

The India Alliance

“ For • we are
labourers together
with God”

1 Cor 3: 9



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ORDINATION OF ASHIRVADBHAI

“I would like to become a preacher.” This was young Ashirwad’s reply to Rev. H. V. Andrew’s query concerning his future life ministry, upon having completed the seven standards of our vernacular Boys’ Boarding School at Dholka. “Even before I was saved I always had the desire to become a preacher some day,” he says. “But after that memorable night in August, 1906, at one of the services of Rev. M. B. Fuller’s revival meetings at Kaira, when I experienced salvation, this conviction became stronger than ever. My desire was to attend Bible School and then go right out into the ministry, but there being a pressing need for Christian instructors in our Boys’ Boarding School at Dholka at the time, Rev. F. H. Back, who was in charge, asked that I teach in the school. The Bible classes were, however, so arranged that I was enabled also to attend many of the classes after school hours. In this way during my eight years of teaching in the school I also managed to complete the four year course for

evangelists along with the other prospective evangelists of the class. Having a keen desire for further study, I then went to Ahmedabad where I took a two year course in the Teacher Training College for young men.

“ Upon returning to Dholka and presenting myself for service to the Mission, I was appointed to the task of visiting all the many schools in progress in our out-stations and other villages of our Gujarat districts, examining the schools, giving advice and instruction to the teachers and having night meetings in the schools and also street meetings in these villages. This work was cut short after a few years due to severe famine in the country which made it necessary to drop many of our schools. I, along with some of the teachers of these schools, was then assigned work as an evangelist.

“ This work I began at Viramgam in 1917. After only nine months in that place God allowed a great sorrow to come into my life through the death of my wife. I felt crushed and much discouraged under this sorrow ; so, leaving Viramgam where we had all suffered much through ill health, I took my two little girls and the dead body of my dear wife and returned to Dholka. About that time Mr. Tamil David, an Indian evangelist, was called as speaker to our Annual Regional Convention at Mehmedabad, in March of 1919. At these meetings I met God afresh, dedicating my life fully to Him and He poured upon me His blessed Holy Spirit. He graciously took away all my sorrow and filled me with a joy in Him and His service which has not left me from that day to this.”

Such is the testimony of God's leadings in the past years of our brother, Ashirvadbhai Lalji. On Sunday, October 4th, it was our privilege to attend the service at the Mehmedabad church in which he was ordained to the ministry and also installed as pastor of the two congregations of Mehmedabad and Hebron, a near-by Christian village. Our Mission chairman, Rev. K. D. Garrison, was

with us for the occasion, also most of our Gujarati missionaries and Indian representatives from practically all of our Gujarati churches. After being questioned by the chairman concerning his willingness to abide by and preach the full Gospel message and to fulfil his duties faithfully as pastor of his two flocks, the joint committee of the two churches was likewise questioned as to their willingness to fulfil their duties toward their pastor. All the ordained missionary and Indian brethren then came forward and laid hands upon Ashirvadbhai while Rev. J. Ringenberg offered the ordination prayer. Rev. S. Kerr from Sanand district gave our brother his charge in pastoral ministry, showing the grandeur and honour of his position and his solemn responsibility as a minister of the glorious, saving Gospel of Christ. Following this stirring message Mr. Garrison addressed the two churches, showing from God's Word their obligations toward their pastor. Rev. Wm. Lewellen from Dholka offered the benedictory prayer upon the newly installed pastor and those under his charge. There was a precious spirit manifest throughout the service and our brother Ashirvadbhai reports special encouragement and blessing and a renewed desire to live a life more and more separated unto Christ and His service.

These two congregations, with a united membership of fifty-seven adults, have together pledged themselves to undertake the full financial support of their pastor. At present there are seven candidates for baptism, three of whom are to be baptized in the near future. We would invite the prayers of God's people for the abundant blessing of God to rest upon this pastor and his ministry that these two congregations may grow in grace and the knowledge of God and disseminate light in the darkness of an idolatrous surrounding community.

EDNA RINGENBERG.

VILLAGE PREACHING

Three Missionaries, two catechists and a young Christian man (the latter to help dig the motor out of the ruts in the jungle roads and help roll the heavy stones out of the way) set out from camp to a distant town. On arriving two sets sped off: one to the men, and the other to the women of the town. Ah, those women! surely God has worked in India's women. How they listened even though there was an outer fringe of men in the crowd. Interruptions there were, for the small children did not understand why *they* needed to sit still, and their mothers did want to hear.

Some had remembered part of the story since last year in a vague sort of way. The forenoon was spent before the village had all had a chance to hear; and the preachers sat down under some trees at a distance, a fire of sticks was made, the kettle boiled, and soon a cup of tea and a bit of bread were being enjoyed.

And there was that patel (headman) who had followed us to hear more.

"You talk to him," says one of the Missionaries.

"You do it, I'm tired" was the reply.

Soon a crowd of school boys came. Sometimes such a company is to be feared, but not this time. Wish you could have seen them as at the finish they formed a line and marched to the singing of a Marathi hymn ending up by receiving each a card with coloured picture of some Bible story.

