

thus occupied by the Rajah is yet to a large extent maintained by the representatives of the old Hindoo Conservative party, whether their Church is called the "Veda Somaj" or "Prathana Somaj." But the Vedas having been found untenable by others, as tending necessarily to pure Pantheism, a religious system with better foundations was accordingly sought for, and after in vain endeavouring to discover it in "Nature," or to envelope it from "Intuition," the new movement has, under the guidance of Keshub Chunder Ser., approached Christianity. After having heard that distinguished man preach, and having seen the response given to his teaching by his splendid audience, numbering the most enlightened natives as well as Europeans in Calcutta; and after having had a very pleasant conversation with him, I cannot but indulge the hope, from his sincerity, his earnestness, as well as from his logic, that in the end he will be led to accept the whole truth as it is in Jesus. But of one thing I feel profoundly convinced, that the Brahma Somaj, which numbers thousands of adherents, is to be attributed indirectly to the teaching and labors of Christian missionaries; and its existence, in spite of all I have read and heard against it, brightens my hope of India's future.

#### AN INDIAN CHURCH NEEDED.

Before closing this part of my subject and proceeding to offer to the Assembly a few practical suggestions as to present duties with reference to our Missions, permit me to repeat a conviction which I took the liberty of stating at our great missionary meeting at Calcutta as to our keeping steadily before the mind of the Churches at home and abroad the vast importance of a native Church being organised in India. By a native Church I do not certainly mean—what, in present circumstances, we thankfully accept—native Churches in ecclesiastical connection with the different European and American missions. It surely cannot be desired by any intelligent Christian—I might use stronger language, and assert that it ought not to be tolerated by any reasonable man, unless proved to be unavoidable—that our several Churches should reproduce, in order to perpetuate in the new world of a Christianised India, those forms or symbols which in the old world have become marks, not of our union as Christians but of our disunion as sects. We may not, indeed, be responsible for these divisions in the Church which have come down to us from the past. We did not make them, nor can we now, perhaps, unmake them. We find ourselves born into some one of them, and so we accept of it and make the most of it as the best we can get in the whole circumstances in which we are placed. But must we establish these different organisations in India? Is each part to be made to represent the whole? Is the grand army to remain broken up into separate divisions, each to recruit to

its own standard, and to invite the Hindoos to wear our respective uniforms, adopt our respective shibboleths, learn and repeat our respective war-cries, and even make caste-marks of our wounds and scars, which to us are but the sad mementoes of old battles? Or, to drop all metaphors, shall Christian converts in India be necessarily grouped and stereotyped into Episcopal Churches, Presbyterian Churches, Lutheran Churches, Methodist Churches, Baptist Churches, or Independent Churches, and adopt as their respective creeds the Confession of Faith, the Thirty-nine Articles, or some other formula approved of by our forefathers, and the separating sign of some British or American sect? Whether any Church seriously entertains this design I know not, though I suspect it of some, and I feel assured that it will be realised in part, as conversions increase by means of foreign missions, and be at last perpetuated, unless it is now carefully guarded against by every opportunity being watched and taken advantage of to propagate a different idea, and to rear up an independent and all-inclusive native Indian Church. By such a Church I mean one which shall be organised and governed by the natives themselves, as far as possible, independently of us. We could of course claim, as Christians and fellow-subjects, to be recognised as brethren, and to be received among its members, or, if it should so please both parties, serve among its ministers, and rejoice always to be its best friends and generous supporters. In all this we would only have them to do to us as we should feel bound to do to them. Such a Church might, as taught by experience, mould its outward form of government and worship according to its inner wants and outward circumstances, guided by history and by the teaching and spirit of Christianity. Its creeds—for no Christian society can exist without some known and professed beliefs—would include those truths which had been confessed by the catholic Church of Christ since the first; and, as necessary to its very existence as a Church, it would recognise the supreme authority of Jesus Christ and his Apostles. It would also have, like the whole Church, its Lord's day for public worship, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Thus might a new temple be reared on the plains of India unlike perhaps any to be seen in our Western lands, yet with all our goodly stones built up in its fabric, and with all our spiritual worship within its walls of the one living and true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. A Church like this would, from its very nationality, attract many a man who does not wish to be ranked among the adherents of mission Churches. It would dispose, also, of many difficulties inseparable from our position, whether regarding baptism or the selection and support of a native ministry. And, finally, it would give ample scope, for many a year to come, for all the