

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

WHAT HINDUS AND MOHAMMEDANS SAY ABOUT MISSIONS.

While so much is being persistently said about the failure of missions in India, it is well to listen to the testimony of Hindus and Mohammedans, to hear what they have to say about missionary operations and their effect. Within the last few months, leaders of the religions which have so long dominated India have expressed in strong terms their fears of Christian progress. Let us go far north, to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. Mohammedans form a very large and influential part of the population. They have had for many years an association for the promotion of Islam. It seems to have been on too aristocratic a basis, and to have failed to enlist the support and sympathy of the community. Very recently a new association has been formed, which sets forth as its great object the defence of Islam. At its inaugural meeting, Sir Syed Ahmad, who by general consent stands at the head of the Mohammedan community, a great friend of the English, and at the same time a stout defender of his own faith, gave a vigorous address, in which he said it was indispensable for them to repel the "intolerable attacks" of the missionaries, if their holy faith was to be upheld. He spoke as if their religion was being undermined by the missionaries, and would be overthrown if not met by a measure of defence.

Let us come down to Calcutta. Recently a new monthly magazine has been started, with the avowed purpose of "demolishing Christianity and setting up a national religion in its stead." Its editor, a well-known literary man, says: "The rapid spread of the mischievous teaching of the Bible in this country is a serious calamity. Many hundreds of Christian missionaries . . . are coming out here, and pursuing the work of proselytism with good success."

Let us now travel far south, and come to Madras. All interested in Indian Missions have heard that last year there was a rebellion in the Madras Christian College, which was largely fomented by the Madras Hindu Tract Society. In one of its publications that society says: "How many hundreds of thousands have these padres turned to Christianity, and keep on turning! How many hundreds of thousands of dear children have they swallowed up! Oh, over how many more have they cast their nets! Is there no learned pundit to be secured for money who will crush these Christians?" The redoubtable pundit required is, it seems, to be secured only for a handsome fee! The exaggerations of the writer show the intensity of his fears.

In the heat of the Madras controversy two measures were eagerly proposed: 1. The establishment of a Hindu College, in which the pupils shall be taught their own religion; and, 2. The establishment of a Hindu Institute, in which the pure Hindu religion should be taught, and from which students, well equipped, should go forth to fight its battles. Some men of the highest rank, of great wealth, and also, I may add, of great intelligence, well acquainted with our language, promised efficient help. What has come of these proposals we know not. Probably, like many other grand schemes, they have been loudly applauded—and forgotten. The Madras Christian College is, we understand, as successful as ever.

The favourite notion of many is that Christianity is to be encountered only by a reformed heathenism. The cry is for a national religion. To meet this demand the Aryan Samaj (Assembly), resting on the teaching of a renowned Mahratta pundit, has existed during the last few years, and is exceedingly zealous in calling on the people to return to Vedism, the religion of their ancestors. This Samaj is strong in the North-Western Provinces, is very hostile—we may say, fanatically hostile—to Christianity. Hinduism, as it now is, is thus described by a Brahmin in a Madras paper. "Hinduism is a corpse out of which the life has fled, and yet it is a living force. . . . The moribund in creed is still able to perform ceremonial functions. . . . Another cause of the survival of the strength and integrity of Hinduism is the intellectual inconsistency and moral cowardice of the generality of the so-called reformers." While making all allowance for the great difficulties of the reformers, we think this censure is well deserved.

Many additional facts might be stated confirmatory to those now adduced. Looking over the great Indian field, there is no doubt much that is depressing, much that is trying;

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but if we rise above single instances and certain parts of that vast region where either scarcely anything has yet been done, or the obstacles are peculiarly formidable; if we take a glance at the currents of thought and action flowing in different and often opposite directions, we are assured hope should be predominant. If we had more hope, resting on the indications of God's providence, still more on the power of His Spirit, and the power of His Word, work would be carried on with vastly more vigour and vastly greater success. A great door and effectual is opened, and there are many adversaries; but greater is He who is for us than all who can be against us, and we know He must triumph.

WON AT LAST.

The following touching story from the pen of the Rev. Maurice Phillips needs no comment: "I accompanied Mr. Robinson last month," he writes, "on a tour through the Tripatore mission district of Salem (South India). I was delighted with the large crowds that listened daily to our preaching. One very interesting incident came under my notice. Some years ago a Sudra farmer in one of the out-of-the-way villages was baptized under the name of Israel. He had a wife and a large family, but they positively declined to follow him to Christianity. At first they gave him a great deal of trouble, refusing to associate with him for fear of defilement, and his wife even declined to give him food. He gradually overcame these difficulties, but his family seemed as far as ever from Christianity. When I visited the family in 1884, just before going home, I asked his wife and each of his sons whether they intended to become Christians, and the answer was "No." I prayed with them, and urged them to follow their father, who was following Christ, but had no reason to believe that any impression had been produced. When camping last month within seven miles of Israel's village, a young man came to the tent and said he was Israel's eldest son. 'Well, come and sit down. I am very glad to see you. I have not seen you for a long time,' I said. He sat down, and told me that last year his father died. I told him I was very sorry, but added: 'Your father was a good man, and he is now in heaven, with Jesus.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I believe that. When my father was very ill, and could not read the Bible, he asked me to read for him.' 'And did you?' 'Yes, I read to him every day, and he seemed always better after I read to him.' 'What did you read?' 'I read the Psalms and the Gospels. My father was very fond of the Psalms and the Gospels.' 'When he died, did you burn the body like a heathen?' 'No. We had a grave dug for him in the field, and we buried him as a Christian.' 'I suppose there was no Christian present to

