

# INDUSTRIAL MISSIONARY WORK IN INDIA

[Questions of industrial work and training appear to be of so great importance and interest at the present time that special attention will be given to them in the Review. Since useful discussion must proceed on the basis of existing practice and actual experience, representatives of leading industrial missionary enterprises in India have been asked to give an account of the guiding principles, methods, and results of the work with which they are connected. The papers which follow are a continuation of a series begun in the January number of the Review.—EDITOR.]

## III. THE S.P.G. SCHOOL AT NAZARETH

IN a country like India, governed as it is by strict caste rules which rigidly define for its inhabitants the possibilities of work and of earning a living, the position of converts to Christianity is often a very difficult one. The mere fact of becoming a convert will usually cause a man to be treated as an outcaste by his fellows and neighbours. Unless a convert is in a neighbourhood, such as most parts of Tinnevely, where Christianity has already obtained a strong footing, he may well find his livelihood gone. The blacksmith or carpenter finds no one to employ him, the shepherd loses the employers who entrusted him with the care of their sheep and cattle and is lucky if he does not one day wake up to find his own few sheep and cattle stolen or killed. Perhaps a false charge of theft may be brought against him, as happened to a poor shepherd convert whom I had the privilege to baptize. Even the despised Panchamas, the Pullar (agricultural labourer), Pariah (day-labourer, etc.), or Barber, find their work taken from them by their Hindu employers, while the unfortunate Maravar (a caste of expert thieves, burglars, and highway robbers) or Pandaram (temple decorators) lose by their

conversion their very occupation and means of livelihood. Then there are the destitute orphans of Christian parents, who have either to be taken over by the missionary or left to wander about as beggars and become hardened in sin and wickedness. Again the missionary must needs take an interest in the poorer members of his flock, who are earning only a few rupees per month, hardly sufficient to keep body and soul together.

In order to meet these various and recurring difficulties, industrial schools have been founded by the different missions for the purpose of aiding the converts as much as possible without pauperizing them, and impressing on them the importance and dignity of labour. These industrial schools teach many different and more or less useful trades, e.g. carpentry, blacksmithery, weaving, printing, and book-binding for boys, and lace-making or embroidered needlework for girls. Lately several missions have had their thoughts turned towards agricultural schools, which the Government are prepared to encourage as they would be of very great use in this land of peasant proprietors. I have gone into the details of expenditure required to start and run such a school. If well-water near the surface is available it could be started for from £200 to £400 exclusive of the cost of land, but including well-sinking, oil-engine and pumps, water-channels, seeds, and fencing. The Government Educational Department, however, require that at least thirty acres be put under cultivation before they are prepared to give grants towards such schools. In this neighbourhood thirty acres would cost about £600 to £900, and this is rather prohibitive as a first cost. Yet if a smaller school of twelve or fifteen acres could be started as an experiment my investigations serve to show that it would be self-supporting. It would certainly be of inestimable benefit to the Christian community as a whole, and to the poorer Christians in particular, while it would offer better opportunities than perhaps any other industry to converts amongst the Maravars, Panchamas, Pullars and Pariahs, for whom there is often difficulty in finding suitable work.

Though my knowledge of the possibilities of agricultural schools is mainly theoretical, I can speak with some experience of other forms of technical education, since I have under my charge here the largest technical school in South India, excluding the government reformatories. The school was begun as an adjunct to the orphanages for boys and girls, eighty in number, who had been gathered in by the late Rev. Canon Margoschis after the great famine of 1877.

