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A table of contents for *Journal of the Transactions of the Victoria Institute* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jtvi-01.php

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1931

742ND ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W. 1, ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2ND, 1931,
AT 4.30 P.M.

E. A. MOLONY, ESQ., C.B.E., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous meeting were read, confirmed, and signed, and the HON. SECRETARY announced the election of Mrs. Ronald S. Murray as an Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon Mr. W. N. Delevingne to read his paper on "The Influence of Christianity on Indian Politics."

*THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON INDIAN
POLITICS.*

By W. N. DELEVINGNE, ESQ.

THE subject on which I have been asked to address you this afternoon is, as the title indicates, a very wide one, and in the time at my disposal I can do no more than set forth in brief outline how and through what channels Christianity has been working upon the lives and characters of the peoples of India and its consequent influence upon the politics of the country at the present day. To what extent that influence

has made itself felt in moulding the political ideas of the Indian peoples can only be inferred, of course, from the facts of history, and must be, largely, a matter of individual opinion, but I hope to be able to show that it is much more powerful and extensive than is evidenced merely by the growth in the number of Indians who have become followers of the Christian religion.

Christianity found its way to India at a very early date in our era, but its advent is so overlaid with legend that it is impossible to say with any accuracy by whom or in what year the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour was first preached to the people of the country. This much, however, can be said with certainty, that Christianity had reached Malabar on the south-west coast of the Deccan before the end of the second century, A. D., and that by the end of the fourth century a flourishing church of Syrian Christians had been established there. In the second century a Roman merchant fleet sailed regularly from Myos Hormus on the Red Sea to Arabia, Malabar, and Ceylon. It found an ancient Jewish colony, the descendants of which still remain to this day as the Beni-Israel, upon the Bombay coast, and in the course of the trade which it carried on with this Jewish settlement, it doubtless brought with it Jewish merchants and others acquainted with the religion of Christ, which, starting from the land of Palestine, had spread throughout the Roman Empire. Its doctrines and its revelation of the Supreme Being as a God who was holy and righteous in all His ways, yet regarded His erring creatures with infinite love and compassion, won for it a favourable reception from the Buddhist princes who ruled in Southern India, and so rapid was its diffusion that, by the sixth century, Kalyan on the Bombay coast had become the seat of a Christian bishop from Persia.

The Christianity that established itself on the western coast of India in the early centuries of our era soon degenerated from the true faith of the primitive Church. The earliest authentic records that have come to light show beyond doubt that at the middle of the sixth century the doctrines of Nestorianism had been accepted by the Christian settlements on the Malabar seaboard. Cosmos Indikopleustes, an Egyptian monk and traveller, and the author of a work on geography and theology entitled *Topographia Christiana*, records that he found a Christian Church on the Callian, or Malabar, coast, and he adds that the bishop who was at the head of it had been consecrated in Persia. The Christian Church in Persia was founded by the

Nestorians, who, after their expulsion from Europe, had been driven by Imperial decree into that country, and had thence sent missions into Bactria and India. It is well to remember, in this connection, that the Christianity which flourished in Asia during the succeeding thousand years was the Christianity of either the Nestorians or the Jacobites (originally an offshoot of the Monophysites) and, together with Buddhism, formed a bulwark against the advance of Islam. Gibbon in his work, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (vol. viii (1832), p. 354), states that, under the reign of the Caliphs, the Nestorian Church was diffused from China to Jerusalem and Cyprus, and their numbers, with those of the Jacobites, were computed to surpass the Greek and Latin communions.

The influence of the Nestorian Church in India, however, was never extensive. It suffered from contact with the idolatrous religions by which it was surrounded, and its life was neither strong nor vigorous. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese arrived in India, the Malabar Christians were governed in religious matters by a regular episcopacy, and they had secured for themselves a recognized position among the Indian princes who were their immediate neighbours. The followers of the Roman Church, in their zeal to make proselytes, soon came into conflict with the Nestorian Church, and there was seen the unedifying spectacle of one body of professing Christians endeavouring by force and the use of the iniquitous Inquisition, to compel another body to abandon their own beliefs and accept the former's creed. Rivalry between different Christian sects is, unfortunately, not unknown in these days, and it may probably be said with truth that one great hindrance to the spread of the Gospel in India has been the divisions and dissensions that have destroyed the unity of the Christian Church.

The Portuguese failed to maintain their hold on India, and, with the coming of the Protestant Dutch to Southern India in the year 1663, the Malabar Christians were delivered from the persecutions of their oppressors and regained their spiritual freedom and independence. But while the methods adopted by the Roman Church to win converts cannot be too severely condemned, it must be admitted that the missions established by Portuguese religious orders along the Malabar coast and in Southern Madras, and especially that which had its origin in the labours of Francis Xavier, of the Society of the Jesuits, opened the way for the spread of Christianity in India. Francis Xavier

arrived in India in the year 1542, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Jesuits opened another mission on the Madras coast. They penetrated into the interior and carried the knowledge of the Christian religion as far inland as Salem, Trichinopoli, and Madura and the distant region of Tinneveli. Whatever may be said of the Roman Church as an organization, and in particular of the Society of the Jesuits, it is beyond dispute that its emissaries in those early days showed great zeal and devotion—a devotion, indeed, that puts to shame some of the Protestant missions working in India to-day. Their priests and monks adopted Indian dress, and in all matters of daily life, such as food, etc., they followed the customs of the Indians among whom they laboured. Their success was, indeed, remarkable, both among high and low castes, and considerable sections of the people in many districts were converted to Christianity. It was largely a nominal Christianity, no doubt, but it familiarized the people with the doctrines of the Christian religion, and I think it would be incorrect to say that it left no permanent impression upon the people. One result, at least, may be attributed to it, and that is, the greater receptiveness of the people of South India as regards the preaching of the Gospel in later times. In the year 1881, according to the census of that year, out of a Protestant Christian population of 511,000 for the whole of India, over 280,000 were inhabitants of Southern India, while in the case of Roman Catholics the figures are even more striking. It is not unreasonable to conclude, therefore, that the Roman Catholic missions in South India had exercised an influence favourable to Christianity on the people among whom the missionaries lived which made itself felt when the Protestant missions began to work. But a Christianity that denied to the people the knowledge of the very Scriptures on which it was founded was bound to fail, and while Roman Catholicism may have gained many adherents from among Hindus and Muhammedans, their change of religion was accompanied by very little change in life and character. Its missions, indeed, had no perceptible share in bringing about the awakening that began in India two centuries later.

