

PERIODICAL  
ACCOUNTS  
RELATIVE TO THE  
*BAPTIST*  
MISSIONARY  
*SOCIETY.*

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VOL. I.

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*Clipstone:*

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1800.

# PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS

RELATIVE TO

## A SOCIETY,

FORMED AMONG

The particular Baptists,

FOR PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL

AMONG

THE HEATHEN.

[N<sup>o</sup>. I.]



NARRATIVE

OF

THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT

of this

SOCIETY.

THE origin of this Society will be found in the workings of our Brother CAREY's mind, which, for the last nine or ten years, has been directed to this object with very little intermission. His heart appears to have been set upon the Conversion of the Heathen, before he came to reside at *Moulton*, an. 1786. It was there he wrote the Manuscript which he has since printed, entitled, "AN ENQUIRY INTO THE OBLIGATIONS OF CHRISTIANS TO USE MEANS FOR THE CONVERSION OF THE

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"HEA-

“HEATHEN;” and his Conversations, Prayers, and Sermons, were mostly accompanied with something relative to this subject. He possessed at the same time, a great thirst for geographical knowledge, and a remarkable aptitude at learning languages, so that his most intimate friends were for several years past induced to think that he was formed for some such peculiar undertaking.

His desire that a Society might be established amongst his connexions, for the propagation of the gospel among the Heathen, and that *he* might have a share in that important service, continued and increased, till at length, in the year 1791, being at a meeting of ministers at *Clipstone*, in *Northamptonshire*, after two discourses had been preached by Brother SUTCLIFFE and Brother FULLER, on *Jealousy for the LORD OF HOSTS*, and *the pernicious influence of delay*, he proposed a Question, “Whether it were not practicable, and our bounden duty, to attempt somewhat “toward spreading the Gospel in the Heathen World?”

As the public service had been attended with more than ordinary solemnity, so this consideration was managed with a good degree of serious and earnest concern to exert ourselves for the enlargement of the kingdom of our Lord: But the chief thing then agreed upon was, to desire Brother CAREY to draw up his thoughts on the subject, and publish them. At the next Association of the Baptist Churches, at *Oakham*, June 16, 1791, it was requested by the ministers who had been present at *Clipstone*, that Brothers SUTCLIFFE and FULLER would print their Sermons above referred to, with which request they complied, and these were followed some months afterwards by Brother CAREY’S “*Enquiry*,” &c.

At the next Annual Meeting of the Association, at *Nottingham*, May 31, 1792, Brother CAREY preached a  
very

very animating discourse from *Isa.* liv. 2, in which he presented two things in particular, as expository of "lengthening our cords, and strengthening our stakes," viz. (1.) That we should *expect* great things; (2.) That we should *attempt* great things. After public worship was over the subject was revived, and a resolution made, "That a plan be prepared against the next ministers meeting at *Kettering*, for forming a Society among the Baptists for propagating the Gospel among the Heathen;" and Brother CAREY generously proposed to devote whatever profits might arise from his late publication, to the use of such a Society.

Accordingly, at the Ministers Meeting at *Kettering*, October 2, 1792, after the public services of the day were ended, the ministers retired to consult farther on the matter, and to lay a Foundation at least for a Society, when the following Resolutions were proposed, and unanimously agreed to.

### *Resolutions, &c.*

I. Desirous of making an effort for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen, agreeably to what is recommended in Brother CAREY's late publication on that subject, we, whose names appear in the subsequent subscription, do solemnly agree to act in society together for that purpose.

II. As in the present divided state of christendom, it seems that each denomination, by exerting itself separately, is most likely to accomplish the great ends of a mission, it is agreed, that this Society be called, *The particular Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel amongst the Heathen.*

III. As such an undertaking must needs be attended

with expence, we agree immediately to open a subscription for the above purpose, and to recommend it to others.

IV. Every person who shall subscribe ten pounds at once, or ten shillings and six-pence annually, shall be considered as a member of the society.

V. That the Rev. *John Ryland, Reynold Hogg, William Carey, John Sutcliffe, and Andrew Fuller*, be appointed a Committee, three of whom shall be empowered to act in carrying into effect the purposes of the society.

VI. That the Rev. REYNOLD HOGG be appointed Treasurer, and Rev. ANDREW FULLER Secretary,

VII. That the subscriptions be paid in at the *Northampton* Ministers Meeting, Oct. 31, 1792, at which time the subject shall be considered more particularly, by the Committee and other subscribers who may be present.

Signed, *John Ryland, Reynold Hogg, John Sutcliffe, A. Fuller, Abraham Greenwood, Edward Sharman, Joshua Burton, Samuel Pearce, Thomas Blundell, Wm. Heighton, John Eayres, Joseph Timms*; whose subscriptions in all amounted to 13l. 2s. 6d.

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*Second Meeting of the primary Society at Northampton,  
October 31, 1792.*

THE Secretary chosen at the former meeting being ill, sent a written copy of the former resolutions, with an account of two new subscribers of one guinea, one of which engages to continue it annually. And also information from Brother CAREY, who was likewise prevented from attending, that  
a gentleman

a gentleman from *Northumberland* had promised to send him twenty pounds for the Society, and had engaged further to subscribe four guineas annually.

Brother PEARCE, of *Birmingham*, gave us information that having mentioned the business to his friends, at his return from the first meeting, and preached upon the subject, they were so suitably affected with the importance of the affair, as immediately, without any personal application to an individual, to offer their generous contributions, which they sent by Mr. PEARCE, to the amount of *seventy* pounds, which he paid into the hands of the Treasurer.

Our good friends at *Birmingham* also adopted a most agreeable plan, of forming a distinct society in aid of the mission, for the purpose of receiving both occasional contributions, and annual, quarterly, or weekly subscriptions, and to co-operate by every other means in their power with the primary society, in pursuing the grand object we have conjointly in view.

