

# **HINDUISM**

AND

## **THE COMING CENSUS.**

*Christianity and Hinduism.*

---

U. N. MUKERJI

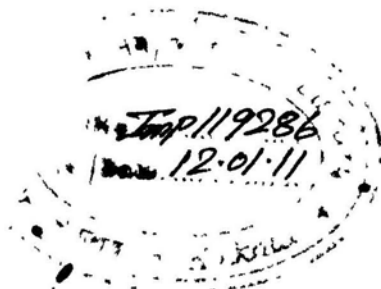
---

Published by  
**SRIKALI GHOSH**  
56, MIRZAPORE STREET, CALCUTTA.  
1911

*Price 4 Annas.*



PRINTED BY JOTISH CHANDRA GHOSH  
57, Harrison Road, Calcutta.





## HINDUISM AND THE COMING CENSUS.\*

---

### I.

A few weeks ago a Circular was issued over the signature of the Census Commissioner with the Government of India, laying down certain instructions for the guidance of the officials connected with the approaching census operations. These instructions have reference to the classification of Hindus. The question as to who should be classed as Hindus is to be decided. The Circular in question affects, according to its own words, "millions of people," every one of whom had hitherto been regarded as Hindus. Probably no document has been issued, which involved such gigantic issues; no writing, with which we are familiar, had for its object the decision of the faith of "millions of people." In the history of the Hindus nobody can recall a similar attempt. To understand the matter properly, it will be necessary to go back a year or two.

In January, 1909, the Right Honourable Syed Amir Ali, President of the All-India Moslem League, waited upon Lord Morley, the then Secretary of State for India, to make certain representations on behalf of the Mahomedan community of India. What those demands

---

\* These papers appeared originally in the *Bengalee*.

actually were, are known to very few in this country. The reply of the Secretary of State leads us to infer the nature of some of them. The following is an extract from what Lord Morley said: "Now the first point Mr. Amir Ali made was upon the unfairness to the Mahomedan community, caused by reckoning in the Hindu census a large multitude of men who are not entitled to be there. I cannot for many reasons, follow that argument. I submit that it is not very easy—and I have gone into the question very carefully,—to divide these lower castes and to classify them. Statisticians would be liable to be charged with putting too many into one or the other division, wherever you like to draw the line. I know the force of the argument, and am willing to attach to it whatever weight it deserves. I wish some of my friends in this country would study the figures of which are called the lower castes—because they would see the enormous difficulty and absurdity—absurdity of applying to India the same principles that are very good guides to us Westerners, who have been bred on the pure milk of the Benthamite world—one man one vote and every man a vote. That dream, by the way, is not quite realised, yet in this country, but the idea on insisting on a principle of that sort—I should not be surprised if my friend here (Mr. Buchanan) heard something of it before he is many weeks older—is absurd to anybody who reflects on the multiplicity of the varied castes." Lord Morley



ended by promising an enquiry on the subject. Possibly as its result, we see the first step. The Circular is reproduced in the appendix and I have no doubt will prove interesting reading to the Hindu public.

The document has to be read many times over before one can get a clear idea as to what it contains. It is very doubtful if a close study of it, and that repeated, is likely to end in a clear comprehension as to what it contains and what it is intended for. One can see that it takes many things for granted—that it suggests theories, that it lays down rules for guidance—it enjoins method of action and it deals in its own way with questions on sociology, doctrines and usage. Taken as a whole, the document is decidedly interesting, containing many original things, and is sure to provide food for reflection to a Hindu. Still the reader will be hard put to, if he is asked to state in a few words, what bearing its numerous and varied contents have with regard to one another or with regard to any particular issue.

Before attempting to make a summary of the contents of the Circular I think I would follow the easier plan of noting the main points that attract one's attention when he tries to go through the document. The opening lines disclose the ground which has led to the issue of the Circular. A convenient passive voice has served to throw a thin veil to spare the blushes, presumably of our Muslim brethern. One notices next the

ground on which exception has been taken to include "millions of people" as Hindus who have been hitherto returned as such. They are those "who are denied the ministrations of the Brahmins and are forbidden to enter Hindu temples and who in many cases are regarded so unclean that their touch or even proximity causes pollution." It is not clear whether one or all of these grounds combined mark the line of demarcation between Hindus and non-Hindus. The next thing that we notice is that the Census Commissioner makes the statement that "there is of course much truth in this criticism." He adds, however, "the fact that Hinduism has no definite creed makes it difficult to lay down any definite test as to who is and who is not a Hindu." The method hitherto followed as regards classification by religion is next indicated. "Every native who was unable to define his creed or describe it by any other name than that of some recognized religion was held to be and classed as a Hindu." There has been one exception to the above. A class has been marked as "animistic"—the qualification necessary for entry under that heading is "that they are certain forest and hill tribes" who do not claim to be Hindus. The word "animistic" has not been further defined, but two examples have been given from which its nature may be inferred, and for which I would refer the reader to the circular. The next sentence deserves careful study—"what seems to be needed is an examination of the position of every doubt-

ful caste and the preparation of an estimate, based on the caste statistics, of the number of persons, classed as Hindus for want of a better name, who cannot properly be regarded as such. The question is what standard can be taken for the purpose of framing such an estimate" I would ask the reader to read it more than once to grasp the sense and to retain it in his mind.

We next learn that "Hinduism is not a question of belief." According to the Census Commissioner "when it (a tribe) has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu social system, it is admitted to Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmins. There is no longer any question of its being a Hindu tribe," "But," the Census Commissioner goes on saying, "there is an extensive debatable ground" occupied by the communities (tribes?) with whom we are now concerned. He is prepared to accept as final the opinion of the Brahmans as to whether the doubtful group (tribes? communities?) are Hindus or not. Evidently there are difficulties in the way. Therefore he concludes that "it would be better to lay down some definite standard, and the object of the present communication is to pave the way for a decision as to what that standard should be." In accordance with the above the concluding paragraph gives a number of tests which might be applied and the Census Commissioner "will be glad to know which of them is regarded by the best opinion in each province, etc., as the most decisiv

or whether there are any others which should be substituted for them." For the last I would refer the reader to the Circular printed elsewhere.

