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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php

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ARTICLE I.

INDIA AS A FIELD FOR INQUIRY AND EVANGELICAL LABOR.¹

By Rev. H. R. Hoisington, Missionary of the American Board.

In addressing the Society of Inquiry in a Seminary whose sons, at the bidding of their Divine Master, have encircled the world, I need make no apology for calling your attention to *India as a field for inquiry and evangelical labor*.

The Hindús, in some of their more important features, are yet to be known. The labors of missionaries and the researches of oriental scholars have, indeed, brought out a valuable collection of facts respecting that peculiar people. Still, those facts are but a *part* of the whole — in many cases, disjointed particulars, and mixed with many errors.

The *system* of Hindúism, like many of the temples of India, is of vast extent, and, in its exterior, highly imposing. It is often grotesque in its forms, and grossly absurd, or strangely enigmatical, in its developments. Its interpretation is to be sought *within*.

If we would *know* Hindúism, we must trace its historic lines, and study into its mystic science. We must apply to those works which are claimed to belong only to the initiated, to those who have been led into the light of their own *divine wisdom*. But those more scientific works are not yet available to the mere English student. Though somewhat familiar with the results of oriental researches,

¹ An Address before the Society of Inquiry of Andover Theological Seminary, Sept. 1, 1851.

I could never get a satisfactory view of Hindûism until I was enabled to trace it in Hindû authors, and in their own language. Most of the reputed standard works on the Hindûs, in the English language, oftener lead to error, than to any just view of that people. Even the *Purânas*, in the best view that can be taken of them, present only the exterior of the system, its more modern and popular form. They leave us uninformed on those fundamental principles which are the life and strength of the whole.

All that I can attempt on the present occasion, will be to cast a hasty glance along the outlines of this interesting field of inquiry.

The origin of the Hindûs lies far within the misty regions of uncertainty. Yet we can catch some glimpses of it. The Hindûs were not the first inhabitants of India. Remnants of the aborigines of the country, are still to be traced in various tribes inhabiting the fastnesses of the hills and forests. They are known under different names. Their several dialects, in most cases allied to each other, have no affinity to the Sanskrit. Never incorporated with their victors, they have maintained their simplicity of manners, and a rude religious creed which bears no resemblance to Hindûism. As successive conquerors poured into the country, these aborigines betook themselves to the protection of the less accessible regions where they still exist.

Though the Hindûs were evidently not the first inhabitants of India, yet they are to be sought among the earliest conquerors. In process of time they embodied successive hordes of emigrants, among whom the *Brâhmans*, as a tribe, are to be included. According to the uniform testimony of Hindû records and tradition, all came in from lands west of the Indus.

There are some reasons to believe, that the aboriginal inhabitants of India, were of the family of *Shem*; and that they came into India by two routes; one, at the north-west, across the Indus; the other, by sea, into south-western India. But the successive tribes of conquerors were more probably of the family of Cush, and mostly entered India by the north-west passage. They first inhabited the Panjaub; and they were long confined to the countries between the Himâlaya and Vindya ranges of mountains.

The Brâhmans, in alliance with other tribes, fought their way into power and eminence. They were early identified, in many respects, with the *Solar line* of kings. The *Lunar line* was a branch from the *Solar*. In it arose the great civil war which forms the subject of one of the Hindû Epics, the *Mahâbhârata*. This division among the

earlier Hindûs existed, and the Lunar line had even become powerful, before the Brāhmins had obtained any extensive footing in India. The *Buddhists* rallied under the banners of the Lunar line. Between these two rival powers there were frequent wars, recurring through a long period of years. The Brāhmins were at length triumphant. The Buddhist power was completely broken. The priests, and other determined adherents of the Buddhist faith, being expelled from the country, took refuge in Ceylon and in countries farther east.

Buddhism was undoubtedly a prominent branch, or school of primitive Hindûism; at least it grew out of such a school. The leaders in this school obstinately resisted the encroachments of the Brāhmins, rejecting their claims to preëminence and their proposed additions to the simpler and purer faith held by them. Hence, the long and bloody contests referred to above, which resulted in the ultimate expulsion of the Buddhist branch of the early Hindû family.

The Brāhmins, aided by their royal allies of the Solar line, having thus either subdued or expelled all the opposing tribes of northern India, naturally turned their attention to religious matters. They now set themselves to carry out their peculiar notions into a *system* of their own. Here commences what I call *Brāhmanism*, or *Brāhmanical Hindûism*.

Whether the Brāhmins were originally a section of the Hindû family, has been doubted. But it is certain, that, at this stage they professed the Hindû faith as they explained it. But they evidently did not hold it in its pristine simplicity. They gradually engrafted upon the existing doctrines, the marvellous system of Hindû idolatry which has shaped and controlled the mind of millions for many ages. To their system belong almost the whole genealogy of incarnate deities, both male and female, with their thousands of temples and multiplied rites and ceremonies; and also, the distinction of caste, which makes the Brāhmins the head, and gives to others, respectively, a relative preëminence over the more docile and dependent classes.

The origin of Hindû castes can't be satisfactorily explained by a reference to the history of India in these earlier times, and, I believe, in no other way.

One ruling purpose, or aim, on the part of the Brāhmins, is everywhere prominent in their doings, viz. To *establish themselves as the hierarchy*, supreme in church and state. For this they planned, for this they fought. And when their victories were complete, they disposed of their acquisitions in accordance with their ruling passion.