At this meeting at *Northampton*, two other friends subscribed and paid two guineas a piece, two more one guinea each, and another half guinea, making six guineas and a half in all. And such members as were present of the first subscribers, paid their subscriptions into the hands of the Treasurer; who proposed to put the sum now received into the hands of a banker, who will pay interest for the same.

The following resolves were passed:—

I. *Resolved*, That the most hearty thanks of the primary society are due to the congregation in *Cannon-street, Birmingham*, for their generous exertions in so good a cause.

II. That we cordially approve of the step taken by our friends in *Birmingham*, in forming an assistant society, to act  
in

in conjunction and union with the society begun by the *Northampton* and *Leicestershire* association.

III. That if this plan shall meet with the general or increasing approbation of the Baptist churches, we shall rejoice to find a number of corresponding united societies formed in different parts of the kingdom.

IV. That Brother PEARCE, of *Birmingham*, who was a member of the primary society, and is the delegate from the corresponding society at *Birmingham*, be considered as a member of the committee.

V. That in order to promote the extension of this society, it appears proper to print a brief narrative of its rise, and plan, accompanied with some short address, and such further additions as shall be determined upon by a meeting of the committee at *Northampton*, Nov. 13, 1792.

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*Third Meeting of the primary Society, at Northampton,  
November 13, 1792.*

AFTER spending time in prayer, consultation, and revising of the preceding narrative, &c. It was further resolved,

I. That every corresponding society that shall be formed in different districts, be invited to send either two delegates, to any meeting of the primary society, or one delegate who shall have two votes.

II. That all persons who may be disposed to favour the design of the society, be invited to send their contributions to the Rev. R. HOGG, of *Thrapston*, Treasurer, the Rev.

A. FUL-

A. FULLER, of *Kettering*, Secretary, or the Rev. S. PEARCE, Secretary to the Corresponding Society at *Birmingham*.

III. That the society would be truly obliged to any of the friends of this design for any hints of information or advice, forwarded to the treasurer or secretaries aforefaid.

N. B. The following articles we wish to be examined and discussed in the most diligent and impartial manner:—

What qualifications are especially requisite in missionaries? What persons are known, or supposed to be, both suitable and willing to be employed in this business? What advice should be given the missionaries, or what regulations adopted concerning them?—Also, In what parts of the heathen world do there seem to be the most promising openings? What information on this head may be obtained from any late books of travels, or from christian merchants, or from such persons as would, at least, favour the design of converting the Heathen?

At this meeting Brother CARRY was not present, but wrote us as follows:—

“ I have just received a letter from Mr. THOMAS, the  
 “ *Bengal Missionary*, who informs me, that he intended  
 “ being at *Kettering* Meeting, but forgot the time when  
 “ it was to be. He tells me, that he is trying to establish  
 “ a fund in London, for a mission to *Bengal*; he ardently  
 “ desires a companion, and enquires about the result of our  
 “ meeting at *Kettering*. The reason for my writing is a  
 “ thought, that his fund for *Bengal* may interfere with  
 “ our larger plan; and whether it would not be worthy  
 “ of the Society, to try to make that and ours unite into  
 “ one

“ one fund, for the purpose of sending the Gospel to the  
 “ Heathen indefinitely.

“ Yours, &c.

W. C.”

After reading this letter, the Committee agreed to make enquiry about Mr. THOMAS, as to his character, his principles, his abilities, and his success amongst the *Hindoos*; and as the Secretary was going to *London*, the enquiries on these subjects were committed to him.

Agreeably to the last resolution of the *second meeting* of the Society at *Northampton*, the following address was prepared, printed, and circulated.

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*Address of the Society to their fellow Christians  
 at large.*

THE object of this society is to evangelize the poor, dark, idolatrous Heathen, by sending missionaries into different parts of the world, where the glorious gospel of Christ is not at present published, to preach the glad tidings of salvation by the blood of the Lamb.

It is a very affecting fact, that according to the lowest computation, there are at this moment above FOUR HUNDRED MILLIONS of our fellow-men in a state of pagan darkness. Many of whom (as the inhabitants of *New Zealand*, and most of the islands of the *Pacific Ocean*) not only live in the habits of offering human sacrifices, but are most certainly proved to be absolute Cannibals, frequently engaging in wars, and feasting on the flesh of their enemies.

Can it then be an object unworthy of the most ardent and persevering pursuit, to disseminate among them the humane and saving principles of the Christian Religion,  
 in

in order to bring these uncivilized barbarians to yield obedience to the Prince of Peace, and to found christian churches in places which now exhibit nothing but scenes of desolation.

Were these ignorant immortals but thoroughly instructed in the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, their civilization would naturally follow. And what miseries would be hereby prevented! How great the blessings that must certainly ensue, on their reception of the glorious gospel of the blessed God!

What pains and expence does it not deserve to attempt to rescue, at least some out of so many millions from ruin. Was man formed in the image of his God, and is it not desirable to endeavour to use those means which are calculated to restore that lost image? Is man the representative of Deity to the inferior creation, and ought he to be neglected and deserted, though in a ruinous state? Hath not God made of one blood all nations, and shall we not respect all our fellow-creatures as brethren? And if we really consider them as such, should not love and compassion excite us to promote their present, and especially their eternal welfare? Did the Saviour stoop so low as to visit our benighted, wretched, sinful world, to recover an apostate race from deserved ruin? Were the most undeserving and guilty, the most sinful and depraved, made the objects of his self-moved compassion? Can we give a better evidence of our partaking of his grace, than by an earnest endeavour to imitate his example, and to subserve the design of his coming into the world, and laying down his precious life; by labouring to promote the salvation of the most ignorant and helpless of mankind?

