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# THE HISTORY

OF

# CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE  
CHRISTIAN ERA.

BY THE

(REV. JAMES HOUGH,) M.A., F.C.P.S.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF HAM:

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## PREFACE.

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IN the Preface to the first part of this Work, including the History of the Syrian Church and the Romish Missions in India to the commencement of the present century, I expressed regret that it contained so little to satisfy the mind that is chiefly interested in the progress of Divine Truth, and ventured to promise that the Volumes now laid before the Public would correspond better with the title of the Work; and I trust that I shall be considered to have redeemed my pledge.

In perusing these Volumes, the reader should bear in mind that one of the objects for which they were written was, to furnish the Christian Public with a body of facts, in answer to the Romanists' vauntings of the success of their own Missions, and their assertions of the failure of Protestant Missions; and hence to prove the fallacy of their conclusions, that theirs must be the cause of truth, and the Protestants' the cause of error. In the two former Volumes I have shown, *from their own authorities*, that their entire course in India has been one of deception; a system of accommodation to the most absurd notions and the foulest abominations of the Heathen: that they have systematically concealed from the Hindoo the





## PREFACE.

essential peculiarities of revealed Truth; and that their Indian Missions, with reference to the propagation of Christianity, have proved, according to the confession of a Jesuit Missionary of thirty years' standing, *a total failure*. Admitting their numerical success, we deny the validity of their inference, that this proves the truth of their system. On such reasoning, Mahomedans may maintain the truth of their religion; for their progress in India has far exceeded that of the Roman Church: while the superstitions of Budhoo have outstripped them both, and must, therefore, according to this mode of arguing, be pre-eminently true.

On the other hand, in the two Volumes now published, it will be seen that the success of the Protestant Missions exceeded the most sanguine expectations, so long as they were countenanced by the local authorities, and supplied with the means of accomplishing their design. We admit their failure, after some years, at a few Stations; but before this is adduced in evidence that they were not founded in truth, it should be remembered that the Apocalyptic Churches, with others established by the Apostles, in a few years came to nothing. We have accounted for these partial failures in a manner that will be satisfactory to every candid mind, without at all implicating, as Romanists allege, the principles they have promulged. So little is known of the history of these Missions during the last century, that I venture to anticipate the astonishment of the reader to find that so much has been done with such inadequate means. When we look at the vast field to be cultivated, the result may appear small; but considering the difficulties of those who had to break up the





fallow ground, the paucity of labourers through the whole of the eighteenth century, and their scanty resources, the result is astonishing. There is nothing like it, *cæteris paribus*, in the history of modern Missions.

In recording the foundation and progress of these institutions, I have studied to trace the leadings and operations of Divine Providence and Grace. Though the labourers were few, there have been among them men of Apostolic zeal, and endowed, I have sometimes been induced to think, with all but Apostolic gifts. They were Germans; and it cannot but be grateful to the Englishman's feelings to see the reception which they uniformly met with from the highest ecclesiastical authorities in England, and even from the King and Royal Family. But for the encouragement and assistance thus afforded them, they could not, humanly speaking, have carried on their work. The Christian public, not in Great Britain only, but throughout the Continent of Europe, owes a deep, a lasting debt of gratitude to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for the liberal patronage it afforded to these Missions almost from their commencement. The publication of the first version of the Scriptures in an Indian language, the Tamul, is to be ascribed to that Society's assistance. I will confess, that, until I had investigated the entire series of the Society's Reports, together with the original correspondence and journals of the Missionaries, I had formed no conception of the extent, the value, the importance of the Society's labours in India during the first century of the Danish and English Missions.

While, however, as a Churchman, I may be allowed





to feel peculiarly gratified at the honourable, the prominent part which my own Church has acted in this laudable work, I have also had pleasure in bearing testimony to the piety and zeal, the ability and success of other Protestants, whether Dutch or Moravians at an earlier period, or English and United States' Missionaries of more recent times, who have embarked in the same cause. There should be no unhallowed rivalry, no mean jealousy among those engaged in a work like this. When the disciples of the Baptist, apparently anxious for their Master's reputation, told him of the success of Jesus, he *answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.* Would that Christians always regarded each other's progress in the work of the Lord with a similar mind! One of the best proofs to be given that we are ourselves actuated by a right spirit, is, to honour the gifts of God in whomsoever they appear; and to honour the men who are diligently using them to the glory of the Giver. We are not surprised at the rivalries of those who are ambitious of worldly renown. Even the philosopher "may wish all mankind to remain in ignorance of important truths, when the most important truths that could be revealed to them were to be the discovery of any other genius than his own. He may sigh over the relief which multitudes are to receive from institutions of a sage benevolence which he was not the first to prompt. If his country be rejoicing at triumphs that have been triumphs of freedom and humanity still more than of the arms of a single state, he may add his silent consternation and anguish to the rage and grief of the tyrant whose aggressions have been successfully resisted, and may lament that he has not himself become a slave by





national disasters, which, in making all slaves, would at least have lessened the glory of a rival." <sup>1</sup>

This is put strongly, but it expresses truly the temptation to which Christians, and even Missionaries, are exposed, to contemplate with uneasiness the triumphs of truth over pagan darkness, only because *we* have not done it, or because its successful champions belonged not to *us*. This is the very element of discord—the way to paralyze our own sympathies and to weaken our efforts. Union is strength: and the secret of unity is to learn cordially to rejoice in the achievements of all that are engaged in the cause we have at heart. Any other feeling gives reason to suspect that we seek our own glory as much as that of the Redeemer.

And is there not special cause for unity in the Missionary work? Protestants of every name have one common enemy, vigilant and active to obstruct all their exertions. In human affairs, a sense of present danger is enough to bring into co-operation very discordant minds, having a mutual interest in the result of their combined exertions. Much more ought this consciousness to unite all that are engaged in extending the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Their enemy is the Church of Rome, which now assumes a more confident position than at any period, perhaps, since the Reformation. Hitherto she has ventured to argue with her opponents, till, beaten at every point, she now seeks to intrench herself within her assumed supremacy. This is the language recently used by one of her leading organs—

“We readily subscribe to the sentiments contained

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(<sup>1</sup>) Dr. Brown's *Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Lecture LXXII.





in the following extract from Dr. Wiseman's Lectures on the Eucharist:—'I will acknowledge the truth of what a modern French divine has convincingly proved—that Catholic controvertists, especially in England and Germany, have greatly erred by allowing themselves to be led by Protestants into a war of detail, meeting them, as they desired, in partial combats for particular dogmas, instead of steadily fixing them to one fundamental discussion, and resolving all compound inquiries into their own simple element—Church authority.'"<sup>1</sup>

Yes, they are right. The Reviewer, Dr. Wiseman, and the French Divine, are all right. This is *the* position for Romanists to maintain, for it is the only ground on which they can defend their numerous dogmas and practices against which Protestants make their appeal to common sense, to the Primitive Church, and the Word of God. Allow Rome to assume that she is **THE CHURCH**; that she is endowed with infallible wisdom, and invested with supreme authority; and there is at once an end to the exercise of the judgment on questions which she has decided. Reason and Scripture must be held in abeyance by her decision.

But will Protestants submit to this? No, not if worthy of the civil and religious liberty which their fathers have achieved. For Romanists to talk of *discussing* this fundamental question with us is a mere pretence. Where, when, with whom, has Rome fairly discussed it? She universally assumes it; and those

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(<sup>1</sup>) Dublin Review, No. XXVI. Nov. 1842, pp. 278, 279. Review of the Rev. W. Palmer's Letters to Dr. Wiseman on the Errors of Romanism, &c.





who dispute her claim she visits, where she has the power, with her severest *anathemas*.

Romanists, however, are not consistent herein: they do not always shut themselves up in their assumed prerogative to dictate to the world. If their antagonists happen to make a mistake in controversy, instantly do they expose it with exultation. When, therefore, they affect to disregard a work or an argument which they find bears hard upon them, and say 'We *will* not answer it,' you may be sure it is because they *cannot*.

To maintain her assumed supremacy Rome is now putting forth all her strength. She vaunts her astonishing efforts to spread the Gospel in the world. We have only to read the former portion of this History to see that their Missions in India were carried on with a studied concealment of the Gospel; and that their crusade against the poor Syrian Church ended in the extinction of the little light they found in her: while in the present Volumes it will be seen that they have left no means unemployed to *obstruct* the progress of the Gospel by the labours of Protestant Missionaries. About the year 1732 the Pope sent twelve Jesuits to India for the express purpose of rooting out the Protestant Faith.<sup>2</sup> Their numbers have increased with the progress of our Missions, until they amount, as stated in the last Report of their *Propaganda*, to seven Bishops, and six hundred and twenty-four priests in India alone.

This is a formidable array, but it need not alarm

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(<sup>2</sup>) B. VIII. c. i. s. 18. First Decade. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Report, 1734.





us. In the history of Indian warfare we often read of a small European army defeating a host of six or ten times its number. Their weapons, discipline, and skill, made up for the deficiency of numbers. The Jesuits, we admit, have skill and discipline; but they have not the Protestant Missionary's weapons: they neither take *the shield of faith* nor use *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*.<sup>1</sup> It is their policy to conceal that Word, for to publish it would disclose their system of deception; while their confidence is placed in the pretended supremacy and infallibility of their Church. Then let us not fear. While true to the *Captain of our Salvation*, and diligent in the use of the appointed *weapons of our warfare*, we shall find them *mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*<sup>2</sup>; while *no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper*.<sup>3</sup>

But we must be united in object and in spirit, if we cannot be in our mode of operation. Romanists taunt us with our divisions, and we may well be ashamed of them. But have they no divisions? Long ago the learned Stillingfleet proved that there had never been greater disturbances in the world than upon the account of that authority of the Pope, which Romanists regard as the foundation of their unity; that on the same account there had happened great and scandalous schisms, when, as Fuller observes, Peter's chair was like to be broken betwixt so many sitting down together; and that these differences in religion, both as to matter of order and doctrine, had been as great, and managed with as much animosity, as any in the Protestant Churches. A more modern publication by

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(<sup>1</sup>) Eph. vi. 17.

(<sup>2</sup>) 2 Cor. x. 4.

(<sup>3</sup>) Isaiah liv. 17.





a ROMANIST<sup>4</sup>, contains relations of follies as extravagant, and Societies as fanatical, arising within the pale of the Roman Church, as passion, error, knavery, or madness have produced out of it.<sup>5</sup> Even in their Indian Missions we have shown, from their own authorities, in the former two Volumes, that the divisions among themselves, occasioned by the jealousies, successively, of the Franciscans, Capuchins, and Dominicans, and by the Jesuits' restless and overbearing endeavours to supersede them all, have exceeded any thing of the kind to be found in the entire history of Protestant Missions. And as to their appeal to the Pope as their bond of union, we have seen how little the Jesuits scrupled to set his authority at nought when he commanded them to desist from their heathen practices in India and China. In India they actually set up a counter authority; and in China they caused the imprisonment and death of one Papal Legate, Cardinal de Tournon; while another, M. de Mezzabarba, was obliged to flee from them for his life.