We can now see why it was that, between the arrival of the Portuguese in India and the end of the eighteenth century, European influence and contact with the Christianity of the west had produced no results of any importance. When the Mughal Empire was at its zenith, under Akbar the Great,

toleration was shown for every form of religion, and there was an open door for Christianity, had it been ready to enter. It is said that one of Akbar's wives was a Christian, and he gave directions that his son, Prince Murad, when a child, should take lessons in Christianity. Jehangir, too, his son and successor, was favourably disposed towards Christianity. We learn from the accounts of Sir Thomas Roe, King James I's ambassador to the Mughal Court, that two of Jehangir's nephews embraced Christianity with his full approbation. Nevertheless, no efforts were made by Christian missions, Catholic or other, to disseminate the Christian religion among the peoples of Northern India during the reigns of the Mughal emperors, and it was not till the beginning of the eighteenth century that the first Protestant mission made its appearance in India. This was the mission of the Lutherans, Ziegenbalg and Plutschau, who in 1705 began work at the Danish settlement of Tranquebar. Ziegenbalg and many of the early Lutheran missionaries were men of great ability, and Ziegenbalg began the translation of the Bible into Tamil, which his successor, Schultze, completed in 1725. Schultze also translated the whole of the Bible into Hindustani. About the middle of the century the well-known missions at Tinneveli, in the district of Tanjore, were founded by Schwartz, and Christianity continued to make progress through his labours. Education received much attention, and schools were set up in order that secular instruction might go hand-in-hand with instruction in the Christian faith. But the century was nearing its close before any of our own people heard the call to go and preach the Gospel in India, and then the call came to a humble cobbler, Carey by name, one of the earliest as well as one of the most honoured of the missionaries that have gone forth from these shores. Carey arrived in India in the year 1793. By that time the English had firmly established themselves in Bengal as the real, if not the nominal, rulers of the province. Clive's victories had defeated every challenge to their military supremacy, and the wise reforms he effected in the administration, combined with his reorganization of the East India Company's service during his second term of office as Governor of Bengal, 1765-67, laid the foundations of our rule in India. During the next twenty-five years the Company continued to extend and consolidate its power in Northern India and the Deccan. It carried its victorious arms across the peninsula to Bombay and Gujarat, and by the year 1793 Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General

assisted by his allies, the Nizam of Haiderabad and the Mahrattas, was in a position to dictate terms of peace to Tipu Sultan, the Muhammadan ruler of the State of Mysore. Carey, on his arrival in Calcutta, found the door shut to missionary enterprise. During the early years of its history in Bengal the East India Company had not shown itself hostile to the labours of Protestant missions. It had allowed Kiernander, who had been sent out by the Danes, to begin a mission in Calcutta in 1758 ; but, subsequently, it reversed its policy towards missionaries, and not only put every obstacle in their way, but deported them back to England. As has often been observed, it was necessity that drove the Company to assume the position and duties of administrators. It had no desire to rule India, far less to reform the intellectual, social, and religious life of the people. It was compelled by force of circumstances to undertake first one and then another administrative duty, because it could not otherwise obtain that settled order and financial security without which profitable commerce was impossible. Carey thus found the purpose for which he had come to India thwarted by his own countrymen, and, baffled in his attempt to begin work as a missionary, he settled as an indigo planter near Malda in Northern Bengal. Here he studied Sanskrit and Bengali, and, having gained some knowledge of these languages, essayed the task of translating the Bible into Bengali. In 1799 he was ready to commence the work on which his heart was set, and, to avoid the opposition of the East India Company, he settled with Marshman and Ward and two other missionaries at Serampur, which at that time was a Danish possession. Thus began that wonderful literary activity that has made the little band of Serampur missionaries famous in every Christian land. In ten years the Bible was translated and printed, in whole or in part, in 31 languages, and by the year 1816 the mission had 700 converts. About the same time the London Missionary Society began to send out missionaries, and in the year 1813 the East India Company was compelled by its new charter to abandon its opposition to missions. It was becoming clear not only to the wiser men among the Company's administrators, but also to the Government at home, that missions, instead of being opposed, should be encouraged and used as a civilizing ally by the Government. If there was to be any real progress in education and social amelioration among the people of India, co-operation between the Government and

the missionaries was indispensable. But it must not be thought that the Government had any desire to foster the growth of Christianity among the people of India. On the contrary, they believed it to be necessary, for the stability of their position, not merely to recognize the religions of the people, but to support them as fully as the native rulers, whose successors they were, had done, and to protect their soldiers from any attempt to make them Christians. For it must be remembered that they had won their territory by means of an Indian army composed mainly of high-caste Hindus who observed all the rules of caste with great strictness, and it was their fixed policy to use every means to safeguard the loyalty of their troops. In pursuance of this policy they took under their management and patronage a large number of Hindu temples, and they even went so far as to refuse to employ native Christians in any capacity and to enforce all the rigours of Hindu law against them. Nevertheless, even in the early days of our rule, there was a measure of co-operation between the Government and the missions. When the College of Fort William was founded by Lord Wellesley in the year 1800 for the purpose of giving the young civilian officers a training in Indian languages and literature, Carey was the only man who could be found to teach Sanskrit and Bengali. He was accordingly appointed professor, and for many years, while his chief work was at Serampur, he spent one-half of each week in Calcutta, lecturing to young civilians in the morning and preaching to the poor in the evening.