It will not be fair to draw any conclusion as to the nature of the Circular from the above isolated extracts. I have mainly picked out those parts which at first sight invite one's attention. It remains only to be noted that the communication is evidently intended for the officials concerned in the next census operations, and so far as I know neither the Hindu Press nor any recognized Hindu Association, nor the Hindu public at large, has received any official intimation of its contents.

## II.

Probably the first question that will occur to a Hindu when he reads the Circular, issued by the Census Commissioner with the Government of India, will be to ask as to the purpose such an investigation is likely, to serve. Why has such an enquiry been found to be necessary? So far as he remembers, no such question has ever arisen—no one among the Hindus has ever asked such a question—none has pressed for its solution. As things are and as they have always been, it is the most unlikely question that can ever occur to a Hindu. What has taken place lately that has made it necessary to draw a strict line among those that had hitherto been known and classed as Hindus? He cannot be blind to the fact that such a procedure can have but one possible result. It will break into two communities those that hitherto have been regarded as one. What is going to happen next,—where is this going to end?

There are other questions that he will ask,—What injury is it likely to do anybody if the system that has hitherto been found harmless be allowed to continue? If any special benefit is to be conferred on any particular section of the people—or on any particular religious community—it can certainly be done without attempting any such cleavage. Instances of special help to a particular class are fairly common. Take the

question of education. There is provision for special help for the Mahomedans. There is similar provision for certain classes among the Hindus. It has never been found necessary to call the last non-Hindus.

If it is the Mahomedans who are the real objectors to the existing classification and if it is that such an enquiry has been set on foot on account of their representation, the matter becomes still more inexplicable. It is to be presumed that the Mahomedans complain of the present system of classification on account of the fact—real or imaginary that it means loss in some shape or other to their community. The mere fact that certain men are called Hindus cannot mean any loss to them or be a subject of any grievance. It is safe to assume that it is not on the score of doctrinal grounds that they raise any objection. That a Mahomedan in these days has any special disability on account of his Faith as compared with the Hindus will be strange news to many. But whatever grievance he may have on such a ground—supposing there is the slightest reason for entertaining such an idea—surely such grievance can be remedied without making an attempt to split those who have been hitherto classed as Hindus into two separate and distinct communities.

It may be that a certain group of persons have expressed their desire to separate themselves from the rest of the Hindus. The Circular of the Census Commissioner does not reveal the exis-

tence of any such body. The formation of Society, Connexion or Church is fairly common among the Protestants, but the seceders do not dissociate themselves from Christianity. They form new sects but they are not classed as non-Christians. Using the word Religion as understood by Europeans and taking it to be the basis of the intended cleavage, what is this talk about Hindus and non-Hindus?

It is altogether a new situation that the Hindus have been called upon to face. Look at the communication from whatever point of view, it has a most disquieting appearance. It has a suspicious resemblance to what we are familiar as writs:—"Whereas complaints have reached the undersigned that you so and so (Hindu community) have done such and such things—to wit—have tried to pass for what you are not, and whereas it appears to the undersigned that there are substantial grounds for such a complaint, you so and so (Hindu community) are hereby directed to show cause within so many days, why you so and so (Hindu community) should not be sawn asunder." Issue of such a writ at least in such terms will be unusual for an English Court of Law, but that is what the Circular of the Census Commissioner with the Government of India practically means to us. More than one step has already been taken against the hapless community. Complaints have been lodged against it, the Magistrate has expressed his opinion that "there is of course much truth" in them—and

finally a writ has been issued. We do not know the precise nature or ground of the complaint. We received no intimation when such a complaint was lodged,—none when it was heard. Those chapters are closed,—they are settled facts. The first notice we receive is this writ. The only thing left for us is to show cause.

Let us return to the text of the Circular. The concluding lines of para 4 run as follows:—“It would be better to lay down some definite standard, and the object of the present communication is to pave the way for a decision as to what that standard should be.” The “standard” is to decide whether certain communities occupying “an extensive debatable ground” are to be called Hindus or not. To decide on such a standard certain tests have been prepared and “the best opinion in each province, etc,” is to pronounce as to which of them is “the most decisive.” One gets a bit mixed up with this ‘test’ and ‘standard.’ The writer of the Circular is sure of his ground when he calls some people Hindus. There are in his own mind certain tests which are quite decisive on the point. When a tribe “has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu (?) Social System, is admitted to Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmins there is no longer any question”—and he concludes the sentence by saying—“but there is an extensive debatable ground which is occupied by the communities with whom we are now concerned.” It is not easy to trace the connection



between these two parts of the sentence. Why does he take it for granted and call it "debatable ground?" The next sentence does not bring much help. "Some more definite test is necessary" Test for what? I must express my inability to make out clearly what the writer had in his mind, and I think most of my readers will be of the same opinion. There is one statement, however, which is perfectly clear. "A simple plan would be to accept as final the opinion of the Brahmans as whether the doubtful (?) groups are Hindus or not."

On the other hand, the Census Commissioner is to a certain extent clear in his mind as to who "are not *Hindus* at all." These "who are denied the ministrations of the Brahmans and are forbidden to enter Hindu temples and who in many cases are regarded as so unclean that their proximity causes pollution." The 'tests' given at the end furnish some clue by inference as to the attitude of the mind of the writer as regards the distinction between a Hindu and a non-Hindu. It is to be deeply regretted that the wording of so important a Circular could leave so much to be desired in the way of clearness and precision.