Notice that biggest boy in front. He has a New Testament clasped to his breast. It was given to him because of his eager interest, and that especially when prayer was being offered, not satisfied with the general petitions for blessing on the village people and on the boys, he quietly put his own name in before the Lord,

evidently as eager as ever a soul prayed, taking the sinner's place, and pleading the merits of his Substitute.

Homeward sped the chevrolet with the six occupants.

Will you not pray, dear reader? Pray for the hundreds of villages out in the jungle. Pray for India's own Christians that on them the "Woe is me" may come, as it comes on those who really desire it. And continue to pray for us missionaries that that "Woe" may not grow less, even if in these last days the opposition of the enemy of the Lord would fain put a stop to His Work in India.

M. RAMSEY.

IN "THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP"

While camped in Phugaon where we held a two days' 'sabha' we invited our Free Methodist neighbours down, and after a meeting with the new Christians of three villages we handed over to these friends a whole family that our dear Junglu had won for his Master. We all felt it very much, but our loss was their gain.

Much time was spent in that part of our district, and we visited some towns three times instead of the usual once, on each occasion being well received, and that by the farmers or caste people. Both men and women left their work and listened with deep interest to the Message of Salvation by Grace. Many Scriptures were distributed. Some who had received a Bible or New Testament last year begged for another this year saying that their friends from such and such a village came and read it and then took it off. We found the people most interested where the Word of God was left last year. Will you pray for our farmers or caste people, both men and women? Many are partly convinced and tell us that they say the Name of Jesus and put Him among their gods. Pray that the Word will wholly convince them that they must take Him

and Him alone to be their Saviour! "No other gods before Me."

The women were more open to the Gospel than I have ever seen them, and Mrs. Fletcher was a great help in gathering together groups of women to hear both from her lips and mine the Way of Life.

We had the Lord's Supper in this camp with our little band of saved ones and about one hundred caste men and others sat for two hours to watch and listen. They saw it all, and saw that we do not pour pig's fat down our converts' throats to break their caste, as the devil, by the mouth of the high caste people, has spread abroad.

Moving Day has come, and all are hard at work packing and pulling down tents, preparing to move on to our last camping place for the season!

"Why do you camp in the Devil's Workshop?" asked the Patil, or head man of the village. "I will give you a better spot near my garden," said he. "It's too late now, and the spot we have in the Devil's Workshop, as you call it, is good and shady, so here we will stay." It is true that after three days we found that the well nearby from which we got our water was visited by a number of young men who took their bath in it. On this account we had to obtain our drinking water elsewhere. It was also true that hundreds of great Indian vultures had been busy eating a dead horse and left the bones close to our camp. Also, we had a hard time in what the Patil called the Devil's Workshop, because before long almost everybody in our camp including myself and wife took 'the Flu' or its first cousin, and though we were not confined to bed but kept on visiting the villages and preaching the grand old Gospel, still it seemed uphill work in our last camp. Our preacher lost his fine buffalo which supplied us all with milk, i. e., she died, and our people began to think we had indeed come into "the Devil's Workshop."

I am sure that every village, and not only this camping ground, is the place of dried bones and death—not dead horses' or buffaloes' bones, but men who are dead in sin and dried up—whose bones have been picked by the vultures of caste and a system of 33,000,000 gods or demons. We did feel the power of the enemy there and everywhere, and so did the company of men and women who visited us day after day.

We announced suddenly one morning that we were leaving for home, and tents had been pulled down when some forty caste women came and said, "Are you leaving us? Do tell us once more of your Jesus? Some of us take His name." One woman asked for prayer. I prayed for them as they stood about our car and they requested us to return. It was really a pathetic parting. One felt he was leaving a band of friends and not heathen women. It was worth staying in "the Devil's Workshop" to have seen the way those hearts responded to our message and the poor idol-ridden and demon-possessed souls seemed to cling to us as though they realized that we had something to impart to them. One cried and said, "Oh I have just come. Do tell me too!"

Have you seen the lost heathen, Brothers and Sisters? Have you had them crowd about you and heard them say, "Tell us His Name that we may call upon Him?" Lost! Lost! Dried and dead, and like the bones near our camp! They cry for Jesus; they cry for His Word. "The Bible," they say, "Give us the Bible!"

Our car rolled away and we were gone—yes, gone, and there they stand in "the Devil's Workshop," in their lost state. How my heart did go out to them that day. Touring is past for another year and these souls are left to wait till we come again, maybe in twelve months.

W. & M. FLETCHER.

BIBLE SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

October 22nd was a "Red Letter Day" long to be remembered in Nargaon, E. Khandesh. Plans for it had been made long in advance. Festoons of colored paper, prepared by skillful and willing hands, were artistically draped in and around the main class rooms of the Bible Training School, while green branches and flowers adorned the verandah and a broad banner with a golden lettered "Welcome" overhung the gate to greet the guests of the day. From seven in the morning till three in the afternoon a good number of missionaries and Indian young men arrived by train from neighbouring stations and had you asked any of them the reason for their coming and for the general air of festivity you would have learned at once that this was "Diploma Day" at the Bible School.

