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THE MORNING STAR.

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THE CHRISTIAN AND CASTE.

We print today a letter from an earnest Tamil Christian which we commend to the perusal of our readers. As to the wisdom of the details worked out we have no comments at present but with the main idea that one ounce of action in worth tons of words we are in heartiest sympathy. It is always much easier to preach than to act and one of the regrettable things in connection with the whole subject is that the Jaffna Christian has usually been much more ready to talk than to act. Pastor Valupilly in his address at the Convocation put the matter not only forcibly but eloquently, and the vast majority of those who listened, we are sure at heart, agreed with every word spoken, but what is the net result of that address, and countless scores that have preceded it? Simply that people have for a few brief minutes been compelled to face the question, and then have gone their several ways as before.

At least ten percent of the population of Jaffna belongs to the lower castes and yet not even two percent of our membership is from the lower castes. But even that small percentage is compelled to sit on the floor of some of our churches or put on some low or broken down benches at the back of the church: almost invariably they receive communion last and not infrequently their names appear last on the church roll.

When a low caste marriage takes place in the church some directing genius is usually on hand to see that a "low caste" bench from the back of the church is brought to the front to seat the bridal party. Or if one of the missionary ladies is conducting a meeting for Christian women only and a low caste woman comes in and is seated by the missionary lady, straightway those high caste Christian women or their husbands go to that low caste woman and utter dire threats should she ever again dare to be seated equally with them, all of which so scares the poor low caste woman that she cannot be induced to come to the meeting again. Or if a low caste woman happens to be calling on the missionaries at the same time with other ladies of higher caste—all Christians and all are served with tea in the same kind of cups and saucers the high caste ladies receive theirs with ill concealed anger. Subsequent inquiry develops the fact that they would have been satisfied had the low caste woman received hers in a coconut shell seated on the floor!! If a series of special meetings is being held and it is proposed to hold one of the morning prayer meetings in the house of one of the low caste members (a home, mind you, that is beautifully clean and well kept), it straightway appears that not a single member can be induced to enter even the compound in which that low caste man's house is situated, and for fear of what? Let some one answer who can. If a death occurs among the low caste members it is far from any, save the Pastor, to be seen near the house of mourning when perhaps there is most needed the helpful brotherly and sisterly comfort that Christ came to teach us how to show to one another.

Now we have not been in the least drawing on our imagination—these are events some of which occur in Jaffna every week and some less frequently, but all making it painfully clear that the spirit of Christian brotherhood and Christlike sympathy, as Christ taught it, is little understood among most of our Christians. We say this calmly and dispassionately, for we feel that the exhibition of a lack of brotherly sympathy and Christian unity which our Christians are constantly showing to those around who do not acknowledge Christ as Lord, is doing more than any thing else to convince Hindus that Christians are not sincere in their professions. However much one man may question the tenets of another man's faith he will always admire his earnestness and sincerity, and admiration commands not only respect, but a respectful hearing.

We do not wish it to be inferred that we think that radical means should be employed or that even a distinct "fight" or "war" should be waged against caste unless it can be done in the proper spirit. It is always possible to do good things in wrong ways. For instance confession of Christ is enjoined on all who accept Him, but if a resident of Jaffna town were to conceive that confessing Christ meant walking up and down the principal streets swinging his arms wildly and shouting his confession of Christ as he went along, he would not only defeat the very pur-

pose for which confession is enjoined, but would bring shame on the name of Christ. Again, opposition to the liquor traffic is a duty imperatively demanded of all, but if a man were to carry his opposition to the point of going into every place where liquor is sold and smashing the liquor bottles he would speedily and properly land himself in jail. There is a right way of doing every good thing: there is the extreme course; there is the golden mean common sense way and there is the "laissez faire" let-well-enough-alone policy which is content to forever declare that Jaffna is not advanced enough yet to for Christians to take a decided stand against caste.