The existence of but *one caste* in the age of purity, the *Krêta Yuga*,

or Golden Age, is abundantly admitted in the *Purānas*. The meaning of this is, that in the first age of Hindūism, the distinctions of caste were not known. This, of course, is incompatible with the legend which represents the four castes as springing from parts of Brahmā's body. But this legend belongs to the age of caste, and has its explanation in the extravagant and baseless pretensions of the Brāhmins, which underlie all their marvels. Besides, in the same Brāhmanical authorities, which present the inconsistency above mentioned, we also find the separation of men into castes to be ascribed to different individuals, at different periods, and for various reasons. All this goes plainly to show, that the distinction was at first of a social or political character.

Let us, then, glance at some of the facts which bear on the origin of caste as a Brāhmanical institution.

Prominent among the tribes, with whom the Brāhmins contended for supreme domination, were the Kshatriyas. They seem to have been of Scythian origin, and to have obtained strong footing in north-western India. The struggle for supremacy between them and the Brāhmins, continued for a long series of years. They were eventually subdued by *Parasurāma*, the most distinguished defender of the Brāhmanical pretensions in that eventful period. In the *Mahābhārata*, one of the two Great Epics above mentioned, it is stated of this Rāma, that "thrice seven times did he clear the earth of the *Kshatriya* race." Again, the Earth is represented as saying: "The fathers and grandfathers of these *Kshatriyas* (i. e. successive generations) have been killed by the remorseless *Rāma* in warfare on my account."

The Kshatriyas being thus humbled, many of them became Brāhmins. But in the final adjustment of affairs between the contending parties, as the condition of peaceful alliance, the mass of Kshatriyas seem to have been constituted a privileged class, or *caste*, bearing the name of their tribe, being made second only to their victors, the sacerdotal or Brāhmanical caste.

This view of the Kshatriyas or military caste, harmonizes with what is said of them in the Brāhmanical writings, with the exception, of course, of the mythological legend, which, in accordance with the whole tenor of Brāhmanism, gives to all parts of the system a divine origin.

The *Vāisyas* constitute the caste next below the Kshatriyas. This term is also found in the *Purānas*, as designating a tribe or nation, who inhabited the south-eastern part of the Panjaub. They seem to

have been one of, the *Sacas*, or Scythian tribes. They were allied to the Lunar line, and, consequently, opposed to the Solar interests.

This people, after a long and severe struggle, were, at length, subdued by *Sagara*, the sea king of India. Of them it is stated in one of the *Purānas*, that they were "separated from affinity to the regenerate tribes [i. e. the two higher castes], and from the duties of their castes."

Here is sufficiently clear indication of the way in which the castes were originally formed. They were evidently the result of conspiring circumstances, which singularly favored the ambitious designs of those aspiring warrior-priests, the *Brāhmans*. But it was a result gradually attained, as one point after another was gained by the *Brāhmans*, and their schemes became matured into a complete system. It is certainly a device well adapted to consolidate and establish in one expansive system, the various and hitherto conflicting tribes of northern India.

The origin of the *Sūdras*, the fourth and lowest caste, can be traced with an equal degree of certainty. Hindū authors speak of a tribe, or nation, by the appellation of *Sūdras*, as inhabiting the western extremity of northern India, near the Indus. They have been supposed, with great probability, to be the *Orydrūcæ* who formed the limit of Alexander's eastern conquest. The same people are called by Strabo, *Sūdrākai*, which is almost exactly the Sanskrit term. One of the *Purānas* states, that "*Sūdras* (or *Sūdrākus*), outcasts and barbarians, will be masters of the Indus," etc., which, at once, indicates the *existence* and *position* of the tribe; and, also, their more servile character, classing them with "*outcasts and barbarians*." Here, then, we have at once the *name* and the *nucleus* of the *Sūdra*, or servant caste.

It is not to be supposed, that the tribes which bore these three distinctive appellations, were the only persons arranged in their respective castes; but that, from their prominence, in one respect or another, they furnished the *occasion* for those particular designations.

The *Kshatriyas* were a powerful race, or, more probably, a combination of the earlier warlike tribes, allied in their leading interests, and in opposition to *Brāhmanical* rule. Being a more civilized and a superior class of men, compared with other tribes, they would naturally have, next to their victors, the superior position in the new system. The idea of bringing other tribes into subordination and servitude, was not new to them; and they were, probably, not second to the *Brāhmans* in the original arrangements which ultimately re-

sulted in the institution of caste. Yet we must ascribe to the Brâhman the *religious moulding* of that system.

The *Vâisyas* were less aspiring, and more mild and docile; and yet they were a very respectable tribe. There are indications that they belonged to the purer classes of the earlier Hindû religionists, and were chiefly devoted to agriculture. They are represented as "diligent in their occupations, and *submissive*." All, therefore, of similar occupation and like condition, of whatever tribe, might, in the ultimate adjustment of the system, well be arranged in the very respectable *caste* of *Vâisyas*.

With the *Sûdras*, who were originally a ruder race of men, and who are represented as having been more completely subdued and humbled — with *these*, all the less pretending in the several tribes, the more humble classes of laborers, etc., would naturally be associated, forming the *Sûdra*, or servile caste.

The combination of such heterogeneous and hostile tribes into one politico-religious organization, might well be expected to be attended with mutual interference and contentions. That such was the case is but too manifest from the Brâhmanical writings. In the *Vâyu Purâna*, *Brahmâ* is represented as assigning to "these castes *their several occupations*, to prevent their *interference* with one another, which HAD OCCURRED *as long as they recognized NO DUTIES PECULIAR TO CASTES.*"

This implies, what is elsewhere clearly taught in the Purânas, that the distinctions of caste, or rather, the division into four great classes, existed before any distinctive duties and privileges for the several castes had been laid down. The *Vishnu Purâna*, in full accordance with other authorities, states, that "The beings who were created by *Brahmâ*, of these four castes, were at first endowed with righteousness and perfect faith;" that "they abode wherever they pleased, unchecked by any impediment;" that "their hearts were free from guile;" that "they were pure, made free from soil, by observance of sacred institutes. In their sanctified minds *Hari* dwelt; and they were filled with perfect wisdom, by which they contemplated the glory of *Vishnu*." Observe, all this is stated respecting the *four castes*. How different from what they now are, or, are even allowed to be!

