

REVELATION IN HINDUISM AND THE RISE OF HERETICAL
VIEWS ABOUT BIBLICAL INSPIRATION AMONG
MID-VICTORIAN BROAD CHURCHMEN
(PART II)

by Richard Fox Young

It was symptomatic of missionary expositions of Christianity for Hindus throughout the nineteenth century that they were based upon Paleyan or Evidential Apologetics, which had originated largely in reaction to DAVID HUME's empiricism, particularly his assault upon the credibility of miracles. HUME's logic was that miracles are beyond reasonable belief because alleged witnesses were probably charlatans, if not simply dull-witted. All religions claim miracles on their behalf; all cannot be likewise true; all must, in consequence, be dismissed by reasonable people.²² The outstanding reply to this skepticism by an orthodox churchman was PALEY's *View of the Evidences of Christianity* (first edition 1794), which amassed citations from Roman writers to confirm a probability argument in favor of the witnesses' credibility: many "professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles, passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings, voluntarily undergone in attestation of the accounts which they delivered." Moreover, "there is not satisfactory evidence that persons pretending to be original witnesses of any similar miracles, have acted in the same manner."²³ Suffering therefore demonstrates sincerity (but not veracity according to Hume); men do not resist oppression on behalf of falsehood.²⁴ Miracles in other religions are merely ornamental, whereas in Christianity they are at its very center, for God demonstrates by them he has vouchsafed his message to his prophets and Son. The odd assumption throughout all of this was that Hindus, just as nineteenth-century empiricists, needed convincing about the possibility and actuality of miracles attributed to Christ and others: they did not, as we shall see.

MUIR incorporated these Paleyan external proofs of Christianity's being revelation from God into his thrice edited expose of Hinduism, the *Mata-parikṣā* (*Examination of Religions*, 1839, 1840, 1852-1854), written in flawless Sanskrit meters and circulated gratis among brahmin pandits. Portraying himself as an impartial observer who had become a Christian because of convincing logical evidence, MUIR laid down as the primary criterion for distinguishing the true religion from false ones the necessity of miracle-working power in the founder sufficient to confirm his authority in divine matters (*camathākārakriyāśaktiḥ sthitā śāstraṇāpravarttate*),²⁵ confirmed by witnesses who endured persecution and committed their observations to written records. A tailor-made argument to be sure, and one guaranteed to at least impress brahmins with the novelty of Christian apologetics, not being empiricists in need of such convincing. One might suppose that pandits viewed the logic of the *Mataparikṣā* as too exotic to be taken seriously. On the contrary, a number of brahmins responded to Muir, also in Sanskrit, on a

variety of points from which we shall select only those dealing with Paleyan evidences and the general subject of revelation.²⁶

One of the brahmins who endeavored to refute MUIR's contentions was a Benares pandit named NĪLAKAṆṬHA GOREH (1825–1885), as stalwart an orthodox Hindu as ever there was, who took exception to the evidence based on miracles. From his *Śāstratattvavinimaya* (A Verdict on the Truth of the [Hindu] Scriptures, ms. 1844–1845), we extract the following: "I ask how contemporary men are supposed to confirm that this [wonder-working] power, expired so long ago, was possessed by this religion's founder? Why must one think that it was exercised directly before the eyes of witnesses? And why should one believe that adversaries tested them? If you say that all this is to be understood according to the Bible, then look here, why not just assume this book is divine – after all, does it not claim to be? Besides, would not someone who is prepared to falsely say his religion is divine contrive stories in order to substantiate its authority? [Muir says,] 'How could contemporary people believe something that did not happen?' But here too you should use the method you use when examining other religions. For instance, there are currently stories circulating everywhere about miraculous things, but which are actually false. Even now one sees that intelligent people accept them as true. [Muir says,] 'It is indicative of this religion's divine origin that people endured hardship when they converted to it.' But we see that people bear hardship by faith alone and die at Prayāga, even though for an unseen reward."²⁷