Do we, indeed, believe the gospel? Do we receive it in reality not as the word of man, but of God? Do we admit

mit into our minds the representations therein given of the state of man? Have we experienced the remedy in any measure, and can we be willing this remedy for perishing souls should remain so very much unknown to the greater part of the world? Or rather, if we have experienced its healing influence, shall we not be concerned that this gospel, with all its treasures and consolations, should be universally known?

Ah! if the soul of a Hottentot, a Hindoo, or a Negro—be like mine! And who can dispute it?—Capable of becoming like God in his moral image—Capable of enjoying his favour and love—Capable of communing with him, glorifying him, and being happy in his smiles for ever! How desirable is it to be instrumental to such inexpressibly glorious ends!

Never let us yield to discouragements, from the apprehension that the attempt would be in vain. If we have duly considered the methods whereby God has already accomplished the designs of his grace in some degree, we cannot consistently object to the adoption of similar measures now. The Acts of the Apostles (that most ancient record of christian history) informs us, that God hath chosen to propagate his truth among mankind by the efforts of their fellow-men, committing the precious treasure of the gospel into “earthen vessels,” that the excellence of the power might the more eminently appear to be of God, and not of man.

The *Jesuits* and other *Papish* missionaries have, in modern times, taken immense pains to propagate their very defective and corrupt kind of christianity, in divers heathen countries.—And our protestant brethren, belonging to other nations, have laboured with considerable success.

Especially

Especially the *Danish* mission to the coast of *Coromandel*, in the *East Indies*, has, since the year 1706, brought above 18,000 Gentoos to the profession of Christianity.—The *Dutch*, in the island of *Ceylon*, and other of their *East-India* settlements, have had still more extensive success.—In NORTH AMERICA, the apostolic ELIOTT, in the last century, was the chief instrument of the evident and thorough conversion of many of the native Indians, and by his labours, and that of other excellent Pœdobaptist ministers, several churches were raised from among those poor savages, some of which were supplied with ministers of their own race, and others with Anglo-americans. Nor were the *Baptists* without a hand in that blessed work \*. In the present century, the *Presbyterian society in Scotland for propagating christian knowledge*, has lent its support to several useful missionaries among the American Indians. The excellent DAVID BRAINERD, an account of whose life and singular success among the Indians, was published by President EDWARDS, and after him his brother *John Brainerd*, were supported by this society. They still afford their assistance to Mr. KIRKLAND, from whom very pleasing accounts have been lately received; and there is also a Mr. SERGEANT that is successfully employed among the Indians at this time. The *Moravian Brethren* have, within these sixty years past, sent missionaries to various heathen nations, and have discovered a zeal for the propagation of the gospel, which ought to provoke in all other denominations of christians a godly emulation. Their success has been remarkable among the *Greenlanders*, and in the *Danish West India Islands*. They also have sent missionaries among the *American Indians*, and the *Esquimaux* on the coast of *Labrador*, who have been hopefully owned for the conversion of

\* See Dr. COTTON MATHER's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Book VII. p. 56.

souls; and have attempted to preach the gospel to the *Tartars*, and to the *Hottentots*, to which last people they are about to renew their mission again. We are informed that in the year 1788 they had in their societies nearly 15,000 converted heathen. The *Weslean Methodists* have, within these few years, attempted a mission to the *Carribbs*, who are natives of the *West India* islands, and have laboured with success among the Negro slaves in those islands.— The labours of brother *GEORGE LIELE*, the Baptist Negro, in *Jamaica*, have been greatly blessed among his fellow Africans, both bond and free. The success of our worthy brethren, who have thus hazarded their lives for the sake of the Lord Jesus, may serve at once as a reproof to our indolence, and as a spur to our activity. Who that realizes the value of one immortal soul, but must be stimulated by these brilliant successes to assist in extending the kingdom of God?

To such an effort, arguments of the most powerful nature must impel every believer in divine revelation, and well-wisher to mankind: for various as the different opinions of christians may be, with respect to particular parts of the gospel scheme, all will agree in this, That the sacred scriptures assure us of the universal conquests of the Redeemer, that “his dominion shall extend from sea to sea, even to the ends of the earth:” that “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;” and that “the isles shall wait for his law.”

Will not God, who seeth the heart, be well pleased with every sincere and earnest effort to promote his blessed cause? Without the divine blessing we readily believe nothing to purpose can be effected. But is this an excuse for inactivity and sloth? Are we not encouraged by innumerable promises and prophecies of the divine word; and by an evident  
blessing

bleſſing crowning the labours of our brethren and predeceſſors?—Let then every chriſtian who loves the goſpel, and to whom the ſouls of men are dear, come forward in this noble cauſe. If God hath given us of this world's goods, to what more valuable purpoſe can we apply a portion of our ſubſtance than in endeavouring to ſend to our poor brethren the bread of life, of which they ſtand in ſuch perishing need? Let every one that is free-hearted offer unto the Lord. For the ſilver and gold, as well as our ſouls which he bought with his blood, are not our own, but his. And whether we can or cannot thus honour him with our ſubſtance, let us attend the generous donations of thoſe that are able to contribute to the ſupport of his cauſe, with our moſt fervent prayers. Many chriſtian ſocieties have, for ſome years back, united in extraordinary prayer for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom: And may not this be conſidered as a certain harbinger of ſucceſs? Let us perſiſt, and we ſhall prevail. Pray ye for the peace and increaſe of the church, they ſhall prosper that love her. Ye that mention the name of the Lord keep not ſilence yourſelves, nor let him reſt in ſilence, until he eſtabliſh and until he render Jeruſalem a praiſe in the earth.

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*Brother THOMAS having been requeſted to give a Narrative of himſelf, and his labours in INDIA, he wrote the following, which appeared in RIPPON'S Baptist Register, No. V.*

MY father is deacon of a Baptist Church at *Fairford*, in *Glouceſterſhire*. He trained me up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; but I proved for a long time a hopeleſs child. Very ſharp convictions were often felt and repeatedly ſtified, till it pleaſed God to make my ſins a heavy burden to me, in the year 1781.

