They sometimes show great timidity, believing the most absurd rumours, as that we come to carry them off to go as soldiers to Burmah, or that we want their children to be used in sacrifices for the building of the railway bridges, etc. But when this fear is worn off, they often show a strong desire to be taught. The difficulty is to find a leisure hour in which to meet them. All day long they are at their toil in the fields or in their villages; in the evenings many are too tired or too drunk to listen. The best time is at night, after their evening meal is disposed of. Then, either with the lantern or with ordinary pictures and our camp light, we can hold very useful meetings, lasting two or three hours at a time.

Such a meeting is deeply interesting—the dusky naked forms of the men and children gathered about us, their dark eyes flashing in the uncertain light, some seated on the ground, others standing in groups around. A wooden mortar is turned upside down to form a seat, and a mat is brought for the teachers. After a hymn and a prayer (perhaps the first they have ever heard), they attentively listen as, with the solemn

stars shining above us and the dark night about us, we speak to them of sin and death, of God and the Saviour Jesus Christ.

None dispute with us ; but one poor woman, who has lost her daughter by death, joins the circle of listeners, and begins vehemently abusing God for having, as she said, taken away her child.

"Where is He ?" she cries. "I would like to kill Him—to burn Him !"

We then speak to her and to all the rest of Jesus raising the dead, and say, "Suppose the mother whose child was raised again to life had been told that that child must still die like others, what would she have said? Would she have abused the Lord? Surely not! She would have been quite willing to trust herself and her child to Him who had shown Himself to be the Lord of life and of death. So we, now that we have heard of Jesus and His power, trust Him even respecting the death of those we love."

The people seem to understand something of the meaning and comfort of these words, and eagerly ask us to come again and teach them more. One old man is very bright and intelligent ; he begins to talk about the glorious empires which used to exist in India, and speaks scornfully of his people, now uniting themselves with the declining fortunes of the British ! This is amusing, coming from an old Mala, with hardly a rag to cover himself or a shed to live in.

We talk of the ways and means of getting a schoolroom ready for a teacher ; but, poor people ! just now the pressing question is how to get water for themselves and their cattle—how to save themselves from famine. Their own wells are dry, and they have to depend entirely upon the good will of their high-caste neighbours. They are not allowed to draw water themselves from the wells of their superiors, but are obliged to place their pots close by, and thankfully accept as much water as is given them. Often they are given very little, and their sufferings are great ; and the worst of the matter is they dare not complain, lest worse befall them. They are, as is usually the case, in debt to the farmers, and dependent upon them in every way. We give them a little money to enable them to deepen

one of their wells, for which the old man is very grateful, and promises in return to do all he can to help us in building the school-house.

One of the Malas is very anxious to have his son educated, saying, "I would go without food for three days to get my boy one day's schooling."

At another village the people come to us, begging us to send them a teacher and give them Christian instruction. To show their sincerity and earnestness, they bring the village idol, a big lump of stone, and allow us to break it in pieces. Afterwards we go on to another little temple, in which is another and larger idol, smeared with saffron, etc. This also we propose to break; but an old woman kneels down in front of it, and earnestly beseeches us not to touch it *in her lifetime*. So we leave it, and look about for a good site for a schoolroom, which the people promise to build.

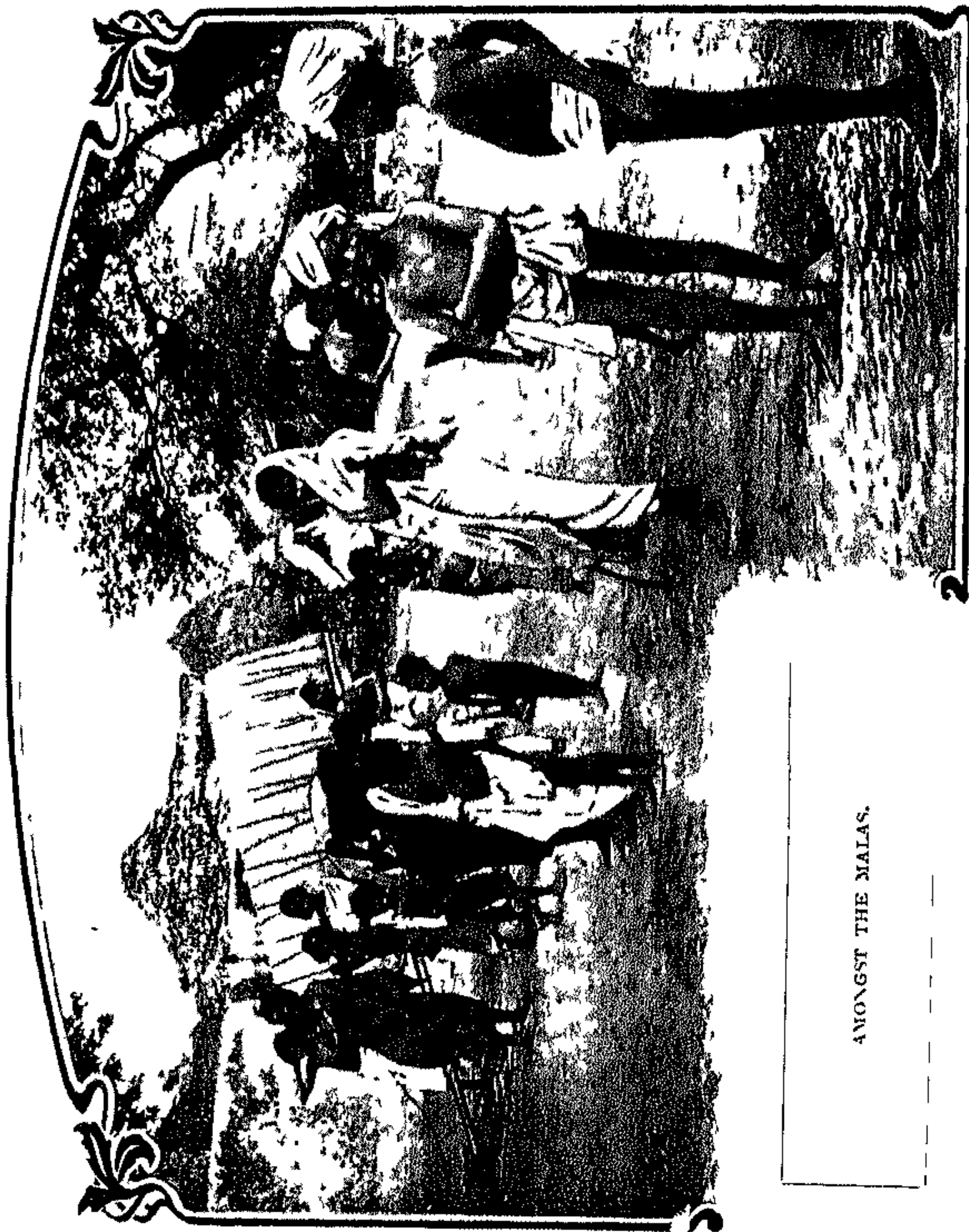
Many of these people hear with evident delight the story of Jesus Christ. Several exclaim, "He gave His life for us, did He? He bore our sins?" And one woman I see standing, with clasped hands, trying to repeat the prayer we are teaching them. "Certainly we will give up our idols; but *how* can we worship Jesus Christ?" they ask.

We tell them that Jesus Christ is with them. "Just meet together in the school-house and say, 'O, Lord Jesus! Thou gavest Thy life for us! Grant us wisdom to know the true way, and help in all our troubles,' and He will hear and answer."

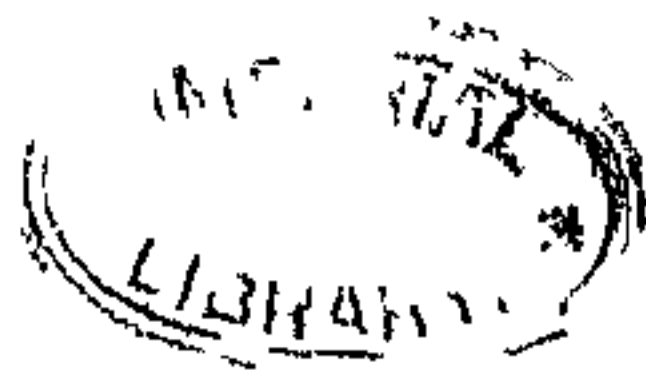
Some of these people, having been with Europeans as servants, learn a peculiar kind of English, dress in European loafer style, and call themselves Eurasians. One of these thus tells his story:

"My father was a clerk in the court, sah. He was very poor man, sah. He died when I was a little chap; and Mr. C. he was c'lector, sah; that gentleman put me to school. Then after I was in one shop, sah; there getting ten rupees; not enough for my grub that, sah; so I left off that place and came here. I liked to go to the sea, on ship, sah; but I was too much sick, and there was one, the mate on the ship, he gave me good





AMONGST THE MALAYS.



words ; he told me, sah, ' You got mother, why did you leave your mother ? ' This way he told, and therefore only I left that ship, and came ashore, sah, to look after my poor mother. My mother died, here only, sah ; and then I had no one to look after me, and give me good advice, that way only, sah. I took one 'ooman, and she lived with me. Very good 'ooman that 'ooman, very simple and nice girl ; she never said bad words or anything, sah. She died, sah, when her child was six months old—that boy you see there, sah. She took very ill ; they done poisoned her ; yes, they did, sah ! There was one native 'ooman used to wait on her, and do cooking, and she used to make pills, sah, with different kinds seeds, and mixed it up with castor oil, and gave to her morning one time, and evening one time, that burnt up all her inside, sah, and she died. They were jealous 'cause I getting a little more pay, sah. That 'ooman got punish ; that sub-magistrate gave some days' imprisonment, sah. He said to me, ' Why you don't tell about this before that girl was buried, and I would punish more severer,' he said, sah. But what did I know ? Then I han't no one to mind the child, sah, so I took this girl from that village. No, sah ; her caste not spoil ; if she be with another man that caste will spoil. Very bad-tempered 'ooman this 'ooman, sah. I never do anything to her ; I got proper sense, and never give bad words ; but she very cross 'ooman, sah, since the two children born. She this way, sah. I like to get rid of such bad 'ooman. Yes, sah.

" I know veravell that 'ooman my wife and must keep her, and marry her properly. Yes, sah ; you only giving good words, sah ; the Almighty will help us if we pray Him. But too much difficult for me ; only fifteen rupees a month, sah ; no clothes or anything. But I never grumble, even in famine time ; we got only six measures for rupee, sah ! I used to drink little rice-water myself, and give the children the rice. I always active and willing, sah ; no complaint made 'bout me by my master ; I always keeping good friends with him, sah. He very good man, and I always doing all my best to please him. I always think of the Almighty, sah. Yes, sah ; you won't believe perhaps whether I am telling true or lie, but it is

true ; one night, like this time, sah, I was coming from the village, and all of a sudden two wolves, they came close to me, sah ; in another minute those wolves would run on me ; but the Almighty saved me, sah : those wolves ran away off and never touched me. Yes, sah ; the Almighty took care of me. I thank you give me one little thing—I want to get good advice from you, sah, you only kind gentleman. Please tell me little about Jesus, and make me go in good way. I done many sins, but like to go in good way now, sah. I think my wife like to come in good way too ; she very bad-tempered 'ooman, sah. My master said, 'If I had such a 'ooman, I would take and pitch her into the sea,' he said, sah ; when he heard her bad expressions, he said that, sah. I told her, 'When you had no children, how nice and humble you were ! how you took care of me properly ! Now you don't do anything ; only keep many strangers here. If you do this way, surely I will leave you off, and go and marry an East Indian Christian girl.' I said this to make her fear, sah—for fun, sah. She said, 'Don't I eat your bread ? if I use them bad expressions, won't Jesus punish me ?' she said, sah. He did punish her ; she got too much pains in her body ; but I took pity on her, and cured her, sah. Yes ! I'll take leave now, sah—don't like to leave your honour. Your honour will be without any good company. Yes, sah ; your men are here, but they don't know veravell English. I'm going, sah ! Good-evening, sah ! I wish very much your honour will be in good state, have good health always. Tell my salaams to missis, sah ; she very kind lady. You only helping poor man like me. How many great men, sah ! they come and make good promise, but they never fulfilling that promise ; they went away, and never heard anything more, sah. I shall always pray the Almighty for you and missis. The Almighty must give you good state ! I'll go, sah. Good-evening, sah. When I come to see you, any old gowns, or cups, or plates, what your honour is going to throw away, kindly bestow on me, sah. Jesus will reward you. Thank you, sah ; good-evening, sah—good-evening ! ”



## CHAPTER VI

### TALKS WITH TELUGUS OF THE HIGHER CASTES

IN this chapter the conversations recorded are with persons who have not received any English education. In their own religion and philosophy they may be highly educated and talks with them are most interesting. Having but little familiarity with Europeans, they meet us at first with their mind full of hostile prejudices, thinking that our only aim is to prove that all their beliefs and practices are false. As, however, they come into closer contact with us and discover that we are willing and anxious to acknowledge all that is true in them, they lay aside their opposition, and enter into discussion, more or less profitable.

Many of them are very rude and superstitious—almost as much so as those beneath them, whom they despise so heartily. One old Brahman once shamelessly declared that “puttinchī, pettinchī, poshinchī, ragi dubbu,” which simply means “the Almighty Rupee,” was his sole god; and further said that all men lived for money—the missionary amongst them; for he, too, was paid for his work. We pointed out that it was one thing to be paid for your work, but quite another to love and trust in money. The latter was the root of all evil. Money would not and could not save from sin and its evil consequences.

My Brahman *munshi*, or teacher, tells me of the illness of his infant child, who, he says, has been born under an unlucky star and is not expected to live. Some are advising him to give medicine, as it is a case of sickness; others to repeat mantrams, or charm-words, as it is a demon. He thinks all might do good, and so has tried everything.

One of the mantrams repeated was the Gayatri, “Om, Tatsa-

viturvarenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi dhiyo yonaha prachodayat," considered to be the greatest sentence in the Vedas. The meaning he gives to it is, " Upon that God who is the author of all our wisdom, the creator of all beings, the destroyer of all evil, who only is to be revered, we meditate."

I remarked that this could hardly be called a prayer, more particularly because more faith was placed in the repetition of the Sanskrit words than in the prayer itself.

He said that the mantram contained four parts, one of which could only be repeated by a Brahman when he had put off his sacred thread. It must not be said in the hearing of the common people under severe penalties. He would not *tell* the words of the *Gayatri* to me, but wrote them down.

Visiting the sick child, we found it lying neglected in a hot dark room, not having been washed (on account of some mantram) for two days—a most pitiable little object. One could only hope that it would die. When we went in to see it, a troop of schoolboys and others came in and stood around, watching us, and laughing and talking in a rude unsympathetic manner, which added to the sadness of the scene.

Belief in demon possession and the practice of exorcism are common amongst Brahmans and other high castes. They will also bring forward, as proof of the truth of Hinduism, their power to heal sickness and snake-bites by means of charms and incantations.

A Brahman gives me a long account of a woman in his own house being possessed by a demon, and of the way in which it was driven out. The woman had been suddenly seized with severe pain all over the body and with great weakness, and was unable or unwilling to perform her usual household duties. She went about everywhere with a horribly miserable or angry countenance, threatening mischief to herself and to others. A relative declared that she was possessed by some demon, and began to exorcise it in the usual way, by repeating certain verses which contain the thousand names of the god Siva. During this incantation, the Brahman at the head of the house had to rub some grains of rice in his hands ; and as he rubbed

the woman screamed, declaring that they were squeezing and pounding her and causing her terrible pain. The exorcist then questioned the demon, and ascertained that it was the spirit of a child of a neighbour which had recently died, and which, for reasons best known to itself, was determined to destroy this woman.

"Can you destroy her?" it was asked.

"Yes, I can and will!" it replied.

The Brahman demon-doctor said they must at once try to save her; and shutting all the doors of the house and lighting an oil-lamp, bade some one take a small cane and soundly beat the woman's shadow on the wall—he at the same time repeating the necessary spell. Upon this, the woman began again to cry out, entreating them not to beat her so; and the exorcist then exacted an oath from the spirit that it should depart. This accomplished, he stopped his incantations, and immediately the demon departed, protesting that it was impossible to withstand such powerful spells and beatings. On asking the woman afterwards what had been the matter with her, she professed to remember nothing of what had occurred.

A Brahman pandit once came to me for some medicine for a bruise on his leg. I gave him some lotion, and directed him to tie a rag moistened with it round his leg, and keep it there.

This he objected to, on the ground that perhaps it wouldn't easily come off again. "No!" he said, "I must not do it, because before I do *pūja* (worship) I must take off every bit of clothing!"

I asked him whether he did not think that God would be better pleased to see him with the piece of rag upon the wound than with it neglected.

"Oh!" he replied, "the sore came because of sin in the past, whereas I put the rag on myself!"

"Well," I said, "one would think that *you* also made the bruise upon your leg, seeing that you caused it by riding home to your village; at any rate, the rag could not be more offensive than the wound it covered."

He, however, preferred his own view of the case.

At a certain village are to be found three small temples, each dedicated to a particular god ; and as usual the village is the home of many Brahmans connected with them. One of these interrupted us as we were preaching, ordering off a number of women who were quietly listening, and who at once meekly obeyed him. On my expostulating with him, he said that he had frequently heard this Gospel ; but, if he had, it was evident that he had hardened himself against it. He said that if Christ had made propitiation for the sins of all men, then the work was done, and there was nothing for men to do, either in the way of belief or in anything else ; that God was neither holy nor unholy ; that all books were false and foolish, and so on.

As we came away an old Brahman followed us over the little stream and walked a little way with us. He had known our missionaries—Porter, Johnson, Hay, and Gordon—and could not say anything against the religion we taught. I urged him to give up *now*, at the last hour, the foolish practices of heathenism and follow Christ, and in my urgency approached him to lay my hand on his arm. With a shout of dismay he and his companions after him rushed off, and plunging into the stream, did not rest until they had got to a safe distance from me. I suppose they thought I was going to try to carry the old man off by force !

At a pretty little village built round a tank of water in front of a temple to Gopalswami, we approached the gate as though we meant to enter. A Brahman, seeing this, made a great outcry, running after us, and shouting, "The dorra is going into the temple," upon which two or three others came out and carefully shut the temple doors, fearing, as they said, that the wind might carry defilement in upon the god.

We asked who it was they so carefully shut up inside ; and though at first we could hardly get a civil answer, yet when they saw us settling ourselves down in the veranda, determined to get an answer of some sort, they condescended to talk to us, and a desultory conversation ensued.

The interesting part of this incident occurred after we had gone away. A great dispute arose in the village as to the defilement of the temple, and the consequent need of purifica-

tion. The Brahmans insisted upon the necessity of something being done ; but two pensioned sepoy who were living in the place argued that the *sahibs* were good men, who did much to help the people, and had as much right to the temple as the Brahmans. Moreover, they said that the Europeans were men of knowledge, and believers in the true God, and that therefore it was absurd to talk of *their* defiling the temple. Eventually, however, the Brahmans carried their point, and two or three rupees' expense had to be incurred in purificatory rites.

One very wet and stormy morning, after a miserable journey in which most of us got wet through in crossing a flooded river, we arrived at a large village of Brahmans and other high castes, and made for the shelter of the courtyard of the temple, the gate of which stood invitingly open.

Going in as far as we could, we asked if any one was there. Some one came running out, and some others made their appearance from various side doors, and wanted to know what we were doing there. I replied that I wanted to see the temple.

"The priest who has the key is away."

"Who is inside ?" I asked.

"God !" was the answer.

"Surely," I replied, "He is outside also, for He it is who cares for men, and gives the flowers and fruits for us to look at and enjoy."

"But," they said, "He is inside the temple in the form of an image."

"Would children of a family," I asked, "make an image, and shutting it up in some dark place like this, call it their father ?"

One man then became very angry, and said that I ought not to come there and talk like that.