What this passage would have implied to MUIR is that, if miraculous evidences are insisted upon, the same can be demanded of Christianity: Hindus like NĪLAKAṆṬHA, though predisposed to believe in miracles, including Jesus Christ's,²⁸ were quick to realize that if verifying criteria were lacking in their own accounts for them, they were not more fully present in the Gospel. There is in ROWLAND WILLIAMS's complaint that it is illogical for Christians to reject miracles recorded in Hindu literature when equally implausible events in the Bible are accepted with credulity, a reasonance of NĪLAKAṆṬHA's insistence that MUIR be willing to accept the consequences of his own verifying criteria. That WILLIAMS knew how his imaginary brahmins in *Paramēswara-jnyāna-gōshthī* should respond to external proofs based on miracles must be due to MUIR's dialogue with the Benares pandit.²⁹

MUIR was next to learn that one of the unfortunate consequences of expositions of Christianity based on evidential proof was that Hindus learned little about Jesus Christ but inordinately much about miracles, with the additional consequence that Hindus regarded his religion as deficient in dogmatic depth and overly dependent upon conjectural reasoning (to which the pandits assigned a pejorative Sanskrit term, *tarka*), leaving little or nothing to faith. With this contrast in mind, NĪLAKAṆṬHA introduced his understanding of revelation: "A divine scripture is profound, its sense beyond the scope of human argumentation. One ought not to search for defects in it. Your religion also contains stories beyond the scope of human reasoning: it is alleged, for example, that a conversation was held between a snake and the

original woman. . . . The human intellect's inability to grasp subtle meaning easily is famous. Indeed, if it could easily ascertain truth, then nothing would be profound. When a religion is easily grasped by the mind, even by dullards, it is neither divine nor partakes of the divine. . . . Even as you criticize our scripture, our faith increases still more through certainty of its profundity. . . . One should not subject to argumentation realities which surpass thought. . . . Those who desire their well-being must exercise faith and nothing but faith in the scripture. Faith is indeed not the culmination of arguing. . . . Reason should conform to scripture, not the scripture to reason. . . . Scripture is self-validifying, whereas reason is just for understanding it. One must therefore use reason that is conformable – never contradictory – to what the scriptures declare.”³⁰

Thus did Muir learn from NĪLAKAṆṬHA that Hindus approach their scriptures in much the same manner as Christians: with faith (*śraddhā*) and aversion toward insistence upon reducing spiritual truths to a logically consistent set of propositions. NĪLAKAṆṬHA's reference to the Vedas' capacity for “self-validification” (*svataḥpramāṇyatva*) would have reminded MUIR of what he already knew from reading Hindu philosophical literature, that knowledge is bifurcated into two divisions, one being secular knowledge (*laukikavidyā*), the domain of sense perception (*pratyakṣa*) and logical inference (*anumāna*), the other being divine knowledge (*alaukikavidyā*), the domain of metaphysics, soteriology, and ethics, where revelation must come to man's aid. Being beyond the realms of sense and inference, revelation must be accepted as it is; there are no grounds for verification apart from itself, least of all miracles, which belong to the domain of *laukikavidyā* and have nothing to do with divine knowledge. At this point, NĪLAKAṆṬHA's discourse impressed upon MUIR that, for all his discussion of them, miracles just interfered with his Hindu partner-in-dialogue's appreciation of the Bible for what it says on other points. To have claimed that the Christian scriptures are true merely because they say so and because they teach otherwise unknowable verities would have been dogmatic claims that Nīlakaṇṭha could at least comprehend, even if not accept.

MUIR aroused the ire of another pandit as well, this one a vitriolic Bengali pandit, HARACANDRA TARKAṢAṆCĀNANA, whose *Matāparikṣottara* (An Answer to [MUIR's] *Matāparikṣā*, Calcutta 1840) combined orthodox Hindu presuppositions with European free-thought in an uneasy alliance. As in NĪLAKAṆṬHA's case, HARACANDRA held views on Vedic revelation that were drawn from a classical provenance³¹ and descanted upon MUIR's reluctance to admit that Vedic miracles were just as plausible as the Bible's.³² But this was all so obscured by a thick veneer of rumormongering (e.g., Hindu converts are given in marriage to daughters of missionaries), canards (the Virgin Mary was a temple whore), cavils based on science (how could a motionless and unintelligent star point the maji to Bethlehem), contradictions in the Bible (the discrepancies in Christ's geneology, in the discovery of the empty tomb, and in the post resurrection appearances), the so-called Great Divide between pre- and post-Constantinian Christianity (before which Christianity was a

persecuted religion and afterwards a persecuting one), and admiring references to European free-thinkers and Unitarians³³ that HARACANDRA was branded – rather inappropriately in view of his orthodoxy – a Pyrrhonist by the Christian community in Calcutta. Upon returning to his homeland, this was also how MUIR depicted HARACANDRA in reports to Broad Churchmen on his experiments with dialogue in India.³⁴