read the Scriptures and to pray?' 'No; but I read the twenty-third Psalm after he body was lowered to the grave.' I said: 'I am very glad to hear that. How did you have the courage to do it?' 'Well; I felt that it was right, and that it was in accordance with the wish of the departed, and so God gave me courage. And not only that, but I am determined to become a Christian too, and die like my father.' What about your wife?' 'She is quite willing to be baptized.' 'Do you want to be baptized now?' 'No; I will wait till you come again, for I want my brothers and their families to be baptized at the same time, and they are not prepared yet.' Oh! how thankful I was to our heavenly Father for this incident. How wonderful God is in carrying on His work! An incident like this is enough compensation for all the labour bestowed in the Tripatore district since the commencement of the mission. May the Lord's work so prosper everywhere!"

WORK AMONG MOHAMMEDANS IN BOMBAY.

An inquirer was sent in to me for instruction a few weeks ago by our zealous missionary at Aurangabad, the Rev. Ruttonji Nowroji. This man's name I do not at present mention, but the facts of his history and present position are briefly as follows: He is one of the sons of an old Maulavi, a man of great learning, who was one of the trio chosen many years ago to represent the Mohammedan side in a great argument held at Agra with the Christian missionaries. This Maulavi collected most of the works on the Christian side of the Mohammedan controversy which were obtainable in Urdu and Persian, in order to refute them. What effect they produced upon his mind I do not know, but this son of his read them carefully, as well as the books on the other side, and the result was that he determined to read the Bible. This he continued to do for six or seven years, until at last every trace of belief in Mohammed faded away, and a firm faith in Christ took its place. He then applied to the Rev. Ruttonji Nowroji for further instruction in Christianity. Hearing of this, his friends tried to persuade him to desist from such a course, but in vain. Then they decided to save themselves and their religion from such injury as his conversion to Christianity would cause it, by administering poison,—more open violence being attended with considerable danger. Some of his pupils—he is a teacher of the Persian and Urdu languages, and something of a poet—heard of the plot, and let him know. He went as usual, however, to Mr. Ruttonji for instruction, and on leaving him that day told him casually that he thought it better to say good-bye for good, as he did not doubt they had met for the last time, his enemies being determined to kill him unless he denied Christ, which he never

would do. Mr. Rottonji then decided to send him to Bombay to me, both to protect him for a time and also to give him further instruction. I have never had such a pupil since I came to India. He is at once brave and humble, most earnest in the study of God's Word, and zealous for the spread of the Gospel of the Saviour, whom he has now accepted. His knowledge of the Bible is already such as would be very creditable to a native clergyman; and is not mere head knowledge, for his whole manner of speech and conduct shows that he has been taught of God. His answers to difficult questions often surprise me; they show that he has so thoroughly and honestly thought the matter out for himself.

This man's earnest desire is to work among his late co-religionists and spread the knowledge of Christ. He has written to a great friend of his in Aurangabad, asking him too to come here for instruction. This friend of his was at one time an atheist, having found Mohammedanism false and delusive; but the study of the Word of God, under my present inquirer's guidance, has convinced him of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. The two friends agreed that one should come to Bombay first, and, if he got suitable instruction, would write for the other; and they decided with one another to be baptized if possible at the same time. Is not this the case of Philip and Nathanael over again? God grant the result may be the same! A brother of this inquirer is also studying the Bible, and nearly convinced of the truth of Christianity. So the leaven spreads.

Last month a young Persian convert from Bagdad arrived, and this month has been working in our mission as a catechist. His name is Mirza Yahya Khan. He was a major in the Shah of Persia's army, having two regiments in his charge, but he had read in his native country, Kirmanshah, the Gospel of Christ, and felt he must confess Him before men by receiving baptism. The Rev. T. R. Hodgson baptized him last Easter, and sent me a very high account of him, which my own acquaintance with the Mirza has since fully justified. He is very anxious to return and work in Kirmanshah for Christ, but has agreed to remain here until Mr. Hodgson returns to Bagdad from furlough. He goes to the coffee-houses in which the Persians congregate, mixes with them, and leads the conversation in religious matters, and gets those who seem at all earnest to come to our Gospel Hall in Byculla, where I see them, and where we have our Christian literature for sale and to lend. Since he has been here he has not only had many interesting conversations with his Mohammedan fellow-countrymen, but he has succeeded in getting three of them to confess belief in Christ, and to come to us for instruction in the Bible.