I had

I had lately married, and my nights and days were dreadful both to me and my wife; but in the month of August that year, attending on the Rev. Dr. S——, who preached from John, vi. 27, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you*; I heard with new ears; the discourse seemed all for me, and afforded me some rest till the following week, when meditating on the scriptures I had heard, and on the Gospel by Matthew, I beheld a new object, in a new light, even Christ crucified, which has been followed, I trust, with newness of life. Then I could feelingly say with Dr. *Watts*,

“ ’Tis heaven to rest in thine embrace,  
 “ And no where else but there.”

I blush to think how unworthily I have carried it ever since to this day; but upon the whole I trust that God is my portion, and my happiness. At the time mentioned, I was settled in Great Newport-street, in the practice of surgery and midwifery: But finding the world more ready to receive credit than give it, I was obliged to sell all, and wait in lodgings, till an offer was made me of going to sea: and in the year 1783, I sailed in capacity of *Surgeon* of the *Oxford* Indiaman to *Bengal*. On my arrival at *Calcutta*, I sought for religious people, but found none. At last, how was I rejoiced to hear that a very religious man was coming to dine with me, at a house in *Calcutta*; a man who would not omit his closet hours, of a morning or evening, at sea or on land, for all the world. I concealed my impatience as well as I could, till the joyful moment came; and a moment it was; for I soon heard him take the Lord's name in vain, and it was like a cold dagger, with which I received repeated stabs, in the course of half an hour's conversation: and he was ready to kick me when I spoke of some things commonly believed by other hypocrites, concerning

cerning our Lord Jesus Christ; and, with fury, put an end to our conversation, by saying, I was a mad enthusiast to suppose that Jesus Christ had any thing to do in the creation of the world, who was born only seventeen hundred years ago.—When I returned, he went home in the same ship, and I found him a strict observer of devotional hours, but an enemy to all religion, and horridly loose, vain, and intemperate, in his life and conversation.

After this I advertised for a Christian; and that I may not be misunderstood, I shall subjoin a copy of the advertisement, from the India Gazette of November 1st, 1783, which lies now before me, and the answers I received, giving only the signature of one of them, instead of the name at length.

### RELIGIOUS SOCIETY.

A plan is now forming for the more effectually spreading the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and his glorious Gospel, in and about *Bengal*: any serious persons of any denomination, rich or poor, high or low, who would heartily approve of, join in, or gladly forward such an undertaking, are hereby invited to give a small testimony of their inclination, that they may enjoy the satisfaction of forming a communion, the most useful, the most comfortable, and the most exalted, in the world. Direct for A. B. C. to be left with the Editor.

The two following answers were received the next day:

If A. B. C. will open a subscription for a translation of the New Testament into the *Persian* and *Moorish* languages (under the direction of proper persons), he will meet with every assistance he can desire, and a competent number of subscribers to defray the expence.

ANOTHER.

## ANOTHER.

The Rev. Mr. —, having read the advertisement of A. B. C. in this day's paper, takes the earliest opportunity of expressing his satisfaction, at a proposal for the more effectually propagating, and making known the truths of the Christian religion, in this country of superstition, idolatry, and irreligion: and for setting forth the excellence of that holy institution, so replete with the means of rendering mankind happy, both here and hereafter; most cordially offers his services for promoting and encouraging so laudable an undertaking, and will think himself happy, if he can be at all instrumental in bringing it to any degree of success.

Mr. —, from the above reasons therefore, wishes an opportunity of conferring with the advertiser on the occasion.

I have never yet found out who was the author of the anonymous note; and as to Mr. —, he was chaplain to the Presidency, and I was afraid to answer him lest I should be scouted; for I had heard him preach, and the sermon as well as the text was, *The unknown God*. This well-worded note of his was intended, I suppose, merely to find me out; and I have certain reasons to believe that the advertisement gave him offence. The following year being at a house in London, where the Rev. Mr. N—— had just called, I heard that a Gospel Minister was going out to *Bengal*, and that Mr. N—— had reason to think there were religious stirrings in that country, as he had read a certain advertisement in a newspaper of such an import; which advertisement was, indeed, what you have now read.

Just as I was returning the first time, I found out Mr. — W——, who kept an Europe shop in *Calcutta*, and  
appeared

appeared to be a truly pious man: I learned by him there was a Mr. G—— and a Mr. C—— up the country\*, and one or two more, who were religious people. Mr. W—— returned to *England* with a considerable fortune. I came back also, and was baptized in *London* in 1785, and began to exhort in private societies, and to preach in different places in town and country. On consulting the Rev. Mr. ——, he advised me to go another voyage, which I accordingly did; and sailed the second time to *Bengal* in 1786, with the same captain and officers, and in the same ship as before. That very season the Rev. Mr. *Brown*, who now preaches in *Calcutta*, went over and took charge of the *Orphan School*, where all the illegitimate children of Europeans, by the native women, are educated and provided for. On my arrival there I found a Mr. —— U——, and a Mr. C——, and two or three more, who were connected with Mr. G——'s family, all serious people, and we used to go together to hear Mr. *Brown*, on the Lord's Day, who preached to the children under his charge: and after a little while we had a prayer meeting, and sometimes a word of exhortation was given. Mr. G—— removed from *Malda* to *Calcutta*: on his coming to us we were increased and strengthened, and I preached at his house every Lord's Day evening. One day, as Mr. W—— and I were walking out, he gave me to understand that Mr. G—— wished me to stay in the country, learn the language, and preach the Gospel to the *Hindoos*: but I was averse to the climate, dreaded a longer separation from my family, and had no particular bent of mind to the work: having also the charge of a ship's company as their surgeon, without any probability of the Captain's giving me leave to stay, or of another surgeon being found to supply my place, I could not accede to the proposal; yet it would often re-

\* At MALDA, about 250 miles from CALCUTTA.

turn to my mind, and after a few weeks I became greatly concerned at heart for the condition of these perishing multitudes of Pagans, in utter darkness; and was inflamed with fervent desires to go and declare the glory of Christ among them. Waters enough have risen since to damp, but will never utterly extinguish what was lighted up at that time. After much prayer and many tears, I gave myself up to this work, and the Lord removed difficulties out of the way, confirming the mission, and comforting me, by adding two seals (both Europeans) to my first labours, who continue my hope and joy, and I trust will be my crown at the day of Christ's appearing. I must here pass over many griefs and sorrows, offences and mistakes, and proceed to give you some information concerning the *Hindoos*, their behaviour and their country, with any other interesting particulars that may occur while I write.