### III.

It is unfortunate that the Circular is not more clearly worded. To say that it is intended "to pave the way for the decision as to what that standard should be," which presumably is to differentiate a Hindu from a non-Hindu, is to further prolong the questions. Supposing a sufficient number of replies is collected, who is to weigh and sift them—who is to appraise their worth—who is to lay down the final law? Are we on the eve of another Council of Trent? Hardly, I should say. The students of Church History know that this Council was called by Pope Paul II in 1545, sat for 18 years and was finally dissolved in 1563 by Pope Pius IV. It was called at the instance of The Most Christian King Francis I and Emperor Charles V—Head of the Holy Roman Empire. The Council decided the doctrines of the Church of Rome and its decisions were reduced to a creed to which all ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome subscribe to this day. We all know that when the 42 Articles of Faith of the Church of England were first drawn up, "questions relating to them were given about to many Bishops and Divines, who gave in their several answers, which were collected and examined very minutely. All sides had a free and a fair hearing before conclusions were made" Cranmer, however, always maintained that the Articles "were his doings." It is

difficult, however, to fit in the present case with the above. One gets mixed up with Lord Morley, the Right Hon'ble Syed Amir Ali and Cranmer, I. C. S., with Prince Maurice and Pope Pius IV, and Emperor Charles, and the Junior Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

The impression that a study of the Circular will leave in the minds of an average reader will be very likely something like this. The Government of this country intends for reasons of its own to devise a standard—as it is called—by which everyone calling himself a Hindu is to be tested. Those who come up to that standard are to be classed as Hindus and those who fail to do so will be put down as non-Hindus. There are persons in its opinion who do not stand in any need of being measured by this standard. Their Hinduism is not a subject of question. They come up to the Government standard. There are however, according to it, “millions of men” who stand on what the Government calls “debatable ground” whose claims to be considered as Hindus, the Government has reasons to doubt. It lays down certain tests, however; these tests in its opinion are likely to bring out the distinction that it thinks differentiates a Hindu from a non-Hindu. These tests are to be utilised by the officials in the next census operations. In plain words, the question is, who is a Hindu and who is a non-Hindu, or which comes to the same thing, what is Hinduism? If we can give a satisfactory reply to the last question we

are pretty sure that there would be no need of instituting such an enquiry. But is it possible to do so? Let us try to understand where the main difficulty lies. We that is, the Hindus who at present number nearly 250 millions of persons, are to give directly or through our representatives a collective and definite definition of what constitutes a Hindu. That is bad enough—worse remains behind. We have to make the English, who are non-Hindus, and foreigners understand that definition. Can we do either?

Let us suppose we have got to deal with an Englishman of the class one occasionally meets with in this country;—educated at a Public School, a graduate of a University, belonging to the upper middle class, fairly well read, with a general, if not a deep, knowledge of the general literature, history and religion of his own country. He may be taken to be tolerably familiar—if not in an equal degree—with the same subjects relating to other European countries. Suppose we try to make him understand what we call Hinduism, and in return look to him for enlightenment as to what his religion—which we take to be Christianity—is. For our purpose we will take him to belong to the Established Church.

To most Englishmen, when thinking of his religion, probably the particular church where he attended in his childhood would be the central point of his thoughts. • No land-mark is more

prominent in English scenery than the village church. No institution is more intimately connected with the home-life of an Englishman than the church. An Englishman of the class that I have selected may be said to grow up in the shadow of his church. With hardly any exertion he can recall every feature of the familiar place. He has been there every Sunday ever since he has been big enough to accompany his mother. Here he was very likely Confirmed by the Bishop and here he partook of his first Communion. If he had a good voice when young he might have sung in the choir—his sister has taken a Sunday class and certainly has helped in its decoration during Christmas. The entire Liturgy or the rituals of his Church is perfectly familiar to him and he can reproduce parts of it as correctly as the minister in the pulpit. He can recognise most of the Psalms and Hymns. Words which would be necessarily unintelligible to us such as Litany, Collets, Responses, Lessons, bring to him memories as familiar as the faces of his brothers and sisters.

Then, there is the minister. No figure is more familiar than that of the village pastor. No function where good is to be done can be complete without him. He is always an honoured as well as a welcome guest wherever he visits, be it a labourer's cottage or a square's Hall. To an Englishman a minister is not only an object of respect but of pride. In his eyes a minister is an embodiment of Christian ideals. The Manse,

Parsonage, Rectory or Vicarage is almost as well known as the church itself. In his home an Englishman learns his Prayers almost as soon as he learns to speak. Very few can remember when he first learned his Lord's Prayer. He is taught his little Prayers when he is in the nursery. There is no English home where religion is scoffed,—very few where it is neglected. Religion forms the bone and marrow of English home-life. The church, the Bible, the service, Prayers, Psalms, Hymns are what he has been used to all his life. Some of them may represent the outward symbols of his Faith, some of them may be the necessary adjuncts; but these he has seen and learned to respect all his life. These are indissolubly connected in his mind with religion. Some or all of them rise instinctively before his mind when he thinks or talks of religion. This holds good practically for every Englishman.

An educated Englishman of the class that I have chosen is generally well informed as to the main outlines of the history of his own Church. The history of the Reformation, the rise and fortunes of the various sects, are well known to him. The names of Ridley and Cranmer, of Whitgift and Parker as well as those of Wolsey and Gardiner of Bonner and Laud, the part they took in the religious history of his country, are fairly familiar to him. He is generally acquainted with the various sets of Articles, the several Prayer-books, their contents

and their history. An Englishman of this class has a fair idea of the main points of difference in matters of doctrine, worship and discipline that led to the formation of the various Dissenting bodies.

There are thousands of books dealing with the history of Christianity, and all cultured Englishmen are familiar with the important landmarks. It was at the first Council of Nicea—now a Mahomedan town in the north of Asia Minor—that the creed was formulated which (with some additions and alterations) constitutes one of his present creeds. It was at a meeting of this Council that Arius, the originator of the Arian heresy as it has since been called, was worsted by Athanasius, then a young man belonging to the inferior clergy—who was destined to give the name, if not to be the author of the Athanasian creed which with the Apostles and Nicene, from the three creeds to which every minister of the Church of England has got to subscribe. It was at the second Council held at this place that the worship of images was solemnly sanctioned. Leo the Isaurian had attempted to introduce into Christian worship the iconoclasm, then preached by Islam; but the attempt failed and that for good, mainly at the instance of Irene the Byzantine Empress, so far as Latin and Greek Christianity were concerned.

From the origin of the Christian Religion (as for ages long, long before that) there have been

questions that have agitated the human mind. Predestination and Election, Justification by Faith, Justification by Work, Everlasting Bliss and Eternal Punishment, Human Corruption, Original sin, Compulsion, Free Will these and many others, have been subjects of speculation to the human mind. To a Christian these subjects are of peculiar interest, They constitute matters of doctrine that serve to differentiate one Church from another.