Let us look again at the same author: "After a while . . . the innate perfectness of human nature was no more evolved; the eight kinds of perfection . . . were impaired; and these being enfeebled, and sin gaining strength, mortals were afflicted with pain," etc.

Then, in view of this *later condition* of men, it is stated, that Brah-mâ *prescribed laws* suited to their station and faculties, the duties of the several castes and orders," etc. And this was to prevent *conflicts* which had already arisen between the existing castes.

However inconsistent with this *legendary origin* of castes, we find, in the *same authorities*, "the distinctions of caste ascribed variously to voluntary election, to accident, and to the positive institutions of different princes."

From all this, it is plain that caste was at first a mere social and political institution, designed to facilitate intercourse and coöperation among the tribes, in their earlier compacts, both before and after the institution of Brâhmanical rule.

But as Brâhmanical authority advanced, and those far-sighted sacerdotal warriors found themselves in circumstances favorable to the development of their designs, they seem to have devoted themselves more exclusively to their professional duties; to religious matters, to which they made all others subservient. Here began the more distinctive development of Brâhmanism as a system of religious faith and practice. Into this system everything was gradually woven; until, at length, the distinctions of caste formed a part of the very texture of Hindûism. Caste, thenceforth, became strictly a religious institution, enforced by all the sanctions of divine law. It has long been an essential part of Brâhmanism, a singular fact in the history of man.

The *general rules* of caste are given in the Purânas as follows:

1. "The *Brâhman* should make gifts, should worship the gods with sacrifices, should be assiduous in studying the *Vêdas*, should perform ablutions and libations with water, and should preserve the sacred fires. For the sake of subsistence he may offer sacrifices on behalf of others, and may instruct them in the *Sâstras*; and he may accept presents of a liberal description in a becoming manner (i. e. from respectable persons, in a proper way, and at appropriate times). He must ever seek to promote the good of others, and do evil to none; for the best riches of a Brâhman are universal benevolence (!). He should look upon the jewels of another person as if they were pebbles," etc.

2. "The man of the *warrior caste* should cheerfully give presents to Brâhman, perform various sacrifices, and study the Scriptures. His especial sources of maintenance are arms and the protection of the earth. The guardianship of the earth is indeed his especial province; by the discharge of this duty, a king attains his objects, and

realizes a share of the merit of all sacrificial rites. By intimidating the bad, and cherishing the good, the monarch who maintains the discipline of the different castes, secures whatever region he desires," (i. e. in a future birth, or another world).

3. "*Brahmā*, the great parent of creation, gave to the *Vāisya* the occupations of commerce and agriculture, and the feeding of flocks and herds, for his means of livelihood; and sacred study, sacrifice, and donation, are also his duties, as is the observance of fixed and occasional rites."

4. "Attendance upon the three regenerate castes is the province of the *Sūdra*, and by that he is to subsist, or by the profits of trade, or the earnings of mechanical labor. He is also to make gifts; and he may offer sacrifices in which food is presented, as well as obsequial offerings" (i. e. he may perform these ceremonies through the agency of a *Brāhman*).

I need not enter upon the *subdivisions* of the four castes. They are as numerous as all the various trades and occupations of life.

The *evils* of caste are manifold. These distinctions, however, operate variously in different parts of India. Still caste exists in its full force over nearly the whole race of the Hindūs. But in Ceylon its power is greatly broken; and it is fast returning to its original character, that of a *social and civil institution*.

The palmy days of *Brāhmanism* were prior to the Mohammedan invasion of India. They extended thence, backwards, through a period of a thousand years.

Caste is but a part of the whole, an item in a vast and complicated system. *Hindūism* now spreads into every department of society, lays its injunctions on every act of life, appropriates to itself every phenomenon in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and every noticeable peculiarity in the physical universe. It consecrates to its service the mountain tops, the rivers, springs of water, holes in the earth, projecting rocks, and every form which may be distorted into a resemblance to any living being, or which may be made to shadow forth, as an emblem, any of the leading dogmas of its dark philosophy. To know India as the Hindū does, we must be able to read these emblematic inscriptions, and to look through them to their hidden and more sacred meaning.

But before we take a glance *within*, we must look again at some other historical facts of this gigantic structure.

The *original form* of *Hindūism* was probably that of the *Vēdas*. These works are the oldest of the Sanskrit writings; with them the

Sanskrit seems to have been first introduced into India. Whether the *Vēdas* were written in India, or whether they were written in some earlier seat of the Hindūs, west of the Indus, is a problem yet to be solved. I am, however, inclined to think that they had their origin where the Hindus first arose, and where the Sanskrit was a spoken language, as it continued to be for some time after its introduction into India, and that they were brought into India by some of those conquering hordes which constituted the early Hindū race.

The Sanskrit of the *Vēdas* is so unlike the more modern and the more polished language of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, the two great Hindū Epics, that those who can read the more modern, cannot understand the more ancient style of that language which is found in the *Vēdas*. It is the more modern form of the Sanskrit that bears the strongest affinity to the existing languages of northern India, a fact which evinces that the Sanskrit may not have been the earliest language of the country.