This is not the place to discuss the Government's present policy of absolute religious neutrality which has been followed since the year 1858, when the Home Government became directly responsible for India, but I may be permitted to say that it is difficult to see what other attitude could have been adopted by the Government. Many individual officers of Government, unfortunately, have interpreted the policy as enjoining favour to the religions of the country and opposition to Christian work, and educated Indians must, at times, have wondered at such an attitude on the part of officers who professed to be Christians. Some people would have had the Government take a definite stand in favour of Christianity and use its money and influence for the propagation of Christianity. Such a course, as Dr. Farquhar observes in his book, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, to which I am indebted for much of my information, could have brought only disaster to the cause of Christ. The

Government could not with justice have used the revenues of the country for the promotion of a religion with which none of the peoples of the country had any sympathy. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that the Government of India, as a Government professedly Christian, might, without abandoning or modifying its policy of absolute religious neutrality, have given Christian missions more encouragement and moral support. Provincial Governments in recent years, I am glad to say, have shown themselves more inclined to do this. For instance, grants-in-aid have been given to mission schools, and the work of reclaiming the Criminal Tribes that have, from time to time, caused the Governments of the United Provinces, Bombay, and the Panjab so much trouble has been largely entrusted to the Salvation Army, who have achieved remarkable results.

Another notable result of the new Charter granted to the East India Company in 1813, which put an end to its opposition to missions, was the establishment of the Bishopric of Calcutta and three archdeaconries, one for each Presidency. The first Bishop of Calcutta (Middleton) arrived in 1814, and since that time the Church of England has actively prosecuted missionary work in India, either through the Church Missionary Society or through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Their most successful work has been carried on in Southern India, where they have reaped the fruits of the devoted labours of the Lutheran missionaries.

The missionary work of Carey and his colleagues at Serampur soon began to develop. The foundation of it was the preaching of the Gospel and the translation of the Scriptures, but by means of a printing press which Ward set up they were able to publish literature of many kinds and to enlist the aid of journalism for the dissemination of their teaching. They laid great stress on education and opened many schools around them for both boys and girls. It was not long before they began to realize that the most effective method of spreading the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ would be to send out native missionaries to preach throughout the country, and with that object in view they built a large college at Serampur and received authority from the King of Denmark to confer degrees. The college quickly attracted students, and, as a result of its teaching, knowledge of the Christian religion began to spread through Bengal. The work thus ably begun by Carey and his colleagues was continued by a young Scotch missionary named Alexander

Duff, who arrived in Calcutta in the year 1830. Believing that nothing would do so much to prepare the Hindu mind for the reception of Christian ideas and principles as intercourse with the spirit of the West through the medium of the English language, Duff opened a school in Calcutta for the teaching of English. Two convictions led him to adopt this method. The first was that the highest form of education is Christian education, by which he meant a sound intellectual and scientific training based on the moral and religious principles of Christ. His second conviction was that such an education could be given to the Hindu only through the medium of English because their own vernaculars did not contain the books necessary for it. Raja Ram Mohan Ray, of whom we shall be speaking presently, obtained rooms for him in which to start his school and brought him some of his earliest pupils. His work in a few years opened a wide door to missionary enterprise in India. His school became extraordinarily popular; the young men of the city flocked to him, and the results of his teaching were remarkable. Western thought caused a great ferment in the minds of the students, breaking down their old ideas and undermining their old faith; while the daily lessons in the Scriptures brought them a new vision of spiritual truth. Many of them, fired with enthusiasm for the new life thus revealed to them, renounced Hinduism and embraced Christianity, and Duff's work and Christianity became the most absorbing topic of conversation among the Hindu community. Dr. John Wilson started similar work in Bombay and John Anderson in Madras. Their example was quickly followed by missionaries in other parts of the country.

To the spiritual awakening of India that thus began at the commencement of the nineteenth century no man contributed more than Raja Ram Mohan Ray, the founder of the Brahma Samaj, a Society whose object was to purge Hinduism of idolatry and the evil practices connected with it and restore it to its primitive purity. I do not think it would be too much to say that it was this remarkable man who first opened the eyes of his fellow-countrymen in Bengal to the truth of the Bible as the revelation of God to man in His Son Jesus Christ, and though he remained a Hindu to the end of his life, as would appear from the fact that, after his death, the sacred thread of his caste was found round him, he was "not far from the Kingdom of God." It was his influence, indeed, and the influence of his

writings, that caused the work and teaching of Alexander Duff to be followed at once by such extraordinary results as we have noted ; and in order to help to an understanding of the extent and power of that influence, it will be well to give a brief sketch of his life and character up to the point at which, in the year 1830, a few months after Alexander Duff's arrival, he left India for England, never to return.

Ram Mohan Ray was born in the year 1774, the son of a Brahman, and at the early age of 15 his mind had so revolted against the idolatry of Hinduism, with its meaningless and often disgusting rites and ceremonies, that he determined to leave his father's roof and sojourn for a time in Tibet, if haply he might find there a purer and more satisfying form of religious faith. He spent two or three years in that country in intercourse with the priests of the Lama, and, on his return to his paternal home at Burdwan, devoted himself to the study of Sanskrit and the ancient books of the Hindus. He had frequent discussions with his father, but through awe of him never avowed the scepticism he felt as to the existing forms of their religion. At the age of 22 he commenced the study of the English language, and when, a few years after his father's death in 1804 or 1805, he became the possessor of the whole of the family property through the death of his brothers, he definitely formed plans to reform the religion of his countrymen. He must have spent large sums of money in his efforts to enlighten them, for he gratuitously distributed most of the works which he published for the purpose. He quitted Burdwan and removed to Murshidabad, where he published in Persian, with an Arabic preface, a work entitled *Against the Idolatry of All Religions*. No one took up the challenge thrown down, but the book raised up a host of enemies against him, and in 1814 he retired to Calcutta. There he continued his studies and gradually gathered round him intelligent Hindus who were interested in his investigations and some of whom united with him in the year 1818 in a species of monotheistic worship. In the year 1816 he had published an English translation of an abridgment of the "Vedant," which is an abstract drawn up by Vyas 2,000 years ago of the whole body of Hindu theology as contained in the Vedas. In his preface to this translation he wrote as follows :—" My constant reflections on the inconvenient, or rather injurious, rites introduced by the peculiar practice of Hindu idolatry, which more than any other pagan worship destroys the texture