If warrant were needed for the organization a definite campaign against caste, it is easily found in the numerous Christian organizations in India whose distinct purpose is to discourage caste in every legitimate, common sense way. The chief value of such an organization is that it makes men show their colors. We believe that a like society here might easily be a great aid to creating a healthy sentiment against caste without being offensive and incidentally stiffen the backbones of some of our Christians. The details of any such organization would need to be worked out carefully—at first very conservatively—and advancing as experience might direct. We shall be glad to receive suggestions looking toward this end for we believe that one of the most important questions that Jaffna Christians ought fairly to face is the caste question.

THE POSTMASTER GENERAL'S REPORT.

"During the year 1902 the increase of business was generally maintained," writes Mr. Moysey our Postmaster General and Director of [Telegraphs, and it will be generally conceded that on the whole this department of government is satisfactorily conducted. We in Jaffna will be better satisfied when our mails come by rail as we hope they will be coming two years hence. The attempt to establish a motor coach service between Tufugala and Batticaloa failed owing to the rough road. It is said also that the pneumatic tires would not stand the temperature. The coach service is certainly bad. The Postmaster General writes as follows on this subject:—

"The coach services have been undoubtedly improved, but they are not what they might be. It is all a question of money. With a sufficient subsidy for mails, sufficient charges for passenger traffic, and a monopoly of the line, a contractor can run a coach satisfactorily in Ceylon. If he is obliged to cut down his passenger rates by competition, he must take the difference out of his upkeep. If the Government subsidy is reduced by competition, the same result follows. I have no doubt that the acceptance of the lowest tender has been the cause of cruelty to animals. The contractor must get the mails through, and the Post Office must insist upon his doing so. The mails cannot be stopped because a horse is galled or is lame, and the order of an Inspector to take a horse off the line must be inoperative unless there is another horse at hand to take its place."

We see no reason why the mails should not come up as far as Anarajapooram by rail early next year. We hope also a horse coach will be allowed from Anarajapooram to Elephant Pass.

The weight of mail sent to the United Kingdom for the year was as follows:—Letters and post-cards 16,526 lbs. and other articles 47,473 lbs. Seventy-nine per cent of the mails were despatched by British steamers, the balance being divided between German and French boats.

The money order business has increased, amounting to Rs. 9,815,240. As for Postal orders these seem very popular everywhere except in Jaffna where very few postal orders are sold. The total amount was Rs. 130,202.

The Post Office Savings Bank seems to be doing an increasing business. It is patronized largely by the poorer people who deposit their little savings from time to time.

Mr. Moysey deals briefly with complaints against the Department from which it appears that many of the mistakes were due to carelessness on the part of the senders of letters. One man forgot to address the letter, another gave a wrong address, a third addressed his letter and then mislaid it, a fourth received an important letter and then forgetting all about it, complained to the Department of its non-arrival. These are all mistakes on the part of the people, but what about the mistakes of the Department?

Correspondence.

To The Editors Morning Star,

Dear Sirs,

One of the subjects at the last annual Convocation of the American Ceylon Mission, held at Manipalay was, "The Problem of Caste in relation to the Kingdom of God." No amount of learned, erudite or eloquent orations from the pulpit or platform will have the desired result unless the Preacher and those preached to, the Pastor and the people, come to a definite and mutual understanding on the subject. It strikes me that instead of these scattered, vague, meaningless addresses and syncretistic and futile attempts to condemn the observance of caste, a clear and well defined resolution must be publicly carried and some well thought-out and practical scheme or proposal be suggested and agreed upon to fight against and

