This change of front was brought about by the Directors of the East India Company. The East India trade was a monopoly of the Company and no Englishman could enter the territories of the East India Company in India without license from the Directors of the Company and any Englishman found in the territories of the Company without a license was liable to be deported. The Company did not take long to realize what the effect of the new clause would be. It knew that the clause would require them to open the gates of India to the flood of the Missionaries and their propaganda. Should the Missionaries be allowed a free hand, was the question of the hour. As was natural this became a subject of a most interesting, instructive and bitter controversy and those who care to know it in its details may usefully refer to the pages of the Edinborough Review and the .....of the day.

There were three parties to this controversy. There were the Directors of the East India Company whose primary interest was to protect its shareholders who were clamouring for dividends. The second party to the controversy was the English Middle Class which was living on the East India trade and whose sons were finding new avenues for lucrative careers in the territories. Thirdly there was the Church Missionary Society formed in the year .....for the purpose of spreading the Christian faith. The interests of the first two coincided. They were for the maintenance of the Empire and therefore wanted peace and tranquility. The third did care for peace but was keen on the substitution of Indian superstition by the Christian faith. The first made a powerful combination and obliged all the forces against the third. The result was that they triumphed and the Church Missionary Society lost. The arguments advanced by the controversialist on the triumphant side are of course the most important and the most instructive part of the controversy.

To the argument that the propaganda in favour of the Christian faith should begin at once, that it was wrong to hold that the truth though sacred should be doled out in such a way and in such bits as to avoid all risk, the reply given by Sydney Smith was a stunning reply. This is what he said :

> "When we consider for how many centuries after Christ, Providence allowed the greater part of mankind to live and die without any possibility of their attaining to the knowledge of the sacred truths by any human exertion, we must be satisfied that the rapid and speedy conversion of the whole world forms no part of the scheme of its Almighty Governor, and that it can give no offence in His eyes if we do not desert our domestic duties and expose the

lives and worldly happiness of multitudes of our fellow country men to hazard in our attempt to their conversion."

* * *

"The Directors would be doing their duty neither to the shareholders nor the British Nation if they allowed 'itinerant tinkers to preach the natives into insurrection..... The natives must be taught a better religion at a time and in a manner that will not inspire them with a passion for political change.' ..... Our duties to our families and Country are set before us by God Himself. We are not at liberty to desert them in order to give a remote chance of conferring greater benefits on strangers at a distance."

It is arguments such as those which prevailed with Parliament and led to the rejection of the Clause in 1793. Wilberforce twitted members of Parliament by reminding them with, their Christianity was not a religion of convenience but it was a religion established by law. But as has been well pointed out, "for the major portion of those 'counted' in the eighteenth century the religion accepted by the State and Society as a convenience was something to be used with fact and discretion at home. There was no need to diffuse it recklessly abroad. The general atmosphere, as has often been pointed out, was remarkably like that of Augustan Rome. To the statesman, thinking imperially, all religions were equally useful, each in its proper place."[1]

The attempt to open the door to the Missionaries failed and the Missionary was shut out from India till 1813. Not only was he shut out but the Company's Government kept a strict vigil upon the activities of such stray missionaries who contrived to go to India without their license.

In 1793 Dr. Carey went as an interloper without license. As he was not allowed to enter Calcutta being without license, he made Serampore, 14 miles away from Calcutta as his base of operation. Serampore was a Danish settlement and the Danes had placed no restrictions on missionaries or mission propaganda. On the contrary the Governor of Serampore actively helped them. Carey and his Mission was always suspect in the eyes of the Company's Government. In 1798 the Serampore Mission decided to engage four missionaries who arrived in the year 1800. They went to reside in the Danish settlement of Serampore. As a matter of fact the Governor General had nothing to do with them. But the unconcealed residence of those unlicensed enthusiasts was too much for the Company's Governor General and Lord Wellesley wrote to the Governor of Serampore, "Would His Excellency see to the expulsion of these interlopers who

[1] Mayhew- Christianity and the Government of India, p. 51.

might at any moment violate the territories of the British East India Company", to which the Danish Governor replied that he would do nothing of the kind[1]. Similar action was taken in 1806 when Captain Wickes brought two more Missionaries in the '*Crieterion*' which anchored off Calcutta. Sir George Barlow was then the Governor General. He took a most extra-ordinary action to prevent the landing of these two missionaries. He ordered that the Captain be not given his clearance papers unless he agreed to take back the two missionaries. Although they had gone to live in Serampore and were in fact under the protection of the Danish Crown. This was not only a more unreasonable attitude towards missionaries but it was also an attitude which could not but be regarded as hostile[2].