An educated Englishman has at some period or other of his life made a study of all or most of those questions.

There is another group of terms with which his studies have made him familiar. The words Church, Confessions, Communion, Connexion bring clear and distinct impressions to his mind. He has only to think of the African Church, the Augsburg Confession, the Romish Communion and Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. A further set of terms can be drawn up,—Church, Chapel-Meeting house, Convention and Tabernacle. To us these words do not convey any sense of distinction. An average Englishman knows the differences very well. To the above a third group may be added—Sect and Brotherhood, Heresy and Schism, Dissent and Conformity. A fourth group may also be mentioned; Synods, Œcumenical Council, General Council, Latern Council, Diet and Conference.

Let me try to sum up. The question of creed, doctrine, worship and discipline mainly—



almost entirely—constitute the Ecclesiastical History of Europe. The History of the Christian Church is the history of these questions. Most educated Englishmen have read the history of their own religion. When he tries to study the religion of any other country his ideas naturally group round these questions.

#### IV.

Up to the present I have tried to guess the mental attitude of an Englishman towards religion as it is formed, by his home surroundings and by the study of the history of his own Faith. I would like to pursue the subject a little further.

We can get a fair idea of the trend of the religious mind of England from its legislations. We can see from the various enactments what are the points that furnish subjects of contention, what they consider essential questions of religion and what is the opinion of the people regarding the most prominent of them. I can not do better than take the period of the Reformation. All Englishmen are familiar with its history. It may give us a clue to the working of an Englishman's mind when he talks or thinks about what he calls Religion.

Most of us have read at some time or other something about the English Reformation, and we are acquainted with the main facts in a sort of way. I mean to deal with only the enactments that were passed about this time. It is necessary to remind my readers that we must make a distinction between two sets of laws, one Ecclesiastical passed by Ecclesiastical Courts binding only on the Clergy, and the other ordinary Parliamentary enactments passed by Parliament and thus become the law of the land obligatory on the people of the country.

The first formal Act of Reformation was passed in 1536 in the reign of Henry VIII. It was the Convocation or the Ecclesiastical Court that passed it. It is known as the 10 Articles. That is, the Ecclesiastical Court of England decided on 10 Articles of Faith and directed that these Articles were to be adopted by the Clergy of the English Church. They had the countenance of the King, but as Parliament had not passed them, they had not the force of what we call the law of the land. Still, it is not to be taken for granted that people disregarding any of the prescribed Articles were left free to ventilate their opinion. The 10 Articles dealt with questions of creed and doctrine. One of the Articles prescribed, maintained the doctrine of Transubstantiation. A luckless individual, John Lambert by name, expressed a different opinion and was called upon to account for his conduct. He appealed to the King who, we are told, held personally a theological discussion with him. It is on record that the Sovereign successfully maintained the soundness of the doctrine and Lambert was duly burned. I need hardly remind my readers that the doctrine in question has been given up long since by the Church of England. The central fact to be borne in mind is that a body of clergymen drew up a set of ordinances regarding the creed and doctrines of the Christian Religion to be followed by the clergy, and by inference, by the people of the country. The King, the head of the

Civil authority, held the same view as the Ecclesiastical authorities.

Three years later, another Act was passed, known as 6 Articles. This time it was a Parliamentary act. This was passed at the instance of the King. As a law of the realm its provisions were binding on every subject of the Crown. These 6 Articles were mainly the same as the previous 10 Articles, dealing chiefly with Christian doctrines and religious usages based on such doctrines. As a law it had to be obeyed. The penalty for disobedience in the case of some of the doctrines was "immediate death." In the case of others the punishment was reserved for a repetition of the first offence.

In 1541, the Bible which was translated by Tyndal into English, was by the order of the King reprinted and directed to be placed in Churches so that all who chose could read it. In 1543, by an Act of Parliament, "Tyndal's translation of the Bible was prohibited." The Act further limited the reading of the Bible to heads of families.

King Edward VI., son of King Henry VIII., succeeded his father in 1547. In the same year the Parliament repealed the 6 Articles.

In 1549 the Ecclesiastical Court prepared the Liturgy, that is, the rituals, or forms and ceremonies to be followed in worship by the English people. This was only binding on the Clergy. But an Act of Uniformity was passed by Parliament compelling the adoption of the

Liturgy by the people. The penalty for non-obedience, commencing with burning, embraced most of the recognised items of religious persecution. It is to be mentioned here, that this Liturgy also has since then undergone many modifications. This Act of Uniformity concerned itself mainly with two things. It enjoined the form of worship to be followed by every Christian subject of the King, and it demanded that every clergyman should take the oath of Supremacy, that is acknowledge the Sovereign to be not only the Civil but also the Ecclesiastical head of the country.

The Act dealt with the form of worship and the supremacy of the Sovereign—what about the creed and the doctrines of the Church? In 1551 a commission of Bishops with Archbishop Cranmer prepared the 42 Articles. "They were founded on the fundamental Article of the Reformation, that the Whole doctrines of the Christian religion are contained in the Scriptures." The Articles defined not only the creed and the doctrines of the Church but its relation with the people and with the State as well as rules for its internal discipline. This was not an Act of Parliament, but these Articles were issued by Royal authority. Jurists are competent to distinguish the distinction, but practically they had all the force of an Act. I may add that the 42 Articles of Faith of the English Church were almost a reproduction of the celebrated Augsburg Confession, and they were drawn up mainly with the help of foreign divines.

In 1553 King Edward died and was succeeded by Queen Mary. The needle turned round. The English Parliament repealed all the Acts of the previous reign. The chief Ecclesiastical Court, the Convocation, framed a fresh series of doctrines for the English people. Most obeyed, a few demurred. Of the latter 270 were burned.

Queen Mary died in 1558 and was succeeded by Queen Elizabeth. Things had to undergo again a change. Another Act of Uniformity was passed in 1558. Hitherto the difference lay between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. A split now appeared among the latter. For our purpose the subject has got particular interest.