At noon all guests fortunate enough to arrive in time participated in a grand general dinner furnished by the students of the school. The question of chairs and table space for such a crowd never arose as everyone sat on the floor of the spacious school verandah, and the matter of dishes and cutlery never affects us here. At such times everyone eats off large leaves pinned together with sticks and uses his fingers to "feed his face."

After a little camera clicking, at 3-30 p. m. the commencement exercises proper began. After singing and prayer, the Principal, Rev. R. H. Smith, called on several members of the graduating class for brief demonstrations of knowledge acquired during the school course. Mr. Barnabas Kulkarni spoke of the singing and music classes and the school gave an exhibition of some of the Indian tunes learned. Mr. Rutton Chavan explained the technique of Sunday School work, which Mr. Daniel Donger immediately illustrated by telling a Bible story to the little children present in the auditorium in a most effective manner. Lastly, as representative of the Bible teaching received,

Mr. Mangal Mission gave a resume of the Book of Revelation, using in this an original chart of the book. Our Chairman, Rev. K. D. Garrison, then addressed the graduates from 2 Tim. 2:2, after which he presented to the nine finishing students their diplomas, thus bringing to them the climax and reward of three and a half years of faithful work.

The graduating class then surprised their Principal by presenting him with a home-made booklet entitled "Our Three and a Half Years' Acquaintance." Each student had written a page full of Bible School reminiscences and impressions, and pasted on it his photograph. This booklet they called "the Sahib's Diploma." A belt with a silver monogrammed buckle, and a beautiful artificial garland were presented to him as tokens of esteem by the class.

And so the great, glad day is over. Will you not pray for these young men who now start in earnest upon their life work in the Master's vineyard, and also that God will call many others to His service?

F. W. SCHELANDER.

NEWS AND NOTES

Missionary Arrivals.

October being the beginning of cooler weather is the time when missionaries usually return to India. As we go to press we are glad to welcome back to India Mr. and Mrs. Lapp, Misses Steed, King and Derr, and Mr. and Mrs. Helfers. Mr. and Mrs. Schlatter are also expected before the close of Conference.

Annual Conference.

Because of unusual rains in September and October it has been found necessary to postpone the Annual Conference for a week. There have been floods through the central part of India, and reports show that 2000 people have been rendered homeless in Akola District alone, with the usual

accompaniment of loss of life and the destruction of farm cattle.

The Conference will be held October 30th to November 8th, and will be the fortieth Alliance Conference in India.

Sickness.

The unusual rains have probably been one of the causes of an unusual amount of sickness. A number of the missionaries are suffering from Malarial fever. Several Indian evangelists have been through a siege of Typhoid, or other protracted illness. The Boys' school at Santa Barbara has had a very severe and protracted siege of various kinds of fever and Misses Beardslee and Ransom have had a very heavy burden to carry in nursing the boys back to health. We are thankful that only one life has been lost and we bespeak your prayers for the overburdened workers at the school.

A Girl's Gift.

Speaking of schools reminds us that the reports of the Government Inspector concerning the result of the recent examinations at the Kaira Boarding School have been satisfactory, Kaira standing highest in all schools in the district which are examined by Government Inspectors. The Inspector was so well pleased with the work of one of our girls who received highest marks that he gave her Rs. 10-0 as a special prize. This unexpected accretion of wealth—the equivalent of a poor man's salary for half a month—so pleased that girl that she kept only half for herself and gave the other half as a thank-offering to the Lord for help in her examinations.

Revival.

The monsoon Bible School conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Hartman in Anjangaon, of which the native church bears the expense, allowing 6 annas a day for food to each student selected by the church, has just closed with much blessing. The month of Bible study proved very profitable

to the simple village Christians and the closing days were marked by a wave of revival in which the Spirit of grace and supplication was poured out upon them all. Pray with us that such revival times may visit all of our stations.

Cast.

Recent utterances by representatives of the 'Depressed Classes'—formerly called outcastes—at the Round Table Conference in London are opening the eyes of the world to realize that caste has not relinquished its inhuman strangle hold upon the millions of unfortunates in this land. A recent case is reported in the newspapers from Jubbulpore in which the low caste people had dug their own well and had obtained a better water supply than that enjoyed by the high castes. This led to hard feelings because the outcastes are supposed not to enjoy any blessing, even as a result of their own labor. The high caste people, therefore, threw stones and dirt into the well until they had entirely choked it up.

Of course processes of law could be invoked but are both slow and expensive, and the outcastes are always poverty-stricken. Meanwhile they can get water from any road-side ditch that affords fluid thin enough to drink.

So long as such operations as these go on unabashed and unrebuked against those who are content to suffer the inhumanity and injustice meted out to them, one can imagine the persecutions that follow those who leave their religion and turn to Christ. Their conversion is regarded as an effort to escape their lot of suffering and contumely and the ill treatment is increased accordingly. It will still be a long time before the caste system relinquishes its hold on this land.

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