

**THE CHRISTIAN BRAHMUN OR, MEMOIRS OF
THE LIFE, WRITINGS, AND CHARACTER OF THE
CONVERTED BRAHMUN, BABAJEE.
INCLUDING ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DOMESTIC
HABITS, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND
SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HINDOOS, VOL. I.**

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HOLLIS READ

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SUPERSTITIONS OF THE HINDOOS; A SKETCH OF THE DECHAN AND
NOTICES OF INDIA IN GENERAL, AND AN ACCOUNT OF THE AME-
RICAN MISSION AT AHMEDNUGOUR.

BY THE
REV. HOLLIS READ,
American Missionary to India.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO THE
AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,
UNDER WHOSE PATRONAGE
THE BRAHMUN, BABAJEE,
WAS CONVERTED,
AND IN WHOSE SERVICE HE WAS A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST,
IN PREACHING THE GOSPEL
TO THE HEATHEN ;
THIS MEMORIAL
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,
BY THEIR DEVOTED
FRIEND AND SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

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P R E F A C E .

THE following memoir, which has been drawn up in the midst of many interruptions, and under great disadvantages, is now submitted to the perusal of the Christian public, with no other claim of merit than that of exhibiting the character of a Hindoo Brahmun, both before and after his heart had been subdued by divine grace. I do it with the hope that it may encourage the hearts of the friends of Christian missions to the heathen; and silence the cavils of those who demand more than the light of the sun before they will see. The former, I trust, will be able to see in the conversion, the labors, the life, and death of this Brahmun, a merciful token of the great Head of the church, that the Brahmunical priesthood, that the Hindoo nation, though they have been so long and so deeply sunk in all that is degrading and disgusting in idolatry, may yet be a holy priesthood and a "delight-some land." The latter, I would fain hope, may be able to discern in the same train of circumstances such a display of the sovereign grace and power of God, that they may be constrained to acknowledge that the conversion of the heathen is an event which the believer in divine revelation may most confidently and most rationally expect. Let such review the subject once more, and then say if, with the divine promises before them, and with a proper notion of the divine attributes, they are not chargeable with a more gross absurdity in disbelieving, than the friends of missions are in believing, that such a desirable event can and will take place.

It is not pretended that the case of Babajee is a com-

man one. His zeal for the conversion of his countrymen, his energy of character, his disinterestedness, his spiritual attainments, distinguished him from the converts with whom I have had the happiness to be acquainted. What has particularly induced me to draw up the memoir is, the belief that Babajee was selected by divine sovereignty as a subject on whom God might display the riches of his grace, for the honor of his name among the heathen, for the confirmation of his promises to the church, and for the encouragement of missionaries abroad, and their patrons at home.

I must here caution the reader that he do not expect too much. The case of Babajee is only extraordinary when taken in connection with the attendant circumstances. Indeed in a Christian land he might afford a singular specimen of firmness and instability, of faith and doubt, of strictness and laxity, of spiritual joys and depression, of ardent devotion, deep penitence and humility joined with neglect of duty and occasional aberrations. Duly to appreciate his character, the reader must transfer himself for a moment to India. He must there witness the practices, the rites and ceremonies of the people, contemplate the early education and the inveterate habits of the heathen, and he will cease to censure, and begin to admire the wonderful change which was wrought in the subject of the memoir. He will only wonder that divine grace could so transform a man. We use great indulgence on account of the force of habit in a Christian country. An infidel, a profligate, or a miser, is converted. His heart is at once right, but many an old habit for a long time remains wrong. He may be over righteous in one respect, but criminally lax in another. These remarks apply to Babajee, but with less force, when the circumstances of his early impressions, and his deeply rooted and erroneous habits are taken into the account, than any case I have ever known.

I have added a Second Part, which contains various facts, anecdotes, remarks, and extracts from other authors, illustrative of the character, customs, and religion of the Hindoos. This, with the accompanying sketch of the

Deekan, and the general notices of India, and the notes which are scattered through the whole, will, I flatter myself, interest the Christian inquirer, and also furnish the general reader, who is inquisitive to learn the character and customs of foreign nations, with so much information as shall repay him for the perusal.

REFERENCES are made from the Memoir to Part Second. After one half of the matter had gone to the press, it was found necessary to bind the work in two volumes instead of one, as originally designed. Consequently a derangement has occurred in regard to the references. Instead of Chapter VI, Part Second, see Chapter I, Volume Second, and so onward.

I have throughout these volumes attempted an *undisguised* exhibition of Hindooism. This I have, in many instances, found to be impossible, without sometimes transgressing those *strict* rules of delicacy—amounting sometimes, perhaps, to *squeamishness*—which, in our country, the present age has proscribed. I have, as far as possible, avoided all indelicacy of language. More than this could not be done, without omitting entirely to speak on several subjects which, more than any other, go to develop the real character of Hindooism. I could have said, as most writers on these subjects have said, that “delicacy forbids me,” &c. But I have always regarded such apologies as miserable substitutes for the information which I was seeking, concerning the national and the religious character of a great nation of Pagans. The reader need not, however, suppose that I have unblushingly told *all*. There still remains behind the curtain all those things which “may not so much as be named among you.”

I have likewise pursued the same course in my accounts of missionary operations in India, that I have in reference to Hindooism. My only endeavor, in both cases, has been to present a *fair* picture, without giving an undue prominence either to light or shade.

The reader will excuse the plainness of the dress. Circumscribed as has been my intercourse for some years