At first only carpentry and tailoring were taught to the boys and lace-making to the girls. Soon other trades were added, and now, besides the above, we teach weaving, blacksmithery and fitter's work, cabinet-making and rattan work. In addition to these trades, we have a class for drawing, some of the students of which go out as drawing masters and some as draughtsmen. There is also a small class for typewriting and commercial book-keeping. The students of the drawing and commercial classes are much better educated than the boys of the Industrial School proper, as they have at least a fair working knowledge of English, and a good general education. Many of the boys who come into the Industrial School are quite uneducated, and are often unable to read and write. These receive a sufficient knowledge of the three 'R's' during the course of their industrial education, being taught up to the fourth standard of the elementary grade. In technical subjects they are supposed to be taught as far as the government technical teachers' intermediate grade. I say 'supposed to be taught' advisedly, since, as a matter of fact, very few of the boys ever reach that grade. Many of them content themselves with learning up to the government elementary technical examination of their particular trade only, as they can easily get posts at Rs.15 or Rs.20 a month in some factory or tea-estate when they have attained that standard. The majority remain until they pass the government technical intermediate examination together with the elementary teacher's certificate. Usually only a few boys who are taken on as teachers in the school remain to the highest standard. There is no difficulty in finding work for them; indeed, they usually find work for themselves, while applications are frequently made to us for boys to fill vacant posts as workmen in factories or tea-estates, or as teachers in schools. The boys do not always remain in the Presidency. Some are now working in northern India, while others have gone to Ceylon, Burmah, and Penang, even to Borneo and Natal. The training they get with us seems to make them more independent than is usual among boys of their class, and more ready to go abroad when opportunity offers, and some have obtained really responsible posts with high wages such as the managership of a factory.

The girls too sometimes go abroad as teachers, but though they learn up to the same standard in their particular trade as the boys, they usually marry then, and they rarely pursue lace-making as a means of making a living. However, in some parts the missionaries

have made a regular business of the industry and carry it on independently or in continuation of the lace-school proper. Apart from the poor pay that can be earned, it is undoubtedly an objection to lace-making as the only industry for girls, that it depends almost entirely on missionary, and more or less eleemosynary effort to get any sale at all ; it is an industry with an exclusively foreign demand, that is, a demand from abroad or among English ladies in India. Yet in nearly all missions, if not in all which seek to provide an industry for girls, only pillow-lace, drawn-thread work, or Irish lace seems to be considered practicable. Such industries as weaving, especially the making of fine *saris* (i.e. the upper cloth which Indian women wear), ornamental ribbon making, Indian embroidery, fine mats and basket-making rarely seem to be taken up except on a small scale. Yet there is a great indigenous demand for work of this kind, and it might be well for some mission seeking for an industry suitable for girls to take up the manufacture of such goods. An opening would thus be given by which they could earn better wages, and get better chances of local sales than is offered by lace-making and European embroidery. Even though the girls marry early and do not pursue the industry they have been taught, it would surely be better for them and would add to their sense of independence to know that they have a trade which they can exercise apart from the mission, if the necessity should ever arise.

It is a great advantage to have several industries taught in the same school. Boys who are not fitted for one industry may be tried in another until the suitable one is found. Then again one industry supports and helps out the others. For instance in my own school the blacksmiths do all the brass and iron work required by the carpenters, and also make the coarser and rougher sorts of tools necessary for the various industries, the carpenters make the wooden parts required by the blacksmiths, the looms wanted for the weavers can be made in the school, the weavers make cloth for the boys' clothes, and the tailors do all the cutting-out, sewing and repairing. The boys who learn drawing prepare the designs required by the other departments, while the typists can help, to a limited extent at least, in the heavy correspondence necessitated by the work.

The cost of the school (including the pocket-money to the boys, which is not fixed, but which they earn for themselves according to the amount of work they turn out) is Rs. 6911 per annum. This includes the pay of teachers, but excludes the cost of board. The

annual gross income of each department is shown in the table appended.

|               |   |   |   |   |          |    |   |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|----------|----|---|
| Carpentry     | . | . | . | . | Rs. 1955 | 8  | 4 |
| Blacksmithery | . | . | . | . | 249      | 4  | 6 |
| Tailoring     | . | . | . | . | 293      | 3  | 6 |
| Weaving       | . | . | . | . | 2403     | 7  | 0 |
| Lace-making   | . | . | . | . | 99       | 10 | 6 |

Total . . . . . Rs. 5001 1 10

*(exclusive of the government grant).*

The total income from all sources is Rs. 9640. The heaviest charge (Rs. 5655) is for board, each pupil costing, on an average, about Rs. 50 per annum to clothe and feed. The charge is heavy because about eighty of the pupils are orphans, who have to be kept here all the year round, and amongst them are many small children who attend school only and do no work. Besides these, many boys and a few girls are received from all parts of the Presidency to be taught a trade. Some boys and girls from the neighbourhood also attend as day scholars. Every year, too, we receive a few older men, converts from Hinduism, whose conversion has deprived them of their means of livelihood. They are sent to us to learn a trade by which they may earn their living, whilst they are at the same time under definite Christian instruction. This is, by the way, an excellent means of testing their earnestness and the reality of their profession, since the ordeal of hard work and uncongenial discipline soon effectively proves whether they have come from a spiritual or a worldly motive. Yet it by no means follows that, because a man cannot stand the life here, he will, on leaving us, revert to Hinduism. His earnestness and zeal only are tested. Such boys and converts are sent to us from missions of all denominations, and in our numbers we include Roman Catholics, Anglicans (S.P.G. and C.M.S.), Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Methodists, while even Hindus and Mohammedans are taken. As a rule they do not remain Hindu or Mohammedan long, since the influence of the Christian boys soon wins them over. Indeed, the influence of these schools, like other mission schools, on the non-Christian students who attend them is a proof of their usefulness as an evangelistic agency. They arouse, moreover, the appreciation of thoughtful Hindus, who fully recognize the importance of the work and the helpful part it plays in aiding the poorer.

Christians to rise in the social scale. Yet when all is said and done, industrial missions are and must be auxiliaries to, rather than a direct agent in, evangelistic effort.

Such schools have an important share in another branch of missionary effort, viz., in missionary comity. Members of different Christian bodies can meet on common ground, and for mutual help and sympathy, in industrial efforts to improve the condition of the people. Methods of work and differences of belief may, to some extent, hinder men from drawing together on the ground of evangelistic effort, but these factors do not operate when we are trying to improve the social condition of our people. And it is undoubtedly of value to have a ground on which we can meet without fear of developing or emphasizing differences. It is true that in the mission field sectarian differences are seen to be matters of little moment before the vast host of heathen indifference or antagonism; here we feel far more than we can feel at home that the common foundation which Jesus Christ alone can lay is a strong and sure bond binding all Christians together as brothers. Even so there are radical differences which cannot easily be overpassed, yet in industrial schools we have agreement and not difference. So I gladly receive in my school boys from every denomination and keep up a friendly correspondence with fellow-missionaries of other bodies; I appeal to them for help when I need it or gladly give help which is sought from me.

Useful as they are in many respects, industrial schools have their limitations. If they are to be kept as schools they can hardly be self-supporting. One has to take boys who are too young to be able to earn sufficient to keep them, and when they are beginning to be really useful they leave and seek work elsewhere. Then the teachers, although they do a fair amount of work in the ordinary course, can hardly earn their wages, since they must necessarily spend most of their time supervising the work of the boys in their charge. Yet if the school here were considered as a day-institution only and all boarding charges left out of account, it would certainly more than pay its way.

Again, such schools really need a competent layman as principal. A clergyman has not, as a rule, the necessary technical knowledge, and even if he has, the care of such a school is apt to take up much time that might well be devoted to other and more spiritual work. With a practical business man in charge, and by employing many

workmen, the schools might be made almost if not quite self-supporting. But this has its own difficulties, since the business side of the work may tend to weaken the spiritual side and to assume too important a position in mission affairs. Even missionaries, diverse as are their duties, cannot serve two masters, both God and man. It is, therefore, very important to bear in mind that mission industrial schools should be schools and not factories under another name, which it is quite easy for them to become. Then again it is a temptation to let the students accustom themselves to the elaborate tools and expensive plants used in English factories. If this is permitted the result is that when they go out to work and have to depend upon their own resources they find themselves in difficulties, because they have not the tools to which they are accustomed.