HARACANDRA turned the tables on MUIR by applying to Christianity the critical tools that his adversary used with Hinduism: whereas MUIR supposed that he found contradictions within the Vedas, relying on the latest researches of European Indologists (among others, the *Mataparikṣā* quoted H. T. COLEBROOKE and H. H. WILSON), HARACANDRA countered by citing some of the latest Western works hostile to orthodox Christianity. This strategy caught MUIR off-balance; being schooled in the external evidences of Paleyan Apologetics and being a long-term resident of isolated administrative centers in the Indian mofussil, he had not been able to keep in touch with developments in theology and biblical studies at home.³⁵ To a certain degree, then, HARACANDRA was able to discomfit MUIR by demonstrating that, within the Western world itself, there was neither unanimity on miracles nor consensus about the historical reliability of the Gospel narratives. Why then should Hindus accede to the Bible's veracity when intelligent Europeans were themselves not sure about it?

MUIR himself was no longer sure about external evidences, and the controversy over his *Mataparikṣā* marks the onset of his searching phase, a search, that is, for that in the Christian revelation which distinguishes it from all others as God-given.³⁶ If miracles and other evidences never amounted to more than a dubious argument based on probability, then perhaps the answer lay in Christianity's moral excellence, or *śreṣṭhatā* as he had termed it in the *Mataparikṣā*'s Sanskrit,³⁷ but to which he had devoted a mere handful of verses in comparison with hundreds on Paleyan proofs. NĪLAKAṆṬHA and HARACANDRA had not so much shaken his faith as a Christian as his confidence in the apologetical methods elaborated by Paley. Badly in need of catching up with new theological currents, MUIR found, upon returning to London and Edingburgh, that Broad Church ideas, especially the insistence upon internal evidences at the expense of external ones, most aptly suited what he had learned through dialogue with Hindus. From 1853 onward, we find him corresponding with numerous Broad Churchmen, Baron BUNSEN, ROWLAND WILLIAMS, and H. B. WILSON, and busily engaged in disseminating the writings of then radical continental Bible scholars (e.g., the Dutch Pentateuchal authority, ABRAHAM KEUNEN³⁸), in addition to the Indological research for which he became famous.

Henry Bristow Wilson

At St. John's College, Oxford, where WILSON tutored in Anglo-Saxon and theology for a quarter-century (1825–1850), he emerged from a conservative

phase (during which he was chiefly known for publicly condemning JOHN HENRY NEWMAN's *Tract XC*) and began to enunciate Broad Church ideas, especially the hope of a comprehensive "national church", still grounded on the Articles and Prayer Book, but interpreted elastically along lines earlier set forth by COLERIDGE's *On the Constitution of the Church and State According to the Idea of Each* (1850). The Church was its own worst enemy according to WILSON, so "he rejected the belief in authority claimed by traditional dogmas and creeds, supposedly derived from a divine revelation, and sanctioned by centuries of use in the Church".³⁹ If the corporate judgment of the Church on religious matters could be tyrannical, coming between believers and their Bible, then private judgment, based on each believer's reasoning powers and faith, must be encouraged instead of restricted by ecclesiastical authorities. Orthodox churchmen would no doubt have applauded his Protestant stance, unremarkable in pleading for the individual Christian's freedom to read the scriptures according to private religious sense, were it not that WILSON denied the dogma of plenary inspiration. Not that man did not stand in need of revelation, but that segments of that revelation were not really revelation at all but human superimpositions, and as such, objectionable. Miracles, for instance, could be dispensed with because "it was degrading to the notion of a perfect and omnipotent Deity that he should have to intervene personally to upset the order of the universe from time to time, merely to convince man of his power".⁴⁰ Nothing in scripture, then, was so sacred as to be exempt from reason; but on this WILSON was vague, saying only that reason and faith must not be arbitrarily separated: "reason must judge faith, and faith elevate reason."⁴¹