I then appealed to the bystanders, saying that I had no wish to make them angry, but only wanted to find out the truth. They all agreed that that was quite right, and began to scold the Brahman for getting angry.

This gave us the opportunity we wanted, and very soon we were amicably discussing all sorts of questions. They referred



specially to the country between the Vindya and Himalaya mountains as "holy ground," a visit to which would remove all sin. I objected to this, telling them of the wickedness which characterized many of the people who dwelt there. They said that notwithstanding this wickedness of the present inhabitants, the place retained the essence of the goodness of the holy people who formerly lived there, just as a cloth retains the scent of sweet flowers.

I replied that the scent must be perceptible before we could acknowledge it. Moreover, I pointed out that the reliable history of the country referred to did not indicate such a wealth of goodness on the part of its former inhabitants as they seemed to believe existed.

After that we talked of the confusion arising from the Hindus allowing so many and such contradictory philosophies in their religious system. They contended that as we found it useful to have many doors to our houses, so was it with the Hindu religion.

I objected to this that if the doors and windows and walls of a house were inextricably confused, and darkness covering all besides, we should be left in terrible uncertainty as to whether we were safely in the house or not.

They admitted that certainty was not a characteristic of the heterogeneous mass of beliefs which is called the Hindu religion.

Seeing a large temple dedicated to Jagannath open, I went to the entrance and looked in. The place is dimly lighted with little dirty oil-lamps, and appears more like a sombre cave than anything else, with low black stone roof above and dingy pillars and obscure recesses below. At the farther end stand three brass images, representing the ugly forms of Jagannath and his brother and sister, before which a lamp is burning. Two or three half-naked fat Brahmans are pottering about; and kneeling on the floor, not far from the door, are two or three men at their devotions.

A young Brahman came up, and I asked him if he believed that Jagannath as here represented was really God.



"Not a bit!" he briskly replies; "the whole of this is certainly a lie."

I look at him in astonishment, and say, "If so, why do you not abandon such lies, and worship the only true God and Jesus Christ?"

"Yes," he answers, "I know there is only one true God, and that Jesus Christ is a wise and holy Saviour; but still we must not forsake the things which have come down to us from our forefathers for hundreds of years, any more than we should give up wearing the clothes in the way our fathers wore them."

When I expostulate with him on the absurdity of this argument he says: "You see, these poor people cannot rise to the height of worshipping such a holy God as you speak of; but seeing a temple like this, with images representing some sort of a god, they come in and worship, and receive pardon for their sins."

"What!" I exclaim; "by believing in, and offering worship to, what after all is a lie, can they obtain forgiveness of their sin?"

"Yes," he says; "look at these men now leaving the temple; they came in burdened with sin, and now leave it rejoicing, because their sin is taken away."

I tell him that he must know that what he is saying is false, for the men are going away exactly as they came in, and would go on to live exactly as they had lived before; no change of heart or mind had come to them. Indeed, it was the effect of such worship to harden the heart and encourage men in sinful living.

He laughingly admitted that it might be so, but seemed to think it did not much matter—at least, it was no business of his.

This utter carelessness and hardness is only too common, and is very trying to faith and patience.

In a village we met a Brahman who said he had often heard of Jesus, but could not become a Christian because he believed that God had appointed men to remain in their own particular castes and religions.

"Then has God appointed thieves their station and work?" I asked.

"Why not?" he laughed; "did not even Krishna steal?"

"If he did," I replied, "he could not be truly representing the mind of God, who must be holy, and has forbidden all injustice and wrong."

He admitted this, but tried to turn the conversation by saying that as children grow up to understand the use of clothes, so must we grow up into all knowledge.

I said, "You have, as you admit, the knowledge of Jesus the true Saviour, yet refuse to act accordingly; so you are like a man who knows he ought to clothe himself properly yet goes about indecently clad."

He laughed carelessly and went off.

A similar case was that of a Brahman police-inspector who paid me a visit at my tent. He declared it was impossible to be a good man in the Police Department, because one was obliged to be constantly deceiving people, telling lies, and so forth; and he related how he had once saved a Christian from going to jail by putting a plausible lie into his mouth and persuading him to tell it. He deprecated a conversation on religious matters because it necessitated hard thinking, besides stirring up the conscience uncomfortably.

Another village official argued with us that it was God in him who was speaking, and when I asked, "Who then tells lies?" he replied, "God."

I told him that that was the biggest falsehood I had ever heard, at which the bystanders laughed and the man himself seemed a little ashamed. He seemed very hardened and godless, and after I had gone he called the Indian preacher to him and asked him if, after all, *he* was not secretly a Hindu, and only making a profession of Christianity for the sake of a livelihood—apparently unable to believe in the sincerity of any one.

In the main street at Ramathirtham (a noted place for

pilgrimages), an old Brahman demanded some sign of the superiority of the Christian religion. He said there were many such wonderful signs connected with Hinduism, as, for example, the fact that the sea at Rameshvaram, where Rama had gone, was always smooth, in proof of which he was willing at once to pay for a telegram to the place to ascertain the truth. Or, he said, he would repeat a mantram over any person bitten by a snake and cure him.

I replied that there were many strange things which could be done by Christians, as well as by Hindus, but these could never prove a bad doctrine to be a good one, or make us believe a thing to be true which was plainly false.

Then he asked us what wonderful things Jesus had done, and we told him of many of His mighty and beneficent miracles, more especially of His giving His life for sinful men. The old Brahman and his companions listened attentively, but again demanded some proof.

They also began finding fault with Christians, saying that they were certainly guilty of the sin of killing cows, to which we replied that the Hindus also killed them in sacrifice, and killed all sorts of animals by cruel treatment, not to mention the destruction of all kinds of plants, in which and on which life abounds.

He then asked me for a book, so that he might be able to compare the two religions. On my saying that I had already given one book away in the village and could not give more, but would sell one at a low price, he pretended to work himself up into a state of great indignation, so I said, laughing, "You are behaving just as I have heard you Ramathirtham Vaishnavas always behave—get all you can and give nothing! The Christian religion teaches something better than that, at any rate."

In one neighbourhood we found the people divided into three parties, led by three men who acted as gurus, or teachers.

The chief of these gurus was named Sitayya Naidu, an elderly, intelligent man, who asked us many questions, such as, Who is God? Is He one or many? When this world comes to an end, what happens? What is sin, and what is merit? How

could God become incarnate? And if He is in heaven as well as upon earth, are there two Gods? If we become Christians, how can we be supported?

Answering these questions, we urged the old man not to be content with merely asking curious questions, but rather to be asking, How can I escape from sin and be made holy? Will God save me, or am I to go on sinning and suffering for ever?

He concluded a long talk with us with the declaration that he believed only in the one true God, and that he had totally abandoned all idol worship as useless, and that he thought God would forgive his sins. It was a deep joy to hear him say, in clear, unmistakable words, in answer to a question put to him as to the grounds of his hope, "I believe my sin is covered from God's sight by the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered trouble and pain and death in this world for our sakes!"

The second leader amongst this people, with a following of some two hundred disciples, was named Sanyassi. He also was a quiet, pleasant man, fairly well off, and keeping a school. His teaching was that man has no free-will, but is the creature of circumstances, which are all ordained by God. The fact that in practical life we all act contrary to this belief did not disturb his mind; I therefore further pointed out that the doctrine in effect denies the existence of sin, and that we are left at liberty to do as we please. No free-will; then no sin. No sin; then no compunction and no sense of right and wrong.

He then referred to the idea of merit, which he thought would balance any evil which might be done.

To this I replied by a parable of a servant who, having been ordered by his master to build a wall, and having built some parts of it very badly, excused himself by saying that he had done other parts extremely well. He admitted that no master would accept such an excuse.

After some further talk, he promised to pray as we did; up to that time he had only repeated mantrams. He also agreed to correspond with me.

The third teacher in this place, called Kurmayya, was a young man of not very pleasing appearance, very proud, and, I fear, deceitful. He said that both he himself and his com-

panions were prepared to go any lengths in philosophy or religion, and that they considered our way was the best, but he said they could not in any case give up caste. To do so would mean social loss and difficulty, which they were not prepared to face. He acknowledged that caste was wholly bad, but he was obliged to conform to its rules for the sake of his position and comfort in the world.

The arrival of a Brahman guru, or teacher, is sometimes conducted in grand style.

The "holy man" has come perhaps from Benares, and is supposed to be a great pandit. The procession is headed by two elephants, gorgeously arrayed; then comes the palanquin with the priest, then a mob of Brahmans chanting verses, the whole followed by crowds of people, some carrying offerings of flowers or coconuts.

In converse he proved a fairly reasonable man, but declared that it was impossible to believe in Jesus Christ as a Divine Being because it was said that he died for men; such an one could not be equal to Rama, who did so many wonderful things.

I spoke then of the resurrection of Christ, but he said that was nothing very wonderful—"a great being could very easily get born over again."

He said surely God could save men from sinning by forcibly turning them from wrong paths, and of this he tried to give some illustrations, but no one present could make out his meaning.

I said that it was through such teaching as this, which lays the blame of wrongdoing upon God and invents easy methods of escaping sin's consequences, that men grow careless in sin; whereas the death of Christ showed sin's awful nature and penalty, as well as God's love and mercy.

Afterwards a man accompanied us for some distance along the road, who showed considerable acquaintance with the Gospel, but who raised many objections against accepting it. He asserted stoutly that there was no difference between body



and spirit, these being only forms of one and the same thing. However, he could not explain how it was that there was such a vast difference between a living man and a dead body, and fell back on the old argument that it matters little or nothing what we believe, so long as our faith remains firm and strong.

To this I replied by giving the story of some sailors mistaking the body of a sleeping whale for an island, and attempting to make their abode there. Their faith did not save them from destruction.

Then he said that it was better to allow men to remain in their own various religions, for if they commenced to change there would be no peace or quiet for them ; only strife and trouble would result.

"But, surely," I said, "truth with trouble is infinitely to be preferred to falsehood with peace ; real and lasting peace will always come to him who seeks and obeys truth," and I urged the man on our parting to read and pray over God's Word, and this he promised to do.

Preaching one day in the bazaar, a large crowd gathered and, at first, heard us well ; but afterwards there arose so much disputing amongst the people, we were obliged to go elsewhere. One man who was constantly coming with the same objection asked, "Is God a spirit or is He not ? has He a form or is He formless ?" and declared it was impossible to think that God should assume a form.

"Who gave to you your form ?" we asked.

"God did," he replied.

"If, then, God gave to you a form, surely He Himself could assume a similar form in order to speak to you and save you from your sins !"

At an out-of-the-way village called Gunapur, a number of Brahmans and village officials, some of whom could speak a little English, gathered near the temple door and discussed with us. They declared at first that the apparently unholy deeds committed by the Hindu gods were not sinful, since they were done in order to show to man the evil of wrongdoing ;



but when I contended that the true God would never do evil that good might come, they gave up the argument, and said the *Puranas*, which contained these stories of the gods, were really not true—they were only intended for the amusement of the common people.

Then one of them tried to make out that different religions were only different fashions of thought, all equally good ; but he drew back considerably perplexed when I desired to put his theory to the test by exchanging my coat for his Brahmanical thread.

Another young man objected that as conscience said different things in different men, and at different times in the same men, it could not be trusted ; nor could he accept its verdict when it said that he was a sinner.

A dresser from the hospital denied the special inspiration of the Bible, and questioned its account of the origin of sin ; although, when pressed for it, he could give no better.

It was evident that the wish not to believe kept these men back, and not honest doubt. Their vanity in speaking a few English sentences in one another's presence was painfully amusing ; but we all had to descend to Telugu at last.

At one large village a number of men of the Rajah caste gathered to hear us. They were very rude and hard at first. "Man could not break God's laws," they said ; "for if he could the universe would soon be destroyed."

"The universe is evidently being destroyed by man's wrongdoing," I replied ; "and some day it may have to be completely purified by a fiery visitation from God."

"But," they returned, "is not God the author of both sin and goodness ? Whenever we do a wrong thing, is it not the Divine Being who produces in us the idea of sin ?"

"Suppose it were so," I said, "still the *guilt* of choosing to do wrong belongs to us, and not to God."

They then asked, "If a man brings a great serpent into his house for his children to play with, and then warns them not to go near it because it will bite, is he not acting very unjustly ?"

"God does no such foolish thing," I replied. "He gives to men a good gift, namely, freedom to choose, so that they may voluntarily serve Him, and thus rise to higher and better things. If they abuse His gift and fall into sin, the guilt and loss are theirs."

Afterwards the Rajahs became more reasonable and friendly, and after asking all kinds of questions about England and its Queen, they listened quietly and well for a long time, as we told them of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

On one occasion we tried to get into conversation with some Brahmans who were noted for their hostility to the Gospel. They were very rude, shouting out, "We won't hear! we don't want to hear! We long ago inquired into our religion and found it all right! We don't want yours!"

One of them was especially violent. Sitting on his doorstep, he vehemently abused us, and when I quietly approached to talk with him he sprang up with a yell, rushed into his house, and closed the door with a bang—to the great amusement of the people gathered round. This he did twice. Some of the others seemed a little ashamed of this demonstration and began to listen quietly, only objecting that it did not matter much what we believed, if only our faith was firm and steadfast. One of them boldly declared that through his faith in Rama he had been lifted up and enabled to fly in the air like a bird!

Afterwards, at the tent, another of them came and propounded to us the following questions, one after the other ;—

1. Do not Christians worship images ?
2. Are they not divided into various sects ?
3. Why should all, including Muhammadans, be wrong, and only Christians right ?
4. Is it not sufficient to believe that there is one God ?
5. Why should Jesus die a cruel death ?

To this last question, an old man who sat close by listening attentively to all our conversation, to my great surprise and pleasure gave a most emphatic answer, "Did not the Jesus Swami bear it all for our sins? Have you not understood that?"

In this place we constantly met with the most bigoted pride and determined hostility. Many of them were the gurus and pandits of the Rajah, who hold land from him as gift land, in return for which they are supposed to render service in various ways.

These men would set themselves to interrupt us, shouting out all kinds of questions, such as, "Tell us, first, who is God? What is He? How is He perceived? By what sense?" and so on. At the word "sin" they again shouted, "What is sin? Who made it? What is your Bible to us? It gives no answer to these questions!"

Pointing to the people gathered round, we explained that the sacred writing called the Bible was intended for them as well as for the learned, and was so simple and plain, that all might learn from it the way of salvation.

At this, they looked round on the crowd with gestures of the most ineffable contempt, and laughed out, "These people! these are mere cattle who know nothing! Can you teach them?"

All our appeals to them to speak courteously, or to listen quietly, were laughed to scorn, and borne down by a torrent of abusive words. However, at last, seizing an opportunity of a little quiet, we rapidly told the Bible message, calling men to repentance and faith in Christ, and so took our leave of them.

One feels almost frightened at such an exhibition of human pride and wilfulness, and for long one is unable to get rid of the impression made by the sight of these strong, healthy-looking men mockingly defiant of the most momentous truths, and arrogating to themselves with imperious vanity the position of gods amongst the people around them. They appear to be the very opposites of those who, "becoming as little children, enter into the kingdom of heaven." In place of the desire to learn and teachableness of the child, there is the most dogged opposition to anything that does not agree with their own conceptions; in place of humility, the most offensive pride; and in place of reverence for truth and God, the most daring and impious effrontery.

All this is no slight trial to one's faith. One cannot help asking, Why does not God vindicate, in some way, His own honour against such blasphemies? Yet even with the question the answer will come, in part at least: What are these men, what are we all, in His sight, but children? and our understanding of Him, and of His ways, is so very very small. He has compassion on us, bearing long with our rude and foolish thoughts of Him, and ever teaching us by the glories of His creation and by the dealings of His Providence. Some day, it may be, these men will repent and turn to Him, and so glorify His tender mercy. If not, then, the Gospel proving "a savour of death unto death" to them, they must perish.

At another village a young Brahman, in company with several others, opposed us in a similarly rough fashion. He was a fine young man, with good head and features, and beautiful large eyes, clever and argumentative, and able to quote from his *shastras* at every turn. But how sadly blinded he seemed, and yet so wilful in his blindness; declaring God to be utterly unknowable one moment, and the next minutely detailing His attributes, and professing to explain His nature, as though he, the speaker, were the creator, and the Almighty but a created being. What ability and even eloquence there was in his talk! Yet it was easy to see that he resolutely closed his eyes to any truth that clashed with his own predetermined philosophy.

His chief point was that sin is simply ignorance, the lower animals being so lost in sin as to have no sense of it at all, while men are partially aware of their condition. He declared that as a Brahman he was a part of the Divine Being and wholly sinless. It was with great difficulty we could rouse in him any sense of the pride and folly combined in pretending to such a position. Whenever an argument came home to him, he silenced his own conscience, and sometimes the consciences of his companions too, with some flippant or jeering remark. One had a strange feeling of mingled indignation and pity for such a man, and a wonder as to what could be the real thoughts which must underlie all his insolent speech.

Kokkallu is a tolerably large and most picturesquely situated village. Two lofty hills, crowned with rocks like huge embattled castles, stand behind it to the east, while other hills surround it, more or less, on the west. A temple dedicated to some Saivaite form of worship stands on the nearest height, and they say that in former times condemned criminals were executed by being thrown from the top.

We found the village almost wholly deserted, the people having gone to the sacrifices which were being offered before starting the cultivation of the rice-fields under the tank. The blood of the animals slaughtered must be sprinkled about the fields before the work could be commenced.

A number of Brahmans gathered round us, one of whom acted as spokesman for the rest. He had read the Bible, he said, but found no profit in it. "How could it be proved," he asked, "that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of men? We have as good characters in our sacred books. Christianity only arose in the reign of James the First of England!" and so on.

We replied that Christianity was not a religion in the same sense that Hinduism was. All other religions were the outcome of man's seeking after God, whereas in Christianity Jesus Christ appears as God's answer to that seeking; and Jesus was proved to be the Divine Saviour needed by men, by exhibiting in Himself the four essential elements of Divinity—All-power, All-wisdom, All-holiness, and All-love. Man had often attempted to realize what such a Being must be like, but only when He Himself had come, had the realization been obtained. The gods and lords many of merely human conception had always come short in one or other of these four fundamental points.

The Brahmans heard us quietly, and assented to all we said; but when we left them, they detained the Indian preacher, and endeavoured to visit upon him the wrath it seems they felt towards the missionary. The Indian brother, however, ably held his own, being more than a match for them, proving to them by verses from their own books that he and his fellow-Christians might be the true Brahmans after all, because it



was character, and not the accidents of birth and circumstance, which made the true Brahman.

Seeing a number of shopkeepers and others seated round a young Brahman who was explaining, or pretending to explain, the *Bhagavat Purana*, which one of them was reading line by line, I went up to them, and after listening for awhile, asked what book it was and what it taught.

He replied that it was the *Bhagavatam*, and that it told of God, who was the Almighty One, and of His creating all things, of the number of the seas, etc.

"What seas?" I asked.

"First," he replied, "the sea of salt!"

"Yes," I said, "what next?"

"The sea of sugar-juice!"

"Where is that?" I inquired.

"On the other side of the sea of salt," he replied.

I expressed my doubt of the truth of this, and began a little explanation of the earth's form and surface; upon which he endeavoured to shout me down, and for a while was very hostile; on some of the others remonstrating, however, he listened quietly, and asked me to sit down beside him.

Presently he again broke out into all sorts of objections. "Our gods did exactly the same as your Jesus! You are only talking because you are paid to do it! In reality there is no God at all—the mind only is God! Whatever we believe in is God! A poor ignorant fellow who holds in his hand a bit of wood, and calls it God, is all right, for it becomes God to him. Your Jesus does for you, and our gods for us!"

Nothing we could say would induce him to talk fairly, so at last I rose and said to him, "You have been simply trying to talk us down! If you do not wish to converse, of course I will go away; but if we talk on these great matters we should do so without anger and reasonably. I will quote one verse from your *shastras* to you; if you respect that, I shall know you are not wholly lost to decency and self-respect"; and I repeated the *Gayatri*. He looked a bit ashamed; but laughed



and said, "After all, those are only words!" "Very well," I said, "I can now only conclude that you are not even a true Brahman, for you despise what all Brahmans consider their most sacred text!"