So much for their vaunted unity. But we are not satisfied to answer their taunts with recrimination. We acknowledge, we deplore, our "unhappy divisions," and pray unto God speedily to heal them. We have recorded them, with their lamentable consequences, whenever they have occurred. Heartily do we wish that every Protestant Missionary would confine himself to the simple promulgation of Divine Truth, without disturbing one another with their

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(<sup>4</sup>) "Histoire des Sectes Religieuses, &c." par M. Gregoire.

(<sup>5</sup>) The question of Rome's vaunted unity is ably discussed in the Quarterly Review for 1823, No. 55.





jealousies or intruding upon each other's sphere of labour. India alone is wide enough for them all. Neither should they go out of their way to provoke the hostility even of Romanists, when they will let them carry on their work in peace. This, however, they never have done, and, there is too much reason to believe, never will do. The Christian Missionary must, therefore, always be on his guard against their secret approaches, and prepared for their open assaults : he must work like the builders of the walls of Jerusalem, with the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other ; with this difference, that his must be *the sword of the Spirit*. The faithful preaching of the Truth will be sure, sooner or later, to counteract the influence of error under every form : and we, or those who follow us, will one day see the formidable host of Romish Bishops and Priests fall before the little band of faithful preachers of the Gospel.

A few words, in conclusion, explanatory of the arrangement of this portion of the History. At first I followed the plan of Niecamp and Meier, giving the rise and progress of the different Missions, Danish and English, in a continuous narrative ; but as the work advanced, it appeared to me advisable to give each Mission in a separate Chapter, which arrangement will be found more convenient for reference. It also renders more apparent the character and circumstances of each Mission. Though all will be seen to pursue the same object, yet there is often considerable variation in the details, which may both increase the Reader's interest, and also serve to show to future Missionaries the desirableness of not acting upon plans previously formed, until well acquainted with their stations. While actuated by sound principles,





they will see that it is advisable to be guided in their application by circumstances as they arise.

The Missions are divided into Decades; and the number of converts for every year is given at the end of each Decade, in preference to stating them as they occur, which, in Niecamp and Meier, often interrupts the narrative, and causes much repetition.

My acknowledgments to Societies and individual friends, for the loan of books and manuscripts, I have made in the body of the work, when they are first referred to. Some of these documents are rare and of great value.

The advertisement of this History, on the cover of the Church Missionary Record, will have informed the public that it is the property of that Society, and that any profits arising from its sale are to be appropriated to its "Disabled Missionaries' Fund." Happy shall I be if it produces any thing towards the comfort and support of those devoted men who have so just a claim upon the Christian community.

Whether I may be spared to finish one more volume, comprising the period of my own residence in India, is known only to the Lord. In the mean time I desire to render unto Him unfeigned thanks for being permitted to accomplish my object so far. May He graciously pardon all its imperfections; avert the evil that might otherwise arise from any error it may contain; and, above all, render it subservient to His own glory!

*May, 1845.*





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# A HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HINDOO MYTHOLOGY AND CUSTOMS.

PREVIOUS to entering upon the history of the Protestant Missions established in India, it is important to give a brief description of the mythology and customs of the country;<sup>1</sup> for this will assist the reader to take a view of that mental and moral desert which Hindostan presents to this day, and to appreciate the exertions of those who, in dependence on God's continual help, have endeavoured to bring it under spiritual cultivation. The subject can hardly fail, also, to interest the intelligent reader as matter of history. Learned persons who take pleasure in the study of Grecian and Roman antiquities will not find those of India less deserving attention. To the devout mind, no part of the literature of

Importance  
of this  
Review.

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(1) This has been done, in part, in the foregoing pages; where it will be seen, that many of the customs now to be explained have continued unaltered more than two thousand years. B. i. c. 1. ss. 6. 14. B. v. c. 3. ss. 5—7.



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pagan nations is so interesting as the vestiges occasionally discovered of the doctrine of one Supreme God; and these will be found more distinct and extensive in the history of Hindoo mythology, than in that of any other country with which we are acquainted.

2. The origin of the inhabitants of India, like that of all other nations prior to Herodotus, the Israelites only excepted, is involved in mystery. But though their earliest history is mixed up with puerile fables, there are seen in it too many traces of facts recorded in the sacred page, to dismiss it as though without any foundation in truth. It will appear, in the course of the following brief outline of their mythology, that they make evident allusion to the Flood; and it is with great probability concluded that they sprang from Japheth. There will appear, also, satisfactory proof, that of the present inhabitants, the Brahmins and other high castes are not the aborigines, but colonies from Egypt, Persia, and other foreign countries, which have followed each other, and before whom the ancient inhabitants have disappeared, or are to be found in those inferior tribes who are now treated as outcasts of society.<sup>1</sup> But if there be truth in this conjecture, these colonies must have been formed at a period very remote; for we have seen, that in the days of Alexander the Great the society and customs of India existed as at this day<sup>2</sup>; and it must have taken many ages to consolidate their power, and change the manners of the country which they invaded. Here, then, at a time when Grecian

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(<sup>1</sup>) M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, *Histoire du Commerce et de la Navigation des Anciens*, c. 9. Father Catrou (*La Croze*, pp. 426, &c.) and other more recent authors, have adopted the same opinion. Vide Col. Wilkes's *History of South India*, Vol. i. c. 5.

(<sup>2</sup>) B. i. c. 1.





History begins to burst forth from the darkness of ancient mythology, we have an account of this people in such accordance with their present character, that they may fairly be regarded as one of the most ancient nations in the world.

3. The Hindoos acknowledge one Supreme God, whom they call by a variety of names. The chief is *Aum*; which appellation is regarded with such awe, that no strict Hindoo will pronounce it in ordinary conversation. Even the Brahmins seldom use it except in their devotions and instructions. On other occasions they substitute for it *Brahm*, and a variety of names expressive of His attributes, which they thus explain:—"The Supreme Being is invisible, incomprehensible, immutable, and without form or semblance. No one has ever seen Him; He is eternal; His essence fills all things; and all derive their origin from Him. He is infinite in power, wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and truth. He is infinitely good, just, and merciful. He has created all things, preserves all things, and delights to be in the midst of men, to conduct them to eternal happiness—a happiness which consists in loving and serving Him."<sup>3</sup> This accords with the description of God revealed in the Holy Scripture; and their reverence for the mysterious word *Aum* is not unlike the Israelites' religious regard for the name of *Jehovah*. And well may this account put to shame many in Europe, who, while boasting greater civilization and more extensive knowledge, and professing a purer religion than the inhabitants of the

Their notions of a Supreme God.

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(<sup>3</sup>) This is taken from Bartholomew Ziegenbalg's Account of the Genealogy of the Gods of Malabar. Other Missionaries, of the Roman and Protestant Churches, give a similar description of the Hindoos' notions of the Supreme Being. Niecamp. *Historia Missionis*, pp. 57—60. La Croze, pp. 452—455. See also Moore's *Hindoo Pantheon*.



East, yet pay no regard to the name of God. Notwithstanding a vast mass of superstition and vain tradition, the Hindoos retain this essential element of truth in its purity; whereas there are those who have gloried in atheism amid the light of Revelation, and laboured to infect the world with their infidelity.<sup>1</sup>

In former times, the Sages, or, as they are sometimes called, the Saints of India, acknowledged and adored this Supreme Being; and their writings, which are still extant, contain several addresses to Him which show the sublimity of their conceptions and, assuming these prayers to emanate from the heart, the purity of their devotions. One of them, after describing the Eternal as the Being of Beings, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, without beginning or end, the only God, thus addresses Him:—"O God, before I knew Thee I was in a state of agitation; but ever since I have known Thee I am at peace within myself, and now desire nothing but Thee."<sup>2</sup> What a comment upon the admonition of Eliphaz to Job: "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."<sup>3</sup>

Another of these Sages speaks of God as the only Being who ought to be loved. A third, supplicating His continual presence, says, "O, Sovereign of all beings, Lord of heaven and earth, I cannot hold Thee in my heart. If abandoned by thee, from

(<sup>1</sup>) It is sometimes questioned, whether any one in his senses can be an atheist. The author once knew one, and he is glad to say only one, in India, who gloried in denying the existence of a God. He was eminent in the medical profession, and extensively acquainted with every department of Natural History; but on his death-bed he had the hardihood to desire his medical attendants to bear witness, that as he had lived in the profession of atheism, he died in the same.

(<sup>2</sup>) B. Ziegenbalg calls the book from which this is taken *Tchiva Vaikkium*.

(<sup>3</sup>) Job xxii. 21.





whom I derive existence and support, before whom shall I deplore my wretchedness? Without thee I cannot live. Call me, Lord, that I may come towards thee."

In the following extract He is described as the God of Providence, illustrated by symbols, in which eastern writings abound.—"God is as an ocean without bounds. If any desire to see and know Him, they must first calm the agitation of the waves, and keep their thoughts in perfect tranquillity, that they may turn to Him alone. There is only one true Being, who is everywhere present, and, like the rays of the sun, diffuses Himself through the world. But, alas! no men desire to know Him: they like better to remain in the filth of their sins. As for me, who have learned to know Him, I can find nothing in the world to be compared to His magnificence, nor to the sweetness I taste in Him. Nevertheless, I find no one willing to place confidence in my words."—"The tortoise usually lives in the sea; but she lays her eggs on shore, and, after burying them in the ground, returns to her own element. Her thoughts, however, often revert to her eggs: they reach, as a thread, as far as the place where the eggs are confined. When the young ones come out, they follow this imaginary thread until they reach their parent. So God, who has placed us in this world, Himself dwells in heaven; yet He bears us constantly in His mind, which extends, like a thread, even unto us. If we follow the track which this line points out to us, we shall certainly find Him."—"Lord, Thou hast known me ever since Thou didst create me; but I only learned to know Thee when I was able to use my understanding. In whatever state I may be, whithersoever I may go, whencesoever I may come, wherever I may take repose, there will I never forget Thee. Thou hast given Thyself to me; and



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I give myself to Thee. Thus much I have seen with mine eyes, and learned with my mind. Thou, O God, art come unto me, as a light which falls from heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Similar passages, of equal beauty, might be quoted to a great extent; but these are sufficient to prove that God must have manifested Himself to the former inhabitants of Hindostan, by means not now to be ascertained: and the existence of books containing such sentiments as these shows that He has not left Himself without witness, even in that idolatrous land. These Sages have distinctly taught their countrymen that God "giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of them; for that in Him they live, and move, and have their being."<sup>2</sup> Nothing can surpass the beauty of some of the epithets addressed by these Indian Sages in adoration to the Supreme God, nor the propriety of their explanations of man's obligations to Him.

