

THE
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

APRIL 1838.

No. II.

ART. I.—*A Compendium of Christian Antiquities: being a brief view of the Orders, Rites, Laws, and Customs of the Ancient Church in the Early Ages.* By the Rev. C. S. Henry, A. M. Philadelphia, Joseph Whetham. pp. 332. Svo. 1837.

A PETTY ambition to be recognised as authors is, we fear, a growing vice among Americans. One of the lowest forms in which the passion shows itself, is that of abridgment. Not that abridgment, in itself, is evil; but because the abridger, in the cases now referred to, cannot deny himself the happiness of being thought a *bona fide* author, by that class of readers who confine themselves to title-pages. On the elegant title of the volume now before us there is no intimation that the book is not the offspring of the Rev. C. S. Henry. A very little turning of the leaves, however, suffices to show that it is all from Bingham, and on looking at the preface, we are gravely told, that "it makes no pretension to originality of investigation." This is not strictly true; for the *pretensions* of a book are to be looked for in the title-page; and besides, there is some pretension in the affected statement that "the work of Bingham has been relied upon, as to facts and authorities—as well as followed

beginners. There are also two tables printed separately on large sheets, containing a synopsis of the verbs and nouns in their inflections. These are among the chief attractions of the work and, in respect to paper, type, and typographical arrangement, are among the finest specimens of this fine art. As to the price, about five dollars for the whole, whatever it may be compared with that of other grammars, it is low in proportion to the style of execution, and the labour spent upon it as a mere work of art, not to speak of its intrinsic value as a work of science. In this latter point of view we must, before we close, pass a general judgment on the work, according to our promise. Having stated so minutely the specific grounds on which we rest our judgment, we have now no hesitation in affirming that, for simplicity, completeness, conciseness, perspicuity, good order, true philosophy, sound learning, and successful adaptation to the wants both of beginners and proficients; this is certainly superior to any other Hebrew grammar known to us in any language; while in point of style and execution, it is at least equal to the very best. We congratulate ourselves and others on the acquisition of an original English Hebrew grammar, which can be referred to as a standard work. That an American publisher could be induced to bring out such a work, in such a style, is an encouraging symptom of improvement in the general taste for Hebrew study, especially when taken in connexion with the fact, that about the same time we either have, or are expecting, a translation of Gesenius's small grammar by Professor Conant, a second edition of Professor Bush's, and a sixth edition of Professor Stuart's.

ART. IV.—*A Picture of India, Geographical, Historical, and Descriptive.* By Robert Mudie. Second Edition. London: 1832. 2 vols. 12mo.

THE style of this writer is strong and free; his views are characterized by great clearness; and he has collected and well arranged a great amount and variety of information. He is perhaps too philosophical sometimes for his subject, as in his theory of idolatry, where a closer adherence to the sacred scriptures would have been more satisfactory than the most ingenious speculations. We do not subscribe, in

every case, to the views which he gives of particular subjects, yet we cannot but admire his bold and ordinarily common-sense statement of his opinions. But for information, which chiefly gives value to a work of this kind; and for a clear and just discrimination in regard to the peculiarities of the country, the people, and the subjects treated of, making that information the more valuable, we fully accord great credit to the *Picture of India*. It is a work which deserves republication in this country much better than nine-tenths of the European books which issue from our press; indeed, we should be greatly pleased to see this *Picture* in an American frame. We should wish to make one stipulation, however, previous to its being republished, that it should be got up in good style, on solid, white paper, and clear type, with the map and engravings all in regular place and beauty.

We now proceed to look at the country of which these volumes treat, making use of their information when we find it adapted to our object, which is to present an outline "*Picture of India*," for the consideration of Christian readers.

Considerable difference is found among writers in the application of the term *India*. Some extend it to all the countries of Southern Asia with which Europeans have intercourse, and which are properly designated as the *East Indies*. Its true application is much less extensive, as it is the name of that part only of the continent of Asia, which is bounded on the south-east and south-west by the sea, on the north-east by the Himalaya mountains, and on the north-west by the river Indus. "*India within the Ganges*" is one of the names given to the country thus defined, but erroneously, since it extends far to the eastward of that great river. It has also been called *Hindustan*, or, more correctly, *Hindustan* (with the accent on the last syllable), but that name belongs strictly to the vast plains of North India; a Hindu in Bengal will say that "he is going into *Hindustan*," meaning the upper or northern part of the country. Continental India is the name of that part of the country which is north of the river Nerbudda, or the parallel of 22° north latitude; and Peninsular India of the part which lies south of the Nerbudda.

The extreme points of this country are in 8° and 35° north latitude, and in 67° and 92° east longitude, embracing a country of about 1,280,000 square miles, a much larger territory than that which is covered by all our United States.

On the north-western side of this vast region, the country is extremely sandy and sterile, large tracts being deserts as

dreary as those of Arabia. In the regions of Central India, the surface is less sandy, diversified by hills, and in many places quite fertile. From the north-west to the Bay of Bengal, bounded on the north-east by the Himalaya mountains, it is stated in the work before us, that "400,000 square miles of territory may be regarded as the valley of the Ganges and its tributaries, which is unrivalled in fertility and population by any other part of the globe." A hilly or mountainous district, between the snowy mountains and the plains, stretches from the valley of Cashmere to the Brahmaputra river, having an average breadth of perhaps fifty miles, whose innumerable valleys, and terraced mountain sides below the level of 5000 feet, are highly productive. In the peninsular part of India the surface and soil are quite unequal; a level tract of country commonly extends from the coasts into the interior, varying greatly in breadth; in the interior itself, the country is comparatively an elevated table land, and is hilly; the soil varies from sandy districts to those which are very fertile.