If, then, "the Word of God" is revealed somewhere "in the Bible", how does one discern the interstices between its divine and merely human parts? For WILSON as for WILLIAMS and other Broad Churchmen, the answer lay in man's – universal man's – moral sense,⁴² which was assumed not to differ greatly from that of educated and cultured Victorian Britons. Of course this latent moral sense must be trained to reflect upon itself, which, when being done, reflexively responds to that in the scripture which is authentically inspired. The Church's duty, then, is to awaken this human faculty, for if the Bible's historical veracity was dubious and the Church's dogmatic conception of scripture too, at least its moral purport – especially in the New Testament – was not.⁴³ As WILSON phrased it in his controversial contribution to *Essays and Reviews*, all men, believers and otherwise, must distinguish "between the different words which [the Bible] contains, between the dark patches of human passion and error which form a partial crust upon it, and the bright center of spiritual truth within",⁴⁴ a statement than which none could be better calculated to anger orthodox churchmen, as it did in 1861 when he was accused of heresy at the Court of Arches.⁴⁵

Earlier in that same year, when the protest against WILSON (and WILLIAMS) was reaching its peak, the first published indication of MUIR's Broad Church sympathies and adoption of critical biblical studies appeared, replete with arguments against the dogma of plenary inspiration: *A Brief Examination of*

Prevalent Opinions on the Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments (London 1861).⁴⁶ To this work Wilson contributed a lengthy preface restating the ideas already alluded to above, but with a new twist in one passage indicative of the information MUIR had passed on to him about the fate that Paleyan Evidential Theology had suffered at the hands of his Hindu partners-in-dialogue. One passage should be quoted in full to show how WILSON assimilated this information and used it to drive home his point that the Church must leave to private judgment the responsibility to ascertain where the moral value of the Bible rests:⁴⁷ "There is a consideration which will not be without weight in the minds of some – now an increasing number – who are brought into immediate contact with non-Christians, such as Hindus and Mahommedans, in our great Eastern Empire and elsewhere. Those people have sacred books as well as we. A claim is set up for the Divine Inspiration both of the Koran and the Vedas. Great numbers are educated in those beliefs, and embrace them as firmly as Christians generally embrace the doctrine of the Inspiration of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Can it then be legitimate to demand of the Mohammedan and the Hindu to test, by their reason and their moral sense, the Scriptures which they hold to be inspired, and which contain many truths, to invite them to 'sift the chaff from the wheat' in that which their fathers and teachers tell them is a Revelation, and not to allow the application of the same method to the Christian Scriptures? Or, in other words, does the setting up a claim for a book, that it is a Revelation, properly bar any examination into its contents as to how far they correspond with such pretensions, or in what sense it can be so called? We may also be assured that, as Christianity comes into actual close contact with Orientals of acute intellects, and inheriting traditional faiths, it will be met with a style of controversy which will come upon some among us with surprise. Many things will be disputed, which we have been accustomed to take for granted, and proofs will be demanded, which those who have been brought up in the external evidence school of the last century, may not be prepared to supply. When we insist that the Inspiration of the Vedas is merely a traditional claim, which cannot shut out an examination of their contents and of the systems alleged to be founded upon them, neither the pandits of Benares [i.e., NILAKAṆṬHA], nor the freethinkers of Calcutta [i.e., HARACANDRA], will admit our claim on behalf of our Bible, to have, in the outset of the argument, a greater presumption in its favour. Indeed by not at once appealing to the immeasurable superiority of the Christian religion generally taken in its moral purport, we should be keeping in the back ground the strongest part of our case."

WILLIAM's *Paramēswara-jnyāna-gōshthī*, with its dialogues between fictional Anglican divines, brahmins, and Buddhists, no less than WILSON's veiled references to MUIR's actual clash with Hindu stalwarts, demonstrate that the exigencies to which Paleyan Apologetics and the dogma of plenary inspiration were subjected in the process of interreligious dialogue served to justify in the minds of Broad Churchmen the legitimacy of their method of approaching the Bible: that is, as a book purported to be revelatory, just as

the sacred books of the Hindus are, but which must be established to be such by reason, man's moral sense, and the critical apparatus of modern scholarship. Although they drew upon evidence from outside their religion to make this point, the lesson was strictly for fellow believers; and though fellow Christians persecuted them for thinking in these terms, it is partly due to the perseverance of WILLIAMS and WILSON in court that clergymen are able to discuss these issues more openly today.

