

The British Commonwealth: What It Means To Me

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The British Commonwealth is an unparalleled phenomenon in the eternal political trial and error that has characterised the chequered human history: empires have made their debut, developed, decayed and died; but, in the British Commonwealth, we see an empire blossoming out into a Family of nations, some nascent while others full-fledged, yet all enjoying rights and privileges appropriate to their political growth.

Like a good citizen who strives to ameliorate the condition of his neighbours, the British embarked on a campaign of disseminating civilisation and bringing all the amenities of life they enjoyed within the reach of backward people who grovelled in primordial conditions of life. This urge of theirs to make the world better than they found it led to the founding of the British Empire.

Wherever the British rule or have ruled, their conduct of affairs has been based upon paternal anxiety for the welfare and advancement of the people under their benign rule: consequently most countries have grown to their full political stature, while the few pink remnants are happy with the existing state of affairs or are on their way to attaining political majority; yet all owe allegiance, like dutiful children, to the Queen, who symbolises the commonwealth. There are a few cases in which countries have broken away like wilful and passionate children: but, after spending time in the wilderness, due to the good wishes of the Mother, they have come back to the fold.

From what the British Commonwealth stands for now, we see that it is not merely a political and economic structure; but it is a Brotherhood of nations working together in the best spirit of fellowship generated by British conception of justice, freedom and paternal government.

The tie that binds together the countries of the Commonwealth transcends political and economic bonds: the tie lies in a state of mind, a state in which when one member gains all gain and one member suffers, all must share the suffering.

The British Commonwealth, which has produced unity out of the diversity of divergent colours, creeds and cultures while observing their full-blooded diversity, is the only hope for the world threatened by the rising tide of religious extremism. May the British Commonwealth live long to continue to be the bulwark of the freedom-loving peoples of the world.