The connection or communication of India with other countries, is worthy of remark. Our author says: "The extremity of the Persian Gulf is at no great distance from the Mediterranean, and that of the Red Sea is still nearer; so that by both of these routes, the whole south of Europe is open to it with a very small extent of land carriage. The passage round the Cape of Good Hope forms a safe communication with the west of Africa and with Europe and the whole of the east of America. The passage round the Malay peninsula forms, in like manner, a communication with the Oriental Islands, with the whole east of Asia, including the important countries of China and Japan, with the scattered islands in the Pacific, and with the whole western coast of the American continent. Both sides of the peninsular portion of India have easy, and almost equal access to the eastern shore of Africa, to Arabia, and to the extensive continent of Australia. Nor are the communications towards the interior of Asia unworthy of notice. Thus, when we look at the situation of India, in a commercial point of view, we find that it is central among the nations, and might obviously be made to combine the north, the south, the east, and the west." Vol. I. pp. 41, 42.

In further illustration of this remark, we might refer to the strange grouping, in the bazaars and on the wharves of Calcutta, of people from almost every principal eastern na-

tion; Arabians, Persians, Afghans, Africans, Burmese, Malays, Chinese; besides representatives from England, France, Germany, the United States, &c. Calcutta may be considered the great centre of the eastern world, in regard to commerce, science, knowledge, political and Christian influence.

The productions of India vary according to the elevation of particular districts, and the quality of their soil. "Besides rice, millet, and the grains of Europe, with varieties that are not known in European culture, the number of podded plants, which might be called beans, peas, and vetches, which the Indians cultivate for food, are very numerous; and the whole find sustenance for the immense population, at a much cheaper rate than the people are fed by the produce of artificial culture in any other country." It is well for the great body of the Hindus that their provisions can be procured at a low rate, as the wages of labourers seldom amount to more than two dollars per month, and more commonly they receive but one dollar and a half; out of this pittance they must find themselves both food and clothing; they have no days of rest like the sabbaths which are so invaluable to the Christian labouring man. Cotton is very extensively grown; a coarser muslin than our common cottons, always white, forms the only clothing of the great body of the people; the richer classes wear a much finer article, and also silks, and the fine Cashmere shawl fabrics. Flax and hemp are grown, but chiefly for the sake of the oil from both, and of an intoxicating liquor from the hemp. Oil is one of the necessities of Hindu life; it is always used for light, as their prejudices prevent their using tallow, and it is employed also to annoint the body every day after bathing. On the Malabar or south-west coast, the seeds of the sweet *pound* tree (*callophyllum inophyllum*), which is often one hundred feet high, and three feet in diameter, yield a fine oil. The common castor oil is more common, though not so highly valued as the cocoanut oil; in North India, oil from mustard seed is chiefly used. India is generally destitute of forest trees or natural woods, except in the hilly regions or the marshy districts at the mouths of rivers. Houses are commonly built of mud or sun-dried bricks, fences are never used, cow-dung mixed with earth is the common fuel, and when wood is wanted for that purpose it is commonly bought by the pound; in the valley of the Ganges, at least, wood is high priced and scarce; few trees of any kind are to be seen excepting the peepul (*ficus religiosa*), and the trees which

are cultivated for their fruit. Of these the mango (*mangifera Indica*) is most esteemed, furnishing to the poorer classes a large part of their subsistence during two months of the year. It is a fine round-topped tree, not unlike the apple tree; its fruit is as large as an orange, but oval in shape, and pulpy. The banana or plantain is also a fruit very commonly used and highly prized. The cocoanut tree is found near the coasts, and serves a great variety of purposes. In the forests the teak (*tectona grandis*) is a noble tree; it is found in two or three localities, and is very valuable for all purposes that require strength, and especially for ship building. The bamboo (*bambusa arundicinea*) is used for a greater variety of purposes than any other wood, often for building houses, for roofs, for articles of furniture and domestic use, &c. It grows with great rapidity, "shooting up," our author says, "to a height of sixty feet in a single year, with a diameter of more than six inches, and is tough, strong and firm." There is a wonderful luxuriance of vegetation in the forests; many of the trees are large and stately, and as they are often completely covered with creeping plants, hanging in graceful festoons, and dressed with the gayest flowers, their appearance is extremely beautiful; while underneath, plants and grasses and shrubs spring up with a rapidity and richness peculiar to tropical regions. Among the articles exported from India, through foreign merchants, every reader will recognize indigo, salt-petre, and opium. The government derives its revenue chiefly from the monopoly of opium and of salt. The authorities will not permit any other purchaser of the former from the natives, nor any other seller of the latter (which they manufacture), than themselves in the first instance, and in this simple manner a large revenue is obtained without the aid of direct taxation.

The climate of India is decidedly good. We are aware that many of our readers will be surprised at this remark, as it is not uncommon to hear that country spoken of as the grave of foreigners. It must be admitted that in former years, the habits of indulgence and free living, together with the neglect of all the rules of prudence, brought many a strong man to an untimely end; and this is still too true of many common English soldiers. Yet among the natives there are few diseases, though, sometimes, multitudes perish from famine, and occasionally from epidemic complaints: they do not commonly live to a very advanced age, on account, perhaps, of their slender and scanty fare. Among

foreigners no kind of disease is prevalent, excepting that of the liver. Local fevers occur, and debility is induced by the heat, which is oppressive from March to the middle of October, though tempered from the middle of June by incessant rains; but the cold season, extending from October to March is delightful weather, clear, cool in the mornings and evenings, and quite invigorating to the health and spirits. The great excellence of that climate is its uniformity. Sudden changes are almost unknown; and consequently disease of the lungs, colds, and catarrhal fevers are seldom met with. Among the 40,000 Europeans in India will be found as large a proportion of strong, healthy looking men, as among the same number in any other country. A worthy English missionary, a man of respectable talents and good habits as a student—who has acquired three of the languages of India so perfectly that he has published excellent grammars of two of them, and has made the best translation of the sacred scriptures into the third, while he continues to preach to a congregation of his countrymen three times each week, and performs other arduous duties as secretary of an important public institution—has been labouring in one of the cities least favourable to foreigners, without interruption, for twenty-six years. Though of a feeble constitution, yet his prospect of life is still as good as at any former period. Long may he be spared in his useful course! His example and other similar instances show how unfounded the opinion is, that a foreigner cannot expect to live long in that country, or, if he should, that the climate must necessarily exert an influence unfavourable to intellectual pursuits. It cannot be denied that the heat of that climate is enervating to the health of a person who has been brought up in a colder country, and on that account is unfriendly to severe mental application; yet this evil may be in a great measure counteracted by careful attention to prudential rules, and by forming good habits of study. To persons predisposed to complaints of the liver, the long continued heat of the climate will ever prove injurious; but other persons may hope, like Schwartz, Carey, Corrie, and others among the dead and the living, to serve God and their generation in that country as in other countries, during the full measure of their appointed days.

