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JOURNAL OF
THE TRANSACTIONS
OF
The Victoria Institute
OR
Philosophical Society of Great Britain

VOL. LXXII

1940



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY
THE INSTITUTE, 1, CENTRAL BUILDINGS, WESTMINSTER, W.C.1

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835TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING,

HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM B, THE CENTRAL HALL,
WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, APRIL 8TH, 1940.

AT 4.30 P.M.

PROFESSOR G. H. LANGLEY, M.A., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the Meeting of March 18th were read, confirmed and signed.

The CHAIRMAN then called on the Rev. G. F. Cranswick, B.A., and Mrs. M. T. Ingram to read their papers entitled "The Wholesomeness of Christianity as Illustrated by Recent Events in India."

The Meeting was then thrown open to discussion, in which the following took part: Colonel Molony, Mr. G. I. C. Ingram, the Rev. A. W. Payne, Mr. R. Macgregor, Dr. Barcroft Anderson, Mr. Sidney Collett and Colonel Skinner.

A written communication was read from Rev. Principal Curr.

*THE WHOLESOMENESS OF CHRISTIANITY AS
ILLUSTRATED BY RECENT EVENTS IN INDIA.*

By THE REV. G. F. CRANSWICK, B.A.

CHRI^STIANITY claims to possess the truth about God and man. It asserts that God has spoken to mankind in the life, death and resurrection of a person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God; "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us". This was the faith of the New Testament writers and still is the faith of believers to-day.

While Christianity is uncompromising with regard to its creed, it does not deny that goodness and beauty are to be found in the other faiths and in the cultural heritage of India. But it calls men into a relationship with God and each other that releases a spiritual power that is re-creative and wholesome. The basic ideas in the word wholesomeness are health and com-

pleteness. These two things were demonstrated in Palestine 1,900 years ago by the earthly ministry of the Son of God.

Wherever the Gospel has been truly preached and lived, there has grown up a Church through which the healing power of Christ has been mediated. In India the Church numbers between six and seven millions (Protestant and Roman Catholic). It has taken root in the heart and mind as well as the soil of India. Although divided, it witnesses to one faith that Jesus Christ is God's revealed Word. Moreover that Church, though still dependent on the older Churches for financial help as well as for personnel, has acquired an entity and character which is truly indigenous. Though comparatively small, it is exerting a wholesome effect on Indian life and thought far exceeding its numerical strength.

A special contribution of Christianity as compared with other religions is its insistence on the value of individual personality. "As many as received him," reports the fourth Evangelist, "to them gave he the right to become children of God." To millions of outcasts in India as well as to many other seekers after truth, this has indeed been a gospel of salvation. Thousands of individuals are to-day entering the Church and in fellowship with others are being built up into "a holy temple in the Lord". Thus Christianity is supplying one of India's greatest needs, namely, a unity that transcends the divisions of race, language and caste. In the matter of the reunion of the Churches, it is to India that the whole world is looking with hope and expectation. The South India Union Scheme is being taken as the pattern for union in other lands.

Mrs. Ingram has shown in her paper the wholesomeness of Christianity as exemplified in Mass Movements. Only those who have lived and served in India and have come to love her can appreciate the strangulating effect of much that is unwholesome in Indian life and custom. Much adverse criticism has been levelled at India from outside, but there is no need to add to the shame and ignominy that is felt by enlightened Indian patriots as they contemplate the dire poverty, the abysmal ignorance and widespread disease that are the common lot of the masses.

The wholesome effect of Christianity in a country in which these evils are on such a vast scale can perhaps best be seen by some facts that have been enumerated by such an outstanding and typical Indian as Dr. Azariah, the Bishop of Dornakal.

He has recently pointed out to his fellow-countrymen that the first newspaper, the first public library and the first English school were organised by Christian missionaries. "Christians", he says, "have been pioneers in women's Higher Education". He gives the following remarkable figures about education in general. "There are about 15,000 elementary schools under Christian management, where over half a million pupils are receiving instruction in the three R's. There are also, under Christian auspices, 419 middle schools with 90,000 pupils and 301 secondary schools with 76,000 pupils and 37 colleges of the University and Intermediate grade with 13,180 students scattered throughout the country". Moreover, the bishop points out that "the Christian Church has given a large number of men and women to public service. It has rendered great service to the sick and infirm. The first school for the blind, the first institution for the deaf and dumb, the first (and even now the largest) sanatorium for tuberculosis patients were all begun by Christian organisations. There are in British India about 500 hospitals with 57,700 beds and fully a third of these are in Christian hospitals. These are served by 299 Indian and 306 missionary doctors and by 800 Indian and 290 missionary nurses". The great work being done for that most-to-be-pitied sufferer, the leper, is largely in the hands of Christian agency.