Postscript on Muir

Broad Churchmen, being pious Bible readers despite – or because of – their critical approach to it, were reluctant to press their arguments beyond a certain point. The Bible must be approached “as any other book” would be, but their conservatism becomes evident in their insistence that, upon being subjected to rational analysis by devout minds, the Christian scripture is discovered to be incomparably more historically accurate and morally elevated than the sacred books of the East. Immediately after the passage cited above, H. B. WILSON, in an attempt to placate orthodox churchmen, assured them that his presuppositions had not led him to the brink of apostasy: “It is not to be supposed, for a moment, that anyone among ourselves, or anyone at all, whatever his relation to Christianity, who has received the advantage of an European education, would put the Koran on a level with the Gospels, the Indian Epics with the histories of the Old Testament, or the Vedic hymns with the Psalms. It could not be done by anyone who would judge the several assumed revelations, not only by their external evidences, but also by their contents. And the foregoing observations [on the legitimacy of his method of approaching the Bible] have not been made out of any intention to depreciate the Scriptures of the Bible, or to place them on a par with other books claiming to be revelations.”⁴⁸

Ironically, one among WILSON's colleagues who, even though he had benefitted from “European education”, began to suspect that the Bible was not the *sui generis* revelation of God's moral will, was JOHN MUIR himself. Following to its logical conclusion the Broad Church's insistence upon universal man's latent moral sense as the only reliable guide to truth in matters purporting to be divinely inspired, and deducing from its dogmatic formulation, the Bible is an “expression of devout reason”, that the Vedas may be likewise defined, the Indologist-theologian left the Broad Church behind and plunged himself into the comparative study of religion, with particular reference to ethics. His research, based on the premise that religions, however disparate their metaphysical and soteriological content may be, converge at the point of morality, occupied the whole latter phase of his career and was published in 1879, shortly before his death, in a volume entitled *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*. In this final project, MUIR cited a profusion of morally didactic passages from Indian literature, purposely juxtaposing them with others drawn from biblical and classical

Greek authorities, in order to make a *prima facie* case in favor of their substantial equivalence. These ethical sentiments, he reasoned, "are the natural expression of the feelings and experiences of *universal humanity*; and the higher and nobler portion of them *cannot be regarded as peculiar to Christianity*." And even if parts of the Veda are not high and noble, "are not even the literatures, whether sacred or profane, of all countries, more or less, disfigured by something repugnant to the moral sense"?²⁹ The caprioles in MUIR's career are striking: while he may still have retained admiration for Christianity's moral excellence – its *śreṣṭhatā* as he called it in the *Mataparikṣā* – he at last viewed the religion he had endeavored to propagate in India as neither better nor worse, in terms of *śreṣṭhatā*, than Hinduism. Even by the elastic standards of Broad Churchmen, he who had joined them in formulating theology that was denounced as heretical, had gone too far and become a heretic himself.

²² D. L. LEMAHIEU, *The Mind of William Paley: A Philosopher and His Age*, Lincoln and London 1976, 108.

²³ *The Works of William Paley*, London 1838, 203.

²⁴ LEMAHIEU, *op. cit.*, 101.

²⁵ The other two alleged proofs were the religion's capacity for universal expansion (*sāmānyatā*) among mankind regardless of culture or race, and the religion's moral excellence (*śreṣṭhatā*), which resembles Broad Church thinking about internal evidences, but which was strictly subordinate to the primary proof, not being the sort of extra-textual "proof" that Paleyans preferred. A synopsis of the entire *Mataparikṣā* will be found in YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 73-80.

²⁶ Four pandits' critiques have thus far been located and translated. Of these only two will be mentioned, as the others never came to MUIR's attention. Of the two that did not, one, in 1839 by a Maratha pandit, SUBĀJĪ BĀPŪ, and another by an unidentified Bengali a decade later, are available in YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 143-49, 177-79.

²⁷ The reference is to ritual suicide, usually by drowning or starvation, which, although generally prohibited by Hindu legal authorities, was permitted at Allahabad (Prayāga), the site of the confluence of the Ganges and Jumnā rivers. The reward was heaven (*svarga*) or liberation from rebirth (*mokṣa*), and these ends are achieved, according to the *Skandapurāṇa*, because Śiva whispers *tattvajñāna* ("knowledge of truth") to the suicidist (P. V. KANE, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, 4, Poona 1953, 606-14). The original Sanskrit corresponding to this translation is in YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 110-11.

