

MISSION FIELD.

The Real Hinduism.

BY F. F. ELLINWOOD, D.D.

Most modern apologists for the old religious systems of India represent Hinduism as the religion of the Vedas. With equal propriety might the Book of Leviticus be referred to as the characteristic text-book of Christianity. The difference is that while Christianity, retaining many of the fundamental principles taught in Leviticus, has developed them and built upon them a higher and more advanced spiritual cult, Hinduism has degenerated from the simpler and purer nature worship of the Vedas into a ramified and superstitious Polytheism.

Modern Hinduism is a conglomerate. It embraces something of the early Aryan Vedic and much of the Sacerdotal Brahmanism which followed it. It has also more or less of Buddhism which, though with the various schools of philosophy it raised a common protest against priestly arrogance and the tyranny of caste, still retained much of the old system. It also took on more or less of the spirit worship and other degrading superstitions of the pre-Aryan tribes. At a later day it borrowed somewhat from Islam, and as far back as the seventh and eighth centuries, A.D., it felt the influence of Christianity. This appeared in the element of *Bakti*, or faith, and in the fuller development of the Krishna cult, which, in the later redactions of the Bhagavad Gita, greatly strengthened the claims of Krishna as an incarnation of the Supreme Vishnu. Hinduism, therefore, like a banyan tree, presents all the trunks, branches, new and old rootings of all the systems that have ever been known in India. In this strange mixture are sublime hymns of the Vedas, mixed with manifold puerilities and corruptions. Then follow the profound philosophic speculations of the Upanishads and the Six Schools. Buddha, notwithstanding his protest against Hinduism, is enshrined as one of the ten avatars of Vishnu. Hinduism in the course of the last two thousand years has developed corrupt elements which have swamped and smothered the nobler teachings of the Vedas; and it is against the Polytheism that has swarmed through the land that reformers have risen up from time to time ever since the twelfth century. Invariably the principle of their protest has lain against Polytheism and the vile Puranic Saktism, or worship of the female principle. All reforms have looked back toward the primitive Monotheism. This was the contention of Ramanuga and Kabir, of Nanak, the founder of the Sikhs, of Mohoun Roy, and Chunder Sen, of Mozoomdar, Dyananda, and other founders of the Brahmo Somaj, the Arya Somaj, and the Sadharan Somaj. All these, though differing among themselves in many things, take their stand for Monotheism, and they all alike have adopted essentially the ethics of Christianity. The catechism published by the Arya Somaj (most bitter of all against Christianity) affords a striking illustration of this fact. Its back is turned squarely against the old Brahmanical ideas of caste, of widow burning, child marriage and child widowhood, of gross incarnations of Vishnu, of cattle worship and all polytheism, of Juggernath, and Thugge, of the bloody orgies Kali and Doorga, and the sacrifice of millions of female infants to the requirements of caste.

Its face is now fully set in the direction of Christian ethics, though it claims rather late in the day that they are not Christian but Vedic.

How has this marvellous change been brought about? Vivekananda and Gandhi and the Theosophists stoutly assert that missionaries and other Christian teachers have exerted little if any influence in India, but at least two scores of Anglo-Indian governors and administrators residing in India for years, and giving their whole attention to social and religious as well as political influence at work in the country, have declared with equal positiveness that the effect of Christian teaching has been marvellous in changing the whole ethical tone of the country. Even Mr. P. C. Mozoomdar, in an article published in *The Outlook* of May 19, 1894, declares that the spirit of Christ is fast leavening all India—and, as he proceeds to now show, not merely the churches of native Christians, but also the masses of intelligent non-Christian Hindus. He protests against what he calls the dogmatism of current Christianity, but he says all that the most enthusiastic Christian could say of the leaven of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That orthodox and jealous Brahmins do not endorse the flippant allegations of Vivekananda and Gandhi, but on the

contrary are greatly alarmed at the influence which Christianity is gaining, is abundantly attested by the following account of a Hindu convention held at Benares, given by Dr. George Smith in *The Conversion of India*:

"A universal Hindu conference was lately held at Benares, including many Hindu ladies of high family. A select committee of pundits brought up a report on 'the deterioration of the Hindu religion.' To an immense crowd at each of the four corners of a great pavilion four pundits read a copy of the report, after which a salute of one hundred *sanka*, or blast from the conch shell, was given. These were the practical conclusions of the report:

"First, all the teachers and all the priests of the Hindu temples will offer prayers at a fixed time to the supreme power; so that the Hindu doctrine be saved from the deplorable state to which it has come down, the day for general prayer being fixed on the 9th of sukla nabami of Aswin; second, to establish provincial Hindu conferences all over the country, such as are established in Bengal and Lahore, and to establish a central great conference; third, to send evangelists to all parts of Hindustan, who should preach Hindu doctrine; fourth, to publish Sanskrit books containing all rules of Hindu ritual, and to publish a series of moral and educational Sanskrit books; fifth, to establish schools for Sanskrit education."

"That is, the pundits appoint a day of united prayer, the employment of evangelists, the circulation of their religious tracts and scriptures, and the establishment of Hindu mission schools. So the Brahmanical revival goes on after a half-hearted fashion, for while caste has a side hostile to all reform from without, it disintegrates from within, and prevents the formation of an united front against the enlightened assailant."

Those who so easily set aside the statements of devoted missionaries, and discount the testimony of a multitude of English administrators, will perhaps be convinced by the manifest alarm of these far-seeing Brahmins.

Letters from India.

IN CAMP, DHAR, Jan'y 16th, 1895.

This has been a wonderful week for the Lord's work in Dhar. I told you in my last week's letter of how successful our meetings had been up till then. On Thursday night again, our Gospel Tent was filled till there was no standing room, and the whole space in front of the tent was occupied as well as each doorway. The crowd numbered probably 400 people and they remained for over an hour and a half, listening to our descriptions of the Bible pictures. We told them the story of the fall, the flood, the trial of Abraham's faith, and Moses, also many stories from the life of Christ illustrated by our magic lantern. This evening we showed only Bible scenes, and sang our hymns. On Friday evening we held a simple Gospel service of singing and addresses, yet the crowd did not seem to be any less than on the preceding evening. We have pursued this course of showing the magic lantern pictures one evening and giving addresses on the alternate evenings. On this occasion we spoke on "The Prodigal Son," "The Parable of the Supper" and "The Ten Virgins."

On Friday evening, Mrs. Russell, Misses O'Hara, Calder, and Dougan and my brother joined me from Mhow. By the kindness of H.H. the Maharaja of Dhar they were his guests in the Durbar tents in the Maharaja's garden. They came to spend a few days and help us in the work.

Saturday evening again the same large crowds gathered at the Gospel Tent and we had another grand meeting. On Sunday we arranged a different programme, we held our Hindi service in the morning, and in spite of it being a very awkward hour for the people, who are most of them at work in the morning, we had an audience of over 200 people. We left the evening free for an English meeting, but unfortunately when too late we found a Durbar had been arranged for the same hour, when all the native gentlemen went to pay their respects to the Maharaja. We held, however, a praisemeeting of our own in thanksgiving for the rich blessings of the past week.

Monday morning we were very pleased to receive the following invitation from the Maharaja's Private Secretary.

Private Secretary's Office, Royal Palace, Dhar, C.I.

MY DEAR SIR,—“Half past one to-day is fixed by H. H. the Maharaja if that will suit the ladies and yourself. He is glad that the ladies are taking trouble to sing for him and play their music. If so, I believe as it is settled that Her Highness the Maharani Gebeba will be too pleased to join you all and meet you here in