

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

ported by the remainder of Bishop Lightfoot's note: "In some parts of Asia Minor, and probably Antioch, the two were still connected when Ignatius wrote" (Lightfoot, "Apostolic Fathers," part ii., vol. i., p. 52).

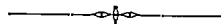
That after the first or the early part of the second century the Agapé was gradually detached from the Eucharist and placed after it is well known; but "the change was not made at the mandate of any central authority, but crept in by degrees" (Taylor, "Notes on the *Αἰδαχή*").

As to the causes which led to this severance, let us again hear Bishop Lightfoot: "It is plain from his (Pliny's) language that these festivals of the Christians had begun to provoke unfavourable comments. The stigma of Thyestean banquets and Œdipodean pollutions was already fastened or fastening upon them. What was to be done in order to disarm criticism? . . . A severance [of the Eucharist and the Agapé], therefore, was the obvious course. The Eucharist was henceforward celebrated in the early morning, whereas the Agapé continued to be held . . . in the evening. It is not quite clear from Pliny's language whether this severance had actually taken place before Pliny interposed . . . or whether it was the immediate consequence of this interposition; though the former seems the more probable alternative. *But anyhow it is a reasonable inference to draw from his language that the severance was due to these charges of immorality brought against the Christian festivals in the age of Trajan, and to the persecutions ensuing thereupon*" (*Ibid.*, p. 401).

Thus it was that the false accuser, imperial and persecuting Rome, and the advance of low and carnal views respecting the Lord's Supper, brought about this and further changes in the apparently harmless direction, first, of the early celebration to avoid slanders, and eventually of the more dangerous innovation of fasting Communion.

T. S. TREVOR.

(*To be continued.*)



ART. V.—THE SANTAL MISSION.

DURING the past century, in the Providence of God, the vast continent of India and Burmah has been given into our care. It contains a population of about 288,000,000; these do not all speak the same language, nor do they all belong to the same race. They may be divided into three great classes: Hindus, numbering 203,000,000; Mohammedans, 60,000,000;

and the remaining 25,000,000 are termed aborigines. It is of these latter that we wish to speak.

There have been several immigrations into India. The Kolarian races, such as the Santal, Mundari and Ho people, were probably the earliest to cross the mountains, and pass over from the cradle of the human race. It is believed that they entered India by the Brahmaputra Valley on the north-east. These were followed by the Dravidian races, such as the Tamils of the south, the Gonds of Central India, and many other tribes whose languages are closely allied to each other, thus giving a clue to their early history. These were, in the course of time, pushed forwards by a later invasion of the Aryans, the descendants of whom are the modern Hindus; and in later times still, we read of the Mohammedan invasion, which subjugated for the most part the various peoples of India. This has made such a deep impression on the inhabitants of India, that 60,000,000 or more have embraced the religion of Mahomet.

We do not intend in this paper to speak about all the aborigines of India, but rather to confine ourselves to two of these tribes, namely, the Santals and Paharis, who are living in the country called Santalia. The Santals are akin to the people who came into India at the first immigration, and are therefore Kolarian. The Paharis, or Hill people (they call themselves Maler), belong to the second immigration, and are therefore Dravidian. They belong to the Hill tribes, because they dwell in the mountainous parts and plateaus of Central India.

The Santals do not all live in one country; they are scattered about in many of the districts of Bengal. They probably settled first in the jungles of Orissa, then passed up to Chota Nagpur, and from thence have come up, like the Israelites, to their present country, Santalia.

Looking at the map of India, it will be noticed that the Ganges, after flowing eastwards for about 1,000 miles of its course, suddenly takes an almost right-angular turn southwards at a point about 300 miles from where it empties itself into the Bay of Bengal. The Santal country lies in that elbow, having the river for its northern and eastern boundaries.

The origin of the country is plainly volcanic, evidenced in the craggy peaks, the steep, jungle-covered hill-sides, and the igneous formation of the rocks. The hills run in several parallel ranges, intersected by streams and rivers; patches of rice-land and other clearings alternating with woods and forests.

Approaching Santalia from Calcutta, you find the monotony of about 150 miles of level plain, at last broken by a low line of hills visible against the western horizon. The railway

gradually approaches the range of hills of Santalia, and at about 200 miles nearly due north of Calcutta you find yourself at Taljhari, the central station of the C.M.S. Mission to the Santals. About two miles to the west of this place is the first range of the hills. It is a very pretty sight to see the varieties of foliage on the hills. Here and there is a patch of *sal* jungle, which at a distance reminds one not a little of our English pine woods, but on closer inspection shows there is not much real similarity. It is the sacred tree of the Santals, and in the groves of these trees, which are to be found on the outskirts of every Santal village, the Santals worship the demons. Then we cannot help noticing larger trees of darker foliage; these are the mangos, which yield a delicious fruit in great abundance. Interspersed are copses of light, feathery bamboos, whilst here and there from out the tangle the palm-tree may be seen rising tall and straight against the sky-line of the hills.

Nestling in the jungle are to be found the Santal and Pahari villages, the former consisting of one long street, with houses and gardens on both sides of it; the latter building their habitations in squares, generally in the thickest part of the forest. The Santals for the most part live in the valleys between the hills, and are therefore not strictly speaking *Hill* people, as they do not live on the hills as the Paharis do.

The Santals, as we said before, are one of the aboriginal tribes of India. They occupy a precisely analogous position to the Hindu and Mohammedan inhabitants, as did the Briton towards the Danes, Saxons and Normans, in days gone by. The more civilized invaders drove the British before them into the remotest portions of the land, *i.e.*, the hills and moors of Wales, Scotland and Cornwall, ousting them from their better lands. So, throughout India, it is found that the remoter mountainous tracts are to this day inhabited by one or more of the numerous tribes of the aboriginal races of the continent. The present country of Santalia is remarkable in this respect, that in its hills and dales are found two distinct aboriginal races:

1. The Maler, called locally Paharis.
2. The Hor, called locally Santals.

The Maler belong to the same stock as the Tamils of South India, the old Dravidian family, and have from time immemorial inhabited this district. They were more widely spread formerly than they are now, as, since Government encouraged the immigration of the Santals from their original seat in Orissa, the Paharis have lost ground, and their villages are scarcely ever found elsewhere than on the summit of the hills. They retain their distinct nationality, and have nothing in common with their Santal neighbours. They never inter-

marry, nor will a Santal eat food cooked by a Pahari. The Paharis, on the other hand, do not object to partake of their neighbours' hospitality, though even then they would not sit down to eat in the same place and at the same time. Unfortunately we cannot say as much as regards drinking, for when they have brewed their intoxicating liquor, they seem to have no caste-feeling or compunctions of conscience.

The country now known as Santalia has a strange history. When the British first took possession of Bengal, the Paharis were the only inhabitants of these secluded highlands. In the year 1832, in order to preserve their independence against Hindu encroachment, the tract of country inhabited by the Paharis was marked off with a ring-fence of masonry pillars, within which Hindus were not allowed to settle. This district, measuring nearly 300 miles in circumference, and containing an area of 1,366 square miles, was made over by Government to the Paharis. But the Hillmen cared only for the highlands; the valleys running among the hills, therefore, were available for other settlers. The Government of India encouraged a few Santals to settle down between the Paharis and the Hindus, and in the year 1832 there were only 3,000 Santals in and near Santalia. Since then they have come up in larger numbers, for, at the time of the Santal rebellion, in the year 1854, there were 83,000, and now they amount to more than half a million, and have given their name to the country they inhabit. The whole of India has taken its present name from a few Aryan settlers on the bank of the Indus, and perhaps, in a more striking way still, we may say that the whole continent of Asia has received its name from a tiny spot where St. Paul was when he saw the vision of the men of Macedonia, saying, "Come over, and help us." The tract of country called Santalia, therefore, may now be called the special home of the Santals, but it should not be forgotten that the country all around this inclosed portion is full of Santals.

Having described the home of the Santals, let us now speak about the people themselves. Their cast of countenance almost approaches the negro type, the face being almost round, the cheek-bones moderately prominent, the mouth large, and the lips very full and projecting; the nose broad, the hair coarse and black. The women have small feet and hands; their clothing consists of six yards of thick cotton cloth, ornamented by a gay red border, one half of which forms the lower garment, secured at the waist, but not so as to impede the free action of the limbs; the other half is passed over the left shoulder, leaving the right arm free, and the end hangs down in front. The heads of the women and girls are

generally uncovered, displaying a mass of hair gathered into a large knot at one side of the back of the head, and ornamented with flowers; their arms, ankles, and throats are laden with heavy brass or bell-metal ornaments. The ordinary weight of a set of bracelets and anklets worn by a Santal belle weighs about twelve pounds; but one set has been known to weigh as much as thirty-four pounds. The tendency of the present-day fashion is to lessen the weight. Christian women as a rule have given up the heavier kinds of ornaments.

The national genius of the Santals inclines them to a sort of pioneer life in the jungles; they are intensely fond of hunting, and a country denuded of primeval forest loses all attractions for them. A Santal, in prosperous seasons, leads a pleasant life. He is either busy with his cultivation, playing his flute, dancing, or engaging in the chase. In hunting down beasts of prey he evinces great skill and powers of endurance, also indomitable pluck. Every year there are great hunting festivals, in which thousands take part. These expeditions are organized with much care and forethought. They take place in the hot season, when the animals have least cover to conceal themselves. When the array of hunters reaches the hunting ground, they form a line of beaters several miles in length, each man being armed with bow and arrows and a battle-axe and accompanied by his dogs. Game of all kinds are then driven to some open space; birds take wing, and are shot down with arrows; deer, pig, jungle-fowl, and other animals are bagged, but tigers, leopards, and bears on these occasions of open warfare are generally avoided.

Though prone to change, the Santals are not indifferent to their personal comfort. Their homes look very cosy, being well raised, about two feet above the ground, with snug-looking verandas; the walls are carefully built of mud, either whitewashed or painted in alternate broad stripes of red, white, and black earth, and the roofs neatly thatched. Accommodation for the various members of the family is scanty; it is obtained by means of partitions, which however do not reach the roof.

In the matter of religion the Santal is at an advantage over his Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours, through having no deeply philosophical system with which to withstand the teaching of Christianity. His religious ideas are chiefly founded on fear of evil spirits, which must be continually propitiated to prevent their injuring the devotees. Chief of all the powers of evil is their national god, Marang Buru (the Great Mountain); why so called no one can, we think, satisfactorily explain. He is the divinity who appears in their legends as the guardian and sponsor of their race. In public

and in private, in time of tribulation and in time of wealth, in health and in sickness, the Great Mountain is invoked with bloody offerings. He is the one religious link that binds together the nation. The sacrifices, instead of being limited to a few animals, as is the case with their family gods, may be anything that grows from or moves on the earth. The worship is essentially one of blood; if the sacrificer cannot afford an animal, it is with a red flower or a red fruit that he approaches the divinity. When the English first took possession of these aboriginal districts, human sacrifices were common, and a regular trade was carried on to supply the victims. Occasionally even now we hear of them being offered in lonely places.

Belief in witchcraft and similar forms of magic is, as a matter of course, rife among the people, in this state of mental thought and education; though, wherever Christian education touches the people, they become to a great extent freed from these miserable superstitions. We know a village where the people—most of them closely related—were so bitterly divided that two families had to leave altogether, and live for months at a distance, in daily terror of their lives, because the children in one house having died, the women of another house were accused of having “eaten” them—to use the Santal expression for bewitching. In the opinion of the heathen no one ever dies a natural death. Death, they say, is caused by demons, witches, or foes acting in secret. The crops in the very fields have to be protected by placing a branch of a certain tree in the midst to avert the evil-eye of any passer-by; and the gardens round the houses have, for the same purpose, an earthenware pot with white and black marks upon it, suspended in some conspicuous spot. The religion of the Santals is one of abject fear: love of God is not in all their thoughts. When spoken to of a beneficent Being, they say: “True, He gives us all things freely, but He never troubles us; therefore there is no special need for us to worship Him.”

It is sad to think how many a seeker after God, who is longing to renounce heathenism, is deterred from doing so by the dread lest the unseen hosts of evil, whom he has worshipped for years, should take vengeance on him and his for their faithlessness to them. Perhaps some calamity may have occurred in a Christian family; the news spreads to a village where the missionary has hitherto found ready listeners, and whom he has regarded as true seekers after light. With superstitious dread they plunge back with renewed zeal into all their old practices, their demon sacrifices and their heathen rites, and, for a time at least, take no more interest in the Gospel story.