In most eastern countries, owing to the imperfect state of society, it is difficult to form an accurate estimate of the number of the inhabitants. The population of India has been stated as high as 180,000,000: from 130,000,000 to 140,000,000

is nearer the mark. The British authority in that country (under the East India Company, which is controlled by the British Parliament) is administered under three political divisions, called Presidencies—of which the Presidency of Bengal includes about 58,000,000; of Madras, 16,000,000; of Bombay, 11,000,000; the subsidiary and dependent states contain about 40,000,000—total under British control, 125,000,000. The population of the independent states, which, however, are awed by the British arms, may be stated at 10,000,000. The number of Europeans, of all classes, does not exceed 40,000. These statistics we take from the *Picture of India*, and we presume they are sufficiently accurate.

We cannot now discuss the interesting questions which might be raised concerning the government of such a numerous people by the few foreigners amongst them, nor can we enter into details as to the *modus operandi* of that government; but must content ourselves with remarking that the British power in India, now conducted with great liberality and good faith towards the natives, will continue unshaken, in all probability, until the entire character of the Hindus shall have become radically changed. If that change should be effected under *Christian* influences, making a sincerely Christian people out of a nation of debased idolaters, the present relationship might continue, perhaps, to the end of time, unless it should be terminated for mutual benefit by the friendly arrangement of the two nations.

The Hindus are a distinct family of the human race. They are generally of a slight figure, except in the north-western provinces (and it may be in other districts), where there are many persons of a robust and powerful frame. Their complexion varies from the very dark—almost black—of the poorest people to the light olive of the higher classes; but this dark colour is not connected with the hair or other peculiarities of the negro family. There is commonly an expression of mildness and vivacity blended in a Hindu's face, not unmixed, however, with that of distrust and cunning; and every real or assumed excellence is made to appear still further attractive by the studied gracefulness and courtesy of his deportment. The lower classes are so much depressed by poverty that there is little encouragement, one would suppose, for the study of politeness; many of them are miserable looking objects, yet they are seldom rude, and are often quite pleasing in their manners; among the higher families there is much to impress and to please in their dignified yet

graceful address. Their deportment, however, depends greatly on the rank of the persons with whom they are for the time associating; towards their superiors there is the meanness of sycophancy, and towards those who are below them, there is the pride and hauteur of ignorance and littleness of mind.

The great mass of the Indians are engaged in cultivating the soil. Many of the mechanical arts, however, are followed; blacksmiths, carpenters, shoemakers, &c., such as they are, are found in every village; and multitudes are engaged in petty merchandise. These employments are hereditary, the son always following the occupation of his father; and they are so incorporated with their religion, by the division of the people into *castes*, or religious ranks, which have each their separate line of life and employment, that they have a character at once definite and permanent. The name of a man's employment is usually the name of his caste also, and as soon would he change his religion as his occupation. Hence, as general competition is excluded, and as the influence of ancestral usage is all powerful, no improvement is made in any Hindu art. Caste and usage sternly resist every effort which the Hindus would otherwise make to change their condition. Like the giant mountains, the regions of perpetual snow, which form one of the boundaries of their country, these customs frown on every attempt to pass beyond their limits. Not merely is this true of important matters; the power of caste and usage extends to the little concerns of the poorest people. A common day-labourer, whose day's earnings amount to but four cents, more than half of which must be given for his single meal, must yet send for a barber to shave him; and the poorest family must employ a regular washerman to wash their few coarse garments; in either case, if they are of regular caste, it would create more surprise, and be attended with far greater inconvenience, if they should depart from what is "customary," than for the members of a wealthy family among us to be found sweeping the streets or climbing the chimneys.

The Hindus live in towns and cities, and in a society whose usages are far more minute and unbending than those of the would-be exclusives in some of our own cities; yet still they are not a civilized people in our sense of the word. They are certainly not barbarians, but their civilization is very inferior to that which exists in most Christian countries. Their houses, style of living, agriculture, mechanical em-

ployments, &c., are all comparatively rude. We note some examples: their houses are commonly mere hovels, ten or twelve feet high by fourteen or sixteen square, built of mud, or bamboo wickerwork, or sun-dried bricks, without windows or furniture; their plough is a rude frame-work of two transverse pieces of wood, one answering the purposes of the handle and share, the other the shaft by which it is dragged along, scratching the surface of the ground; their blacksmiths carry their smithy in their hand, with all its implements tied up in a piece of leather, and the half dressed skin of a goat for a bellows, swung over their shoulder, and thus provided they come to the place where their work is to be done, kindle a fire on the ground, find a stone for an anvil; and the handiwork will be worthy of its mechanic and his tools. These are instances; the houses of the higher classes are larger and more comfortable, certainly; and in the large cities, better mechanics will be found in better shops; yet our account is true generally. Their civilization may be characterized as *heathen civilization*; the result of necessity in a country so densely populous that the people must work in order to live, but modified and restricted by a religious system which presses down all the energies of its votaries, and takes away from them even the desire of improvement.

The system of Hindu knowledge is still more imperfect than their civilization. It fills many volumes, and receives the untiring attention of many scholars. Their mental faculties are disciplined and sharpened by their studies; they receive the name of learned men; and, certainly, in point of mental skill and power, they are greatly in advance of the rude native of New South Wales, or the simple minded negro of Western Africa. Yet their knowledge is of such a kind, for the most part, that the poet's words admit of a literal application to their Pundits and Gurus:

"Where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise."