Controversial writers have appealed to these descriptions of the Deity, in confirmation of their exaggerated accounts of the purity of the religious principles of the Hindoo Brahmins, notwithstanding the idolatries of the vulgar. Their opponents have denied the justice of this inference, alleging, that in most pagan countries God has been described in language equally sublime, by people whose conceptions of Him were confessedly mean,

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(<sup>1</sup>) *Tchiva Vaikkium*. La Croze has given several other extracts from the works of Ziegenbalg and other writers (Liv. vi.); but those in the text may suffice to illustrate our subject.

(<sup>2</sup>) Acts xvii. 25—28.





and that such is the case in India. This anomaly does, undoubtedly, appear. The Brahmins lavish upon their Supreme God the loftiest expressions which human language can supply, while their notions of Him are most unworthy of the Divine nature. But how do we know that these expressions are their own? Is it not more reasonable to conclude that they have derived them from a former and better race of religious instructors? May they not have retained the sublime descriptions of those who have gone before, without inheriting their corresponding ideas of God? This is certainly a more reasonable explanation of the discrepancy, than the conclusion that they are themselves the authors of those addresses to God, and those descriptions of His nature and will, which present a perfect contrast to all their notions of Him. This view of the question tends also to confirm the inference which may be drawn from the passages here adduced, that India was at one time blessed with a better class of religious teachers than she now possesses. And who could these be but the Sages mentioned above?

4. The Brahmins have lost, also, the ancient mode of worship which these holy men observed, as well as their conceptions of the Supreme Being.<sup>3</sup> Throughout India not a temple is erected by the Hindoos, not an altar raised, nor a single act of adoration performed, to the honour of His name. They have ingrafted upon the purer doctrines of the ancient religious guides of India a system of idolatry as full of abominations as any that ever debased the soul of man.

The  
Supreme  
Being not  
worshipped  
in India.

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(3) In Kinderley's Hindoo Literature may be seen a Translation of *the worship of the Supreme Being*. It is not easy to determine to what age or class of persons this is to be attributed: it is certain, however, that the present race of Hindoos know of nothing so pure.



There are many, indeed, yet ready to acknowledge, with their Sages of old, that the Supreme God may be known both by His word and works: that our own minds, reflecting upon what we behold, may easily understand, that faith, love, and obedience are due unto Him for our creation and preservation.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, you nowhere see Him obeyed and loved. Those who are loudest in His praise are often the farthest from Him in their character: and others, less inconsistent, yet justify their neglect to worship the Supreme Being, by arguing that He is incomprehensible; and that, since He is without form or qualities, no man can conceive an idea of Him sufficiently distinct to adore Him. They then avow their conviction, that He will approve and reward the worship which they render to inferior beings as regulated by the Hindoo law. It is declared, however, in Holy Scripture, that no such plea will be admitted in extenuation of idolatry.—“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead:”—thus far the Hindoos admit, as we have just seen,—“so that they are without excuse.”<sup>2</sup> The extent of their responsibility is known only to that righteous Being, who, at the last day, will judge every one’s works according to the means he has possessed of knowing his Creator’s will.

(<sup>1</sup>) Upon this, and one or two more passages, Ziegenbalg remarks, “that the Pagans of India have much more sublime and appropriate ideas of the divine nature than are commonly found among the ancient Greeks and Romans.” And La Croze adds, “I will venture to say, that the sentiments here transcribed are infinitely more orthodox than the Bull *Unigenitus* of Pope Clement XI.” *Hist. du Christ. des Indes*, p. 461.

(<sup>2</sup>) Romans i. 19, 20.





5. The notion now entertained in India of the Supreme Being is that of a pure Spirit, without attributes; either dwelling alone in His own eternal solitude, in a state of infinite blessedness, or inhabiting every creature that hath life, whether animal or vegetable: so that they are to believe that they see God in every thing, and therefore that every thing is God. This is, in fact, the old Pantheistic system, which confounded God with the universe. For instance, the soul of man is contemplated as a portion of this Spirit; and as it is thought to be degraded, and to contract defilement, by its connexion with matter, they deem it the great business of life to emancipate it from the dominion of the senses, until they become absorbed in the contemplation of the one God. The persons who aspire to this state of purity are called Jogees, Sanniasses, Voiragees, and other names, all intended to intimate that they are alike insensible to pain or pleasure, being lost in meditation upon the universal Spirit.

Jogees and  
other  
Devotees.

In order to attain unto this perfection, the Indian devotees have recourse to various means to mortify the flesh, so as to become perfectly indifferent to hunger or thirst, heat or cold.<sup>3</sup> Some of their austerities are so severe, that it is hard to imagine how human nature can sustain them. One will vow to swing over a fire with his head downward four hours a-day for a given number of years; and when each day's task is done, he descends from the tree from which he has been suspended, and rolls his body in the embers of the fire. Others hold an

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(<sup>3</sup>) Allusion was made to these Jogees in B. v. c. 3. s. 5; and the fuller account there promised will now be given. See Rev. W. Ward's *Account of Hindoos*. 4 volumes. *Missionary Register* for 1819, pp. 280, 282, 327; 1821, pp. 471, 472; 1823, pp. 455, 456. *Christian-Knowledge Society's Reports* for 1773, p. 74; 1776, pp. 82, 83.



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arm erect, or cross both arms over the head, until the blood ceases to circulate, when they lose all muscular power, and become so dead and stiff that they cannot be taken down again. The nails are suffered to grow till they are like the talons of a bird of prey; and if the hand be clenched, the nails sometimes grow through it. Some of these ascetics sit in one posture, with their legs tucked under them, until they become almost as useless as their arms, and they are therefore carried from place to place. Others travel about the country, living upon the ignorant and superstitious, who hold them in great reverence. One has been known to lie on a bed of spikes night and day for thirty-five years, and to be drawn about the country upon it for thousands of miles. Others vow never to lie down to rest; and, to prevent this, they wear an iron collar about the neck like a large gridiron. They sleep leaning against a tree or wall. Some are seen with an iron frame round the loins, with small iron cups fixed upon it, in which oil is kept constantly burning, from the effects of which their bodies become blistered and ulcerated. Others will stand a long time in the midst of fires kindled on the ground close around them: the distress which this must occasion can be best imagined by those who have felt the heat of a tropical climate. Others will stand for years on their heads or hands, or hang with their heads downwards, suspended by the legs thrown across the branch of a tree, for three or four hours at a time. Others will bury their bodies in the ground, or immerse them in water, up to the chest or chin, and remain in this position for years, at the same time keeping their hands high enough to hold and count their beads. Others are seen with a padlock upon their lips, to hold them in perpetual silence. Some who have vowed to go on pilgrimage to a distance, will either





walk with sandals filled with spikes, or measure the way by the length of their bodies, lying down and rising alternately.

But it were tedious to enumerate all the modes of torture which these superstitious people have invented. Let the specimens now given suffice. The avowed object is, to emancipate the spirit from the bondage, and cleanse it from the impurity of the flesh with which it is connected: and when this is attained, the soul is thought to be prepared to return to the universal Spirit whence it emanated, not to exist a distinct, ransomed being, in perfect bliss, but to lose its identity, and be absorbed in the Supreme Being, like the air in a vessel when it escapes and mixes again with the atmosphere, or a bucket of water thrown back into the ocean.

Such is the theory of the Jogees; but the present race understand little, and care less, about the theory. It is well known that the majority of them are among the most sensual of the natives; and their object in adopting the life of ascetics is, that they may pass their days in idleness. By their austerities they gain such credit with the people, that they are honoured almost as demi-gods: and while pretending to be too indifferent about food to beg, they know it to be unnecessary; for the crowds who admire them deem it a privilege, a religious duty, to anticipate their wants.<sup>1</sup> And so far from having subdued their passions, one<sup>2</sup> who had closely

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(<sup>1</sup>) The author once resided within a few doors of a Hindoo Prince, whose gate was perpetually visited by these mendicants. One especially, who had for twelve years held his arm erect, in the manner described in the text, came for several days, accompanied by a party of sturdy mendicants in attendance upon him, who raised the well-known shout as soon as he arrived, when he took his seat outside the gates, and remained there until sufficient rice was brought out for the whole party.

(<sup>2</sup>) The late Rev. W. Ward, Baptist Missionary at Serampore, who has written much more to the same effect in his "Farewell Letters,"



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observed them declares, that "they frequently curse those who refuse to give them food. Many are common thieves; almost all live in an unchaste state; and others are almost continually drunk by smoking intoxicating drugs. They are total strangers to real purity of heart and righteousness of life. They dread to kill an insect, to reproach a Brahmin, or to neglect a ceremony; but their impure thoughts or unjust actions never disturb their peace."

There can be little question that the austerities here described, as well as those practised in the West, were derived from Egypt. The custom of the Egyptian anchorets to mortify the body and live in solitude, has been described by various authors. Epiphanius, a Christian Father of the fourth century, speaks of the voluntary tortures which the pagan priests of that country, in his time, endured; loading their necks with iron collars, wearing coarse or scanty apparel, piercing their noses, from which they suspended rings in honour of their gods, and living in great abstinence.<sup>1</sup> It was here that Pythagoras learned to abstain from animal food, which the Jogees of India also abhor, and even from some kinds of vegetables.<sup>2</sup> Philo calls the Egyptian anchorets *the Ascetæ*, and gives a similar description of them. Herodotus speaks as an eye-witness of the severities they inflicted on their bodies in honour of their idols. Plutarch makes mention of a pagan hermit who led a life of great austerity in the deserts of Egypt, between the Nile and the Red

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Letters," and in his elaborate Work on the Literature, Customs, &c. of the Hindoos.

(<sup>1</sup>) Epiphanius, *contra Hæres.* Tom. ii. lib. 3. in brevi Expositione Fidei, num. xi. p. 1092.

(<sup>2</sup>) Luke Holstentius's Remarks upon Porphyry's Life of Pythagoras, p. 182. v. 12. pp. 71, 72. Edit. Cantabrig. La Croze, pp. 434—436.





Sea, the country where Anthony the Egyptian lived in a similar manner, in the third century of the Christian era, and became the founder of those communities of monks who have since disgraced many Christian Churches.<sup>3</sup>

It may suffice to adduce one more proof that the monks of Greece and Rome derive their origin from this source. Jerome, a Christian writer of the fourth century, who adopted the monastic life, became a warm advocate of monachism, in opposition to Jovinian, who attempted to check the superstitions which were threatening to inundate the Church. Jerome, in his second book against Jovinian, has copied nearly the whole of Porphyry's fourth book on abstinence from animal food; and the greater part of this book is taken from Chæremon, an Egyptian Stoic.<sup>4</sup> Thus may Egypt be said to have brought the Church of God under a more grievous bondage than the thralldom in which she held her in the days of Moses and Aaron.