The Vellore Mutiny among Indian Soldiers which took place in 1806 was quite erroneously attributed to missionary propaganda and Sir George Barlow in a panicky condition proceeded to put the following restrictions on the activities of the Serampore Missionaries:

1. The Missionaries remain at Serampore.
2. They must not preach openly in the bazar.
3. Native converts might preach provided they are not sent forth as emissaries from Serampore.

The vehemence with which the Government of Bengal came down upon the Serampore Mission in 1807 for issuing a tract on Islam in which quite inadvertently the prophet Mahomed was called an imposter also furnishes further evidence of the attitude of hostility which Government of the Company bore towards the Missionaries.

The Government of Bengal refused to be satisfied with the apologies of Dr. Carey and insisted upon the transfer of the Press from Serampore to Calcutta in order that Government may be in a better position to control the literature issued therefrom. The news caused dismay for it meant the disruption of the mission. As usual, the Governor of the Danish settlement came to their rescue and told the frightened Serampore Missionaries that he would fight their battle if the Government of Bengal forcibly removed the Press to Calcutta. Subsequently matters were settled and the order was withdrawn[3]. But the fact remains that the Government of the Company was not a friend of the Missionaries.

So much for the excuse which they can legitimately plead. But what attitude did they take when they were allowed after 1813 to operate in the field ? Did they take the line that caste must go from the thought and life of the Convert? The earliest pronouncement of a Protestant Missionary does not warrant an affirmative answer.

[1]J. C. Marshman. Life & Times of Carey, Marshman and word. Vol. 1, p. [2] *Ibid.,* p. 307.

Missionaries intolerating caste : Dr. Heyne in 1814 wrote : Missionaries, in many instances, have fallen into a mistake of a very injurious nature to their rapid or even ultimate success. In converting a Hindu to Christianity, they oblige him to adopt a line of conduct by which he loses his caste; this, in India is considered such a disgrace, that it must present a powerful obstacle to conversion. But the political division of the Hindus is no part of their religious tenets, though it has been so mistaken by the most enlightened. In giving to the Hindus the Christian religion, allow them to retain their caste, and they could be found to embrace it without reluctance, and in considerable numbers."[1]

But I do not wish to judge the attitude of the Protestant Missions to so important a question from so stray a pronouncement of a solitary individual. There is evidence to show that the Protestant Missions were once early in their career called upon to make up their mind on this important issue so that it can be said that the view maintained by the Protestant Mission is a considered view. The time when this issue was discussed seriously was the time when Rev. Heber was appointed the Bishop of Calcutta. He assumed his duties in the year 1823. During his episcopate he toured extensively in the whole of India and in Ceylon. In the course of his tour, he became aware of the sharp conflict of opinion among Protestant Missionaries to the question of toleration of caste among converts. He decided to resolve this difference. How he went about the business is told in the words of Mr. Kaye who has succintantly narrated it:

> "There was strife, therefore, among the missionaries, which Heber was anxious to allay. The question had been brought before him, before he quitted Bengal. He had there sought to arm himself with all the information that he could obtain, respecting not only the practice of the earlier Protestant missionaries, but the true nature of the institution of Caste. There was then in Bishop's College a Christian convert, known as Christian David. He had been a pupil of Schwartz; and was truly a remarkable man. No less distinguished for his intelligence than for his piety, he was regarded by the good Bishop as the one of all others to whom he might most expediently refer for the solution of his doubts. Heber drew up, therefore, a series of questions, which he submitted to the native Christian, and received from him a series of replies, stated not only in excellent English, but with a force and precision which could not be easily surpassed.

[1] Krishna District Manual, p. 282.

"First, with regard to the nature of Caste, it was declared by Christian David, that it was, among the natives of Southern India, "purely a worldly idea"— "not connected in their minds with any notion of true or false religion," that the native converts, drawn from the higher castes, were disinclined to intercourse With low-caste proselytes, not on religious or superstitious grounds, but simply for social reasons; that there were certain distinctions between high-caste and low-caste persons not by any means ideal, and that these distinctions were not to be gilded over merely by the acquisition of worldly wealth. He specially set forth that low-caste people indulged habitually in an unseemly mode of speech—frequently using coarse or indecent expressions very revolting to the feelings of high-caste men; and that they were altogether less decorous and self respectful in their way of life. Learning, he said, might elevate them; and if a Pariah became learned he was called a pundit, and respected by the Church; and then his brother converts would associate with him, but still they would not "from worldly fear or pride" eat with him from the same dish. From the days of Ziegenbalg downwards they had been wont to sit at Church in two separate divisions, and had communicated separately at the Lord's table, drinking out of the same cup, but the high-caste converts drinking first. As a proof, however, that these were regarded as merely worldly distinctions, Christian David said that high-caste and low-caste, among the Christian congregations of the South, were buried in a common burial ground, and took part promiscuously in the funeral ceremonies, "as if with the consciousness, contrary to the heathen nations, that death levelled all distinctions."

"Rather by mild remonstrance and persuasion than by the enactment of any stringent rules, which might have proved great obstructions to Christianity, the elder missionaries had sought to mitigate the evil; and Christian David declared that under the ministration of Schwartz the evil had considerably diminished. But Mr. Rhenius, of the Church Missionary Society, a truly conscientious and devout Christian, had taken other views of the duties of Christian teachers, and had gained over to his opinions the younger missionaries in the South; so that they agreed, as I have said, among themselves, to make the total repudiation of Caste, even in its mere social aspect, an essential condition of admittance to the Christian Church; and they had, moreover, spoken and preached against the elder missionaries—even the most venerated of their predecessors—denouncing them as "corrupters of the Gospel" for having permitted such things to soil the purity of Christianity.

Of all this Christian David spoke with profound regret. His own opinions were naturally inclined towards the doctrine and the practice of his old master Christian Schwartz. The mild interference and affectionate advice of the Bishop might, he thought, dispose the hearts of the younger missionaries towards greater toleration and forbearance.

"Very earnestly and very conscientiously did Heber revolve this important subject in his mind. It is in accordance with all that we know of the character of the man, that he should have inclined towards the more conciliatory practices of the elder missionaries. But he deferred any final decision, until the opportunity should arrive for the collection of further information and the delivery of a sounder and fuller judgment on the spot. When, therefore, he visited the Southern Presidency, he wrote letters of inquiry to some of the principal missionaries and instituted a select committee of the Christian Knowledge Society for the purpose of making further investigation into the subject. From one letter written to the Rev. D. Schrievogel, though little more than a series of questions, the bent of his opinions may be derived. It appeared to him, after much deliberate consideration, that Caste, as represented to exist among the Christian converts on the Coast was in reality an institution differing little in its essential features from the social exclusiveness prevailing in Christian countries. Is there no such thing, he asked himself, as Caste in Europe? Is there no such thing as Caste in America? Do not the high and the low sit apart in our English churches ? Do not our well-dressed high-caste folks go up first to the altar to communicate? Do high and low sit down to meat together—do their children attend the same schools? Are there no Pariahs amongst us? In other civilized countries, is there not a prevailing sense of Caste, apart from all associations of worldly distinction? Does not the Spanish hidalgo wear his Caste bravely beneath his threadbare cloak? Is the wealthiest mulatto fit companion for the poorest white? It may be called blood, or anything else in another; but in its essential features the one thing differs but little from the other. It is an intelligible and appreciable Christian principle that all men in the sight of God are equal. But it is equally certain that all are not equal in the sight of Man; and it is a fair presumption that God never intended them to be equal. Social distinctions exist every where; and if, argued the Bishop, the distinctions which exist among the converts on the Southern coast are merely social distinctions, why should we endanger the success of our efforts by endeavouring to enforce a law of equality, which is maintained among no other classes of men?