Towards the solution of the problem of illiteracy the Christian Church is taking its share. In British India only ten per cent. of the total population is literate. The total figure for Christians is 18 per cent. Literacy amongst women is 2.9 per cent. while the literacy among Christian women is 20.3. This is what an Indian editor said when asked what difference Christianity had made to women in India: "There is no doubt that Christianity and Christian missions give an impetus to the advance of freedom among Indian women; first to Indian Christians and then spreading through them to the other sections of Indian nationality. Women have been given a wider scope of thought; a freer social atmosphere and a more happy intercourse between men and women; the encouragement of independence among women and a desire to earn their own livelihood".

This is what a member of the anti-Christian Arya Samaj has said: "A degenerate Hinduism has enslaved our women. They were condemned to illiteracy, idolatry, superstition, suffering, drudgery and dullness. The lovely things of life were all kept from them. Through Christian missions the folly and the wrong

of this treatment of our women has been convincingly demonstrated”.

Under the leadership and inspiration of Dr. Laubach, the drive towards literacy amongst Christians has recently made great strides. By use of his reading charts, which he first employed in the Malaya States, simple villagers are not only learning to read themselves but are increasing their own proficiency as well as adding to the number of prospective readers by the slogan, which they put into practice, “Each one, teach one”. More striking still, perhaps, is the fact that Dr. Laubach has been asked to co-operate with the efforts of several Congress Governments by demonstrating his methods and training workers for literacy campaigns.

The importance of Christian institutions for higher education on future leadership in Church and State can be seen from the fact that only two out of the forty-two delegates to the recent World Conference at Madras had not been to a Christian college.

India is moving rapidly in the direction of her political goal. There, as well as in the West, the ill-effects of a purely secular education can be seen. It may well be that the Christian college will form a bulwark against the advance of secularisation.

Towards the solution of the huge problem of poverty the contribution of Christianity is not insignificant. Nearly ninety per cent. of the population of India live in its 750,000 villages. It is there that poverty as well as disease and illiteracy are seen in their most acute form. In some places Christian missions have been pioneers in the matter of Vocational Schools in which training in various kinds of industries or crafts, as well as in agriculture, forms an integral part of the curriculum. It is to be hoped that India will be spared the evils of sudden industrialisation that this and other countries suffered in the past. There is evidence to show that the movement from field to factory has grown alarmingly in recent years. Rural Vocational Schools run by missions are playing their part. Such schools, often run in conjunction with Rural Welfare Centres, fit lads to return to the villages as artisans or farmers. Such lads are themselves pioneers in village uplift and are a great strength to the village church.

At the recent World Conference held at Madras under the auspices of the International Missionary Council, more than half the delegates came from Churches in “missionary lands”. So that it can be justly claimed that in the reports and findings

of that Conference the voice of the younger Churches is heard. The following is a quotation from a section of the findings called "The Place of the Missionary in the Unfinished Task".

"There is a strongly expressed and, we believe, unanimous opinion among the younger Churches that missionaries from the older Churches are still needed. This applies to areas where Churches are organised on a self-supporting and self-controlling basis as well as to the less developed regions".

From this it will be seen that an extensive slackening of the missionary efforts through the war might endanger even the existence of some of the younger Churches. Were they cast adrift to face vast and intricate problems as well as unparalleled opportunities before they were strong enough to stand alone, disaster might ensue.

A policy of devolution has been the practice of most missionary societies for a number of years. To show the good effects of this two examples must suffice. One of the criticisms of the Lindsay Commission against the colleges was that they were segregated not only by distance but by thought from the main stream of the Church which in India is mainly a rural church. Sixteen Christian colleges have lately completed surveys on the economic and other conditions of the rural Church. In addition to this at least one college known to the writer has started a Youth Service Bureau. The students visit certain selected villages for longer or shorter periods in order to demonstrate simple methods of sanitation, hygiene, reading, etc. The Bureau includes Hindu and Moslem members as well as Christians. It is, to say the least, a very wholesome sight to see high-caste Hindu, as well as Moslem and Christian students digging sanitary pits for low-caste villagers! They, too, are having to revise their "old fashioned" notions with regard to college students.

Quite recently the missionary societies have revised their medical policies. In the past it was the foreign missionary who carried on a vast amount of curative medical work in a number of large base hospitals. The importance of Preventive Medicine for a country like India has been realised. So that now from the base hospital to which patients flocked in their hundreds (and will do so still) healing is to be taken to the people. This involves the setting up of small dispensaries where there are none and supervising them by "mobile units"—cars or boats. But more, it involves the training of the village padre, teacher or others in the use of simple remedies and as

instructors in village hygiene. Thus the "unordained" are being called to the Ministry of Healing.