During the time of the Santal insurrection of 1854, horrible atrocities were committed. Certain women and young girls were accused of having practised witchcraft. They were seized and brought to the plain of Barheit, which was the home of the leaders of the rebellion, and an eye-witness has related that he saw several women hacked to pieces. One man who had lost a son some time before was told by the witchfinder that a certain woman had "eaten" him. She was summoned and found guilty. Then the complainant, with his battle-axe, cut off one of her arms, and then said, "You bewitched my wife," and he punished her by cutting off a leg. No mercy was shown to the poor victims; everyone believed that they were guilty, and thought they were executing righteous judgment. Truly, the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty. Some of these poor women actually accuse themselves of being witches. A peculiar hallucination seems to come over them, and the honesty and truthfulness which so distinguish the Santals from the other races in India, prompts them to tell the secrets of their own inmost hearts, even though it should be contrary to their interests.

Illness is supposed to come through the agency of evil spirits, so the priest, or magic doctor, as he may more rightly be termed, is often resorted to. A missionary writes: "The work and method of these magic doctors was once brought to my notice. A heathen woman was brought to me at one of our out-stations who had just been bitten on her foot by a poisonous snake. Her foot and ankle were swollen, and she was suffering great pain. I administered various remedies, repeating them for more than twenty-four hours, and was full of hopes for her recovery, as I had observed in every previous case which had come before my notice that if the case proved a fatal one the patient died within three or four hours from the time the bite occurred. But coming out of our little mud chapel after reading evening prayers, I asked for the woman, and found that her husband and other relations, finding she was not entirely cured, had carried her off to an *ojha* (the Santal medicine man) about a mile distant. The next morning I heard from an eye-witness what had occurred. After receiving his fees and a fowl, the *ojha* began a series of incantations over the woman, and beginning at her head, stroked her with both hands, blowing at some imaginary demon all the while. Having brought both hands down to the foot which had been bitten, he, increasing his gesticulations and blowing, fell on his back, declaring that the demon had come out at the foot and had knocked him over. The sad and extraordinary part of the story is that the woman died almost immediately after."

The Santal country is infested with snakes and venomous

creatures. We are constantly being called upon to administer remedies, but in case of bites from venomous snakes such as the cobra they are seldom, if ever, of any good. Owing to the forests of Santalia being cut down there are not so many wild animals as there were formerly. Elephants, tigers, bears and leopards were at one time very common, and even rhinoceros were to be seen near Taljbari. Leopards are still very plentiful, also bears in some of the wilder parts. It is also an event of constant occurrence that men and women bathing in the larger rivers are seized upon by alligators and drawn under the water, to be devoured by these ravenous creatures. Rings and copper coins are constantly found undigested in the stomachs of these creatures, thus showing that some unfortunate woman had come to an untimely end by being devoured alive, probably while bathing.

The position of women among the Santals is a great contrast to that occupied by their Hindu and Mohammedan sisters. They are allowed a large amount of independence, and are treated with respect and consideration; but they take little part in any religious rites, considering religion to be the special business of the men. It is difficult, therefore, to gain their attention when first bringing the Gospel before them, as they are not accustomed to exercise any independent thoughts on the matter. There is no such thing as seclusion in Zenanas, and the missionaries have no difficulty in gaining friendly intercourse with all the members of a Santal family.

We will now give an account of the Creation as gathered from the traditions handed down orally from father to son among the Santals :

At first there was no land to be seen, only one vast expanse of water. Then the Lord made crabs, alligators, prawns, worms and tortoises. Then the Lord said to Himself, "What else shall I make? I will make man." He formed them of earth, but before they were dry, the Day-horse descended from above and trod on them, and they were broken in pieces.

The Lord, being grieved, said, "I will not make them of clay again. I will make some birds." Then, after making them, He placed them in His hand, and saw that they were very beautiful. They flew about, but finding no resting-place, they returned to the Creator's hand.