Whatever may have been the *origin* of the *Vēdas*, it seems quite certain, that the worship inculcated in them was the earliest form of the Hindū religion in India. It was a worship offered to Fire, Air, the Sun, the Moon, etc. It was a branch of *Sabianism*, if not the earliest complete form of that system of worship; and, at once, connects the Hindū with the patriarchs of the Bible.

Another ritual has taken the place of that more ancient form of worship, a ritual found in those more modern works, the *Purānas*, which has so antiquated that ancient creed, that one who should follow the precepts of the *Vēdas*, would be regarded as an infidel. And yet the Hindū glories in his attachment to the *Vēdas*, the forgotten Oracles of his fathers.

The earliest seat of the Hindūs within the borders of Hindūstān, was the *Panjab*. There the two great Epics were doubtless composed, as also the Institutes of Manu, and probably some of the *Purānas*. The Epics and the Institutes furnish the principal materials for the mythological form of Hindūism in all ages. These works were doubtless composed, in most particulars, of legends of an earlier date, which were imported into India, and now for the first time collected and written. The two Epics were probably written about three centuries B. C. They are the chief sources from which the Brāhmins of later ages have drawn their materials, especially the authors of the *eighteen great Purānas*. Hence, in these comparatively modern works, we find materials which belong to a high antiquity intermixed with modern ingredients. In these works the impos-

ing mind of antiquity is distorted into unison with puerile modern inventions, and in such a way, as evinces a long period of successive innovations upon the ancient system of faith.

In these Brāhmanical writings we find unequivocal evidence of the previous existence of a system of Philosophical Religion. This was different from the religion of the Vēdas, being more metaphysical and argumentative. Yet both seem to have been embraced by all the leading schools of primitive Hindūism.

The early Brāhmins, like others of their time, ostensibly held the Vēdas as their Sacred Scriptures; yet they practically denied them; and, taking their stand on their mystic philosophy, they made it the basis of a marvellous system of incarnations, etc. This was the point of divergence between them and the priests of the Lunar dynasty.

The two Epics and the Institutes mark the period of Brāhmanical domination, and present to us the transition-stage of Hindū learning and religion. This will be manifest from an intelligent view of the Bhāgavat Gēeta, the very singular episode in the Mahābhārata. It is a discussion, on the nature of the Godhead, and on the nature and destiny of man, between the god Krishna and the hero Arjuna, occurring in the midst of a civil war, and on the very field of battle where the opposing hosts are just ready for the onset. The god encourages the hero to fight, which he is reluctant to do, as he perceives that the hosts of the enemy were composed of his kindred, his teachers, and his friends. The argument of the god is based on the doctrine, that mind and matter are entirely distinct; that actions are duties incumbent on every one, but which must be performed without the least regard to their consequences, such as pleasure or pain, profit or loss, etc.; that death and life are but unimportant modifications of the same being, and hence the massacre of the dearest kindred becomes a matter of indifference. Let us listen a moment to the reasoning of the god:

“Thou mourn'st for those thou should'st not mourn, albeit thy works are like the wise.

For those that live or those that die, may never mourn the truly wise.

Ne'er was the time when I was not, nor thou, nor yonder things of earth:

Hereafter ne'er shall be the time, when one of us shall cease to be.

The soul, within its mortal frame, glides on thro' childhood, youth and age;

Then, in another form renewed, renews its stated course again.

All indestructible is He that spread the living universe;

And who is he that shall destroy the work of the Undestructible?

Corruptible these bodies are that wrap the everlasting soul—

The eternal, unimaginable soul. Whence, on to battle, Bhāratha!

For he that thinks to slay the soul, or he that thinks the soul is slain,
 Are fondly both alike deceived : it is not slain — it slayeth not ;
 It is not born — it doth not die ; past, present, future, knows it not ;
 Ancient, eternal, and unchang'd, it dies not with the dying frame.
 Who knows it incorruptible, and everlasting, and unborn,
 What heds he, whether he may slay, or fall himself in battle slain ?
 As their old garments men cast off, anon new raiment to assume,
 So casts the soul its worn-out frame, and takes at once another form,
 Thus deeming, wherefore mourn for it ?" —

On inspection, we find that this philosophical poem, the Bhâgavat Gêeta, presents a somewhat polemical aspect towards the Vêdas — "not rejecting them altogether, but representing them as falling short of the highest end, and devoid of true purity of mind."

The poem, also, is destitute of mythological imagery, and yet it lays a broad foundation for the whole monstrous system of divine incarnations.

Again, it positively discountenances the self-inflicted mortifications of the Yôghees, their excruciating penances, and their absurd and fantastic tortures ; and yet all the fundamental doctrines of Hindû asceticism are here involved ; and the whole poem goes to illustrate their importance.

Now, from such preparations, it was natural and easy to proceed to the full development of the Hindû Pantheon, with all their grotesque mythology, and to the whole round of ascetic observances. The Purânas, in which these matters are drawn out in detail, are all comparatively modern ; the latest has been computed to be not more than 300 years old. The eighteen Great Purânas, with the almost innumerable and still more modern local Purânas, complete, what I regard, the series of Brâhmanical writings.

Brâhman were, indeed, the authors of some of the philosophical treatises which belong to the arcana of Hindûism. But the subjects treated in these works are not distinctively Brâhmanical. They are essential parts of Hindûism in all its ages of existence. The principles in these works, having been appropriated by the Brâhman to their own interests, now, of course, form a part of Brâhmanism, the more modern form of Hindûism.