In these and in many other ways the Indian Church is preparing itself to shoulder more responsibility. In Palestine in the days of His flesh the Son of God manifested the Father's love not only by words of love but by deeds of love. "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" asked the messengers from the bewildered Baptist. "Tell John", said the Master, "what things ye have seen and heard; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good tidings preached to them". The Christ of Christianity is not dead but alive. He lives and is active still through His Body the Church: and where Christ comes there, too, is health, completeness, wholesomeness.

*THE WHOLESOMENESS OF CHRISTIANITY AS
ILLUSTRATED BY RECENT EVENTS IN INDIA.*

PART II—By MRS. MAY T. INGRAM.

Perhaps amongst no people on the face of the earth has Christianity such an opportunity of proving its "wholesomeness" as amongst the fifty millions of Outcastes in India. To realise the difference that the Gospel of Christ has made, and is making, to India's Untouchables, one needs first to see them without it. Then the contrast appears, to use one of their own similies, "ásmán o zamín ka farq"—"as the difference between heaven and earth".

For centuries unnumbered these unfortunate people have been condemned by the religion of their land—the ancient Hindu law-code of Mánu, to a life of degradation, oppression and suppression, such as is almost impossible for us, who live in a free and Christian country, to imagine. The law of Mánu has decreed that the Outcastes shall never rise, shall never have education, or rights, or be treated as fellow human beings by their Caste masters, and one of the wrongs that has burned in the soul of many an Outcaste parent is the knowledge that he

can never hope for anything better for his children than fate has decreed for him.

On the outskirts of practically every village in India one finds the collection of miserable huts that are their only home, and the Outcastes themselves, who live in them, dirty, illiterate, and desperately poor, living always under the shadow of fear—fear of ill-treatment and bullying at the hands of the Caste masters for whom they work, and still greater fear of evil spirits, and malicious petty gods, who are always on the lookout to do them or their children harm. It is not surprising that centuries of such conditions of life should have produced in the Outcastes certain characteristics that are much to be deplored, sullen resentment that they dare not express, lying, and a perpetually cringing attitude. But all this serves only to show up more clearly the wonder of the miracle of grace that is wrought when an Outcaste family steps out into the freedom with which Christ can make them free.

For a new day is dawning. To the poor the Gospel is being preached, as Christ said that it should be, and many of India's poorest are receiving Him gladly, and are finding in Him One Who can save them from sin and from fear, and can give the peace of forgiveness; One Who is alive and Almighty, and Who yearns that they may know Him as their loving Friend and Brother.

In the area in which my husband and I are working, the Agra district of the United Provinces in North India, there are 440 villages and hamlets. No other European of any sort lives there, and we, with our little band of Indian helpers, are the only Christian workers. In some 80 of these villages there are now groups of Christians from amongst the Outcastes—some large groups, some very small, but most of them shining like stars in a midnight sky, in the midst of the heathen darkness with which they are surrounded.

Let me take you to one village, in which the Christian group is still very small. We visit first the home of a still heathen Outcaste. Darkness, dirt, and squalor characterise it; flies are thick upon the unwashed eyes of the small children, and discontent is written upon the faces of their parents. On the raised mud platform outside the mud hut is the "thán" or shrine, a small mud erection plastered over with cow-dung, supposed to be inhabited by a spirit who must be placated by frequent offerings and attention. Just round the corner is

another home, of people from the same group of Outcastes. The wide mud platform is clean swept, and all trace of a "thán" has disappeared. The hut is much lighter, for windows have been knocked through the mud walls, and there is a general air of happiness and well-being. Girwar and his wife come out with bright smiles to welcome us, and the children gather round. On Sundays the work of the week is reduced to a minimum, and, when it is not the turn of that village to be visited by a worker, Girwar himself will lead a service of worship to the living God, which friends and neighbours will attend, and later in the day, he, with some members of the morning congregation, will probably visit some other village to bear testimony to the Christ Who has done so much for them. This is just one instance from many such that I could quote.

Basil Matthews was greatly struck with this same transformation during his recent tour in India, and, in his book that followed, *The Church takes Root in India*, he wrote of the Christians from the Outcastes, that "their houses became cleaner, their backs lose the cringing stoop, and their eyes the glint of dread . . . The folk who once tremblingly bowed before a stone stained with the blood of a cockerel as they cowered before the small-pox goddess, now, as Christians, become the joint creators of a house of God . . . and daily those once terror-stricken animists make it resound with joyful praises of the God of Love . . . The improvement . . . is economic and æsthetic, hygienic and spiritual, all inextricably interwoven" (pp. 51, 52).