It were needless to pursue this question further, and might weary, rather than edify the reader. No one can have given attention to the subject, without believing that these austerities passed from the anchorets of Egypt to the priests of Baal, and to the Jogees of India, and also to not a few of the monks of different Christian communities. In all ages and nations, self-righteousness, indolence, pride, with other evil affections of the mind, have induced the designing to impose in this way on the credulous; and the ignorance of mankind has favoured their imposture. That this should have occurred among the deluded worshippers of false gods can

(<sup>3</sup>) Eusebius. *Ecll. Hist. Lib. ii. c. 17*, upon the Ascetæ in Egypt. The whole subject is treated of in Bingham's *Christian Antiquities. B. vii. chap. 1—4*.

(<sup>4</sup>) Eusebius. *Ecll. Hist. Lib. vi. c. 19*. Valesius *in loc.* Also La Croze, p. 438.





be no matter of surprise; but it does excite astonishment and painful regret that it should so soon have found acceptance, and been retained so long, in various sections of that Church which had been taught, by Divine inspiration, both the inutility of such acts of mortification, and also the spiritual nature of that dedication of the whole man to God which alone is acceptable in His sight.<sup>1</sup> Herein, however, we have another humiliating proof that a Christian profession is not enough to secure mankind from the infirmities and passions of all the world besides. Only let Christians forget that they must be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation<sup>2</sup>, and they have nothing to preserve them from the wildest aberrations of the darkest pagans.

Metem-  
psychosis,  
with its  
effects.

6. To return to the Jogees of India.—Like the Pythagoreans, they hold the notion of the metempsychosis, as do most of the Hindoos in these days, believing that the soul of man after death passes into the body of some other creature, taking that of an animal whose nature corresponds with the individual's character when inhabiting a human body. This is regarded as a kind of penance; and these transmigrations are supposed to go on until the soul becomes sufficiently purified for absorption into the Supreme Being. Hence their reluctance to deprive the smallest insect or most noxious reptile of life, thinking that it may possibly contain the soul of one who, in his former birth, was a friend or kinsman; or fearing lest they should dismiss it from the body before its allotted term of penance were expired. Accordingly, a strict Hindoo would rather allow himself to be stung by a serpent than kill it; and the Jogees in the forests are often carried off by beasts of prey, without attempting to

(<sup>1</sup>) 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. 1 Thess. v. 23.

(<sup>2</sup>) 1 Pet. i. 5.





defend themselves. This may be attributed also to another effect of their doctrine of absorption: for while it induces them to be scrupulous of the lives of other creatures, it tends to make them careless of their own. Believing that fate has doomed them to pass through a certain number of bodies before they can attain the required degree of perfection, they often feel very indifferent about quitting their present tabernacle. Of this we have too many instances in the vast numbers who annually drown themselves in their different rivers and wells, throw themselves under the wheels of their idols' cars, and burn alive on their husbands' funeral pyre.<sup>3</sup> Suicide is a crime of so frequent occurrence that it excites little or no attention among the Hindoos.

A striking instance of this effect of the doctrine is given by the two Mahomedan travellers of the ninth century, whose account of their travels has been noticed in former parts of this work. They say—“All the Kings of India and China believe the metempsychosis, and make it an article of their religion. A person of credit relates, that one of these princes, newly-recovered from the small-pox, and beholding himself in a glass, was deeply troubled to see how sadly he was disfigured. Turning toward a nephew, who stood by, he said to him, ‘Surely it never yet happened to any one, as it has to me, to remain in his body after such a change. But this body is only a vessel filled out with wind; and when the soul leaves it she migrates into another. Go mount the throne; for I am about to separate my body from my soul, until I return in another body.’ At the same time he called for a sharp weapon, with which he commanded his

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(<sup>3</sup>) This practice is at last happily discontinued in the East-India-Company's Dominions.



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nephew to cut off his head. The young man obeyed; and afterward the body was burned."<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, it is seen that the doctrine of one Supreme Being, so correctly maintained by Indian Sages of former days, has degenerated into a system of the grossest imposture and superstition. Some modern writers, judging of the Hindoos rather by the books in their possession than by their moral character, have held them up as models for even Christians to copy; and they have argued, that, instead of attempting to convert them, if we adopted their creed we should profit by the change. We stop not to reason with Christians, if such they be, who know so little of the Hindoos' religion or their own. Suffice it to remark, that, putting aside the theory which those who are now revered as the saints of India so totally disregard, the facts adduced above may enable us to judge how far they merit the encomiums thus lavished upon them.

7. The Sages, who acknowledged and worshipped only one God, never admitted any representation of Him; but the present race of Hindoos regard the *Lingum* as an emblem of the Supreme Being materialized in the creation. This impure symbol,

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(<sup>1</sup>) Euseb., Renaudots' Translation, p. 69. See also pp. 79, 82, and the Translator's Notes, p. 31, &c.

It is unnecessary in this place to enter into any confutation of this doctrine; but we may notice an argument of Tertullian's against it, more curious than intelligible. Thus he reasons—"If the doctrine of the metempsychosis is true, the numbers of mankind must always remain the same; there can be no increase of population; whereas we know the fact to be otherwise."—Tertullian. Treatise de Animâ, c. 30. (Ecclesiastical History of the second and third centuries, pp. 207, 208, by the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr. Kaye.) This learned prelate has cited the remainder of the paragraph, chiefly "on account of the information which it supplies respecting the height to which cultivation and civilization were then carried." The opening sentence, given above, may serve to exercise, if not to aid, those who shall be curious further to investigate the theory of metempsychosis.





which is no other than the Egyptian *Phallus*, is worshipped by all classes through the length and breadth of Hindostan: it may, therefore, be regarded as the Universal God of the Hindoos. This idol, being most commonly found in temples dedicated to Siva, is generally supposed to be a representation of that god. Though all castes reverence the *Lingum*, yet there is one class, called *Linguayits*, specially dedicated to its worship. The *Linguayits* always wear a small *Lingum*, made of crystal or granite, suspended from their neck, and enclosed in a shrine of gold or silver. No other person is ever allowed to see the idol, or even to touch the shrine that contains it. In form it resembles a cone, but less tapered. The public processions in honour of this idol are attended with all the infamous excesses formerly committed at the festivities of Osiris and Bacchus. In a word, the Hindoos on these occasions act over again the Egyptian *Phallica* and the Roman *Bacchanalia*. This description the scholar will comprehend, without polluting these pages with a fuller account of the abominations attending the processions and public exhibition of the *Lingum*.<sup>1</sup>

8. The Hindoo mythology, which has superseded the doctrine and adoration of the Supreme God, it is not easy to comprehend. The brief outline now to be given differs, in a few immaterial points, from some accounts already published; but with others it will be found to agree. The occasional variations in the several descriptions given by Europeans of the religion of India, are to be attributed to the different notions and traditions prevalent in those parts

Hindoos'  
system of  
Mythology.

(<sup>1</sup>) Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, calls this idol the *Priapus*, and says, that when Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria, found it in the Temple of Serapis, he exposed it to public scorn, ordering it to be carried through the midst of the Forum. Lib. v. c. 16.





of the country where they have severally resided. Every district has its peculiar superstitions and its tutelary divinity; and with them the people have modified different features of the general mythology. To attempt to reconcile all these local modifications with the Hindoo Vedas<sup>1</sup>, Puranas<sup>2</sup>, or Upa-Vedas<sup>3</sup>, would be found an impracticable task; and any result of such an effort would be uninteresting to the reader, and often most offensive to the virtuous mind. The object of the present history will be attained by such a description of the mythology of Hindostan as shall exhibit its general character.<sup>4</sup>

We begin with the Hindoos' account of the Creation. From eternity the universe lay in embryo in the unfathomed mind of Brahm. Darkness

(<sup>1</sup>) Sacred Hindoo writings.

(<sup>2</sup>) Legendary poems.

(<sup>3</sup>) Commentaries on the Vedas.

(<sup>4</sup>) A more circumstantial account of this incomprehensible system may be seen in the following works. Sir William Jones on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.—*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. i. The several elaborate communications of H. T. Colebrooke, Esq.—*Ibid*, Vols. vii. viii. ix. & xii. Moore's *Hindoo Pantheon*. Maurice's *History of Hindostan*. Ward's *View of the History, &c. of the Hindoos*. Much information may also be found in the *Journals and Correspondence of the Missionaries*, referred to at the opening of this chapter. An epitome of the Religion of the Hindoos is given by Mr. Mill, in his *History of British India*, B. ii. c. 6., until he seemed to grow too weary of the puerile and offensive details to conclude as circumstantially as he began. He found that the task he had undertaken "was rendered difficult by the unparalleled vagueness which marks the language of the Brahmins respecting the nature of the gods, the vast multiplicity of their fictions, and the endless discrepancy of their ideas. Hence it is," he adds, "that no coherent system of belief seems capable of being extracted from their wild eulogies and legends."

Even Sir William Jones, who was a passionate admirer of much that he found in the literature of India, was constrained to confess that its "scheme of theology is most obscurely figurative, and consequently liable to dangerous misconception: that it is filled with idle superstitions, abounds with minute and childish formalities, with ceremonies generally absurd, and often ridiculous."—Preface to *Institutes of Menu*.





impenetrable shrouded the whole, until he spake, when light beamed forth to chase the universal gloom. Then from himself arose inert matter, wherewith to fulfil his vast designs. Waters flowed around, bearing with them prolific seeds without number. Then the mighty *Nara*, the Divine Spirit, moved over their surface, and caused the seeds to vegetate. Again Brahm spake the word, and the waters produced an egg of gold, whence issued the emblems of his wisdom, goodness, power, under the names of Brahmah, Vishnoo, Siva<sup>5</sup>, the three gods to whom all subsequent events are attributed.

Other accounts are given of the production of these emblems of the divine attributes. Some authors attribute their origin to *Bawaney*, the mother of the gods, who is said to have laid three eggs, from which they were produced. Others relate that Brahmah sprang from a lotus, the water-lily, which grew from the navel of Vishnoo as he lay sleeping on the expanse of waters. Leaving to those who may have patience and curiosity for the

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(<sup>5</sup>) It will be seen, in the character of these divinities, and their operations, that there is very slender ground for the comparison which some writers have drawn between them and the Sacred Persons in the Christian Trinity. Such statements must tend rather to the prejudice than the commendation of Christianity, both with the heathen abroad and infidels at home. The late Sir William Jones repudiated this comparison in strong terms. — See *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. i. p. 272. Also, *Calcutta Christian Observer*, Nov. 1839, pp. 690 *et seq.* There are, however, resemblances between the features of Hindoo mythology and the facts of Divine Revelation, the notices of which, remarks Dr. Robertson, "do not deserve to be classed with the credulity of the first Spanish Missionaries to America, who, from their own interpretation of certain expressions and ceremonies of the barbarous tribes of the country, concluded that they had some knowledge of the Trinity, and other doctrines, facts, and practices, of the Christian Religion."—*History of America*, Vol. ii. B. iv. s. 7. A few of the most remarkable of these resemblances will be noticed in the text.





