

**OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICY  
IN INDIA. A VITAL QUESTION  
FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND  
THE CHURCH**

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Our educational policy in India. A vital question for the government and the Church by James Johnston

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# OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN INDIA.

## A Vital Question

FOR

## THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHURCH.

BY

REV. JAMES JOHNSTON,

SENIOR MINISTER OF ST. JAMES'S FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW.

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"The main object of the despatch" of 1854, containing the valuable Code of Education for India, "is to divert the efforts of the Government from the education of the higher classes, upon whom they had up to that date been too exclusively directed, and to turn them to the wider diffusion of education among all classes of the people, and especially to the provision of primary instruction for the masses."—*Parliamentary Blue Book*, 1870.

"And now, after a lapse of twenty years, the emergent unavoidable question is, Why are there not plain indications of its speedy accomplishment? Is it not owing to the lack of faithfulness to its principles in the Education Department, tolerated and connived at by the Bengal Government."—*Allahabad Mission Conference*, 1873.

"It is the moral and not the military question which stands first in the order of ideas, with reference to the power of England in India, as much as with reference to the power in England itself, of the State over the people."—*A British Statesman*.

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1879.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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WE have arrived at a crisis in the history of education in India.

It demands the earnest attention of every Christian and patriot, and it will require combined and continued effort to accomplish the end desired by the wise and benevolent men who drew up the Despatch of 1854, and by those distinguished missionaries, with Dr. Duff at their head, who established schools and colleges for Christian education.

The spread of information, such as I have endeavoured, at the request of friends, to present in a plain and trustworthy form, must be our first work.

I shall be glad to hear from any who are willing to assist in this important undertaking.

J. J.

SUNNYLAW, BRIDGE-OF-ALLAN,  
15th May, 1879.

## OUR EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN INDIA.

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I PROPOSE to treat briefly of the educational methods by which the Government of our country has sought, to bestow the benefits of a higher civilisation, and the Church of Christ, to confer the still higher blessings of Christianity on our empire in India, to show what the results of those methods have been, and to call attention to certain changes, in the present modes of procedure, which seem essential to the attainment of the important ends desired by the Church and the Government.

Object in writing.

The subject is both important and urgent. It bears directly on the highest wellbeing of two hundred millions of our fellow-subjects, it involves the stability of our empire in India, it affects the higher interest of the kingdom of God.

### A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH.

There are three periods of our history in India which may be characterised by their appropriate symbols—the ell-wand, the sword, and the sceptre. The first, or mercantile, which still continues an important feature, had an imperial style and stamp upon it from the first, and the military character of our rule, which has existed side by side with the earliest adventures of commerce, is still painfully prominent in the third period of settled government; still, as we shall show, there is a marked predominance of the three characteristics, trade, conquest, and legislation, at the periods referred to.

Three periods.

### FIRST PERIOD.—TRADE.

For about a hundred years trade was the special, we may say the exclusive, object of the East India Company.\* By

East India Company.

\* Appendix A.

the habits of its members, as well as the nature of its constitution, it could not be otherwise. It is expressly laid down in the original charter, that the Company was to consist of merchants only. In the language of the period, "no gentlemen were to be members of the Company," and so tenacious were the "Governor and Company" of this feature of their charter, that when the Court party wished to give the command of the first fleet of merchantmen to Sir Edward Michelborne, they refused his services on the ground of his being a gentleman, saying they "would sort their business with men of their own quality." Until the end of the seventeenth century gain was the great pursuit. It is not pleasant to look back upon the means employed for the attainment of their sordid ends, and it is not my intention to form an estimate of the character of the men, or the morality of their commercial transactions. The extension of trade, protection of their monopoly, and large profits were the ends they never lost sight of, and which they pursued with a courage, sagacity, and perseverance worthy of the highest aims of moral agents—the pursuit of virtue, the good of men.

#### SECOND PERIOD.—CONQUEST.

The Company  
afflicted with  
earth-hunger.

It was not until the year 1689 that the East India Company entered on a new line of policy. In that year we find them openly aspiring to independent authority in the East. In the language of Mr. Mill, "It was then laid down as a determined object of policy that independence was to be established in India, and dominion acquired." At that date they wrote to their agents: "The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care as much as our trade." They resolved to be "a nation in India," and held up to their servants the example of the Dutch, who, they say, in sending advices to their governors, "wrote ten paragraphs regarding tribute for one relative to trade."

Trade tribute.