of society—together with compassion for my countrymen—have compelled me to use every effort to awaken them from their dream of error, and, by making them acquainted with their Scriptures, enable them to contemplate with true devotion the unity and omnipresence of Nature's God. By taking the path which conscience and sincerity direct, I, born a Brahman, have exposed myself to the complainings and reproaches even of some of my relations, whose prejudices are strong and whose temporal advantage depends on the present system. But these, however accumulated, I can tranquilly bear, trusting that a day will arrive when my humble endeavours will be viewed with justice—perhaps acknowledged with gratitude. At any rate, whatever men may say, I cannot be deprived of this consolation—my motives are acceptable to that Being who beholds in secret and compensates openly." A reprint of this abridgment of the "Vedant" was published in London in 1817 by a friend of his, and the preface to it contains a letter from Ram Mohan Ray to this friend in which occurs the following significant passage: "The consequence of my long and uninterrupted researches into religious truth has been that I have found the doctrines of Christ more conducive to moral principles than any other which have come to my knowledge, and I have also found Hindus in general more superstitious and miserable, both in performance of their religious rites and in their domestic concerns, than the rest of the known nations of the earth."

Ram Mohan Ray's writings show that he was greatly perplexed by the various doctrines which he found insisted upon as essential to Christianity, both in the writings of Christian authors and in his conversations with the Christian teachers with whom he was intimate. He resolved, therefore, to study the original Scriptures for himself, and for this purpose he acquired a knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek languages. Becoming strongly impressed with the excellence and importance of the Christian system of morality, he published, in 1820, in English, Sanskrit, and Bengali a series of selections principally from the Synoptic Gospels which he entitled "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness." This work was published anonymously, but without any attempt to conceal the identity of the author, and it brought upon him some severe animadversions in *The Friend of India* (the modern *Statesman*). In reply to them, Ram Mohan Ray published over the signature "A Friend to

Truth" an appeal to the Christian public in defence of "The Precepts of Jesus," in which he declared that the expressions employed in the preface to them should have shown his opponent that "the compiler believed not only in one God whose Nature and Essence is beyond human comprehension, but in the truths revealed in the Christian system." He further maintained that the "Precepts of Jesus" contained not only the essence of all that is necessary to instruct mankind in their civil duties, but also the best and only means of obtaining forgiveness of sins, the favour of God, and strength to overcome our passions and to keep His commandments.

This appeal and a second appeal which followed it drew a series of criticisms from Dr. Marshman, of Serampur, and Ram Mohan Ray once again restated his beliefs, and concluded by saying: "Had not experience too clearly proved that such metaphorical expressions (*i.e.* those relating to the unity of God the Father and God the Son), when taken singly and without attention to their contexts, may be made the foundation of doctrines quite at variance with the tenor of the rest of the Scriptures, I should have had no hesitation in submitting indiscriminately the whole of the New Testament doctrines to my fellow-countrymen, as I should have felt no apprehension that even the most ignorant of them, if left to the guidance of their own unprejudiced views of the matter, could misconceive the clear and distinct assertions they everywhere contain of the unity of God and the subordinate nature of His Messenger Jesus Christ."

The purpose of these quotations from Ram Mohan Ray's writings is to show how deeply he had been impressed with the truth and purity of the Christian faith; and to prove that he was ever ready to give a practical application to his beliefs, I should add that during those years he conducted a vigorous agitation against the practice of "sati" (that is, the self-immolation of a Hindu widow on the funeral pyre of her husband), which finally led to Lord Bentinck's famous order of the 4th December, 1829, declaring all who abetted "sati" to be guilty of culpable homicide.

The following extract from an article written by the celebrated Swiss historian, Sismondi, in the *Revue Encyclopédique* in the year 1824, will help you to appreciate the extent of the influence exercised by Ram Mohan Ray and the extraordinary hold he had on the minds of his countrymen. Sismondi wrote: "A glorious reform has, however, begun among the Hindus. A

Brahman, whom those who know India agree in representing as one of the most virtuous and enlightened of men, Ram Mohan Ray, is exerting himself to restore his countrymen to the worship of the true God and to the union of morality and religion. . . . He communicates to the Hindus all the progress that thought has made among the Europeans. He is among them, by a much juster title than the missionaries, the Apostle of Christianity.”

I have referred at what may seem disproportionate length to the work and influence of this one man—Ram Mohan Ray—because while the missionaries Carey, Marshman, and Ward, and their predecessors, the Lutherans, had opened the door for the propagation of the Gospel in Bengal and Madras, it was Ram Mohan Ray who, by his writings and example, began that great awakening in the minds of his fellow-countrymen which was to develop so rapidly and which, by the very contrast to the purity and truth of the Christian Faith, brought them face to face with the debasement and pollution of much in Hinduism that flourished under the guise of religion. Ram Mohan Ray’s appeal to the educated classes among his countrymen, and especially those of the Brahman caste, was one of extraordinary power. It was utterly devoid of self-interest or self-seeking ; he himself was in affluent circumstances and possessed almost everything that birth or position could give him. What he sought was Truth and Truth alone, and shall we be far from the truth if we say that some rays of “ the glory of God as revealed in Jesus Christ ” had entered his mind and heart and brought the conviction that in Jesus Christ, His Anointed One, God had made Himself known to men ? It was his work which prepared the way for the teaching of Alexander Duff and, as we have seen, made the minds of his countrymen peculiarly receptive of the truths of the Gospel.

