

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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Hinduism and Christianity by John Robson

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JOHN ROBSON

HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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AND
CHRISTIANITY

BY THE
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"THE HOLY GHOST THE PARACLETE"
ETC. ETC.

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PREFACE

“NOT only does Hinduism contain a subtle philosophy, express high moral truths and enjoin many social virtues; it even in one guise or other embodies many of the leading religious truths which Christianity teaches. But that there is in it an ineradicable vice which neutralises all that is good, which has paralysed, and which must paralyse, all those efforts at reform within Hinduism that more enlightened Hindus have made and are now making, and which leaves Christianity the only hope for India—is what I have endeavoured to show.”

This extract from the preface to the first edition of this book indicates its purpose. When that edition was published, thirty years ago, the difficulty was rather to convince people at home that in Hinduism there was a real yearning after God, and an embodiment of many of the truths which are at the basis of all religions. The difficulty now is rather to convince them that Hinduism is utterly inadequate as a response to that yearning; that the truths it contains are so poisoned with error as to make them powerless for the highest good; that Christianity is still the only hope for the regeneration of India. But all investigation has made

this more evident: the more thorough and the more sympathetic the study of Hinduism, the more evident becomes the conclusion that all that is true in it finds its fulfilment only in Christianity.

Since this book was written, many others have been published on Hinduism, some dealing with the whole field, others with particular phases or localities. It seemed to me at one time that it might be as well to leave the field to fresh writers; but as missionaries in India have assured me that it still supplies a want which no other book has sought to supply, the second edition being exhausted, I have prepared the new edition—rewriting the greater part, and seeking to give it more the character of an introduction to the study of the religions of India. It would have been an easy and a fascinating task to enlarge it, and to give full details of the different sects of Hinduism, of its chief festivals and many forms of worship; but this would have been to alter the purpose of the book, to make it an attempt to supersede writers who have occupied these fields, instead of making it an introduction to them. I have therefore sought to curtail rather than to expand, to avoid what is merely of passing interest, and to give only such details as may be necessary for a clear understanding of the main features of Hinduism, and of the principles which underlie its cult and ethics. Until these be grasped, the resistance which Hinduism opposes to Christianity cannot be understood; when once they are grasped, the

significance of each detail observed by workers in the field, or related in books on the subject, becomes more easily apparent.

It has been a sufficient reward to me, for any efforts that this little work has cost me, to have received testimonies from many in the field that it has been helpful to them, putting them in a position for understanding the character of the task before them, and for observing the religion with which they had to contend, that would otherwise have required a long experience to attain. Thanking God for the service which it has thus rendered, and praying that by His grace it may yet be serviceable to workers in India and to students of missions at home, it is now offered them in this new edition.

P.S.—Just when this edition had passed through the press, I received from India a brochure, entitled the "Yogi (or Jogi) and his Message," by Swami Dharmananda Mahavarati. He occupies a position quite different from the founder of the Brahma Samaj or the Arya Samaj. His tributes to Christ and the Bible are as eloquent as those of Keshub Chunder Sen; his adherence to Hinduism as complete as that of Dayanandi Saraswati. He looks on Christ and His religion as the fulfilment of what is best in Hinduism. He is himself a Yogi, and he looks on Christ as the greatest of the Yogis. Some of the statements on which he grounds this, both with regard to the unrecorded years of Christ's life and the attainments of the Yoga system, require, to say the least, verification. He hardly realises, too,

what must be the consequence of putting new wine into old bottles. But there is a high moral earnestness and sincerity about all he writes; and he seems one of whom Christ would say, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Nothing better could be desired for India than that his countrymen should follow his advice, and study earnestly Christ as He is presented in the Bible. If they do so, we may trust that the Holy Spirit will bring them into the full knowledge of the truth.

NOTE AS TO THE PRONUNCIATION OF HINDU WORDS

<i>Ch</i> as in Church.	<i>ā</i> as <i>a</i> in bar.
<i>g</i> " " get.	<i>e</i> as in they.
<i>j</i> " " jar.	<i>f</i> as <i>ee</i> in feet.
<i>ph</i> " " up-hill.	<i>ī</i> as <i>ee</i> in see.
<i>th</i> " " boat-house.	<i>ū</i> as in put.
<i>ḍ</i> as <i>u</i> in but.	<i>ū</i> as in rule.

J and *y* are interchangeable in many words, as *jogi* or *yogi*; *jati* or *yati*. The short *ḍ* has much the same force as *e mule* in French. It is, as a rule, inaudible at the end of a word. Thus Veda is pronounced *Ved*; Mantra, *Mantr*; Rāma, *Rām*; Krishna, *Krishn*.

In this book the diacritical marks are generally given only the first time a word is introduced.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

	PAGE
India and Christendom; Hindu philosophy and worship; elements of truth in Hinduism	xiii

CHAPTER I

THE MANTRAS

Earliest hymns of India; the Aryas and Dasyus; Aryan gods, deifications of nature; hymns to Varuna, sense of sin, sacrifice, immortality. Henotheism, Hebrew and Aryan; childhood of religion; entrance of abstract ideas; hymn to the one God; hymn to the Supreme Spirit, keynote of Hinduism; development of Hebrew and Indian religions	1-18
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CHAPTER II

THE VEDIC AND SUB-VEDIC AGE

Magic and rationalism. <i>Śruti</i> or revelation; the four Vedas, their three divisions. The <i>Brāhmanas</i> : new gods; sacrifice and its significance; Brāhmanical and Levitical sacrifice; deity incarnate in sacrifice; first conception of the Avatār. The <i>Upanishads</i> : pantheistic thought, transmigration, asceticism, reaction of philosophy in religion. <i>Smṛiti</i> , or tradition; laws of Manu; caste and its origin, the twice born and the once born, the four castes; struggle between Brāhmins and Kshatriyas; the Rāmāyana; the Mahābhārata; aboriginal worship; Brahmanic India	19-36
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