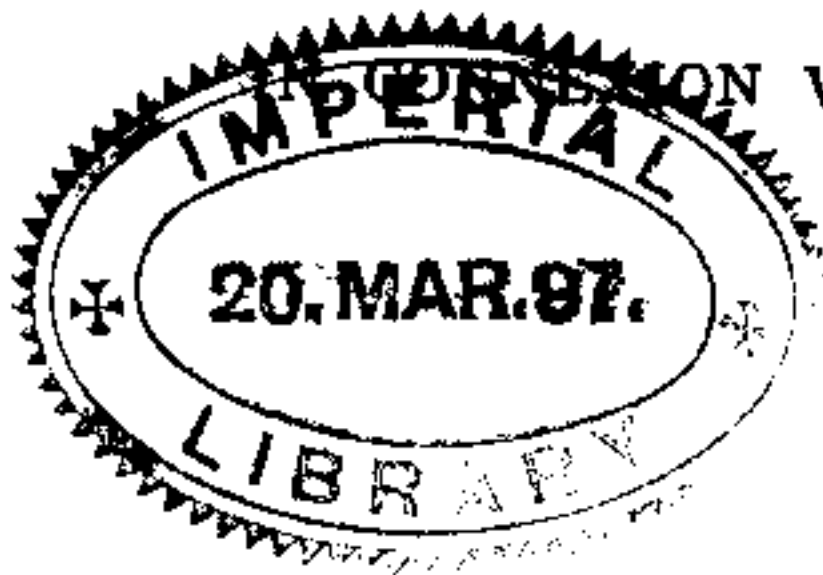


160A/256

Cambridge Mission to Delhi,



IN CONNECTION WITH THE S. P. G.

INDIAN CHRISTIANS:

THEIR ATTITUDE TO MISSIONARY WORK
AND RELATIONS WITH MISSIONARIES.

BY

A. C. GHOSE, B.A.

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LAHORE; LAY-READER AT DELHI.

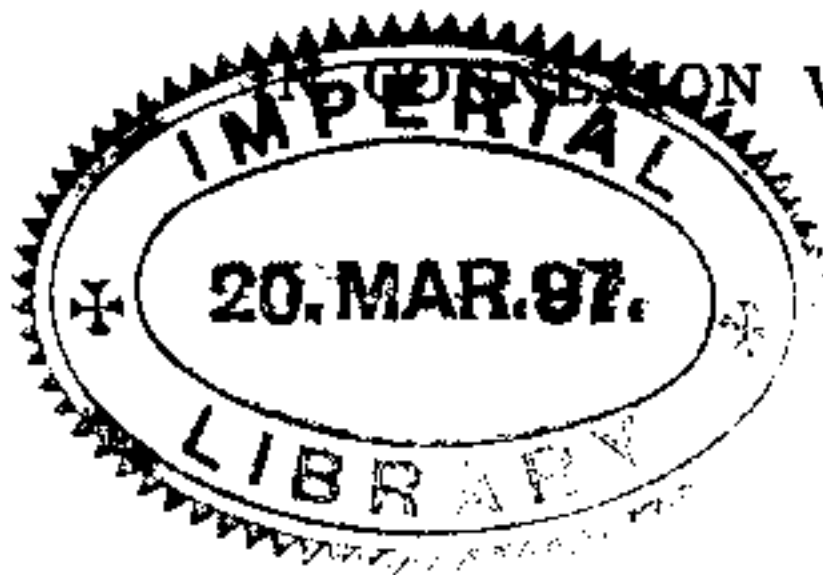
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PREFACE.

THE writer of the following paper may need to be introduced to many of those into whose hands the Occasional Papers of the Delhi Mission come. Mr Ghose is a young native Christian who for the past three years or more has been giving efficient help in connexion with the Delhi Mission, and particularly in the work among Mahomedans. He was set apart by the Bishop of Lahore, as a Reader, together with Mr Cunningham, of Trinity, in November 1893, at the time of the opening of the new buildings of the Christian Boys' Home. About a year later, in December 1894, he was elected to the Mission Council at Delhi. Referring to this, Mr Lefroy wrote "It is a very distinct honour as no native has been elected before so young." It was to him that Mr Lefroy alluded in his letter which was published in our last Report, when he said, "In the scarcity of English workers, I am receiving invaluable help from a young native assistant, and I cannot help feeling that it is in part the very fact of our own great need which makes me value him so highly, and recognise what special qualifications he has for effective work¹." And now we may expect to hear ere long that he has been admitted to Holy Orders. For, as I am (I think) justified in mentioning, the Bishop of Lahore wrote to me on Jan. 8th last, "I hope to ordain Ghose to the Diaconate at Delhi on Sunday, March 1st." Among the ordinations taking place throughout the Christian Church on that day, there will, probably, be few, if any, of deeper interest than that in St Stephen's, Delhi, in the presence of the assembled brotherhood, though alas! the Head of the Mission will be absent, to whom it would have given deep happiness to be there. Many friends of the Mission may, probably, read these words on or near the day in question. Will they offer an earnest prayer for the young Indian Deacon who, we believe, will be just entering upon the life of the Christian Ministry?