> "In this wise thought Bishop Heber. He had said from the first, that if he could be of any service to the Christian cause in India, it would be as a moderator—that by a conciliatory course, smoothing down the asperities of the over-zealship, he might hope to do much good as the chief missionary; and now he believed that it was his duty to cast in the weight of his authority upon the side of those who had resolved not to. pour too much of new wine into the old bottles."

This view was more forcefully expressed by another Protestant Missionary Rev. Robert Noble who came out to India in 1841 and was in charge of the Church of England Mission Work in Masulipatam made it a rule to exclude Pariahs, leather workers and scavengers from his school. Defending himself against the charge of introducing caste in the Christian fold he defended himself in the following terms: "The humblest and most pious Christian parents in England would not allow their sons, much less their daughters, to be educated with their footmen, with their cooks and their scullery maids. Perhaps I was punished oftener by my pious father for stealing away to play with the boys of the village than on any other account; while in the best ordered Christian family I have ever seen, the children were not allowed to converse with the servants or to descend the second step of the stairs into the kitchen. My father would not have allowed us to mix with the" cook's or stable boy's children; nor can I see it right to require of Brahmins that before we will teach them the Gospel, they must sit down on the same form with the pariah and the sweeper. The requirement is to me unreasonable and unchristian."

It is true that many wise and devout Christians since Heber's time believed that he was altogether wrong; and that Bishop Wilson at a later period reversed his decision emphatically pronouncing against all toleration for the inequities of caste on the ground that it was an ingrained part of Hindu religion. But the fact remained not only the official but also the general view of the Protest Missions' in India regarding the place of caste in Indian Christianity.

Thus all Missionaries agreed that Christianity should be made easy in order that it may spread among India. On this point there seems to be difference of kind among Catholics, Lutherners or Protestants. Such difference as exists is one of degree. If there exists Caste and other forms among Christian converts it is the result of this policy—

[1]An exception must however be made in favour of the Protestant Missionaries of America. In July 1847 the American Missionaries passed the following resolution regarding this question—

> "That the Mission regards caste as an essential part of heathenism, and its full and practical renunciation, after instruction, as essential to satisfactory evidence of piety: and that renunciation of caste implies at least readiness to eat. under proper circumstances, with Christians of any caste.",

policy of making Christianity easy. In adopting this policy the Missionaries never thought that some day, somebody would ask them 'What good is Christianity for a Hindu if it does not do away with his Caste'. They misunderstood their mission and thought that making a person Christian was the same thing as making him a follower of Christ.

V

Let us take the second part of the question. Has Christianity been able to save the convert from the sufferings and the ignominy which is the misfortune of every one who is born an untouchable? Can an untouchable after his conversion to Christianity take water from a public well? Are his children admitted to a public school? Can he enter a hotel or tavern which was not open to him ? Can he enter a shop and buy things from inside? Will a barber shave him? Will a washerman wash his clothes? Can he travel in a bus? Will he be admitted in Public offices without compunction ? Will he be allowed to live in the touchable quarters of the village? Will the Hindus take water from him ? Will they dine with him ? Will not the Hindu take a bath if he touches him ? I am sure the answer to every one of these questions must be in the negative. In other words conversion has not brought about any change in the social status of the untouchable convert. To the general mass of the Hindus the untouchable remains an untouchable even though he beomes a Christian.

The question is, why has Christianity not succeeded in raising the status of the untouchable convert? What are the reasons for this failure? I am not sure that my reasons will be accepted by all those who are interested in the problem. But I will state them for what they are worth. To understand and appreciate what I am going to say I must begin by pointing out that a change in the social status of the convert Can be the result of a two-fold change. There must be a change in the attitude of the Hindus. Secondly there must be a change in the mentality of the convert. Status is a dual matter, a matter *inter se* between two persons and unless both move from their old position there can be no change. What has been done by those who are in charge of Christian endeavour to make the parties move on? A consideration of this question will enable us to understand why Christianity has failed to raise the status of the untouchable convert.