Moreover some trades as, for example, lace-making, which afford a living wage in the West may not do so in the East, and then those who have learnt and desire to practise them are forced to depend upon the missions for their daily bread instead of upon their own resources. I do not by any means assert that these are the results of mission industrial schools, but they are tendencies that must be guarded against. The results of which I have had personal experience have been quite different, and the boys, at any rate, are taught to earn their own living and to depend upon themselves. Thus when they go out into the world they are quite competent, and more than able to hold their own in the struggle for a livelihood, a fact which is evidenced by the eager competition for the services of our boys. In our neighbourhood it is becoming increasingly difficult to get men for the more poorly paid kinds of work such as palmyra-tapping and other unskilled labour. This is due in part to the industrial education given in our school, as well as to emigration to neighbouring countries where labour is sought after. The result has been a great increase of wages all round.

To conclude, mission industrial schools have a very real influence in raising the conditions of the poorer Christians, while at the same time they help converts who would otherwise be unable to obtain a means of livelihood and would be helplessly dependent on the mission. They are thus a distinct aid both in pastoral and in evangelistic work. But they must remain schools, lest they harm the mission by developing a tendency to money-making instead of the soul-winning which, under Christ, is our real work.

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#### IV. THE AGRICULTURAL WORK OF THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT ALLAHABAD

THE Allahabad Christian College of the American Presbyterian Mission is just opening a department of agriculture. The College offers courses leading to B.A., B.Sc., and M.A. degrees as prescribed by the University of Allahabad. In addition, this College has for the last six years had departments of electrical and mechanical engineering in charge of three American engineers. The students who have taken the four years' course and received the college certificate (the University as yet grants no degrees in these subjects) have found positions more easily and at higher pay than the great majority of graduates. In an institution where such activities were in operation the department of agriculture was normally the next step, though work in agriculture in India is not by any means work along the line of least resistance.

Indian missions have been slow to embark upon scientific and modern agricultural education for several reasons.

A great deal of money is required for land, equipment, and salaries.

Many good Christian people fear that work of this kind not only fails to forward directly the extension of the kingdom of God, but rather obscures the main issue of the missionary purpose.

The right kind of man to teach agriculture and manage agricultural institutions is difficult to find. Scientific agriculture (and no other can long exist) calls for a man with a broad general education in addition to highly specialized knowledge and skill. Of course the man must be above everything else a missionary in spirit and in fact.

The farmers of India are wedded to custom, illiterate, and superstitious; many of the best informed and most sympathetic missionaries and government officials despair of making any impression upon the Indian cultivator.

The average amount of land of the tenant farmer of the United Provinces is less than three and a half acres; landowners hold about four and a half acres. The available capital is so small that it is difficult to adapt American and English agricultural practice and theory to the conditions. The average capital of a tenant farmer, which includes his plough and other farming implements, his household furniture, and his wearing apparel, is less than ten shillings; adding the value of his average pair of oxen, his total wealth is less



than five pounds. Lack of means and small acreage thus present an almost insurmountable barrier.

A majority of the students of India are interested in education because certificate and degree are the only passports to government service. At present there are no offers of such service for men with training in agriculture, therefore few students are independent enough to desire agricultural training.

In view of these great obstacles, why should Indian missions seek to provide education in methods of agriculture? The following reasons may be named.

Eighty per cent. of the three hundred and fifteen millions of India are dependent upon agriculture for a livelihood. India, owing partly to its climate, will never become an industrial and manufacturing country like England and Belgium. Education in agriculture would benefit not only a larger number of the people of India than any other kind of education, but it would aid those whose need is greatest.

Agricultural education necessitates less change of occupation than any other kind of education. In India, where occupations so largely follow caste decrees, this consideration is worth while. Almost every industry calling for skilled labour and following the factory system is hindered and retarded because sufficient men are not to be had; there is great disinclination on the part of the workers to change from their hereditary vocation, even though larger remuneration be offered.

The mass movements of low-caste people to Christianity have convinced most missionaries engaged in this work that some effort to improve the economic condition of people with such a long period of degradation and oppression behind them must be made. In some missions boys from among these low-caste converts have been given training in carpentry, iron-work, shoe-making or sewing. When these boys have come into competition with their non-Christian fellow-artisans the Christian has often been worsted and has fallen back into the ranks of casual labour, not because his work was not good, but because the force of caste was too strong. In agriculture there is room for all. These boys live on the land, so to train them in agriculture is not to take them away from their hereditary occupation. Further, there is always a market for the product of their work.