put down this monstrous evil. Almost all Christians are convinced that caste observance is a curse in Jaffna, a disgrace to their religion, and a powerful hindrance to their progress. But they are physical, intellectual and spiritual progress. They are afraid to altogether disregard it under the existing circumstances. Since no united action is taken against it, Christians, even those placed in an awkward position, must find themselves placed in an awkward position, when occasions arise for making marriage contracts, for members in their own families or for those amongst their kin and kin, for they would be the sufferers who would be to disregard caste-observance, and with a great many of their helpful relatives and friends. I think the real test comes mostly at weddings when relatives and sometimes intimate friends have to dine in one or other of the houses of the contracting parties. It is here that even Christians observe caste and social connections. Some professing Christians are who seem to take a pride in their own family connections and who minutely observe caste and shade of connections and who shun so either from ignorance or out of sheer necessity. It is not my purpose here to enter into a discussion of any of the various intricacies of caste, but I wish to ask, why not at once forth what may be called an Anti Caste Association, consisting of those who would promise never to observe caste and who would dine, if invited, at the weddings of their relations or intimate friends and associate with them thereafter, as they would gladly do, if, as at present, marriage contracts were made in families considered to be well connected. This will not only be a definite step taken towards counteracting the evil influence of caste-observance but also give an occasion to many caste-Nicolaitans to disengage their hearts openly from encouraging ways offered to join them and make a bold departure from the evils that undermine society at present. The Christians, of whom there are now many, will thus form an independent unit and could afford to stand by themselves. The fact is that Christians have not yet altogether separated themselves from the customs and customs of their caste and caste relations and friends, in spite of the fact that they are called to be a separate and peculiar people for God. Some of them, if not many, have simply changed their religion not their faith; their outside, not their inside; their lips, not their hearts; and hence all those cross-castes evils. These things might have been some extent excused in those days when Christianity counted but a few in its ranks, but now that it embraces thousands and tens of thousands and possesses considerable power and influence for good, we can afford to, say, we must, stand on our own legs and separate ourselves from the foolish customs, and prejudices of heathendom.

I would, therefore, propose the following points for the careful consideration of all who really desire a reform in this matter:—

1. Let some leading Christian gentleman take the initiative by privately writing to all the native ministers and a few leading Christian laymen and women of the three Missions in Jaffna, who are likely to join in this movement. The cordial sympathy and earnest co-operation of at least 20 of them must be first secured.
2. After getting their consent, let a committee be formed out of them to write out and print a small pamphlet in Tamil and in English on "Caste and Christianity" and on "The duties of Christians to counteract its evil influence." Let these pamphlets be profusely circulated among all the Christians in Jaffna, with invitations either publicly in a newspaper, or privately by word of mouth, calling for an expression of their willingness to join in the movement.—[In this way the strength of the movement will be roughly gauged.]
3. Then to convene a public meeting by letters and advertisements and to formally organize an Association.
4. One of the resolutions to be passed at the meeting must be that all those who join the Association will make wise never to entertain considerations of caste and social connection, whenever invited to dinners or at weddings, and always to encourage every endeavour to act accordingly, unless they have valid reasons.
5. They must also promise to do all in their power and unswervingness of caste-observance.

These are a few hints, which might be still developed. I remain, Yours obediently,

Jaffna, 26th Oct. 1903.

A. VOICE.

A NEW J. P. FOR MATALE.

Sir West Ridgeway could not have conferred a more wisely deserved distinction on any one than the dignity of Justice of the Peace just conferred on Mr. Daniel Joseph of Matale. His services to his country and his personal abilities and character, merited such honor, who is a keen observer on things did not longer unrecognized and unrewarded and has in honor with the approaching Birthday of His Most Gracious Majesty conferred on Mr. Daniel Joseph the title of J. P. for the Matale District. All Mr. Joseph's friends and his friends will, I am sure, rejoice in the honor conferred on him by His Majesty's Government.

NOTES.

—A memorial is to be erected to the Christian Martyrs of the last centuries. It is proposed that it should take the form of a building which would be the Exeter Hall of China.

—The largest carpet in the world is 40 ft. in breadth and 100 ft. in length. It is now at Windsor Castle.

—The biggest leaves in the world are those of the Injal, a length of 30 ft. to 50 ft. and are from 10 ft. to 12 ft. in breadth.

—The largest hotel in the world is the Ansonia New York ground. There are nearly 200 miles of piping, 100 miles of water and 100 miles of electric light.

—The British and Foreign Bible Society distributed 1,000,000 Bibles and 1,491,000 New Testaments during the year ending March 31st last.

—The Brazilian Government has decided to proclaim Rio de Janeiro International Town of the Air, to hold an International Congress is to be held in December 1905 and the of 300,000 rupees for the winner.

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