Hindûism may be divided historically into three periods :

1. *The Patriarchal Period.* This embraces the time when the earlier legends and dogmas of the Hindûs were but partially systematized, and, probably, unwritten. It was the period when the notions of those aspiring men, portions of a dispersed race, held still some resemblance to the doctrines taught by the patriarchal "preacher

of righteousness," doctrines known also to the family of Abraham. This was the period of the *unwritten Vêdas*, or, of that original Vêda, from which, according to the general sentiment of the Hindûs, all the four written Vêdas were formed. The distinctive features of this period are to be sought in the Bible, in the history of the great Iranian Empire, and in the Vêdas.

2. *The Philosophical Period.* This was the period during which the principles and facts of the patriarchal age were still further removed from their primitive purity and simplicity; and when, in connection with other materials, they were moulded into a more recondite and philosophical form, and were, ultimately, wrought into a vast system of *metaphysical religion*. The mystic number "five," the five divine operations, the division of the universe into classes of fives, etc., all which are essential principles in modern Hindûism, were also among the fundamentals of that earlier system. Then, too, was conceived the idea of man as a miniature universe, in whom these mysterious "fives," with all their powers, divisions, relations, operations, etc., are fully developed. The mystic number "three," as in the Triad, etc., seems to have had a later origin, as also the device of the four castes. Both these seem to belong to Brâhmanism, or the next period. The chronological lines of this period cannot be so easily drawn. It must lie *back* of the Epoch B. C. 300, when the next period began to dawn. That there was then existent such a system of philosophical religion, is abundantly manifest from the earlier Brâhmanical works above mentioned. I had often looked into Manu's Institutes, and the Bhâgavat Gêeta, but I never understood them satisfactorily until I had become acquainted with some of the standard metaphysical works of the Hindûs; which are in fact the best commentaries we have on those ancient works, as well as on the whole system of Brâhmanical Hindûism.

3. *The third Period is the Purânic, or Mythological.* This is the period of Brâhmanical domination; when the existing notions were developed in a more imposing and popular form, a form monstrosly hieroglyphical and fabulous. It is here that we find the whole genealogy of Hindû gods and goddesses, with all their mystic dress and accompaniments. To this period belong all the popular forms of temple-worship.

The earlier form of the Purânic system is found in the two Great Epics, and in the Institutes; but its present form is that of the Purânas, works of a much more modern origin, and the products of different ages. The eighteen great Purânas, in most of the materials

of which they are composed, are very similar to one another; and yet they are of a polemical character. Some of them claim supremacy for Brahmâ, some for Vishnu, and some for Siva. Each supports its peculiar claims, by the great mass of mythological legends and mystic dogmas, all being shaped to the distinctive nature of the god it exalts, and to his worship. All these works claim to be supported by the authority of the Vêdas.

This shows that there have ever been different sects, or schools, among the Brâhmanas. These various schools are now all embraced in two great divisions, the *Sâivas* and the *Vâishnavas*. These two bodies recognize each other as right, or orthodox, in most respects; the one necessarily involving the other in all their fundamental doctrines. On certain points they violently contend.

Many popular errors are prevalent respecting some parts of Brâhmanical Hindûism. These the Brâhmanas like to have prevail, as they help to shield them in their penetralia. All such errors would be at once dissipated by a correct knowledge of their more sacred and concealed doctrines of philosophy. In their monstrous mythic system there is "*a unity in the midst of great diversity.*" The Brâhman can quote his Sâstras for authority in all his idolatrous practices, while he claims to be a worshipper of one god, in accordance with the doctrines of the same Sâstras. This is a great fact in modern Hindûism, without a knowledge of which the system is not understood. My limits will allow only a very brief illustration of this particular:

The doctrine of *one God*, in connection with almost innumerable objects of worship, and these of all varieties of character and relations, seems to be an inexplicable paradox. But the Hindû, whose transcendental powers have been developed through their divine Wisdom, finds no difficulty in the matter. How, then, do they explain it? To understand their explanation, we must glance at some of the leading doctrines in their theology. Respecting the Deity, they hold:

1. That there is but *one God*, who is eternal, self-existent, omnipotent, omniscient, all-pervading, formless, and unchangeable, even so as to exclude the exercises of desire, love, hatred, etc. Yet, he is capable of being developed, or manifest through material organism.

2. That this one god exists in a *twofold nature*, that of male and female. In the philosophical poems these natures or *Energies* are often designated by the terms *Purusha* and *Sakti*. In the English translation of the Bhâgavat Gêeta, the female nature or energy of

deity is obscurely brought to view under the term "nature." All the divine operations whatever, are performed through the coöperation of these *two Energies*. In order that they may operate, it is necessary that they be developed, each in its appropriate organism. This doctrine lies at the foundation of Hindú theogony, and leads to the whole genealogy of gods and goddesses. Every operative deity must necessarily be an incarnation, and must have his incarnate Sakti or consort. These two Energies and their *modus operandi* stand out to view in a great variety of symbols. These symbols, like the gods and goddesses themselves, are proper objects of worship. Of these, the most prominent, and the one everywhere to be seen, is, the LINGA. This is usually a compound symbol, designed to shadow forth the two divine Energies in coöperation. It is, accordingly, a higher object of worship than most of the idols of the land.

These views explain the worship of posts in certain cases, of stones of various forms, of univalve shells, holes in rocks, etc. The elephant's proboscis has the same hieroglyphical meaning as the Linga. Hence, that animal is sacred, and of great importance in the services at temples. Herein, also, we have an explanation of the god with an elephant's head, variously named *Ganpat*, *Ganésa*, *Pilliyár*, an idol worshipped more than any other one throughout India. He is the *god of action*, the operator in the reproducing processes in all organic beings.

It is also an established principle, that the two Energies may be developed in any form, at any time, and to any extent, or to any number of times; and that the form assumed is determined by the nature of the service to be performed, as the one must be adapted to the other. Hence the innumerable local deities which fill the land, such as Giants, Monsters, Men, Women, Beasts, Birds, Reptiles, Trees, Mountains, and the like.

