

ness for those two formidable looking words we will not be far wrong. The Surgeon takes every precaution against infection or pollution as it may be termed. He washes his hands, brushes his nails, rubs them, scrubs them with soap, steeps them in antiseptics. The room is rendered aseptic as far as it is possible, the table is treated in the same way, the instruments are all boiled to prevent any possible speck of dirt from lodging in them. The assistants and attendants are to be as careful as the surgeon himself and no-body who is not thoroughly safe is permitted to approach the table or even enter the room.

It will be hard for Europeans to realise that the main idea underlying both the above examples is the same, namely cleanliness. Absolute cleanliness is as much the idea in the operation room as it is in the "Thakur ghar." Of course the idea is worked from different points of view in the two cases as it is carried out also differently; but at the root of both of them is the supreme thought of cleanliness. This cleanliness, the surgeon thinks indispensable for the success of his operation; in the other case the worshipper thinks it necessary for perfect Communion.

To us Hindus this idea about cleanliness is well-known; to Europeans it would seem strange. Some years ago Professor Hankin brought a similar fact to the notice of the Europeans. It is a familiar sight to see at a well in the United Provinces, people coming, with their own *lotas* (brass pot) and ropes to draw water from the

well. A Brahman will never think of using the water drawn by a low caste. He thinks it will be impure. He uses his own pot and rope. It is a simple question of sanitation and it has nothing to do with religion.

This idea of purity has given rise to the correlative term of pollution. These two ideas acted upon for thousands of years have crystallized into immutable usage. What has it got to do with religion? Let me give a few instances. In many parts of Bengal a Brahman will freely use the water drawn by a Kaibarta—in some parts he will decline to do so. In many parts if it is Ganges water no question will be raised. In many parts a Brahman will use water brought by a Goala, in others they will object to do so. Such examples can be multiplied indefinitely. Almost every District has got its peculiar usages in such matters.

It will be equally difficult for us to understand what has the ministration of Brahmans got to do with Hinduism? More than a score of communities can be named in Bengal alone who minister to themselves. I have only to name the important community of the Jogis. It would be strange if these are going to be classed as Non-Hindus.

It will be interesting for us to note that the main grounds of those who objected to the present classification are based on considerations that have furnished matters for these "tests." Let me quote the passage. "The complaint has often

been made that the Census returns of Hindus are misleading as they include millions of people who are not really Hindus, who are denied the ministration of the Brahmans and are forbidden to enter Hindu temples, and who in many cases are regarded as so unclean, that their touch or even their proximity causes pollution. There is of course much truth in this criticism." If these are the grounds that are going to be employed to differentiate a Non-Hindu from Hindus then out of the twenty millions of Hindus in Bengal fully ten millions will be classed as Non-Hindus.

XVIII.

It will be comparatively easy for us to grasp the situation if these "tests" were all that we had got to consider. A study of the Circular creates an uneasy feeling that the writer has got some sort of idea of his own as to what constitutes Hinduism. Two new questions crop up. What may be those impressions and how far are they to be considered as Government views?

There are our friends the intelligent Orientalists. Their productions, always wonderful, sometimes awful, have at some period or other, conveyed to many of us strange and bewildering informations regarding our Faith. On the whole they have their uses. But here is an altogether different situation. Here is a Circular issued by a responsible official of the Government, which contains what looks like his views upon Hinduism—certain 'tests' have been directed to be used for differentiating Hinduism from-Non-Hinduism. The tests are evidently the result of the officials, views as to what Hinduism is. What does it all mean?

I think I better first quote the passages which may be taken to convey to us an idea as to what the writer of the circular considers to be Hinduism. (1) Hinduism has no definite creed. (2) A man may believe in the whole Hindu pantheon or only in particular Gods or for that

matter in no Gods at all ; he may sacrifice, or abstain from sacrifice, he may eat flesh and fish or abstain from so doing ; but he is still regarded as a Hindu, if he belongs to a recognised Hindu caste ; does not deny the supremacy of the Brahmans and abstains from disregard of the restrictions observed by the caste follows. (3) It is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Hindus persons who do not worship the Hindu Gods and are not admitted to Hindu temples, and who are not regarded by others, and do not themselves profess to be Hindus ; (4) there are persons who are not ordinarily regarded as Hindus. again those (5) who while calling themselves Hindus for want of a better name are almost beyond its pale as the classes already referred to (Paraiyan, Bhangi, Chutura, Chamar, etc.) (6) Hinduism is not a question of belief. (7) It is very hard to say at what stage a tribe comes to be regarded as a Hindu caste (8) When it (a tribe) has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu Social system, it is admitted into Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmans, there is no longer any question (of its being Hindu). (9) A simple plan would be to accept as final, the opinion of the Brahmans as to whether the doubtful groups are Hindus or not. (10) A group might be regarded as Hindus in one place and not in another."

Let us try to classify the above statements. Roughly speaking they fall under four groups.

Hinduism has no fixed creed, Hinduism is not a question of belief. These two statements fall under one category. They define what according to the writer of the circular Hinduism is not.

"A man may believe in the whole Hindu Pantheon or only in particular Gods or for that matter in no Gods at all, he may sacrifice or abstain from sacrifice, he may eat flesh and fish or abstain from so doing, but he is still regarded as a Hindu, if he belongs to any recognised Hindu caste, does not deny the supremacy of the Brahmans and abstain from open disregard of the restrictions observed by his caste fellows. 'When it (a tribe) has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu social system, it is admitted into Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmans, there is no longer any question.' These two may be regarded what according to the writer is Hinduism.

There is a third group. "It is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Hindus, persons who do not worship Hindu gods and are not admitted to Hindu temples and who are not regarded by others and do not themselves profess to be Hindus" "There are persons who are not ordinarily regarded as Hindus." There are those "who while calling themselves Hindus for want of a better name are almost as much beyond its pale as the classes already referred to" "A group might be regarded as Hindus in one place and not in another." It is hard to say at what stage a

tribe comes to be regarded as a Hindu caste." This group may be called the Doubtful Hindu group.

Then there is the last section which may be called "the deciding agency column, "a simple plan would be to accept as final the opinion of the Brahmans as to whether the doubtful groups are Hindus or not."

So, there are four columns under which the writer's statements fall

(1) The negative category what Hinduism is not. (2) The Positive category what Hinduism is. (3) The doubtful column what doubtful Hinduism is and (4) the deciding agency column. The last is not final, and is by no means to be accepted, for "that would leave too much room for difference of treatment." So Brahmans are not much good for deciding as to who is a Hindu and who is not. There must be something else, hence these "tests" and "a standard."

