

British rule has done away with many exaggerated caste distinctions which existed years ago. But the work of abolishing castes entirely would take centuries. It is questionable whether the victory would be worth the trouble. The Pariahs are satisfied with their political equality; nor does their social inferiority bear so heavily on them as it would seem. In India no Hindoo is ashamed of his caste; his position in life is the accident of birth, and he is perfectly resigned. Every Hindoo is persuaded that the Brahmins came from the mouth of the God Brahma, and none more so than the Brahmins themselves. This persuasion pervading every caste, high and low, is the source of the almost inconceivable influence the Brahmins wield and their inordinate pride.

It is this pride, coupled with their natural rapacity, that makes their conversion to Catholicism such a difficult task. Although no longer identified as a body with the priestly profession, they are still the priests of the idols; and the revenues of the pagodas are theirs. Moreover, such is the legislation among the people that the Brahmins, who would embrace the Christian faith, would be driven out of the caste. This is the lowest degree of Indian degradation.

It will be seen, then, how important the conversion of the Brahmins is from the missionary's standpoint, and we can appreciate the difficulty the Christian missionary labors under in his effort to introduce the doctrines of the Gospel. The prejudices of centuries have to be attacked and overthrown before the work of building up the faith in souls is begun. In this the preliminary work is undoubtedly the hardest. An Indian is not merely the slave of his caste, with its inexorable isolating laws, but he is a pagan besides. Europeans endeavor to find a symbolism underlying the various forms of Hindooism. But the testimony of the Brahmins themselves, who