¹ Seventeenth Report, p. 14.

Through what circumstances Mr Ghose came to Delhi I do not know, nor what previous training he had received. But I feel sure that he would himself say, that he owes much intellectually, morally and spiritually to the intimate intercourse and fellowship with the Cambridge Missionaries into which he has for the past two or three years been admitted. Of his education, ability, and good sense, the following pages afford striking evidence.

At the meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of Lahore last November one Session appears to have been devoted to the subject of the 'Attitude of Indian Christians to Mission Work.' Mr Ghose was one of the appointed readers, and the paper here given was delivered by him on that occasion. It is reprinted from the *Panjab Mission News* for Nov. 15, 1895. What he has written seems deserving of being made known to a circle of readers in England, and preserved in our series of Occasional Papers. It is pleasant to be able now to include among the authors of them, one of the Indian comrades of our Missionaries. He gives us a vivid picture of the change which is taking place in the social life of India, especially as it affects the feelings and views of educated young native Christians. We cannot but be glad to learn what some of the influences are to which these young men are exposed, from one of themselves. Some of the considerations which he brings before us have also a direct bearing upon the grave question, which should occupy the attention of Missionaries and Missionary Societies, perhaps, more than it does—by what steps and how rapidly the native Church is to be brought out of a state of pupillage? The problem is analogous to that one of greater difficulty and vaster extent which confronts England in the future government of India. For assuredly the end of our rule in India must be to train its people for self-government. And, however slow the process may have to be, it will in the years that lie before us become increasingly difficult for our statesmen to ignore the pressure of a movement towards this goal. The conditions of Indian life are changing, and they will doubtless change more rapidly than they have done, as the effects of the education and civilisation which we have spread throughout the country are more and more felt. It will be the part of true statesmanship to take these changes into account, and to adapt our policy to them. And if there is danger on the one hand in doing anything that may unsettle the sense of the strength of the governing power, or in forgetting the hostile feelings which continue to exist between different

ces and religions in India, there is danger also that Englishmen, yielding to the masterful instincts of a governing race, may be too regardless of native feeling and opinion, too indisposed to consider patiently how far their natural aspirations can safely be satisfied.

English Christians, in their relations with Indian converts to the Christian Faith, may be liable to make mistakes which are not dissimilar and which are less excusable. Within the sphere of Church-life at least the spirit of fellowship should be strong enough to overcome differences of race; but it is to be feared that it does not always prove itself to be so. The European Missionary may also be tempted to keep the members of his native flock, or his native agents, too long in the position of children, may be too fearful of admitting them to such a share of responsibility as they are fit and ought to have. We have had several indications that our brethren at Delhi are giving earnest thought to these questions. Mr Lefroy in the paragraph preceding that from which I have already quoted makes some admirable remarks on the subject of the recognition to be accorded to native fellow-workers¹. I may recall, also, Mr Allnutt's treatment of it in his Paper on "The Present Needs of Christian Educational Enterprise in India." With reference to Christian teachers in Mission Schools and Colleges, he asked: "Have we not reached a stage in the development of Mission work when, provided that competent men of really high character can be found, we who are Missionaries ought to be ready to yield up more executive power to our native brethren, so as to afford them fuller scope for the exercise of their powers? Opinions will vary very much as to the wisdom of doing this yet, though all, I believe, will agree that this ought to be the policy aimed at....I am personally convinced that the time is very near, if it has not already come, when we shall have in this, as well as in other departments of our work, to be prepared to efface ourselves more than has been easy, perhaps even desirable, in the past²."

Another example is the Society of "Friends in Council," which was begun by Mr Wright as long ago as 1891, and of which the object is to bring English and educated Indian Christians together for the frank and outspoken interchange of views on questions of all kinds, preferably burning questions, alike religious and social.

We trust that the members of the Cambridge Brotherhood may

¹ See Seventeenth Report, p. 14.

² Occasional Paper, No. 22, p. 11.

be able to make some solid contribution towards the solution of the problems which I have indicated.