Contemporaneously with the reforming activities of Ram Mohan Ray, a new spirit began to inform the Indian Government. The conviction had been growing in the minds of the wisest statesmen at home that Britain, if she was to govern India, must govern it for India’s good, and at the beginning of Lord Bentinck’s Governor-Generalship a policy of reform was initiated that not only brought about the abolition of many cruel and revolting practices which had long formed part of the religious life of the people, but gave effect to the cardinal principle that no native of India should suffer in any way because of his religious opinions, but all should be absolutely equal before the

law. "Sati," as we have seen, was prohibited, and effective measures were set on foot for the suppression of "thagi" (the throttling and robbery of travellers), female infanticide, and human sacrifice. At the same time, though it was principally the need for economy that led to the introduction of this reform, the employment of Indians in Government service was largely extended and the foundation laid for the formation of a Provincial Civil Service.

More momentous and far-reaching in its consequences than any of these reforms, though less spectacular, was the decree, issued in 1835, shortly before the expiration of Lord William Bentinck's term of office, that English should be the official language of India and the medium of instruction in all higher education. For years there had been an acute controversy among the officials of Government as to whether the Government should support Western or Oriental education, and Raja Ram Mohan Ray took part in it, condemning the Sanskrit system of education as useless and arguing strongly in favour of education on the lines of Western science and thought. The controversy came to a head in connection with a question as to the distribution of educational grants from the public purse, and the scale was turned in favour of a Western education and English as the medium of instruction by Macaulay's famous minute, in which he argued powerfully in favour of English as the language which gives the key to all true knowledge. Paradoxical as the statement may at first seem, the decision that higher education in India should be along the lines of Western science and thought and that English should be the medium of instruction has been one of the most potent factors in bringing the life and thought of the literate classes of India, and thus, indirectly, Indian politics, under the influence of Christianity. It is to be remembered, of course, that Christianity has exercised its greatest influence on the politics of India through the Administration, which, since the British became possessors of the country, has been regulated and conducted in accordance with the principles that underlie the governments of all professedly Christian countries. But the consideration of this aspect of the subject lies outside the scope of the present paper, and I am attempting only to show the part that Christianity has played in shaping and giving direction to Indian politics through its influence on the life and thought of the peoples of the country. How, then, has the decision to make English the official language and the

medium of instruction in all higher education affected the life and thought of the people of India, or, to put it more exactly, the literate classes among the people? To give the answer in a single sentence, it was by opening to the Indian mind the whole field of English literature and science, with its Christian ideals of liberty, equality, and philanthropy. It will, perhaps, help us to realize the effect of this policy if we try to imagine what would have been the mental condition and position of the Indian peoples to-day, had the door to a knowledge and understanding of Western science and thought been shut to them (excepting a very small and limited class) and English had never become a medium of thought and speech among them. We have only to read Macaulay's great minute of 1835 to see what would have been the result of adhering to a vernacular education for the people. He scathingly criticizes the Oriental instruction given in the existing colleges and remarks: "Our Council is obliged to print books which give artificial encouragement to absurd science, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, and absurd theology." Apart from the teaching of the missionaries among the poorer classes and the distribution of the Scriptures in the vernaculars, the light of Christian Truth would never have shone upon the people, and the darkness that enshrouded them at the middle of the eighteenth century might have remained to this day. To trace the development and spread of English education in India and to show how students at the schools and colleges became imbued, through the prescribed educational courses, with Western thought and ideals would require a volume, but I shall endeavour to explain very briefly in what forms the influence thus imparted manifested itself, and how it helped to shape the hopes and aspirations of the politically-minded classes. The results produced so far have been revolutionary in the highest degree, and the changes that are even now in progress are kaleidoscopic. What the ultimate result will be, it is impossible to predict.

The society known as the Brahma Samaj, which Ram Mohan Ray had founded in the year 1828 with the object of purging Hinduism of polytheism and idolatry, languished after he left India for England and would have died had not the Tagore family, now so well-known through the writings of Rabindra Nath Tagore, become interested in the new movement and given it both moral and financial support. In 1842 Debendra Nath Tagore, the son of Ram Mohan Ray's friend, joined the

Society, and was soon recognized as its leader. Under his leadership it continued to develop, and though its advance towards Christianity was checked in that the new leader did not share Ram Mohan Ray's reverence for Christ and believed that India had no need of Christianity, its influence steadily increased during the next twenty years. Meanwhile, in the year 1854, the duties of Government in regard to the education of the Indian people were reaffirmed in the comprehensive despatch sent out to the Governor-General by the Court of Directors at the instance of Sir Charles Wood (afterwards Lord Halifax), President of the Board of Control. Universities were founded at Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay in the year of the Mutiny, and in addition to other reforms, schools for teaching English were gradually established in every district. At the same time, Christian missions began to give greater attention to education, especially English education, in their schools, and the number of missionaries rapidly increased.

A few years after the Mutiny the Brahma Samaj again took a prominent place in the social and religious life of Bengal under the leadership of one Keshab Chandra Sen, a Calcutta student who came of a well-known Vishnuite family and had had a good English education. He founded the "Sangal-Sabhā," or Association of Believers, which met regularly for devotional purposes and for the discussion of social and religious questions. The Sabhā also discussed the question of caste, with the result that the members gave it up once and for all, while Debendra Nath Tagore even went as far as to discard his sacred thread. At Keshab Chandra Sen's suggestion the Brahma Samaj began to follow the example of Christian philanthropy and gathered money and food for sufferers from famine. Keshab came more and more under the influence of Christ and sought increasingly to translate His precepts into the daily practice of his life. In the year 1864 he made a long tour in India, extending as far as Madras and Bombay, and preached with great power and success wherever he went. The welcome he received throughout his tour was remarkable, and the doctrines he preached met with such acceptance that he conceived the idea of forming one Brahma Samaj for the whole of India. As a result of his preaching, a new society called the "Veda Samaj" was founded in Madras the same year, which subsequently developed into the present Brahma Samaj of Madras; while three years later his preaching bore further fruit in the formation in Bombay

of a society called the "Prārthanā Samāj" or Prayer Society. The aims of this society were theistic worship and social reform. The movement, however, did not spread widely in Bombay. It lacked the active and enthusiastic missionaries that laboured for the Brahma Samaj in Bengal, and owing to the absence of definite beliefs among its members and the uncertainty of its theological position, it did not produce much literature.