The persecutions during Queen Mary's reign had driven many Englishmen to seek refuge in the Continent. Basle, Zurich, Geneva, Frankfort furnished asylum to the greater number. There they came under the influence of the Continental Reformers,—notably of Zwingli and Calvin. At Frankfort, John Knox a follower of Calvin was their pastor. When Elizabeth came to the throne many of them returned to their native country in the expectation of liberty to follow their own conscience. They had imbibed the simplicity of the worship they had seen in the Continent. On many points of doctrine they held views different from those of the native English Clergy. In their dress as ministers, ceremonies and worship they maintained a difference. They had seen forms of Church Government different from Episcopacy, which

was the prevailing English system. Many of the English Clergy shared their views. The result was friction between the Government Church, as we would call it, and the Clergy with the new notions. Many of the latter held meetings to discuss their grievances and exchange views. These *Prophesyings*, as they were called, were suppressed. In 1566 the first secession of Protestants from their parent Church took place, and ever since there has been a number of sects and denominations who refuse to conform partly or wholly to the Ecclesiastical ordinances of the Government or as it is called the Established Church. I would close this part of the subject, mentioning however that the Toleration Act in the reign of William and Mary brought partial relief to the Non-conformists and it was not until 1829 that the Roman Catholic Relief Bill finally removed the hardships that the English Roman Catholics had suffered for nearly three hundred years.

The rise of this party necessitated activity on the part of the English Government. They had in 1562 formulated a fresh series of Articles, this time 38 in number, for the guidance of the Clergy. In 1571 another Article was added at the instance of Archbishop Parker. An Act of Parliament was passed in the same year, making subscription to the Articles obligatory on every clergyman belonging to the Church of England. This is the law to this day.

Let us try to realise what lies at the root of these differences. Creed, doctrine, form of wor-

ship, Church Government, the relations of the Church with the State practically represent the main points of difference. Whether it is between the Protestant Church and the Roman Catholic Church, or between the Church of England and the Nonconformists, these five subjects singly or combined furnish the bone of contention. To a Christian, especially to the English Christians, these five subjects constitute the materials out of which he constructs his idea of religion.

There is another series of facts of even greater interest that stands out from the short summary of the main enactments passed during the Reformation. We see a Central Civil authority in the person of the Sovereign with his Council and the Parliament, a Central Ecclesiastical authority represented by a Supreme Ecclesiastical Court and a *Hierarchy* of Church dignitaries and finally the people of the country—the laity. The Ecclesiastical Court lays down the Articles of Faith for the people, their creed, the doctrines they are to believe, the method of worship to be followed, the views that are to be taken regarding spiritual and speculative questions. They advise the Sovereign, the Supreme central authority, as to what in one word, the religion (in the sense the Christians call it) of the people should be. In some cases the Sovereign did not need any advice; he initiated the changes himself. The king issued orders himself or through the Parliament and the people got their religion. If they demurred to accept it they were punished.



## V.

If it falls to my lot to try to convince anybody on any debatable point, one of the necessary equipments with which both of us may be expected to be provided is a knowledge of the language which we both understand. In the present instance, this is the first and the greatest difficulty that we have got to contend with. I do not refer to our want of sufficient knowledge of the English language. This is unavoidable. We may reasonably hope that the superior intelligence of the great *Sah eblogue* would compensate for that deficiency. But there is a more serious difficulty. Their thoughts have been trained to run in a certain groove. The word 'religion' is coupled in their minds with certain clearly-defined associations. The possibility of the existence of any other form of human faith other than that of their own, would not be very likely denied by most respectable Christians. They are generally grouped under the generic terms of Paganism, Heathenism, Fetish worship and Idolatry. Superstition is the common name he is used to assign to the whole lot.

We also in our own way have a sort of idea as to what Hinduism is. It would be strange if we had not—seeing that we call ourselves Hindus. The difficulty is how to translate our thoughts to make a Christian understand what we mean.

Let us have a look at our respective assets. We have learned that *Dharma* is Religion, *Pujah* is worship, *Pratima*—Idol or God (indifferently) *Devata*—ditto, *Punya* is virtue, *Pap* is sin *Karma* is action, *ni-am* is Rule *Swarga*, is Heaven, *Narak* is Hell, *Janmantar* is Transmigration of soul *Shastra*, a book of religion and *Nayadarshan*—Logical Philosophy. Of course, we know that apple is *Atha* and a *Tepari* gooseberry. I was once told that a *Rath* is a wooden church.

A Saheb cannot be expected to be behind-hand in his knowledge. Most well-informed Englishmen can give the main tenets of the religion of the Hindus. They are Brahmins, castes, gods and Jaggarnath car. One sees them all in the letter, issued by the Census Commissioner with the Government of India. He will miss the car, but will find compensation.

With such mental equipments on both sides we have got to define what Hinduism is so that the great Sahebs may understand. Two dumb individuals, one with a pack of cards and the other with the figures of chess, trying to make each other understand the nature of their respective games, will have an easier time of it.

Probably it may facilitate matters if we approach the question from a different point of view. Suppose we ask the Englishman with whom we have been hitherto dealing, as to what Christianity is—if any complaint has ever been made in his country that the census returns of Christians are misleading on the ground that

they include millions of people who are not really Christians at all ; if there is any debatable ground in his country occupied by these people ; the nature of the test in his country accepted as final, which seems to decide whether such people are or are not Christians ; whether in his country a group is regarded at one place as Christians and not in any other place ; and whether it has been found desirable to lay down some definite standard, and has any communication been ever issued by the Census Commissioner with the Government of England with a view to pave the way for the decision as to what that standard should be. Let us try to form a guess as to what his reply is likely to be.

An Ecclesiastic of the Church of Rome has to subscribe to the following doctrines :—

1. I most firmly admit and receive the Apostolical and Ecclesiastical traditions and all other observances and constitutions of the church.

2. I admit also the sacred Scriptures according to that sense which holy mother Church, to whom it appertains to judge of the true meaning and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures, hath holden and still holds ; nor will I ever receive and interpret them otherwise than according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers. °

3. I profess likewise that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the new law, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all of them to every one ; namely, Baptism, Confirmation,

the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony, and that they confer Grace, and that of these sacraments Baptism, Confirmation and Orders cannot be repeated without sacrilege. I receive also and admit the received and approved rites of the Catholic Church, in the solemn administration of all the aforesaid sacraments.