²⁸ A contemporary observer, W. H. SLEEMAN, noted that "Hindoos never doubt any part of the miracles and prophecies of our scripture – they believe every word of them; and the only thing that surprises them is that they should be so much less wonderful than those of their own scriptures" (*Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official*, 2, London 1844, 51-52).

²⁹ MUIR had also come across similar critiques of external evidences in the writings of RAMMOHUN ROY (1777-1833), the forerunner of neo-Hinduism, whose work he admired: "If all assertions were to be indiscriminately admitted as facts, merely because they are testified by numbers, how can we dispute the truth of those miracles which are said to have been performed by persons esteemed holy amongst natives of this country? . . . Have they not accounts and records handed down to them, relating to the wonderful miracles stated to have been performed by their saints, such as Agastya, Vasishta, and Gotama; and their gods incarnate, such as Ram, Krishna, and Narsingh; in the presence of their contemporary friends and enemies, the wise and ignorant, the select and the

multitude? – Could not the Hindoos quote in support of their narrated miracles, authorities from the histories of their most inveterate enemies the Jains, who join the Hindoos entirely in acknowledging the truth and credibility of their miraculous accounts? . . . Musalmans, on the other hand, can produce records written and testified by contemporaries of Muhammad, both friends and enemies, who are represented as eye-witnesses of the miracles ascribed to him. . . . They can assert, too, that several of those witnesses suffered the greatest calamities, and some even death, in defense of that religion” (J. C. GHOSE and E. C. BOSE, (eds.) *The English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, New York 1978, 614–15).

³⁰ The corresponding Sanskrit will be found in YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 106–07.

³¹ MUIR had argued in the *Mataparikṣā* that, whereas the Veda’s origins are unknown, being lost in the oblivion of time, the Bible’s beginnings are historically verifiable. HARACANDRA answered this with reference to the traditional Hindu belief in the eternity of the Vedas: “Only that religion is true which has prevailed on earth since the time of creation, and not one that arose subsequently.” The pandit was here faithfully voicing a concept of revelation that had its precedent in Manu 1.23, on which the scholiast Kullūka Bhaṭṭa comments: “The same vedas which [existed] in the previous mundane era were preserved in the memory of the omniscient Brahmā, who was one with the supreme spirit. It was those same Vedas that, in the beginning of the [present] *kalpa* (era), he drew forth from Agni, Vāyu, and Sūrya: and this dogma, which is founded upon the Veda, is not to be questioned.” For details, consult YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 94.

³² E. g., “With his left hand Kṛṣṇa lifted the great mountain called Govardhana, in order to rescue the inhabitants of Braj. . . . Some [i. e., MUIR] say this did not happen. What can one say about this kind of prejudice? It is the height of idiocy to put complete trust in one’s own race’s religion but not in those of other” (*Mataparikṣottara* 1.43,45; references to this text are by chapter and verse). The account of this miracle is in *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 5.11.1–25 (translated in C. DIMMITT and J. A. B. VAN BUITENEN, *Classical Hindu Mythology*, Philadelphia 1978, 116–17).

³³ E. g., “Since many fearless, intelligent men, such as HUME, TOM PAINE, the great VOLTAIRE, PALMER, PAINE, and GIBBON confuted these [Christian] priests, the priestly classes, being answerless, called them infidels” (2.55). The second “Paine” is undetermined. Thomas Fyche Palmer (1747–1802) was an English Unitarian, exiled to Australia, whose experience of religious persecution became famous in India. Unitarianism was introduced to Calcutta early in the nineteenth century; it became especially popular in the Brahmo Samāj and its literature began to circulate in Bengali in HARACANDRA’s time (for details, see S. LAVAN, *Unitarians and India*, Boston 1977). Free Thought made inroads too, especially TOM PAINE’s *Age of Reason*, which appeared both in English and Bengali in this period. According to the Baptist missionary WILLIAM CAREY (1767–1837), *India swarms with Deists* (quoted in HALBFASS, *op. cit.*, 72).

³⁴ MUIR was able to see through the Western veneer of the *Mataparikṣottara* to its orthodox Hindu core, and he attempted to show that different stages in the development of Sanskrit precluded belief in the dogma of eternal Vedas. See J. MUIR, *On the Arguments by which the Alleged Eternity of the Vedas May be Refuted*, in: *Christian Intelligencer* (Calcutta), 10 (1840), 341–47, extracts from which are quoted in YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 99–100.