Mr Ghose's own remarks, from the point of view of an Indian Christian, are made with so much moderation, that Englishmen would be wanting indeed in right feeling, if they were unwilling to learn from them. His plea also that Indian Christians may not be judged too hardly, because they do not as yet shew so much religious enthusiasm as might have been hoped, is the more worthy of respect because of the fact which he modestly keeps in the background, that he has himself been enabled to devote himself to the spread of the Kingdom of Christ in the Ministry of the Church, and to resist the attractions of careers which offer the prospect of greater worldly success.

V. H. STANTON.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
Ash Wednesday, 1896.

MR A. C. GHOSE'S PAPER.

It is a fact that there is a marked unwillingness on the part of educated Indian Christians to take up work in connexion with Missionary Societies. In order to find out the causes which have brought about this state of affairs we must take care not to separate the Indian Christian too much from his heathen countrymen. A great deal that can be said of the people of India generally can be said of the Indian Christian also.

If one looks over the present condition of India it seems right to say that, although the Indian peoples have always been considered very religious, yet the new state of affairs inaugurated by English ascendancy has thrown religious questions, religious aspirations, and religious life rather into the shade. The Native Christian community has by no means escaped the effects of English rule in this respect.

Before the advent of the English, political and professional life and Government employment were the portion and privilege of a very limited body of men. The higher professions in the modern sense of the word did not exist, and if they did, they were the monopoly of some particular class or caste. The rank and file of the people busied themselves with more or less petty pursuits. Religion engaged, perhaps, the greater part of their attention; and if any man from the lower orders got education, he very likely drifted into some monastic body. Wave after wave of invasion passed over the heads of the population, and one conqueror after another squeezed them dry. Liberty in the modern sense of the word was practically unknown, and, as for political life, it was not even so much as dreamt of.

But things have changed. Public opinion and liberty are coming into existence. It has become possible for men of comparatively low castes to rise to high posts in the State by the help of education. Learned professions with great prestige and pecuniary profits are springing up. A new mode and standard of life, more or less on

to a new life and new possibilities. The old lethargy, which in old days gone by greatly contributed to the religious instincts of the people, is passing away, and everybody is trying to be free to devote himself to new pursuits. There is a growing dissatisfaction with the old frugal methods of thought and life. But there is still a dead weight of caste prejudice and superstition lying like a curse on the country. It is only the Indian Christian who finds himself really free and therefore able to devote himself to new pursuits. The dissatisfaction with the old standard of life and thought finds its culminating point in him. Education added to his religious and social freedom brings high professional prizes within his grasp. His origin may be low, his income small—but he is free in the real sense of the word. He has secured the freedom required to enable him to live up to the new and enlightened standard of life. There are no caste-fellows to cramp his ambition. There is no uneducated wife or mother to thwart him at every turn. He has no child-wife growing up with him to nip his youth and manhood in the bud. He has broken with a dozen stale, obsolete customs which cramp and limit the energies of his heathen countrymen. A Hindu or a Muhammadan with English education may consider himself a child of freedom; but his freedom is prison-life as compared with the freedom of an Indian Christian. The latter is the truest outcome of English influence. The possibilities and desires of the Englishman are, to a very great extent, his possibilities and desires also. The one thing prominent about him is his eager desire to rise in the social scale and to emerge out of the squalor and confusion of Indian life. In order to do this he wants more money than sufficed for him or his forefathers under the old conditions of life.

This being the case, is it to be wondered at that the educated Indian Christian should be rather loth to devote himself to a purely religious life? Has not secular life on the very face of it infinitely larger attractions for him? Isn't he free enough and educated enough to compete successfully with his rich heathen countrymen? Is it to be wondered at that he likes to become a doctor, a lawyer, a tahsildar, or an extra-assistant-commissioner, in preference to becoming a padre? Is it to be wondered at that a man whose forefathers for ten generations were a down-trodden oppressed race, with all their nobler human qualities and aspirations rudely repressed, should, on suddenly finding himself free, and the world and all its good things within his reach, run eagerly after them and

we scant attention to the deeper and more silently uttered calls of his religion? Is it any wonder that the rising Indian Christian lads, with new energies in their muscles, new aspirations in their hearts, new and progressive ideas in their heads, and the love of a new and more enlightened standard of living ingrained in their minds, should give little attention to the invitations of missionaries? They would not be human if they did not do that. English education is intensely human and natural if it is anything. It develops the manly and human side of a man. And it has this effect more on the Indian Christian than on the heathen. It energises the Indian Christian more than it does the Hindu. India has been too busy with religious performances and speculation hitherto. It has been fed too long on religion and was well nigh becoming dyspeptic. But the human and physical side is now waking up with all its possibilities of power and greatness. The educated Indian Christian is truly a free and healthy man, and the fact of his being thrown out of the shackles of caste into close contact with Englishmen, inspires new ideas and new desires in his mind. Is it to be wondered at that he should try to push on in the race of life and attach only a second-rate importance to his religion? Everybody must admit that there is nothing really mean or low in his doing so. It is not enmity against the missionaries that keeps him out of religious work. No doubt he does not aim at the highest; but then the world and his own human possibilities are too much with him.