At the Hindu College an elderly man was introduced by the students as desirous of discussing one or two points in Telugu, he being ignorant of English. He declared himself to be an atheist, but said he should like to learn something of Christianity. "What is Christianity?" he asked.

"Shortly, it is the religion of Christ," I replied.

"What, then, is Hinduism?" he inquired.

I answered that probably he would know better than I did, and that I should be glad to hear what of Hinduism he accepted and believed in.

"The *Rig Veda*," he said.

I then went on to describe how the Hinduism of the present day had probably been evolved from the early sun and sky and air worship of the times of the *Rig Veda*, through first the priestly and sacrificial system embodied in the later Vedas; then the various *Laws of Manu*, with the *Upanishads* and philosophies; next the hero and idol worship developed in connection with the great epic poems, the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, etc.; followed again by the *Puranas* and later forms of religious teaching.

To all this my friend agreed, and even corrected some of the students who wished to deny that the teachings of present-day Hinduism were corrupt. He, however, objected that Manu's laws could not have come after the Yajur Veda, because the latter contained some of Manu's sayings.

To this I replied that the chronology was uncertain and unimportant, and it was acknowledged that the text of the Vedas was corrupt.

This led to the question of the inspiration of the Hindu books generally. He admitted that they contained a great deal of apparent nonsense and worse, but said that even this had a meaning which was understood by the wise.

I pointed out that it could not be consistent with God's

wisdom and goodness to place truth in the middle of nonsense, so that it could only be recognized and understood by a very few. The result of such a procedure would be precisely what we see in the case of the Hindus—a general moral deterioration—a fact he had admitted. I asked him to compare these religious books with the Christian's New Testament, which was intended for all, and made easy for all.

He then asserted that there were many people who, though they could not read, yet had a religion, which proved that God gave to each according to his capacity ; and hence each man's religion was right for him.

This was easy to meet ; and then I explained what was meant by salvation—not merely the escaping hell, or sorrowful rebirths in the future, nor even the attaining absorption into the Divine Essence, or the everlasting enjoyment of all manner of delights. It consisted, I said, in the changing of a man's mind and heart from a state of rebellion against God to one of love to Him and voluntary service for Him. This could only be accomplished by God revealing His love to us in some way, and this He had done in Jesus Christ.

This brought down a storm of opposition, the students appearing to be intensely hostile to the very mention of Jesus Christ. My opponent also began to lose his temper, and tried to make out that though I, as a Christian, pretended to be saved from sin, I yet continued to eat meat, and so sinned against God. "The fact is, you Christians know nothing of our Hinduism, which is, after all, the best!" a remark which made even the students laugh. Gradually he recovered his equanimity, and smiled when I said in conclusion, "Well you began by avowing yourself an atheist, and you finish by saying that you are an orthodox Hindu after all!"

A Brahman, holding the office of village Sub-registrar, used often to converse with me. He begins perhaps with a long oration, in a somewhat pompous strain, the substance of which is that every man must work out his own salvation by educating himself and seeking to do what is right.

I said that this was very good theoretically, but that history and experience showed that men inevitably failed in their efforts to save themselves. They might be able to elaborate great systems of philosophy, but without help from the Divine Being their philosophies never saved them from immorality and sin. The question was, Had God come to men's help? and the answer was, Yes, God had come to their help in the person of Jesus Christ the Saviour.

The Registrar replied that there might be other helps, and on my asking him what, he said, "The Vedas."

"What, then," I asked, "is the help given in the Vedas?"

He seemed unable to say, so I remarked that the Vedas only presented a system of mantrams and ceremonies which were really impracticable and useless as a means of salvation from sin.

"Well, then," he said, "there are the *Upanishads*."

"What are they," I replied, "but the very philosophies which you have already admitted to be no true helps to the life of the soul?"

He then simply reiterated his first statement that we must do our best to save ourselves, and, referring to the Hindu system of bodily exercises and austerities, asserted that they were simply intended to be a means of prolonging life, and in order that men might be better able to do good.

"Have they not also," I asked, "a religious character? Are they not intended to effect a union of man with the Divine Being?"

He admitted that it was so. After some discussion of the three Hindu doctrines of Advaitam (which makes man but a part of the One Being), Dvaitam (the existence of two eternal entities), and Vasishtadvaitam (the doctrine of man's present separation from, but ultimate reunion with the Deity), the question arose, How can man attain union with God? I said, "Certainly not, as Hindu philosophers too often teach, by his own efforts, his bodily exercises, alone; the grace of God must come to his aid."

To this the Registrar replied that in this Christianity asked for belief as opposed to reason.

"What, then," I inquired, "is there unreasonable in Christianity? Is the belief in one personal God so?"

"No!" he replied.

"Or that He cares for the creatures who have become separated from Him by their sin?"

"No!"

"Or that He Himself became incarnate to save them?"

"No! But," he asked, "why believe in Jesus Christ? Why not believe in Ramanujachari?"

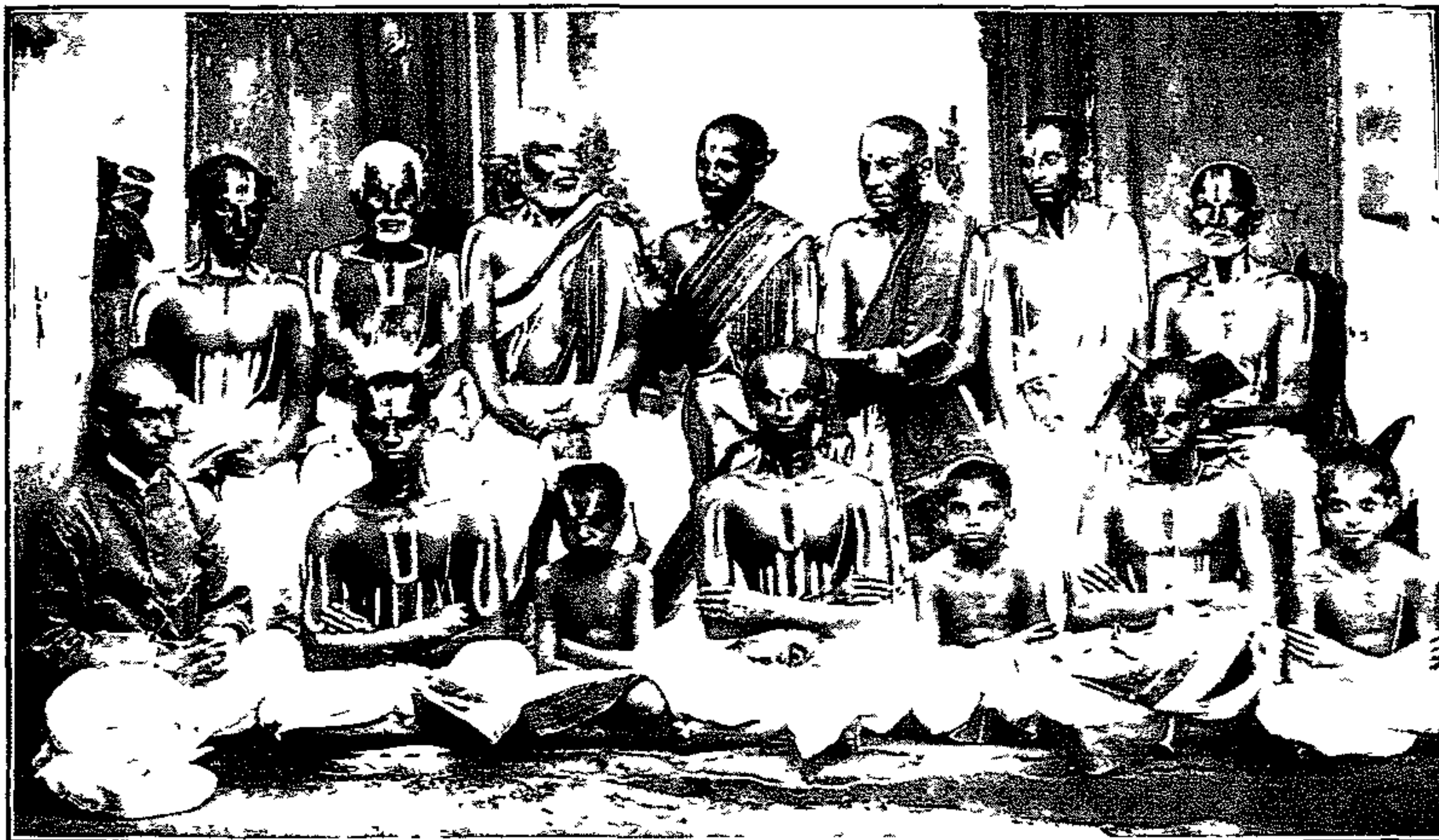
"Certainly," I said, "believe in Ramanujachari that which he says of himself, and which we know him to have been, that he was a reformer and teacher; but Jesus claims to be something more; and a something we need more; for He came not merely to teach or to reform, but to give His life a sacrifice for the sin of the world—a sacrifice which could only be made, as all thoughtful Hindus admit, by a God-man."

At Jagannathpeta, a fine-looking old man, with white hair, acted as spokesman for the rest, and was evidently very anxious, though in a courteous sort of way, to talk us down. The gist of his remarks was that it mattered little what we believed, so long as we had faith in something. Everything was divine, and so would become God to us, if we simply believed in it. At first he said that Govinda was the proper name of their god; then it was Vishnu; eventually it became Siva. One friend of his believed that by taking water into his mouth and spitting it out fifty times he would obtain salvation; another thought that by knocking his hair-knot up and down so many times he would be saved, and so on. "Any plan is good," he said; "but, indeed, there is no certainty anywhere!"

When I replied that there was certainty in believing in Jesus Christ he said, "Well, perhaps at the last, when I come to die, I will call on Jesus and He will come and save me!"

At Maradam I found a number of Vaishnava Brahmans engaged in reading a large old book. I asked them whether they had read the Bible which I had left with them a few





*Photo by F. Paul, Bangalore.*

A DIFFICULT AUDIENCE.

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months before. They said they had read some of it, but were unprepared to give any opinion respecting it. Religion was a thing which took a long time to inquire into.

One old toothless man argued that God was One whatever we called Him.

"But," I said, "God could not contradict Himself. He is holy, and could not be unholy at any time or be cursed for His misdeeds, as Vishnu in some of his incarnations is said to have been."

"Although he was so cursed," the old man replied, "yet it was for a good purpose—the destruction of certain demons."

Then he asked what proof we had that the Bible was greater than other books.

"It bears God's signature," I answered, "in the holiness, wisdom, and love of the character of Him which it reveals."

Then the old Brahman declared that perhaps he did not believe in the existence of a God at all.

"If you think that," I said, "why all these ceremonies? I shall have to believe that you do all these things and teach them to others in order to deceive people and merely to make a living!"

He half admitted that it was even so, and wanted to prove that such was our position also. After this he asked a great many questions, such as, When was Jesus born? What became of all the people before Him? How did God create the world? Of what use were the animals? What is sin? If God is almighty, why does He not create us without sin?

In reply to the last question I said, "We who can hardly see beyond our own little village must not attempt to judge God's methods in His great universe. When His work is finished it will certainly be seen that He has caused the greatest good to come even out of evil. Meanwhile it is our work to co-operate with him in subduing sin, and combating with all our strength its consequent evils."

On coming away I tried to get a promise from them to read the Bible, but the old man would make no promise. I felt half inclined to take it away again, but left it, hoping that some of the younger and more honest among them, some of whom had listened with close attention, would read it.

One Sunday we took some of the school benches into the main street and held a service there. A large crowd gathered and listened well. Afterwards two or three entered into conversation. They tried to show that God is the author of sin as well as of goodness, and even said, in bravado, "Yes, we might worship a god who even lied and was partial and unjust!" But afterwards a spirit of quiet attention came upon them as we showed them how they *needed* Christ—a pure, wise, and loving Saviour giving His life for them.

They urged that they might be induced to love God for many other reasons.

"What reasons?" I asked. "No greater motive can be provided than this, and if this has no influence upon you, you are lost!"

One of them seemed much impressed and asked with earnestness, "How then can I be convinced that Jesus Christ died for me?"

"Let us ask God to convince you," I said. "Kneel with me and we will pray."

They refused to kneel, but stood reverently while I prayed; and then the young man said that he too would pray, and offered a short and good prayer, some of which I felt by the ring of his voice to be sincere; some of it perhaps was directed more against us. He prayed that anything we might have said wrong might be forgiven, and that if we were in wrong paths, we might be led into the right. Altogether the prayer pleased us much—the first time, I think, I ever heard a Hindu really pray.

## CHAPTER VII

### TALKS WITH ENGLISH-SPEAKING TELUGUS

MANY Telugus have now received something of an English education, having been students in missionary or Government or Hindu high schools and colleges. It must be borne in mind, however, that after all they form but a very small fraction of the whole population.

Many of them drift away from their Hindu religious moorings, some developing a cynical atheism, some becoming wholly indifferent to the claims of religion, some taking a theistic position, even accepting Jesus as the highest and best teacher ; a few more or less openly acknowledge themselves Christians.

The pride with which some of these young men will air their English is very noticeable and not a little amusing.

A young Brahman came to speak to me in my garden, and, seeing me engaged in digging up a number of old bottles, said, with an air of amazing dignity, " Why are you tormenting your body in order to remove those *veals* (vials) ? " I asked him to come and help me, but he refused, saying that hands were made for books and writing, for feeding and washing oneself, not for such mean work ; we should get " common coolies " for that.

By way of beginning conversation, I asked him why he wore beads round his neck. He replied that they were used as a help in prayer, by which I found he meant the repetition of certain Sanskrit words, the meaning of which he was very doubtful of.

Then we talked of the comparative value of the Vedas and the Bible ; and he gave the story of Krishna's hiding the clothes of the shepherdesses while they were bathing—" the incarna-

tion of joviality" he called it—without the slightest feeling, apparently, that such a story was utterly opposed to all ideas of the purity of the Divine Being.

In the Mission School I referred to the pride of a Brahman who refused to take a book from the hand of a low caste man.

One young man replied, "It was not pride! Would the elephant receive anything from the dog?"

"Yes, certainly," I said, "if the dog brought anything which the elephant required."

"Well, would you eat with your left hand?"

"Yes, and so would you if your right was gone!"

"Well," was asked again, "your sister is a woman, but could you marry her?"

"No," I replied; "because all law, both of nature and of revelation, forbids it; whereas there is no such law against one man receiving anything from the hand of another."

The students, while acknowledging that many of the fruits of Hinduism, such as the follies of the festivals, the performance of sati, and the system of caste, were bad, yet said they would join in the festivals for the sake of the fun, and observe the rules of caste in deference to custom. Some, however, said that they intended to return to the pure Hinduism of their Aryan forefathers, and endeavour gradually to emancipate themselves from the bondage of caste. I pointed out that the Hinduism of the Vedas, which they proposed to study, contained very little that would help them in their difficult task, and begged them meanwhile to read the New Testament and offer prayer to God for guidance.

This led to a talk about prayer. They argued that it was quite enough if prayers were presented as offerings, with flowers, etc. I said that they must have definite requests to make, and that the all-important thing they needed to long for and pray about was the forgiveness of sin, and the gift of eternal life.

They replied that their *Puranas* gave them assurances respecting these great blessings; but when I asked for proof of

this, they could not give it. They then asked me how they should pray, and I offered to pray with them there and then, if they promised to remain quiet and reverent.

They at first demurred, some saying that I should not be praying to the god they meant.

I replied that there was but one God who could hear our prayers—He who was the Almighty Maker and Ruler of the world, ourselves, and everything. As I was coming away, the lads again asked me to pray; so getting their promise to be quiet, I knelt down and prayed with them and for them. They were perfectly quiet and solemnized, and a good impression was evidently made upon their minds.

Reading the Bible with a class of young men in the Hindu College at Vizianagram, I had to contend at the outset with a very ungenerous and hostile spirit. They were determined to find fault with every word. As we had taken up the subject of the creation, they insisted that since mention is made in Genesis of "confusion" and "emptiness," these must therefore be considered as the first creations of God, who must hence be looked upon as the author of confusion, etc. In short, they were bent on pushing the theory of the verbal inspiration of the Scripture to its logical issue, which would reduce the Bible to a bundle of absurdities. However, after I had explained that the Bible was not a treatise on philosophy, or on history, or on poetry, though it might contain something of all these, but that it simply told of God's dealings with men through the Jewish race, in order to their salvation, the students became more tractable; the reading proceeded more smoothly, and it was pleasant to note the passing away of the foolishly hostile spirit which had animated them.

One of them read a short essay, which seemed to be a collection of sentences from various English writers, referring to Hindu castes. It spoke of the *Puranas* as not being the accepted religious book of the Hindus, and concluded with some remarks on the novelty of Christianity.

This was followed by another essay, read by a young man of sensual appearance, which contained nothing but abuse of missionaries and their work. In it was embodied a dialogue between two students who were supposed to have become Christians, one telling the other that he has embraced Christianity because he had been promised a European girl in marriage, etc. The essayist also spoke of the missionaries as living in comfort, and only succeeding in getting hold of the dregs of the people, and concluded by warning all good Hindus to keep clear of them.

We replied, saying that abuse was no argument. The facts were not such as had been represented ; the essay, so far as it contained truth at all, only showed how some Hindus might seek to become nominal Christians from evil motives, and proved nothing against the missionaries, whose teaching was admittedly pure and good. We pointed out further that while it was the glory of Christianity that it did seek and save even "the dregs of a people," yet it did not stop there. It succeeded not only with the poor and ignorant, but it had won to itself, in all parts of the world, men of the highest station and culture ; and the foremost nations of the world were those who acknowledged Christ as Lord.

Then we gave a simple address on the question, "Is Christ the Son of God?" giving brief illustrations of His power, wisdom, and love. It was very difficult, however, to keep their attention, their one desire being to hear themselves speak English.

When we came away, although they salaamed to us very politely, some of the younger ones relieved their feelings by throwing small stones after us.

The following week the large schoolroom was crowded with the young men to hear two letters which had been received from two Brahmans who had recently been converted and baptized at a neighbouring station.

After reading the letters and showing how they proved that the converts had not taken the step hastily and in ignorance, but were evidently acquainted both with the Hinduism they had left and the Christianity they had embraced, we went on



to explain what *conversion* meant—the change of mind and heart which made the true Christian.

One or two then followed with short speeches, chiefly in ridicule of the idea that the young men could be sincere in their profession of Christianity, and reaffirming the statement that they had only hoped to marry English girls.

After we had replied to these, a tall, well-dressed man arose, and was introduced as a *vakil*, or pleader from the court. He at once commenced a long and abusive speech in Telugu, the chief point of which was that the young men in question could not know Sanskrit, in which Hinduism was locked up, and therefore could know nothing of Hinduism itself. They had only had time to learn a very little of Christianity, and yet wanted at once to induce others to follow them. He then wandered off into low stories in abuse of Christians generally, which were greedily listened to by the lads.

I at length succeeded in stopping him, and asked him to say what he could about Hinduism, as he evidently had no argument to bring forward against Christianity. He admitted that even amongst Brahmans caste was held so rigidly that the different sects could not eat together; and he asked us, "Would you, then, be willing to eat with the new converts?"

"Certainly," we replied, "if they wished it." We then went on to compare Christianity, with its teaching of universal love, with Hinduism, which so divides men; and further pointed out that it was not at all necessary to be acquainted with the Sanskrit of the Vedas, or the whole of the Bible, to discover the truth: a man became a Christian more because his heart and conscience were touched than because of intellectual attainments.

It was then getting dark, and the confusion of many persons trying to speak increased. Stones, too, were being freely flung from outside through the open doors, some of which struck us. On our saying, "This, then, is the last resource of Hinduism!" some of the young men seemed ashamed, and tried to put a stop to the stone-throwing. All the way from the schoolroom to the street, however, it continued, and the yelling and hooting

were loud and fierce. The speech of the vakil had evidently roused all that was base and cruel in them.