Let us look at these categories a little more in detail. "Hinduism has no definite creed." "As already stated Hinduism is not a question of belief." The second statement, as it can be seen is regarded by the writer as a repetition or corollary of the first.

When Babu Keshav Chandra Sen visited Oxford the first question that Dr. Pusey put to him was "well, Mr. Sen, what is the creed of your Church?" "Ever since the age of fifteen," cried Newman, "I have heard of nothing but dogmas."

The term creed as employed with reference to religion is used synonymously with Confession of Faith. "Creeds or Confessions of Faith may be defined as authorized formularies of Christian doctrine." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.) Looking at another source I find it defined, "as a brief and authoritative summary of the Articles of Christian Faith, hence a statement or profession of fundamental points of belief." The word creed comes from *credo*, I believe, which is the first word of the Apostles Creed. I am sorry I have not got the Civil Service Regulations by me otherwise I would have been glad to give the definition as it is given in that invaluable work.

The writer is perfectly right in making the statement that Hinduism has no definite creed. The essential feature of creed, according to Christians is that it is authoritative. It is the authorized formularies, some one in Authority has prepared at a certain time a set of these formularies. Formerly these used to be imposed by means of penal laws on Christians. At present they are taken to be accepted. So far it is easy to follow the Census Commissioner.

But it is not quite so easy to follow him further. He thinks that the statement means the same thing as "Hinduism is not a question of belief." What has fixed Creed to do with belief? Is it because, in the case of the Hindu, there is no authoritative statement or there are no "authorized formularies" for his doctrine? Can there be no belief without authority? It is quite

natural for a Christian to maintain the point but that scarcely adds to its accuracy. The Quakers have no creed fixed or otherwise. I wonder if the late Mr. John Bright was classed by the Registrar General of England as an individual without belief—ergo—a Non-Christian.

XIX.

Let us see the second group, the positive group as to what according to the Census Commissioner, Hinduism is. "A man may believe in the whole Hindu Pantheon, or only in particular Gods or for that matter in no Gods at all, he may sacrifice or he may not sacrifice, he may eat flesh and fish or abstain from so doing ; but he is still regarded as a Hindu if he belongs to any recognised Hindu caste, does not deny the supremacy of the Brahmin and abstain from open disregard of the restrictions observed by his caste-fellows."

Let me make a slight alteration in the first portion of the above. "A man may believe in the whole Christian Trinity, or only in particular Persons or for that matter in no Persons at all, he may sacrifice (the mass is regarded as a sacrifice by the majority of Christians) or he may not sacrifice, he may eat flesh and fish (during lent) or abstain from so doing like the majority of Christians, but he is still regarded as a Christian." There we can follow one another, but the subsequent portion is not quite so intelligible. Three expressions stand out clearly—"Recognised Hindu caste". "Supremacy of the Brahmin" "restrictions observed by caste fellows."

We learn on the authority of Lord Morley that an Englishman is brought up on Benthamite pure milk, gratis let it be hoped. Many of us

have heard of an institution where pure milk and playing the flute were extras. It will strike a foreigner however that milk is not the only pabulum that has always afforded him nourishment. A number of Acts of Uniformity, not to mention a few unconsidered trifles like "the Five miles Act," "The Conventicle Act," "The Corporation Act" have from time to time supplied undoubted additional nutriment.

This idea of authority-claiming supremacy, imposing restrictions, issuing license is inseparable from an Englishman's mind from what he calls his Religion. He sees it in every institution with which he is familiar; nowhere is it more in evidence than it is in his religion. I borrow the following quotation. "Methodism forms and truth alike requires that we should be thus designated, rather than by secular and equivocal words, which are not suitable to the exact propriety of language. Connexion is a mercantile expression, Community is monastical, Society is deceptive for there are societies political as well as Religious. much less are we a Sect, for a sect is the fragment of a large body to which it always bears some relations. We are nowhere dominant nowhere in subjection nowhere a sect but a Church wherever we exist. The Wesleyan community is distinctly, independently and perfectly a Church."

An average Hindu will be apt to wonder as to what has all this to do with Faith. However let us go on. To be a Church—one thing

is essential—discipline. There must be an authority whose supremacy is acknowledged and which has power to punish and reward. Besides to be a Church, it is necessary to be recognised and licensed by the central civil authority. To an Englishman, Connection, Community, Society, Sect, Church, are all familiar terms. All of them have one thing in common, they are all organisations. It is quite natural that he will look for an organisation when he talks or thinks of religion.

This central idea of organisation in the sense with which he is familiar with the term, is evidently responsible for the expressions I have marked above. There is the “recognised Hindu caste.” What is “recognised”? Licensed it can hardly mean for we have not come to that yet. Still the caste is to be recognised. Many questions follow, recognised by whom, by what agency, according to what rules? The meaning of the Celsus Commissioner is quite intelligible to a certain point, but beyond that, it is hard to follow what he means to say.

“Supremacy of the Brahmins”—here again we can follow the working of his mind. The Brahmins are above all Hindus; so to be a Hindu this Brahman’s supremacy must be recognised, but what is this supremacy? The word is not unfamiliar in history—both civil and ecclesiastical. What sense does the writer wish to convey when he uses the word?

In England the Sovereign is the Head of

everything connected with administration. He is the Head of the Army, Church and of every other department of administration. He is the supreme authority. Every form of power is delegated power—delegated by the King. The Primate of England is the Primate—because the King has made him a Primate and whatever authority the dignitary possesses is owing to the gift of authority, so to speak, made to him by the Sovereign. This holds good both as regards ecclesiastical and civil authority. An English Roman Catholic priest will probably say that in ecclesiastical matters the Roman Pontiff is the supreme authority. Whatever authority the priest possesses is authority delegated by an acknowledged and central Head.

The terms Papal supremacy and Royal supremacy are familiar. They convey distinct meanings. Let me give their definitions. Papal supremacy—the supreme authority which the Pope formerly exercised over the Churches of England Scotland and Ireland and which still continues to be more or less recognised in some countries.

Royal supremacy—the authority which the Sovereign of England exercises over the Church of England as being its supreme head on earth.

