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# Christianity in Ceylon

*Its Introduction and Progress under the  
Portuguese, the Dutch, the British and  
American Missions with an Historical Sketch  
of the Brahmanical and Buddhist Superstitions*

JAMES EMERSON TENNENT



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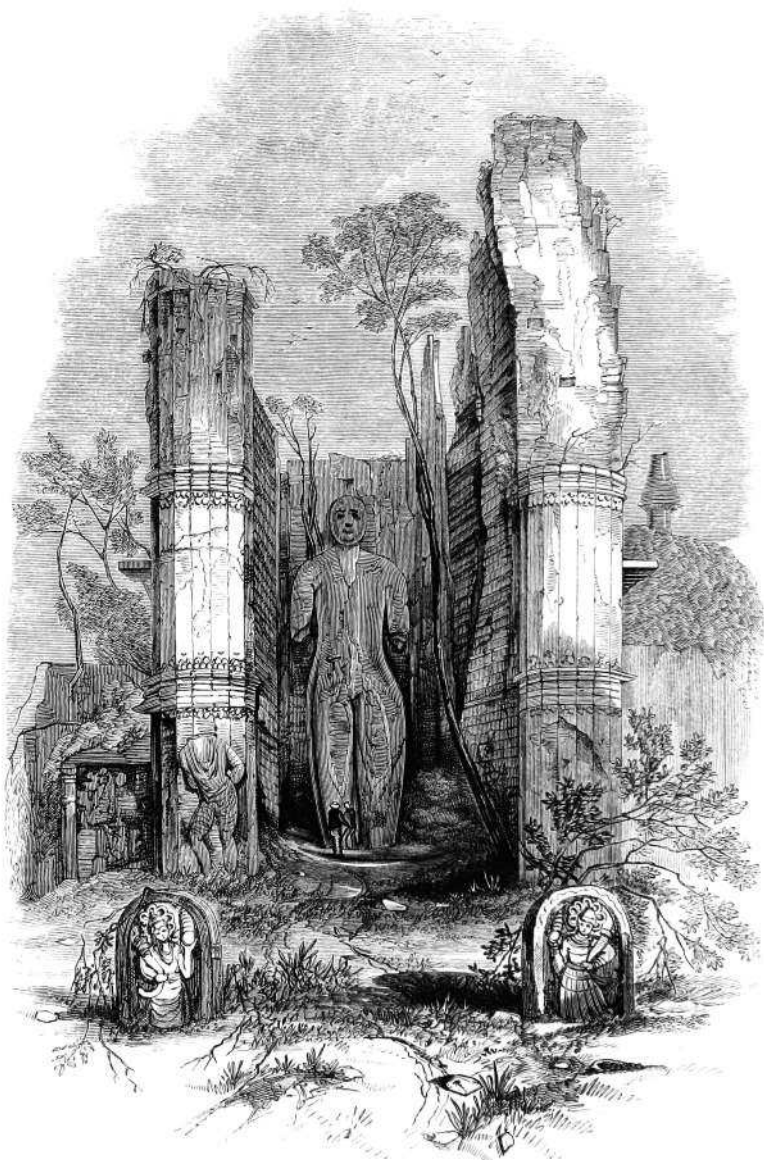
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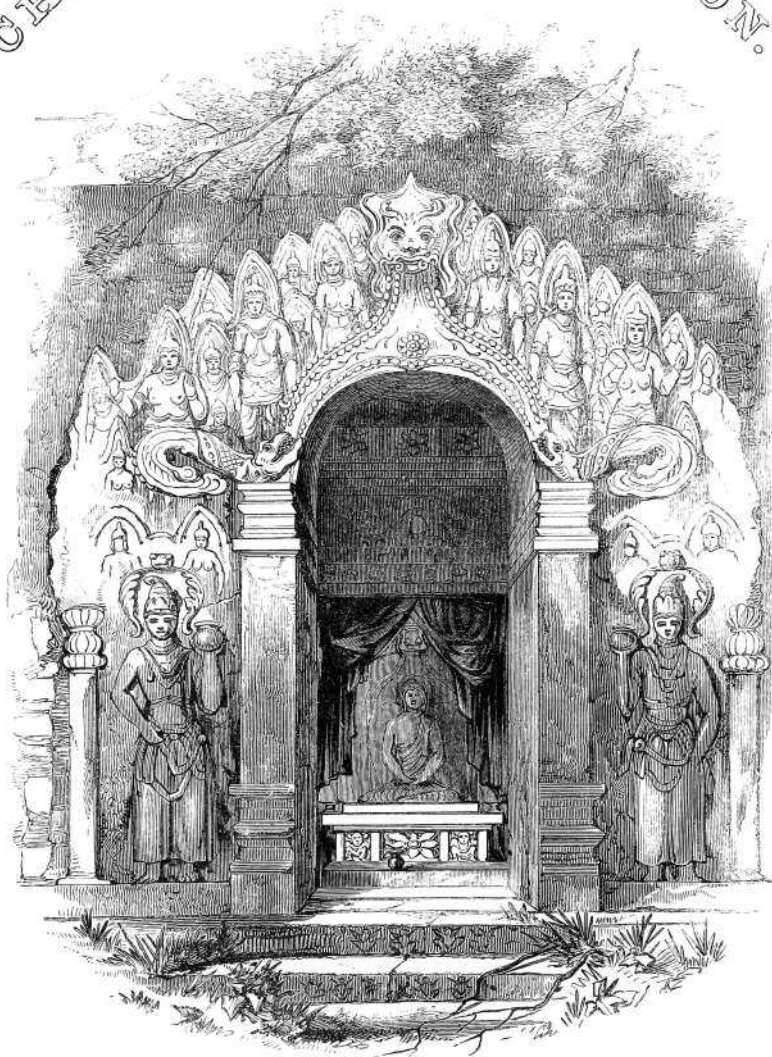
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The Jayatawanarama.—Ruins of Pollanarua.

