

The Sikh in Our Fair Dominion

Since coming to British Columbia I have been deeply grieved to find that so many maintain such an un-Christian attitude towards the Sikhs. In the humble hope that I may be of some service in helping to a better understanding of the claims of our brothers from the East I submit the following.

I trust the churches in Canada will kindly bear with me while I endeavor to draw their attention to a very important matter which is at present in urgent need of their thoughtful consideration.

There is a great deal of prejudice abroad regarding the Sikhs which is both un-Christian and unwarranted. Who is he? The reply is found in the following address delivered by their worthy representative, Dr. Sunder Singh, at the Canadian Club, Toronto, on the 28th December, 1911.

"Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Canadian Club,—It is a great pleasure to be here with you. It is a great privilege to speak to so many men who are interested in the British Empire, which fills the world. The President has spoken to you about the position; in fact, has passed very flattering remarks about the Sikhs' service to the British Empire in India, as well as outside of India.

"Before speaking of the Sikhs in Canada I will speak of them in general. They are all one man's disciples, i.e., followers of Baba Nanak; the word 'Sikh' means a disciple. The Sikhs originated in Northern India, in the Punjab,—the land of the Five Rivers. They were disciplined by the oppression of the Mogul tyrants. In the 15th century there was a reformation. Just as there was a reformation in Europe, so there was one in India. It was started by Guru Nanak and Guru Govind Singh. It was a social reformation, and they taught that all religions are one; that humanity,—men and women,—are all one; that sin could not be atoned for by asceticism and idol worship. That teaching could not fail but meet with opposition in a land where there was so much idol worship and superstition and to cause the people to be up in arms. The Guru or the teacher went to Arabia and to all parts of India. He taught that there was no caste in the eyes of God; that all people were one. We had ten teachers altogether, but the Mohammedans persecuted these poor Sikhs, put prices on their heads, and their children were flayed alive.

"The ninth teacher, the Guru Tegh Bahadur, was asked by the Mohammedans to profess the Mohammedan religion. He said the Mohammedans and the Hindus were all one in the sight of God, so there was no difference. He was finally beheaded. His son, Guru Govind Singh, made this church a church militant. He taught the Sikhs to help the weak and the fallen. After the death of the ninth Guru, his son Govind Singh, became the tenth and greatest Guru, who consolidated the Sikhs into a religious and political power. His teachings spread all over India. When he died, some of these Sikhs who forgot that spirit got into trouble with the British and fought with them. They were valiant foemen, but they lost their cause and soon after that they helped to keep British power in India. In fact, the history of the Indian Mutiny would have been different if it had not been for the Sikhs.