After his return to Calcutta Keshab Chandra Sen read a great deal of Christian literature and was more and more influenced by the Christian Scriptures. He gathered round himself a small but devoted band of followers who were characterized by a desire to lead a pure and holy life and by a passion for the saving of souls. They went about preaching and lived lives of simplicity and self-sacrifice. In 1866 Keshab Sen formed a new society, called the "Brāhma Samāj of India," and invited all Brahmas throughout the country to join it. Many of the oldest members of the original society refused to join it, but nearly all the younger and more enthusiastic men followed Keshab, and many notable Brahmas in other parts of the country also joined the new society. In 1869-70 Keshab Sen paid a visit to England, where he was warmly welcomed, and on his return, with his mind filled with fresh schemes for social reform, he inaugurated many new social activities, including a Normal School for Girls and an Industrial School for Boys. A fresh impetus was given to the movement, and the tours of the Samāj missionaries in the towns and villages of the country and Keshab's own journeys to distant cities and his great lectures in English drew multitudes of men to the worship of the one true God and rapidly built up the membership of the Samāj. Yet already there were signs of discord within the Samāj, and an opposition party began to make itself heard. The Samāj had no organization, and Keshab, induced by the reverence and homage which the younger members paid him to believe that he was different from other men and in some way inspired, resisted every form of popular government proposed by those members who were sensible of the dangers that were likely to arise from the supremacy of one man in the Samāj. The opposition of the party of freedom and progress grew and finally came to a head when Keshab Chandra Sen permitted his daughter to be married to the young heir to the native state of Kuch-Bihar, and the marriage was celebrated with idolatrous rites and ceremonies. The marriage was denounced by the opposition party as an

unforgivable sacrifice of principle, and the majority of the members, failing to depose Keshab, left the Samāj and formed a new society called the "Sādhāran Brahma Samāj." "Sādhāran" means "general," and the addition of the word to the title implied that it was catholic and democratic. Despite this great schism in its ranks, however, Brahmaisim has continued to grow in strength, and to-day the "Sādhāran Brahma Samāj" has a large body of adherents in Calcutta. Its influence, indeed, was very much wider than the number of its adherents suggested. It is no exaggeration to say that the ideas and principles underlying Brahmaisim and other similar movements in India have permeated, in a greater or less degree, every grade of society among the educated classes of India, and that, to-day, very few educated Hindus could be found to defend the superstitious and idolatrous practices that form so large a part of Hinduism. During the latter part of my service in Bengal one of the most striking characteristics of the younger generation of Bengalis was its acceptance of the duty of social service. If a flood or other catastrophe occurred, there were always bands of young men ready to endure hardship for the relief of the sufferers, and on more than one occasion their assistance proved of great value to the Government. The spirit of self-sacrifice thus manifested was undoubtedly due partly to the example of the Christian missionaries and partly to the influence of the Brāhma Samāj and its unceasing insistence, from its earliest days, on the virtues of philanthropy and service for the common good.

I should remark here that the awakening which began to manifest itself in India at the beginning of the nineteenth century had very little effect on the Muhammadan section of the population. Whether it was due to resentment at the destruction of their empire in India by the English or to a contempt for mere intellectual power, the Muhammadans as a whole displayed an almost complete indifference to the advantages offered by the new system of education, and the new movements that had so marked an influence on the social and moral ideas of the Hindus touched them but little. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Anglo-Muhammadan College at Aligarh, was an outstanding exception to this rule, and it has been largely due to his labours in the cause of reform that the Muhammadan community in India to-day is gradually becoming permeated with modern ideas in religion.

At the time when the religious zeal of Keshab Chandra Sen and his followers was gaining many adherents for the Brāhma Samāj, the missionary societies in India began to display increased activity. Education on Christian lines was advanced, translations of the Scriptures into the vernaculars were widely disseminated, and much was done to improve the conditions under which native Christians were living. The progress of Christianity between the years 1872 and 1901 was indeed remarkable. It nearly doubled its numbers in the thirty years, rising from one and a-half to about three millions. Native Christians, however, as was but natural, were most largely recruited from among the classes outside the Hindu system, that is, the outcastes or depressed classes, and from the nature of the case they were not in a position to exercise any appreciable influence on Indian politics. It is only within the last few years that the position of the 60 millions of outcastes or untouchables in the State has become a question of pressing importance.

Some time before the death of Keshab Chandra Sen the reforming, not to say iconoclastic, tendencies of the new movements to which the religious awakening in India had given rise had begun to produce a reaction among the educated classes of India. A new spirit was seen to animate them. Many forms of new effort, especially in the direction of social service, appeared, and a National Reform Movement was initiated which led to the formation in the year 1888 of a National Social Conference. The reaction manifested itself most conspicuously in a growing desire to defend Hinduism and an increasing confidence in its defensibility. The movement is now shared by Muhammadans, Buddhists, and Parsees, but it first appeared among the Hindus. Concurrently, political aspirations began to make themselves heard, and in the year 1885 the Indian National Congress was inaugurated. On the religious side the reaction led to the inception of many new movements, prominent among which was the Arya Samāj, founded by Dayanandra Saraswati, and the Deva Samāj, an atheistic society with its centre at Lahore in the Panjab. These all had their birth in a desire to free the ancient religions of the people from the gross and polytheistic ideas that had grown around them and to bring them more into conformity with the moral principles underlying Christianity.

