

VAIṢṆAVISM AND CHRISTIANITY

DR. J. D. BASKARA DOSS



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF LEADERSHIP TRAINING
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Foreword

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The Literary works of Dr. J. D. Baskaradoss has brought about books on the origin and development of Tamil Bhakti Movement and the influence of Christianity over it. The advent of Christianity into India dates back to the 1st century AD which coincides with the arrival of St. Thomas, the apostle of Jesus Christ.

This book on Vainavism and Christianity is one such attempt in bringing out the fact that the doctrine of Trinity in Indian religions was the outcome of the Christian doctrine of Triune God. Naturally the Triune God of Vaisnavism is based on the Trinity of New Testament. The Author goes on to explain the concept of Avatar and incarnation and the fulfillment of sacrifice. An impassionate study of this book will reveal the truth.

We thank God for this commendable work by the Author. The Trustees of our organisation join with me in wishing him for all his future works and the ministry. We also thank Bro. N. John Jeyanandam, P. Bose Ponraj, Moriah Ministries for his prayerful involvement.

G. J. Pandithurai

Founder Trustee & President

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A fund of information and research works by the contemporary eminent scholars have opened new vistas to look at the popular Indian religions from a different angle comparing it with Christianity.

This small book is an attempt in this line and this actually was presented as a research paper before the learned scholars at Bronx, New York in 2005 during the First International Conference on the History of Early Christianity in India. I thank Dr. John Samuel, Founder President of International Centre for the Study of Christianity in India for his permission to publish this book. I also thank my brothers of the family of NILT Messrs G. J. Pandithurai, A. J. Rajasekaran, R. Soundar Rajan, Sharon Devaprasannam for their untiring support in publishing this book. I sincerely thank Pastor Oswin Michael Of Jesus Family Ministry, Jersey City for his gesture.

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Preface

‘Dravide Utpanna Bhakti’ is a famous quotation for Bhakti movement originated in Dravida country and it had gained momentum and spread through the North. The Historians and the scholars attest that Vedic Thoughts had never contributed to the origin and development of Vaishnavism.

Six fold religion viz. Saivism, Vaishnavism, Saktam, Ganapathyam, Goumaram and Souram are the outcome of Bhakti Movement. In this millieu Thirukkural had played a very vital role. We also had witnessed Tamil Nadu had interaction with the foreign countries – the ancient Tamil poetry give enormous data about the spice routes and silk routes with which our country was very well linked with the neighbouring countries and as a result the economy of our country grew besides the intellectual and the spiritual spheres.

The revolutionary preaching of Jesus Christ in the beginning of 1st century brought about a sea change not only in Palestine but it had reverberated in various parts of the globe by the apostles of Jesus after his resurrection. St. Thomas, the direct disciple of Jesus came to India in 49 AD during the reign of Gondapharus in Taxila, he went back to Palestine on hearing the sad demise of Mary, the mother of Jesus and he returned to India in 52 AD and started his mission in Malabar and he extended his field of Gospel work to Tamil Nadu for a period of Twenty years and was martyred in Mylapore in 72 AD.

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Introduction

The advent of Christianity into India dates back to the middle of 1st c.A.D. which coincides with the arrival of St.Thomas, the apostle of Jesus Christ. It has been recorded in the history that Tamil Nadu carried out trade with the neighbouring countries both by land and sea. This helped the interaction with the people and the dissemination of the gospel of Jesus proclaimed by the ‘early’ missionaries in India. The origin and development of Tamil Bhakti Movement dates back not prior to the fifth century A.D. It may appear to be hypothetical that Christianity may have given rise to the origin of Vaiṣṣavism and other Indian religions. This proposition is taken up for a brief analysis in the following pages.

Origin of Vaiṣṣavism

As Dr.Keith observes in Journal of Royal Asiatic Society states that: