

dency of thought struggles for the possession of Jesus Christ,"¹—One, moreover, untouched by earthly ambitions and selfish motives—we see this One proclaiming Himself the Personalization of these Messianic visions, and confidently predicting an effusion of the Spirit of God that should make the world His harvest-field. Lastly, we see this expectation and promise fulfilled in the gift of Pentecost and the new creation of the world that followed. Rationalism completely fails to explain away this triple witness to the transcendental Personality of Jesus Christ. These three facts of history, the Voice of Prophecy, the Messianic Consciousness, the Baptism of the Spirit, form a threefold cord not easily broken ; rather, we may say, they form links in a chain of argument which, pursued to its legitimate conclusion, assures us that, in accepting the creed of Christendom, we are not the victims of illusion.



India's Special Claims.

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THE Bishop of London calls the sense of responsibility "the strongest thing in the world"; and so it is. Responsibility for the right use of gifts and privileges we possess is one of the most distinctive moral lessons which the Bible would impress upon us. Without the sense of responsibility no nation, no individual can have any character and continue firm.

"Go ye and make disciples of all the nations" is a command to be simply and unquestioningly obeyed. And our obligation is in proportion to our privileges and opportunities. It is a confessed and general law pervading every department of creation, that special privileges imply responsibilities. This is frequently insisted on in connexion with the Jewish Church and with the people of Israel, who, for reasons to us inscrutable,

¹ Harnack, "What is Christianity?" p. 3.

were privileged in being made the custodians of the faith. To them, as a sacred trust, were committed the oracles of God, and together with that trust and privilege came the obligation to use it in the direction which Providence indicated, and which circumstances allowed of God so largely facilitated. Is it exaggeration to affirm that England enjoys in those respects, in which true greatness consists, a position second not even to Israel? Ours is a land of religious light and liberty. We are not known and characterized as an infidel people: we are not saturated with rationalism: we do not groan under the bondage of superstition. "What great nation is there that hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is?"

I should like to press home this question and make men reflect upon it. For lack of reflection many do not grasp the full import of these blessings. It surely would never be objected to a ready help in foreign missionary work, "Let us convert the home heathen first," if men quite understood that we ourselves are pretty much what we are through missions and missionaries. Time was when the inhabitants of these islands were savages, and actually worshipped idols and trees and shrubs, and offered up human sacrifices to propitiate their gods. From what one reads in early British history they must have been very like some people we missionaries have seen in several parts of the mission-field. But missionaries came here; perhaps St. Paul, perhaps St. Joseph of Arimathea, and others. Nobody really knows. Anyhow they came, and they were the means of converting the whole island to Christianity. Years passed by and the Christian islanders were attacked by heathen tribes from over the sea. These invaders were almost as savage as the original inhabitants had been. They succeeded in driving the Christians out of the best parts of the islands and settled down there themselves. Again missionaries came and brought the Gospel to the conquerors; and gradually the island became Christian once more. Britain was the first of all countries to receive the Christian faith. Christianity was privately professed elsewhere, but the first nation that proclaimed it as their religion,

and called itself Christian after the name of Christ, was Britain. And Britain made this confession when the Roman Empire itself was pagan and a cruel persecutor of Christianity. Now we are emphatically a Christian nation. God has put us in trust with the Gospel. We are responsible. And the heathen island has grown into a great empire, occupying nearly a quarter of the world. God has put us in trust with the Gospel, and our beloved King reigns over 400,000,000 people who are not Christians—millions of them, indeed, have not so much as heard that there is a Christ.

I refer particularly to India. The rise, progress, and extension of the British Empire and its continuous growth year by year form one of the most wonderful chapters in the history of the world; but the most wonderful thing in that chapter is the story of our possession of India. It is a remarkable fact that this little island in the Northern Sea should possess that land thousands of miles away. Think of the vastness of the land; a land covering 1,700,000 square miles and containing over 300,000,000 souls; a land equal in size and population to all Europe excepting Russia. This truly is one of the most extraordinary phenomena of history. And behind this fact lies a long series of strange events, which a thoughtful mind hardly can contemplate without being impressed with the truth, that in the British occupation of India there are unmistakable evidences of the Divine controlling power, which overrules for its own purposes the passions and ambitions and intrigues of men and nations. The Portuguese wanted India, and actually formed settlements in that country as early as the year 1498; the Dutch followed them; and later on the French; but the British obtained the land. However, we never went out to India with any scheme of conquest. The story is well known. A little over three hundred years ago a royal charter was granted to certain merchants of London to engage in trade with India. They formed the East India Company. They settled on the Coromandel coast at Fort St. George and Madras, then in Bombay, and then in Calcutta. Each of these stations had

its President, answerable to the Company at home, and each was defended by a small force of British soldiers and of sepoys. But there was no thought of conquest. It was a pure and simple trading concern. And those who were sent out to protect British interests were expressly enjoined not to aggress and not to annex. Increase of territory was not part of the programme of our policy for India. Nevertheless, province after province came into our hands under circumstances which could not be resisted, until now the whole land is ours from Cape Comorin in the south to the Himalayan snows in the north, and from Bombay to the very walls of China. And Britain, possessed of the advantages which the wealth of the land confers, has gradually risen in wealth and power till we have acquired a position, the most exalted ever attained by any civilized nation. It has been remarked that whatever city or nation has in the lapse of ages held the keys of Indian commerce and influence, that people has invariably become the richest and most flourishing in the world. Arabia became "Araby the blest"; Portugal, by the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope, was raised from indigence to wealth; Holland for awhile blazed forth with splendour from the East; and thus we also have been helped to our high position amongst the nations of the world. God has put us in trust with India. Much has been given to us, more than ever we wanted; and of us much shall be required. The people of that land are fellow-subjects with us of the same King Edward VII.; they ought to be fellow-subjects with us of the same King of Kings and Lord of Lords and only Ruler of Princes.

Yes, India has special claims upon us. I was saying this to an Anglo-Indian the other day—a retired Colonel. "Of course," he replied. "We understand that, and we have done much to meet those claims. We found the country torn by the internal strife of races and constantly overrun by the foreign invader. It was a land where infanticide, human sacrifice, sati, the dedication of girls in the name of religion to lives of evil, were rife. We have done away with most of these things. We have

introduced good government amongst these people ; a decent civilization, schools and colleges, trains, electricity." " Yes," I said, " but what of our responsibilities as trustees of what we believe to be the true religion ?" " Ah !" he replied, " now you talk like a missionary. You will pardon me if I say that I do not agree with the prime motive of foreign missions. It is not necessary, and certainly in many cases is not desirable, to disturb the faith of these folk in their own religion. They are much better left to their old faiths. Why cannot we leave them alone ?" I am afraid that this is the feeling in many minds. The idea of our imperial destiny is nowadays constantly brought before us on the platform and in the press. We feel what it is to be an Empire. We are growing and pulsating with the sense of our Imperial destiny. And this idea is pregnant with beneficent results to the world in the interests of material progress ; but we must take care that it is consecrated as well to the advancement throughout the world of the Gospel of Christ. It is a noble ambition to seek to plant in India the root-principles of our own greatness as a nation, but the ambition is not full-orbed, is not worthy of professed followers of the Saviour, unless it also embrace the determination to confer upon the teeming millions of that land and other lands the knowledge of that religion, which is the particular factor in Anglo-Saxon civilization. " Leave them alone." That is just the one thing we cannot do ; firstly, because that sentiment is altogether contrary to the Christian religion and all religious aspirations ; secondly, because wherever our higher civilization, our higher religious ideas, our higher knowledge, our science penetrate, there the old religions become weaker, the old civilization and religious ideas inevitably break up. We cannot help interfering in this way ; because an alien and a stronger spirit and set of ideas come in amongst the people, and their old traditional way of thinking, feeling, and behaving disintegrates and becomes impossible. In Travancore, the other day, a missionary saw a native coming to his bungalow with a load on his back. The man laid his burden on the ground, and, unfastening the bundle,

revealed a number of brass idols. "Why have you brought these here?" asked the padre; "I don't want them." "Nor do we," was the quick rejoinder, "for our faith in idols has been destroyed." Even the lowest class of idol-worshippers—many of them—are beginning to understand the evil and futility of idol-worship. The educated Hindoos do not attempt to justify the gross sensual idolatry of Hindooism. Some of them try to read mystic spiritual teaching into what appears sensual and stupid; others would like to effect a compromise with Christianity; others, again, have altogether abandoned religion, and, loosed from the old moorings, are drifting down the river of time without a God and without a creed. A whole B.A. class in one of the Government colleges in Calcutta were asked to state their religion, and replied that they were all atheists.

Similarly, amongst the Mohammedans, there has developed a spirit of restlessness and dissatisfaction. "We don't know what to think," said a learned Maulvie; "I study the Koran, and conclude that the Bible is worthy of all my consideration; but I also see that the Koran contradicts the Bible to such an extent that it cannot be accepted as a revelation from the God of the Bible." Another Mohammedan, a graduate of Oxford, said: "I must go further than I do at present, if I really take the teaching of my own books regarding Jesus Christ." We have taught the Mohammedans to read thus critically. Then, again, others of them have developed a neo-Mohammedanism, which, by false interpretation of the text, reject things which the Koran most plainly teaches, such as the working of miracles by the prophets, the birth of Christ from a pure virgin, the efficacy of prayer, and so forth. The people of India are naturally a most religious people, and yet a very large proportion of the population of that land is now without any real religion. We have taken it away from them. And in this matter all of us have contributed something; not only the missionaries, but civil servants and army men and others out in India. It is very noteworthy (as was pointed out by the Dean of Canterbury in a speech not long ago) that such an objection

as that quoted above from my Anglo-Indian friend is most often and loudly raised by the very persons who, in various ways, are doing as much as anybody to disturb the faith of the heathen and Mohammedan in their religions. "There is nothing which is a more certain solvent of the religions of India than modern science, and in proportion as the knowledge of science is spread throughout the land must the ancient religions gradually crumble." And further, one does not find that the people who raise these objections have a similar objection to disturb the civilizations of the ancient world by our arms. But to return; I repeat that a very large number of the people of India—the educated and those who have come into contact with Europeans out there—are now practically without any religion; and we are largely responsible for these things. Furthermore, this state of irreligion is affecting the morals of the people to such an extent that not long ago a large number of the inhabitants of Calcutta presented a memorial to the Viceroy, praying that the Government would graciously adopt special measures for the compulsory introduction, in a general form, of moral teaching into all their schools and colleges in the land. Verily there is a gap to fill. Mere moral teaching will not fill it. We have to recreate a religion for these people, to renew inspiration, to give the resources of a moral life and a corporate cohesion. We have to Christianize them, as Christ commanded.

Why has God given us India? Remembering that all God's purposes look through time into eternity, we reply that India has been subordinated to us for a mission, not merely to the minds and bodies, but to the souls of men. We are to communicate to India the secret of our own pre-eminence. To the Hindoos we have to preach one God, and to the Mohammedans one Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. No other religion can satisfy the needs of the human soul; no other religion is so qualified to deal with the moral and social problems which gather around the things of this life. Our religion carries with it a truth, a purity, a peace, a joy, and a blessedness which can-

not be experienced by those who are strangers to it. We speak experimentally ; and what this Gospel has done for us, it can do and it is doing for the people of India. I have been a missionary in India for over twenty-six years now, and know something of what I am writing about ; and I have laboured in one of the most barren corners of the Indian mission-field, but I have never seen the slightest cause for discouragement regarding the work. This work bears on its front the unmistakable stamp of the Divine approval.

Considering the great inadequacy of the efforts put forth the results are really wonderful. According to the recent census there are now three million native Christians in India. During the last two decades they have been increasing at the rate of 30 per cent. and over 113 per cent. since the year 1871. And we are looking for greater things. There were larger accessions to our ranks this last year than ever before. God's people at home have been stirred up to pray more and do more on behalf of this missionary cause ; and the consequence has been that the spirit of a genuine revival has passed out to India. In the most unexpected places there has been a deepening in the spiritual lives of the workers and an ingathering of souls altogether unprecedented. And in all who are really attracted to the Gospel is being effected that same transformation of life and character which we look for and perceive to be the case amongst ourselves in the old country. These baptized Christians, however, nearly 3,000,000 of them, do not represent all the blessing which God is giving to mission work in India. Many people nowadays demand statistics of conversions and measure success by statistical tables. Well, we missionaries have no need to shrink from this manner of criticism, but we feel that this is not the correct method of estimating the results of the work done. How can it be if the kingdom of God comes not as a general rule with observation? How can it be if that kingdom be as leaven which a woman took and hid in the measures of meal? A vast leavening influence is going on all over India. "We live and move and feel in a Christian

atmosphere," said a Brahmin magistrate to me ; " our whole social, political, and religious life is being changed by you missionaries and your work." An educated Mohammedan merchant once remarked to me : " Your work is being more blessed than you, perhaps, suppose, Sahib. I know it. There are many Mohammedans who think with me that the Koran is not of God, but that what you call ' the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ ' is, and you have taught us to desire this Christ and to accept this Gospel." In a letter, which quite recently appeared in a Calcutta native paper, the writer said : " Christianity may be false and Hindooism may be true ; but India is rapidly moving on to the religion of Christ, and no human power can resist fate." A change is fast coming over the people. Oh that friends of the cause at home quite realized this ! Secularists, agnostics, and theists are realizing it and are pouring into India their propaganda. We, too, must be up and doing as never before.

Only let us be faithful to our sacred responsibility in this matter of our mission to the souls of the people of India ; then this land, hitherto the theatre of a score of faiths, will become the great and central temple of a religion " as true and pure as God." Evil shall cease, ignorance and superstition shall be taken out of the way ; the men will no longer whine, but become brave again ; the women will occupy their rightful place in the home and in society ; and the children will be trained to better things. The Eastern and Western Aryans will kneel at the same footstool, and offer the same grand old prayer, beginning " Our Father, which art in heaven." When this change will take place we do not know. It took three centuries to overthrow heathenism and other " isms " in ancient Europe, and it may take as long in Modern India. However, the triumph of Christianity in India, and not only in India, but all over the world, is assured.