The essential element of supremacy is authority. What then is the sense intended to be conveyed by the Census Commissioner when he talks of Brahman supremacy? If he meant Brahman superiority that would have been intelligible. Most of us willingly, cheerfully

acknowledge that the Brahmans as a class are in many respects superior to the other classes. We do it the more readily as his superiority is neither delegated, nor assigned, nor is our respect the result of threat or compulsion. In what sense does the Census Commissioner use the expression?

It is the same with the third expression—"open disregard of the restrictions observed by his caste fellows." Caste evidently, accordingly to the Census Commissioner is an organisation, say, like a Church. Every Church has got its discipline to be observed by the communicants. You cannot be a Wesleyan and celebrate the mass. If you do so you will be most certainly refused Communion the next time you present yourself as a candidate for it. A similar state of things apparently holds good according to this official for caste as well. It is an organisation and as such it must have its restriction, and to belong to it, one must not openly disregard the restriction. So far it is fairly easy to follow.

But supposing caste is not a well defined organisation, say like a Church, what then? Let me quote from the Encyclopædia. Britannica article caste "Whenever therefore the writer has seen something which reminds him of any part of the extremely indeterminate nature—Indian caste he has used the word."

XX.

“According to the Census Commissioner when a tribe has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu Social System, is admitted into Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmins, there is no longer any question of its being a Hindu.”

So there are two guides. One must belong to a well-recognised caste or the tribe to which he belongs must occupy a recognised position in the Hindu social system. It is not clear whether one includes the other. We have here another expression—Hindu Social System. What does it mean? If there was a corresponding expression—Christian Social System, we could have tried to follow its sense. There is no such expression so far as we know. Even if there was one, it cannot be connected with any intelligible definition. As before, the Census Commissioner has used an expression with a definite object. The object is perfectly clear. He defines who is a Hindu or rather under what condition a man is to be recognised as a Hindu. Yet the condition specified conveys no definite sense. The official has not tried to explain what he intended to convey by an expression which is evidently used to furnish an explanation.

Let us take another expression. It looks more hopeful—The ministrations of the Brahmins.

A Christian has no difficulty in understanding what ministration means. He sees it at the Baptism, Confirmation, Communion, Marriage, and Death. He sees the Hindu priest officiating in certain ceremonies so that, it is not unnatural for him to connect one with the other. But how far does the analogy hold good and what conclusions follow a closer enquiry?

It is quite true that a Brahman officiates at Annaprashan, Upanayan, Bibaha, Sradha and at Pujas. The Christian minister is an ordained person, he is licensed to do all that work. What is more, no one but an ordained minister is fit to perform any of those duties. There cannot be any Baptism, any Confirmation, any Communion any Marriage, any Funeral without this licensed ecclesiastical official.

The Christian minister is an authorized person, he has derived his authority from some central organisation. No one who is not similarly authorized can perform these offices, and what is more difficult for us to understand is, all these ceremonies will be null and void if they are not performed by a regularly licensed official.

With us there is no license, no central authority, no authority for the matter of that. If a Brahman chooses to officiate at any ceremony and if he can get people to seek his ministration there is nobody to say nay nor will it render the ceremonies null and void. A familiar analogy will make the matter more intelligible to a Christian. In England nobody can practise medicine unless

he is legally qualified. This is not strictly correct, but for our purpose we shall take it to be so. He becomes what is called a registered practitioner. Let us suppose a few things. That a man falling ill cannot be treated by any body who is not a registered practitioner that the treatment will be null and void and thirdly the patient cannot treat his own ailment himself.

If we can grasp the above we will be in a better position to understand the relation that exists between a Christian and his minister. The expression—ministration of a Brahman—is synonymous with, and brings similar ideas to his mind as ministrations of the Christian minister. In his religion a person denied the ministration of a minister is not a Christian. He naturally takes it for granted that a man who does not employ a priest (who must be evidently a Brahman according to the Census Commissioner) to minister to him cannot be a Hindu.

Where is the Guru? There is no such person among Christians whose offices are similar to those of a Hindu's Guru, so that's how he has escaped the lynx-eyed Census Commissioner.

An ordinary Englishman, in the sense that he does not belong to any particular class, is created by authority a licensed minister. A Hindu cannot clearly make out this business of a Central authority. A Brahman as mentioned above becomes a priest if he chooses to, and if any body will take him as such. In a similar way and under similar conditions there is nothing to pre-

vent a man from becoming a priest if he does not belong to the Brahman community. Probably certain communities may look askance at him but that does not make him less of a priest nor do his ministrations become null and void.

A man with a medical degree or qualification from a recognised body may treat a patient. So can a man with no degree or qualification. The former may look down upon his non-qualified confrere, but that does not make the latter less of a doctor nor is he regarded as such by his own patients. As I have said before, the matter is purely a social or society affair, what has religion to do with it?

In one word the expression—ministration of Brahmins—means quite a different thing from what ministrations of a minister means to a Christian.

Let us pass on to the third or “the doubtful Hindu group.” “It is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Hindus, persons who do not worship Hindu gods, and are not admitted to Hindu temples and who are not regarded by others and do not themselves profess to be Hindus. There are persons who are not ordinarily regarded as Hindus” There are those “who while calling themselves Hindus for want of a better name are almost as much beyond its pale as the classes already referred to.” A group might be regarded as Hindus in one place and not in another.” “It is very hard to say at what stage a tribe comes to be regarded as a Hindu caste.”

I will take one statement first. "It is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Hindus, persons who do not profess themselves to be Hindus." The meaning is certainly intelligible—more intelligible than most things in the Circular. To some atleast, it does look at first absurd, but that is not the view of the Indian Government. In the Census Reports, there is a classification under the heading of Animists. Nearly three millions of people are entered in that category. *Do they profess to be Animists?* Do three persons among these three millions have any idea what that word signifies? I am not an Animist, even I do not know what the word means.

When he says there are persons who are not ordinarily regarded as Hindus he again takes shelter behind a passive voice and uses words which should have been explained before they were employed to express any intelligible sense. It is useless to try to divine what was in the mind of the writer when he used the term "ordinarily,"

I will take the rest together and try a little alteration and see how they read. "It is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Christians, persons who do not worship Christ (like millions of Christians who hold Arian and Socinian views) and who are not admitted into Christian Churches, (like the Negroes in America) and who are not ordinarily regarded as Christians, (like the Mormons of America.)

