

The India Alliance

NEWS OF THE INDIA FIELD OF THE CHRISTIAN AND
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'First in Thy Grandmother' (II Tim. 1: 5)

By K. D. GARRISON, Akola

Whence does Hinduism derive its strength? It has no Church, nor defined creed, nor coherent doctrine, nor pulpit instruction, nor Sunday schools. It is without any administrative body, or final authority to pronounce decisions. Split up into castes, with eighty-five per cent of its people illiterate, and sixty million of its adherents debarred from human rights, or representation, or even admission to the temples. Why did it not fall to pieces years ago? In a gathering of Indian Christian evangelists this question was asked. One answer given was that Hinduism survives because of the influence of its grandmothers!

A western home normally consists of two generations: parents and children. The Hindu 'Joint Family' consists of three—parents, the sons with their wives and the grandchildren. Sons bring their wives into the home before they reach the 'teen age', and can still 'be taught'. Indian proverbs about mothers-in-law bear witness that the presiding genius of the home, the old grandmother, rules it, 'with a rod of iron',—or at least with a very sharp tongue. Her vigilance insures the punctilious observance of the requirements of religion, and of caste (which is religion in India). The old lady knows that she will soon be gone, and imagines that her sons' welfare depends upon the careful piety of their wives. For, is not a widow one whose husband has been taken from her to punish her defective piety, either in this life or in a former one?

In this scrupulous atmosphere the children spend their tender years, unconsciously absorbing its teachings, learning from example to worship Brahmins and cows, to be helpful to caste brothers, but to spurn all below them. Perhaps the boys will have their masculine ego indulged and flattered, but the girls will early be made to feel inferiority, learning from babyhood to curb their own desires and feelings, and will later become in turn the inflexible custodians of custom and religion, scrupulous observers of feasts and occasions; the rigid opposers of whatever is new or different. They will have learned from their grandmother what *she* learned from *hers*, of five generations ago.

So while politicians squabble over home rule and British rule, India quietly continues to be ruled by its grandmothers. This makes it 'The Unchanging East'.

Buddhism was a religious revolt against the caste system and other features of Brahminism. It was preached by preachers sent out by a great emperor. It flourished throughout India, and then silently disappeared from the land, reabsorbed by Hinduism. Later Islam came, converting with the sword. Hinduism received the sword in its bosom. India became a shambles. But today Hinduism outnumbered the Mohammedans, four to one. Christianity comes with a message of love and helpfulness. The outcastes are attracted, but orthodox Hinduism is impervious, and deals cruelly with those who withdraw from it. It cannot accept what its grandmothers reject.

The results have not all been bad, or Hinduism *would* have collapsed long since. Some worthwhile things have been fostered. The high standard of morality, and of self-sacrifice common among Indian women have had their source here. And Indian civilization has thus been kept intact. One only regrets that this conservative force has not been exerted for a worthier cause. It is much the same kind of influence that once

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Teaching Them

'Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.'—Matt. 28: 20.

From the words spoken by our Lord in commissioning His disciples to evangelize the world, it is obvious that the missionary's ministry is to be essentially a teaching one. For this reason we are this month emphasizing the ministry of teaching in the news we send you from our field. In place of the regular editorial we present the following report of the special Committee on Christian Education which was adopted by our Annual Conference in session in Akola, November 2-8, 1944:

Scripture Teaching Scheme of the C. & M.A. in India

'Preamble: Whereas secular education in India is becoming increasingly idolatrous and anti-Christian, the following educational scheme has been formulated for our Church in India:

I. Village Schools: The purpose of village schools, whether conducted by the Church or the Mission, is to give the children of our converts a rudimentary education of a thoroughly Christian nature so as to insure a Bible-reading and Bible-knowing generation in the future, and to shield our Christian children from the soul-destroying virus of enforced idolatrous practices.

II. Preparatory Schools: These are intended to go beyond the village schools in that they provide Government-recognized secular training and spiritually planned Bible training for our Christian children. The aim is to provide our children with an education

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necessary to a useful Christian life by affording them a thorough grounding in Christian principles in a thoroughly Christian environment, in contrast to the idolatrous Hindu and bitterly anti-Christian atmosphere prevalent in the secular schools of India today. **Note:** Until now the majority of Sunday school teachers in our churches are former students of our preparatory schools, and a considerable number of these former students have entered our Bible training schools to prepare for full-time Christian service. During the past year Indian Christians, in payment of fees, have contributed Rs. 11,024 toward the financial upkeep of these schools. (It may be added that further financial help is urgently needed.—Ed.) Our preparatory schools have made a definite, and by no means small, contribution to the upbuilding and establishing of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in India.

