

Mission Field.

A BIBLE-CLASS AT TRICHI-
POLY.

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(S. P. G. Mission Field—April.)

CONTINUED

The greatest difficulty felt in this meeting of Hindus is to convince them of sin. With some sin is the violation of caste rules (Kulu Dharuon); with those acquainted with religion it is *Maya* (illusion.) Not unfrequently we hear some say, as in one of our recent meetings, that they are not sinners. It is, therefore, found necessary to clear the way for God's Spirit, whose work it is to convince the world of sin, by explaining to them the true basis of sin—the fallen nature of man.

It is wonderful how largely metaphysical is the mind of our countrymen! When Christ's ministry speaks to them of the salvation of the soul, he is asked to explain to them the nature of the soul, its relation to the body, to the external world, and the universal mind. They have then to be taught to distinguish between philosophy, which is nothing more than the history of human thought, and Divine revelation. Again and again I have had to tell them that, though I did not neglect to cultivate philosophy, my business as an ambassador of God was to proclaim to the perishing world, not philosophy and metaphysics, but the simple Gospel. I have ever to be on the watch against such attempts to cause digression, and direct their attention to the corrupt nature of the soul with a view to investigating the way to remove sin. With some of our countrymen God Himself is merely a subject of speculation, as He is the object of the Christian's love and worship. This is specially the case with those who pretend to have read some of the Tamil religio-philosophical works. These sometimes remark that there is no philosophy in the Gospels, and that they contain only the history of a person. They are told that revelation is no system of dogmas; that the ancient religious systems, being but the products of the human mind, give to us man's attempt by his unaided reason to solve some of the problems of life; that they all failed for that very reason; that the ancient grouped after God, but did not, with the help of their philosophy, succeed in finding Him; and so "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." St. Paul's account of them was read from Romans i. to show how "in the fulness of time," when the helplessness of these man-wrought systems was fully proved to the world, God in His mercy sent a Person to regenerate the world.

The exclusive claim of Christianity is another difficulty. I was often

asked, "Are we then to give up our great men and their learned works, and accept Christ as our only Saviour?" I had to remind them that I could not be more liberal than God Himself, Who is greater than our greatest men; and I read to them the words of St. Peter, when he was filled with the Holy Ghost, from Acts iv., "Neither is their salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." They were fully convinced that this exclusiveness was not an invention of Christians, nor of men at all.

Through the philanthropy of a Philadelphia woman there is an establishment on Lombard street near Thirteenth, the Morris Home, devoted especially to the care of cats and dogs. Three hundred of cats, whose owners have left the city, live a life of elegant and comfortable leisure through the hot summer months, returning to their old homes when the families come back from country or seashore. To very many this may seem ridiculous; but it is certainly the refinement of cruelty to turn such household pets into the street to starve.

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Prepared under the cognizance of Mr. Herbert Gladstone, Under-Secretary for the Home Department, an interesting parliamentary paper was published last evening showing the number of persons who voted as illiterate at the general election. In England and Wales there were 46,109 out of a poll of 3,75,962, or one in 81, in round numbers; in Scotland the figures were 4,577 out of 466,040, or one in 102; in Ireland there were 84,919 out of 395,034, or one in every four and a half.

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