From the above, however, it must not be supposed that the Outcaste usually, or at once, finds that "godliness is a way of gain". When he and his family become Christians, their work is the same, they are just as poor, and they continue to live in the same poor little huts. True, it often means the possibility of education for his children, and, if an Adult Literacy Campaign is in progress in the neighbourhood, he and his wife may find themselves able to read in the amazing time of a few short weeks. But with it all may come fierce persecution. The Caste master is furious that his field labourers should presume to change their religion, and he determines by every means in his power to stamp it out. So he sets a gang of still heathen Outcastes on to the new Christians. They are set upon and beaten with heavy sticks; their goods are stolen; false charges are brought against them and they find themselves in the law

courts ; they are prevented from drawing water at the one well open to them ; in all these and many other ways they learn that we must “through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom”. Very seldom do we find that persecution makes them turn back from their following of Christ. Much more often their faith and courage are an inspiration to us, and in South India, where the Christward movement amongst the Outcastes is of much longer standing than that in the North, we witness another miracle—that the once persecuting Caste masters have themselves been won to faith in Christ through the transformed life and testimony of the Outcastes.

Dr. Waskom Pickett, Bishop in the American Methodist Episcopal Church in India, bears most striking testimony to the effect upon the Caste people in the Telugu area of the transformed life and habits of the Christian Outcastes, in his recent book, *Christ's Way to India's Heart*. I make no apology for quoting at some length from this book, for two reasons. First, that it is in part my own experience, for my husband and I had the privilege of being lent by our Society to help with the first month of the survey that preceded the writing of the book ; and secondly, that if I could induce each member of the Victoria Institute to possess and to read this book, I feel that I could do them no greater service. It can be had for 2s. from any missionary society. The book is a thrilling record of the way in which the simple testimony, backed by the transformed lives of the Outcastes, has been the means of winning Caste people of all ranks to Christ. They have seen the power of the Gospel to achieve the miracle that no other power ever could, to make dirty people clean ; thieves honest ; drunkards sober ; hereditary enemies into friends and brothers ; to raise downtrodden womanhood, and, as Dr. Pickett puts it, “our evidence affords convincing proof that Christ is freeing His people from a sense of grievance, and giving them instead a creative sense of mission ” (p. 64). He continues : “A Lutheran minister, converted as a boy from the Depressed Classes, told us vivid stories of the mistreatment which he suffered from the higher castes before and for several years after his conversion, and of his boyhood dreams of revenge. Then he added : ‘I am having my revenge now, and it is sweeter far than in my dreams. More than a score of men and women and nearly three score of children of the higher castes have received baptism at my hand. When I hated my oppressors I felt little and mean. They were my

superiors. But now that I love them and am leading many of them to Christ I have a continuous sense of elation and fulfilment. Now they are my brothers' ”.

Dr. Pickett records a conversation between himself and a still heatlen Caste man, concerning the Christian Outcastes in his village. “Has being Christians made them better?” asked Dr. Pickett. “Certainly”, replied the Kammas. “Before they became Christians they were robbers and murderers—even we Kammas were afraid of them; the difference between them as they were then and as they are now is like that between the earth and the sky, between noon-day and night.” “What other groups have become Christians?” “Two lower Sudra groups” “Are their lives also changing?” “Yes, in just the same way. Some were drunkards, now they don't drink.” “And what of your people? Haven't some of them become Christians?” “Yes.” “Are they also being changed?” “Yes, and more rapidly than the others were. It seems that we Kammas are better material than the Malas “(such is caste pride),” but none of our people would have become Christians if they had not first seen what happens to the Malas.” “You say that you have seen many bad men changed to good men, drunkards to sober men, robbers to honest neighbours. Has that happened only to those who have become Christians? Haven't you seen anyone changed like that in Hinduism?”

“At this the old man seemed surprised that we should ask such a question and revealed how deeply he had been affected by what he had seen. ‘Never! only Christ can change men like that!’ A few months later the old man and his entire family knelt before the altar in the little church in the village, and, after confessing their faith, received the sacred rite of baptism and were admitted to the Church” (pp. 52, 53).