Ignorance itself is far preferable to the wisdom which is acquired by reading the history of the gods that belong to the Hindu Pantheon. Their exploits, wars, loves, employments, &c., are the burden of the greater part of their writings. A favourite volume* describes the history of Krishnu, one of the incarnations of Vishnu, who was brought up with several

* The Prem Sagur, according to the 10th chapter of the Bhagavut of Vyasudev.

thousand dairy maids as his companions. The contents of this book cannot be named, and yet we are assured that it is a fair specimen of a large part of the Hindu sacred works. There are treatises on other subjects, astronomy, law, medicine, &c. Some of their poetical works are not destitute of beauty, though abounding in extravagant oriental imagery. Their astronomical tables, little known forty or fifty years ago, and not then understood, were the strong tower, like geology at the present day, from which infidels drew their most formidable weapons against the Christian religion: being supposed to prove the existence of the earth and other planets of our system from a period of many hundred thousand years. But the date of those tables has been clearly shown to be within a period of seven or eight hundred years, and the long series of ages, on which their calculations are founded, are satisfactorily explained as being necessarily assumed in order to form their system. The explanation is too long for our pages. It must be admitted, that such treatises as the *Surya Siddhanta* evince considerable acquaintance with the movements of the heavenly bodies, and with mathematical science, perhaps greater than any of the Hindu literati now possess; but still it is strange that such crude and extravagant error, as their writings generally contain, could ever have been written and treasured up in books; and still more strange that it should have received the full belief of men of sense, and of some cultivation of mind. All ignorant people have many strange legends to talk of, relating to "goblin, elf, or sprite;" but in India the learned and the ignorant alike credit the grave accounts, which teach that this solid earth of ours rests on one of the horns of a great ox, who, becoming tired, as well he may, occasionally shifts it over to his other horn, whereby earthquakes are caused; and that an eclipse of the sun is caused by the malevolence of a vast monster, who, seizing the hapless luminary, would drag him without ceremony from his place. But this calamity, thanks to the piety of the Hindu clergy, can be prevented, for the Brahmins announce his danger beforehand, assemble vast multitudes of the people, sometimes more than a million, receive their offerings, employ their supernatural power, rend the air with their shoutings and tomtoms, inflict on themselves all kinds of torture, and thus save the poor sun from destruction, and plentifully fill their own pockets with the offerings made by their deluded countrymen. Such illustrations, though so gross as to be ridiculous, are yet too

melancholy as proofs of ignorance to be treated with any other prevailing feeling than that of pity for so much weakness and so much wickedness. While some of their books are of a more respectable character, like the treatise already referred to, they are in general filled with errors, and with the history of vices and crimes, rendered sacred by being regarded as the acts of their gods.

There is one marked peculiarity in the character of the Hindu writings, to which we ask the particular attention of our readers. *They are all considered sacred by the people.* Even those works, which contain the most improbable and the most disgusting accounts, are regarded as *religious books*. This remarkable fact may be owing, perhaps, to their authors having originally claimed for their works a divine origin to secure for them a better reception. The fact itself, however it may be accounted for, is unquestionable; and it is not only singular and interesting, but, as we shall see presently, it leads to very important results.

With this system of literature certain classes only are acquainted; the Brahmans, the writers, and some others, are generally able to read, and many of them to write. Among persons belonging to these favoured classes, there is a wide difference as to the extent of their learning; some of them can only read, but do not understand the meaning of a single word if written, as their sacred books generally are, in the Sanscrit language. Yet as even the reading and hearing of the Shastras is considered meritorious, the number of such readers is large, and their standing among the people is so respectable as quite to satisfy their literary vanity, because it is the means of satisfying their desire of more humble but more needful matters, such as "rice and curry," or the common provisions of life. Others are deeply read in Sanscrit lore; many years have been given to reading and chanting, repeating and explaining their sacred records; and often these men possess minds of a high order, skilled in metaphysical subtleties, trained to disputation, and almost unrivalled in readiness and tact in argument. They are formidable opponents, especially in discussions concerning their religion, as they are perfectly at home in their knowledge of the language, the usages, associations, mental habits, and entire life of their countrymen, and as they are equally at home in the assured profession of the profoundest deference and regard, bordering on idolatry, of all around them. Such are the learned men among the Hindus. But they are the few. The

great mass of the people are extremely ignorant, not being able either to read or to write. To this class belong all Hindu females, even those of the highest ranks in society. For their instruction there are no schools, except the few established by missionaries, which the usages of the country, in a great measure, prevent their attending. They are seldom acquainted even with the simplest rudiments of written knowledge. It is disreputable for them to be able to read. Their social usages, their religion, their fathers, husbands and brothers, all forbid it. Woman in India is a poor degraded being, not qualified to improve the tone of either intellectual or virtuous society, nor to adorn or bless the retirement of domestic life. We need scarcely remark, that the mass of the people in any country will be what their mothers are. Their minds will be impressed on the tender minds of their children, and all the years of subsequent life will never efface the lineaments of that image. And where the years of both adult and youthful life must be years of arduous and unremitting toil, in order to provide a scanty subsistence, it is quite obvious that, as to mind which is ever the standard of the man, the Hindu adult will be but a grown up child, ignorant and destitute of thought, but not so innocent, as when he was a child under his poor mother's pitiabie tuition.

From one-fifth to one-tenth of the Hindus are Mohammedans in their religion, the rest are nearly all idolaters. The Mussulmans are found in all parts of the country and include many of the better classes of the people; they are less intolerant than persons of that faith in the western nations of Asia, and they do not now attempt to make proselytes. Indeed, they differ but little from other Hindus in regard to knowledge, morals, customs, and even the observances of that peculiarly Hindu institution, caste.