Brahmah,  
their  
Creator.

exercise the task of reconciling these contradictory fables, we proceed briefly to notice the work assigned respectively to these three divinities.

9. BRAHMAH, as the name signifies, is the emblem of divine wisdom. This attribute he was to exert in the work of creation. When he burst forth from his shell, he caused the canopy of the azure heaven to grow from the upper half, and the earth from the nether, and then commanded the firmament, or ether, to float between. At his word, the waters retired from the ground to the cavities which he had prepared for their reception, and left the land dry. He next created man, casting him in a divine mould, and depositing in his breast an immortal soul, drawn from the eternal spirit. At the same time he endowed him with consciousness, while passion, goodness, and darkness, met together in his mind. His body was constructed with five senses, the medium of knowledge and pleasure to the soul confined within. All other earthly creatures were made for man's use and enjoyment. The creation finished, Brahmah retained dominion over every particle of matter, causing it to assume whatever form he pleased.

The vestiges of revelation in this account will be obvious to the attentive reader of the Bible. But it is a singular circumstance, that the Hindoos are taught to pay Brahmah little honour. How dark must be a system of religion which inculcates the omission of a duty of such universal obligation as the worship of the Creator by His rational creatures! Yet such is the fact; and, astounding as it is, the reason assigned for it is still more appalling. The Hindoos are taught to believe, that when Brahmah descended from the lotus, as above described, and contended with Vishnool for the right of primogeniture, Siva pressed between them, in great wrath, saying, "It is I who am truly the first-





born; but I will resign my pretensions to either of you who shall be able to reach and behold the summit of my head, or the soles of my feet." Brahmah instantly ascended; but having fatigued himself to no purpose in the regions of immensity, yet loth to abandon his claim, he returned to Siva, and declared that he had attained the crown of his head, calling, as his witness, the first-born cow. For this union of pride and falsehood the angry god ordained that no sacred rites should be performed to Brahmah. How prostrate the mind—the millions of minds—that can believe the Creator to be capable of such crimes, and think him unworthy of the homage of His own creatures! Yet this is the case. Throughout Hindostan scarcely one temple is to be found dedicated to Brahmah, in his individual character of Creator; nor is there one day in the Hindoo calendar specially consecrated to his honour. The Brahmins alone, in acknowledgment, we presume, of his creating them out of his head, and investing them with the sacerdotal office, worship him every morning, at sunrise, with the ceremony of *Sandivane*, ablution in the Ganges, or, if at a distance from that river, in some sacred tank. With this exception, the functions and adoration of Brahmah seem to be absorbed in those of Vishnoo, in whose temples his images are to be found, which represent him in the human form, with four heads and four arms. In one hand he holds the Veda, which is believed to have issued from him as the source of wisdom. Another hand holds a ladle, with which the Brahmins pour lustral-water at the performance of Pooja, or religious ceremonies. The third hand holds a rosary, which is a string of beads<sup>1</sup>, carried

(<sup>1</sup>) This bead is called, in South India, *Rutirautschum*. It is the fruit of a tree in Malacca, and becomes as hard as coral. Sometimes the rosaries are made of crystals.



CHAP.  
I.Vishnoo,  
their  
Preserver.

by Brahmins, jogees, and other devotees, either round the neck, or coiled on the crown of the head. These beads they count at their devotions, much in the manner of the Romanists, passing one with the fore-finger and thumb at every mental recitation of each of their gods' names. This is thought to promote abstraction of mind while contemplating the attributes of deity. It assists them also to count their recitations. The fourth hand of Brahmah holds a chatty, a small brazen vessel, containing water for ablution, which Brahmins always use as a preliminary essential to prayer or sacrifice. Such are the Hindoos' notions of their Creator.<sup>1</sup>

10. VISHNOO, the emblem of divine goodness, is the Saviour of the Hindoos, who believe in him to preserve them chiefly from temporal harm. He, like Brahmah, is represented in the human form, with a beardless face and placid mien, and having four arms. In one hand he holds a chank, or shell<sup>2</sup>; in another, a chakra, a missile weapon resembling the quoit<sup>3</sup>, with a hole in the centre, on

(<sup>1</sup>) Indian Antiquities, Vol. v. p. 851. Periodical Accounts of the Baptist Missions, Vol. i. p. 213.

(<sup>2</sup>) Buccinum, or whelk, a genus of shell-fish belonging to the order of *vermes testaceæ*. These shells are highly appreciated in India, especially in the north, whither they are sent in great quantities all the way from the Gulf of Manaar. The chank is used as a wind instrument of music, a small hole being made at the spiral end, where the musician blows. Almost every religious mendicant carries one, with which he announces his arrival at your door, that you may know he is waiting there for alms. It is blown at funerals also, and its doleful, monotonous tone is very appropriate to the occasion.

(<sup>3</sup>) The quoit is still used by the Seiks, a nation of North India, as a weapon of war. They go into action with from eight to twelve fixed upon the turban, which is raised in form of a cone to receive them one upon another. They throw them with such dexterity as seldom to miss their mark. When the air is still they can hurl them point blank about two hundred yards; but they seldom





which it is twirled by the fore-finger, and thrown at the destined object. When whirled by Vishnoo, irresistible fire is supposed to issue from its periphery. His third hand holds the gadha, or mace, an ensign of the civil authority which this god is supposed to exercise over human affairs. In the fourth hand he holds a nymphæa, or lotus, in allusion to the fable of Brahmah's production from this flower. Hence his worshippers claim for him precedency over all the gods, and call him Narayanah, the Omnipresent.

Vishnoo is often represented reclining on the coiled body of an immense cobra-capella, or hooded snake, with seven heads, whose hoods, expanded over the head of the god, form a canopy to shield him from the sun's vertical beams. In consequence, this venomous reptile is deemed sacred to Vishnoo, and treated with religious reverence by his votaries.<sup>4</sup>

In order to effect the purpose of his creation, which was to deliver mankind from the sorrows of the present life, Vishnoo is believed to have appeared nine times on the earth, under different forms; and the Hindoos look for his tenth advent before the consummation of all things. Each incarnation is called an Avatar; which is, a descent of the god.

His first<sup>5</sup> avatar is called *Matsya*, a fish; which form he assumed when the world was drowned by a flood, in order to preserve in a vessel a holy man and his family, consisting, with himself, of eight persons, together with pairs of different animals.

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seldom take effect at a greater distance than about one hundred. They are made of steel, and the periphery is sometimes almost sharp enough to sever the head from the body at a short distance.

(<sup>4</sup>) An interesting account of "Serpent Worship" is given in Lieutenant-Colonel Francklin's *Researches on the Jeynes and Boodhists*, c. 2.

(<sup>5</sup>) The avatars are not always given in the same order. That followed in the text is the most usual.



At that time the Asoors (devils) stole the Veda from Brahmah, while asleep, and threw it into the waters; but Matsya brought it up again from the deep.

The second avatar is *Koorma*, a tortoise, in which form, as is stated in one fable, Vishnoo took the newly-created world upon his back, to make it firm. Another account says that he sustained the mountain *Mandur*, (or *Mairo*, as it is sometimes called,) with which the Soors (a species of angels) and Asoors (devils) churned the ocean of milk in order to recover the *Areeka*, or water of immortality.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, they plunged the mountain *Mandur* into the milk, holding fast a gigantic tree that grew upon it, which served for a handle, and passing round it, instead of a rope, the body of the serpent *Versooke*. With this they turned the tree with such velocity, that *Versooke* became sick just as they had recovered the *Areeka*, and vomited poison. Other accounts state, that the poison issued from the bottom of the ocean, in consequence of its being overchurned. But wherever it came from, Vishnoo, at Brahmah's command, drank up the venom, lest it should poison the *Areeka*, and so the labour of the Soors and Asoors be lost.

The third avatar is *Varāha*, a boar, which form Vishnoo is said to have assumed, in order to recover the earth from an abyss, where it was sinking in mud and water at one of the periodical destructions of the world; or, according to another fable, to raise it from a gulf into which a giant had hurled it. *Varāha*, descending into the abyss, lifted up the earth upon his tusks, and bore it aloft in air.

These three avatars have a manifest allusion to

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(<sup>1</sup>) The Method of churning in India is as follows: they immerse the instrument in a large vessel of milk, and turn it with rapidity by means of a rope passed two or three times round the handle.





the deluge, which catastrophe is represented on the walls of some of the Hindoo temples.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, there is much in the fabulous stories of the Hindoo gods, as there is in all ancient histories and superstitions, that agrees with the word of inspiration;—a proof, that whatever is found of truth, in all ages and countries, emanated from the same source, like waters everywhere from the ocean, how polluted

(<sup>2</sup>) Allusion to other facts of sacred history, as promised above, will appear in several parts of this account of the mythology of India; and it will be seen, from the following extracts, that other pagans, besides Hindoos, have derived their best thoughts from that hallowed source:—

“There are satisfactory reasons for supposing that improvement in the language of the Brahmins, and refinement in the interpretations which they put upon their ancient writings, not to speak of what may have been done by their favourite practice of interpolation, have been suggested by the more rational and simple doctrines of Mahomet. The natural effect of acquaintance with a superior creed is well described by Mr. Bryant. ‘It is to be observed,’ he says, ‘that when Christianity had introduced a more rational system, as well as a more refined worship, among mankind, the pagans were struck with the sublimity of its doctrines, and tried, in their turns, to refine. But their misfortune was, that they were obliged to abide by the theology which had been transmitted to them, and to make the history of the Gentile gods the basis of their procedure. This brought them into immense difficulties, and equal absurdities, while they laboured to solve what was inexplicable, and to remedy what was past cure. Hence we meet with many dull and elaborate sophisms, even in the great Plutarch; but many more in after times, among the writers of whom I am speaking. Proclus is continually ringing the changes upon the terms *vóos*, *voeπos*, and *νοητός*; and explains what is really a proper name as if it signified *sense* and *intellect*. In consequence of this, he tries to subtilize and refine all the base jargon about Saturn and Zeus; and would persuade us that the most idle and obscene legends related to the divine mind, to the eternal wisdom and supremacy of the Deity. Thus he borrows many exalted notions from Christianity, and blends them with the basest alloy—with the dregs of pagan mythology.’—Bryant’s *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, Vol. iii. pp. 104, 105. Such are the opinions of the greatest men respecting those attempts to allegorize a rude superstition, which some of the most celebrated of our Indian guides so vehemently recommend.”—J. Mill. *Hist. of British India*, Vol. i. B. ii. c. 6.



CHAP.  
I.

soever this truth may have become in its course from generation to generation by the vicious imaginations of mankind.

The fourth avatar is *Narasingha*, a monster with a lion's head and a human body, which sprang in a moment from a pillar of stone. Vishnoo is said to have assumed this form, to tear out the entrails and drink the blood of Eeraunien, a powerful and barbarous giant, who ruled the world with an iron sceptre, and to place his pious heir upon the throne.