Then the Lord called the alligator, and asked him whether he could raise up the earth from the bottom of the waters, and thus make some dry land for the birds to rest upon. He tried, and so did also the prawn, but as soon as they raised the soil it was washed away. Then the Lord called the worm and asked him if he could manage to raise up the earth. He answered, "Yes, if you will bind a tortoise by his legs on the surface of the

waters." The tortoise was chained, and the worm fastened itself to the tail of the tortoise with its one end, and with the other reached the earth at the bottom of the sea. He thus gradually placed the soil on the back of the tortoise; this, when dry, became an island. (Whenever the tortoise wriggles there is an earthquake). Soon grass grew, and the birds made their nest. Five eggs were laid, and when they were hatched a baby boy and girl appeared on the scene. The geese asked the Lord how they were to bring up such strange creatures. He said, "You must give them juice from your mouth, and let the infants suck it from some fibre saturated with it." Thus were the two brought up.

Then the Lord told the geese to search out a place where the man and woman could live. They found a place to the west called Hihiri Pipiri (the land of the butterfly); to that place they carried them on their wings.

These two—the first man and woman—were named Pilchu Haram and Pilchu Budhi. They lived on grass and the various seeds which grew there.

One day Marang Buru (the Great Mountain) came to them and told them how to brew beer. He gave them directions how to prepare the yeast; then when it was ready he told them to pour out a libation to himself, and then to drink some of it themselves. They made cups by folding large green leaves. Soon they became drunk, and knew not what they did. The next day they were ashamed, so the Lord told Marang Buru to take them two cloths, one of ten and another of twelve cubits length. In course of time seven sons and seven daughters were born. The father took the lads to Khanderaï Forest, where they spent their time in hunting; and the mother took the girls to Suruku Forest to gather fruits and leaves. One day when the old people were not watching the young men managed to get to the place where the girls were, and found them dancing, so without more ado they joined in, too, and soon after paired off. The old people finding out what had happened, built them seven houses. Thus the race of man increased, but the rule was made that no one should marry into the same family or tribal division in future.

Then they found the place was not sufficiently large to hold them, so they migrated to Khojkaman. There they became very wicked; they behaved more like beasts than men. The Lord was angry, and made up His mind to destroy them. He called to them to return, but they would not listen. So the Lord determined to destroy the wicked race. He chose a boy and a girl, and told them to flee to a cave; then for seven days and seven nights it rained fire-water, and everything was

destroyed. Then the race again increased from these two persons who were preserved alive in the cave. From this place they journeyed to Sasangbeda; there the race divided itself into twelve tribes, which actually exist to this day among the Santals. The name of one tribe, however, is lost.

In these migrations the Santals reached a high range of hills, which they were not able to pass. There they made a vow to Marang Buru, that if he would show them the way they would for ever afterwards offer sacrifices to him. They found two passes, Singduar and Bahiduar, which they crossed safely, and journeyed on till they came to the river Sang. They knew not how to cross, so some of them became dispirited and longed to go back to Chaichampa. They crossed safely, however, treading on the expanded leaves of the lotus, and found that not even the soles of their feet were wetted in crossing.

The account goes on to enumerate the different countries through which they passed before they reached the river Damuda, a large river to the south-west of the Santal country. This stream is sacred to the Santals, and the place where the collar-bone of every Santal is carried after the corpse has been consumed on the funeral pile.

Sir William Hunter, in his most interesting book "Annals of Rural Bengal," says: "No one can fail to be struck by the analogies which these traditions bear to the Mosaic and Sanscrit accounts of the Creation. The earth covered with water, the raising up of the land, its preparation for mankind, the nakedness of our first parents, the Divine provision for clothing them, are points in common. But I believe that in the Santal Genesis, as in that of other races not of Aryan or Semitic descent, the tradition of the Creation is mixed up with that of the Deluge—if, indeed, the Creation with these less-gifted tribes does not begin with the Flood.

"The Santal legend describes rather the subsidence of waters than a creation, and the striking features of such a subsidence are accurately detailed. The Great Mountain first stood forth from the deep, while marine forests continued to live upon the surface of the waters. As the flood went down rocks appeared, with shell-fish, prawns and other crustaceous animals. On its further subsidence it would leave the earth covered with worms, and the countless creeping things with which the slime of a tropical river teems. Then would spring up a luxuriant covering of grass, and the earth would be ready for its human inhabitants. The prominent mention made both in the Mosaic and the Santal accounts of the use of strong drink and of the indecencies committed under its influence is certainly a curious coincidence."

F. J. COLES.

(To be continued.)