The incident, however, turned out for the furtherance of the Gospel. The Principal of the College, hearing of it, inquired into the matter, and punished some of the youths by dismissing or suspending them from the College. On our intercession they were forgiven, and our relations with the students became more friendly than ever.

On another occasion we discussed the doctrine of transmigration.

Our first objection to the doctrine, namely, that it finds no confirmation in human consciousness or experience, was acknowledged as important; but it was urged that at any rate certain Yogis had asserted their experience of previous existences.

The further objection that it did away with man's freedom of choice and will, the students tried to meet by saying that while men in one existence suffered the results of former acts, they were yet free to originate fresh ones.

"But," I said, "the doctrine is that man's very birth, surroundings, and motives, as well as his acts, are all the result of previous lives."

"An answer will be brought to that objection another time," they replied.

We then showed the injustice which this teaching attributed to God, in that He caused His intelligent creatures to suffer, without permitting them to know the causes of their sufferings, so that they might resist temptations and recover themselves; in answer to which they said, "Suppose a man should, in his sleep, fall over a precipice; there would be no injustice in his suffering the pain caused by his fall."

Most of the young men admitted that they knew very little as to what the doctrine really involved, and wanted us to explain it. We concluded the discussion by saying that Christianity, though not a philosophy, yet showed a more excellent way. Transmigration condemned all men to an interminable round of existences; even Brahmans, who were supposed to be on

the highest plane, were far from reaching the goal of perfection—it had only been attained, according to the Hindu idea, by a very few Yogis or saints. The inequalities of our present existence need not be referred for explanation to the past; Christianity pointed to a future judgement, when all mysteries of this nature would be explained and apparent inequalities rectified. Christianity further insisted upon the freedom and responsibility of men, who were able to make full choice of good or evil. To help men in their choice, God had sent His Son, the Holy Helper; and when once the choice of right is made, man becomes a nobler, wiser, stronger being than he could ever have been without the experience of evil.

One of them objected to eternal damnation as a penalty for a finite creature's fault; to which I replied that the penalty is only *final*, and in that sense *eternal*, when the choice of evil becomes final and so eternal.

One of the essays thus read betrayed much ignorance. It spoke of the "helpless missionaries coming over to India with one face for the learned and another for the grass-sellers"; and, comparing the faith and charity of the Bible with those of Hinduism, it asked in what was the former superior. Where were such pious ascetics and Yogis to be found as in India? Where such charity? Do not the pious Hindu women feed Brahmans every day? Was it not well known that the Hindus pray three times a day, while the English only pray twice? and in the recent Queen's Jubilee festival, while at all the temples and mosques prayers were offered on the Queen's behalf, the English did nothing of the kind. The essayist begged the missionaries to give up what they must have found to be unprofitable work, and betake themselves to temperance reform and the like.

In reply we said that missionaries were quite willing to do what they could in temperance and other work, but could not give up the preaching of the Gospel, which was not so unprofitable as he supposed. While acknowledging and rejoicing over all the good taught by the various religions of the world, the missionaries felt that men needed some grand motive power

to incite them to the<sup>r</sup> right, and this was only to be found in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And this help and stimulating power was needed by the learned and unlearned alike, as much by the "grass-buyers" as by the "grass-sellers."

After this, the subject of Theosophy came up for discussion, suggested by the visit a little while before of Colonel Olcott. It was plain, from the contradictory accounts the students gave of the Colonel's address, that he had been but little understood. One of them claimed for him that he had become a Brahman, believing in Karma, etc. ; but when I asked if, then, he (the speaker) would *eat* with this new Brahman, he gave a very doubtful "Yes!" and the feeling of the others present was decidedly against him.

The subject of Buddhism was also taken up. One young man constituted himself the champion of Buddhism, and said he thought that the extinction of evil desires would be salvation, and that if certain laws were laid down for the doing of what is right, men would do the right, and so attain the salvation spoken of.

I said I should be glad if they all became Buddhists to the extent indicated by the young man's remarks, but endeavoured to show that the sense of love to God and confidence in Him must be recovered, and so our nature renewed before right thoughts and actions would come.

He said he understood what I meant, and that he did not wish to be a Buddhist, but only to know the truth.

I told them of the many in England who were longing to hear of their turning to the truth of God, and the young man said, most seriously and earnestly, "Well, there are many amongst us secretly turning towards it, and perhaps before very long many will openly acknowledge it."

Another paper was given on "The Conversion of the People to Christianity." It was written in grotesque English, asserting that people are unable to judge as to the respective merits of various religions ; that therefore it is a great sin to disturb their minds with questions on the subject ; and that the European nations try by force or by fraud to compel others to become Christians.

The other students, however, at once declared that the latter statement was untrue.

The essayist then went on to say that whatever Jesus Christ was said to be able to do for Christians, "God" could do for the Hindus.

"Whom do you mean," I asked, "when you say God?"

"Vishnu," he replied.

"What incarnation of Vishnu?"

He seemed somewhat ignorant of Vishnu's incarnations, but at length said "Krishna, who," he explained, "revealed God to us so as to help us in our prayers."

"In what way," I asked again, "can the foolish stories of Krishna—of some of which it is a shame even to speak—help us?"

"Oh," replied one, quoting a Sanskrit verse, "if at the moment of death you say 'Krishna! Krishna!' all sin will be forgiven, and you will be transported to heaven."

"Then," I said, "I may sin as much as I please, for I can save myself, just at the last moment, by merely repeating the name of Krishna!"

The students were ashamed at this, and said they did not quite mean that.

I then pointed out how salvation comes to us through Jesus Christ, who made an atonement for us by the sacrifice of Himself. The class became deeply interested as I spoke on this theme, and especially as I told of the agony of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane. One, however, said that if Christ thus suffered for all, then all must be free.

"No," I replied, "for what God wants in us is a change in our hearts towards Himself; and that only takes place when we believe in the Christ."

"Why can't God change my heart?" he inquired.

"There are three things," I replied, "which it seems possible for God to do with you. First, He may change your nature, and take from you the freedom of choice which is your distinguishing mark as a man; but that would not be salvation. Second, He may keep continually punishing you for your sin; but that also would not be salvation. Third, He may atone for

your sin in such a way as to exhibit to you at once His love for you and His hatred of all sin, and so move you to turn again to Him in love. This He does in Jesus Christ, and this is salvation."

The students were very attentive throughout this explanation. One or two of them asked almost in the words of Scripture, "What must we do to enter the Kingdom of God?"

In one of the classes, one of the young men made a long speech in which, after relating at length some of the miracles of Christ, and admitting that these could only have been performed through divine power, he went on to say that we had often come and addressed them, but we must not think that we had made any impression upon them; and advised us to adopt a different plan, pointing out the specific faults of Hinduism and the peculiar advantages of Christianity.

To this we replied by saying that his very speech showed that our teaching had made a considerable impression upon them; for a year ago not one of them would have been able to tell so much about Jesus Christ, nor have spoken so reverently and well of His claim to be divine. As to exposing the faults of Hinduism, we said that we very much preferred to dwell specially upon that which was almost lost sight of in Hinduism, but which constituted the glory of Christianity—the doctrine and the fact of an adequate atonement for sin.

All listened quietly to this; only one tried to give a different turn to the conversation by referring to the kindly character of Hindus as compared with Christians. "Hindus," he said, "are unsurpassed for their kindness, even to animals, never even killing an ant."

"No," we answered, "they will not kill an ant in theory, but in practice they half starve much bigger animals, torture cows and bullocks, indulge in cruel cock-fights and ram-fights, and soak the ground with the blood of their many sacrifices."

Two of these young students seemed particularly thoughtful and interested, and paid me a farewell visit just before I left the town. They spoke very much from the agnostic



standpoint, asserting that the existence of God could not be proved.

I replied that the Bible itself declared that man by wisdom could not find God ; but that there is a Supreme Being, an intelligent Ruler of the Universe, all nature witnessed.

One of them then said, "Suppose a number of rupees fall down—some fall one way, some another ; there is no sign of plan or purpose there."

"To you," I replied, "there may not appear any such sign ; but are you so omniscient as to be able to assert that there certainly is no such plan or purpose ? Is there no sign of purpose in those parts of the universe which you can observe ? "

"Yes, of course there is," he answered.

"Then surely," I continued, "it is reasonable to believe that intelligent purpose may be in existence even where we cannot see it or prove it."

"But," he objected, "it is inconceivable that God interferes in such small matters."

"Not at all," I replied, "for to God nothing can be either small or great in our sense of the words—all is equally important to Him ; and if man can 'interfere,' as you term it, with the phenomena of the world around him, surely a greater and higher Being may be able to do so also, and that in ways unknown to us."

The young man argued then that force and matter, upon which force acts, are but forms of the same thing ; and yet was obliged to admit that the properties of "force" were the direct contraries of those of "matter."

"How then," I asked, "can such contraries be said to be parts of one and the same thing ?"

Afterwards I went on to speak of Jesus Christ as the Great Revealer of the Unknown and Incomprehensible God, in whom we might see something at least of the Divine Power, Wisdom, Holiness, and Love.

"The fact and the trouble is that men do not wish to know God ; hence they close their eyes to the beautiful vision of Jesus Christ."

On leaving, these young men showed great friendliness, one

of them holding my hand a long time, as though loath to part with me.

It was noticeable how the members of this class fell off in their attendance as they began to be roused into earnestness. It was evident that they felt themselves to be on dangerous ground, and therefore endeavoured to shirk the responsibility involved in facing the truth. Some among them had definitely grasped the thought of Jesus having made atonement for the sin of man ; but they tried to use it as an argument for continuing in sin. We accordingly dwelt much on the moral power of such an exhibition of God's hatred of sin and love to men, and also on the purity of that Spirit which Christ imparts to those who are believers in Him. This gradually silenced them, so that intellectually they became convinced. All that was needed was that yielding to the Divine impulse which would issue in the open acknowledgment of their change of thought and belief.

After the students have finished their education in the schools and colleges, they usually endeavour to obtain employment under Government, and accordingly we often meet with them holding various positions of trust and usefulness in the country. Some of them are wise enough to continue their studies, and are always ready to converse with the missionary when they meet with him. Some retain the good impressions they received in their youth in Mission Schools, or elsewhere ; many become careless, and many hardened in heart amidst life's cares and temptations.

Visiting one who held the post of Sub-magistrate, we found him a very good English speaker and a very polite and kindly disposed man. He said he had been educated in our Mission School, and had been a great favourite with the missionary there, from whom he had learned much. He said that though not a Christian, he was not an idolater, nor even a Hindu according to the Hinduism of the present day. He admitted that he was a sinner, but took refuge, in an indirect manner, in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, according to which

every man, sooner or later, receives the due reward of his actions.

We remarked on the terrible character of this doctrine, which practically takes a man out of the hands of an all-wise God and consigns him to a stern fate. Moreover, the past history of the peoples who are believers in it shows that they deteriorate rather than improve ; consequently it presents no very hopeful outlook.

He admitted that those who seemed likely to ascend in the scale of being were very few in number, but he said, "Some teach that Christianity is even a worse system of doctrine, since it gives man but the alternative—he must go either to heaven or to hell."

"Well," we replied, "but transmigration appears to mean little else but hell ; whereas in Christianity we are brought into direct relationship with God, who gives to every man an opportunity of finally choosing either Himself or sin. No man is condemned because of his actions, or even of his sins merely, but because of his final rejection of God's offer to help and save him."

He then said that he had been almost persuaded into open profession of the Christian faith, but happened to go on a visit to his grandfather, who explained to him from the Hindu *shastras* that there can be no need of a mediator between God and man, because the life of God, though it may be only as a spark, is to be found in every man, and he has only to fan this spark into a flame by making certain efforts, and he will realize God. Idolatry and all connected with it he condemned utterly, designating it by the expressive English word "bosh." He, however, could not give me any clear statement of the way in which the divine spark in a man may be fanned into a flame ; and he listened attentively to all I said of the great revelation of God given to us in Jesus Christ. He admitted the freedom of man's will, the need of an atonement, and the beauty of the character of Christ.

This Sub-magistrate was succeeded by another who also had been educated in our Mission School.

He asked us why we considered Hinduism to be of merely human origin and not divine.

We gave him three reasons: First, Because of its local character—it being evidently an outgrowth of the Hindu mind, and wholly ignoring the world at large; second, because of its attempts at religious philosophizing; and, third, because of its inconsistencies and immoralities.

“Moreover,” we said, “Hinduism shows its human origin in that it is a religion of works, men thinking to obtain merit (and so salvation) by their religious acts.”

The Sub-magistrate denied this, and referring to idolatry, said, “The true Hindu does not believe that the idol before him, and the flowers with which he dresses it and the prayers he makes, will save him. It is his faith in the one God which will be his salvation; and after a time he will dispense with all these outward aids to devotion.”

We replied that we were glad to hear him thus speaking of the one true God, and of faith in Him; but we reminded him that thousands who regarded themselves as true Hindus would *not* speak in such a way, but trusted rather in their idols and the ceremonies connected with them. Further, as he had asked us to say in what Christianity was better than Hinduism, we said, “In this very thing amongst others, that whereas Hinduism only supplies men with speechless images of various forms as helps to their devotion, or at best the strange and even evil stories which those images represent, Christianity gives us the Christ, the express image of God’s person, a pure, holy, loving Being, One who is not speechless, but who gives, both by His recorded words and by His Spirit within us, comfort and counsel. We have in Christ not only an image or concept of God worthy of our meditation, and such as no human mind could invent, but one which is at the same time connected with the great work which was needed to be accomplished on our behalf—the making of an atonement for our sin. There is nothing in the teachings of Hinduism which can compare with this.”

The Sub-magistrate said he thought he could find some similar passages in Hindu books, and promised to look for them.

Then he referred to bathing as another meritorious act, but said that of course to the true Hindu the bathing with water was only symbolical of the cleansing of the soul from the stains of sin ; and he endeavoured to show that in a similar way true Hinduism was free from all those unworthy practices which were commonly believed to belong to it.

I replied, "Very good ! Christ as the one Saviour claims all that is good everywhere, whether amongst Englishmen or Hindus, and if you turn from all that is useless and wrong towards that which is good and right, you are simply turning towards Christ. But remember that without Him you can complete nothing. He alone gives to us such a revelation of God's hatred of sin, and of His love for the sinner, that men are constrained from rebellion to obedience and love. Nowhere else can the motive-power to a really new and holy life be found."

"This is too material an idea for the true Hindu," he said. "If a man simply prays to God, that is enough. God produces in that man a sense of His goodness."

"How ?" I asked.

"By means of the beauties and blessings of nature," he replied.

"But," I said, "we go to God as sinners, and cry to Him for some assurance of His forgiveness and of His help—in one word, for salvation. What answer does nature give us to this cry ?"

"If God simply says 'You are forgiven,' is not that enough ?" he inquired.

"No !" I said ; "for God's Word has gone forth, linking death with sin ; and unless He Himself intervene, this death with all its terrors and sorrows must be our portion. He is not like man, who will say, one moment perhaps, 'This criminal must die,' and the next forgives him. God has brought into existence a marvellous network of causes and effects which work against all sin ; and if we have contracted sin, we must be destroyed by the working of those laws, unless He Himself intervene. No such intervention has ever been heard of except in the life and death of Jesus Christ."



Subsequent conversations with this man only showed a falling away from the simplicity of his first convictions ; and his character, according to abundant external testimony, exhibited a corresponding decadence. He tried to show, sometimes, that Hinduism and Christianity were in their main principles the same, only Christians said that Jesus was the Mediator, whereas Hindus said others ; and he mentioned various names, as *Purnapragna*—words meaning All-wisdom, etc. Then he argued that if ordinary Hinduism was bad, so was ordinary Christianity, and lastly he said that since it was undeniable that some old ascetics and others had obtained salvation apart from Christ, therefore Christ was unnecessary.

To this last I replied that such good men, if any there were, were always the first to welcome Christ when He in any way or form came to them.

A court pleader, who spoke English fairly well, said that he believed in the one God, whom the Christians worship as Jesus and the Hindus as Vishnu ; that the main principle of all religions was the same, viz., belief in one God whom we must serve by faith, truth, and love ; but that unfortunately the truth connected with the Hindu form of religion had got locked up in the Sanskrit Vedas.

This, I said, was surely a proof of the human origin of such a religion. God would not hide away truth where it would be impossible for the generality of people to get at it.

Then he said that he could not give up Hinduism because of a certain strong proof of its power which he had received. After studying for a time in his native town, being poor, and unable to go to a higher college, he was wasting his time loitering about the streets, when he was advised to apply to his guru (religious teacher). The guru whispered a mantram into his ear, by the power of which, together with merit obtained by the strict observance of certain rules prescribed by the teacher, he was able to pass all necessary examinations, and so to obtain an excellent situation.

In reply to my questions, he said further that the mantram



could not be told to others, and was only of service when the prescribed rites and ceremonies were carefully performed.

"Well, then," I said, "we come again to the same point. The religion you profess, even in respect of a common earthly good, is open only to a favoured few, who can manage to learn a secret charm and perform certain secret rites. All the rest of the world may perish."

He laughingly admitted that it was so ; and it was evident that his mind, notwithstanding his fine talk, was wholly occupied with thoughts of a low and sordid character.

The postmaster of one small town and others once assembled to have a talk with us. His first question was, "What is Spirit?" which he insisted on as most important ; for he believed, he said, that there was no such thing as man or death ; there was only one great spirit, which was in man, and formed his body, as it formed the various other objects in the universe. This was "force" or "power," and beside it there was nothing anywhere.

"Then is it God who commits sin?" I asked, "or at any rate who has the sense of committing sin?"

"No," he replied ; "I simply say that no such thing exists."

"But," I said, "the universal conscience of man declares that it does. If you kill this child, you will have a consciousness of sin—that is, a sense of having done something you ought not to have done. If I strike you with my stick, you will not only be conscious of discomfort and suffering—you will also have the feeling that I have done an unjust thing ; in other words, that I have sinned !"

At this he went off at a tangent. "What do you mean by *me* and *you*? You are me, and I am you, and all is God !"

I shrank from him as if in horror, and said to all the people, "God is all-holy, wise, and good ; we are weak and sinful ; the greatest of all sins is the pride which says, 'I am God.' This is blasphemy against God Himself, and will surely be fearfully punished unless repented of !"

The people assented, and the man seemed a little ashamed and touched.

Others then wanted to know how sin came, and I gave some explanation, but urged that it was foolish to refuse to come to the Saviour until the origin of sin had been ascertained.

One man asked, "But how do we know that we are sinners? God can do all things, and therefore can sin, if He please; and we may sin also if only we do so for good purposes."

I replied that God cannot sin, for in so doing He would contradict Himself, which is an impossibility. In conclusion, I begged them to pray that true enlightenment might be granted them.

The postmaster said that he did pray, asking for forgiveness of sin, and so on.

"Why," I said, "just now you said you believed there was no such thing as sin!"

"Oh," he replied, "that was only for argument's sake."

"Ah," I said, "those are crooked ways in which to walk; they will lead you astray! Hold to the truth, and to that only, if you would save yourself and those who hear you."

A police inspector, paying me a visit, first saw my servant, and wanted to know from him why his master went about on this *mad business* of teaching people: why couldn't he let them alone? With me he was very polite—a fine big man, dressed in some respects like a European.

He was willing to admit that it was "the desire of every man to go into the presence of the Lord Almighty, to live in happiness."

"But," I inquired, "are men fit to go there?"

"Some are, and some are not," he rejoined.

"How many are?" I asked.

"Well, most are irrational—fools," he answered.

"Men are not fools," I said, "so much as sinners, and all are sinners."

"Yes," he said; "but some commit only little sins, others great ones, and their punishment will be accordingly."

"To men," I replied, "sins may be small or great, but to God they are all as one, since they indicate a heart at enmity with Himself. Now, how can this enmity be removed, and a new

disposition implanted? Certainly not by the reading or hearing the stories of Vishnu, or by the foolish rites of worship accorded to Siya, or to the village goddess, but by knowing and believing what God has done for us through the one Saviour."