The fifth avatar was *Vamana*, or the dwarf. He is called also *Trivikrama*, or three steps, in allusion to the achievement by which he delivered the world from the tyranny of king Bailee. Having performed a signal service for this giant, Bailee desired him to choose his own reward. He asked only so much earth as he could compass in three strides. Being so small a person, the giant thought this less recompense than he deserved: however, on his declaring that he desired no more, he was told to take his three strides. Putting out one of his legs, it increased in length until it stretched half over the earth: next, raising the other leg, it was lengthened to the same extent, and thus brought him back to the spot whence he started. He then said to the tyrant, "You see I have compassed your dominions at two steps, where shall I take the third?" "I have no spot left," Bailee replied, "but the crown of my head: you must place your foot there." *Vamana* took him at his word, and pressed him down into the bottomless pit, where he was allowed to reign.

The sixth avatar is *Parasoo-rama*, a priest; under which form Vishnoo is said to have destroyed two races of infidels, the Pooliver and the Saumauner, who openly declaimed against the religions of Vishnoo and Siva, and all worship of idols, and abstained from every sacred rite. The god was then to propagate his own religion throughout India.





This fable is supposed to relate to a grievous persecution raised some years ago by the Brahmins against the Sages mentioned above. No wonder that priests of idolatry should wage a war of extermination against the worshippers of the one Supreme God. We know that Socrates died for the testimony of the unity of the Godhead against the idolaters of his day; and it is probable that these holy men were martyrs to the same fundamental truth. Certain it is, that they have long since disappeared, and are known now only by their writings. While, however, the Brahmins have succeeded in destroying the Sages, they take to themselves the credit of the pure sentiments which they left behind—sentiments which modern Brahmins neither understand nor teach, nor attempt to reduce to practice.

The seventh avatar was *Rama*, a prince; under which form he destroyed the giant Ravana, the tyrant of Yail-Lunga (Ceylon), who had ten heads and twenty arms. When Rama was in the south of India, Ravana crossed over to the continent, stole his wife, and carried her away to the island Yail-Lunga. Rama pursued the giant; and when he came to the gulf of Manaar, having no means of crossing the water, the army of monkeys, under the command of Honnuman, ran away to the mountains, and brought back a quantity of huge stones, with which they made a bridge for Rama to pass over to the island. He soon overtook and subdued Ravana, and recovered his wife. The reef of rocks which still connects Ceylon with the continent is to this day called, by the natives, Rama's bridge. The fabulous events of this avatar form the subject of the celebrated poem *Ramayana*.

The eighth avatar is *Krishnah*, who, though of the royal family of Cansa, was removed in infancy to the lowly cottage of a shepherd, in consequence of the attempts of his uncle, Kansha, to kill him,





lest the infant should take possession of his throne. Kansha, missing the object of his jealousy, hoped to secure his destruction by slaying all the infants in the neighbourhood; but Krishnah was safe under the care of the shepherd, who brought him up. In this form Vishnoo is said to have appeared in greater power and glory than on any other occasion, though he passed through much suffering to his triumph. The most puerile and degrading stories are told of his childhood. When grown to man's estate, the most wanton and indecent descriptions are given of his conduct with the shepherdesses of the country. Other accounts state that he was sorely distressed by a gigantic and deadly serpent, which coiled its folds around his body, and bit his heel. At length Krishnah got his foot upon the serpent's head, and triumphed over him.

The ninth avatar is *Budhoo*, a warrior; under which form Vishnoo engaged to perform many wonderful works for the benefit of mankind. As the worship of Budhoo in India is now almost confined to the island of Ceylon, we shall notice it again in the next chapter: there can be no doubt, however, of its having once prevailed on the continent.<sup>1</sup>

The tenth avatar is *Kalki*, which is yet future. In this, his last incarnation, Vishnoo is expected to appear as a warrior, with seven crowns, armed with a scymetar, and mounted on a winged milk-white steed. He is then to judge the world, to destroy the wicked, to consume with fire evil of every form and shade, and afterwards to introduce a reign of universal holiness and peace. The coincidence between this avatar and the description of our Lord's second Advent in the Book of Revelation is very remarkable. He is then to appear on "a white horse," coming in righteousness to judge, and make

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(<sup>1</sup>) La Croze, pp. 492—499.





war.<sup>2</sup> Such is the Hindoos' Preserver. There can be little doubt that this, as well as the other avatars resembling the history and character of Jesus Christ, were constructed from some copies of the Gospel which are supposed to have found their way to India at an early period of the Christian era. The coincidences are so remarkable as to seem to render it impossible to account for them in any other way. But, whatever their origin, they give the Christian Missionary a great advantage in preaching to the Hindoos, inasmuch as he can tell them, that their minds ought to be prepared to receive instructions agreeing with their own Vedas, though divested of the fables with which they have been encumbered. Hindoos are taught to believe that the different avatars of Vishnoo occupied millions of years; but they, like all other heathen nations<sup>3</sup>, have the most extravagant notions of chronology. The events comprised in the avatars of this god must all have occurred within four thousand years, for they begin with the flood. And it appears from the writings of the Sages, who, as we have just seen, are said to have been destroyed by Vishnoo in his sixth avatar, that some of them were found on the coast of Coromandel about six hundred and eighty years ago.<sup>4</sup> Hence we may conclude that the events of the sixth avatar, when these Sages were extirminated, took place within the last seven centuries; and that at

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(<sup>2</sup>) Revelation xix. 11—21.

(<sup>3</sup>) Stillingfleet's *Origines Sacrae*. B. i. c. 6. There is also an elaborate work entitled "A Key to the Chronology of the Hindoos," which will interest the curious reader.

(<sup>4</sup>) "Il paroît par les Livres des Sammanéens qu'il y a cinq cents soixante ans (this was written about one hundred and twenty years ago) qu'on trouvoit encore des gens de cette Religion dans les Roiaumes de la Côte de Coromandel, on peut croire que la domination absolue du Paganisme moderne n'est guères plus ancienne que de cinq siècles dans ces pays-là." La Croze, pp. 498, 499.



CHAP.  
I.

Siva, their  
Destroyer.

that period the Hindoo religion was not universal in Hindostan. Indeed, the great object of Vishnool, in his sixth avatar, was, as we have seen, to propagate the worship of himself throughout India. But we must not attempt to investigate so intricate a question in this place.

11. SIVA, the Destroyer, is the emblem of divine power. He is also called the Regenerator, because he is said to destroy only to renew. He has other names; such as, Maha-dēva, "the great god," Isuren, and a few more. This god divides with Vishnool the adorations of the millions of India. He is represented by a human figure, sometimes with many heads, but more frequently with only one. He has three eyes, the third being in the centre of the forehead, and pointing up and down. Hence he is sometimes called *Trilochana*, "the three-eyed." These eyes are supposed to represent his omniscience, and his controul over all events, past, present, and future. From this and other points of resemblance, Siva has been identified with the Jupiter of Greece, who was called *Triophthalmus*, "the three-eyed;" and his statues have been found with a third eye in the forehead. Siva has four arms. In one hand he holds the trisula, resembling the three-pronged trident of Neptune, which has led to his being identified with the classic god of the ocean. In his second hand he holds the fatal cord, called the *Pasha*, with which he is said to bind and strangle the wicked. It is uncertain what is precisely indicated by the positions of his third and fourth hands. One is bent downwards, as if to encourage petitioners to declare their wants; the other is raised, as though to offer protection or bestow a blessing. Siva's exercise of the power of destruction is indicated by the string of human skulls suspended from his neck. The serpents that are seen in his ears are emblems of immortality.





It has been remarked above, that the Lingum is regarded by many as an emblem of this god. He is represented by various other figures, and in numerous attitudes, which it were to little purpose to describe in this place.

12. Besides these three principal gods, the Hindoo Pantheon is as crowded as that of Greece or Rome with other imaginary deities. They have *Indru*, the king of heaven; *Ganesha*<sup>1</sup>, the god of wisdom; *Vreekuspaty*, the god of learning; *Darma-dēva*, the god of virtue; *Kumæ-dēva*, the god of love; *Kar-tikeya*, the god of war; *Agnee*, the god of fire; *Varoona*, the god of the waters; *Pavunu*, the god of the winds; *Yumu*, the judge of the dead and king of the place of torments; *Virsuvana*, the god of riches; *Dhan-wuntary*, the god of medicine; *Yumu*, the god of the infernal regions, or judge of the dead; besides others too numerous to recite. These, also, are called by other names in different parts of the country and in the native writings. The Hindoos are said to have thirty-three crore of deities; that is, three hundred and thirty millions.<sup>2</sup>

Various  
other Gods.

13. They have also an almost equal number of goddesses, called Saktis. Besides Bawanee, the mother of the gods, there is *Lukshmee*, the wife of Vishnoo, and goddess of plenty; *Doorga*, or *Kalee*, wife of Siva, and goddess of destruction. She also, like her husband, wears a necklace of human skulls, and a girdle of the hands of the slain, and is supposed to delight in human sacrifices. Men of robbery, violence, and blood, supplicate her help and protection before they perpetrate their infernal deeds. Every god is supposed to have one or more wives; and several of them have a great variety of names.

Their  
numerous  
Goddesses.

(1) The Janus of the Romans. This appears to be revered more than any other of these secondary gods.

(2) A crore is 100 lacs, and a lac is 100,000; so that thirty three crore of deities is just 330,000,000.





Some are objects of terror to their deluded worshippers, who endeavour to propitiate them by the most impure and abominable rites. Nothing can be imagined more demoralizing and brutalizing than the public services in honour of many of these imaginary beings. Truly is this dark place of the earth *full of the habitations of cruelty*. Under the prostituted name of Religion, the land is defiled with blood. It is supposed that the barbarity of human sacrifices has long ceased in India; but as we become more and more acquainted with the interior of the country, we find the horrid practice is not yet extinct. And what are we to call infanticide and the immolation of the widow on the funeral pyre, which are perpetuated still in some parts, notwithstanding the efforts of British humanity to abolish them? What must we call the horrid rites of Juggernaut<sup>1</sup> and other idols, when men and women, sometimes with children in their arms, throw themselves under the wheels of the ponderous car on which the god is drawn in procession, and are crushed to death? Are not these human sacrifices?

Devils and  
Demoniacs.

14. Besides these goddesses, the Hindoos believe in numerous demons, male and female, who are said to lead mankind into every species of crime, and to assume various forms, suited to give effect to their temptations. They are supposed to possess

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(<sup>1</sup>) Since this was written, the Bengal Government has (in 1843) reported to the Indian Government at home, in answer to their long-pending inquiry, that no pledge whatever was originally given for the annual money payment of 6000*l.* to the Temple of Juggernaut, and consequently that there is no pretence for its continuance. Its own landed revenue will, of course, continue; but its own votaries and patrons must henceforth supply the needful, and not the British nation. It is to be hoped, therefore, that, at last, the abominations of Juggernaut will be suppressed, or, at least, that they will no longer be supported by the British Government.





both men and women ; and the miserable creatures said to be under their influence are seen to act as much like demoniacs as any described in the Gospels. They rove about stark naked ; their heads are in perpetual motion ; they alternately sing and rave ; and such is their violence at times, that it is dangerous to approach them. Others are sullen, reject all food, flee the habitations of men, and seek to hide themselves among the ruins of old pagodas, or wander about in the jungles (woods). No doubt these are generally lunatics under the different forms of insanity, and many have been cured under European treatment. Frequently, indeed, the case has proved to be nothing more than an excess of bile ; but it is hard to convince the natives of this : they confidently believe the patient to be possessed of the devil, and have various methods of exorcising them.<sup>2</sup>

15. Many of the devils that are supposed to distress mankind are believed to be the spirits of men and women who have committed suicide, by whatsoever means, or who died suddenly, either from excessive grief or by any accident. Their souls are supposed neither to be admitted into heaven nor sent to hell ; but suffered to hover about, in company with devils, and to exercise all their infernal influence over mankind. The natives affirm that they often see these ghosts, especially in their dreams, and that they incite them to commit various crimes ; and they seem to be in as much fear of them as of the devils themselves.

Departed  
Spirits.

On the other hand, the Hindoos have an indis-

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(<sup>2</sup>) The subject of demoniacal possessions has been too fully treated of by various writers to require an extended discussion upon it in this place. A lucid digest of the whole argument is given by Dr. Macknight, in his *Essay on the Demoniacs mentioned in the Gospels*, prefixed to his *Harmony of the Four Gospels*.



CHAP.  
I.Rishis, or  
Prophets—  
Munoo.

tinct notion, without attempting, as far as I have seen, to reconcile it with the doctrine of a general transmigration of souls, that the departed spirits of those who have led virtuous and useful lives exercise a benign influence over them; and, like all heathen nations, they class them among their demi-gods. Indeed, every hero and saint, even while alive, is regarded as an incarnation of some deity; and in the Hindoo Puranas are described the incarnations of other beings besides the ten avatars of Vishnoo.

16. There is yet another class of persons held by them in great estimation. These they call *Rishis*, or prophets, and pay them almost as much reverence as their gods. These prophets are said to amount to about fifty thousand; and the native poems and other writings contain extravagant accounts of their wisdom and virtues. With these, perhaps, may be classed Munoo<sup>1</sup>, the Hindoo law-giver, though he is often described as a demi-god and saint. He is said to have produced ten lords of created beings, who, at his command, produced seven other Munoo's; and these were followed by all kinds of beings, divine and human. Munoo has been identified with Noah; and the other seven Munoo's are, perhaps, to be regarded as the family preserved with him in the ark. He is said to have secured the Veda at the time of the deluge. He is regarded, also, as the author of the *Institutes*<sup>2</sup>, a code of laws of high authority with the Hindoos. There are other writers, especially the authors of their different systems of philosophy, whose memory is

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(<sup>1</sup>) This name is often spelt Menu.

(<sup>2</sup>) The *Institutes* of Menu were translated by Sir William Jones. (Works, Vol. iii.) With some wise and useful maxims in these *Institutes*, there is mixed up much that is incoherent and absurd. This, however, is attributed to some foolish commentator on the original work.





revered by the natives of India; but their names are too numerous, and their dogmas for the most part too ridiculous, to be given here. They are often mentioned in such terms, that it is not easy to distinguish between the reverence paid to them and to the gods of the country.

17. Almost every thing in the universe, animate and inanimate, is an object of the Hindoos' adoration: rivers and mountains; forests and particular trees; towns and villages; beasts of the earth, especially cows and elephants, monkeys and snakes; birds of the air, especially the eagle, vulture, kite, and wagtail; fishes in rivers and the sea; stones of various kinds; books; the plough; the spade; in a word, every implement wherewith man obtains his livelihood. It were to take a wide range over each department of natural history to enumerate the things they worship. Not that this infatuation is peculiar to the Hindoos. Many Negro tribes worship animals and reptiles.<sup>3</sup> The ox and numerous other animals were esteemed sacred in Egypt. The cow was oracular and sacred among the Amonians.<sup>4</sup> Not only cows, but horses, eagles, lions, bears, were esteemed divine animals among the Syrians.<sup>5</sup> The Egyptian priests respected as sacred the life of every creature, and for this reason interdicted the use of animal food.<sup>6</sup> At an early period the Greeks, and even the Romans, punished with death the killing of an ox. The worship of this species of quadrupeds appears,

General  
worship of  
creatures.

(<sup>3</sup>) Edwards's History of the West Indies, ii. 77. 4to edition.

(<sup>4</sup>) Bryant's Analysis of Ancient Mythology, i. p. 323.

(<sup>5</sup>) Lucian, De Syria Dea.

(<sup>6</sup>) The priests of Egypt, says Herodotus, account it unholy to kill any thing which has life, saving what they use in sacrifice. Herod. Hist. Lib. i. cap. 140: and Porphyry informs us, that it was not till a late period of their history that animal sacrifices were introduced. De Abstin. Lib. ii. et iv.



CHAP.  
I.

Worship of  
the sun.

indeed, to have been common to all the idolatrous nations from Japan to Scandinavia. That, in India, it is a worship directed to no moral end is evident upon the slightest inspection. It has been well remarked, that to renounce the benefits which the inferior animals are fitted by nature to render to man is not humanity, any more than swinging before an idol, by an iron hook forced through the muscles of the back, is the virtue of self-command. And that this superstition took not its rise from a sensibility to the feelings of animated creatures is evident from the barbarous character of several nations where it prevails; from the proverbial cruelty suffered by the labouring animals of Hindostan, the only care being to avoid taking the creature's life; and from the apathy with which human beings, even nearest relatives, are left to expire by hunger and disease, and widows forced to the funeral pyre, while reptiles are zealously tended and fed.<sup>1</sup>

The reason which they assign for this worship of the creature is, because they imagine their Supreme God to be in every thing, and that His presence converts every thing, even the basest creatures, into himself. Ask them why they adore this or that object, and the answer you commonly receive is, "Because it is BRAHM."

18. In most heathen nations the sun has been the chief visible object of adoration; and though, in the present day, the Hindoo population generally do not worship the sun, yet it is not wholly discontinued.<sup>2</sup> He is supposed to be the governor of all diseases, and is worshipped to avert the maladies to which the body is exposed from his

(1) Mill's History of British India.

(2) The late Dr. Carey, Baptist Missionary in Bengal, witnessed the worship of the sun in the neighbourhood of Mudnabatty, and gave a particular account of the ceremony. *Periodical Accounts*, Vol. i. pp. 404, 405. *Memoirs of Dr. Carey*, pp. 313—316. Ed. 1837.





displeasure. He is called Sooriya, or Deebahar; and there is no doubt, from many passages in the Hindoo Vedas and other writings, that the worship of this luminary once prevailed throughout India.<sup>3</sup>

(<sup>3</sup>) The following authorities may suffice to prove this fact, of which some persons long resident in India seem not to be aware.

The late Mr. Wilford, having stated the general opinion that the three principal gods of India resolve themselves into one, namely, the sun, says, "The case was nearly the same in ancient India; but there is no subject on which the modern Brahmins are more reserved: for when they are closely interrogated on the title of Deva, or God, which their most sacred books give to the sun, they avoid a direct answer, have recourse to evasions, and often contradict one another and themselves. They confess, however, unanimously, that the sun is an emblem or image of the three great divinities jointly and individually; that is, of Brahm, or the Supreme One."—*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. iii. p. 372.

The late Sir William Jones, in a discourse written to prove that the gods of Greece, Italy, and India are the same, says, "We must not be surprised at finding, on a close examination, that the characters of all the pagan deities, male and female, melt into each other, and at last into one or two; for it seems a well-founded opinion, that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses, in ancient Rome and modern Varanes, mean only the powers of nature, and principally those of the sun, expressed in a variety of ways, and by a multitude of fanciful names."—"The three Powers, Creative, Preservative, and Destructive, which the Hindoos express by the trilateral word *Aum*, were grossly ascribed by the first idolaters to the heat, light, and flame of their mistaken divinity, the sun."—*Ibid.* Vol. i. pp. 267, 272.

A passage from the Veda, translated by Mr. Colebrooke, after naming several deities to whom the mysterious syllable *Aum* belongs, adds, "But in fact there is only one deity, THE GREAT SOUL. He is called the SUN; for he is the soul of all beings. Other deities are portions of him."—*Ibid.* Vol. viii. p. 397.

"The sun is Brahm: this is a certain truth revealed in the sacred Upanishats, and in various sac'has of the Vedas. So the Bhawishya Purana, speaking of the sun: Because there is none greater than he, nor has been, nor will be, therefore he is celebrated as the supreme soul in all the Vedas."—An extract from a Sanscrit commentary, by Mr. Colebrooke. *Ibid.* Vol. v. p. 352.

Much more to the same effect may be seen in the *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. ii., and those referred to above. The late Mr. Ward, in the Introduction to his elaborate work on the Hindoo Mythology, &c., p. 60, says, "We learn from the *Ain Akbūree*, that



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The sun is represented in a chariot with one wheel, and drawn by seven green coursers, with his driver Aroun—probably the Aurora of the ancient Heathen. From some cause or other, the Brahmins seem reluctant to acknowledge, though they do not deny, that heliolatry forms a part of their religion. When the more intelligent of them are closely interrogated on the subject they avoid a direct answer, have recourse to evasions, and often contradict one another and themselves. They confess, however—that is, the learned Brahmins—that the sun is an emblem of the three great divinities jointly and individually, Brahmah, Vishnoo, Siva: that these Powers, Creative, Preservative and Destructive, are the heat, light, and flame of the sun. Hence it follows, that as the powers of the Supreme Being of the Hindoos are shadowed forth in the

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that the entire revenues of Orissa, for twelve years, were expended in erecting a temple to the sun.”

Presuming that these authorities will suffice to prove the prevalence of heliolatry in India—they might be multiplied to a great extent,—we will conclude this note with the Hindoo prayer to the sun. Mr. Colebrooke, in his account of the first Vedas, speaking of the Gayatri, says, “I subjoin a translation of the prayer which contains it, as also of the preceding one, both of which are addressed to the sun, for the sake of exhibiting the Indian priest’s confession of faith, with its context:—‘This new and excellent praise of thee, O splendid, playful Sun! is offered by us to thee. Be gratified by this my speech: approach this craving mind as a fond man seeks a woman. May that Sun, who contemplates and looks into all worlds, be our protector! LET US MEDITATE ON THE ADORABLE LIGHT OF THE DIVINE RULER! MAY IT GUIDE OUR INTELLECTS!’ Desirous of food, we solicit the gift of the splendid Sun, who should be studiously worshipped. Venerable men, guided by the understanding, salute the divine Sun with oblations and praise.”—*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. viii. p. 400.