Let us consider the question in parts. What has Christianity done to make the Hindus move on? I find they have done nothing. They seem to be depending upon an idea doing the miracle. The faith in an idea

doing the work has been well expressed by the late Duke of Argyle when he said:

> "There is no method of reform so powerful as this. If alongside any false or corrupt belief, or any vicious or cruel system, we place *one incompatible idea,*—then without any noise of controversy or clash of battle, those beliefs and customs will wave an idea. It was thus that Christianity, without one single word of direct attack, killed off one of the greatest and most universal curses of the pagan world,—the ever deepening curse of slavery."[1]

Whatever may be the importance of an idea, I am sure, history does not bear out the conclusion of the Duke of Argyle. It is debatable question whether the end of slavery in the Roman Empire was due to the influence of Christianity. It is beyond doubt that serfdom continued in Europe although Christianity was an established institution for several hundred years. It is an incontrovertible fact that Christianity was not enough to end the slavery of the Negroes in the United States. A civil war was necessary to give the Negro the freedom which was denied to him by the Christians.

The dependence of those in charge of Christian endeavour upon planting of an idea and leaving it to work a miracle is therefore one of the reasons why the untouchable has remained an untouchable notwithstanding his Christian faith.

Let me take the other part of the question. Does Christianity inspire the untouchable to move on ? I am constrained to say that (it)does not. So far as I am able to see, Christian preaching to the untouchable is less centered on 'practical' reforms and more centered around the development of Christian social attitudes. Christians who desire the conversion of the untouchables insist on regarding Christianity as purely "spiritual". To teach that Christians have an obligation to love others is no doubt very valuable. But to stop there and argue that spiritual life expressed in a social attitude is quite unrelated to material life and Christians can have nothing to do with it, is in my judgment to preach an empty doctrine. What is the use of a daily exhortation to a wrong doer to be good and just if the exhortation is not followed by action to make the wrong doer just and good. The Christian Missionaries have never thought that it was their duty to *act* and get the injustice that pursues the untouchables even after his conversion to Christianity removed. That Missions should be so inactive in the matter of the social emancipation of the untouchable is of course a very sad thing. But far more painful is the inaction of the untouchable who becomes a convert to Christianity. It is the saddest thing. He

[1] Quoted by C. F. Andrews. Christ and Labour, p. 25.

continues to suffer from the Hindus the same disabilities which were his lot before conversion. It is an extraordinary thing that the movement for the redress of wrongs is carried on by the untouchables who have not become converts to Christianity. I have never noticed the untouchable Christians meeting in Conferences for the redress of their social wrongs. That they have grievances is beyond question. That there are many who are educated enough to lead them in their struggle is also well known. Why is it then there has been no movement for the redress of their wrongs?

I see three reasons why the Christian untouchables have failed to raise a movement.

The first reason is to be found in the complete absence of desire on the part of the educated among the Christians to take up the cause of the community and fight for it. This is due in my judgment to the fact that within the Christian Community the educated class and the mass has no kinship. The Christian Community is a composite community. In some places it is divided into touchables and untouchables. In all places it is divided into high class and low class. The educated class is largely drawn from the touchable or the higher class. This educated class being detached from the lower or the untouchable class of Christians is not charged with the wants, the pains, cravings, desires, aspirations of the latter and does not care for their interest. The untouchable Christians are therefore leaderless and therefore unable to mobilize for the redress of their wrongs.

The second reason why there is no movement among the untouchable Christians is due to certain faults in the mental make-up of the convert. The mental make-up of the untouchable Christian is characterized by a complete absence of any urge to break his bonds. What is the reason for this absence of any urge in the untouchable Christian ? It seems to me that there are two reasons which account for this. One reason is to be found in the antecedent of the untouchable who becomes a Christian. An untouchable becomes a Christian for some advantage or he becomes a Christian because he *likes* the teaching of the Bible. But the case is very rare of an untouchable becoming a Christian because of a positive discontent or dislike of the Hindu religious teachings. The result is that Christianity becomes only an addendum to his old faith. It does not become a substitute for his old faith. He cherishes both and observes them on occasions appropriate to each.