The radical principle of the Hindu religion has been described by the apostle Paul, Rom. 1: 21—23. The precise ritual is not given in those verses, but the genius or animating spirit of that religion is clearly presented. We may remark, briefly, that it is a system of the grossest idolatry; imaginary personages without number; idols of wood, metal, stone, and clay; rivers, particular plants, &c., receive divine worship. Some of the educated Hindus, it is true, profess to worship a spiritual being under these representations, which, they will argue like the Romanists concerning their images, are of important service to aid their devotions, especially to the common people. But this refined distinction they are careful

not to make known to the vulgar; they themselves, like Socrates, worship "the gods of the state," as do other men; the great mass of the people worshipping "gods many and lords many." The Hindu religion provides no atonement for sin, but is built, as are all the attempts of unrenowned men to propitiate the divine Being, on the principle of merit obtained to counteract or counterbalance deserved evil. Hence their long pilgrimages, their cruel self-inflicted austerities, their offerings and sacrifices; for these latter, which are not very frequent, do not seem to possess any meaning similar to the Christian idea of substitution. Their religion, moreover, exerts no influence to restrain from vice or to foster virtue; their different gods and goddesses are patrons and exemplars of deceit, falsehood, drunkenness, theft, licentiousness, murder and other crimes. There are no regular days of rest and instruction, no general assembling of the people to worship God with solemn services in temples dedicated to his name. Temples there are, of all sizes and shapes, and very numerous; but they are merely houses of idols, and places to which the people may resort to perform their rites and make their offerings and their requests. The idols in these temples, and their ritual observances, and all their associations are, to imitate the delicacy of the language of sacred scripture, things "of which it is shame even to speak." There are festivals or times set apart in honour of particular divinities, varying in length from a single day to a fortnight, and occurring once a year, commonly for each of their chiefly worshipped gods; and as every Hindu observes a number of these holy-days, a considerable part of the year is consumed by them; not less, it has been said, than three months. "A holy-day," says the Rev. H. Read, whose "Memoir of Babajee" is a truly valuable work, deserving an extensive circulation, "affords an excuse for idleness and revelry; and none stop to inquire what is the religious design of the day. Hence the Hindu, the Mussulman, the Parsee, and the native Christian, are not unfrequently seen mingled together in the same observance. They mutually observe each other's festivals so far as to suspend their business, and make them days of pastime and frivolity. There is not, perhaps, a more fertile source of the poverty, and of the depravity of this people, than their holy-days."

The Hindus have a regular priesthood, the Brahmans, who are commonly men of some learning, but whose knowledge, unaccompanied by any virtuous influence, only fits

them to be more wicked and vile than their countrymen. Their character, in point of fact, is just what might be expected under such a religion and in such a state of society.

From such a religion, such a system of gods, ritual observances, and priests, it is not difficult to conclude that the character of the people must be very depraved. Men seldom reach the standard of excellence which they have proposed for their imitation, and it seems unreasonable to expect that they should be more holy than their gods, or more moral in their conduct than their religious teachers. We forbear, however, to describe the moral character or conduct of the Hindus, for the simple but sufficient reason, that the account of heathenism contained in Rom. 1: 23—32, is so accurate and even so graphic a description of the Hindu character, as to supersede the necessity of any other. A person might almost believe the apostle to have been in India, and to have written that account in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.

Such is a brief sketch of India, its inhabitants, and their religion. Whether we sail on its mighty rivers, bearing on their bosoms thousands of boats freighted with the productions of nations; or whether we traverse its vast plains, stretched out like the broad sea, and yielding abundantly the fruits of the earth; or enter its forests, teeming with every variety of vegetable life in the wildest luxuriance, and tenanted by the elephant, the lion, and the tiger; or stand and gaze on its northern mountains, covered with perpetual snow, whose lofty and pure grandeur seems to belong to another world—every where the power of God is visible; his existence and his presence are testified by his works; dark indeed must be the mind which cannot see the manifold proofs of his eternal power and Godhead. Yet it is in the very midst of this land that man is an idolater! It is here that his character and conduct are most vile. It is here that his alienation from God is more extreme than in any other country, perhaps, under the heavens.

But even these heathen millions shall be given to the Lord Jesus for his inheritance. Such is the promise of God. His promises are all yea and amen; there can be no doubt concerning their fulfilment, whatever delay may take place in regard to the time. And as to the time of the gathering of these Gentiles into the fold of the Redeemer, it is evidently drawing on apace. There is much in the present condition and circumstances of this great people, in

this point of view, to awaken the deepest interest in every Christian mind.

Every person must be struck with the wise and powerful ordering of God's providence, by which this great nation has been brought under the control of a Protestant power. The Hindus, two thousand years ago, were as numerous, as intelligent, as powerful, as they are at the present day; while the British Islanders were then a race of savages, as little known to the then civilized world as the Dayaks of Borneo. How changed the relation of those nations to each other and to the rest of the world! Yet the Hindus have not retrograded in the march of nations; they have simply made no advance; their religion has enchained their minds; and their mental and moral existence has been unchanged in its dull uniformity. The inhabitants of Great Britain have received the gospel, with all its high-toned influences, and its spirit of enterprise and mental elevation, and now sway the most extensive dominion that God ever gave to any nation. We advert to this great dispensation of God's providence in order to mark the open door which it has set before the Church for giving the knowledge of salvation to more than one hundred millions of the human family. All the appointed means of grace may now be employed in that country, with perfect safety and freedom, systematically and permanently. The liberty to preach Christ and him crucified is no more fully given to the minister of the gospel here in the United States than it is among at least ninety millions of the Hindus. We make this remark in the deliberate conviction of its truth. Yet the whole number of ordained ministers of the gospel, now labouring among those millions, is less than one hundred and seventy. The providence of God is, therefore, far in advance of the efforts made by the church to obey his will in regard to these heathen; a much larger field of labour is here thrown open than the church has yet endeavoured to cultivate; a much greater work is here prepared for the church than the means can execute which she has devoted to its performance.

The previous labours of missionaries have greatly prepared the way for the employment to advantage of a large number of Christian ministers. There was a time in India, even since the British authority was established, when only a few missionaries could have been profitably employed. Dictionaries, grammars, and translations were to be made; without which they must have laboured at a great disadvan-

tage, both in studying the language and in direct ministerial duties. Yet it would not have been expedient to have employed five hundred missionaries, at once, in compiling dictionaries and grammars. Now, these facilities are prepared, and five hundred or five thousand might commence their labours, with no greater delay than each individual would be subject to. The first missionaries to India were like the labourers in our national armories; they prepared the weapons of war. A whole host of men would be useless at Springfield or Harper's Ferry for such a purpose; but when the weapons are all ready, the larger and more efficient the army, the sooner will the victory be achieved.