It is impossible to give an adequate idea of the pride and cunning which were apparent in this man's demeanour and conversation. He would hardly hear me out in anything, but went on with some foolish question, adding all manner of fulsome flatteries of us, deprecating my supposed anger, and so forth. At last I bade him take leave, rising and speaking to him as earnestly as I could, urging him to beware of trifling with the patience and goodness of God.

An educated Hindu, after attending a Sunday morning service, came to me and said, "Sir, I have some doubts. You said that death is the result of sin, yet we see some good people dying early while others, who are bad, live long."

"True," I replied, "still all die; and just as we cannot see the laws which govern electricity, causing a storm to break out now here and now there, so we cannot see the workings of sin and its consequences, as they appear here, there, and everywhere, causing men to die. The Bible declares this law in the words, 'Death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,'"

"But," he said, "suppose we do not acknowledge any *book*. I prefer to go by general principles, therefore do not refer to the Bible."

"Very well," I replied; "what general principles do you acknowledge? Do you believe that all men are sinners?"

"Yes."

"That God loves sinners?"

• He hesitated, but at length said "Yes."

"How do you come by these two general principles?"

"By talking with others, and by thinking and observing," he answered.

"Have you not also *read* the thoughts of others in books? Would not a letter from a friend be equivalent to talking?"

"Yes."

"And supposing that God wished to speak with us about anything, He must either talk to us or communicate with us by means of writing?"

"Yes."

"Well, then," I said, "we may add to our general principles that God may perhaps thus communicate with us."

"Admitted," he replied.

"I believe, notwithstanding your previous statement, you accept the *Rig Veda* as a revelation from God, do you not?"

"Yes," he said; "I do."

"And yet," I continued, "the *Rig Veda* is very much inferior to the Bible in that it says nothing concerning one of your general principles—that God loves men and seeks to save them."

"I acknowledge it," he said.

"Further, though perhaps you may gather from the Veda something of what you ought to be and do, it furnishes you with no commanding motive or impulse, *enabling* you to be and to do what you ought. The Bible, on the other hand, does furnish such a motive in the presentation of God's love for sinful man in Jesus Christ."

"I acknowledge," my friend said again, "that there is no history to equal that of Jesus Christ; but why should I come to Him *first*? I may find another and a better way of salvation."

"But why should you come to Him *last*?" I asked. "The world has sought in vain for a better revelation from God. Why delay?"

These thinkers often find themselves compelled to apologize for the sins committed by the gods.

One of them said that he thought the best method in theology was first to prove the existence of God: everything followed upon that. He considered that Jesus, Vishnu, etc., were all equally manifestations of the Deity, but being of a comparatively recent age were not worshipped by philosophical thinkers.

I said that Jesus could not be compared with Vishnu, etc., inasmuch as He was a holy Being, whereas the latter could not be so described.

"But," he replied, "what we call sins are not sins when committed by divine personages."

"If a deed is sinful when committed by a man," I said, "its sinfulness is only enhanced by being committed by one calling himself divine."

"No," he contended; "when by the might of his acts he proved himself divine, deeds which looked sinful must be otherwise explained."

"In such a case," I said, "we should be utterly unable to tell whether the being so acting were a good or an evil spirit. God, the name given to the Divine Being, meant *good*; and if God is anything at all He must be good."

My disputant acknowledged that degradation in worship was certainly always followed by the degradation of the people.

One Sunday I was visited by a clerk from the Collector's office. After some conversation he abruptly asked me, "Is it true that the Lord Jesus is about to favour us with a visit? It is said in the papers that some Christian in Tinnevelly has had a vision of Jesus coming to him, and telling him that He meant to favour the earth with a visit in September. I think it will be a good thing if He does come, for there is much wrongdoing and sin in the world which need correcting." He said this in the most indifferent tone of voice, as though he were speaking of some new Collector coming to the district.

I asked him if he were ready if Jesus Christ should come.

He said he believed in the truth of Christianity, but that there were too many difficulties in the way of openly confessing it, and he gave as an illustration the case of a Christian munsiff, who, he said, when lying ill, could not get a single person to go near him to attend to him.

I urged on the young clerk the importance of seeking the kingdom of God and eternal life, in view of which the difficulties he spoke of appeared utterly insignificant.

He agreed with all I said, but his conscience had evidently become seared by his playing fast and loose with convictions. He had been educated, and received many good religious impressions, in one of our Mission Schools.



Another instance of one who had become hardened in sin was that of a police inspector whom I occasionally met with. He was clothed in a complete suit of armour of self-absorbed indifference. Nothing we could say about God, or heaven, or hell, or judgment to come, of love or righteousness, would move him in the least. As soon as I stopped speaking, he would begin to talk upon some wholly irrelevant subject ; pretending that he could read my history by the marks on the palm of my hand—that I had, or tried to have, “two wives,” “three childrens,” etc., or he requested me to tell the stories of Siva or of Vikramarka. He scrupulously endeavoured to keep me in good temper ; but it seemed as though he could not give his mind to anything true or serious.

A similar case was that of a fat, self-complacent individual, who disliked all trouble, and who frankly acknowledged that he was far too busily engaged in making money to bother himself about religious matters. “Colonel Olcott had proved Christianity to be bad, and Hinduism to be good ; and *Colonel* Colenso had proved the English Bible to be false. All religions, like the radii of a circle, tended to their centre, God,” etc.

When we replied that if all religions thus tended to a common centre they would show a tendency also to harmonize, he refused to argue further, and piteously deprecated our breaking in upon his peace with such profitless questions.

On one occasion a meeting for educated Hindus was called, to which we were invited, to listen to a paper by one of the Hindu College masters. The paper was a very long one, running over a great variety of subjects.

The essayist began by saying that “they were all deeply grateful to the missionary for his disinterested work amongst them, braving (as he did) the heat of a country where men are broiled four months of the year, baked four months, and spend the remaining four months in trying to get cool—a climate which only insects and undertakers enjoy.

“The benign rulers of the land, pitying the unfortunate Hindus going to eternal perdition, have kindly sent the missionaries to teach them the way to heaven.



“What do these missionaries say? In brief, they say that the Bible only is God's Word, and Jesus only the world's Saviour. This is something very novel to the Hindu, who has his own sacred and ancient religion; moreover, it includes an offer of strange things for his belief: as, for example, the extraordinary assumption that all men are sinners because of Adam's fall!

“Now, every man has some religion in name, although in reality he may have but little; and in speaking of religion, two great questions arise. First, who or what is God? and second, is there a future state?

“First, with regard to God and the origin of the world. It is said that God created the world; but this must be followed by another question, Who then created God? If it is answered, He created Himself, what need is there to speak of Him at all? Why not be satisfied to say, We don't know! Even the researches of modern scientific men have thrown no new light on the subject. Paley's argument from design is by all thoughtful men considered unsatisfactory, as it is impossible to argue from experience respecting matters of which we have no experience whatever.

“Second, as to the question, What comes after death? A European is not more likely to know than a Hindu. There are said to be three principal revelations—the Bible, the Koran, and the Vedas; and by the Vedas I mean the *Srutis*, *Smrutis*, and *Puranas*. Now, if these were really divine, they would be perfect; but we know very well they are not. If the Bible were perfect, whence so many divisions amongst Christians? It is well known that in London, on Sundays, in the parks, the Tories will have their preacher in one place, the Whigs in another, the Atheists in another, and the Orthodox in another.

“The stories in the Bible are open to many objections; it is enough to say that Scripture is but scripture, or writing—something of human origin, and therefore full of defects. Think of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which the Bible is said to teach! A Roman Catholic is taught to believe that the bread and wine over which the priest repeats some words actually

becomes the body and blood of Jesus Christ ! Perhaps few of us go to our temples, but if we did we should not go to eat our God ; our endeavour would rather be to feed him. Still, perhaps there is something to be said for a religion which gives something to eat and drink in its churches.

“ With regard to Vishnu's incarnations, we believe in them as evidencing God's willingness to help men. The stories about them are myths revealing the self-sacrifice of the gods.

“ Again, there is the doctrine of the Trinity in unity, which Christians are asked to believe. This does violence to all our notions of arithmetic, as the miraculous birth of Christ does violence to our notions of the possible.

“ Thus indeed we may go on finding faults and defects in all the so-called revelations. The natural argument is the only plausible one—the instinctive belief that this universe must have had an Author ; though there are objections even to that. Is this world in any sense perfect ? Why does its Author tolerate its evils ? If He can remove them, and does not, then He is not All-wise and All-good : if He cannot remove them, then He is not Almighty.

“ Religion is simply that which binds us together in societies ; it is a system of rules to keep order. In the Bible are the Ten Commandments, in which, however, the negatives predominate. Christ's sermons also contain the best and highest morality. Society forms its codes of law, and does its best to promote order and morality ; but finding it difficult to overawe all kinds of men, it invents the religious ideas of a future life, etc., and holds out spiritual as well as social rewards and punishments. The Hindu, believing in the after-life, feeds his departed relative, whereas the Christian is content to feed the survivors at the funeral feast. Heaven and hell, being but human inventions, are described according to the modes of thought and life current amongst different peoples. Thus the Christian has his paradise of flowers and flowing streams ; the Muhammadan his feasting and *houris* ; the Hindu his sensuous *Svargam* for the lower classes and his ethical *Moksham* for the more cultivated Brahmans.

“ The missionaries are without doubt good men, but they

should go to countries where there are cruel and superstitious practices to be swept away, and not trouble themselves to come to the Hindus, who are a civilized and enlightened race. We do not want the religion which the missionaries seek to bring us, but we are glad of their help in giving us a good secular education.

"In conclusion, we may sum up the whole matter by simply believing and asserting that his religion cannot be wrong whose life is in the right."

After the essayist had finished, a pleader from the court rose and said a few sensible words, in a manly way, deprecating the effort of the writer to throw dirt upon all religions alike. Rather, he said, we should carefully inquire into the points thus raised, and try to discover the truth. The missionaries did not come to force them to be Christians, but begged them to consider what was true.

Another also said a few words, and then my colleague spoke. He said that so many points had been taken up by the essayist it was impossible to reply to them all. He would confine himself to the question of the future life. The three great religions of the world might be taken to be Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Brahmanism offers for the future a succession of births, with ultimate absorption into the Deity; Buddhism offers us final annihilation; Christianity offers us something infinitely better than either of these. It declares that God has bestowed upon men the gift of personal life, and this life may be made holy through the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, and hence become eternal in the world to come. The heaven of the Christian is not a mere paradise of sensuous delights; it is a place or state of holiness where God, the All-holy, dwells. Hell is not mere fire; it is the being without the sense of the Divine presence, the being left to the fruit of one's own doing.

After this we were thanked for coming to the meeting, and then I said a few words. I complimented the writer of the essay on his command of the English language, "but," I went on, "I must very strongly protest against the flippant tone of the whole paper, its lack of earnestness and devoutness in discussing matters of such great interest and importance. More-

over, his flippancy led the author into mistakes ; as, for example, the statements that missionaries were sent out by the rulers of the land and that the doctrine of transubstantiation was taught by the Bible, together with the very mixed character of his remarks on the divisions amongst Christians."

Referring to what he had said about the fall of man through the sin of Adam, I replied : " No doubt some such theory is held by Christians generally, and it is borne out by all modern researches into the mysteries of heredity ; but apart from all speculations as to the origin of sin, the missionaries are surely right in emphasizing the fact that men *are* sinners, and have fallen away from some ideal state. If there is one mistake greater than another, it is that into which so many Hindu teachers have fallen, the mistake of thinking lightly of sin, of considering it more a misfortune than a fault. Christ and His followers give wider scope and deeper meaning to the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament, declaring that man must love God with all his soul, and his neighbour as himself, and they give, therefore, a deeper significance to the idea of sin."

Passing on to the conclusion of the essay, I referred to what had been said about the use of religion in giving sanction and force to all codes of morality. " All religions teach morality more or less, but where are their sanctions, their enforcements ? What *motives* do they supply ? What, *e.g.*, are the sanctions relied on by Hinduism ? Its religious books only contain here and there anecdotes of the gods punishing sin ; in many cases even the gods themselves are said to be guilty of sin. Hence the tendency of the Hindu religion to relax rather than to enforce the morals which are taught. Christianity, on the other hand, enforces its holy teaching by a revelation both of God's holiness and of His love, of His hatred of sin and of His pity for the sinner, in Jesus Christ. A man is not a Christian because of having been born in a Christian country, or because he believes certain doctrines, but because he has come under the influence of this mighty revelation. Christ is to-day working miracles ; for men and women are only being admitted as members of the Christian Church as they profess to be *converted*—changed by this marvellous power of



God. In no other religion can be found not only such true and pure moral teaching, but also such mighty motives to sanction and enforce it."

At a subsequent meeting the writer of the essay delivered himself of similar remarks of a politico-religious character, specially referring to the Government taking money from Hindus to pay chaplains of the Christian religion. We agreed that this was unjust, but said that the people of England were gradually coming to recognize the injustices connected with State establishments of religion, which would ere long be abolished.

Afterwards I gave some further criticism of the school-teacher's previous paper. I said that its sad hopelessness was as striking as its flippancy had been. According to it, nature was imperfect, and therefore there could be no perfect God; religions and revelations were imperfect, and therefore again there could be no God. "It should be remembered," I replied, "that we are not in possession of such perfect knowledge as to enable us to judge respecting the work of the Creator or the revelations He has given of Himself. The universe reveals power and purpose; Jesus Christ reveals power and purpose exercised in love to man; that is sufficient for us. This is a far more reasonable belief than to say the universe created itself, and so to leave it without meaning or purpose of any kind at all."

In reply to the objections made to the Bible on account of the singular stories of the Old Testament, I said, "It must be borne in mind that these early histories are very ancient, and of traditional and even legendary character. We accept them as containing a Divine message for the world, first because of the evident unity of purpose they exhibit, and second because that purpose culminates in the perfect character and work of Jesus Christ. The New Testament is admitted by all scholars to be substantially authentic and true; its invention by either Jew or Greek was an impossibility. This external evidence, combined with the internal, compels its acceptance, and *its* acceptance involves the acceptance, in its own way, of the Old Testament."

In concluding, I referred to the saying, "His religion cannot be wrong whose life is in the right." I said the great question was *whose* life was in the right? As we realize that there exists a perfectly holy God, we realize also that our lives are *not* right, and we crave some religion, some revelation which will show us the means of getting right with ourselves and right with God.

On two successive evenings we were engaged in a singular discussion with a man named Venkata Reddi, who had been educated in our Mission School and afterwards became a ship captain. The discussion was held in the Telugu language in our schoolroom in Vizianagram, and was attended by a large number of people.

It was commenced by a friend of the Reddi standing up and reading a number of rules for guidance in discussion, we were to talk with courtesy, with truth, with fairness, etc.; and then to our surprise he said that as we were about to discuss concerning God, it was proper to begin with prayer, and he read a long piece out of what seemed to be an *Upanishad*, in a sing-song voice. We then said that we would also pray in our way, and one of our Indian preachers offered prayer.

This done, the Reddi produced a formidable-looking paper, from which he proceeded to read a number of objections to the Bible. First, he asked whether we believed that God was an Omnipresent being, or not.

"Yes," we replied.

"What is omnipresence?" he asked.

"The presence in everything, everywhere, of God's power or influence."

Then he bade us turn to Gen. ii. 3, where it is said that the Lord "came down to see," etc., and said that this showed that the God of the Bible did not know all things or inhabit all places.

We replied that throughout the Bible, which is a history of God's dealings with men, God is represented as working, as he does in nature, through means, and as appearing in human form to make known His will or to carry out His designs. These



old narratives were very obscure and brief, but it would seem from them that the Lord occasionally appeared in human form, and in this instance He did so to confound human pride and disobedience.

"Where was the pride?" the Reddi asked.

This we explained, and then he inquired, "What! can God be angry?"

"Yes," we replied; "He is angry with all sin and wickedness, and must punish them."

The ship captain's next question was, "In Gen. iii. 8, God is said to have walked in the garden in the cool of the day, etc.; what sort of a God could this be?"

We replied that the answer given to the first question applied in this case, and this again had to be repeated many times.

Next he quoted a great number of texts both from the Old and the New Testaments, evidently at first quite uncertain himself as to what the point of his objection was. It appeared, however, that he wanted to show that the Bible taught that its religion was intended for one people only—the Israelites, or Jews.

We referred him to the Acts of the Apostles, from which he had been quoting, to show him that Peter and the other Apostles, after preaching to the Jews, when they refused to believe, turned to the Gentiles. We showed also how this had been foretold by the Spirit of God, and commanded by Christ Himself.

In reply the Reddi could only read over and over again Peter's statement that Jesus was the Jews' Saviour, and maintained that this excluded all others. It was useless trying to move him from this, and as it was then getting dark, we rose to go, the audience clapping, though why they did so was not apparent.

The following evening we began in the same way with prayer, and then the Reddi quoted from Mark xvi. 16, Gal. iii. 26, Matt. xvii. 20—the promise that the signs of healing and of being able to escape harmful things should follow those who believe.

We said that the explanation of this might be found in

connection with the very incident quoted by the Reddi himself. In Matt. xvii. 20, some of the disciples of Jesus could not perform a certain miracle, and Jesus said the reason for this lay in their lack of faith. Now faith is in proportion to our knowledge of the Divine will, and we can only work miracles as we perceive the necessity for them, and their consequent accordance with the Divine will. In the early days of Christianity the necessity was clearly seen and the accompanying faith experienced, and the *signs* spoken of did follow those who believed. There was no promise that this state of things should always exist, and gradually, as the religion of Jesus spread and took firm hold in the world, the necessity for these wonders ceased. Yet in a very true sense, though in a different manner, wonderful works "follow those who believe" to-day. For the more a people come under the power of Christianity, the more they show themselves to have the mastery over a multitude of evils, of poisons, sicknesses, evil beasts. Yet more wonderful is it to observe the miracles wrought in the spiritual world by those who believe—the victories gained over sin and evil in the souls of men.

The next matter brought up by the Reddi was the story in Acts xvi. 17 of the girl possessed by the spirit of divination. The girl followed the Apostles, declaring that they were the servants of God, yet, being a divining spirit, it must have known that such conduct would only bring ruin to itself. Hence the story is self-contradictory—false.

We replied that whatever amount of knowledge the evil spirit might have possessed, we may be quite sure that it, in common with all evil spirits, was entirely under the control of God, and in this case it was very likely compelled to bear witness to the truth of the Apostles' mission.

"Then God must be the Author of sin!" he said.

"No!" we answered, "for sin is the choice of wrong, whether we are able to do it or not. Our doings and the doings of all creatures are all under the control of the Divine Being."

A singular difficulty was then made out of Luke xix. 46, Christ driving the people out of the temple. In another place it was said that the Jews cast out of the synagogues those who

did not believe in Jesus ; how therefore could Jesus cast out men who themselves had the power to cast others out ?

Of course this difficulty arose out of ignorance of the words used ; but the Reddi listened most contemptuously to our explanation, merely remarking that he was sure he knew as much about the Jews as we did.

The next subject brought forward was in connection with the knowledge possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Although He is said to have been filled with the Spirit, and so of all knowledge, yet on one occasion He went up to a fig-tree expecting to find fruit when there was none.

We said that it did not necessarily follow from the narrative that Jesus did not know that there were no figs on the tree. The reason for His acting as He did on this occasion was to *give His disciples a lesson on faith*. They were losing heart and courage in following Him, and as they passed along, being hungry, Jesus, who always acted in every respect as a simple man, went to the fig-tree in their company to get fruit. Finding none, He cursed the tree—a proceeding very different from His usual course and no doubt filling His disciples with astonishment. In the evening of the day, as they returned from the city, they saw the tree withered away ; and then they were taught their lesson. “Have faith in God !” In all this we see Jesus acting, as He always did, exactly as a man would act, in hungering, talking, etc., but unlike a mere man, too, in that all He did was done with a view to spiritual ends.