³⁵ MUIR’s experience of the devastating effect to which Hindus put anti-Christian Western sources to use, was paralleled by other nineteenth-century missionaries throughout South Asia in their dialogue with other religions. Evidently Paleyan Apologetics died a very slow death on the mission field. Before MUIR, JOSHUA MARSHMAN, CAREY’s colleague at Serampore, had been hard-pressed when RAMMOHUN ROY quoted Unitarians against the Trinity. At mid-century when G. PFANDER, of the Church Missionary Society, argued with Muslims in

public debate oder the Trinity, he was "astonished to find that Dr. WAZIR KHAN had the books of T. H. HORNE, D. F. STRAUSS, and other German theologians in front of him" (A. A. POWELL, *Maulāna Raḥmat Allāh Kairānawī and Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century*, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1976, 53). During the Buddhist-Christian debates held in Ceylon at Pānadure in 1873, "Questions on the history of events recorded in Buddhist works were matched with counter-questions of the historicity of events recorded in the Bible." "In the early 1860s, Bishop COLENSO's writings [on the Pentateuch] caused 'much excitement' in Ceylon. And so did, soon afterwards, the writings of free thinkers, CHARLES BRADLAUGH and others. European criticisms of Christianity were used by the Buddhists to taunt their opponents with the claim that Christianity was losing ground even in its traditional homeland" (K. MALALGODA, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society, 1750-1900*, Berkeley 1976, 229). During the 1880s, *Sandaresa*, the organ of renaissance Buddhism in Ceylon, extensively quoted such anti-Christian American journals as *Truthseeker* and *Free Thinker* (L. A. WICKREMERATNE, *Religion, Nationalism, and Social Change in Ceylon, 1865-1885*, in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1969, 144ff.).

³⁶ Not that this phase of MUIR's career was without ambiguity and a certain inertia. His third edition of the *Mataparikṣā*, for example, added several hundred verses citing classical writers in an attempt to buttress the credibility of the Gospels, even though he had ceased to believe so himself by 1852.

³⁷ In fact, MUIR's partners-in-dialogue found little of moral worth in Christianity, what little they learned about it from MUIR: they evinced only minor interest in Jesus Christ, seeing him as a *deus ex machina* introduced by the creator to solve the problem of creating beings who then turned evil; were unimpressed with the doctrine of justification by faith (as were certain Broad Churchmen for the same reason: Cf. CROWTHER, *op. cit.*, 121) because it implied that God is wrathful and that repentance alone is insufficient to appease him; and above all were horrified by Christianity's assertion that animal life is soul-less. For details on these and other criticisms, see YOUNG, *op. cit.*, 109-35.

³⁸ *Three Notices of the "Speaker's Commentary"*, London 1873, *The Five Books of Moses*, London 1877, both translated from Dutch by MUIR, and *Prophets and Prophecy in Israel: An Historical and Critical Enquiry*, London 1877, with his introduction.

³⁹ CROWTHER, *op. cit.*, 112.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 116.

⁴² "Here arises no question of the extent or nature of the corruption of man, or of the remains of the divine image; . . . for whatever the depression of his natural state, all alike inherit it; whatever are his capabilities of elevation, in all are the same rudiments of improvement" (H. B. WILSON, *The Communion of Saints*, Oxford 1851, 186; quoted in CROWTHER, *op. cit.*, 114).

⁴³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ Quoted in CROWTHER, *op. cit.*, 119.

⁴⁵ For details on the charges and proceedings, consult CHADWICK, *op. cit.*, 80ff., and CROWTHER, *op. cit.*, 121ff.

⁴⁶ The first edition was published anonymously; the second, in 1862, bore his name. Thereafter he was so much out of favor with Evangelicals that they later attributed another anonymous treatise to him, *Supernatural Religion* (London 1874-1877), actually written by W. R. CASSELS, an outspoken but reclusive British atheist.

⁴⁷ MUIR, *A Brief Examination of Prevalent Opinions*, LV-LVI; emphasis added.

⁴⁸ MUIR, *A Brief Examination of Prevalent Opinions*, LVI.

⁴⁹ MUIR, *Metrical Translations from Sanskrit Writers*, XXXIII-XXXIV, XLIV; emphasis added.