The efforts already made by the church for the conversion of the Hindus have by no means been in vain. The sacred scriptures have been translated and published in all the principal languages of India; tracts, in explanation of particular doctrines and duties, have been widely circulated; schools have been formed, and multitudes have been educated under Christian influences; the truths of our holy religion have been exemplified before the heathen in the lives and conduct of many Christians and Christian families; the gospel has been preached to tens of thousands of the people; convictions of the falsehood of idolatry, and of the truth of Christianity, have been diffused far and near; hundreds of converts have been gathered into the visible church; and this system is going on. Its influence is felt in the very heart of Hinduism. The word of the Lord, thus in various ways spread abroad, shall not return unto him void. The system of missionary effort which is at present pursued in India, we believe to be decidedly judicious, suitable, and good. Imperfection belongs to all that is human; among so many agents, differing so widely in talent and education, and in the forms and usages of their religious systems, we are not surprised that there should be individuals whose usefulness seems to be little, and that measures should sometimes be adopted which would not commend themselves to every mind; yet, in general, we are well satisfied with this very diversity. Let some conduct schools, of different orders; let others make translations, and publish suitable books; let all preach the gospel; some in stated meetings; others by the way-side; others in the great fair where thousands will listen to the eloquent speaker; others in conversation with single individuals; and let all exemplify the gospel in their lives. All these modes of effort, pursued in a spirit of love to God and

to the souls of men, in humble dependance on the divine blessing, shall work together for the good of the Hindus. While it must ever be a very prominent object to train up pious natives to become ministers and teachers to their countrymen, the missionary may still preach the gospel. It is not a hopeless task to labour for the salvation of the adult heathen; many such persons have become the hopeful subjects of grace, and have supported the profession of their faith by a consistent life, and by a Christian death. The missionary would betray a mournful ignorance of the extent of his commission, if not also of the spirit of his Master, if he should neglect any opportunity of bringing the knowledge of pardon and eternal life, affectionately and clearly, to the mind of a heathen man or woman, even though they should be aged idolaters, ready to go down into the land of darkness. And the same missionary would equally err; on the other extreme, if he should neglect efforts for the conversion of the youth around him, while their minds are tender, and comparatively free from prejudice, and from the power of heathen habits, and if he should not be watchful to prepare them for carrying on that great work, which missionaries from foreign countries cannot prosecute to the same advantage as native labourers, even if their number were sufficiently large. We deprecate any separation of these kinds of Christian effort; and we are constrained to think those persons not merely mistaken, but narrow in their views of the nature and extent of missionary labour among the heathen, who would have missionaries to direct their efforts exclusively to any one particular kind of labour. The blessing of God has attended all these different efforts of the church in India; this unquestionable fact should settle a question that would never have been raised, if the instructions of inspiration, as recorded in the twelfth chapter of first Corinthians, had been sufficiently considered, in connexion with the character and extent of the duty, which is to be performed among the heathen. It is, we think, far more important to bear in mind that the means employed by the church for the conversion of the Hindus, is, on any theory of effort, entirely inadequate to the work which is to be done. If missionaries must only preach to the people, then 12,000 ministers are needed, so that every 10,000 persons may have a pastor. If missionaries should also superintend and conduct such institutions, as will be adapted to raise up a native ministry, still a much larger number is needed; in either case, men of devoted piety, men of the best talents, and of

the highest attainments, are greatly needed. And why should not men of *experience* engage in this work? The British government does not send out only young men to conduct its affairs in India. Merchants do not send only their younger clerks to make their eastern investments. This way of proceeding seems to be reserved for the Church, ever less wise than the children of this world. But we forbear complaints, and rejoice, rather, at the success with which it has pleased God to favour the feeble efforts of his people.

At the same time, the earth is helping the woman; the progress of events is wonderfully co-operating with the appointed means of grace; general agencies are exerting a mighty influence on the mind and the religion of India; an influence which will greatly accelerate the overthrow of idolatry, and, if *fully improved by the Church*, will give very important aid to the establishment of Christianity. Of this kind is the influence that is exerted by the administration of the government according to those principles, which, in England and in this country, are recognized as a part of our civilization, though unquestionably we are indebted for them to our religion. And we may remark, *en passant*, that this influence of government is much greater in a corrupt eastern nation, where every man is anxious to commend himself to his superiors by any and every means, than among the less servile inhabitants of western countries. The general policy of the East India Company is to protect all their subjects in the free exercise of their religion. It is not, therefore, by *direct* authority or legislation that their rule is exerting an influence on the religion of the Hindus: indeed, in this respect their influence is extremely unhappy, for they are legally connected with the idolatry of the country in various ways; by appropriating moneys for the support of certain temples; by collecting a tax from pilgrims to particular holy places; by enjoining the attendance of their troops, commanded by English officers, at some of the processions in honour of idols; and by taking the superintendence of some of the idolatrous temple-establishments in all their details, even down to sanctioning the appointments of the prostitutes! They seem to have taken the place of the native rulers, whom they succeeded, in regard to these matters, without considering that the former were heathen who approved these things, or else Mohammedans who were indifferent to their moral character and anxious only to promote their own gain, while themselves are Christians, responsible

to God for all their employment of the power which he has entrusted to them. The melancholy result has been that the mass of the native inhabitants, incapable of distinguishing things that differ, and seeing the European gentlemen present at their festivals with the government troops, and knowing also that a portion of the revenue is derived from this source, very naturally conclude that the government approves their religion, a conclusion which the wily Brahmins are very prompt and careful to confirm. This is a great evil. The times of ignorance concerning it exist no longer; and we trust it will be corrected without delay. We are glad to perceive that public sentiment in England is beginning to be strongly arrayed against it, and we hope its days are numbered.