A similar objection was founded on John viii. 59. Christ, knowing that His time was not yet come, yet when the people tried to stone Him, hid Himself from them. Surely if His time was not yet come, no blow could kill Him ; and there was no need for Him to hide Himself from them.

This received an explanation similar to the last. Jesus could, no doubt, have saved Himself by miracle, but He always acted as an ordinary man on all ordinary occasions.

The Reddi then quoted, from John v. 19, Christ's assertion that He never did anything but what He saw the Father do, and said, “Show me that God the Father ever did such things as Jesus is said to have done.”

We answered that Christ and God were one—an answer which evidently took the man by surprise.

"How then," he asked, "was it necessary for Him to receive the Holy Spirit?"

To this we answered that of course to us the nature of God must be a great mystery, but that we believed that God in Christ limited Himself to become a real man, and then afterwards was gradually filled with all the fullness of the Spirit.

Then he referred to Christ forgiving sinners and accepting the penitent thief on the cross, and asked, "Did not Christ say that only those who were baptized as well as believed should be saved? How then could those who had not been baptized be saved?"

We answered that baptism is but a sign—an acknowledgment of Christ's authority. The actual faith and confession are the things necessary to salvation. If possible, the sign should also be given, but if impossible, it is of course not required.

This practically concluded the discussion, which was altogether more one-sided than I had expected. The captain seemed to be unable to do more than ask his questions and listen to our answers. So far as he was concerned, I fear little good was done; but the reading and re-reading and the reiterated explanation of some of these beautiful passages of Scripture must have had a good effect on the minds of the listeners.

One evening at a large town we sent the crier round to announce a meeting in the English school. The fellow carried a drum, or rather big gong, whilst another man acted as shouter. It was amusing work getting the right sentence into the crier's head.

"Padre has come! therefore! Bah! bah! he will make English! Bah! in the school!"

"No," we said; "he will make a meeting."

"Padre has come from Vizianagram! therefore! Bah! he will make a school at six o'clock! Bah!" etc.

At the school we found most of the chief people assembled, and after singing a hymn and prayer, we gave a short outline





EDUCATED TALKERS—A HIGH-SCHOOL STAFF.





of the life of Christ, urging them to accept as their Saviour so wonderful and loving an incarnation of God. The headmaster of the school and one or two others said that they did not see the need for any Mediator between God and man; another asked why God did not send Jesus Christ before, and what became of the human race prior to His coming.

After answering these and other questions, we discussed the subject of prayer. The chief speaker tried to prove that the repetition of mantrams was true prayer. This, of course, it was easy to show to be impossible; and then he said that since God is everywhere, we may set up anything as an object of adoration and prayer.

"Suppose then," we said, "we take this stick as the object of our worship. We pray to it, but since it gives us absolutely no answer, we feel that we are off the track, and must go elsewhere. We therefore go, say, to the temple of Narasimham and pray to the idol there. What answer do we get? Nothing more than the story connected with that particular incarnation of Vishnu, and that again is no answer to our prayer for salvation from sin."

"No," said he triumphantly; "there is no answer anywhere."

"Yes, thank God!" we answered, "there is an answer given to us in Jesus Christ."

The headmaster then wanted to know why Christ did not come to India; and in reply we pointed out that there was need for Him to die but once; had He come to every land, He would most likely have met with the same treatment everywhere, and been killed, by wicked men.

This man was not sincere in his talk: for, while for argument's sake he was willing to admit himself a sinner, yet when urged to the acknowledgment of sin as the commencement of the better life, he refused to do it.

Insincerity of this kind often reveals itself in the behaviour of these partially educated young men.

At a kind of mutual improvement meeting, a graduate of the Madras University reads an Epicurean essay, in which, amongst

other things, idolatry comes in for a share of ridicule, as a thing only useful for the ignorant and low. A friend of his who is present is equally emphatic in his condemnation.

The following day is a holy day in the place, and the idol Narasimham, with his two wives, is brought out of the temple and carried round the town upon a huge contrivance representing a serpent with many heads. The procession has brought the idols into a large open porch built specially for their reception, and there they stand, bedecked with flowers, besmoked by blazing torches, and surrounded by the coconuts and other offerings brought by the deluded worshippers. These are being received by the priests, who stand in front of the car and give to the people in return betel-leaf and *prasadhā*m (the cooked rice which had been offered to the god). In front, at a little distance, dance and sing the bedizened prostitutes of the temple to the music of some tinkling bells and small drums. And there, in the midst of the dirty, noisy throng, turbanless and half-naked, their faces made hideous with large Vishnu marks, and receiving the greasy-looking *prasadhā*m from the hands of the priests, sit the graduate and his friend! True, that which they are doing can hardly be called worship; all is noise and laughter and foolish talking. Still they are there to countenance by their presence what is held to be worship by the people all around them. They see us looking at them, but are too much ashamed to look in our direction. It is sad, too, to see their wives and other women with their children gathered on one side of the porch, pressing as near to the front as they can, as though they would get at least a *smell* of the virtue which must emanate from a place so holy!

At another meeting of this Mutual Improvement Society the Government apothecary, a Brahman, reads a paper on caste, its origin, meaning, and signs. As is usual with the educated Hindu, he speaks of it not so much as it actually is to-day, but as a system given in the Hindu books—an ideal division of the people into classes, according to their different work or trades, and in accordance with their various characteristics.

We point out that the caste he spoke of might perhaps be regarded as a good thing, but that if it ever existed at all, it

belonged to a past age, not to the present. The question is concerning the caste system of to-day—is that good or bad? We said that for the British Government it might be well to have the people split up into sections in this way; but that for the nation as a nation it could not be beneficial; it was undoubtedly a source of weakness. Moreover, it fostered pride, for men of all castes regarded their position as the result of their own merit, and despised the castes beneath them. Then, too, it was a system which placed too much power in the hands of one class. If the goodness of that particular class could be guaranteed all might be well, but it was notorious that the Brahmans were no better than the people of other castes. We deprecated the idea that mere cleverness or intelligence constituted a claim to high caste. It was character-goodness, probity, and purity which elevated men and nations, and this a Pariah might obtain as well as a Brahman.

An Indian Christian spoke of the benefit which would accrue from intermarriages amongst all classes of the people, and instanced a Christian family in which the father was a Brahman and the mother a Pariah; the children had been educated, and were now filling honourable and useful positions in the country. It was to be hoped, he said, that the golden age of the past, with its purer ideas regarding the class divisions of the people, would speedily return. Towards that end we should all be working.

In a public meeting held in the temple *mantapam* addresses were given by several members of the Madras Hindu Tract Society, the subject for discussion being the advisability of having a Hindu school in the town in opposition to the Mission School.

The first speaker was the headmaster of the Mission School, who, though in favour of the scheme, thought it impracticable on account of the expense involved. "The Hindus," he said, "have no cohesion amongst themselves, and the school, if started, would only exist for a few months." He urged them not to fear the teaching of the Bible in the Mission School, as it did no harm. "I myself, for example," he said, "have taken the poison, and am none the worse for it."

After him a young man of very unprepossessing appearance stood up, and in a very harsh voice rambled on volubly, telling all sorts of extraordinary stories. He declared that Europeans merely came to India to seek good situations, and amongst these were the Salvation Army people, whom he ridiculed. "They come and learn a little of our language," he said, "and then try to teach our children their religion. English Christianity is now spreading in the land, but as yet it is springing up only as very young plants. Now is the time to root them up!" A hard task, he admitted, and yearly growing harder. Then he gave a short account of the birth and life of Jesus Christ, in the main correct, though he tried to make it ridiculous. I felt that if I had not been present he would have gone great lengths in misrepresentation. Then he referred to the Old Testament, and said that the Bible taught that the earth was only six thousand years old; that it gave an impossible story of a garden of Eden to account for the origin of sin, etc. In one breath he declared that Christ's death for sinners was something that no one could believe, and then that they had the same thing in Hinduism. In conclusion, he rambled about idolatry, which he said was a necessary step to better things, as the alphabet was in the education of children.

The chairman (a railway official) was not very willing to allow me to speak, but I insisted on being allowed to answer the remarks which had been directed against Jesus Christ and Christianity. "I am glad," I said, "that the story of Christ has been told here, albeit in ridicule; but I ask, what is there of improbability or deserving of ridicule in that story? Jesus Christ was born through the operation of God's Spirit; and this wonderful birth was followed by a life equally wonderful, and this again by a death and resurrection of most marvellous interest. This is the story of God's coming to man in order that He might make the necessary sacrifice for man's deliverance from sin. Not only is this the grand theme of the Bible, it is also hinted at and symbolized in some of the religious books of the Hindus themselves. This then is what we teach in our schools. You have said that Sanskrit is the language in which the real truth regarding religion is to be found. Well,



we desire to teach Sanskrit in our schools ; we actually do teach it. We are not afraid of truth anywhere. One of the speakers has said that it is a grand thing to be bigoted on behalf of one's religion (matābhimānam). I would say, No ! We ought rather to be bigoted on behalf of the truth wherever it may be found. We should be willing at once to give up a religion if it were shown to be untrue. As to idolatry being a means of raising men to that which is higher and better in worship, the history of India is a proof of the contrary ; for that history shows the votaries of idolatry sinking lower and lower in their religious ideas and forms of worship."

To this the youth replied, inconsequently enough, by referring to the slaughter of the Canaanites and the marriage of Abraham and his sister ; and as a sort of last thought he said, "Well, in devotion all that is necessary is to obtain steadiness of thought, and for this purpose any sort of worship will do !"

After he had finished, the town apothecary rose, and in very halting English propounded the following questions : "Why did not Jesus display His glory when in His mother's womb, as Krishna did ? Why was Jesus subject to the temptations of the devil ? Why did the Gospels vary in their accounts of the blind man, and of the angels at the grave of Jesus ? How was it that even His own mother Mary did not know Him after His resurrection ? How about His cursing of the fig-tree ?"

After these questions had been answered the chairman spoke, quoting verses from Hindu books, most evidently in display of his learning. He said that idolatry was like keeping a photograph of a friend ; that God, though without form or quality, might yet appear to us ; that Rama, *e.g.*, was one such appearance ; and then he proceeded to allegorize the story of Rama in a most singular fashion. The demon Ravana represented, he said, superstition ; Ceylon was the kingdom of ignorance ; Rama was Patience and his wife was *Chittam*, which perhaps might mean Self, as it was something in subordination to Rama ; Hanumantudu, the monkey-god, stood for Peace ; but here he was at a loss, and confessed he was not then quite prepared to explain all the allegory !



In conclusion, he called upon those present to decide that a school should be established in the town, and some agreed to this. Others, however, said that there was now no time to come to any decision—another meeting had better be called ; and so the gathering dispersed.

On another occasion, I met two young men of the same Hindu Tract Society. They brought a tract with them, written in opposition to Christianity ; but as the very first reference to the Bible it contained turned out to be a mistake, they dropped it altogether, and simply conversed, asking me first why I believed in Christ.

I replied that it was because He, and the great work He had done, met my needs as a sinner, giving me the help and peace which I could not obtain elsewhere.

"How can you say that," they asked, "unless you have tried all other methods of salvation ?"

"Well," I answered, "if there is any better way, I will certainly follow it. Do you know of any better way ?"

They said that they did, but had not brought it with them then ! One of them then said frankly that he did not believe there was any God at all.

"Then," I said, "you must be a hypocrite, for by the marks you wear upon your forehead you profess to believe in Siva."

"No," he replied, "I only wear those marks in conformity with the customs of the world."

"But," I insisted, "if you do not believe that Siva is God, you should so far be sincere, and live up to that belief ; and then, supposing there is a God in the universe, He cannot but commend your sincerity, and lead you into more true knowledge of Himself. Your first step is to be sincere !"

But he went on to argue that if there is a God at all, the world shows Him to be partial and unjust ; because some are born to sickness and sorrow, others to happiness.

"Not so," I said ; "the sorrow and pain of the world arise from the sin of men—sin due to themselves in departing from the living God. The glory of God appears in the midst of it all, in that He by His marvellous power and wisdom brings

out good from the evil, men being saved from sin to eternal lives of active goodness."

I pointed out, moreover, that happiness is not the chief end of man, but that his aim should be to attain that which God is seeking in him and for him—a holy character, bright with the beauties of all righteousness.

This the young man professed not to be able to understand, and so left me.

One day I was visited by the Sheristadar, the Sub-registrar, and a pleader from the court. After some preliminary talk, I referred to the festival of Narasimham, which was approaching, and asked the Sheristadar if he really believed in Narasimham as a god. On his saying he did, I asked, "Why? what does it do for you? or what can it teach you?"

He could say nothing except that it taught the doctrine that God was to be found in everything.

The Sub-registrar, a very bigoted Brahman, then interposed, and said that idol worship like this referred to was useful for the low and ignorant, while for us there was philosophy.

I reminded him that this had been precisely the position taken up by the learned classes in all idolatrous nations, and as a consequence the common people had been left to sink lower and lower into degradation and moral death, while the so-called philosophers failed to find out God by their speculations. He admitted that, for his part, he could not say certainly whether there were a God or not; but when I pressed this home to him he only laughed and said he only made the statement for argument's sake.

The Sheristadar then asked why God could not appear in some palpable form, say, in the sky above us, and so settle, once for all, all these doubts.

"What good would that be?" I asked. "Suppose He appeared now, He must communicate to us something we could understand; otherwise His appearance would avail nothing. Above all, He must either say or do something which would excite in us a strong constraining love towards Himself."

"Remember," I concluded, "no sincere man can be truly

happy in this strange world unless he knows that his<sup>h</sup> sins are forgiven and that the eternal God and himself are reconciled."

One of the most interesting of these men with whom I had much conversation was a wealthy zemindar, or landowner, of the Rajah caste. He was extremely fond of religious converse and discussion, and availed himself of every opportunity to engage in it.

Speaking of Jesus Christ, he once said, "Yes, I do think Him a most wonderful character—sinless and wise, an incarnation of the Deity."

"If you think so," I replied, "can you believe that so *wise* a Being was deceiving Himself; that one so *true* was deceiving others? Could He tell or act a lie?"

"By no means."

"Then," I pursued, "He declares in unmistakable language that He alone is the Saviour of men, and that they must believe in and follow Him; and He sent His disciples to proclaim this message to all the world. If you believe Him to be true, you ought to accept these declarations of His and follow Him."

"No," he replied, "such expressions occur in the teachings of all great and holy men, and are merely intended to call attention to the transcendent importance of their words."

I objected that it was possible to interpret the words of the Lord Jesus in that way, only at the expense of His integrity and loftiness of character; and then proceeded, in a simple way, to speak of the atoning sacrifice which Christ, as the Son of God, came to accomplish for men.

The Rajah listened attentively for awhile, but afterwards said, "You speak plausibly, but I do not think that there could be any need for the Almighty to act in such a way. He could, if He wished, change the whole force of the universe in a moment by a word. And since He foresaw the coming of sin and suffering, He is the Author of these, and we must, by some philosophical system, account for this fact."

I replied that, while admitting the Omnipotence and Omniscience of the Divine Being, we still could not conceive of Him as able to cause a thing to be and not to be at the same

time ; or to cause love and constraint to be the same things ; for if, in our conception of God, He be one who could declare stability to be instability, justice to be injustice, truth to be untruth, then for us there could be no such things as stability, justice, or truth, and therefore no God.

Said the Rajah : " I think that in such a view as yours God would be limited ; whereas I believe that everything, even contradictions, are possible to Him. And we Hindus explain the apparent sin and sorrow of the world in this way. We say they are *illusions*. They form, as it were, the dream of the Divine Being, something passing through His consciousness. This view of Him and of phenomena glorifies God as infinite, and humbles man as nothing."

" I cannot admit," I replied, " that such a view of the nature of God should satisfy us for a moment. His name would then be, if you like, the Infinite Dreamer, not a very exalted name ; worse still, He might then be justly called the Infinite Deceiver, for all men, everywhere, are saying to themselves, ' We are realities,' and thinking and acting on that supposition. Moreover, however light the burden of the world's sin and sorrow may seem to you, to multitudes it is a bitter, an awful reality. What comfort would it be to such weary ones to tell them that all their troubles are illusions ? Indeed, what peace can such a theory bring to your own mind ? "

" I should teach men," he replied, " to listen to the great teachers who from time to time rise up in the world, such as Rama, Jesus, and Muhammad."

" But," I said, " these give contradictory teachings on the great themes of God and sin and salvation. God is one, as you admit, and His salvation must be one also, namely, a voluntary turning from sin and a voluntary choice of right, springing out of a *love* to the Divine Being. The only teacher of this truth in its fullness is Jesus Christ, and He alone supplies the all-constraining motive for loving God. His obedient life and atoning death on our behalf call forth all our love, and belief in Him and in His work for us changes us from rebellious sinners into loving saints."

After some further talk, the Rajah concluded by saying,



"Well, I have changed my beliefs many times ; I may become a Christian yet ! "

At another time, in pursuance of our conversation, he observed that all nature teaches us to believe in the existence of God, for there is thought in the universe, and if there is thought there must be a thinker, and that thinker is He whom we call God.

I said, "But does not a thinker mean a person ? Do you not believe in a personal God, and not, as you said awhile ago, in a great Being who exists sometimes in a state of unconsciousness, sometimes in a state in which He dreams, and so projects from Himself the phenomena of the universe ? "

"Well," he replied, "we must not go too fast, but must reason down, step by step, from the first truth, that there is a God, to the lowest manifestation of Him. We ask first respecting this great Being, What are His attributes ? He must be omnipotent and omniscient, and He must be perfectly happy. A purely happy omnipotent Thinker is God, and His happiness is self-centred, self-contained, independent of all outward objects. But, then, to account for outward objects—the world, etc.—we must say that for the completion of God's happiness His thought must become objective, and hence it takes on the multitude of forms we see around us."

"This would be all very well as a theory," I returned, "provided you had only to deal with a thinker whose thoughts took merely material form ; but you yourself and your fellow-men are also (on this supposition) part of those thoughts of the Supreme Being. We ourselves are conscious of being thinkers, and we think and speak of ourselves as originators of thought. We say of ourselves, 'We are not God ; we are not omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly happy' ; nay, we are conscious of voluntarily forsaking the true path of happiness, and doing wrong which causes misery. We therefore conclude that we possess, in some sense, an existence independent of God."

"True, we think so," the Rajah replied ; "but this is simply our ignorance ; this idea of ours is but a thought created by the Creator of all the thoughts which at times possess us."

"If so," I said, "since all is but a part of the Divine Being, and necessary to His happiness, you have a God who is self-



deceived, and self-contradictory. He is Omniscient, yet His thought is ignorant ! He is Omnipotent, yet thinks Himself weak ! He is All-holy, yet His thought confesses to sin ! ”

“ No,” he said ; “ the *essence* of the Deity is self-contained ; it is only His activity that is thus sensible of certain limitations.”

“ Then,” I rejoined, “ you have two gods—one independent and happy in His self-complacency, the other dependent and conscious of weakness and misery. If again you assert that this is only one Being, then the one part of this Being deceives, and the other is deceived by, the other part.”

The Rajah acknowledged the dilemma, but said that at any rate such a theory of the nature of God was more satisfying to the intellect than the Christian system, which seemed to assert that there were some things which God did not and could not do.

“ Christianity simply says,” I replied, “ that God cannot contradict Himself. He cannot be both pure and impure, both conscious of strength and weakness, knowledge and ignorance.” Then I begged him to consider the Christian’s view of man’s relation to God, namely, that both the Divine will and the human will were not shams, but realities ; that because man had opposed his will to God’s, he had become conscious of sin ; that sin must be followed by estrangement from God, and if persisted in, must end in ruin ; but that God, in mercy, had taken human nature upon Himself, so that He might for us become conscious, not of sinfulness, but of sin’s effects, and so, by bearing our sins and carrying our sorrows, make it possible for us to escape. At the same time, He draws our affections towards Himself by this exhibition of unquenchable love. This,” I said, “ was reasonable in itself, and rested, moreover, upon a perfectly credible revelation—the life of Christ being a perfectly reliable history. What hope or joy,” I asked, “ what motive impelling to the right, can there be in believing that you are only an ‘ unconsciously conscious ’ part of the Deity—a mere play of His thought ? ”

“ The hope of improving one’s condition,” the Rajah replied, “ the desire for happiness, and so on.”