The second reason for the absence of any urge is due I am afraid to the teachings of the Christian Church. The Christian Church teaches that the fall of man is due to his original Sin and the reason why one

must become Christian is because in Christianity there is promise of forgiveness of sins. Whatever may be the theological and evangelistic basis of this doctrine there is no doubt that from a sociological point of view it is a doctrine which is fraught with disaster. This Christian teaching is a direct challenge to sociology which holds that the fall of man is due to an unpropitious environment and not to the sins of man. There is no question that the sociological view is the correct view and the Christian dogma only misleads man. It sets him on a wrong trail. This is exactly what has happened with the untouchable Christians. Instead of being taught that his fall is due to a wrong social and religious environment and that for his improvement he must attack that environment he is told that his fall is due to his sin.

The consequence is that the untouchable convert instead of being energized to conquer his environment contents himself with the belief that there is no use struggling, for the simple reason that his fall is due to the sin committed not by him but by some remote ancestor of his called Adam. When he was a Hindu his fall was due to his Karma. When he becomes a Christian he learns that his fall is due to the sins of his ancestor. In either case there is no escape for him. One may well ask whether conversion is a birth of a new life and a condemnation to the old.

VI

Does the Indian Christian Community count in India? What importance, what influence does it have in settling the affairs of the country. It ought to have importance and influence both in the country and society. It is undoubtedly the most educated and enlightened community in India. Not only the percentage of literacy among Indian Christians is relatively larger than in many other communities in India but the University Graduate, Doctors, lawyers are far in excess than can be found in communities which are vastly superior to them in number. Not only the men are educated but also women are educated. With all this light and learning the Christians as a community, it must be said, counts for very little—if at all—in the affairs of India. There may be difference of opinion on this. But this is the conclusion I have arrived at after as close and as impartial a study as I have been able to make. My opponent might say that I am mistaken or that I am misrepresenting. But I take comfort in the fact that there are some Indian Christians who share my view and also my regret. Here are two letters which I take from Young India.

The first is from an Indian Christian to Mr. Gandhi and published in the *Young India,* August 25, 1921. This is what he says:

> "I am sorry to say that you do not take us Indian Christians as the people of India, as I have seen many times Young India mentioning Mussalmans, Hindus, Sikhs, etc., but omitting the Christians.
>
> "I should like you to believe that we Indian Christians are also people of India, and take much interest in India's own affairs." The following is the comment made by Mr. Gandhi on this letter. He says:
>
> "I assure the correspondent and other Indian Christians that non-cooperation is no respector of creeds or races. It invites and admits all to its fold. Many Indian Christians have contributed to the Tilak Swaraj Fund. There are some noted Indian Christians as non-cooperators in the front rank. There is constant mention of Musalmans and Hindus, as they have hitherto regarded one another as enemies. Similarly there always has been some cause when any race has been specially mentioned in these columns."

Apart from the question whether it is true that many Indian Christians have contributed to the Tilak Swaraj Fund and whether it is true or not that noted Christians were front rank non-cooperators, the answer given by Mr. Gandhi to the main question of the correspondent is incorrect if not misleading. If Musalmans are mentioned only because they regard the Hindus as their enemies why were Sikhs mentioned? Surely they did not regard the Hindus as their enemies. Why were they mentioned? The Sikhs were not only mentioned but were treated as an important party without whose active cooperation it was felt that the struggle for Swaraj could not be carried on. And be it remembered that the cooperation given by the Sikhs was not given unconditionally. As is well known the Sikhs had put down two conditions in return for their cooperation[1]. One condition was that in designing a national flag for India the Sikh colour which they said was black should find a place in it. Their second demand was that they should be guaranteed by the Congress representation in the legislature. It is thus clear that Sikhs were not mentioned but placated. But the Christians were not even mentioned. Now there are only two explanations for not mentioning the Indian Christians. Either they were with the Congress in the struggle for Swaraj or that they were not worth mentioning as being too insignificant. That they were not with the Congress in this struggle for Swaraj cannot be gainsaid. The following letter written by an Indian Christian written to the Editor of the *Indian Social Reformer* and reproduced in the *Young India* expresses the attitude of the Indian Christians to Swaraj:

> "We have positive evidence to show that as early as the second century of Christian era there were Christian settlements in India. Such

[1] Young India. Aug. 4. 1921.

being the case, Christians in India can claim to have existed in India some centuries earlier than the very birth of Islam. How comes it then that the Indian Christian born and bred on the soil of India and of ancestry purely Indian, has not learnt to cherish the ancient history of this country, its culture and to look upon its people, however different in their religious persuations, as his bone and of his flesh ? Whence is it that unlike him Hindu or Mahomedan fellow citizen he has not watched for, aspired to and eagerly welcomed every stage that adds a cubit to the cultural, social or political statute of his motherland. Why is it that *Vande Mataram* is a national outpouring of the Hindus and Mahomedans only and till now ignored by the Indian Christian ?