The new spirit of self-confidence and independence which was now animating the educated classes and quickly developed

into a spirit of Nationalism soon began to manifest impatience at the slow progress that was being made towards emancipation from the control of the foreigner. The educated Indian regarded himself as a full-grown man and was becoming restless under the domination of a race whose attitude toward him, unfortunately, was too often calculated to inspire him with a sense of inferiority. Impatience bred resentment, and at the close of the nineteenth century a deep feeling of hostility towards their English rulers began to surge through the minds of the educated youth of India. This feeling was accentuated by the fact that, owing to the low educational standards set by Government, thousands of young students were passing the matriculation or B.A. examination, for but a small fraction of whom posts could be found in Government service, and the rest of whom were wholly unfitted by training for scientific or commercial pursuits. The victory of Japan in the Russo-Japanese War caused their hostility to leap into flame, and in 1905 a campaign of anarchism and murder was set on foot which compelled the Government to adopt severe repressive measures. The phase passed, but the spirit of animosity remained, and year by year the demands of that section of the educated classes which was represented by the Indian National Congress for self-government, grew more and more insistent. During the Great War, which set free a tide of nationalism through the whole world and led to the creation of many new and independent States, the spirit of antagonism to English rule burst out afresh. Mr. Gandhi placed himself at the head of the opposition that had been aroused by the passing of the "Rowlatt Bills" and, in 1918, began a campaign of passive resistance to Government. It ended in disaster, but the non-co-operation movement steadily grew. The Indian National Congress lent it support, non-co-operation committees were set up in the villages, and Mr. Gandhi went up and down the country preaching opposition to Government. To-day the effects of the movement are still being felt in India, and even at the present moment, when the Round Table Conference is sitting and determined efforts are being made to evolve a constitution for India that shall satisfy, in part at least, if not wholly, the aspirations of educated Indians while safeguarding the interests of the inarticulate masses, non-co-operation is still being advocated, and within the last few months we have witnessed a fresh outbreak of anarchism and murder.

Despite the general turmoil and unrest, however, and the persistence of the Swarajist or Extremist party in its campaign to coerce the Government by terrorism and open defiance of the law, the leaven of Christian ideals and principles is still working, and the outlook of the educated classes in regard not only to matters of religion, but also to political questions affecting the welfare of the people, is being gradually transformed. The revival of the ancient religions, while it has led to the repudiation of many of the beliefs and customs that were founded on them, has at the same time revealed their utter insufficiency to meet man's deepest need. Thinking Hindus no longer hold the doctrine which is the basis of the Hindu religious system, namely, that each man's caste is a certain index of the stage of spiritual progress his soul has reached in its transmigrational journey. To an extent they are unwilling to admit, they have lost faith in the system, and, finding nothing to take its place, have sought satisfaction for their aspirations in social service and philanthropic schemes for the betterment of the people. Many, again, have turned to politics in the false hope that, if they could but have freedom to govern themselves, it would usher in a golden era and provide a cure for all the ills from which the country is suffering. But beneath all the changes that are rapidly transforming the social and political life of India, Christianity has been working like an unseen force. In every modern reform movement Christian standards have been the guide, and the methods and principles of Christian missions have been followed in almost every case. The movements for the emancipation of the depressed classes, for the deliverance of women from the bondage of the "purda," and for the abolition of caste owe their inception to the influence of Christianity, and it is by the adoption of Christianity that the depressed classes hope to secure for themselves a position of freedom and equality in the social system of India. What will be the outcome of these movements no man can foretell, but that Christianity will continue its beneficent work is certain, for, in the words of Sir Narayan Chandravarkar, of Bombay, "The ideas that lie at the heart of the Gospel of Christ are slowly but surely permeating every part of Hindu society and modifying every phase of Hindu thought."

DISCUSSION.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. E. A. Molony, C.B.E.), in moving a vote of thanks to the lecturer, said: As we are chiefly interested with the events which have led up to the present position, I do not propose to refer to ancient history except to mention the very early Christian tradition that St. Thomas, after preaching in the kingdom of one Gundaphar in India, went on into another kingdom, where he was martyred. Quite recently it has been shown that Gundaphar was an Indo-Parthian prince, who probably ruled in North-western India.

The present condition of affairs in India may be said to have been derived from the evangelical movement in England under Wesley, at the end of the 18th century. Carey was the great pioneer missionary, and the early 19th century was a period of great events. The life of Ram Mohan Ray, the new charter of the East India Company giving a footing to missionary work, social reform under Lord William Bentinck, the inauguration of the Brahma Samaj, and the facilities for English education—all these were signs as well as the cause of a great liberation of thought from age-long shackles. The process which we see proceeding is a veritable renaissance of India as well as of nearly the whole of Asia.

The reader of the paper has referred to the new portent of social service which he came across in Bengal. I also came across it at Agra in the year of the great influenza epidemic, when the local Seva Samiti (Society of Service) did most excellent work, and this new spirit is at work all over India. The Servants of India Society, which started in the Bombay Presidency, is well known, and the spirit of social service is now spread all over the country, and will before long bring in many much-needed reforms. This movement is mostly due to the new ferment of Western scientific ideas and the teaching and example of missionaries.

The victory of Japan over Russia gave an immense impulse to the feeling of nationality in India, as elsewhere in Asia—a feeling which was further reinforced by the return of Indian soldiers who had served in Europe and elsewhere during the Great War, and from the loudly proclaimed slogans of self-determination and the right of small nations to exist.

New ideas and new ideals now have a wonderful opportunity to establish themselves, and the extent to which Christian ideas have penetrated into the citadels of the old religions is astonishing. Those who have read *Christ at the Round Table* will realize something of what is happening. The feminist movement, which 30 years ago or less was really non-existent, is now vigorous.

In the mass-movement areas great and even embarrassing numbers are coming into the Christian Church, and when the vision of an independent Indian Church, purged from the divisions of the West, takes hold of the popular mind, a veritable landslide is not improbable. The Salvation Army is working among outcastes. The Government has for many years given money for the reform of the Maghya Doms, with no result. The Salvationists are successful inasmuch as they introduce new life into the men they try to reform. Similarly, I think, the salvation of India will be brought about by the introduction of new life through Christ.

The vote of thanks was carried with acclamation.

The Rev. A. BODY said : What we see in India now is new wine being poured into old wineskins ; and the wineskins are bursting. That makes things very difficult for those who are responsible for the peace and order of the land. But it is a sign of success, and not of failure. The new wine is in the old skins, and it is working there.