The myths respecting these local gods, do not so much explain the character of the deity exhibited, as the occasion of his appearance. The specific characteristics of a local deity are to be sought in the distinctive attributes of the great family to which he belongs, either that of *Siva* or *Vishnu*, and in the nature of his organism, as having the benevolent, or malevolent propensities developed. These things are all explained in their "divine philosophy!"

3. There is another very important principle to be considered in deciphering the complicated system of Hindú idolatry. It is that which is involved in the mystic "*fives*" above mentioned. The specific doctrine here to be considered is, that the production and gov-

ernment of the universe involves *five distinct divine operations*. Each of these operations, in accordance with the preceding statements, requires that the operator have an organism adapted to the nature of his service. Hence the necessity and consequent actual existence of *five superior gods*. Both the *Sáivas* and *Váishnavas* hold this doctrine, and have each their five gods; some of whom bear the same names in both schools, but others are differently denominated by them. The *Sáivas*, so far as my reading extends, are more precise in their designation of these duties, and in their modes of worship and meditation. Yet the existence and relations of the five can be distinctly traced in the earlier, as well as the later, works of the *Váishnava Bráhmans*.

These five operative gods include the common Hindú Triad, as *Brahmá*, *Vishnu* and *Siva*, and two others of a higher order of development. These two are more commonly denominated, the *Obscurer*, and the *Illuminator* or *Grace-giver*. Their prerogatives respect the more spiritual department in the divine government, being confined to intellectual beings, to their conduct, destiny, etc. Hence their organisms are of a more ethereal nature. They are not regarded as belonging to the catalogue of visible deities; they can be seen only by the illuminated eye of the Wiseman.

The other three, with their grosser organisms, are concerned in the management of the physical universe. Yet *Siva* and *Vishnu* are spoken of, each by his adherents, as supreme. But this is not strictly correct, and in the contests between these rival schools it is mutually condemned. In each of these schools the name of their distinctive deity is used in two senses; one, referring to his specific development and office-work; the other, to him as the representative of the whole class of operative gods, and hence as the index of the Eternal one. In this last sense he is, with them, the supreme God. They use these terms variously, somewhat as we use the term *Christ*, sometimes meaning the *Mediator*, and sometimes "God manifest in the flesh."

The order of development and relative standing of the five operative deities is as follows:

The first is the *Illuminator* or *Grace-giver*. His form, or *Rúpan* (a more comprehensive term than form), is a complete development of all the perfections of the five. In him *Gnánam* (divine wisdom) shines perfect over all. He dwells in light ineffable. When he reveals himself to the soul, then its vision is perfect, and all things are seen as they are. The soul has then escaped all the entanglements

of its organism, and will not be born again. Now clothed in light, it is "like his Lord."

The second is the Obscurer. He is born, as the Hindû expresses it, from the preceding. His Rûpam is deficient in the development of the organ of Gnânam, which is the characteristic perfection of the Illuminator; but it possesses the attributes of the other forms. His characteristic propensity, or physiological bump, is that of *Action*. He prompts and guides the soul through all the courses of human action. The object is, that man may be made to eat the fruit of his own doings, and thus "work out" his ultimate deliverance from the bondage of the human organism, which is his salvation. As this *god* keeps men in their native ignorance as to spiritual things in order that they may be led on in their fated courses of action, both good and bad, he is called the *Obscurer*. But as this is necessary for man's ultimate good, even this administration is declared to be gracious.

The third deity is Rudra, or, less properly, Siva. He is born from the Obscurer. His Rûpam is wanting in the development of the characteristics of the first two; but in comparison with the last two, *wisdom* predominates in him. He is, collectively, *the Triad*. The three commonly named as the Triad are but an expansion of Rudra, by successive births, or developments. Rudra's province is, to secure the proper continuance of the physical universe. This of course is done in accordance with laws before mentioned; for everything comes and goes by the coöperation of the two divine Energies. Hence, in his department, there must be the work of generation, continuance or growth, and destruction, with reproduction. These are all illustrated in the case of a plant propagated from the seed. Rudra, or Siva, is commonly called the Destroyer, because the work of destruction is peculiarly his right, and is not performed by the other two below him. But he is more strictly the Regenerator, or Reproducer. He destroys in order to reproduce.

The fourth deity is Vishnu. He is born from Rudra, or Siva. His office-work consists in the agency which is required for the continuance and growth of organic beings, from the moment of generation until perfect maturity. He is hence called the Preserver.

The fifth and lowest of the five is Brahmâ. He springs from Vishnu. He is the Generator, and properly the agent of all the others. Hence he is not generally recognized as a distinct, visible deity. He is rather a metaphysico-physiological abstraction; and is one of the divine objects to be sought and seen by the devotee in his mystic studies and meditations. I once asked a learned Hindû, who, under

the motive power of money, had been imparting to me some of their secret dogmas, "Why do you have no temples to Brahmâ, and seem to pay him so little respect?" His characteristic reply was, "Sir, were I to visit your house, should I pay my respects to your servant, or to yourself?"

Brahmâ is in no proper sense a Creator; nor should he be placed first even in the common Triad. His name is displaced from the catalogue of the visible deities; and his proper office-work or agency, is carried on by developments bearing other and various appellations in the different schools. Among most classes, however, the elephant-headed god, *Pilliyâr*, or *Ganêsa*, is regarded as the acting deity in every production. In reference to the physical world, he is virtually Brahmâ, especially since the original production of things from their eternal entities. This god (*Pilliyâr*) is called the Son of Siva. By means of this development of his own physical organism, Siva effects the work of generation, as a part of his proper business in the management of the physical universe.

