

THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND MISSIONS IN INDIA.

BY THE REV. L. B. WOLF, GUNTUR, INDIA.

Principal of Arthur G. Watt's Memorial College, Evangelical Lutheran Mission

There is entire agreement among those who are engaged in missionary endeavor in India, that the school has a place, and a well-recognized one, in the development of the Church and in the evangelization of the millions whose gods neither hear, nor see, nor know, but whose devotion to them fill all with wonder and surprise.

The school, as an evangelizing agency, was recognized in the beginning of Protestant missions in India, and for low and high castes it has ever been a successful method for the spread of the Gospel and the advancement of the kingdom of our blessed Saviour. The thousands of children in mission schools of all grades up to the college, and for both sexes, furnish proof, if proof were needed, to show the regard and estimate placed upon this agency by those to whom the work has been entrusted. The work done in them among the children of the little congregations of outcastes, who bear different names in different parts of the Indian empire, has greatly improved, as more improved methods are being employed. The schools were originally started in many parts of the empire in the various missions to improve the condition of the poor outcaste, who for centuries had been ground under the heel of his betters, and for whom the Gospel brought hope and the promise of emancipation. Christianity and enlightenment to the poor outcastes mean, and have ever meant, the promise of the life that now is, and of the life to come. The little school in the village is the visible symbol of a new life, and is big with hope for those who have come to see its real power.

But among the higher classes of the community the school has become a recognized agency among missionaries. With slightly different plans you will discover, wherever you go in the great empire and into whatever mission you enter, that, especially among the girls of the better classes, those who cling most tenaciously to their customs and Hindu usages, the mission school has become, under the wise management of lady missionaries, a most popular and helpful auxiliary in breaking down Hindu opposition and teaching Christian truth. These schools for girls, and I especially refer to those in the Madras presidency, are the most powerful agency at work in the Indian empire, and are doing more to root out old hoary customs and Hindu notions than any other single agency employed.

All agree that these schools have been most useful in missionary effort; and very few there are among informed missionary workers who would think it

wise to close them. Now and then it seems to some that the money spent on them should be spent on more direct evangelistic effort; but the school can be made, and if the opportunity is seized, it will become the most direct evangelistic agency, preaching the Gospel and sowing the seeds of the kingdom in the most receptive soil, at a time when character is being formed and habits moulded. There are whole districts in South India in which the only work at present done among certain classes of the Hindu community is that of Christian schools. The volume of work done in the elementary schools among the different classes can not be estimated, but it is certain that no factor is so helpful and will prepare India for the coming of the King.

But the Christian college has also a place in the preparation of India for the Christ. Elementary education under Christian influence, with Christian instructors and systematic Bible lessons, has both prepared the ground and laid the foundations for the Christian college as an evangelizing agency. Space will not permit us, or we would give the development of this branch of mission work since the days of Dr. Duff, as well as the soil in which it has taken root.

Times have changed, it is true, since Dr. Duff laid down the great fundamentals on which the Christian college rests; but the state of India has not yet come into that condition of preparedness that his purpose can not now be subserved in the work of the college. The last fifty years have marked wonderful changes in the nation, and in no way has this new condition been hastened so rapidly or so remarkably as through the schools and colleges, the universities and professional schools under government, mission, and Hindu control. The character of the influence is, of course, mixed; it would be unfair to say that only those high-schools and colleges under mission control have exerted an influence for Christian thought and life, for none should forget that he who digs away the shifting sand of Brahmanism does a splendid service for Christianity. The non-interfering policy in matters religious of the government colleges and high-schools did a service, and a noble one, for Christianity, even though it is regarded as negative and destructive.

In such conditions as India furnished no influence from the West can be ignored, and the policy of the government has given the opportunity, which Christian missions needed, for transforming a negative and destructive agency into a positive and effective medium, through which Christian truth and thought could be brought to bear upon the educated students of the land.

It must not be overlooked that the educational policy of the British government not only gave this opportunity to the missionary societies but the same advantage wrought also in favor of Hinduism and Roman Catholicism, should they avail themselves of