CHRISTIANITY IN CEYLON.



Entrance to the Great Temple of Dambool.

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BY SIR JAMES EMERSON TENNENT.

# CHRISTIANITY IN CEYLON;

ITS INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS UNDER THE PORTUGUESE, THE DUTCH,  
THE BRITISH, AND AMERICAN MISSIONS :

WITH AN HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE  
BRAHMANICAL AND BUDDHIST SUPERSTITIONS.

BY  
SIR JAMES EMERSON TENNENT,  
K.C.S., LL.D., &c., &c.

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TO  
THE RIGHT REV. ROBERT KNOX, D.D.,  
LORD BISHOP OF DOWN AND CONNOR, AND DROMORE,

*This Narrative,*  
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE INFLUENCE  
OF  
EDUCATION IN THE DIFFUSION OF CHRISTIANITY,

IS DEDICATED,  
WITH ESTEEM AND REGARD,

BY  
THE AUTHOR.

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BUDDHU.

From the Gal Wihare, Ruins of Pollanarua.—(p. 34.)

## INTRODUCTION.

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FOR some years past I have been engaged in the preparation of a work on Ceylon, its history, its topography, its capabilities, its productions, its government, its present condition, and its future prospects as a colony of the Crown.

It will account for much that might otherwise seem abrupt or obscure in the following chapters, to state that they were originally commenced as portions

of the plan which I had thus sketched for myself, and in which the religion of the people and the progress of Christianity necessarily occupied a prominent place. But as the inquiry proceeded, I found it so far exceeded in interest what I had at first anticipated, that the materials I had collected became at once too important to be omitted, and too extended to form a subsidiary portion of a more comprehensive work. Hence their appearance in the present form.

The sketch of the Buddhist superstition will be found to differ in many essential particulars from its aspect as described in other countries of the East, but my object has been to present the features of Buddhism as it exists in Ceylon; and for this purpose I have availed myself largely of the observation and experience of those Christian missionaries who have made the religion of the natives, and the sacred books in which it is embodied, an object of patient and profound investigation. I believe that the account which I have given will be found to be not only more copious, but more correct, than any similar notice which has hitherto been published of the popular superstitions of the Singhalese.

The same observations apply to the chapter which treats of the Brahmanical system as cultivated by the Tamils of Ceylon; though in its details it presents but few variations from the tenets and practice of Hindooism generally on the continent of India.

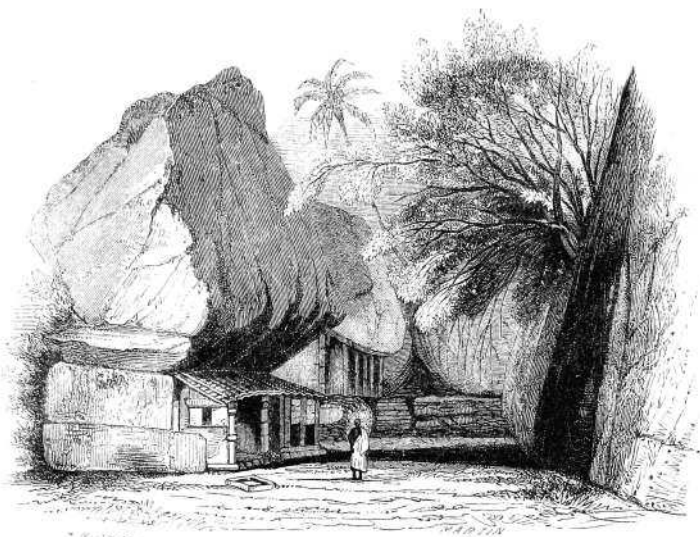
The narrative which I have compiled from

## INTRODUCTION.

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authentic sources as to the state and prospects of Christianity will, I trust, be read with interest by all who look on missionary labour not merely in its loftier capacity as the disseminator of immortal truth, but who regard it in its incidental influence as the great pioneer of civilization and the most powerful agent for the diffusion of intellectual and moral enlightenment.

Nor can I lay down my pen without an humble yet confident hope that this exposition of facts which have fallen under my own immediate notice as to the success of missionary toil, and the inroad which has been made, through its instrumentality, upon the ancestral and national idolatries of Ceylon, will operate as an encouragement to those by whom these exertions have been supported, as an assurance that their labours hitherto have not been in vain, and a demonstration of the fallacy which falsely proclaims that the religions of India are inaccessible to Gospel truth, and unassailable by its influences.



The Ala Wihare, Matelle.

p. 31.

## CHAPTER I.

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Nestorian Christians in Ceylon in the Sixth Century—Disappearance of Christianity between the Sixth and the Sixteenth Centuries — Accounts of Early Travellers—Portuguese Conquest, A.D. 1505 — Their singular Expedients for converting the Singhalese—St. Francis Xavier, “the Apostle of India” — Conversion of the Hindoos — Conversion of the Buddhists — State of Christianity on the Arrival of the Dutch, A.D. 1638.