Here it seems in place to remark, that the distinctive nature and character of the gods depend entirely on the development of their organisms; just as the structure of the animal determines its kind, marking out one an elephant, one a horse, one a cow, etc.; and just as the physical conformation of a man has been supposed to determine his peculiarities of temper, mind, etc., i. e. to make him such a man as he is, rather than any other.

Hence Siva, being what he is by means of his organic development, must, in carrying forward his appropriate work, be everywhere present in his own proper form, either *visible* or *invisible*; both of which conditions are equally possible, and may be equally apposite.

On the same principle, Siva's son, the generating *Pilliyâr*, may be everywhere developed. Hence the multiplicity of this idol is regarded as quite consistent with the unity of the godhead. The cupidity of the priesthood has not been slow in discovering occasions for extending his visible presence. These considerations, *mutatis mutandis*, explain the multiplicity of other gods, all of whom, with very few exceptions, are but branches or children, from the family of either Siva or Vishnu, the two who head the catalogue of visible deities. As the agency of *Pilliyâr*, the Generator, is necessarily involved in the production of Siva's form, as really so as in any other developed existence, he has been shrewdly denominated, in their own poetic language, "The son that was born before his father."

These *fundamental doctrines*, and other assumed attributes of the

supreme deity, are variously drawn out and combined, so as to form, in fact, the very fabric of popular Hindûism. These radical principles are seen by the eye of the initiated, in the forms, vehicles and dress of idols; in the form, divisions and decorations of temples; in the number, the varied shapes and uses of sacrificial utensils; and in the articles offered in sacrifice; in the institution and performances of dancing women; in the nature, order and circumstances of the great periodical festivals held in temples throughout the land; in the Ganges and other sacred waters and sacred places, resorted to by pilgrims for bathing and other prescribed meritorious rites. My limits will not allow me to trace out these things to any great extent. A few additional particulars must suffice:

The Hindûs have several Triads, which are more or less distinctly to be seen in their popular forms of worship, as well as in various symbols. The commonly known Triad, Siva, Vishnu and Brahmâ, constitute, as above mentioned, the embodiments of the three natural or physical powers of the godhead. The prerogatives of these deities properly extend to no other departments of the divine administration, than what appertains to the physical universe. The government of man, as distinct from mere animal or inanimate existences, lies beyond their province. This is not the highest of the Hindû Triads. It does not enter so much into the spiritual relations and interests of the soul as others yet to be named.

Another Triad is composed of the first three of the five operative deities. In this case, Rudra, or Siva, is considered as embracing the two lower developments, which both his organism and office-work imply. The doctrine of this Triad is not published to the masses; but belongs to the mysteries which are to be known only by the regularly initiated. It is shadowed forth in many of the mystic hieroglyphics which adorn the temples, and in the forms of worship.

Still another Triad is seen in the three deities which are usually drawn on the cars, or carried in sedans, on "the *great day* of the feast" or festival, which occurs at stated times, in the several temples. The three idols presented on such occasions may sometimes be regarded as the representation of one or the other of the Triads above mentioned. But they more strictly and properly represent the SUPREME, or *Superior* DEITY, whose form or Rûpam embraces the two divine Energies, and the TWO ENERGIES separately developed and embodied. In all such cases, of which Jagganaut is a fair specimen, the *Superior* deity is A MALE, while the *two inferior* are A MALE and A FEMALE. These, to the experienced eye, at once

present to view the *unity of the Godhead*, and the *modus operandi* in all departments of divine administration.

This view of the subject shows the meaning and appropriateness of the name Jagganaut, or *Universal Lord*, as applied to the principal deity in that celebrated temple in Orissa; and also the propriety of all classes, all castes, mingling indiscriminately in his worship. He belongs equally to all, being the Lord of the universe.

So in multitudes of other temples we find substantially the same thing — Jagganaut under other appellations, and different schools mingling in the same worship. This is strikingly the case at Râmêsuram, a celebrated temple and bathing place, commonly called Adam's Bridge, between the continent and Ceylon. It is a place of great resort, at stated times, of all classes, and from all parts of India.

Hence, also, in smaller temples Sâiva priests not unfrequently conduct festivals in honor of Vâishnava deities, and vice versa. This is consistent when the service is viewed as offered to the Universal Lord, and to his two instrumentalities, or agents, ever employed in the divine operations.

These examples will be sufficient to show, how the whole system of Hindû theogony, and their mytho-symbolic worship may be deciphered and explained by the aid of their higher doctrines. They will also illustrate the declaration made, that, in that monstrous system of Brâhmanical religion, "there is a *unity in the midst of great diversity*."

I must now beg indulgence in a few remarks suggested by my subject.

In Hindûism we have the singular fact of a *living antiquity*, and that, too, of the highest order. The intellectual life and vigor, which have given such perpetuity and expansion to the principles that formed the ancient mind, are still manifest in the Hindû character. The principles which have thus operated to uphold such a vast and cumbersome system, have been equally efficient in sustaining the physical and intellectual powers of the people, in despite of the lowering and noxious influences of error and all the abominations of idolatry. The Hindûs, unlike the red men of our forests, or the inhabitants of the Pacific isles, are not dying out, but are a living people, as thriving as any other, where the chances of life are allowed to them in any reasonable degree.

We find in the character of the Hindû, and in his modes of life, an expression of what has been for many ages. As their fathers were, so are they in many things. The account given of the people in

Alexander's time, twenty-one centuries ago, is, with a very few exceptions, equally correct now. The earliest allusions, found in Brâhmanical writings, to the domestic and other customs of the people, have a perfect illustration in what now exists. Have we not here, then, an important and deeply interesting field of inquiry for the classical scholar, for the ethnologist, and for the Biblical antiquarian and interpreter?