There are four *Shasters*, or laws, among the *Hindoos*, which they call the *Vedas*; these they hold in the highest esteem, and say it is unlawful for any man to read or hear them read, except he is a *Bramin*. The *Vedas* are said to have been written many millions of years ago, which, however, is easily disproved by other books and writings in use among themselves. These *Vedas* are written in *Sanscrit*, which may be called the Latin of the East, and they are the fountain of all their books of theology, as the *Koran* among the *Moors*, and the *Bible* among us. There are eighteen sacred books called *Poorans*, which are all commentaries on the *Vedas*: and it is the custom of all the *Bramins*, to learn a great part of these by heart, and they are very apt and clever in quoting portions of them in conversation: this they find the more easy to them, as all their books are written in verse. I think it is impossible to convey to any person who never was in that country, an adequate idea of that profound reverence in which they hold

hold their sacred books. But what is wonderful, they hear the divine authority of these books questioned with patience and moderation, at all times, and in all places. Some of these books hold up for their veneration characters which are very profligate, and contain strange doctrines, evidently of an infernal origin, which have a dreadful effect on their minds and manners. They abound, moreover, with such contradictions (though on the other hand with very good moral precepts), that I am sure it is no difficult thing to convince the more intelligent persons amongst them, that they are not of divine authority: and I am persuaded, there are some to be found among them, who think there is no revelation from God yet, because they see in all these books, some things incompatible with their notion of God. That there is one great God, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omniscient; that he is to be worshipped and served; that the soul is immortal; that we all have sinned; and that some Atonement is necessary; are truths commonly believed among them all; and add to these things, the divine predictions we have of the latter day, with the encouragements of Jehovah, to declare his glory among the Heathen; and I think, without any thing more, one might find reason enough to go and preach to them. But I can truly say, wherever I have been conversing or preaching among them, I have invariably found them willing to hear, and that they always behave with great decency and respect. I trust also that the door of faith is opened to the *Hindoos*, by the conversion of two or more *Hindoos*, and by many other striking effects, which, though short of real conversion, may, in the Lord's own time, prove a great blessing to many. Some little account of *Bosho*, the Munthee, one of these converts, in a letter from him and a Bramin, will accompany these papers. He is about 35 years of age, and a person of more than ordinary capacity, and has been well educated in the Persian language; he was recommend-

ed to me by Mr. W. C——, who is a great Persian scholar; and I have employed him in the office of my Munshee, or teacher, all the time I have been in *Bengal*. It was he that composed the *Bengal Hymn* which I annex\*, and many other sonnets of his own accord, without any assistance from me or any other; and it was he who chiefly laboured with me, in the translation of Matthew, Mark, James, &c. and he often disputes with and confounds the Bramins, both learned and unlearned, though he is not a Bramin himself, but of the writer *Cast* †; and this is not in a small degree extraordinary, for the Bramins think it a very great condescension to hold an argument with any person whose *Cast* is inferior to that of a Bramin. This man has a considerable degree of knowledge and gifts, and I hope they will one day shine forth to the good of many. I should have baptized him, but his relations refused to give him his wife and children. He will accomplish his wishes I hope, before I return, and then his family will be numbered with the stated hearers, and he himself be baptized with the Bramin *Parbotee*, of whom I shall give you a short account presently. The greatest difficulty in spreading of the Gospel in *Bengal*, arises from the *Cast*: for all who are baptized, and partake of bread and wine with us, *will lose cast*; and when a man has lost cast, his most intimate friends and nearest relations will forsake him for ever. He cannot possibly be restored again by any means; and the meanest Hindoo, from that time, refuses to eat, drink, or converse with him; he becomes an outcast and a vagabond in their eyes, in the most strict sense. But when the way is once opened, the difficulty will gradually diminish, and, if they walk as becometh the gospel, they will become a cast of themselves, and that an honourable one too.

\* This Hymn, with a metrical version, will be found at the end of this number.

† Order or tribe.

I might here give you an entertaining account of many who have left off their idolatry, flower-offerings, and vain superstitions, and are in the habit of reading the Bible \* as the Word of God, and the only book that discovers, to their satisfaction, the way of salvation: but I am already spinning out my paper to a greater length than I intended, and what I have to say of *Parbotee* will take up a considerable portion of your time. I will by the bye, just mention a few things of *Mohun Chund*, another Bramin, of whom I once hoped well, whose heart failed him, at last: but I cannot say, even now, that I have given up all hopes of him—far from it. This man is a Bramin of some repute, and has a vast number of disciples, who prostrate themselves at his feet wherever they meet him. He lives at *Boolahant*, about six miles from *Malda*. He came to hear me in the crowd, and was easily to be distinguished from the rest, by his fixed attention and regular attendance. One day, after I had been discoursing about prayer, he very gravely asked me, “Sir, when a man prays to God, how many days is it before he gets an answer?”—I then repeated the account of the woman of *Canaan*, and other different cases: he continued to attend, converse, and write, on the things of the Gospel, and seemed at length convinced that he was a great sinner before God; that there was no refuge for him among all their shafters; and that the gospel alone was of God, discovering the way of salvation. This man continually came to see me, and was reckoned by his people a convert to Christianity, for he disused the worship and ceremony of the Hindoos, to his own temporal loss; and forbade that homage which had long been superstitiously paid him from the people. He often talked publicly with great persuasion, to

\* They have Matthew, Mark, James, some part of Genesis and the Psalms, with different parts of the prophecies, in Bengalee manuscript: three or four of them have all the above, and some only a single part, which they lend to one another and copy.

other Bramins, in favour of the Bible. On the 28th of June, 1790, he had been to pay me a visit, and returning to his own home, he found there *Parbotee*, a Bramin, who called to see him.