This tribute they evidently looked on not as a revenue for the maintenance of a government ruling for the benefit of the people, but as a new and fruitful source of profit to the Company. Conquest was sought, not from motives of ambition, that "infirmity of noble minds;" but from the



lower and more degrading infirmity—the love of money. It is true that ambitious men often got the power into their own hands, and aimed at conquest more for its own sake than for the material advantages to be gained; and what seemed incidental circumstances often led to wars which were far from profitable to the Company. A mysterious hand seemed to lead them on from one war of defence or aggression to another, until by the end of another century the trading Company had become masters of an empire more populous than that of Alexander or the Cæsars. Up to this time we can trace no well-defined, far less systematic, plans for the benefit of India. Great generals, able governors, good men did appear and strove hard to introduce beneficent plans for the government of the country or the benefit of portions of it over which they had control; but the system was adverse to any great or beneficent measures, a selfish policy of gain and aggrandisement was the order of the day.

A higher Power leading.

### THIRD PERIOD.—LEGISLATION.

It was not until about the beginning of the present century that we find a clear and decisive change in the policy of the Company; and that originated not from within, but from without. It was in the British Parliament that the change was effected.

The charter of the Company had to be renewed every twenty years, and new powers were claimed by Parliament as the possessions of this imperial trading corporation increased; a sense of responsibility began to manifest itself in the Legislature when the subject was discussed in 1793. It was not, however, until the renewal of the charter in 1813 that the conscience of the country was really aroused to a sense of the solemn obligations which our great power and vast territories in India imposed.

Responsibility realised.

It was to a small body of men that we owe the beginning of a new era in our relations with India—a compact phalanx of true patriots, whose greatness arose from the soundness of their moral principles and the purity of their motives, and whose power sprang from the strength of their convictions. The same noble band of men who achieved

The "Clapham Set."

the emancipation of the slaves in the West Indies, were the means of introducing into East India sound principles of government and the blessings of education and religion.

The contest was keen, but what the wisdom and experience of Grant and the eloquence of Wilberforce failed to obtain in 1793 was secured in 1813. The movement in the direction of a higher moral tone in the government of India, and a desire to improve the condition of the people, to liberate them from many of their own barbarous and immoral customs, and to free the government from sinful complicity in the idolatrous practices of the heathen, were greatly aided by the writings of Claudius Buchanan, the son of a Scotch schoolmaster, under the patronage of distinguished Indian statesmen such as Lord Wellesley and Lord Minto. Buchanan was sent out by Mr. Henry Thornton, one of the leaders of the "Clapham men," as a chaplain to the Company.

Charter of  
1813.

From the year 1781 the Legislature had been asserting its right to a voice in the government of India, at first through one of the responsible advisers of the Crown, and a few years after by a "Board of Control," and in 1793 several members of the Privy Council were placed upon the "Board" with large powers in all matters of imperial policy.

In 1813 the monopoly of the trade with India was abolished, and that with China followed in 1823. In fact, "the Company" as a body of traders practically ceased to exist. Instead of each of its members and servants, as at first, being of the trading class, none of the employees of the Government are now allowed to engage in trade on their own account, and as one consequence of this change of policy, the character of the service has from that time gone on in the march of improvement, and for many years the public servants of the Crown in India have been as distinguished for honour, justice, and benevolence as they had always been for talent, energy, and courage.

Our responsi-  
bility national  
and personal.

It is not, however, my intention to describe the nature of the new charter or the effects of its operation. I refer to the change for two reasons.

First, to call attention to the fact, that *the nation* has been from that time responsible for the government of

India, and, that we are individually responsible for the action of our Government in the East, as well as at home,—that we cannot escape from our obligation for national sins and duties towards our fellow-subjects in India.

We are all the more under moral obligations to our fellow-subjects in India from the fact, that they have no representative voice in the choice of their rulers. They are still, and for many a day must continue to be, governed as a conquered race. Our government is *paternal in form*, we are the more bound to see that it is *paternal in character*. The position of our country as a Christian nation, with the destiny of two hundred millions of an alien race in our hands, is the most solemn ever assigned by an overruling Providence to any nation upon earth. This sense of responsibility is intensified by the consideration, that these millions of our fellow-subjects are nearly all Muhammadan or heathen.

My second reason, for calling attention to the change in the relation of the Legislature to the people of India, is to arrest attention on this other fact, that the most important and beneficent measures for the amelioration and improvement of the condition of the native of India have been carried out by the *Home Government*.

Great and good men in India have originated and planned most valuable measures, but under the old *régime* they were comparatively powerless to carry them into effect. The interests of trade and profits stood in the way, and blinded the eyes of the Directors to any change merely for the benefit of the native. But since the establishment of the "Board of Control" in 1793, and by more recent measures, Parliament have taken the reins into their own hands, there is a desire to rule for the higher and unselfish ends of government. The heart and conscience of the nation have, to a large extent, been reached, and do now sincerely seek the good of India. If the attention of the Government and the sympathy of Parliament can be fixed on any real grievance, there is a fair prospect of its removal; and, convince our rulers at home of any obvious benefit to be sought by legislation, and if practicable, there is hope that it will be conferred. Under the old rule in India a deaf ear was turned to any change

Government  
paternal in  
form.

Should be  
paternal in  
fact.

Reform must  
come from Par-  
liament.