In regard to other matters, the East India government has acted nobly. The general principle has been recognized that no proceeding, however religious in its character, should be tolerated which conflicts with the interests of property or of life. Accordingly the horrible rite of the *Suttee* was prohibited by law in 1828, greatly to the dissatisfaction of many natives even of intelligence and character; parents are no longer permitted to cast their children into the Ganges, and fewer alligators are now to be seen on the shores of the isle of Saugor; infanticide still prevails among some of the independent states, but British authority in every practicable case, and British influence in all cases, are interposed in behalf of humanity. We refer to these instances, not merely to the praise of the British rule in India, but as illustrating the influence of that authority on a religious system which sanctioned these enormous crimes. The power and the mercy of their western conquerors have triumphed over some of the worst evils under which the Hindus groaned. In the establishment of law, as impartial and supreme, we have a still more important illustration of the point at present under our review. The Brahmins find themselves on a level with the Sudras, in this iron age of the earth, and, although the time was when they might commit almost any crime with impunity, and certainly with but little fear of adequate punishment, those days have departed, and the semi-divine honour of the Brahmanical order is fast following. The Thugs, those professed and organized murderers, no longer escape detection and execution, however faithfully they may invoke the protection and confide in the power of their patron goddess Bhowanee; and their reverence for the

object of their idolatry will not long survive, it may be hoped, their conviction of her feebleness to save. From such illustrations, it will be apparent, that no government can be administered according to the enlightened views of a Christian people without its wielding a powerful influence adverse to the existing superstition of the Hindus.

The progress of general knowledge affords even a stronger illustration of the same kind. The intercourse of so many Europeans with the natives, in different parts of the country, and for a long series of years, must have brought a large amount of western knowledge before the minds of the Hindus. In addition to this, several native newspapers have been published in some of the large cities, in imitation of the English papers, by persons who have considerable acquaintance with European knowledge, whose circulation must add something to the store of Hindu ideas; while those newspapers which have been established to defend Hinduism, unwittingly contribute their quota of influence to break up the almost universal sleep of the Hindu intellect, and thus prepare the way for approaching changes. Still additional are the private and mission schools, and especially the various institutions of learning, which are supported by the government. In a large proportion of these the English language is the chief study, and European knowledge is extensively spread abroad. From all these sources the natives acquire correct information concerning various subjects; they learn that astronomy is not practically synonymous with astrology, and chiefly useful for casting the nativities of their children; that the sun, and not the earth, is the centre of the planetary system; that the earth is not a vast plain, with a lofty mountain in its centre, supporting the heavens of their gods, and surrounded towards the extreme limits of the plain by concentric oceans of milk, of honey, and of ghee; that the atmosphere is not peopled by imaginary beings and pervaded by inexplicable influences; in short, they receive the same simple but correct information, which is so common among ourselves that we do not think of its benefits.

If now our readers will recollect, particularly, that all Hindu knowledge is strictly *religious knowledge*, recorded in their scriptures, revered as divine, interwoven with the very structure of their religion, and inseparable from it, they will perceive that this progress of correct general knowledge is immeasurably important in its bearing on the Hindu religion. It tends most directly to its utter subversion. No

Hindu can be convinced that his sacred scriptures teach the greatest absurdities about the sun or the earth, without losing all his reverence for their divine character. His common sense leads him to reject a system which he now perceives to contain so much that is ridiculous. His mind, disabused of a thousand errors and prejudices concerning common things, and furnished with sound principles and habits of thought, can no longer be kept in trammels by silly legends relating to ten thousand gods and goddesses. He soon learns to consider the religion of his country not merely false but vulgar; and when he has reached this stage, the religion of his fathers is no longer his religion. To avoid the loss of property and reputation, while the multitude continue believers, he will conform to its external ritual; but in his mind and in his heart, he has abandoned it forever.

Where does such a Hindu now stand? He has been convinced that the gods in whom he trusted cannot help him, and indeed that there are no such beings; that the religion of his country is only superstition; that its millions of priests and tens of millions of devotees are, at least, miserably deluded; he soon learns to think them also oppressed, if sincere, by a most burdensome system; and if they are not sincere, he is ready to denounce their heartless and exacting pretensions. But further than this he rarely goes. He has not been taught, by the greater part of the agency we have been reviewing, that while his own religion is false, any other is true. That agency has been employed only in pulling down the temples of idolatry, but not in erecting churches for the worship of the true God. The claims of Christianity have not been brought before his mind. He is, therefore, at sea without a chart or compass. He is a blind wanderer without a guide; or rather he follows the guidance and the promptings of his own heart, and they, assuredly, will never conduct him to a knowledge of the truth, or inspire him with a love of its purity. His heart is depraved like the hearts of all men. He, therefore, even rejoices in his newly acquired licentiousness, (we cannot call it liberty;) he is released from all feeling of responsibility for his conduct, except to the power of human tribunals; he yields himself up to the full gratification of his corrupt desires; he has no disposition to know or to honour such a God as the bible describes; his language now is that of the fool, "no God." He is, in truth, a heathen atheist; not the refined, intelligent atheist of revolutionary France, but

one, the standard of whose atheism is, if not the science, at any rate the morals of his previous heathenism.

We have been sketching no fancy picture. In all the cities and towns where European influences, as they may be termed, exist, many of the better educated and higher classes are decidedly atheistical, or at any rate, deistical, in their opinions; and their number is rapidly increasing. The Rev. Mr, Mackay, of the Scotch Presbyterian mission in Calcutta, says, and his statement is worthy of the utmost confidence, "I am preparing a series of lectures for week day evenings on the deistical systems, as compared with one another, and with Christianity; this subject has been selected in consequence of the fact, that *nearly every educated Hindu in Calcutta professes deism.*" Hindu deism, it need hardly be suggested, is no better than practical atheism; and therefore, we have preferred to use the latter term, as expressing at once the feelings of the mind, and the practice of iniquity in the conduct, without apprehension of judgment. It is greatly to be feared that a much larger number of the Hindus are thus becoming atheists than Christians; for reasons which have already been pointed out.