Again how comes it that both Hindus and Mahomedans regard the Indian Christian sentiment towards their aspirations as lukeworm if not positively hostile and conversely why is it that the ever-growing height of the national spirit in India makes the Indian Christian feel dwarfed and helpless and suspicious of his security in the future."[1]

Notwithstanding Mr. George Joseph, K. T. Paul, and Dr. S. K. Datta there is no doubt that the Indian Christian Community far from taking active part in the struggle for Swaraj was really afraid of it and that this letter depicts truly the prevailing attitude of the Indian Christians. The reason why the Indian Christians were not mentioned along with the Musalmans and the Sikhs is therefore clear. The omission to mention them is certainly not due to their being friends of Swaraj. The only conclusion that one can draw for such a omission is that they did not count. It is a sad thing that so enlightened a community should have no importance and no influence in the affairs of the country.

What can be the reasons for such a position ? The most obvious reason is of course, the smallness of its numbers. The weight of its numbers is too small to make its existence felt as a force in public life as can be the case with the Musalmans or with the Depressed Classes. But this cannot wholly account for their insignificance. There must be other factors to account for this. I see two.

One is this. The Indian Christians are living in sheltered waters. They are, at any rate, a large majority of them are living in the laps of the missionaries. For their education, for their medical care, for religious ministration and for most of their petty needs they do not look to Government. They look to the Missions. If they were dependent upon Government they would be required to mobilize, to agitate, educate, and organize their masses for effective political action. For without such organization no Government would care to attend to their needs and their requirements. They are not in the current and not being in the current they care not for public life, and therefore no recognized place in the public.

[1] Young India. 21st Dec. 1922.

The second reason is that the Indian Christian is a disjointed—it is a better word than the word disunited—Community. All that it has in common is a common source of inspiration. Barring this one thing which they have in common everything else tends to keep them apart. Indian Christians like all other Indians are divided by race, by language and by caste. Their religion has not been a sufficiently strong unifying force as to make difference of language, race and caste as though they were mere distinctions. On the contrary their religion which is their only cement is infected with denominational differences. The result is that the Indian Christians are too disjointed to have a common aim, to have a common mind and to put a common endeavour. To an Indian Christian from Tamil, a Hindu from Tamil is much nearer than an Indian Christian from the Punjab; An Indian Christian from U.P. feels greater kinship for a Hindu from U.P. than he does for an Indian Christian from say Maharashtra. In short, the term Indian Christian is just a statistical phrase. There is no community feeling behind this phrase. Indian Christians are not bound together by what is consciousness of kind which is the test of the existence of a community.

I do not know what Indian Christians will think of what I have said of the weaknesses which infect their life. One thing I can say. It is this—I am deeply interested in Indian Christians because a large majority of them are drawn from the untouchable classes. My comments are those of a friend. They are not the strictures of an adversary. I have drawn attention to their weaknesses because I want them to be strong and I want them to be strong because I see great dangers for them ahead. They have to reckon with the scarcely veiled hostility of Mr. Gandhi to Christianity taking its roots in the Indian Social structure. But they have also to reckon with militant Hinduism masquerading as Indian Nationalism. What this militant Hinduism will do to Christians and Christianity can be seen from what happened at Brindaban very recently. If newspaper reports are true[1] a crowd of mild Hinduism quietly went and burned down the Mission buildings in Brindaban and warned the missionary that if he rebuilt it they would come and burn it down again?! This may be the solitary instance of misguided patriots or this may be just a piece of what the Hindus are planning to get rid of Christians and Christianity. If it is the shadow of events to come then Indian Christians must be prepared to meet them. How can they do that except by removing the weaknesses I have referred to? Let all Indian Christians ponder.

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[1]Indian witness.

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