4. I embrace and receive all things and everything which have been defined and declared by the holy Council of Trent, concerning Original Sin and Justification.

5. Further I profess that in the mass is offered unto God a true, proper and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead ; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is really, truly and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that a conversion is made of the whole substance of the wine into his blood ; which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation.

6. I confess also that under one kind only is received the whole and entire Christ, and the true sacrament.

7. I strenuously maintain that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls detained there are assisted by the prayers of the faithful.

8. Likewise that the saints, who reign together with Christ, are to be venerated and invoked, and that they offer prayers for us to God, and that their relics are to be venerated.

9. I most firmly declare that the images of Christ, and of the ever-Virgin, mother of God, as also of the other saints, are to be had and retained, and that due honour and veneration are to be shown to them.

10. I affirm also, that the power of Indulgence was left by Christ, in his Church, and that the use of them is very salutary to Christian people.

11. I acknowledge the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of Rome to be the mother and mistress of all Churches, and I promise and swear true obedience to the Roman Pontiff, successor to the prince of the Apostles St. Peter, and the Vicegerent of Jesus Christ.

12. Further I do, without doubt, receive and profess all things which have been delivered, defined and declared by the sacred canons and Œcumenical councils, especially by the holy Council of Trent and all things contrary thereunto, and all heresies of whatsoever kind, which have been condemned, rejected and anathematized by the church, I in like manner Condemn, reject and anathematize.

“This true Catholic faith, out of which no one can be saved, which I by these presents I profess and verily hold I N. N. do promise, vow and swear most firmly to keep and confess (by God’s help) entire and inviolate, to the last breath of my life and that I will take care, as far as in me lies, that the same be holded, kept and preached by all who are subject to my control or who are connected with my charge.

So help me God and these the holy Gospels of God." ~~and these the holy Gospels of God.~~

Everyone of these doctrines is based, according to the Roman Catholics, on irrefutable Scriptural proofs. Millions of Christians have suffered for holding or denying every one of these doctrines. Those days are gone by. A Roman Catholic priest will give them this most rigid adhesion and they will be as warmly denied by every Protestant minister. As facts are, a candidate for Orders in the Church of England has got to declare his adherence to a very different set of doctrines.

## VI.

I have got before me a list of Articles to which every Ecclesiastic belonging to the Church of England has got to subscribe before he can be ordained. I am sorry I cannot reproduce them, they will take too much space. The study of a different Faith is always interesting ; at present, it is of special value to us. These Articles throw considerable light on the mental attitude of Englishmen,—the bulk of them belong to the Church of England—and help us to realise what an Englishman understands when he speaks of Religion and what he associates it with. I will give the headings of each Article.

The first treats, "Of Faith in the Trinity" ; the second, "Of the word of Son of God which was made very man" ; the third, "Of the going down of Christ into Hell" ; the fourth, "Of the Resurrection of Christ" ; the fifth, "Of the Holy Ghost" ; the sixth, "Of the sufficiency of Holy Scriptures for salvation," the seventh, "Of the Old Testament" ; the eighth, "Of the Three creeds" ; the ninth, "Of Original or birth sin" ; the tenth, "Of Free Will" ; the eleventh, "Of the Justification of man" ; the twelfth, "Of Good works" ; the thirteenth, "Of Works before Justification" ; the fourteenth "Of works of Supererogation ;" the fifteenth, "Of Christ alone without sin" ; the sixteenth, "Of sin after Baptism", article seventeenth, "Of Predestination and election ;"

article eighteenth, "Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the name of Christ"; article nineteenth, "Of the Church"; article twentieth, "Of the authority of the Church"; article twenty-first, "Of the authority of General Councils"; article twenty-second, "Of Purgatory"; article twenty-third, "Of ministering in the congregation"; article twenty-fourth, "Of speaking in the congregation in such a tongue as the people understandeth"; article twenty-fifth, "Of the Sacraments"; article twenty-sixth, "Of the Unworthiness of the ministers which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments," article twenty-seventh, "Of Baptism"; article twenty-eighth, "Of the Lord's Supper"; article twenty-ninth "Of the wicked which eat not the Body of Christ in the use of the Lord's Supper"; article thirtieth, "Of Both Kinds"; article thirty-first, "Of the one oblation of Christ finished upon the cross"; article thirty-second, "Of the marriage of priests," article thirty-third, "Of excommunicated persons—how they are to be avoided"; article thirty-fourth "Of the Traditions of the Church;" article thirty-fifth, "Of the "Homilies"; article thirty-sixth, "Of consecration of Bishops and ministers"; article thirty-seventh "Of Civil Magistrates;" article thirty-eighth, "Of Christian men's goods which are not common"; article thirty-ninth, "Of a Christian man's oath."

Mere enumeration of the different subjects is not likely to leave any clear impression on the mind of the reader. I better quote a summary



of their contents as given\* by the divine from whose pages they have been taken. "The first five treat of the doctrine of the Trinity; the three following establish the rule of Christian Faith; from the ninth to the eighteenth inclusive they bear reference to Christians considered as individuals; and thence to the end they relate to Christians considered as members of a Church or religious Society. They are intended not only to declare positive doctrines, but also to refute acknowledged heresies, especially the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome." The Articles themselves are generally short paragraphs, clear and definite, and admit of very little doubt, as to their meaning and significance. Englishmen belonging to the Church of England profess their absolute adhesion to these Articles. As in the case of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, all the Articles of Faith of the Church of England are according to its ministers based on extensive and irrefutable Scriptural proofs.

In the year 1829 the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, as mentioned before, was passed. It removed all the civil disabilities that the members of the Romish Communion had suffered during the preceding three centuries. The English people were averse to the passing of the Bill, and it was mainly through the influence of the Duke of Wellington in the House of Lords and of Sir Robert Peel in the Lower House that the Bill passed. The Duke of York, Heir to the throne

had protested against it. Lord Eldon the Chancellor declared his opinion that if the Bill passed "the sun of England will set for ever." Nothing very serious happened, however, when the Bill became law.