The *Sanskrit* is now justly receiving much attention from European scholars, not only as a rich and finished language, but as holding a prominent place in comparative philology. The *Tamil*, which is the radical language of Southern India, is, in my opinion, equally deserving of attention. It is, perhaps, in its primitive character, farther removed from the Sanskrit than is the German. It is equally as rich, polished and pliant, as its northern neighbor. In it is found all the learning of the ancient Brâhmanical tongue. In its two dialects, the High and the Low Tamil, it possesses a peculiarity of great interest to the philologist. The High is the *poetical dialect*, and embraces nearly all the learning of the people. Everything is written in poetry, even their Arithmetic, their Dictionary, their *Materia Medica*, their Astronomy. The poetical dialect, in its words and structure, is so unlike the common Tamil, that one acquainted with the latter merely, cannot understand a line of the former. Hence, *interpreters*, men whose business it is to sing off and translate the Purânas and other works into the language of the people, are everywhere in demand. The native Grammar of the High Tamil is complete and well-formed.

Not only do these languages, these revealers of man as he has been and is, deserve attention; but the system also, which they embody, embracing, as it does, not only the religion of the people, but their whole encyclopædia of science and literature, is worthy of much more consideration than it has yet received from American scholars. The Hindû philosophical works, rightly understood, would, as I fully believe, form the best commentary on the ancient philosophy of the West, that we can have.

During the age of Grecian philosophy, more was drawn from that fountain of Hindû thought and scheme, than has been generally supposed. In the Philosophical period of Hindûism, the eye of the western philosopher was attracted to the East, to the Hindû hierophant, with whom he found not only new ideas in philosophy, criticism, and ethics, but a system already formed, and far surpassing anything previously known in Egypt or Greece. We have good

evidence that some of the earliest of the Greek philosophers visited India, and carried thence many oriental ideas. But Plato, perhaps, did more than any before him, in working up the products of the oriental mind, and giving them an occidental cast. Of him it has been well said: "At length the *balance soul* was born, who made the *East* his *BASE*, and *Europe* his *SUPERSTRUCTURE*."

Hindûism also hinges on Bible facts and Bible truths at many points. Its earlier periods stretch through Old Testament times, back to within a few ages of Nimrod's reign, while the forming period of Brâhmanism embraces the times of Christ and his apostles, and the first publishment of the Gospel among the nations. It is abundantly manifest, that the principles and movements of the people of God, during those eventful periods, had an important influence in India. In existing Hindû works the characters of Noah, Abraham, Moses, and other Bible worthies, are clearly discernible, appropriated, of course, to the interests of Hindûism, and metamorphosed into oriental myths. Many of the great truths of revelation undoubtedly lie in the foundations of that master-system of error; truths respecting God, the human soul, and the great work of Redemption. Some of these coincidences, or transcripts, belong to philosophical Hindûism, forming radiating lines, which lead us back to that central region whence sprung the post-diluvian race, and where cluster the great facts of the Old Testament Scriptures. Others belong to the Purânîc age. These give pretty clear indications of the existence in India of apostolic or other missionary labors of the early Christian church. There is much in the character of *Krishna*, a god who is often figured as crushing with his foot the head of a serpent, which is biting his heel, that bears strong resemblance to the New Testament view of *HIM* who came "to bruise the serpent's head." But in the religious rites and ceremonies of the Hindûs, and in their domestic customs, the Bible student will find much to interest him, much that will remind him of the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish temple, much that will closely correspond with the character and habits of the Jew, and things that will furnish ready illustrations of many passages in our more ancient Scriptures.

I would not, however, point to India as a field interesting to the scholar merely. More especially would I invite the attention of this Society to it as a *field for Christian enterprise*. Here is at least one fourth of the unevangelized portion of the human race, and in circumstances of great interest to the Christian philanthropist. I know of no class of unevangelized men, whose conversion to God would

seem to promise more for the interests of the church, than that of the Hindûs. Besides, they are enthralled in such a system of religious faith and practice, as leaves no hope of their deliverance, except help come to them from without, from the Gospel. That marvellous combination of truth and error, of influences, which has held these millions in bondage through so long a succession of generations, will hold them still if left unresisted.

And now, my brethren, shall this state of things continue? The only remedy, we know, is that presented in the Bible. The application of this remedy must be made by means of Christian missions. But where are the missionaries? India, all open to the Gospel, and already moving and heaving as if in its transition stage — yes, *India* has long been stretching out her hands to our “schools of the prophets,” saying, “*Come YE, and help us.*” And never was this call more urgent than now, never enforced by more encouraging considerations; and yet how few respond to it! *WHY is this so?* Has this Society, in a Seminary so honored in the records of Christian missions, duly entertained this question? Has it either *in fact*, or in the *plans* and *purposes* of its members, its full and fair representation in that wide and whitened field — men who shall speak for you among those teeming millions, and tell to those ready to perish, your love to Christ, and your sympathy for dying souls? Does not the command of Christ require this of you? Do not the best interests of this Seminary, do not the best interests of our country which we so much love, the best interests of our American Zion, yea, of all that is valuable in life, and precious in the kingdom of Christ; do not all these interests, so far as they depend on you, my brethren, demand that you *do your duty*, that you spread yourselves, in due proportions, through *the whole field*? I leave with you the question. I have time only to put it. Let each see to it, that *he does his duty*; let him so plan and labor, that he may make the *most of life*, in this eventful period of the world's history.