*Parbotee* was a man of *title*, and of a more high and honourable rank than this man. He was also a very strict observer of the Hindoo laws and customs, daily rising early in the morning, and repairing to the distant jungles \* to gather curious flowers, superstitiously valued amongst them; and these he offered, with abundant forms, in the river *Mahanuddee*, which was near; and repaired, at particular seasons, to their more sacred river the *Ganges*, which they say cleanses from sin.—There was not his equal in all the neighbourhood, for zeal and accuracy; a thorough devotee. This man, having heard of our new Shaster, the Bible, was not a little displeas'd: and when he understood that the other Bramin who came in, had been to see me, he required of him to go and wash his clothes, for he must be defiled, and would defile, for he had been in the company of an Englishman: and it is the common custom of all religious orders among them, to go out of the company of an Englishman or Mahometan, into the river, and immerse their bodies, with their clothes on. I have often observed the Bramins, and *Pundits* †, do so, after holding any conversation with me. To induce this man to go and wash his clothes, *Parbotee* urged that I was of the *Maleetch*, viz. *unclean*, if not *filthy*. He replied, that filthy men did filthy deeds; whereas he could never say so of this Englishman—and he would not go and wash his clothes. The other continued to insist upon it, and finding his injunction was not honoured, he proceeded to do a thing which will appear trivial to you, but is a very formidable action among them.

\* Woods.

† Viz. Learned Doctors.

It is the custom of the country to smoke very much; and their tobacco is made up into a paste, with spices, &c. this paste they place on one side of a copper-plate, and coals of fire on the other side; the tobacco being lighted, they then put it on the upper extremity of a tube, and the lower extremity runs down into a shell, or other vessel, containing cold water, and sometimes rose water, which is very common there. The smoke is agreeably drawn through the cooling water by means of another flexible tube, which is the pipe, and is generally about twelve feet long:—Now, when Bramins, or others of equal cast, meet together, it is a constant mark of friendship and good understanding for the man of the house to offer this Hookah to his visitor, and it is passed on from one to the other. But when the Bramin in question gave the Hookah to *Parbotee*, he emptied the water out of it: this is the action that will appear little to you, but which is a kind of formal disgrace among them, and proves a forerunner to that which is worse than death, viz. *loosing cast*. Such a proceeding before witnesses, could not escape particular notice, nor fail of drawing the attention of many, to the great dishonour of *Mohun Chund*: So he left the company, and went and poured out his complaint to God in prayer. The day was far gone, he returned no more to his company, but retired with his family to rest.—About two in the morning he was called up by *Parbotee*, with vehement cries; and on opening the door, found him in great agitation, and, to his inexpressible surprize, *Parbotee* desired to hear the Gospel, and that the Bramin *Chund* would go and pray for him: he replied as well as he could, and took him to the house of *Bosboo* the Munshree, where they spent their time till day-light, in reading, praying, and singing. But matters were not yet explained: they observed he did not go to his usual ceremonies, but returned to Munshree's house in great trouble of mind, about noon, making his former requests, and, on their repeated enquiry, he

he related to them a very remarkable dream, in which I have no doubt at all but he received divine admonition and instruction. The effects of it were visible on his body and mind for several days. I found it very difficult to administer any consolation to him, and was afraid the consequences might be soon fatal; but he continued daily to hear the Gospel, and began to join the rest in singing and praying; and confessed to all his former folly, and professed to believe that the Bible was the only word of God, and Jesus Christ the only Saviour. When I left *Bengal*, he had continued to walk in an orderly becoming manner, and gave me and others great satisfaction. I cannot pass by one remark in my diary; though it is rather long, I shall here give you a copy of it verbatim. You must know we \* were all on the river, going a journey of 230 miles; and we had a prayer meeting on setting out. *Mohun Chund*, and *Ram Boshoo*, the Munshee, having made their intercessions, I called upon *Parbotee*, whom I had never before heard; and though the Munshee's prayer was more judicious and orderly, yet that of *Parbotee*, both in manner and matter, was at that time inexpressibly sweet and awful to my spirit.

*Extract of my Diary of August 19, 1790.*

‘ Endeavour to recollect a little of *Parbotee*'s unequalled prayer.

*Expressions in PARBOTEE'S Prayer.*

“ I performed the rights of the Ganges; I called this good—I worshipped wood and stone; I called *this* good—  
 “ I heard the shafters of men, that are all false and vain; I  
 “ called this good—Lord, I am a most wretched creature  
 “ to this day: I know nothing—nothing. I have spent all  
 “ my days in wickedness, and have not obtained the least

\* Munshee, Parbotee, Mohun Chund, and myself.