Some years later, that is, about the middle of the last century, there took place what looked like a Roman revival in England. Two hundred ministers of the Established Church reverted to the original faith. "The Pope consecrated Dr. Wiseman, Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster." Roman Catholic Cathedrals were built at different places and the Roman Pontiff assumed prerogatives that had not been heard of in England for three hundred years. The English people took alarm; and many of the scenes of the "no Popery" days were reproduced. The result was the passing of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which defined the rights of the Pope in the British dominions.

Excepting on occasions like these, there has been scarcely any friction in the last hundred years between the two communities, and an outsider would never think that there was any difference between the two Churches. All the same, no minister of the English Church would ever think of admitting any of the Roman Catholic doctrines, nor will a Roman Catholic priest ever dream of adopting the Articles of the Church of England. As a matter of fact, no Roman Catholic—I mean among laymen and not priests—will ever attend the worship of a Protestant Church. \* If he is found at such a

place he incurs serious penalty.

Divided as the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches are in their views regarding almost every doctrine that is associated with the name of Christianity, there is at least one doctrine in which both the Churches agree. Both of them believe that the Holy Ghost proceeded equally from the Father and the Son. The Greek Church holds that the Holy Ghost proceeded from the Father alone. The gravity of the distinction will not be apparent to my Hindu readers ; but it practically unsettles the whole question of Trinity on which Christianity is based. The true significance of "Holy Ghost" has always exercised the minds of non-Christians.—I may say that among Christians the idea about it is not quite clear. "By the Holy Ghost is meant either the Spirit or Inspiration, shed forth at Pentecost on the Apostles, and on others, or that inward assistance, whereby men's minds are changed and renewed."

If the Protestants unite with the Roman Catholics in differing from the Greek Church on such a vital point, they agree with the last Church against the Roman Catholics as regards a not less important question. The Roman Catholic Church enjoins, as we have seen, seven sacraments, while the two others lay down two. What is a sacrament?—with our ready inaccuracy we have translated it as *sanskar*. Let me give the meaning, as understood by Christians. "They are permanent federal rites by which Christians

bind themselves to the Captain of their salvation, being instituted by Christ himself to unite us to Him." Whatever they may be they are not *sanskars*.

Instances like these can be multiplied without end. There is an inexhaustible literature on the subject, and the curious will be struck with the endless differences that characterise the three Churches. If pressed, every item that can be connected with the creed, doctrine, worship, or discipline associated with the name of Christianity may be made the subject of a triangular duel. Yet the followers of all these Churches go by the common name of Christians, call each other Christians and live peacefully together as all good Christians are supposed to do. Roughly speaking, there are one hundred and sixty million Protestants, two hundred and twenty five million Catholics, and ninety millions belong to the Greek Church.

---

## VII.

Let us look at one of the Churches a little more in detail. It is natural that we should take the Protestant Church. We were talking about the sacraments. Probably the most solemn rite of the Christian Church is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. A follower of a different Faith feels a natural hesitation in talking of a ceremony held sacred for hundreds of years by millions of people. The mere thought that the subject may be unconsciously handled in a way that may suggest anything in the way of a jarring note to those who hold it sacred, considerably increases the hesitation. I shall confine myself, therefore, so far as I can, to Christian sources. According to the Christian belief, Jesus Christ partook of a Supper with his disciples on the night before his death. The following extracts from the Bible will explain:—"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them—saying this is my body, which is given to you; this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." *Luke XXII. 19-20.* "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come" *1, Cor. XI, 26.*

I have given elsewhere the doctrine of the Roman Church on the subject. I will reproduce it here.

"Further, I profess that in the mass is offered unto God a true, proper and propitiating sacrifice for the living and the dead; and that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there is really, truly and substantially the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into his body and of the whole substance of the wine into his blood; which conversion the Catholic Church calls Transubstantiation."

Commenting on the above a Protestant divine says:—"Now, the Romanists say that the bread and wine, after consecration are annihilated; and that instead of them, their outward appearances or *accident* alone remain, under which the real body of Christ is present. This transformation they attribute to miracle, perpetually repeated at the celebration of every mass through all ages. Of this they are so firmly convinced that they pay to these elements of bread and wine the same adoration, which they would pay to the real person of Jesus Christ, if he were visibly present. This we consider barefaced Idolatry." There is no need for us to try to understand the merits of the case, we may take it for granted that there is an extreme and irreconcilable difference of opinion about the subject between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches. Let us see how the Protestants fare among themselves.

Every student of history knows that during

the Reformation no subject caused greater excitement, or created more bitter animosity than this doctrine of Transubstantiation. It was recognised by the Christian world as one of their most fundamental doctrines. On one side stood the entire Catholic Church. On the other were ranged with their scanty followers. Luther and Melancthon, Zwingli and Carlstadt. There were others besides who watched or took part in the contest, John Calvin with his brother Lambert Calvin, and Peter Martyr were engaged in the same disputation at Geneva and Strasburg. The upshot of the dispute is interesting study. The Roman Catholics maintained their old ground and have stuck to it. Luther and Melancthon agreed with them so far as "the real presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the bread and wine" but denied "the mass to be a sacrifice" or that it ought to be worshipped or adored. Zwingli and Carlstadt taught "that the body and blood of Christ are really present in the *Eucharist*; and that the bread and wine were no more than external *signs* or *symbols*, designed to excite in the minds of Christians the *remembrance*, the sufferings and death of the divine Saviour, and of the benefits which arise from them." Calvin differed from both and the English Reformers differed from the Lutherans, Zwinglites and the Calvinists inasmuch as they held a sacrament to consist of an outward or visible sign or material symbol and an inward or spiritual force. I don't think any Hindu will venture to decide the

merits of the case ; but one fact is fairly apparent. If at one place there could be gathered a divine of the Lutheran Church, a minister of the Calvinistic Church, a member of the Swiss Church, and a dignitary of the English Church, all excellent Protestants, it will be found that the opinion of every one of them regarding this fundamental doctrine of Christianity is absolutely different from that of the three others. And the fact does not stand in the way of their regarding one another as excellent Christians.

