

World of Missions

Educational Work and the Indore Mission College.

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[It is but fair to the writer to say that we are compelled to condense his valuable paper, which was too lengthy for the space at our command.]

It is with the greatest hesitation that I take up the pen to write a few words on educational mission work generally, and the Indore Institute in particular, which the Canadian Presbyterian Church has established; yet I trust I can see the matter in its true perspective; and it may not after all be so presumptuous for me to express my conviction that the activities of educational work are making immense contributions towards the evangelization of India, and that, like all other forms of work, they are capable of accomplishing far more.

It may be observed at the outset that there is a close parallel between the position of the educationalist and the medical missionary; and the justification of the one is the justification of the other. The medical mission combines in its scope soul and body; the Christian college combines soul and mind. A writer has remarked that "A sound mind is surely as desirable a preparation for the Gospel, and as real a part of the Gospel blessing, as a sound body. Does it more promote the glory of God to banish disease than to banish ignorance?"

Moreover, the educationalist finds himself in a position to reach a class which the street preacher has difficulty in touching; we must guard against an exaggeration of this argument. It is not true that the educated people will not listen to preaching. In Bombay we find them ready to hand in large numbers, while we speak on the sea front near Church-gate Railway Station. But a closer contact between the missionary and the individual is the great desideratum, and in the constant intercourse in the college this personal element is introduced, and we must bear in mind that these men are determined to have education; the treasure of western learning, itself one of the noblest products of Christianity, are being poured into India, the young Indian sees that they are worth having, and every facility is put before him by the impartial, though perhaps from the Christian standpoint, unfaithful and ungrateful government to acquire all that the spirit of Christ has during the centuries unveiled of truth and knowledge, but without the Christ himself. An education such as this is a doubtful blessing, and it is not

improbable that the government will one day be awakened to see the real fruits of their much-lauded "neutrality."

In India it is worth while remembering that Christian education cuts at the very spirit of caste. The force of caste can hardly be realized by those who have not been in contact with the system; it is nothing short of marvelous to observe how completely it enchains the minds of even the educated and enlightened, and it seems plain that those who read and think must be led to do so from the Christian standpoint, before they can be expected in any way to set themselves in opposition to this dominating principle.

And this leads us to reflect that the educational missionary is reaching the brain of India. "Hindu society is an organism, and the educated men must not be looked upon merely as so many souls, but as the brain of the organism, possessing an enormous and disproportionate influence over the other members; it is evident then that missionary work, if intelligently conducted, must devote, even for the sake of the mass of the people, a considerable part of its energy to the propagation of the Gospel among the educated classes.

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The time seems to be past when it is necessary to answer objections to the educational form of missionary work. The position of the Christian college is a recognized one, now, and there is scarcely a large society which does not include it in its methods, the C. M. S. at Agra and Masulipatam, the Free Church at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras, the Established Church of Scotland at Calcutta, the L. M. S. at Calcutta, and Belary, the American Presbyterian at Lahore, the Methodist Episcopal at Lucknow, and others are exhibiting a consensus of opinion as to the value of Christian education in promoting the common object of their work.

You may say that the college produces no results. The reply is that the silent results are infinite and immeasurable. This fact has already been touched on above, but if the fewness of actual converts be urged as an objection, it must always be remembered that Hinduism (and indeed Parseeism and Mohammedanism to a great extent) is not so much a religion as a great social system. Within this system vast numbers outwardly remain, while they to a great extent adopt Christian conceptions of God and religion; the compliances of idolatry are reduced to a minimum and explained away. It is true that these

men are compromising with sin, and making no outward confession of faith; they are not yet baptized, and reckoned as converts. Much as we may wish to see and pray for thorough conversion and open confession of Christ among the students, it may well be that the moral and spiritual influence exerted on those who remain unbaptized is as genuine Christian work as the work of baptizing men whose moral and spiritual preparation has to be begun after baptism. "There is an intensive view of Christian work as well as an extensive; there is a real preparation for the Gospel which is more valuable than an unreal profession of it. The history of the 'conversion' of our European nations and of the baptized savagery of the Middle Ages, might teach of thankfulness that we have in India a great class of educated men to whom we may give, be the cost what it may, a firm hold of the morality and spirituality of the Gospel."

But it is not true that there are no visible results. Many of the strongest and most valuable converts are the direct result of educational work. George Bowen used to say that the majority of all the converts in Western India were the fruits of education; and at the same time the number of secret believers is probably considerable. Rev. J. C. R. Ewing of the Forman Christian College, Lahore, records how a student in the B. A. class in the college, believing himself to be seriously ill, made in his presence and in the presence of a number of his fellow-students, the declaration that for more than a year he had been fully convinced of the truth of the Gospel, acknowledged his personal sinfulness, and his entire acceptance of Jesus as his personal Saviour. Within my own short experience, I can recall many students in mission colleges on whose minds and hearts, by their own confession, the Gospel has left an indelible imprint.

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Last October I paid a brief visit to Nagpur and Indore for the purpose of conducting a special series of evangelistic services among the educated young men in these places. In each case I was much impressed by the position which the Mission Colleges occupied; they seemed like foundation stones of truth which nothing could shake. I will confine myself to a word about Indore. It seemed a little short of a miracle that the College should be there at all and as much a miracle that there should be any students in it, raised after a tremendous fight not only with the dissolute and hostile Hindu prince who rules the native State, but even in face of opposition from the British Agent Governor-General, it represents much persevering effort and a grand succession of answer to prayer. The building is admirably situated in British territory, just outside the boundary of the native State; it has a striking appearance and is designed with every attention to usefulness and dura-