

TRUTH SPREADING IN INDIA - Reprint 4594 April 1910

WE are much gratified with the reports reaching us from India. Apparently the Lord has a great harvest field there. A large proportion of the natives in the cities understand the English language, which is taught in the schools; besides a considerable number of English-speaking people reside there. The fact that India's three hundred millions have come under subjection to the British rule has operated both favorably and unfavorably as respects Christianity. It has carried the Bible to the people—to a very limited extent, of course. But it has also carried here and everywhere much of error and much of combination with sin and pride. Apparently many people in India realize the impossibility of ever converting the world. And such of these as are of believing hearts are earnest and ready for the harvest message—the gathering of the Lord's jewels and the establishment then of the Millennial Kingdom for the blessing of all the families of the earth with restitution privileges.—Acts 3:19-21.

Our Brother Devasahayam writes us that in the city of Madras there are approximately 120 to 150 who have considerable ear for the Truth. But the majority of them, weak and fearful, he styles Nicodemuses, because they desire to inquire after the Truth in secret rather than more courageously. Apparently there is a good field in India for laborers—Colporteurs and preachers. Few, of course, can afford the expense of such a journey and few are qualified for the position. Europeans there are quite generally well educated, as are many of the natives; and no one could properly present the Truth unless he could speak English quite grammatically and with some fluency. Moreover, it is a place where great self-denial would be required, as the people are poor and Colporteurs would have more difficulty than here in meeting their expenses.

Some of you, but not all, know of Brother Devasahayam's conversion to the Truth; hence we give a brief recital. His father was a convert to Christianity, a native preacher in India. The son desired to enter the ministry, and, seeking a good education, came for it to the United States. He took a college course, working his way as janitor, etc., through a college under the auspices of the Methodist Church. In common with all colleges, that one had Professors who inculcated Higher Criticism and Evolution, and Brother Devasahayam was poisoned thereby. He was too conscientious to further consider preaching the Bible, which he had come to disbelieve. He had gained an education, but lost his religion.

He came in contact with the Truth, but cared not to read it, disbelieving everything connected with Churchianity.

A friend of the Truth, deeply interested in him and believing him to be honest, paid his expenses to the Saratoga Convention. There he became partially interested in the Truth and began to read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES. He stopped with us at the Bethel Home while studying and became fully convinced respecting the Bible and the Divine Plan of the Ages. He gave his heart fully to the Lord and symbolized his consecration by baptism. The Society paid his way to India and purposes to co-operate in the work there as the Lord shall seem to open the door further.

"GOOD TIDINGS" IN INDIA - Reprint 4814-4815 May 1911

MY DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL:—

Yours dated February 11 reached me too late last week, so I was not able to send a reply then. I am very glad to hear from you; the contents of your letter give me much strength.

In Travancore the Truth is spreading rapidly; the Lord is opening the way. Everywhere people are flocking to hear the Gospel Truth! The majority of the poor people are unable to grasp the details, but a large number among them, who are the leaders of the community and can read and write their vernacular language (Malayalam) are able to understand the Plan of the Lord; and I am glad to tell you, dear Brother, that they are appreciating the Truth, and gladly preach it to others.

In my last letter I wrote the details of the work in Travancore. Before I left India, or rather Travancore, fourteen years ago, I spoke Malayalam and Tamil fluently. (These two are the languages spoken in Travancore.) But when I came back I was not able to talk either Malayalam or Tamil. But now I can talk both fluently; they have come back without much trouble. So the language difficulty in connection with the work in Travancore is no more.

Until a few weeks back the work was not systematized. From experience, the Lord has shown me that the work among that people must be carried on in a thoroughly organized form, and that no hope of material help should be given to them in any way. This is quite new to them, as all the missionary societies start their "Christian" work on the basis of "rice" Christianity. It took some time and much hardship to convince the leading men of the wisdom of the method we have adopted. The Lord has opened their eyes to see the beauty of Christianity and the principles upon which the Lord and the Apostles carried on the work. I

am glad to say that they understand a great deal now of the Secret of the Lord. Their lives, their enthusiasm and zeal explain it.

Just think, these poor people going about and visiting the people at their houses and teaching them the Truth, and also making arrangements to hold meetings in several places! We have in all now sixteen congregations holding meetings regularly in fifty different places hereabout. Thirteen of the brethren are working regularly among these people. The fact that they have been doing this work for the last two months (some of them for five or six months) without receiving any financial help, shows the interest and the devotion they have for the Lord's work. We have fourteen temporary shelters for the purpose of holding meetings. In each of these places from 100 to 350 people attend the meetings regularly –not simply attend the meetings, but they have learned much during these days; and even those who were once baptized in the London Mission Church want to be immersed again since they understand the real import of baptism as set forth in the Scriptures.

As large numbers of the people are illiterate, we have to teach the Truth orally. But as there are quite a good many who are able to read and write, it is best to have some tracts printed, setting forth the main points of Present Truth.

As we have thoroughly consecrated men with us now, as far as I can judge, we would have no difficulty in entrusting the work of teaching to such. Many people have come to me to start work among them, but I have not yet seen my way clear to begin the work and carry it on effectively.

You will be greatly surprised, dear Brother, when I say that among all the "Christian" people in these parts, the Present Truth is the subject of discussion. Some are for, and others against it, even in the sectarian pulpits. Last week there was a conference of the London Mission people, where the main discussion was about the Lord's work of our Society in these parts. So there is much interest either directly or indirectly.

The elders and deacons hold two class meetings each week; about thirty are attending and studying the Lord's Word to preach to others. Some walk from twelve to fifteen miles to attend these meetings. We hold these from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. I find that this class study work is very helpful. They all have their note-books with them and take notes when I discuss each subject from the volumes and the booklets. It is wonderful how these poor ones go to the Reverends and tell them about the Truth, giving Bible references for every statement they make.