Let the missionary body recognise this. They ought to have known this long before and been prepared for it. Let them not be over-anxious to seek any large co-operation from educated Indians. Only a very few will enter mission work, but the rank and file will of necessity try to push themselves forward in the world which is offering them its best prizes, and which prizes they urgently need in order to live up to the standard of living which they have set before themselves.

There will come a time when Indian Christians will become calm and subdued. Time will discipline them. They will find out the hollowness of all purely human achievements. They will find out that of all the blessings which Englishmen brought to them Christianity was the best and highest. Your telling them so won't do; they must learn it by experience. The Cross will have new and real significance for them. The voice of the missionary sounds rather

settle down, let the noise cease, and Native Christians will rise at the Master's call and rally round the standard of the Cross. The missionary epoch is destined to be but one of the many epochs of Indian Church History. The sons of the present race of Indian Christians will yet be the religious conquerors of India.

It is difficult for Englishmen to grasp our position. Englishmen have won their victories. The world lies prostrate before them. They have gained leisure. They can afford to look on the world with calmness and gravity. But with us it is different. We have won no victories yet. Our future lies before us, and we eagerly press on towards it. It is no wonder religion gets thrown a bit into the shade with us. Purely religious life seems to many a living burial. We have not lived long enough to know by experience and the stern discipline of life that it is not so. We are too eager to distinguish ourselves in some way or other.

But some one will naturally ask me: "Are you going to work out your future by leaving Christianity behind?" I answer, "Certainly not!" We owe everything we have to our religion, and everything we do will always be coloured by our faith, and our moral and spiritual standards will always be Christian, however we may fall short of them. Our best and noblest youths will always be good Christians, and we have no doubt they will continue to devote themselves to God's work.

There is another fact which ought to be taken notice of in connection with the question under consideration. Mr Cotton, in his book on New India, speaking of the work of missionaries, gives the following quotation from some book, or pamphlet, written by Colonel Osborne. Colonel Osborne writes:—"The chief obstacle which besets the missionary is that occasioned by the peculiar relationship which exists between Englishmen and natives. The English are not only rulers of the country, but rulers in whose inner life as individuals the people are of no account; that is to say, the English in India form no attachments, no friendships with the people of the country. A few among them may associate with the natives from a sense of duty, but for their mental and moral needs their own countrymen are sufficient, and not one Englishman in a thousand, when the hour comes of leaving India for good, is sensible of a wrench, of a void being created in his life, by the separation from any native whom he has known. No greater obstacle in the way of mission work can be conceived than a state of mind such as this. It denotes

e want of that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, and yet it is a defect from which the English Missionary is of necessity as little exempt as the English Official. Contrast this attitude of aloofness with the feelings of the Apostle Paul towards individual members of the churches which he had founded, and we shall find little difficulty in understanding why Christianity in India does not spread and develop as in the days of Imperial Rome."

These words may or may not be true in the case of English officials, but when the writer applies them wholesale to the missionary he goes too far. It would be an act of ungratefulness for me to deny that missionaries have done an enormous deal for Indian Christians; from a material and monetary point of view they could not possibly have done more. Besides I am fully conscious of the fact that in this very room there are missionaries who daily live a dying life for the sake of us Indians. I remember many who in the days gone by have laid down their lives for us. I forget none of these things, and yet I say with the author of the lines I have quoted, that there still exists a certain degree of aloofness between the missionary body on the one hand and the Indian Christian body on the other. This separation and this aloofness accounts for a great deal. In the end the Englishman remains an Englishman, and the Indian an Indian, with little that is common between them. With the growth of the Indian Christian body, the feeling of oneness with their spiritual progenitors has not grown up. England has sent us and is sending us many of her sons and daughters, but those sons and daughters remain to the end the sons and daughters of England. I wish we could have been able to call them our own people. Between us and the missionaries there ought to have been a tie stronger than the tie of blood or country. But it does not seem to be so.

I do not pretend that there are no exceptions to what I am saying. I myself can testify to the fact that there are cases where there is love of the strongest kind between missionaries and Indian Christians. But in spite of all this, when I speak of the class to which I belong, I feel justified in saying that the attachment which ought to have existed between missionaries and us is more or less absent. Had this attachment existed we would have been the slaves of missionaries.