“ know—

“ knowledge of God. O put far from me these evil things!  
 “ O make them depart far from me. I have hearkened  
 “ now to thy word. I will hear *them* no more—I will not  
 “ the least regard the idols of wood and stone any more!—  
 “ Vanity: lies. Lord, I will hear no more at all these shaf-  
 “ ters of the Hindoos; they are all false and vain. Wretch-  
 “ ed sinner! Save me! O save—save, save me. Give—  
 “ give—O give—Give, O Lord! Give me to know—  
 “ Hell! what?—Heaven! what?—Without the blood of  
 “ Christ I shall never be saved. Without the flesh of Christ  
 “ I shall never live\*.—Lord, what is the meaning of this?  
 “ I know not what it is—how can I get the blood of  
 “ Christ?—O teach me, I will do any thing thou say’st—  
 “ Cast! what?—Home! what?—Friends! what?—Life!  
 “ what?—What is any thing? all is nothing but thee.—  
 “ I want no money †, I want nothing but thee. O what a  
 “ wretched sinner am I! O tell me thy way! O tell me  
 “ by *Munsee*; tell me by the *Sabaib* ‡. We are going to  
 “ *Calcutta*—Many, many, wicked things are there. O keep  
 “ us all while we stay there.

“ O that I had but love! O that I had but faith!—  
 “ O that I had forgiveness! O that I had but those things  
 “ which thy people have. Like them—O give me like  
 “ them, like them. O Lord, how many evil things are in  
 “ my mind every day! I am a wicked blasphemous wretch!  
 “ I have shame in me—Wicked shame before the people,  
 “ and wicked fear of men!—Far, O far away from me,  
 “ put far away my sins. Forgive me; and teach me what

\* He had heard read John, vi. 53.

† Referring, perhaps, to some cruel charges, that they followed the Gospel for money: but the truth is, they made no gain by it, of a temporal kind; they suffered LOSS.

‡ SAHAIB, i. e. Sir. He meant Mr. THOMAS.

“ I shall do. I will do any thing. O that I did but know  
 “ what to do: O give---give---give—Lord what shall,  
 “ what can I do?”

‘ Here he burst into a flood of tears, with now and then  
 ‘ such fervent cries, as I never before heard: he continued  
 ‘ in prayer about half an hour. I read and explained the  
 ‘ faithful promises of God to supply the poor and needy,  
 ‘ and to satisfy the thirsty soul with living waters; spoke  
 ‘ of the mind, and the inner man, delighting in God mani-  
 ‘ fested in the flesh, and crucified for sin; that this was  
 ‘ eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. After  
 ‘ concluding, he returned to his boat, and, as the Munshee  
 ‘ tells me, wept there over his own sinfulness, a long time.’  
 Thus far my diary.

Considering that this took place almost two months  
 after the dream, and observing the deep concern of mind  
 which is but imperfectly expressed in this written account;  
 you will agree with me, that it is a very extraordinary affair;  
 and the loss and shame among men with which it has been  
 ever since followed, put it beyond all doubt, with me, that  
 it has pleased God to awaken this man. He continues, a  
 living witness to thousands, of the vanity of paganism, and  
 the reality of the christian religion. The Bramins and re-  
 lations of these people, who find their interests shaken, have  
 raised reports, stirred up enemies, and brought accusations  
 against them evidently false; but they behave on these trying  
 occasions, like men; like christians who have their trust  
 and hope in God; and they are to be baptized on my return  
 to that country, and so *lose cast* for ever, in which many will  
 join them, and so become at least stated hearers of the Gospel.  
 A man of *Parbotee*’s high authority among them being on  
 our side, if he could only say he thought that the Bible *might*  
*be true*, and of divine authority, would be a very great bles-  
 sing to any Missionary whose heart should be stirred up to go  
 and

and preach to them. But I bless God, and reflect on it with great comfort, that there are *thousands* of *Hindoos*, *Bramins*, and others, who are ready to own as much, and more than this; and if these were dead, I should go over to them, with all joy and confidence of hope, assuredly gathering, from these tokens, and many others, that the Lord hath called me to preach unto them *the unsearchable riches of Christ*: and I hope and pray, he will yet enable and call others more fit for, and worthy of, this delightful work than myself. There are several *Bramins* who have the book of Matthew in their hands, who read it in their families, and among their friends, whom I have never seen; and there are several with whom I have conversed, that have read the scriptures to some good effect, though not really converted to Christ. These would all rejoice to see more witnesses of the truth, as it is in Jesus, among them. The two converts I have mentioned to you expressed a desire of sending a message to the Rev. Mr. — with whom they knew I corresponded; to this I replied, they had better write it down; they did so, and I have translated it, and a copy of their letter you will see at the close of these papers\*.

In addition to what may be gathered from the above, of their religion and manners, I shall mention a few things, which shew that the necessity of some *atonement for sin*, is one of their prevailing ideas. I believe that human sacrifices are very rare, if not entirely unknown among them: although about four years since there was an account of one in the India papers; but there are doubts of the authority from whence it came. Sacrifices are made, however, of buffaloes, kids, and lambs, which are to be publicly seen at their stated seasons. They have also a custom of using several voluntary tortures, which every person, who has resided

\* See page 32.

in the country for a year or two, must be more or less acquainted with. I shall describe two or three of them:

1st. *That of swinging.* The person who makes this atonement has two iron *flesh-hooks* passed through the integuments, on each side the back-bone; and being suspended by ropes attached to these hooks, he is drawn up above 40 feet in the air, and there twirled round for a considerable time; all which he bears without any expression of pain or impatience. Whatever he throws down of fruit, or the like, is caught up with great avidity, and counted sacred. Sometimes the skin has given way, and the person has been dashed to pieces: so now, in all that I have seen, cloth has been passed round the middle, for the hooks to hold by with the skin. The ceremony may be seen in almost every town once a-year.

Another torture is after this manner: The man *passes threads through each of his sides*, in six places; and the threads being thirty yards long, and fixed at each end, he dances backward and forward as in a rope walk.

A third is *running a spit of four feet long all through the tongue*, and drawing it backwards and forwards. Besides which, I might mention *sitting in one position for years*, exposed to fires in hot weather, and cold dews in cold weather. Many other things of a like nature are common among them.

I shall conclude with an instance I have heard from some of our religious brethren at *Calcutta*. Mr. *Swartz*, or one of the *Malabarian* missionaries, related it to them.