There are persons who are not ordinarily regarded as Christians (like the Mormons and various other sects in Europe) There are those who while calling themselves Christians for want of a better name are almost as much beyond its pale as the classes already referred to in Abyssinia and elsewhere. A group might be regarded as Christian in one place and not in another. It is hard to say at what stage a group of men can be regarded as a "Christian" sect as in the case of the Heretics in Russia.

On reading the above, an ordinary Christian will not see anything particularly absurd.

Then there is the last column, the deciding agency column, as it may be called. It lays down the method how all doubts may be removed. "A simple plan would be to accept as final the opinions of the Brahmans as to whether the doubtful groups are Hindus or not." I am a Brahman, yet I regret to say that nobody has ever consulted me on such debatable points. They ought to be ashamed of themselves, and I would strongly urge them to read this excellent Circular.

It is comparatively easy to follow what is in the mind of the Census Commissioner. Every Brahman is a priest. He is also (or therefore) an authority or the Brahmans have got a recognised authoritative ecclesiastical court--something after the Houses of Convocation or the Wesleyan Conference and that all questions of doctrine and discipline, of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are

referred to such courts and their decisions are held final and are implicitly obeyed. Of course there is no legislature, at least yet--to enforce them.

It is useless to try to combat any one of the above ideas. One can only wonder where has the official obtained them.

XXI.

I will ask my reader's permission to follow the subject a little further. We must make every possible attempt to grasp the sense of the Census Commissioner's communication. It will not be fair to that official to leave any stone unturned to discover the idea that he has formed regarding Hinduism, and on which he has evidently formulated the "tests."

Let us first assume that he has in his mind that Hinduism is a sort of religion, say, like Christianity. Some of the statements seem to suggest the possibility. The talk about definite creed, belief, Hindu Pantheon, Gods, sacrifice, temple, eating flesh and fish, supremacy of the Brahmans, ministration of the Brahmans,—all belong to that class. They suggest to a Christian in a sort of way, creed, ritual, worship, sacraments, discipline. In his mind, these are all recognised elements of religion. However faint the resemblance may be, it is possible for an average Christian to recognise or imagine to recognise the traces of a likeness.

Supposing we take it that the Census Commissioner has an idea that Hinduism is a social concern, there are expressions that would support such an assumption. Caste, recognised Hindu caste, restrictions observed by his caste-fellows, tribe, Hindu social system, recognised position in Hindu social system—all belong to this category.

There seems to be in the mind of the official a sort of an undefined connection between the above two sets, and the product, so far as it can be grasped, is his "Hinduism."

One unhappy fate is common to all the terms collected above; none of them has been defined. No one knows what meanings have been attached to them. These expressions, freely mixed up and liberally used, are all that we possess to draw our conclusions from as to what the Census Commissioner understands by Hinduism.

Hopeless as any attempt would be to unravel the mystery it is impossible to shut one's eyes to one controlling idea that seems to be running in his mind. Hinduism may be a form of religion as he understands that term; it may be another name for a particular form of social system or something in an indefinite sort of way betwixt and between—one thing he seems to be pretty clear about; that there is an organisation about it. Religion or social system, whatever it may be—it must mean an association of persons—and if it is an organisation it must have an authority—supremacy, restriction—rules and all the other usual elements of an organisation.

Supposing the educated Englishman with whom we seemed to be dealing in the early papers is to ask us as to what Hinduism is, are we in a better position to answer him? Let me try. We shall have again to go to his country.

Many of us trying to read English History have been puzzled with one question. What was

it that led to the English Civil war in the 17th century? Was it to assert the liberty of conscience or was it the establishment of a certain form of Church Government or was it to secure Civil liberty that the English people rose in arms against their King? Was it economic cause that led to the war or was religion at the bottom of the conflict? There were on one hand the questions of ship money, the forced loan, the disregard of Parliament. There were on the other hand Laud's Arminianism, his suspected leaning towards the Roman Church, the attempt to impose uniform form of worship in Scotland and Ireland, then there was of course the King's French consort. Which of the above two sets of grounds constituted the motive of the fight? The Puritans to a man belonged to the Parliamentary army, it was they who formed Cromwell's Ironsides and won at Marston Moor and Naseby, and it was the Puritans who led the popular army. That was about 1643. Fifteen years later, it was the same Puritans under the name of Presbyterians who were supplicating Charles II at Breda to return to England, and it was mainly through their efforts that the Restoration took place. It was the stern Puritan Denzil Hollis who had shortly before the out break of the Civil War "held the Speaker in the chair, while Elliot read a protest against Arminianism and Papists." It was the same Denzil Hollis who was at the head of the supplicants, praying Charles II to return. What did the Englishmen

fight for. If it was for their faith why did they begin by beheading Charles I and end by soliciting his son to return and all this within 15 years ?

When we try to understand European civilisation we meet with the same (and to us inexplicable) intimate connection between civil and ecclesiastical history. One cannot dissociate one from the other, he may as well try to separate bone and flesh in a living body.

It will not be absolutely impossible for a European to grasp such an idea. The monks as they were in the ancient African and Asiatic Churches may bring the matter nearer home. There are some sects like the Quakers in England and the Shakers in America who to a certain extent keep themselves aloof from the central civil power.

Before a European can understand what Hinduism is, he must completely dissociate the idea of a Church from that of the State. With us our Faith has nothing to do with a central civil authority. It is quite true that in ancient Sanskrit works instances of a central Political head and his influence over the followers of the Hindu Faith are by no means uncommon. Legislations defining the relations are familiar enough. But that state of things has passed away long since. We only see remains of it now. There are still many Hindu States feudatory to the English Government. No sign can be discovered that a central power—the ruling chieftain or his

council--exerts any influence in any shape over the Faith of the people.

We have sects as many as or even more than what the Christians have. A sect is something like an organisation in the sense as it is understood by Europeans. There is a sort of central authority within it, there are rules, rituals and even discipline in the sense familiar to Christians.

But there are a few things that must be kept in mind before we run away with the idea that a Hindu sect is another name for a Church. In the first place it need not be recognised, registered or licensed by authority, civil or Ecclesiastical. In former times when a Christian Order was formed it needed recognition, license in the shape of a Bull from the Pope. In the present day if a church—I mean a public place of worship—is intended to be opened in England, it requires to be licensed, in some cases by a Central Ecclesiastical authority, in all cases by the Central Civil authority. A Brotherhood or Society within certain limitations would represent the idea, to a certain extent, of a Hindu sect.