It remains to be seen who is responsible for this state of affairs. Some will say it is the Indian Christian who is to blame; that he is greedy, that he is ungrateful, and that he aspires to things which it is

impertinent in an inferior to aspire to. I do not deny that there is some truth in each of these accusations. I know full well how many scores of people of my own class there are who have received nothing but benefit and favours from missionaries all their lives and who ought to have been grateful to them, but who, on the contrary, spend their time in abusing them and spreading wrong impressions concerning them. We have to find out what produces such people. It is possible that in many cases such men are the products of their own diseased and jaundiced minds. Their production cannot be helped; they will die by a natural death. But in a great many cases this state of affairs arises from sheer misunderstanding. The missionaries are socially so far above the ordinary Indian Christians that they hardly ever get properly known or understood. Wrong ideas grow up on both sides, and there is hardly any social commingling to remove them.

Under these circumstances I would beseech the missionaries as the stronger party to have more patience with our faults in this respect. I would remind them that it was for our sake that they had originally left their country. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep, however bad the sheep may be. It is no wonder that a good many missionaries lose all patience with their converts. It is natural, but under these circumstances there comes a split which becomes a sort of chronic disease and entirely embitters the relations between the missionary and the Indian Christian.

What is wanted is greater patience on the part of the missionary and greater identification with the people of the country, so that there may be more social intercourse leading to the Indian being more thoroughly influenced by the life and opinions of the missionary. Unless the missionary condescends a little more than he has done hitherto there is little hope of a proper understanding growing up. I ask the missionary to condescend, not assuming that there has been no condescension till now, but simply taking him to be the stronger party. It is infinitely harder for the Indian to rise to the level of the missionary.

But some one will ask me: "How is it possible for Englishmen to give up their national instincts and ways of thinking? How is it possible for Englishmen to become Asiatics? On the other hand, it is equally impossible for Indians to become Englishmen." True, I recognise the difficulty, but yet the problem is not insoluble. Kipling has said somewhere, though I am not sure whether I am

reproducing his words correctly: "The West shall never be East, nor the East shall ever be West. But where two strong men stand face to face there is neither East nor West."

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin; one touch of the Crucified Saviour can make English Christians and Indian Christians kin. We want genuine men, strong men, to stand face to face. Men of petty minds and small capacities will go on quarrelling and wrangling. But let strong Englishmen and strong Indians stand face to face; there will spring up an attachment and an amount of mutual respect which will annihilate all differences and distinctions.

OCCASIONAL PAPERS

already published.

1. *Letter from Mr BICKERSTETH* (April, 1879).
2. *Letter from Mr BICKERSTETH* (Sept. 1881).
3. *Higher Education at Delhi*, by Rev. Dr WESTCOTT (1882).
4. *Religious Influence in Mission Schools*, by Mr LEFROY (1883).
5. *Indian Muhammedans*, by Mr BICKERSTETH (1883).
6. *Two Cold-Weather Tours*, by Mr CARLYON (1884).
7. *The Leather-Workers of Daryaganj*, by Mr LEFROY (1884).
8. *Account of Work*, by Mr CARLYON (1885).
9. *Report of London Meeting in May*, 1885.
10. *Educational Work in 1885*, by Mr ALLNUTT (1886).
11. *Mission Work in the Rohtak District*, by Mr HAIG (1887).
12. *Mission Work in India*, by Mr LEFROY (1887).
13. *India's Religious Needs*, by Mr ALLNUTT (1888).
14. *My First Two Years in Delhi*, by Mr KELLEY; with
St Stephen's College and School, by Mr WRIGHT (1888).
15. *Christ, the Goal of India*, by Mr LEFROY (1889).
16. *General Review of Work since 1881*, by Mr LEFROY (1890).
17. *Hostel, Boarding-House, and College*, by Mr WRIGHT (1890).
18. *Work among Jâts of the Rohtak district*, by Mr CARLYON (1891).
19. *Account of Opening of New College Buildings*, Dec. 8, 1891.
20. *Higher Education at Delhi*, by the BISHOP OF DURHAM (1892).
21. *Mahomedanism, its strength and weakness*, by Mr LEFROY.
22. *Present Needs of Christian Education*, by Mr ALLNUTT (1894).
23. *The Christian Boys' Boarding House*, by Mr KELLEY (1895).

Copies of most of the above papers and of most of the previous Annual Reports still remain and may be obtained from G. M. EDWARDS, Esq., Sidney Sussex College, the Rev. C. E. F. STAFFORD, St Alban's, Herts., or the Local Secretaries.

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