“ But are not these motives,” I said, “ every day proving

themselves utterly insufficient? Nay, do they not quite as often lead to opposition to the Divine will? Do not men constantly sacrifice the best and highest in themselves for the present gratification of some selfish pursuit or unholy passion? Contrast the inefficiency of all such motives to right conduct with that presented in the Gospel of Christ."

The Rajah then adverted to the teachings of Jesus, which he acknowledged to be very beautiful, and said, "I dreamed of Jesus Christ once. About a year after my father's death, I dreamed that I was standing by his funeral pyre, with the fire in my hand about to light it, when I saw, sitting on the side of a hill, the figure of a very old man, with flowing white locks. I thought it was some Muhammadan, and sent some one to inquire. The reply came, 'It is Jesus Christ.' 'And what is He doing?' I asked. 'He says He is praying for your father,' was the answer. It made me very happy to think that so great a Being was praying for my father."

I said, "Yes; your father was often spoken to concerning the Saviour of the world. An old missionary, Dr. Hay, used often to converse with him; but I fear he did not, after all, believe in Him."

"Oh yes, he did," the Rajah replied. "He believed in all religions, and I think that God and Jesus and all those great Beings are so merciful that if we only repeat their names they will come to save us."

"True," I said, "the Lord Jesus is merciful; but what is it that we cry to Him for? If we merely want to escape from trouble, the consequences of our sin, and want to be made happy and comfortable as we are, He cannot and will not hear our cry. But if we are conscious of our sin and desire reconciliation with God, and so go to Him, then He will save and help us."

I then spoke on the teaching of Jesus about the new birth, and told him of Nicodemus coming to Jesus by night; in all of which he was much interested, and on my going away he suddenly asked, "Oh, please tell me! what became of that Nicodemus after all?"—a query which we ourselves often put regarding the many Nicodemuses of India.

Passing through the lofty gateway of this man's "palace" (as it may be called), your attention is attracted to a niche in the wall where stands a rude dirty shrine, in front of a misshapen idol, daubed all over with red and yellow powder, and surrounded at night by a number of greasy guttering oil-lamps. A cunning-visaged old priest mounts guard close by, shaven and almost naked. A few steps further on, you are in the "palace," in the midst of all the elegance and luxury which European and Oriental taste can devise and wealth can furnish. Just so is it with the man who lives in the palace and maintains the shrine without. He will have a mind well stored with knowledge drawn from all sources, he will be accomplished and courteous, yet withal he remains the slave of custom, superstition, and evil habit. "How hardly shall they that have riches [mental sometimes as well as material] enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

## CHAPTER VIII

### TALKS WITH TELUGU INQUIRERS AND CONVERTS

MANY of those described in the previous pages might be classed under the head of inquirers, if not of converts. But in this chapter we give a few typical cases of those who directly expressed their desire to become Christians ; some, as so often happens, with ulterior motives, others in all sincerity, anxious to prove their faith by their deeds.

We were at one time greatly interested in a young man of the Komiti, or merchant, caste. He seemed to be very much in earnest, inquiring what he must do to be saved ; but he was involved in some quarrel and lawsuit with his family, which led us to suspect his sincerity. He told us he had been first impressed some four years before by hearing the Gospel preached in the streets, and had often since conversed with Christians. He was very vehement in manner, and would sometimes say, "You don't believe me when I say that I will become a Christian. To prove my sincerity, I am willing to sign a bond for a thousand rupees. Why, I had half a mind to eat with you in my house the day you came to see me."

We had some earnest talks and even prayer with him, and he was so frank in all he said that we had great hopes of him ; yet he always put off any open acknowledgment of his faith, on one pretext or another.

At length I went to him at his village, determined to know the truth. A sacrifice had just been performed in the place in honour of Vishnu, and the merchants were all feasting at the houses of the Brahmans. Our inquirer had also gone with the rest to the feast, excusing himself on the ground that it was

merely a custom. We sat down in the veranda of his house and had a talk with the other members of the family, from whom we gathered that the young man was in fact only pretending to wish to become a Christian. He wanted to exasperate and intimidate his relatives with the view of getting some property from them.

Of course he denied this when we spoke to him about it ; but we found, to our sorrow, that what had been told us was true. He had only been deceiving us to serve his own purposes, and gradually he withdrew, as he found that nothing more was to be gained from his connection with us.

Coming home tired one Sunday morning, I find an old man waiting to see me. Hope revives that a sincere inquirer has come ; but the following is the conversation which takes place.

*I.* "Sit down, please, and tell me why you have come."

*Old man.* "To visit your honour, and to worship the great Lord Jesus Christ."

*I.* "I am glad to hear you say so. Do you really believe in Jesus as your Saviour ?"

*Old man.* "Yes, certainly. Why not? Isn't He the only Blessed One, who created us, takes care of us, and makes us holy, and saves us from our sins?"

*I.* "Ah ! then you have often heard the Gospel, and there is no need for me to tell you again. But confession with the mouth like this, though very good, is useless, unless it is accompanied by confession in deed."

*Old man.* "Yes, of course ; we must confess in act as well."

*I.* "Are you ready to do so? Do you want to give up the foolish and useless ceremonies of Hinduism and openly confess Jesus Christ?"

*Old man.* "That is my desire. I should like to have some books telling me of the life of Jesus."

*I* (getting the books, and bringing them to him). "Here are two : I hope you will carefully read and pray over them. You are now an old man, and God has cared for you so long. Will you not turn to Him, and let the rest of your life be spent wholly for Him?"

*Old man.* "Yes, certainly ; that is my great wish now."



After a little more talk, chiefly about how he may earn a livelihood as a doctor, after professing himself a Christian, I say, in accordance with Hindu custom, "You may take leave now, and come another time."

*Old man.* "Won't your honour give me some money to buy a cloth with? This is your Sunday, so of course you will give me a present."

*I* (somewhat taken aback). "What! you asking a present! You are surely joking! You are not a poor man, or I would perhaps give you something. I have already given you some books."

*Old man.* "Well, then, kindly give me some money to buy meat and rice, and I will make curry and rice in your honour, sir!"

*I.* "No; that is not our custom either. But if you are really seeking Jesus Christ, and wish openly to confess Him, you won't mind coming in and sitting down to breakfast with me. I shall be glad if you will so favour me."

*Old man.* "Is that all you will do? I thought this was your giving day. Well, never mind! I'll take leave. Your honour's pleasure." (*Exit grumbling.*)

On another Sunday, a young man visited me who said, "I have made up my mind to visit your honour every morning."

I expressed my pleasure, and asked what he sought.

"Instruction from your honour."

Anxious to find out what his real motive was, I inquired whether he was in any trouble of mind.

He did not reply at once, but eventually said that there was some dispute between him and his father.

"But," I said, "you have not come to me to talk about that, have you?"

"No."

"Then are you anxious about yourself? about sin, and the way of salvation?"

"Yes!" he said.

Whereupon I sought to interest him in a chapter of the Bible. I could see, however, by his wandering eye and in-

attentive manner that his thoughts were not with what we were doing. At last the object of his visit came out. *"I shall be very glad if your honour will kindly teach me photography."*

A terrible instance of deceit and hypocrisy occurred in the case of one professed inquirer.

One day, a tall, rather fine-looking young Brahman called, and expressed a wish to be baptized. He said that his father was dead, and that he had been adopted by some relative, with whom, however, he had been in dispute about some property. Latterly he had been employed in the Collector's Court, but was then desirous of doing mission work. He spoke of having been greatly moved by reading the text, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and had been trying to live the Christian life, but found it very hard to do so in a Collector's Court. He was quite willing to do as we directed, and wished us to pray with him. This we did, and he responded with an emphatic "Amen."

However, not feeling satisfied with the man's words and demeanour, we wrote to those who might know something of him, and the following is the story received in return.

"The man in question is an unmitigated scoundrel. His original name was V., but about 1870 he was adopted by the D. family; hence he received the new name of D. P. This adoption was set aside by the High Court; but he still kept the name, and resided with his adopted mother. In 1884 he was baptized at M., and as he failed to get the personal advantages he had expected to obtain by becoming a Christian, after a few days he apostatized. Still, he never was received into caste again, and his wife and adopted mother remained under excommunication for having consorted with him as a Christian. After a time he left for another town, where he was to some extent received by the Brahmans, and then again returned to his home, and entered into employment in the Court. He kept this post for a time, when he managed to swindle a resident out of a good sum of money, and ran off to Madras. The police kept on the look out for him, but, his adopted mother promising to repay the money in time, the prosecution of him

ceased, and he returned. A little while after, he went away to Hyderabad, and there, under a false name, he was again baptized, as a Baptist; and then again, after a short stay, swindled some people out of money and bolted. No more was heard of him until his appearance with you."

Of course, as soon as he discovered that we knew his story, he was off again; and we only heard rumours of him as still trying to impose himself upon missionaries as an inquirer and one desirous of doing mission work.

A young Brahman of a very different stamp was Narsing Rao, of the busy little town of Parvatipur. When I first met him he was only sixteen years of age, though he looked much older. This was probably due to sickness, for he was consumptive, very thin and haggard, with an ominous husky cough, and pain in the side. He was married, and expected his wife to come and live with him soon. She had, he said, been educated to some extent, and he had given her a copy of the Gospel to read. "I am waiting till I come of age, and am independent," he continued, "and then I will confess Christ. My father is careless about religious matters, but my mother is very bigoted. One day I told her that I had been with you. She shrank from me in horror, and got hot water and poured over me, bathing me well; she also cleansed the cot I had sat upon, and said I ought to cut off the hand with which I had shaken the hand of the missionary.

"I have been to Puri, and spent fifteen days in the temple of Jagannath. During the festival a man desired to be killed by the idol car, and dug a hole and buried himself in the road, just where the car would pass over him; but the police discovered him and dragged him out. I also saw the pots in the temple which are placed one on the other, the topmost one boiling; and I touched the idol itself. I would not eat the stuff they gave me, but ate fruit which I had brought with me. One poor man who had a sore on his arm was pushed by the crowd on to the shrine, and some of the blood from his arm fell upon it. There was a terrible outcry made: the man was dragged out, and the place purified at great cost. I paid

altogether one rupee and a half for my fifteen days in the temple. A European might get in by dressing like a Bengali Babu and speaking Hindustani, only he must be able to tell some lies !

" I should like to go to the Mission School, where I could learn day by day something of Jesus. Even now I always pray to Him three times a day, and when my friends compel me to make the customary oblations with water, I make them, but inwardly I say, ' O Jesus ! this is Thy blood which Thou didst shed for me ! ' My friends already call me a Sudra."

I said I thought it would be surely easier, as it certainly would be better, for him to openly confess himself a Christian than to live constantly in the practice of such pretences.

" But think," he replied, " of the trouble which would befall me if I openly confessed Christ now ; I am not yet eighteen, and my relatives would drag me before the Court, and get a warrant to carry me off somewhere, and so both to you and to me there would be sorrow ; most likely you would never see me more. Wait till I am of age and my own master."

I never saw Narsing Rao again. Death claimed him before he attained his wish to become his own master ; and yet perhaps we may say, in the goodness of God, through death, he entered into the fullness of the life he longed for.

A true, but very timid, believer was a young Brahman named Ramanna, of the Vaishnava sect. His father was very strict in all his religious observances, bathing and repeating his mantrams daily, and frequently visiting the temples. He had two younger brothers, one of them a student like himself, and several sisters, some of them married. His young wife had learned to read and write and sew, and do other kinds of work. Her family, though Brahmans, were not of the same caste, but inferior ; hence he could not eat with his brothers-in-law.

He was a student in a large Hindu College, and when I first met him was working hard for his B.A. degree in the Madras University. He had been seriously ill more than once, and was very thin and weak ; but though frequently warned not to work so hard, he persisted in it, feeling that it was his only



chance in life. He said he hardly knew how he came to like what was written in the Christian Scriptures, but was led on to read and to think about Jesus by a missionary with whom he became acquainted. He had at length come to believe that the Bible was a true revelation of God, and that Jesus was the only Saviour ; and often in conversation with his missionary friend, his heart warmed within him, and he half resolved to openly confess Christ. Yet his life was far 'from being a happy one. He one day showed me his sacred string, which was broken in two, and merely knotted together and hidden away under his clothing. A thread of this should not be broken, and if it is, it should be at once renewed with proper prayers. But he had lost all faith in it and its mantrams. Truly that broken string was an emblem of poor Ramanna's inner life. He had snapped many of the links which had bound him to the spiritual life of his countrymen, but had not the courage to yield himself to the new impulses received from Christ, and he was hiding away his shame and inconsistency from people's eyes as best he could. In a similar manner he wore the usual marks of Vishnu upon his forehead, but so carelessly, it was plain that he thought but little of them.

" Why, then," I asked, " are you afraid openly to confess the truth ? "

" Ah ! " he replied, " if you could only understand ! Why, if I am *only* away from my people a little longer than usual, my uncle or my brother is sent to see what has become of me. The other evening, when I was gone to study in a friend's house, and had not returned when rather late, my relatives, as you know, went up to your house, and demanded if I were there ; and not believing your word, went to the police-station to see if they could get a search-warrant to enter your house and see for themselves. All the town was astir, thinking I had gone to join the Christians. If I am seen going to your house, some one follows me ; and if I converse with you in the street, some one impatiently waits for an opportunity to drag me off. If you only knew the bitter reproaches I endure at home from the old people ! How hard it is to be called an outcast, a Pariah, a betrayer of your people, when you know you are but



wishing for yourself and for them a happier and a better life ! ”

His household was a large one, with many women in it. Relatives also lived next door. On one occasion, my wife called to see them. Ramanna and his wife were there, and received her courteously ; and the women learned some knitting, and heard the singing of a hymn. The old people, however, did not approve of the visit, and only looked scowlingly on from a distance. Afterwards quite a storm arose. His father ordered all the women to bathe, and said he would never more have his house defiled by the presence of a European lady. A week after, my wife called again ; Ramanna was not there, but returned in time to see that things were not going smoothly. No chair had been given to my wife to sit on, and Ramanna's wife and sisters and some other women were standing against the wall of the court-yard, as far away as they could get. No explanation had been given of the change in their behaviour ; indeed scarcely any one would utter a word. They would take nothing from my wife's hands, but only from the ground. Ramanna's presence made things a little better ; but he felt very much vexed and ashamed at the conduct of his people.

He afterwards said to me, “ I do not feel brave enough to struggle against the forces arrayed against me. I fear my people might proceed to any lengths in their opposition to my becoming a Christian. Not long ago a Brahman in a neighbouring town, who openly acknowledged the truth, was speedily lost sight of, and I believe he was poisoned by his enraged relatives. What, then, might not be expected in a proud and bigoted community like this ? No : I am not yet courageous enough to die for Jesus ; nor can I face the loss of my wife, and of all things, and patiently endure the enmity of parents and friends. I must wait. The courage must come from Jesus. Sometimes I pray to Him ; but then, just when my heart seems to brace itself, and is almost ready for a spring towards liberty, the terrible consequences appear again. I shudder and draw back. I hope that by and by I may go away to Madras, there pass my examinations, and obtain

a little freedom and independence. Then I shall be able to take the step I ought to take."

One incident painfully illustrates the terrible opposition often encountered by those who endeavour to make a profession of Christianity in India.

The man was a pensioned sepoy, who called on me one day, and said that for twelve years he had been learning something of Christian truth, but had been prevented by various circumstances from openly confessing his faith. Now, he said, he was determined to unite himself with the Christians. His great fear was that his wife would give very much trouble and do all in her power to prevent him.

In the evening we went down to the man's house. As we stood outside the little courtyard, speaking to him, we could hear the woman within talking very angrily, and presently the door was opened and we could see her. She sat on the ground in the little veranda of her house, with her hair dishevelled and her eyes rolling as though she were possessed by a thousand furies; and pointing to us, as we entered, she said, with a terrible scream, "There! don't you see! they are not content with destroying my husband, they want to destroy me also! Go! go!" she shouted; "you are dead people! If you offer me a world of gold, I will not come! I will not listen! You are nothing to me!"

"Don't be violent, or unjust," I said. "This man has done you no harm, and will do you none! Listen!"

But she interrupted me with, "No! Go! go! I will hear nothing!" and became so wild, shouting and throwing herself about, it seemed best to leave.

The poor man, opening the courtyard door again to let us out, said, "You see, sir, how it is! You had better go. You cannot help me," and so we sorrowfully came away.

After we left, the woman made a great uproar, and calling in all the neighbours, declared that she would throw herself into the well if her husband became a Christian. The neighbours stayed in the house all that day, and prevented him from going out, alternately threatening him and coaxing him,

to induce him to change his purpose. He was thus compelled to put off his intended baptism ; and although he continued to attend our church services, he eventually gave up the idea of openly professing himself a Christian.

I once was a spectator of similar determined opposition on the part of relatives, while staying at a missionary's house in Madras.

A young Brahman, a student in the Mission School, had become a Christian, and determined to be baptized. Owing to the persecution of his relatives, he had left his father's dwelling, and was residing for the time with the missionary. One evening, his mother and three brothers, together with a crowd of people, came crying and yelling about the house, and we took the precaution of sending for one or two constables. These seemed unable to do anything, so we sent for the inspectors. Two came, and then in their presence the relatives were allowed an interview with the young man in the garden before the house.

A terribly trying scene ensued. The youngest brother clung round his feet ; the two bigger brothers each took an arm, rubbing their faces to his, hugging him round the neck, imploring him to come away ; the mother fell at his feet, beating her head on the ground before him. The young fellow bore it all most bravely, pushed the child from off his feet, and struggled to get free from the others. His mother kept on bitterly weeping, and saying that she had borne him, and nourished him so long, and now he was going to leave her.

But all she and the others could say, though it deeply affected him—his face being drawn with anguish and the perspiration standing in beads on his brow—did not move him from his purpose.

After a time, their caresses became more violent, and an attempt was made to drag him towards the gate. This violence was fatal to their cause ; for the young man's ire was roused, and he struggled still more earnestly to be free of them. We asked the inspectors how far they would let this sort

of thing go, for the young man was evidently getting exhausted. They said nothing : merely exhorted the relatives to be more moderate. Gradually, however, the struggle increased in violence, and the young convert fell to the ground. This seemed to give the policemen either the courage or the right to interfere, and they dragged the boys and woman off him, his clothes being nearly all torn from him in the struggle. At last he was free, and almost naked, panting and exhausted, he fled up the steps into the Mission House, while we held the persecutors back.

They then flung themselves down in the dust of the roadway, weeping and shouting, and knocking their heads and bodies about in the most frantic way. After a while, constables came and cleared the compound ; but for a long time a crowd remained outside the gate, shouting and hooting.

This young man became a very earnest and useful Christian ; and his brothers afterwards acknowledged their folly in thus attempting to hinder him.

One Sunday, after preaching, five persons received baptism, three men and two boys. They came dressed in clean white cloths, and boldly stood up when called upon, and confessed that freely and voluntarily they came for baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, whom they acknowledged as their Saviour. (The whole congregation, among whom were several Brahmans, looked on with great interest.) During the address which followed, it was painful to notice the sneers and smiles on the faces of these Brahmans. A Eurasian who was present was so angry with one of them that he took him outside and gave him a rough talking to, telling him "the sight ought to have knocked tears out of him instead of grins !".

After we had returned to the little bungalow where we were staying, one of the men who had been baptized came running into the veranda, seeking refuge from the persecution of the people. We went outside and found the poor man sitting down with an excited crowd round him, abusing him in loud angry tones. They stopped on our appearance and



A TELUGU CONVERT.

" My father (a priest) prophesied that I should turn a Christian "

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some of them went away. Others remained, and for two hours we were engaged in talking with them.