In England practically every man belongs to one Church or another. It may be the Anglican or the Government Church, the Wesleyan, the Baptist or the Presbyterian. There are hundreds of them. Still there are millions of Christians who belong to certain Churches, in a sense conform to their rules and discipline, but practically have nothing to do with the differences of sects or trouble themselves about any critical study or

examination of the doctrines of the particular Church to which they are supposed to belong. They have a fairly clear idea in their minds as to what they think Christianity to be—do not bother themselves about questions and differences ; they call themselves simply Christians. The statement is not very definite, but that it represents a state of things that actually exists nobody will probably deny.

We go still further. Most of us call ourselves Pancha Dewata Upashaks, that is, followers of five Paths. They are the Shaibas, Shaktyas, Baishnabs, Sowras and Ganapatyas. When we meet together we meet on the common platform of Pancha Dewata Upashaks. Amongst ourselves some of us may be Shaibas, Shaktyas or one or other of the followers of five Paths, but that does not stand in the way of our meeting together.

Something like this is not unknown among Christians. A Wesleyan and a follower of the Anglican Church may meet together at a religious meeting. A minister from each of the Protestant Churches may be found in a meeting, say a temperance meeting, but it will be hard to imagine that they would join one another in a common worship. A Roman Catholic will never join with a Protestant. In our case the difference comes in here. The followers of every of one of the five Paths would have no objection in joinining with the others in common worship. We go much further than that. But the above

would give some idea as to the nature of "discipline" that exists among us.

The Englishman with whom we have been talking will have to give up his idea about all connection between Church and State, and considerably modify whatever notion he might have possessed of Church and Church discipline. One word more about discipline and we will finish this part of our subject. We have got no central ecclesiastical tribunal. The Roman Catholics have it in their Pope and his council. Everyone of the Protestant sects has got its own tribunal. I have mentioned it before. Some of our sects possess such an institution, but it forms no part of our Faith. To the majority of us existence or non-existence of an ecclesiastical court makes no difference.

The existence of a priestly hierarchy in the sense that we see in some Churches and grades is also practically unknown among us. I cannot remember the name of any sect that possesses anything like what we see in the Roman or in the Episcopal Churches.

In the 39 Articles of faith of the English Church there are some that concern themselves with the refutation of certain doctrines of the Roman Church. We have got of course nothing to do with them. Then there is a number of Articles which deals with questions of discipline and with the relations of the Church with the State. We have got very little in common with them also, as we don't possess anything which

corresponds with those particular Articles of faith. -

There is a third group of Articles which deal with such subjects as the Original or Birth sin Predestination and Election, of Free will, of the Justification of man, of good work, of works before Justification—we may call it the speculative group. We Hindus also think on these and similar subjects, but our ways of treatment are different.

A Hindu may believe in Predestination without being a Calvinist (or Anglican)—he may believe in Justification by Faith or *Bhaktimarga* without being a Moravian Brother, he may believe in Election by work without being an Antinomian, he may believe in instantaneous conversion without being a Wesleyan, he may believe in Justification by good works or *Karmamarga* without running counter to the Gospellers or Solfidians, he may believe in inward light without being a Quaker, he may deny Original or birth sin without being called a Pelagian, he may refuse to subscribe to free will without being a Calvinist.

Now let us put the things together. A Central Civil authority, a central Ecclesiastical authority, Church Government, Church discipline, hierarchy of priesthood occupy a large, a very large part of a Christian's religion. For a European to understand Hinduism he must dissociate all those ideas from our Faith.

As regards what I have termed speculative

questions or doctrines as they would be called by some, they do not constitute with us tests for differentiation in the sense they do in the case of Christians. Subscription to, or denial of any doctrines of like nature, is purely a personal matter.

Thirdly, we have got nothing in the shape of a "fixed creed," no authoritative Confession of Faith laid down by another for the people to follow.

What remains then?—Belief. We shall talk about it in our next.

XXII.

“The cow that you worship as Bhagabati, is what we eat. She is a thief (*she chore*). Your Kali, your Durga, are not Gods, they are false Gods. If you worship them you will go to Hell. When you will burn in Hell you will call on Kali and Durga to save you, but Kali and Durga will say, how can we help you, we are all burning. Therefore leave off the worship of the false gods, etc., etc.,

A carriage accident once made me an interested listener to the above exhortation. It was our familiar friend the Christian missionary holding forth to the Heathen. There are scores of street corners in Calcutta where similar exhortations can be heard every afternoon.

Let us pass down the road and listen to the man that is singing :

*Alla ka nam succha hai
Jhuta hai aur sub bachan.*

Allah's name is alone true, false is every other word. That is a Mahomedan Fakir.

Let us pass further on—and hear what another man is singing :—

*Je bhabe, je bhabe
shei bhabe pabe.*

Seek but the Lord, all Paths lead to Him. That is a Hindu.

If a Christian can grasp what it means he

may be in a position to understand what Hinduism is and what we have as equivalent for what he is accustomed to consider as a creed. The street singer is an illiterate man, very likely he will be worsted by our friend the missionary in argument; but that is what hundreds of millions of human beings have believed for thousands of years.

It may be an image—stick, stone or a leaf that he may use for his Communion or worship if you choose to call it so, or he may not use anything, it makes no difference. He may belong to a sect or he may not, he may have forms of worship more gorgeous than that of the Roman Church or of the Irvingites or there may be no ritual; he may have his ideas about Revelation, Incarnation or on any of the speculative questions or doctrines, he may express those ideas coherently or he may not,—it makes no difference to us. He is a Hindu.

As to our belief that is our personal affair. Many among us have adopted the teachings of others—just as Christians adopt the teachings of their ministers, (in their case backed as the case generally is, by a central Ecclesiastical authority)—many have refused to do so. That makes no difference. It is a personal matter with us. No body has got any controlling or compelling voice over our conscience. A father does not know, nor does he seek to learn, what is the Path chosen by his son. Everybody is free to choose his own Path. They are all Hindus.

A Christian may say—well we have our paths—would you call a Christian—a Hindu ?

I am not writing about Hinduism. There are hundreds of books, written by Hindus that deal with the subject. I am trying to give an idea what an average Hindu thinks when he thinks or speaks of Hinduism.

The above question is quite intelligible. If a man says "what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Acts XVI, 30,31." There are many Hindus who will say, well, if that is your path we have no quarrel with you.