A certain man, on the Malabar coast, had enquired of various devotees and priests, how he might make atonement for his sin; and at last he was directed to drive iron spikes,

spikes, sufficiently blunted, through his sandals; and on these spikes he was to place his naked feet, and walk (if I mistake not) 250 cofs, that is about 480 miles. If through loss of blood, or weakness of body, he was obliged to halt, he might wait for healing and strength. He undertook the journey, and while he halted under a large shady tree, where the Gospel was sometimes preached, one of the missionaries came, and preached in his hearing, from these words, *The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.* While he was preaching, the man rose up, threw off his torturing sandals, and cried out aloud, *This is what I want;* and he became a lively witness, that the blood of Jesus Christ does cleanse from all sins indeed.

It may appear a very formidable undertaking to go and preach among these poor destitute perishing souls. Perhaps the heat of the climate, and the barbarous manners of heathens in general, may operate in part, as a discouragement to some, who would otherwise cordially engage in this service; but where God *makes willing*, obstacles will comparatively disappear. One part of the year the weather is cold enough: at night we can bear two or three blankets, and should be unable to sleep for cold without them. In the day we use warm clothes and fires, especially in the upper parts of Bengal, which lies in latitude 26° N. The country abounds with provisions at a cheap rate; so that thousands of the natives maintain themselves and families, pay rent and customs, out of an income not exceeding 10s. sterling per month.

Near *Malda*, at which place I resided, the prices of provisions in common were as follow; but at *Calcutta* they are much dearer:

		s.	d.		s.	d.
30 Fowls	- -	2	6	A Sheep	- -	2 6
16 Ducks	- -	2	6	A Kid	- -	0 8
A Hog	- -	2	6	A Lamb	- -	0 8
A Deer	- -	2	6			

Pine apples, mangoes, plantains, limes, melons, peaches, vegetables, and fish, very plenty and cheap; and other things in proportion. But if an European must have a great house, a palanquin, a number of servants, and eat and drink the unwholesome food brought from Europe; as hams, tongues, claret, porter, &c. *Bengal* may prove both an expensive and unhealthy place to him; otherwise the country may be enjoyed, and several servants kept at a small expence.—Some servants are necessary there, which would be quite superfluous here; such as a person to carry a chatta, or kind of umbrella; a cook, a washerman, and perhaps more: the most expensive of these is the cook, and his whole wages will amount to no more than 15s. per month at farthest, and he find himself. House-rent is the most expensive article; for the lawful interest of money in that country is 12 per cent. and the Company allows eight. But for my part, I have lived in a boat for six months together, as comfortably as any prince in Europe; and for 16 or 18s. a missionary may build an excellent house, with mud walls and straw covering. I have done this also, and lived more comfortably than I do now in England: so that the difficulties attending a Gospel mission are not insuperable; if they appear so, it is only at a distance; and should they be ever so great, in a service of this kind, we expect, through God, to do valiantly.

As to the learning of the language, it is a work attended with difficulties: but when the whole time is devoted to it, three or four months will bring a man through the greatest

of them; and he will begin to converse with the natives, with great amusement and pleasure to himself, and profit to them. And as to the barbarity of these people, it is not with them as it is with other Pagans, of whom we have read and heard: for the *Hindoos* are certainly distinguished from all people on the face of the earth, for their harmless and inoffensive behaviour; and the province of *Bengal*, and its inhabitants, are proverbially distinguished from all other parts of *India*, for their gentleness of manners, and harmless behaviour to their enemies as well as their friends. I have known among them men of considerable power and authority, who were highly offended with me, because they imagined my work affected their interests (Acts xx. 25): but I lived within a mile of them, in a lonely house, with my windows and doors wide open all night, without sword or fire-arms, and free from the smallest apprehension of danger. — However, this could not be prudently done in the neighbourhood of *Calcutta*.

In the year 1787 I began to learn to speak and write the *Bengalee*. Till the month of June or July of this year, I was engaged at *Calcutta*, and preached to a few Europeans there. In 1788 I could *converse* freely with them, especially with those I was well acquainted with. In 1789 I began to find that my pronunciation was generally very defective, and consequently my preaching, for the most part, could not be understood: I had also begun to translate. I remained there the second time, from the middle of 1786, till the end of 1791; but had no thoughts of staying there till about the beginning of 1787, nor did I sit down to the work till about the middle of that year: so all the time spent among them was five years and a half; but most of this time I have preached twice every Lord's Day to a congregation of *Europeans* in the country. Considering this, and the difficulties that must necessarily occur to the first adventurer, (for they have no dictionary, vocabulary, nor printed books

to assist one, as in European countries); I say, considering these things, the time may be reckoned but two or three years; and I doubt not but a person of a moderate capacity may attain, in that time, as much knowledge of the language as I have; and I can now express myself in *prayer*, *preaching*, and *conversation*, comfortably to myself, and so as to be understood by others.

JOHN THOMAS.

*Letter from Hindoo Christians to the Rev. Mr. ———.*

GREAT SIR,                      *Dated 7th month Mang, 1198.*

WE sinful Heathens for a long time have used worship and ceremonies, according to our own paganish shafters and customs, and we have been accustomed to think, that different kinds of people have different kinds of shafters\*, would be saved by the works thereof. The deeds of the shafters of this our country you will be acquainted with by conversing with Mr. *Thomas*.

O great Sir, though we thought that many nations had many kinds of shafters, yet in the country of the English we thought there was no shafter at all; for, concerning sin and holiness, those that are here have no judgment at all. We have even thought that they were not men, but a kind of other creatures like devourers. Within these six years, it is our mercy and praise that Mr. *John Thomas* came into this country. Such a kind of ootum † person we have neither seen, heard, or known of, at any time. On his com-

\* Holy laws.

† OOTUM, or best kind. They say there are three sorts of men in the world—the ootum, muddheum, and odddhum; that is, the best, middling, and worst kind.