One young man, who had lost an eye, said that if Jesus would restore sight to his eye he would believe ; if He healed the blind when upon earth, and did not do so now, He was partial and unjust. Others wanted to know what particular benefit was to be obtained by believing in Jesus. Others said, "Show us a way, and we will walk in it" ; by which they meant, "Show us how we may get more money, and we will come." All were very hostile at first ; but afterwards they acknowledged that they were wrong, and tried to atone for their rudeness by flattering me in various ways.

Many people also gathered round the evangelist's house, where the other converts had gone, abusing and scoffing at them ; and when they went home, their relatives and neighbours refused to allow them to come near them. All the Sunday the poor men were without food, until they took some in the evangelist's house.

Visiting the town again a short time afterwards, on one of the great festival days, we found the people literally "mad upon their idols"—the whole place given up to the wildest scenes of uproar imaginable. The converts were in great fear, and apprehensive that violence would be done them by their excited countrymen. We were glad to be able by our presence to reassure and help them. The case of one inquirer, however, astonished and dismayed us beyond measure.

He had long been very friendly, and often said that he would certainly become a Christian. He had even been in the habit of accompanying the evangelists, and telling the people of the Saviour he had found. But when we saw him, what a spectacle he presented ! He was evidently mad, naked and dirty, with chains about his legs, and confined in a little stockaded place outside his brother's house. The people said he was possessed by an evil spirit ; but some told us in confidence that his brother, resenting his efforts to become a Christian, had drugged him, and so reduced him to this condition.

On seeing us, chained though he was, the poor fellow managed to climb over the fence, and, coming up<sup>o</sup> to the Christian preacher, linked his hand in his, and said he wanted to come with us. He believed in Jesus, he said, and would not stop there. How our hearts ached for him, standing there in the midst of that heartless noisy crowd, looking so helpless and forlorn! If only we could, by a word, have cast out the spirit of madness which possessed him, and taken him away "clothed and in his right mind"! But, in a moment he was gone again, his brother having appeared and frightened him off, and then started abusing us, and otherwise causing an uproar amongst the people. It seemed to us to be the hour of darkness and the triumph of the power of Satan! Yet as we looked up to the serene blue sky above us, we could not but feel that even so the Almighty and All-holy God was still sitting upon His throne in the heavens, ruling the universe in righteousness, though we perceived Him not, nor understood all His ways.

We never saw this man again, and of his fate we could learn nothing. He must have been sent away to a distant place.

Another victim of successful intimidation and persecution was a young sepoy who was one day brought to us by two of the Indian preachers. He had been learning from them of the way of salvation, and had at length determined to confess his faith by baptism. His appearance and manner were very pleasing; and on our asking him if he had counted the cost of the step he proposed taking, he said he had, and was prepared to bear any trouble for the sake of Jesus Christ, who had done so much for him. His relatives were greatly opposed to his becoming a Christian, and were already giving him trouble. We then told him that he must try to be thenceforth a soldier of Jesus Christ—a witness for Him amongst his comrades, and seek to win them to Him. He said that he would do so; and when we asked, "In whose strength do you promise this?" he replied, "In the strength of Jesus only!" His demeanour was not at all

boastful, but simple and modest, and on his expressing a wish to be baptized on the following Sunday, we agreed.

Desirous of making further inquiry about the young man, we called on his commanding officer, who gave him an exceedingly good character, and said that he had "a clean sheet" in the defaulters' book—a great thing in a three years' service—proving him to have been a very "good boy." The officer saw no difficulty in the way of his baptism; said, indeed, that it would be a passport to favour, if the man showed by his conduct that he was really a Christian.

On the Sunday morning the young sepoy was present at our service, which we conducted as usual. When about to read the chapter, his mother, with a number of people, mostly sepoys, came in. She was crying bitterly, beating her breast, and imploring her son not to throw himself away in that fashion. I went to comfort her; but she threw herself on the ground at my feet, beating the floor with her hands and crying yet more loudly. I felt deeply for the young man, as he sat there with ashy face and compressed lips: it must have been a hard struggle going on within him. He was determined, however; and rising, said to his friends, "Why do you come and make this uproar? Why do you not let me go my way and you go yours? Take her away!" One of them, accordingly, took the poor woman away; and as we went on with the service we were painfully conscious of her cries and lamentations as she went down the street.

The little chapel was full of people, before whom the young convert bravely stood up, and modestly answered the questions put to him. I then baptized him, afterwards addressing the assembled people, urging them also to come forward and confess the Saviour. At the conclusion of the service, they crowded round us, saying all sorts of evil things about the young man, as, for example, that he was only changing his religion in order to get a wife, etc. Some of them were very hostile, and when we moved off, hooted after us; others seemed to understand and to sympathize with us.

Timothy (this was the name he took) came home with us, and on the way told us that he was not afraid that his

people would try to do him any bodily harm, but that they would try to get him into trouble with the officers of the regiment.

The after-history of Timothy, so far as I could trace it, was not a happy one. For a time he went on well as a Christian ; but the people of the regiment were untiring in their efforts to ruin the young man's reputation, and in this, at last, they succeeded. Temptations of the worst kind were placed in his way, and at length, harassed and pressed on all sides, he fell into disgrace. Then the regiment left the place, and I lost sight of him ; but I heard that afterwards he became a Roman Catholic.

Preaching once amongst the Malas (Pariah class), we came across a man, named Sanyassi, who was very shrewd and well-behaved, and who seemed to receive the Gospel message in all simplicity. After hearing us the first time, he himself made a short speech, saying that in man there were a number of voices—the voice of the fox, urging to deceit ; that of the elephant, or pride ; the snake, or uncleanness ; the tiger, or cruelty, etc. ; but that amidst them all might be heard the voice of God urging to goodness and right. He said we ought to listen to the good voice and turn away from the evil ones.

For several days this man attended upon our teaching, and learned much. One day he came to us for advice. He was called to a neighbouring village to see a niece who was ill—dying ; if she died, he would have to take part in the funeral ceremonies ; he would also have to go to the astrologer's house to inquire if the time of death were lucky or not ; if unlucky, the astrologer would prescribe what must be done, taking, of course, a fee. Was it wrong for him to take part in all this ?

We urged him to keep as clear as he could of all heathen ceremonies ; but all that he told us showed how entangled these poor people were in the network of idolatrous worship, and how many are the difficulties in the way of one wishing to become a Christian.

At length, one evening Sanyassi and a large company of his



relatives and friends came to the shed where we were living. He seemed full of earnest purpose ; but many of the others were very angry with us, as were also the caste people (some of whom stood around), because of our giving so much attention to the Pariahs. We invited Sanyassi to openly confess his faith in Christ and to receive baptism. He said he was willing, but feared that his people would beat him. We promised to stand by and protect him.

Then he spoke of the coming, in the following month, of his caste gurus, or priests, when he, as the chief of the community, must do puja to the Brahmans. Later also there would come a certain feast, when he would have to bring out from his house a family idol, and worship it with the usual ceremonies. If he should refuse, he and his would be excommunicated. Again we promised to see that no harm came to him, and to help him in any difficulty.

Then, on my asking him whether or not he believed in Jesus Christ, he made the most touching confession of his faith I think I ever heard. "I believe in Jesus as my God !" he said ; "for He loved us all, and came into the world to die for us ; He bore our sins for us, and rose from the grave ; we must then pray to Him for His Holy Spirit !"

"It is enough," I said ; "you must be baptized."

Water was brought, and he said, "Well, if you promise to stand by me, I am willing."

So we baptized him there, standing in the glorious moonlight, and prayed for him that he might indeed be baptized with the Spirit of God and become a means of blessing to his people.

Afterwards all went quietly away to their houses, we anxiously listening, fearing a disturbance might arise in the village.

A few weeks after Sanyassi's baptism we received a message from him to say that his house (or rather hut) had been burnt down, *and with it the family idol*, so that now, as he joyfully said, it would be impossible for him to bring it forth for the required ceremonies. This man remained faithful, and even learned to read ; and after a time several

of his relatives also received baptism and acknowledged themselves Christians. When I met him again some years afterwards he joyfully saluted me. He was then a preacher of the Gospel to his countrymen.

At a small out-of-the-way village we once met with a man whose story remarkably illustrates the way in which the simple reading of the Bible sometimes brings one into the light. He had received no instruction from any one, and yet had become learned in the Scriptures which "make wise unto salvation."

While pitching my tent just outside the village, he first accosted me, making friendly salaams, and saying that he knew that we came to tell of Jesus Christ, the true Saviour. I told him to wait a while until we were settled in our camp; whereupon he retired till the afternoon, when he returned, and sitting down on the floor of the tent, told his story.

He was a young man, a widower, owning a little property which he had obtained by his trade as an oil-merchant. For some time past, however, he had left his business, and given himself to the study of the Bible. I asked him how he had obtained a Bible, and how it was he had a taste for such studies. From a child, he said, he had been of a religious disposition; and one day, finding a torn tract on which was written a prayer to God, he learned it, and loved to repeat it. Then he used to pray that God would send him the whole of the prayer; and some time after, seeing a child playing on the bank of a stream with a small book, he went to see what it was, and to his joy found it was the very book he wanted. The other prayers contained in this book he also learned by heart, some of which he repeated to me with evident delight. After some further time, a merchant brought a New Testament for sale, which he purchased, and ever since had read and thought over it.

I was astonished to hear him quote whole passages, asking very intelligent questions about them. How was it, he asked, that there were unbelievers, like the Sadducees, in Christ's time? Who were Isaiah and the prophets? and could he get an Old Testament anywhere? He considered the prophecy

by Isaiah about the eyes of the people being blind, and their ears stopped, and their hearts hardened, so that they could not believe, so exactly fulfilled in the people of this country, that that in itself was sufficient to prove the Bible to be God's Word.

I asked him why he remained unmarried. "Because," he replied, "both Jesus and Paul commended the unmarried state."

I spoke of baptism ; but here I found that he had read the Scriptures differently from myself. He thought that Christ never intended baptism to be perpetual. He came to do away with rites and ceremonies ; and if we observed them, then we were very little better than the Hindus. Paul declared that neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availed anything ; what was required was to be a new creature in Jesus Christ.

To try him, I asked how he explained Christ's words to Nicodemus : "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." To my astonishment, he replied without hesitation that Christ then referred simply to natural and spiritual birth, as He Himself explained, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

After I had pressed him a little on the subject, he admitted that it was perhaps because he did not wish to break with all earthly relationships that he held these views on baptism. "But," he said emphatically, "Jesus Christ is here with us to-day, is He not ? If, then, He will make it clear to me, by dream or otherwise, that I ought to be baptized, I will certainly be baptized. But at present I do not see that He calls me to break with everybody and everything for the sake of a ceremony." I felt very much sympathy with the man in this declaration.

Inquiring about him in the villages, we found that he bore a very good character, and was known as the man who had given up everything to read a book which he called "Bible."

The Christian knowledge displayed by this man was the more remarkable inasmuch as he could by no means be called clever, nor was he well read in Hindu or other books. He was

a poor illiterate man ; yet, with the Bible as his teacher, he had learned much. He was well acquainted with many of the verses of the poet Vemana (moral teachings in an attractive poetic form) ; but these he impatiently brushed aside, even though quoted in illustration of Bible teachings.

I couldn't help asking him how it was that he alone, of all the people round him, had thus obtained possession of so much precious truth.

" *Devuni yerpattu* (God's election)," was his answer.

Going into the weavers' street one day, the evangelist saw an old man of the blacksmith caste who had for some time previously heard the Gospel from him, and had acknowledged its truth. He began then to speak to his old friend and to the crowd which gathered round, while I engaged in similar work at a little distance. The people heard us gladly ; and after a time the evangelist came to me saying that the old blacksmith had declared himself a believer and was anxious to be baptized, and that he had actually gone to bring water for his baptism.

His sons, middle-aged men, were shouting, "No, don't, don't !" but he said, "I shall ! I believe in Jesus, and I mean to receive the sign of it."

I asked him whether he really believed in Jesus as his Saviour, and he replied, "Yes ; Jesus came into the world and died for our sins—for my sins ; I wish to be baptized in His name, and to serve Him for ever."

Kneeling in the midst of the people, in front of the house, we offered prayer, and then I baptized him, his sons agreeing, and many saying that our words were true and good.

Immediately afterwards, a young man of the Telaga (a certain division of the Sudra) caste stepped forward, and asked to be baptized in the name of Jesus. I found that he also had often heard the Gospel from the evangelist, and had always acknowledged his belief in Jesus. He could also read a little. In answer to my questions, he again made confession of his faith, and also said that his wife was learning the way of salvation from him.

I asked, "Do all these people know you, and are they willing you should thus acknowledge yourself a Christian?"

He looked round on them all, and replied, "Yes, they all know me"; and as this was evidently the case, I saw no reason why I should not perform the ceremony, and I baptized him. He was full of joy, and followed us back to our tents.

I was not without misgivings in baptizing these two men in the midst of a heathen town, far away from Christian influences. Doubt whispered "Do not do it! who can look after them when you are away?" But faith seemed to say, "Do not fear! Will not God, who has thus taught them a little, care for them still? We shall see them sometimes, and the Good Shepherd will surely care for these stray sheep."

We had never afterwards any reason to regret the step we had taken. The old man died not long after, steadfastly avowing his faith in Jesus. Of the other man we heard from time to time, and occasionally met and conversed with him. All we heard was favourable, and we believe that he continued in his humble way to live as much of the Christian life as was given him to live.

A most interesting case of inquiry, leading to conversion, was that of a weaver living in a fine village, where he carried on his business with three or four of his sons.

We first heard of him as an intelligent man who had learned a good deal of Christian truth, and who was very fond of speaking to others of that which he had learned. He was a quiet, pleasant man, with always a smile on his face, and very talkative. He had for some time suffered from an affection of the eyes, which interfered with his favourite occupation of reading. His son used therefore to read to him, and on one occasion began reading to him a copy of the Psalms which he had bought. This at once arrested his attention, and the beauty and power of the prayers and ascriptions of praise to God so laid hold of his mind that he at once set to work to commit many of them to memory; and the Psalms were always held in great esteem and affection by him. Other portions of Scripture and some tracts also came into his possession: and



as he studied these, and talked at intervals with Christians, he was led to abandon all faith in the idolatrous practices of Hinduism, and to place his trust in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

At my first interview with this man, after some interesting talk, I urged him to come forward and openly confess his faith before men. This, he said, he was most anxious to do, but he was involved in a number of lawsuits, the termination of which he hoped would come shortly, and then he would be free, and would be baptized as a Christian. One of the sons also said that if the father, the head of the house, became a Christian, he too would follow.

Some months afterwards I visited him at his village. This time he brought forward all the usual objections made to Christianity, which one by one we answered. At last, in the presence of all his people, he made a simple and devout confession of his faith in Jesus; and when I significantly pointed to the silver box, supposed to contain the emblem of Siva, still hanging on his breast, he voluntarily took it off, and handed it to me, asking, "Now, what more do you want?"

I replied that it was not I, but the Lord Jesus Christ, who had said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; had he been baptized?

"Yes," he replied, "I have received the baptism of the Spirit; is not that enough?"

I said that Christ had commanded baptism with water also, as an acknowledgment of His authority over all the nations. Was not that so?

"Yes," he admitted, "but then, what is baptism?" and he related what some of the people of the Canadian Close Communion Baptists had told him, and brought out a book they had given him, out of which he tried to spell something about Greek prepositions, and so on. It made my heart ache to see an earnest man thus turned aside from the simple verities of the Gospel to a question of much or little water in the rite of baptism.

I explained what I thought baptism was intended to mean, but after some conversation, he suddenly sprang to his feet

and said : "I believe in and love the Lord Jesus ; He is my Saviour, and His word is my law. I have received His Holy Spirit, because I have already believed in Him." This was all he would say at this interview, so we left him, bidding him pray and study the Bible, and so find the true way for himself.

The same evening we called to see him again, and sat on the veranda of his house for a long time conversing with him. He told us again the story of his conversion, prefacing it by looking down upon his chest, now free from the long familiar lingam-box, and exclaiming, "Now I am a new man!" and concluding by saying, "I am a believer in Jesus only ; I have renounced Siva for ever."

Numbers of the townspeople, having heard the news, came to stare at him ; and his relatives rudely and scornfully addressed him ; but he took all in very good part. Afterwards his people went the length of shutting him up in the house ; but he gave a last message through a window to one of our company : "Give my salaams to the missionary, and tell him I have the Word of God with me, which is my cup of salvation. From this will I drink, and never seek other waters !"

Some time afterwards his son was baptized by the Canadian Baptists ; and on this account, though he wrote desiring me to go to his village to baptize him, I declined to do so, as I told him it would be causing a division in his family, which had better be avoided. On his writing me again, however, expressing a very great desire to be baptized by me, I proceeded to his village ; but found the Canadian Baptist missionary there, and after some very strange and interesting meetings, the matter was again deferred. Eventually he received the rite by immersion, the reason given by him being this, that the *greater* baptism must of necessity include the *lesser*, and so it was safer to be immersed. In reality it was a case of being overcome by the greater pressure ; the Baptists, of course, insisting upon their point very much more than we cared to do.

We conclude this series of "talks" with an account of a farmer belonging to the Cuddapah District.

From the first this man showed much attachment to the evangelist stationed in his village, and his evident determination to become a Christian very soon led to his being greatly persecuted. He, however, bore all trouble of this kind with great patience and courage ; he had grasped the truth with all his soul, and as he was a man of much natural spirit and force of character, he was not backward in proclaiming himself a Christian, even preaching in his simple way the Gospel of Jesus to his fellow-villagers. At the festival time he resolutely resisted the Reddi's order to worship the family idols which are brought out at that time ; upon which the people consulted as to how they might put him out of caste. However, for some reason or other, nothing of this was done. He was a man well acquainted with the stories circulated about the gods, and with the homely proverbs and sayings in use amongst the people. Hence he was able to give very appropriate and telling replies to all his adversaries, and they rather feared him. They named him after the evangelist—Shantayya No. 2, often ridiculing his going to prayer and reading.

From the first he was fond of the exercise of prayer, and would ask the teacher to go with him to some quiet place in the fields, that they might pray together. He taught his wife as much as he could of the Christian religion, and she expressed a wish to be baptized with her husband. It was his intention to come in to the Head Station, that he might be baptized ; but the news getting abroad in the village, a number of friends and neighbours gathered at his house, and told his wife all sorts of stories ; how that if the missionary baptized her husband he would put meat into his mouth, would spit on him, strike him with his shoe, etc., and so frightened her that she fled away to her mother's house ; and when he went to her, wept and made such an outcry, he had to give up the idea of being baptized for the time.

Not long after this occurrence we met him in the village, when he spoke most humbly of himself and very simply of Jesus as his Saviour, and told of the ways in which he had been persecuted in order to induce him to bring an offering to the village goddess. He said that he wanted to explain to all

his people what baptism meant, so that quietly, and without any trouble, he might receive the rite. It was delightful to hear this poor unlettered man speak so truly as a Christian. He had tried, he said, all the plans of salvation followed by his own people, but had found no rest for his soul. Now nothing should ever make him forsake the Lord.

A week or two after this he came into the Head Quarters, and received baptism at our Sunday morning service. His wife came with him ; but as her knowledge of Christian truth was small, her baptism was deferred. He made a very touching and very joyful confession of his faith in Jesus. He told us afterwards that he had been greatly troubled all the night previous with fears as to the consequences which might follow this step ; "but," he said, "I rose from my bed and prayed, and the Lord gave me courage, and now my baptism has filled me with joy !"

The preceding pages form a review of about twenty years' "talk with the Telugus." As the writer concludes it, the remembrance of many a look from dark eyes, responsive to his appeals, of many a loving lingering handshake, of words spoken in hearty goodwill, of letters written in gratitude, comes back to gladden him, and to assure him that such "labour is never in vain in the Lord."

He hopes that the perusal of the simple record may lead some other to try his hand at the work, that he may also have a share in the joy.





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