

Remarkable Changes in India

INTERESTING INCIDENTS.

REV. DR. PENTECOST, who has recently spent some time lecturing in the different centres in India, and has come much into contact with Educated Hindoos, says that there are many of them who are really believers in Christ, who make no secret of their belief, who no longer join in idol worship, but who have not taken the step of receiving baptism, and in consequence are not outcasted by the Hindoos.

This marks a great change in the attitude of heathenism. Twenty, or even ten, years ago, to avow faith in Christ, to refuse to do poojah to the household gods, or go to the temples and receive the mark of the God upon the forehead from the priest, would have involved any man in all the horrors and sufferings of an outcast, but so many men and women are now confessing Christ, without baptism, that the shrewd priests are remitting the severities of discipline in this respect and granting indulgence to those who, though they confess Christ and refuse longer to worship idols, refrain from baptism. Should the Brahmin priest insist on outcasting all in the Hindoo households who avow belief in Christ, simply on that avowal, the number of outcasts would become so great that it would be a practical breach in the entire ranks of caste, but they are only postponing the, to them, evil day."

"I do not," says Dr. Pentecost 'justify the course of these believers, but think, and teach them, that they should make no compromise, but should come clean out and take their places with the baptized Christians. At the same time I think there is a good deal to extenuate the course.

The reasons given for it are various.

Some take this position not from unwillingness to openly confess Christ, which they have already done, but because baptism would entail upon them the instant and terrible experience of becoming outcasts, not from their old faith which they would gladly do, but from father, mother, kindred and friends, which as yet they seem not to have the courage to face.

Others justify their course on a different ground.

"One of my most constant hearers was a young Pandit, the master of a school for boys, a Brahmin of high caste. He came daily with two of his boys about fifteen years old, one a young Hindoo, the other a Mohammedan. This man I believe, has been a secret disciple for a long time. His knowledge of the New Testament was extraordinary. One night he with his two boys, came forward to the front seats and openly confessed Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord, boldly declaring that he cast himself on the 'atoning mercy of God in Jesus Christ for his salvation.'

His two scholars followed his example, and many conversations with them has led me to believe that they were truly converted." The Pandit took this ground with regard to baptism, viz. "That it is not essential to faith and salvation, that he freely confesses Christ and his faith in Him, and that abstinence from baptism still preserves him a place in his home and among his friends, and allows him to preach Christ to them in a way he could not otherwise do."

The position of yet another class is illustrated by another incident in Dr. Pentecost's experience. "A man of perhaps thirty-five told me that he had come clearly to see that Christ was the Son of God and the only Saviour of sinners, but he could not confess Him in baptism for the reason that it would cast him out of his father's house and away from his wife and children, and bring down upon them the terrors consequent upon being allied to an outcast. Living in the joint family house of his father he said his family would not only be dependent upon his father for support, but subject to all the abuse that would otherwise be heaped upon them."

"The day is dawning and the pent up waters of secret faith and home confessions are gathering strength every day, and soon, like imprisoned waters, will burst the dam of caste and overflow the land with hundreds and thousands of converts openly and gladly confessing in baptism the risen Lord."

Work in Jamaica. Very interesting is the Presbyterian Church in the Island of Jamaica, which is the result of mission work begun some eighty years ago by the U. P. Church of Scotland. Its history is interesting from the fact that being almost wholly negro, most of the more than 10,000 communicants that compose it are the children of those who were once in slavery, when slavery existed in the British West Indies. Interesting too is the work it now contemplates. At its last meeting of Synod, the neglected condition of the 14,000 East Indian Immigrants, such as our Church is caring for in Trinidad, was considered, and the Church decided to begin, by means of a staff of catechists, a mission for their benefit. Saved from bondage, physical and spiritual, they now seek to bless others. No doubt our Mission College in Trinidad will be able to help by supplying catechists.

"There are people who would do wonderful things for the Lord, if they could only do them without costing too much."

Little self-denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over favorite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold, which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life that God approves. —F. W. Farrar, D.D.