(\*) This is the sentence called the Gayatri, which the Hindoos are said to regard with unspeakable veneration. Sir William Jones has given another version of it, somewhat different in its phraseology, but the same in substance.—*Works*, Vol. vi. p. 417.

Mr. Mill, in his *History of British India*, gives a full account of this subject, B. ii. c. 6.





characters of these three gods, the sun must be BRAHM himself. Thus are the gods of Hindostan, like those of Egypt, Greece, and Rome, ultimately resolved into the glorious orb of day. Oh for the time when the pagans of India shall reason thus: "If the creature be so glorious what must the Creator be?" But all things were created by the Incarnate Word. Yes, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ." Arise, shine upon this benighted land! Hasten the day when India, with "the holy Church throughout all the world," shall acknowledge Thee!

19. But the Hindoos' notion of their god is even more ephemeral than this. They resolve him into the elements; they invoke, they salute the very air they breathe, and call it Brahm. Yet, notwithstanding their complicated theory, and their multitudinous pantheon, when closely pressed upon the absurdity of their notions, and questioned as to what they really do believe respecting the nature of their gods, the very Brahmins have confessed, what the Christian already suspected, that in reality *they have no god!* Astounding as the conclusion is, one is forced to regard them as a nation of atheists. Literally, THEY HAVE NO GOD. The Hindoo is, therefore, *without hope*. He has not a god, in all the catalogue of his idols, that he believes can deliver him from the fate which he supposes to be indelibly written upon the forehead of every human being. Hence the absence of moral and righteous principle from the minds of these people. Of whatever crime you convict them, they show no shame or remorse, unless their secular interests are endangered; for they think, and will sometimes tell you, if they dare, that it was their fate to do it, and therefore that they are not to blame. To the same cause is to be ascribed the apathy with which they lie down to die, with the

Universal  
Atheism  
of India.





means of their preservation within reach; and the deliberate manner in which they will deprive themselves of life from the slightest provocation or trouble.

Their  
Temple  
establish-  
ments.

20. Nevertheless, though they have so little confidence in their gods when most in need of their succour, they honour them at vast expense and trouble. Those imaginary beings are represented by a variety of forms, some the most hideous that the imagination can invent. Spacious pagodas (temples) are erected to hold the idols; and large establishments maintained, of men and women, elephants and cows, to keep up their daily worship. Some of these pagodas are richly endowed: others are supported by the costly offerings of the votaries.

Some notion may be formed of the character of these religious services, from the fact that the female part of the establishment is composed of prostitutes. These victims of a debasing superstition are bought for the purpose in childhood, generally in times of famine, when their parents are glad to part with them for a trifling sum, or a few meals of rice. They are then well fed, and, at a proper age, dedicated with great pomp to the service of the gods. They are the only class of females whom the natives allow to learn to read and write; and these arts they are taught, to enable them to copy and sing the stories of their gods. Their business is to dance in a wanton manner, and sing indecent songs before the idol, when carried in procession, or in any other way exhibited on public occasions. The rolling of the eye, the expression of the countenance, and the attitudes of the body, are made to correspond with the impure actions of the god which their songs describe, in order to excite the passions of the beholders. These women are forbidden to marry, being considered as wedded to the idol which they serve; but they have families notwithstanding.





Their children are claimed as the property of the pagoda, the daughters being employed as their mothers, and the sons becoming the musicians of the temple. The fathers of these children are most commonly the Brahmins, or priests of the god. The whole system of the Hindoos' worship partakes of this infamous character: and if such is their religion, what must the people be?

21. The pagan inhabitants of India are divided into four general classes, called castes, who are said to have been created by Brahmah out of different parts of his own person.<sup>1</sup> The *Brahmins* issued from his mouth, bringing the Vedas<sup>2</sup> with them. They form the sacerdotal caste, and are the depositaries and only authorized teachers of the Vedas. The second caste sprang from the arms of Brahmah, who endowed them with strength to protect mankind from harm. They are called *Kshatriyas* (or *Katris*), and form the military caste. Under the ancient Hindoo Governments the *Kshatriyas* were the rajahs and soldiers of the country. The third caste, called *Vaisyas*, Brahmah created from his thigh. These engage in the cultivation of the soil, in attending upon cattle, and in commercial pursuits. The fourth caste sprang from Brahmah's foot, and are called *Sudras*, a name implying servility. They are regarded as made for the service of the other castes, who employ them in all menial offices. These castes were created with their females; and when Brahmah surveyed them, as they first issued from his body, he addressed them thus: "What shall be your occupations?" They submissively replied, "We are not our own masters,

Origin and  
character  
of Caste.

(<sup>1</sup>) The origin and character of the castes on the Malabar Coast have been explained in the first Volume, B. i. c. 4. s. 7. Mr. Colebrooke has given the origin of castes in other parts of India, in a literal translation from the Sanscrit.—*Asiatic Researches*, Vol. v.

(<sup>2</sup>) For an account of these Vedas see Vol. ii. B. v. c. 3. s. 11.





CHAP.  
I.

## HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

CSL

O God! Command us what to undertake.” Then followed the distribution of them in the order above described.

Each of these castes has, in the course of time, become separated into numerous sub-divisions. Some tribes of Brahmins are esteemed more holy, or more ancient, or more skilful in the sciences, than others. The subordinate castes, as the other three are considered, are subdivided into the professions which they severally pursue. The military caste in British India seems to be absorbed in the general character of the British army, which is composed of all castes, from the Brahmins down to the very outcasts not yet described. But the other castes are still preserved, and their rules are very strict. The son is generally obliged to follow the father's occupation, by which they are now distinguished, being called the writer caste, the weaver caste, the tailor caste, and so on. A man thinks himself defiled by coming in contact with one beneath him, or even if the breath of an inferior pass on him; and in that case he must perform certain ablutions to purify his person. These ceremonies are regulated by the comparative grade of the man who has polluted him, the defilement being reckoned according to his caste; his immoral character or the filthiness of his person never being taken into account. Again; a man cannot rise above the caste in which he was born, whatever his wealth, abilities, or services; but he may descend, by marrying an inferior, by eating forbidden or polluted food, or doing any thing contrary to the laws of his caste.

There is another general division of all these castes into the worshippers of Vishnoo and Siva; who, as remarked above, divide the millions of India between them. They are distinguished by a mark on their foreheads. Some assert that the





votaries of Vishnoo, others those of Siva, are the more numerous.

Besides these castes, and below them all, are the *Chandalas*, or *Parriahs*, just alluded to, who are treated by the rest as outcasts, and despised as the vilest of men. To drink a cup of water poured out by a Parriah, to eat food which he may have dressed, or to touch any part of his clothes, is considered a heinous offence; and if not expiated by strict penance, together with troublesome and expensive ceremonies, would be punished with loss of caste. But we are not even yet at the bottom of this system. There are grades even lower than the Parriahs; such as workers in leather, and several others: indeed, the subject is all but interminable; and we have now pursued it far enough for our purpose.

This distinction of caste is analogous to the different orders of society in ancient Egypt. The Egyptians were divided into seven classes, of which the priests ranked the highest; the military order came next; then followed the other five, which were divided into classes, following each its own profession; and these were again subdivided, after the custom of the Hindoos. There is a fact mentioned in Holy Scripture which looks like a corroboration of this statement: "The Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination to the Egyptians."<sup>1</sup> They probably regarded them as outcasts; and would have deemed themselves defiled by sitting down with them to meat. Joseph, therefore, was careful for his brethren to dwell apart from them, in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd was an abomination to the Egyptians. This close resemblance between the state of society and the manners of the two

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(<sup>1</sup>) Genesis xliii. 32; xlv. 34.



CHAP.  
I.Effects of  
Caste.

countries is another collateral proof that India derived many of its customs from Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

22. The effects of this arrangement upon the entire population of India are such as every Christian philanthropist must deplore. The Brahmins have shown themselves to be adepts at priestcraft. While arrogating the exclusive right of reading and expounding the Shasters, they have themselves sunk, generally, into ignorance and apathy, without abating one iota of their pretensions; and the people, implicitly conceding the claims of this proud and ignorant priesthood, have submitted to be held by them in a state of mental thralldom worse than Egyptian bondage. The Brahminical priestcraft runs through all the ramifications of their system of caste;—a system which is not, as some have thought, the mere civil distinction between high and low, rich and poor, which Divine Providence has appointed in every country for the benefit of the whole. The wisdom and goodness of this appointment is apparent wherever it is duly regarded: the different orders of society feel their mutual dependence, and learn to respect one another. In such a community, superiority is maintained without arrogance, and service rendered without servility. The road to prosperity and distinction will be open to all, for all are free. One of the lowest, by talent and education, industry and good conduct, may attain the highest rank. There is nothing of this in India. A Sudra and a Parriah must remain in their degradation as long as they live, whatever their moral excellence, their abilities, or wealth. And

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(<sup>1</sup>) Herodot. Lib. ii. p. 153. Diodor. Sicul. pp. 35, 47, ed. Græcæ Stephani. Plato in Timæo, Tom. iii. p. 24, edit. Serrani. Aristot. Lib. viii. Politicorum, pp. 198, 199, edit. Græc. Wecheli. These are the authorities referred to by La Croze in confirmation of the view here given, *Histoire du Christ, des Indes*, pp. 433, 434.





as these advantages cannot elevate the lower castes, so neither can the want of them depress the higher. Whatever crime a Brahmin may commit, provided he abstain from ceremonial pollution, he is revered as a holy Brahmin still: and it were a violation of Hindoo law<sup>2</sup> to execute one of them, even for murder. The lowest poverty does not degrade a Brahmin; nor would he deign, however poor, to drink a cup of water poured out by a king, or eat rice dressed by a queen. For *this* he would lose caste; but not for any moral delinquency. He may also bear arms, or engage in mercantile and agricultural pursuits, without detriment to his rank. He claims a right, indeed, to all the advantages to be derived from the occupations of those below him; but on no account will he allow them to aspire to any of his pretensions. They are never suffered to look into the Vedas, nor to approach the altars of their gods. The lower castes, indeed, may not enter within the walls of their pagodas. They are taught to look upon the Brahmin as a kind of demi-god; and, in their delusion, they fall prostrate before him, as in presence of their idols.

This system of caste, then, must be considered a *religious* distinction. It is an artful contrivance of the Brahmins to hold the millions of Hindostan in bondage; and it presents a more formidable resistance to the propagation of Christianity in India than any other impediment. For while, on the one hand, it engenders a pride that spurns, and a tyranny that fears, the doctrines of the Gospel; it begets, on the other, a servility which causes the mind to collapse, shutting it against inquiry into

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(<sup>2</sup>) It need, perhaps, scarcely be remarked, that British Judges in India pay no regard to this law. A Brahmin guilty of a capital offence is as surely executed as men of the lowest caste.