In the popular mind to be baptised is synonymous with conversion to Christianity. Among Christians generally a similar idea prevails, "for the baptism instituted by Christ means faith or belief in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in whose name a person is baptised. And this implies a belief in the Atonement of Christ, that is, in the Kingdom of God." A child may be born of Christian parents, but he is not on that account a Christian. "Except a man be born again (a phrase held to be synonymous with Baptism) he cannot see the Kingdom of God." A child dying unbaptised means therefore a serious thing. In the Church of England as well as in many other Churches a child is baptised soon after its birth. The ministers of the Church at present perform the ceremony ; formerly lay people—women—even midwives performed it.

The nature of the sacrament of Baptism is not regarded in the same light by all Christians.



Leaving the sects of Pedobaptists, Anabaptists, Catabaptists the modern Baptists practise adult Baptism. There are sects of Christians, as we shall see later on, which practise old-age Baptism, and some which baptise their dead. There is a sect which believes in baptism by fire. A non-Christian may therefore be at a loss to understand as to what is the true Christian doctrine.

The Roman Catholics according to the Protestant divines regard it as of a nature of miracle, the very act (*opus operatum*) always and necessarily carries with it an inward regeneration.

So much for the two sacraments, held essential for every Christian.

---

## VIII.

The perplexity considerably increases when one attempts to study further. What are the essential doctrines of a Christian—what constitutes Christianity?

Let us look to the Articles of Faith as prescribed by the Church of England. We ought to get the help we are looking for. As quoted before, “the first five treat of the doctrine of Trinity; the three following establish the rule of Christian Faith.”

The central pillar of Christian Religion is supposed to be the belief in Trinity. I better quote the first Article of Faith in full. It treats “Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.” “There is one living and true God everlasting without body, parts or passions, of Infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things; both visible and invisible; and in the unity of this Godhead there be the three persons of one substance, power and eternity; the Father, the son and the Holy Ghost.” We are not competent to discuss the significance of the above. I do not think an average Christian ever tries to analyse or discuss its sense. There is a consensus of opinion among Christians about what it means. An Ecclesiastical commentator remarks as follows:—“This treats, first, of the existence, unity and attributes of Deity; and secondly, of the Trinity in Unity.”

Ever since Christianity has appeared as a religion, no subject has caused a greater difference of opinion than the question of the personality of its founder. Most of it would be unintelligible to us. The controversy between the monophysites (one nature) and Catholics, the difference between the monothelites (one will) and those who held the Dyothelite doctrines or the exact nature of the distinction that separates homoiousion from Homoeousion, cannot possess very great interest for us, for at least one reason, and that is, we know nothing about them. But it has not been the case with Christians. They have been subjects of fierce controversies and sometimes of something far more serious. Joan Boucher, a woman, was burnt at Smithfield in 1550 in the reign of Edward VI for denying the *humanity* of Christ, and a year after Paris, a Dutch surgeon, was burnt for denying the *divinity* of Christ. I don't think an average Christian troubles his head about such matters now.

There is however another question which has never been set at rest. Is Christ a divinity or was he a man? There is a third question which has also not been finally answered. • Did such a person as Christ ever live? For our purpose, I will only deal with the first question.

Is Christ a divinity or was he only a man? What is the view of Christians themselves? Ever since the beginning of Christianity this question has agitated the Christian world. The Basilidian,

the Monarchian, the Sabillian, the Manichian (a combination of Christian, Zoroasterian and Hindu doctrines), the Pauline, the Arian are some of the well-known heresies, as they were called, of the early Christian Church. They differ in details, but all agree generally in denying divinity to Christ. In the Middle Ages the same heresies continued. The Cathari, (the Puritans of the Middle Ages,) Patarini, Albigensis and many others held Paulican or the Gnostic views. Later on, the Socinians, Budneans, Farnovians maintained the same doctrine. Most of these heresies have been named after the originators, and the followers in many cases go considerably beyond the founders; but there is one thing common to all of them and that is they deny the divinity of Christ. How do the English Christians fare? Let us look at some of the sects. I will take the Irvingites first.

The Irvingites call themselves the Catholic and Apostolic Church. For the information of my readers I may mention that the term Catholic is assumed by many Churches besides the Roman Catholic. The English Churchmen call theirs also Catholic (but, of course, not Roman Catholic) Church. The founder was the Rev. Edward Irving who was ordained as a Presbyterian Minister. Before I go further I ought to mention that the present as well as the subsequent accounts that I have given about the different sects has been taken from the pages of ministers of the English Church. I believe that

the descriptions are fairly accurate. The Reverend Edward Irving first began his pastoral life as an assistant at St. George's, Glasgow, to the celebrated Scottish divine Dr. Chalmers. In 1827 he first promulgated his views on Christianity. He maintained that "Our Lord took upon him fallen and sinful flesh, with like appetites and desires as are found in us." In a sermon delivered by him, he maintained that "our Lord's body was devil possessed." In a paper he wrote "that every variety of human wickedness which hath been realised or is possible to be realised was inherent in his humanity." He gave out that some among his congregation was blessed with the gift "of speaking with the tongue." The utterances were of the nature of miracle as well as of prophecy. "The prophets testified of the nearness of the coming of Christ and of the judgments which would immediately precede it" "Another subject of the utterances was the sinfulness of Christ's human nature." The people "were promised, that after the close of three years and a half of testimony of the world commencing from the 14th January 1832, the Lord Jesus would come again in glory; the living saints would be caught up to meet him, the dead saints would be raised and the world would be given over to judgment for an appointed season." "This Church has made considerable progress during the last few years. In England, there are about thirty congregations, comprising nearly six thousand communicants, and, the

number is gradually on the increase." We are further told that no "Christian Community in England of equal size can boast of so many families of rank and wealth."

We have all heard of the American "Shakers". It is not generally known to us that it was an English woman—Ann Lee—who founded the sect.

"About 1770 Ann Lee discovered the wickedness of marriage and began to "testify against it." She called herself "Ann the word" meaning that the word dwelt in her. "And her followers say that the man who was called Jesus and the woman who was called Ann, are verily the first pillars of the church, the two anointed ones." There are thousands of Americans, men and women, who belong to this sect, and the sect is not by any means unknown in England.

---