The average income of the ordinary Indian farmer per family of five persons is about eight shillings a month, that is at the rate of a

halfpenny a day per member. A self-supporting church is hard to imagine among such a poverty-stricken community. Therefore to improve the economic condition of these people brings measurably nearer that for which every missionary works and prays ; the church that pays its own bills and has a little over to provide for extension work.

As an evangelistic agency (and this is the great motive of the missionary, no matter what form his activity may take), it is easily possible that agricultural education may yield results as good as the usual literary training given in mission institutions. If missions are justified at all in entering the educational field, that education which reaches the largest number is worth while, and ought to be undertaken. Agricultural education would reach out to the villages where the people of India live. Every Christian on his little farm, with improved methods and improved stock, getting returns three or four times as great as the untrained farmer, would attract the attention of non-Christian neighbours. The simple folk of India are appealed to by the Old Testament standards, and success in farming would be associated with the religion of the one getting these good results.

Agricultural education would be one of the surest safeguards against the famines that come with such frequency upon one part or another of India. The Indian farmer knows a good deal about his business, but he ploughs, sows, and reaps according to couplet and rhyme which sum up the experience of centuries, and, as far as they go, are excellent guides. But in the abnormal year, the famine year, he has to sit down in helpless inactivity and watch his cattle die and his children starve. He lacks adaptability.

In consideration of these facts, then, the Allahabad Christian College has gone into agricultural education. It has bought two hundred acres of land on the opposite side of the Jumna river from the present college site. The plans call for ten thousand pounds at least to be spent in building, equipping, and providing biological, chemical, and horticultural laboratories, cattle barns, a tool-house, implements, stock, hostels for students, bungalows and quarters for teachers and helpers. Of this sum four thousand pounds given by friends in America and England has already come to hand and is spent. The Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church, as such, makes no appropriations for the College. It does, however, give its influence and sympathy.

For the present the department is offering courses in (1) Horticulture, which will deal chiefly with fruit cultivation and garden produce. (2) Agronomy, which includes farm practice, field crops, soil physics, cultural methods, seed selection, drainage, irrigation, the use of tools and implements. (3) Animal Husbandry. (a) A small flock of sheep has been given by Government with an imported ram. The object is to try to improve the wool both in yield and quality. (b) Dairying and stock raising. (c) Poultry.

In charge of the horticulture is Mr. W. Bembower, B.Sc. in agriculture, who before coming to India had done work for the Ohio State agricultural extension department, also at the United States government experimental station in Florida, where semi-tropical fruits are grown. Mr. A. E. Slater (son of the late Mr. Slater, L.M.S., Madras), a graduate of Guelph, Canada, gave up a position on the staff there to come and take charge of the agronomy and agricultural chemistry. The writer of this paper is in charge of the animal husbandry. He was brought up on a dairy farm and has taken the degree in agriculture at Ohio State University, specializing in animal husbandry. Thus three qualified men are to have charge of the work in agriculture. Most of the introductory work will be done in the College proper, so that these men can devote their whole time to their own subjects.

Courses are being adapted to meet the needs of the graduate in science already familiar with chemistry and biology; the matriculate who is ready to take up science; the illiterate who must be taught by actual demonstration in the field, and who can get nothing from books, but must see and handle the various seeds and implements. Extension lectures are being arranged in villages near by for those afraid or unable to come to us.

As the College only opened in July 1912 there are as yet few actual experiences to relate, but students of each class are asking to be admitted. The men in charge are learning by actual experience how to adapt their knowledge to Indian conditions. The Indian tenant has no margin of resources so he can not afford to experiment or to take any risk. This fact is before the minds of the staff. Plain sailing or easy going is not to be expected; the task is great; the danger of failure is great; but the reward for success will be great also. It is in the belief that He who has begun a good work will continue it to the end that we go forward in our enterprise.

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