A crisis will soon arrive in the religious interests of India. Long has she groaned under the intolerable burden of the Brahmanical religion. But the day of its power has passed away. It is now chiefly a religion of usage. The multitude conform to its requirements because they are customary. They are not moved by love, nor are they greatly influenced by fear. The example of their fathers, and of the higher classes, outweighs all other considerations. But the former are dead, and each succeeding generation will feel for them a diminished reverence, in proportion to the laxity of religious practice and feeling which will continue every year to gain ground. The higher and more intelligent classes themselves are in a transition-state. They will not long continue heathen. The causes we have described are gradually undermining the foundations of their temple; it is beginning to totter; rents are made in its walls; some of its pillars have already fallen; many of the more discerning are even now fleeing from the shaking and falling fabric. Their example will be imitated by the myriads of their countrymen. We believe the decree has gone forth, and soon it will be fulfilled, that the Hindus shall be heathen no longer. But what shall they be, Christians or atheists? This is the great question that is to be solved in India. Shall the Redeemer's praise be sung in her

native dialects, or the praise of human reason, and the heartless dogmas of an impious unbelief?

The interest with which we view this question is greatly increased by the probability, that the religious system of the Hindus will be finally overthrown, not chiefly by the gradual conversion of its followers, but by the simultaneous renunciation of it by entire classes of the people. The structure of Hindu society, and the intimate union of their religion with the entire frame-work of their existence, lead to this result. In that country, it may be truly said, that men scarcely live as individuals. Their life is merely a part of the large sect, or division of their community, to which they belong. These classes or sects follow separate employments, never intermarry, nor even eat together, and worship chiefly different gods, though some gods may be worshipped by the people generally. All who belong to the same sect are wonderfully similar in their thoughts, feelings, and information, as well as in their occupation, dress, and modes of life. To retain their places in this system is of the very greatest importance. Exclusion from caste is regarded, and justly, as a terrible calamity. Thereby a man falls at once to the lowest place in the scale of existence. He loses his reputation, so that, although his former standing may have been more distinguished than that of our members of congress or supreme judges, he is now more despised than the most degraded wretch in our penitentiaries. In most cases he loses all his property. He is discarded by all his acquaintances, reviled by his friends, renounced forever by his nearest relations. He can obtain no employment. Were he at the point of death, no man would give him even a cup of water. "He is an outcaste man," would cause a crowd to start aside to escape the defilement of his touch; there he would stand alone, in the deepest disgrace, an exile in his own land, a loathed stranger among his kindred and friends, a doomed man, whose only refuge is the grave. Such are the chains with which the system of caste has enslaved the Hindus, and by which their connection with the Brahmanical religion, which has forged and rivetted them, seems to be rendered indissoluble.

In consequence of this system, as a man would lose caste by partaking of the Lord's supper, or associating with Christians, there seem to be almost insuperable difficulties to hinder *individual* Hindus from embracing Christianity. Few men have sufficient strength of mind to encounter such tre-

mendous evils; and this does not seem to be the age of martyrs in any part of the world. We seldom see persons making great sacrifices for the kingdom of Christ, even in those countries where the full-orbed light of the gospel has long shone; and the case is not different in India. We are far, however, from doubting the power of divine grace to enable men to triumph over all these evils. Even the bond-slaves of caste have been made witnesses to the efficacy of that grace. But the circumstances under which men live have a great influence on their religious character, and on their readiness to receive the gospel. How seldom do we find the children of Jewish parents coming to the Lord Jesus for salvation, even where they live and grow up in the midst of the ordinances and means of grace! How few among the rich and mighty of this world are called! So among the Hindus, it seems improbable that individuals should be converted in large numbers under the reign of caste; and the comparatively small number of persons who have professed Christianity, though that number is much greater than is generally believed, seems to confirm the opinion which, *a priori*, might be formed.

The discouragement, however, of this representation, imparts the greater interest to the probable subversion of that system. It is fair to suppose, and experience justifies the opinion, that where large masses of people are so closely linked together, the motives and agencies which would influence one of their number, would equally influence many. If a Coolie or a Zamindar were urged to renounce idolatry and trust in Christ Jesus, he would talk of the subject with other Coolies or other Zamindars, and they with others; the interest would increase with the increasing numbers, feeling a common concern in every thing that touched their common bond of union, caste; and if at length one should feel constrained to abandon his false religion, and to flee for refuge to the hope set before him in the gospel, the entire probability is that many others of the same sect would be in that state of mind which would induce them to go and do likewise. In the event of any change, this system of caste will make it, probably, both general and sudden. Let the Hindu religion, then, be subverted by the employment of Christian agency, and this extraordinary institution will become a most important means of helping forward the great work of salvation. Its uniting, assimilating, all-pervading power will lead men, in larger numbers, and with a more devoted heart, to turn unto the

Lord; and the Saviour shall receive the glory of a new and splendid triumph over one of the great master-pieces of Satan's power and malice.

The long-desired and glorious result presupposes and requires the employment of such an amount of appropriate Christian agency, as shall be commensurate with the great work which is to be performed. A spirit of general inquiry concerning the Christian religion, if it were now evinced by the Hindus, would be almost a calamity; it would certainly meet with disappointment, and disappointment in regard to such a subject would be a severe calamity. What could less than two hundred foreigners accomplish for one hundred and thirty-five millions of deeply interested, inquiring minds? We leave this question to produce its own effect upon the reader's mind. If the view which we have taken of this interesting subject should result in the addition of a single labourer to that small band who are now waiting for the harvest, we shall be highly honoured. The claims of India upon our Church in particular are very strong. The Presbyterian Mission in the Northern Provinces has opened our eyes to the wants of millions, and opened a channel of communication between them and us, which we have no right to leave dry or empty. The history and present prospects of that noble mission are, we trust, familiar to the minds of all our readers. If, however, at some future time, we should be able to present a rapid and continuous account of that good enterprise, we think it would excite even the most languid and indifferent to action.

ART. V.—1. *Facts and Observations concerning the Organization and State of the Churches in the three Synods of Western New York, and the Synod of the Western Reserve.* By James Wood. 1837.

2. *Legal Opinions respecting the Validity of certain Acts of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.* By Messrs. Wood, Hopkins, and Kent. New York Observer, Sept. 16, 1837.

THE measures adopted by the last General Assembly have now been the subject of constant discussion for more than nine months. The press has teemed with arguments both