But the Christian does not stop there. The next thing he says is. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned" *Mark XVI 16*. There we do not understand him and for the matter of that, millions of Christians don't. Let me give a few more.

"Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." *Acts VI*. "Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come into the flesh. There is a deceiver" *2 John 7*. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" *I Cor iii 11*. "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you—than that we have preached on to you—let him be accursed" *Gal 1.5*. There are many among us who according

to some Christians would be very likely called Idolators, image worshippers—whether they are so or not it is hardly worth our while to stop to enquire. But supposing they are idolators—in the sense that some Protestants use the word—it makes no difference to us.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image—or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them” Exod XX, 4. 5. “Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman and putteth it in a secret place.” Deut XX VII 15.

There are millions and millions among us who cannot be said to be under any point of view an image worshipper, yet they have no quarrel with those that use a material representation for their Communion. There is no scratching, no biting. They are all Hindus.

“One nation alone had refused its incense to the emperor. That nation was destined to provide a God for the coming centuries. In the arrogant words of a Jew, of our own times, this nation said to the world “Till thou art able to understand me, behold a man of my race, make of him thy God.” And Jews and Christians have been fighting over it for the last two thousand years.

It takes two to make a quarrel. We

Hindus do not quarrel about our faith. Why is it going to be fastened on us? In our Eternal Faith there is room for all. It is the others who dissociate themselves.

We allow every body perfect liberty to choose his own Path, why should it be so is hardly my business to enquire. Let me quote a passage from a divine, it may help non-Hindus to understand what would appear to them as a mystery.

“Among the phenomena of Church History few are more deserving of the students, consideration. He will naturally inquire how is it that a system (Unitarianism) that has gained so few converts at home should so fascinate our descendants in the Western Continents. The existence of a National Church is generally admitted on both sides to furnish the solution. There are peculiarities in the American character which must also be taken into account; a boldness of enquiry, a fondness for abstract theories; restlessness beneath opinions of long standing which have probably contributed to the same result.”

In the Hibbert lectures of 1880. Renan told to his English audience “faith cannot be prescribed: a man believes what he things to be true.”

We have believed and practised it for thousands of years. We Hindus never allow any fetters on our conscience, neither do we impose it on others.

*Je bhabe Je bhabe
Shei bhabe pabe.*

Seek but the Lord—all Paths lead to Him.

XXIII.

Let me put the several things together. We have no central civil authority to enforce the doctrines of our Faith. For hundreds of years such a thing has not been known. We have forgotten that there can be any connection of the State with our Faith. In the next place we have no Central Ecclesiastical authority as the Roman Church, Greek Church or the several Protestant and other Churches possess.

There are many sects of Hindus among whom something like the organisation one finds in the Christian Churches, can be met with. But such a system is confined to a limited number among us.

Lastly, as to creed many among us have adopted the teachings of others and obtained their creeds, in the sense this term is understood by Christians from a recognized and acknowledged authority : but to us Hindus it is quite immaterial whether we formulate our own 'creeds' or beliefs or receive it from another.

That there is divergence, among us, in our beliefs, methods of worship, in our views regarding doctrines^e—no one will deny. That there is such difference among Christians is equally undeniable. The Christians use various expressions to mark their sense of difference. In Russia three classes are recognised—first, the orthodox or those that profess the State Faith ; secondly, the Dissidents

such as these that hold Arian or similar beliefs : and thirdly, the Heretics—those whose accounts have been given before. In England there are the Anglicans who belong to the Government or the Established Church, and Non-conformists. In no country is any sect known as non-Christian. In the old days Heretic and Schismatic were familiar terms, but nobody, unless he was a professed follower of another religion, was called a non-Christian. So is it with us. There are hundreds of sects, there are in addition millions of persons who belong to no sect. No one is known as a non-Hindu. Such a term possesses no meaning for us.

That there is an immense gulf in many respects between the Hinduism, say, of a Brahman Professor of Theology and a member of a semisavage aboriginal tribe, there can be no doubt. Possibly the difference will be greater than what exists, say, between an Anglican Doctor of Divinity and an ordinary Englishman. There are reasons to explain this difference.

The number of English people who belongs to the Church of England will not be more than twenty millions, that is, it would be less than the population of two divisions of Bengal. To minister to this number there are nearly twenty-five thousand ordained ministers. Every one of them is a graduate of a University. The annual income of this sect will be nearly ten millions of pounds, that is considerably more than what is spent annually for the Government of

the whole of United Bengal. The sum they raise annually among themselves in addition to the above will not be short of another five millions. It chiefly goes to education, charity, hospital and mission work.

The Government of that country spends every year about fifteen millions of pounds for the education of its poor boys and girls. Education is compulsory. There is no such thing as an illiterate person in the country. There is practically no body who is not a member of a religious organisation or a Church as it is called. There is Church accomodation for almost every man and woman in the kingdom. In every school religious teaching is practically compulsory. Up to recently nearly every teacher in a public school was an ordained minister.

Compare the above with our present condition. In Bengal ninety-six out of every hundred Hindus cannot read or write. In most parts of India, if we except a few persons, the people are absolutely illiterate. In England the average level of education is rising every year ; in our country, there is a uniform level of absolute ignorance which has not changed for hundreds of years.

What is true of England is true in a greater or less degree of many European countries. In Russia education up to recently was in a backward condition, scarcely twenty-four per cent of the people could read or write. The Heretics are more numerous in that country than in any

other part of Europe. It is confidently expected that the corrupt and aberrant types of Christianity that existed there fifty years ago will probably be things of the past when education spreads more largely among the people.

In this country also, there are what many among us would regard as corrupt forms of Hinduism. Why should it be taken for granted that we will never change? Is the religious condition of any country an unchangeable entity?

Students of English History have an idea as to the state of Christianity in England just before the Reformation. When Henry VIII appointed a Commission to report on the condition of the Monasteries, the facts that came to light did not show that Religion existed in a particularly exalted form within the sacred institutions. In fact most of the things that were disclosed, cannot be published at the present day. The state of the country could not have been very different. In fact it is generally agreed that Christianity, instead of progressing, had fallen off after the Norman conquest. One of the first acts of William the Conqueror was to replace the native primates by foreign prelates. For five hundred years the spiritual and moral teachers of England were Italian and French priests. There were fewer church buildings in England at the time of the Reformation than at the time of Edward the Confessor. Christianity in England lay fallow, if I may use the expression, for nearly four hundred and fifty years.