Why should we go on giving Western teaching to the Indians ? They can never become Westerns, and they only get muddled. The answer is that we can only give them what we have to give. That Western civilization we have to give, and we have tried to give that and have succeeded. We used in missionary work to try and Anglicize the people, until the Mutiny, and then we learned that we ought to Christianize them and not to anglicize them. That was a great and very important lesson—the characteristic note of our Mission work—and we owe it to India to act on the lesson so learnt.

Lieut.-Col. MOLONY warmly thanked the lecturer for a paper so sympathetic to Christian Missions in India ; but he thought that the Mahrattas were more to blame than the British for the destruction of the Moghul Empire. The point was of some importance, because Indians try to blame us for the wars which desolated India during

the century ending in 1818. These wars, however, were more due to the Mahrattas having cut the Moghul Empire in two than to any action on our part.

The Colonel read an extract from Mr. Rice Holmes' *History of the Mutiny* (which comes in the middle of a paragraph intended to describe the anarchy which it brought to the North-Western Provinces). This was the passage: "Those natives who had been taught English were generally, and those who had been converted to Christianity were invariably, loyal."

Mr. WILLIAM C. EDWARDS said: I am sorry that I cannot share in the optimism of the lecturer. I think that we have been going backward in India during the past generation. In my opinion our Government ought to have declared itself definitely and openly Christian in 1857, after the Mutiny.

Sir Herbert Edwardes said in 1860: "I have been asked (by men high in power, etc.) and I have unhesitatingly expressed it as my opinion that we ought to stand forth in India as a Christian Government. If asked why? I have said because I consider it our duty to do so. If asked whether a Christian Government of India is a course that is likely to be safe for England, the only answer which I should give to that question is that it is the ONLY safe policy" (*Life*, vol. 2, pp. 246, 247).

Alas, the policy of cowardice and compromise was adopted, and it has brought in its train unmeasured troubles. Our double-minded policy has been reflected in the officials sent to that country. The religious systems of India seem to me to be of Satanic origin. Our lecturer praises the great and wonderful schools of India, but do they turn out Christians? or *Anti-Christians*? Generally the latter. If we had established elementary *Christian* schools in the 740,000 villages of India, what a different story we might have to tell?

We have 80 million Muhammadans in India. I have been travelling in the East, and I believe that the Muhammadan religion is decaying fast. A few weeks ago I was speaking with a man in Damascus. He told me that he went to a certain college founded by Christian men and built with Christian money. He was not a Christian, but he had some belief in the Bible. He was taught Darwinism; he accepted that and rejected the Bible. He is now

a militant atheist. I hope the lecturer will forgive me for saying that I do not like people speaking of William Carey as "a humble cobbler." He was a learned man and a highly respected minister before he went out as a missionary to India. I have walked the great and noble halls of Serampur—stood in his pulpit and spoken in the Lal Bazaar, and I admire him greatly. We do not speak of Joseph Lancaster as a cobbler nor of Epictetus as a slave.

As regards Chandra Sen, he tried to graft upon the Hindu upas-tree some buds of Christian truth, in hopes of getting blossoms of Christian virtues. Consider for a moment his travesty of the Lord's Supper. He used rice instead of bread, and said, "We worship not thee, O Rice, but GOD IN thee." He was really an eloquent Pantheist, and Hinduism has much of that. I am equally opposed to the praises showered upon the Samaj movement. I have before me their pledges—judge for yourselves from two of them: "I shall, as the first step, amalgamate different branches of the same caste." Does not that mean the possible perpetuation of the MAIN castes? Again, "I will never hold, attend, or pay for nautches, or otherwise hold out encouragement to prostitution." That really means toleration of the "unspeakables" of Indian life and Hinduism.

I grieve to take so gloomy a view of Gospel work in India, and to have to say that, in my humble opinion, we are drifting toward a widespread apostasy among the so-called Christians there. Nothing is contributing so much to that as the teaching of Modernism in the colleges and pulpits that are financially supported by the self-denial of evangelical people in this country.

LECTURER'S REPLY.

During the discussion very little has been said by way of criticism, and I do not think there is much that calls for a reply on my part. The Chairman, I was glad to find, expressed himself as being in general agreement with the views put forward in the paper, and it is interesting to note that his own experiences in India lend support to the suggestion that the spirit of social service which has been seen to animate the younger generation among the educated classes of India during recent years is traceable to the influence of Christian ideals and the example of Christian missionaries.

Col. Molony has expressed dissent from the view that it was the British who destroyed the Moghul Empire. When referring to the Muhammadans' reluctance to avail themselves of the advantages offered by the new system of education, I was not discussing historical facts, but was indicating what influences might have been at work in the minds of the Muhammadans. The Mahrattas, undoubtedly, were an important factor in the weakening and destruction of the Moghul Empire, but it was the British who gave it the *coup de grâce*, and as they succeeded to that empire, it is not unnatural that the Muhammadans should lay its destruction at their door.

There is considerable truth, I think, in Mr. Body's remark that what we have been doing in India is to pour new wine into old bottles—with the inevitable result. But what lies at the root of the difficulties that are confronting us as a nation in India is that while we have largely destroyed the faith of the Indians in their ancient religions, we have given them nothing in their place, and have refrained from presenting Christianity to them as the one true religion.

Mr. Edwards has, I fear, misjudged or misinterpreted some of the remarks that have been made in presenting the subject for consideration. I greatly sympathize with his view that our Government should have definitely declared itself Christian after the Indian Mutiny—or even earlier than that—but I am unable to see that it could have given effect to such a declaration in the various branches of the administration or have discriminated in favour of followers of the Christian religion.

Mr. Edwards is mistaken in thinking that I have praised “the great and wonderful schools of India.” Far from it: in my opinion, the Government of India's educational system is one of the weak spots—if not the weakest—in the administration. Much more should have been done to spread and encourage primary education. Nor, again, is it quite correct to say that I have showered praises upon the Samaj movement. I have referred to the growth and development of the Samaj movement as showing that the leaven of Christian principles and ideals was working in the minds of thoughtful Indians, who sincerely desired that Hinduism might be purged of its corrupt and debasing beliefs, but I have not held it up for admiration, as Mr. Edwards seems to suggest.