III. Bible Training Schools. These schools are intended to give a three-year intensive course in Scriptural subjects, and practical Christianity, so that men and women of God 'may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work.' We do not contemplate that all Bible school students shall enter professional preaching service, but that this training shall prepare them for teaching, lay leadership (in the case of women, spiritual home-making), and other service within and without the Church.

IV. Short Term Bible Schools: These schools aim to give short but intensive and thorough courses in the Word of God, and practical Christianity to Christian leaders in our village areas so that they may be prepared to establish the Christian altars of private, family and public worship amidst idolatrous surroundings, so that they may be prepared to give a bold witness of their faith in Christ Jesus to their non-Christian neighbours. **Note:** These schools will, at times, include classes in the Laubach system of Adult Literacy so that illiterates among our village Christians may be afforded the priceless privilege of reading the Bible, God's holy written Word.

V. Other Schools. The local churches will continue and increase their efforts in the teaching ministry of graded Sunday schools, stressing the importance of the Church, not only as a worship centre, but teaching centre for imparting Bible-based Christian truth for every grade of life from the cradle to the grave. Week-day Bible classes for young people, and youth leadership classes conducted by the local churches with the aid of pastors, Christian youth leaders and missionaries must more and more increase so as to permeate our Church in India with a knowledge of the Word of God and an experimental understanding of triumphant Christian living amidst the perils of a non-Christian land.'

Feed My Lambs

By MR. and MRS. AUGUST HELFERS
Mission School, Dholka

'Ere the evil days come nigh them,
Let the children come to Me,
And forbid them not,' said Jesus,
'For of such My Realm shall be.'

'Dahya is an orphan; he has no one to look after him since his parents died, and I want him to have the privilege they never had, not only of a decent education, but the more important one of receiving Christian instruction as well.' So spoke the Christian aunt when she brought Dahya, a raw heathen boy, whom she had just adopted, to us at the opening of school.

It is not easy for a boy of eleven or twelve years of age to begin with youngsters half his age in the infants' class, but he quickly settled down and began to take his studies seriously. Being of a quiet and reticent nature it was difficult to ascertain his reaction to spiritual matters. Hence, it was with feelings of joy and gratitude we listened as he stood up in the last session of our special revival meetings during Easter, and with tears trickling down his cheeks, praised God that he had come to Dholka where he had heard for the first time the story of our Lord Jesus Christ and His saving Love.

A few days later he said a cheery 'good-bye' as he went off with the other school children or the summer vacation. School reopened; many students returned and with them were several new ones, but we missed Dahya's bulky form and smiling face. Had he failed, like several others to get a seat on the overcrowded train that morning? Well, no doubt he would come on the next one, for he seemed very happy with us. But he did not; nor, on the next. Dahya, we learned, had been stricken with smallpox during the holidays and had gone on that journey for which no return ticket has ever been issued.

Incidents like the above cause us to pause and ask ourselves whether we are fulfilling to the utmost of our ability in Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit our Lord's last personal command that early morning on the seashore nearly two thousand years ago to Peter and down through the ages to every believer who professes to love Him: 'Feed My lambs!'

Moon-Play

By BERNICE E. STEED
Mission Girls' School, Khamgaon

It was New Year's Day of '42 when a doll-like little girl (belated Christmas gift!) arrived at our door with her mother. We marvelled that anything so charming and lovely could

come out of the mire of a heathen village. One look into the laughing eyes and our hearts were won.

The Gospel had entered the village home through the witness of a Christian relative and had found responsive hearts. Only three weeks after baptism, fever of three days' duration took the father into the presence of his newly found Lord. To save the widow from non-Christian brothers who were planning her remarriage with a Hindu, she and her child were sent to Khamgaon—the mother to learn to read in the Bible training school and the child to learn to read with the children in the preparatory school. It was evident that the mother was truly God's child and had taught her little girl well. The child, who had been named after a sacred pool in the city of Benares where men make vain attempts to wash away the stain of sin, she now calls 'Moon-play' which seems most suitable since the mother is teaching her, who is as playful as the moonbeams on the water, to look heavenward.