During the next hundred years the English people changed their form of religion four times. We have all heard of the Vicar of Bray whose name has come down to us as a type of plastic conscience, but the unfortunate prelate did not sin more deeply than the rest of his countrymen. If the English House of Commons provided any index to the religious state of England its statutes are sufficient testimony. Commencing with the reign of Henry VIII the English people changed their faith regularly during the successive four reigns. The Peers were hardly an exception.

“Ich sehe diese wurdgen Peers mit Schnell
Vertauschter Überzeugung unter vier
Regierungen den Glauben viermal ändern ”

Schiller—Maria Stuart

In the seventeenth century the Englishmen had their Civil War. What share religion had in it, is not easily intelligible to a foreigner. The eighteenth century was England's century *par excellence*. The year 1769 they regard as their *Annus Mirabilis*. In religion this century was marked by the earnestness of the people, the rise of the Dissenting bodies and by the predominance of Arian and Socinian views. Wesley, Whitfield, Priestly were the prominent names. The nineteenth century was England's century of fruition. It was marked by a desire to return to Priesthood. Imperialism divorced from Priesthood will be a new thing in history. In religion Irving, Newman, Pusey are the representative names of this century.

XXIV.

One fact is evident from the above. The religious life of a people may lie fallow and uncultivated for centuries. The Hindus had been under Muslim rule for seven centuries. This foreign rule and foreign religion could not exist without leaving their influence. Egypt and Asiaminor were the cradles of the Christian Faith. What has been the outcome of Muslim rule in those countries? We need not go further than England to see what effect foreign rule and foreign religion can have on a conquered people.

•Most of us know that it was Pope Gregory the Great who sent a Benedictine Monk Augustine—to convert the people of England and that in the course of a hundred years from that date the people of the Saxon Heptarchy were converted to Christianity. The English Churchmen, however, strongly deny that Christianity was introduced into England by the efforts of the Roman Pontiff. They maintain and not without reason that Christianity was prevalent in England when the Romans were in possession. In fact the Church of Britain, they declare, was in a flourishing condition in the early Christian centuries.

The Saxons, the infidal Saxons—as they were called and remained for many centuries, invaded England in the 5th and 6th centuries and they practically extirpated Christianity from the

country. The country was rechristianised by the Roman Pontiffs in the 7th and 8th centuries.

When the Central Hindu Government fell—most of us look upon Buddhism to be a sect of Hinduism—its influence on the distant and outlying parts of the country weakened and disappeared. This has gone on for eight hundred years. Many of the aboriginal tribes living in forests or hills, have thus lost their original Hinduism and taken to a form almost unrecognisable as Hinduism. These classes furnish most of what are now called in the Census Reports—"Animists."

How do the English people regard any interference on the part of the State with questions of Faith? I have alluded before to the case of the Bishop of Salisbury against William and Wilson. The Primate of York was one of the Judges. This is what the Archbishop of York lay down, "The real authority of the Church of England is the voice of the clergy of the Church of England" Yet in England the King in Council is the recognised Head of the Church of England, Why should we like a Government official to laid down for us as to who is or is not a Hindu?

Taking for granted that there are many Hindus who will be regarded by some as following a corrupt form of Hinduism—is that any reason why they should be marked by the Government as non-Hindus? We need not go out of India to show the absurdity of such a procedure.

I have quoted the following elsewhere,* it will bear reproduction here.

"A local writer speaking from personal acquaintance with the Mussulman peasantry in the Northern districts of Lower Bengal states that not one in ten can recite the brief and simple "Kalma" or creed whose constant repetition is a matter of almost unconscious habit, with Mahomedans. He describes them as a sect which observes none of the ceremonies of its faith, which is ignorant of the simplest formulas of its creeds which worships at the shrines of a rival religion, and tenaciously adheres to practices which were denounced as the fondest abominations by its founder.....the masses of the rural Mussalmans had relapsed into something little better than a mongrel breed of circumcised low caste Hindus." (Sir W. W. Hunter, Director General of Statistics. "Encyclopaedia Britannica)."

Let me quote here another passage. It is from the Census Report of Bengal, 1901.

"The uneducated Mahomedans of the lower and uneducated classes are deeply infected with Hindu superstitions and their knowledge of the faith they profess seldom extends beyond the three cardinal doctrines of the Unity of God—the mission of Mahomed and the truth of the *Koran* and they have a very faint idea of the differences between their religion and that of the Hindus. Sometimes they believe they were descended from Abel (Habil) while the Hindus

*A Dying Race.

owe their origin to Cain (kabil). Kabil they say killed Habil and dug a grave for him with a crow's beak."

The form of Mahomedanism described by Sir W. W. Hunter has long ago disappeared, that described by the Census Commissioner of Bengal in 1901 is fast passing away. There has never been any talk of effecting a cleavage among the Mahomedans on the above account. Why should it be found necessary in the case of the Hindus ?

How do English courts regard any interference with questions of religion ? I will again refer to the case of the Revd. Messrs. Williams and Wilson. In recording their judgment the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council laid down :—

"This court has no jurisdiction or authority to settle matters of faith or to determine what ought in any particular to be the doctrine of the Church of England."

How is it that an official of the Government of India lays down what Hinduism is ?

Let us try to put together how the case stands

An official of the Government of India has some ideas of his own about what Hinduism is.

Based on those ideas, he prepares a number of "tests" whose object is directly or indirectly, to differentiate a Hindu from a non-Hindu in the next Government Census Report.

He suggests finally how those 'tests' are to be applied.

This is the first time, so far as we know, that a responsible official of the Government has

pressed an opinion as to what Hinduism is, in his official capacity, and this opinion has been made the basis of intended action on the part of the Government. The intention in this case is to lay down as to who is and who is not a Hindu and to classify them accordingly in the next Government Census Report.

Where the official has received his ideas from, is not mentioned, and can not be guessed, the sense of the statements he has made about Hinduism cannot be discovered. The 'tests' are a bundle of meaningless sentences, and the method he has suggested to collect the views of the people who number nearly two hundred and fifty millions will create merriment in a nursery. Let it be added that no section among the Hindus not one man out of two hundred and fifty millions has expressed any desire for such an enquiry, and so far as it is known it has been undertaken at the demand made by the followers of another Faith.

