

OUR TASK IN INDIA

SHALL WE PROSELYTISE HINDUS
OR EVANGELISE INDIA?

BY

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'THE EMPIRE OF CHRIST,' ETC.

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of Gehenna than yourselves."—**MATT.** xxiii. 15.

"But go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God."—**LUKE** ix. 60.

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PREFACE

THE responsibility of England for the true welfare and prosperity of her Indian Empire is one which is being increasingly recognised; and, as an essential part of that welfare, the responsibility of the Church of Christ for the religious well-being of our Indian brethren is being pressed upon the various branches of that Church with a growing urgency. There is, however, at the same time, a tendency on the part of an increasing section of the Church to criticise both the nature of the undertaking, and the methods which are being employed in its prosecution. A closer acquaintance with Indian religious thought on the one hand, and a more intimate knowledge of the character of missionary work on the other, coupled with a growing dissatisfaction with dogmatic Christianity, are producing in the minds of many suspicions as to the necessity, and doubts as to the wisdom of our Indian missionary enterprise, which, though not very well defined are

affecting that enthusiasm for the cause, and that intense conviction of its necessity, without which it can never be carried to a successful issue.

The object of this book is to give a fresh presentation of Indian Missions, which it is believed is more in accord with our modern thought and feeling on the subject, and to offer suggestions for its more effective working, so that the missionary enterprise may be more firmly established in the heart and mind of the Church. The keynote of the whole presentation is the distinction between two conceptions, the old and the new, which may be described, with sufficient accuracy for the purposes of contrast, as Proselytism and Evangelism. The mere names, however, are of no importance, and their accuracy may be easily called in question. It is the different attitudes assumed by the missionary body, according as the one or the other conception dominates the thought, which are of supreme concern. The real distinction is not one which can be adequately realised except by following those attitudes through the various branches of missionary work. The author's position on this question could have been described in a sentence, but it could only be properly explained in a book.

In endeavouring to make his meaning clear,

there has all along been the fear of appearing too dogmatic. He has tried to avoid this as far, as possible, but he is conscious of having failed. It should be remembered, however, that while dogmatism is always emphatic, emphasis is not necessarily dogmatism. It is almost impossible to write on a subject upon which one has strong and definite convictions, without appearing to occupy the position of the superior person who knows all that there is to know, and regards that which he does not know as not worth knowing. The author disclaims any pretensions in that direction. He is conscious of a limitation of vision and an inadequacy of knowledge which may seriously interfere with that true presentation of the case which is needed. The necessity, however, for some presentation on the lines indicated has forced him to write, and the desire to make the position clear has compelled him to run the risk of appearing too dogmatic. He has no wish to separate himself from the great missionary body to which he belongs, nor any intention of pleading not guilty to any charge of proselytism which may be brought against that body. The charge may probably apply to some missionary methods, but it does not apply in any degree to the spirit which animates the missionary

body. It is doubtless not always easy to distinguish between some of the results of their labour and proselytism, but their labour itself is inspired not by the proselytising, but by the evangelising spirit.

The opinions here expressed are merely those of an individual missionary whose experience is limited in its range, and whose grasp of the situation is necessarily partial. They are based, however, upon a quarter of a century's work in India, and are the result of long and earnest thought upon the various questions raised. They need, as they will doubtless receive, the criticism they merit, and one may perhaps hope the endorsement of other more capable and experienced missionaries. The book is sent forth with the one supreme desire of making the missionary work in India more effective for the good of our Indian Empire, and more worthy of the cause of Christ.

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