Not at once, on becoming a Christian, does an Outcaste lose the stigma of being an Outcaste. In fact, the great majority never really lose it, though it is often lessened, as their cleaner ways and more self-respecting manner of life become apparent. One cannot blame them for wanting to hide their identity, and some, who are able to get education, and therefore other forms of employment away from their native village, become lost in the crowd in a town, and are known simply as Christians. It is often a real sign of grace when an Outcaste is willing to own up to the identity that he has lost, in order thereby to give glory to God. One of our own workers, handsome and intelligent

beyond most, has said to High Caste fellow-travellers in a railway carriage, "And I was an Outcaste boy. See what Christ has done for me!"—much to the amazement of the other travellers.

From east to west, and north to south, literally from Cape Comorin to the Khyber Pass, and even inside the Pass, are to be found Christians who once were Outcastes. They form the vast majority in the India-wide Christian Church, and mass movements Christwards from amongst the Outcastes are in progress in at least nine large language areas.

And so in India to-day, "to the poor the Gospel is preached", and again "the common people heard Him gladly". And to-day it is being vindicated up to the hilt that the "things which are despised hath God chosen . . . to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence".

DISCUSSION.

Colonel SKINNER said: May I stress the value of these papers on the Wholesomeness of Christianity. The idea originated with Colonel Molony, our Papers Secretary, and in my opinion they offer the best possible challenge to the oft-repeated, thoughtless statement that Christianity is just one religion among many, all of which have their good points. Wholesomeness is the keynote, and healing, healing of soul and body, is the appointed work. "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." The same chapter of St. Matthew's gospel that opens with that gracious message concludes with the wondrous appeal, "Come unto Me all that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." What other religion, the world over, can offer such credentials? What voice, save that of the divine Son of God, can speak such healing to sin-scarred, broken hearts and lives? Christianity, in truth, is *the* religion alone that cleans up the havoc of human lives wrought by sin and left untouched by all other religions of mankind, and the evidence

of its wholesomeness we have in abundance in the two beautiful papers we have heard read to-day.

Colonel MOLONY thanked the authors of the three papers read on "The Wholesomeness of Christianity" for their very successful interpretation of the wishes of the Council in the matter.

The Rev. A. W. PAYNE emphasised the fact that the diffusion of Christian influences in India was a preparation for the national acceptance of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The progress made in that mighty enterprise had been elucidated in both papers.

He also drew attention to the fact that in all evangelisation the offence of the Cross must ever be present. It matters not how the preacher endeavours to avoid giving offence to Jew and Gentile (1 Cor., x, 32). The Cross must ever be a stumbling-block to the unbeliever. That makes it all the more desirable that the offence should be reduced to the smallest possible proportions, as C. H. Spurgeon used to advise. The great Baptist preacher remarks that while the soul of the saint may be amongst lions, there is no call to twist their tails. Even in dealing with Romanism, it is necessary and desirable that all due respect and honour be given to doctrines which are believed to be erroneous, even while their fallacies are fully and faithfully exposed.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION.

The Rev. Principal CURR wrote: Mr. Cranswick has rendered useful service to the student of Christianity by drawing attention in his valuable paper to what may be described as its by-products, which can be discerned wherever it is preached and practised, but which seem to be more clearly discerned in such a vast mission field as India than in lands which are nominally surrendered to its ineffable influence. These by-products may be defined as the healing and humanising effects of the gospel on conditions of life in the lands where it is proclaimed. These should not be minimised, although their value is inestimably lower than that of the unspeakable spiritual blessings which the circulation of the Bible brings in its train. To illustrate the point from manufacture, a firm which

specialises in the manufacture of soap may be able to utilise waste material for the production of other commodities whose sale will produce a substantial profit.

The paper refers to the contribution made by Christianity to the cause of education in India. In that connection, it is impossible to refer too often to the great decree associated with the name of Lord Macaulay, whereby English was made the medium of higher education in a sub-continent where there are many tongues and dialects spoken. The result is that the educated Indian has access to all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in English literature, headed by the English Bible. Such factors may not amount to very much at present in the conversion of India, but the early history of Christianity furnishes remarkable illustrations of what is known as the *preparatio evangelica*. Roman Law, Greek Philosophy, and Hebrew Religion all prepared the way of the Lord—unconsciously indeed, but none the less surely, for all things are wrought after the counsel of God's holy will both in heaven and in earth.

May it not be feasible to make similar claims for all the beneficent measures for which British administration has been responsible? There are the abolition of horrible customs, and the organisation of improved facilities in a multitude of ways. The philanthropic record of British rule has been above all praise. These things can never be substitutes for the gospel, but they may well be adjuncts to it, since they can be truly described as the fruits of that blessed tree, the Cross of Jesus, which bears twelve manner of fruits, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

AUTHOR'S REPLY.

The contributions to the discussion, spoken and written, were duly submitted to the authors of the papers, but they did not consider that there were any points calling for comment.