God gave the child a new Christian father who loves her as his own and is being used along with his wife to bring others to the Saviour. Moon-Play remained in her village home for a year but she did not forget the three months she had spent in Khamgaon School and begged her mother to send her back. As the family income was small the mother suggested she attend the village school but her reply was, 'I want to go to a Christian school'. In answer to the mother's and our prayers God raised up a friend who made it possible for her to come, and here she is, radiating gladness.

As the moon draws the tide, Moon-Play draws others after her. In a short time after her return to school, her village playmate, 'Beauty', came too, which seemed the more remarkable because she was from a Hindu home. What joy we saw in these two girls' faces some months later when news came of the happenings in the great Christian camp meeting held in close proximity to their village. Beauty's big brother had helped to make the camp meeting possible by contributing generously in grain from his fields and during the meeting he and others openly confessed Christ in baptism. Had not the prayers of the little girls had a part in this?

Last June two new girls came from the same village to study in our school. One of these, though only ten, had been married to a Hindu. He deserted her, however, when the family became Christian. The smaller girl of nine years has had four marriage arrangements made for her to the disgraceful financial profit of her father. They have opened up like beautiful flowers since coming here. How different might have been the course of their lives if the influence of Moon-Play and her home had not come their way, and now they

too have opportunity to grow and develop under the influence of Christians who love them.

We thank God for the privilege of a share in the training of these young lives who will touch many other lives whom we never could touch. They earnestly pray for their unsaved relatives while here and witness when they go home for holidays. We thank God too for the many friends in the Homeland who are sharing in this work by their prayers and their gifts.

They Must Read the Bible

By ALBERT C. EICHER
Mission Boys' School, Akola

Christian faith is never content that people live in ignorance. There *must be* the word of God as the firm foundation for Christian living. This *must be read* to be understood. Reading implies education.

Our Alliance Mission has never stressed an ultra-educational programme, but it does firmly believe in sufficient schooling to give our boys and girls a strong Biblical and spiritual stance, and a moderate chance for the improvement of their position economically. A self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating Church will never be built without an under-structure of economic stability, Christian self-respect and a thorough knowledge of God's Word.

For over forty years our India Alliance Mission has operated four educational institutions. They were originated as orphanages to care for the children brought in during the great famine of 1900. As the orphans grew up and out, the need changed; and the name of Boarding School was adopted. This has not been an entirely happy choice of names. A boarding school in America is ordinarily thought of as being a high-class, often toney, and usually expensive institution. At our last Mission Conference it was therefore decided to change their name to preparatory schools, rather than the misleading 'boarding schools'.

We try to keep living conditions in the school at such a level as not to wean village boys and girls from their simple living. Food is nourishing and of the most common type; housing is adequate but not elaborate. Our two chief aims are that the children shall learn discipline (which is almost entirely lacking in most Indian homes), and that they learn the Way of Salvation through the Word of God.

Village day schools of which we have some and need more, act as feeders passing on the most promising students to our preparatory schools where they will be further trained in Bible and regular schooling, after which it will be but a step to Bible Training School if the Lord calls them into His service.

Formerly all monies for operating the orphanages came from the Homelands. Now we charge parents fees for their children according to their ability to pay. Most pay a third, which is the minimum, some half and a few pay full costs. Last year only six boys were accepted free. Four out of the six came first in their classes. Together with fees and Government grant-in-aid towards teachers' salaries (our schools are Government recognized and inspected), we now get more than half the necessary funds for these schools here in India.

In our four Mission preparatory schools we have an enrolment of 325 boys and girls in their most pliable years. Many of our pastors and evangelists, a large majority of our teachers and most of our Church elders and deacons are products of our schools. They have been effective training centres in the building of a firm Christian Church.

'The entrance of thy Word giveth light. It is this passion for the Word of God that has brought India's Christians to be recognized as proportionately far more advanced in education than other religious communities in this land of illiteracy. It is education with the purpose—and our preparatory schools have had a great part in fulfilling it—that our Christian boys and girls must have their own Bibles and be able to read them for themselves.

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produced a Timothy through the 'unfeigned faith' in God communicated to him from his mother and grandmother. They even named him 'Timothy' (worshipper of God), and they taught him religion, for from a child he knew the Holy Scriptures. (II Tim. 3: 15.)

The Church in India greatly needs some Christian grandmothers. They are scarce for in the first generation of Christians, the grandmothers, if they are saved, are themselves 'babes in Christ'. Perhaps in another generation we shall have them. But meanwhile the best we can do is to select a few elderly widows of tried character and send them to the Women's Bible School hoping that they may become as Lois to the younger village Christians and wise guides to the younger women.