It is absurd to take it for granted that the English Government constitutes itself the supreme Ecclesiastical authority on Hinduism, and in the united capacity of the Chief Judge of the Hindu Faith and the Head of Civil administration intends to lay down in the next Census Report as to who are in future to be recognised by the Government as Hindus—and who are to be marked as non-Hindus. Yet that is unfortunately the impression that the study of the Census Commissioner's Circular is most likely to create.

Nobody grudges the official who has drawn up the Circular his views about Hinduism. If they had appeared anywhere else they would have provoked just as much comment, or attracted just as much notice as productions of a similar nature generally do. But the question that every one would ask will be—why they have found a place in a Government publication?

In what sense does the Government of India identify itself with them? Are they what may be called the official views on Hinduism? If not, which is probably the truth, why then have they been permitted to appear in an official communication?

We would earnestly ask the Government to reconsider its position. There is no question that is more likely to create misunderstanding than that of religion—no where does it hold more true than in India and no time is more unsuited for the ventilation of such questions as the present. What good the Circular is intended to accomplish is not known, but one thing can be predicted and that is if the measure that the circular fore shadows be carried into effect *in any shape or form* the effect will be neither contentment, nor rest, nor peace.

APPENDIX.

THE CENSUS RETURNS OF HINDUS.

(MR. GAIT'S CIRCULAR.)

The complaint has often been made that the Census Returns of Hindus are misleading, as they include millions of people, who are not really Hindus at all, who are denied the ministrations of Brahmins and are forbidden to enter Hindu temples, and who, in many cases, are regarded as so unclean that their touch, or even their proximity, causes pollution. There is, of course, much truth in this criticism, but the fact that Hinduism has no definite creed makes it difficult to lay down any definite test as to who is, and is not, a Hindu. A man may believe in the whole Hindu Pantheon or only in particular gods, or for that matter, in no god at all—he may sacrifice or abstain from sacrifices—he may eat flesh and fish or abstain from so doing; but he is still regarded as a Hindu if he belongs to a recognized Hindu caste, does not deny the supremacy of the Brahmans and abstains from open disregard of the restrictions observed by his caste-fellows.

In the Punjab Census Report for 1881 it was stated that “every native who was unable to define his creed or describe it by any other name than that of some recognized religion, or a sect of some such religion, was held to be, and classed as, a Hindu.” This is practically the procedure

which has hitherto been followed throughout India, except in the case of certain forest and hill tribes who, when they do not claim to be Hindus, have been classed under the head "Animistic."

2. There are, however, many other tribes and castes whose beliefs and customs are of the "Animistic" rather than the Hindu type. A case in point is the Paraiyan of Madras. Mr. Thurston writes "Brahman influence has scarcely affected the Paraiyan at all, even in ceremonial. No Paraiyan may enter any Vaishṇava or Shaiva temple even of the humblest sort. They are neither Vaishnavites nor Shaivites." They acknowledge a supreme deity whom they call kadavert but do not worship him. Their worship is confined to various mothers (amma), such as the goddesses of the boundary bamboos, cholera. The ceremonies attending their worship are similar to those of the Animistic tribes.

The position of the sweeper class of Upper India, usually known as *Bhangi* in the United Provinces, and Chutra in the Punjab, is very similar. Mr. Crooke writes that the religion of the sweepers is a curious mixture of various faiths, but neither Hindus, Mussalmans nor Shikhs recognize them as belonging to their body. In the Punjab Census Report for 1891 (page 88 to 90) it is stated that 7 per cent. of the persons classified as Hindus in table VI were not returned as such in the schedules and that the great majority of these were persons obviously belonging to the sweeper or scavenger class. Mr. Maclagan points out that the difficulty is to know where to draw the

line—“While there is no doubt that we should be complying with Hindu feeling in excluding the Chutras from the list of Hindus, should we also exclude the *Chamar*, and if the *Chamar* why not *Sansi* ; and, should the *Gayra*, the *Megh* and the *Khatik* follow ; and, in fact, where is the line to be drawn ? In the absence of any clear decision on the point, it will be best to adhere to the present system of including all as Hindus ”

3. Apart from the difficulty noted by Mr. Maclagan, a change of classification is to be deprecated as it would interfere with the comparability of the statistics of the coming census with those of previous enumerations. At the same time it is obviously absurd to enter without comment as Hindus persons who do not worship the Hindu gods and are not admitted to Hindu temples, and who are not regarded by others, and do not themselves profess to be, Hindus. It would of course be possible, as done by Mr. Maclagan, to keep a note of the number of persons classed as Hindus who do not return themselves as such ; but, while this would throw some light on the question, it would not go very far towards furnishing accurate figures for the number of persons who are ordinarily regarded as Hindus. It would not eliminate those who, while calling themselves Hindus for want of a better name, are almost as much beyond its pale as the classes, already referred. What seems to be needed is an examination of the position of every doubtful 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.

4. As already stated Hinduism is not a question of belief. A Hindu writer some years ago defined Hindus as "those people of India who belong to a hierarchy of castes," and added that 'what the Hindus or the major portion of the community do, is Hinduism.' The weak point of this definition is that it is dependent on the meaning of 'caste.' Where is the boundary line between caste and tribes? Many of the existing castes such as the Marhatta or Ahir, were originally tribes, and it is very hard to say at what stage a tribe comes to be regarded as a Hindu caste. When it has obtained a recognised position in the Hindu social system, is admitted to Hindu temples and enjoys the ministrations of the Brahmans, there is no longer any question, but there is an extensive debatable ground, which is occupied by the communities with whom we are now concerned. Some more definite test is necessary, but what should it be? A simple plan would be to accept as final the opinion of the Brahmans as to whether the doubtful groups are Hindus or not, but this would leave too much room for difference of treatment. A group might be regarded as Hindus in one place and not in another without any real difference in its actual position. 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.

V.

§ The following are some of the tests which might be applied, and I should be glad to know which of them is regarded by the best opinion in each province, etc., as the most decisive, or whether there are any others which should be substituted for them :—

(i) Do the members of the caste or tribe worship the great Hindu gods ?

(ii) Are they allowed to enter Hindu temples or to make offerings at the shrine ?

(iii) Will good Brahmans act as their priests ?

(iv) Will degraded Brahmans do so ? In what case, are they recognised as Brahmans by persons outside the caste or are they Brahmans only in name ?

(v) Will clean castes take water from them ?

(vi) Do they cause pollution (a) by touch (b) by proximity ?

SIMLA,
The 12th July, 1910.

(Sd.) E. A. GAIT.
Census Commissioner.

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