It is best to have some booklets printed for the use of these Pilgrims, Elders, etc., as well as for those who are able to understand the Truth somewhat. It will cost too much to have the volumes translated either into Malayalam or Tamil. We shall have to circulate the literature free, as the people are unable to pay. I would suggest that extracts of certain chapters of all the six volumes be printed. We must have also some tracts in Malayalam and Tamil. We can distribute these tracts among the denominational church people whom we cannot reach otherwise. These are the reasons why I put \$500 for printing purposes for this year. The tracts could be used in all South India, among fifteen or twenty millions of people.

I am sorry to say that some of the teachers have to work in the fields at least a few days each week to earn their bread; the rest of the time they spend in preaching the Gospel and holding meetings. Last Sunday morning 450 people attended the service in one place, and in the evening 850.

Your brother and servant of the Lord. S. P. D.

IN REPLY

DEAR BROTHER:—

Your welcome letter of March 21 is before me. I am glad to have it. If you can get into right line with our ideas of the work we will be glad, and believe that a great blessing may result. We are praying for you and the work in India, and believe from the tenor of your last letter that you now understand our program better than at first, and will follow it.

Our plan is not to trust to oral instruction of teachers, but to co-operate specially with those who are able to read English, and who will take the printed matter with them in their preaching and translate to those who are unable to read. We do not mean by this that none may be accepted as teachers who cannot read English, but that those able to read English should be given preference.

You are quite right, dear Brother, in understanding us not to wish to purchase either teachers or hearers with rice. The Gospel must be hungered and thirsted for with a spirited appetite. As for the teachers being obliged to labor a part of their time, we think it the very best way, except for a very few whose entire time as overseers might be necessary, like your own and that of the pilgrims. We favor this very same course in every land. For the teachers to be so separated from the people that it would be thought a shame for them to make tents or do other work for an honest living, is neither good for themselves nor does it have the proper

influence upon the people with whom they should be in close touch as "brethren."

We feel that the money sent you thus far has not been unwisely expended, and you may count on upwards of two thousand rupees for printing during the ensuing year, also an allowance not to exceed five rupees per week for the teachers who are giving all their time, and something less for those giving part of their time.

Please make monthly reports, which need not be lengthy, but which should contain distinct statements of amounts expended for literature and the quantity it purchased, also number of teachers and pilgrims, and briefly the work being done.

We are sending herewith £20.

Very truly your brother and servant in the Lord.

OUR MISSIONARY WORK IN INDIA - Reprint 4848-4849 July 1911

From childhood the writer has had a broad sympathy for the heathen and an earnest desire for their uplift, which must include their knowledge of Christ. His intention was to be a missionary to the heathen until he discovered two things:—

(1) That God has a future time for dealing with the whole world, including the heathen, under Messiah's Kingdom of glory, light and power, and that God's present work is the selection or election of the Church to be members of the Messianic Body, of which Christ is the Head—in all a "little flock," all saintly.

(2) He discerned, in Divine providence, that although God is no respecter of persons He has evidently designed the gathering of the majority of the "elect" from amongst the Semitic and the Aryan races of Europe and America. And, desiring to follow the leadings of Divine providence, and thus to be a co-worker with God, he turned his special attention to the gathering of "the elect" and has been using his energies chiefly where this "elect" class are mostly to be expected—in civilized lands.

However, in God's providence, the writer, less than two years ago, became acquainted with a native of India, Mr. Devasahayam, through whose instrumentality a considerable work of grace is already under way in Travancore District, India. This is not the work of dishonoring the Divine Name by misrepresenting the Divine Character and Plan and telling the poor heathen that they have been foreordained and predestinated to eternal torture, except a lucky few; neither is it the message of Evolution and Higher Criticism and Humanitarianism. On the contrary, it is the telling of the sweet story of the old, old Book, rightly interpreted—the story of the Love of God, of the sacrifice of Jesus, of the election of the Church class to be joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom, and of the blessing that is yet to come to all nations as the result of the redemption and the Kingdom which Messiah will shortly establish, when the elect Church shall have been completed.

IGNORANT FAITH—INFIDELITY—TRUE FAITH

The story of Mr. Devasahayam and his work well illustrates the power of the Truth, in contrast with false doctrine and Higher Criticism. Mr. Devasahayam's father was a native missionary in Madras. The son, of religious mind, determined to follow his father's footsteps and be a missionary to his people. He appreciated the value of education and in the providence of God reached America and, under letters of introduction, entered the Methodist College at Delaware, Ohio.

His father was attached to the Methodist Body and the son, also, gave to it his adherence. A four-years' course was sufficient to do for him what it does for nearly every young man who passes through any modern college in this, our day—it destroyed his faith in the Bible as the inspired Word of God. Thus set adrift from his original convictions he was too honest to accept the invitation of the Methodist Church to go to his home land and preach to his heathen countrymen what neither he nor the educated Methodist professors, ministers and missionaries believe. He declined the offer and took up lecturing in churches, describing the manners, customs, clothing, etc., in India.

About this time Mr. Devasahayam came in contact with some whom he believed manifested not only a great deal of honesty in their discussion of the Bible, but also a great deal of knowledge respecting the precious Book. He cultivated their acquaintance, made inquiries respecting their views and was presented with six volumes of STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES. The careful and prayerful reading of these six volumes converted Mr. Devasahayam from his Higher Critical Infidelity and Evolution theories back to the Bible—not, as before, in mysticism and superstition, mis-called faith, but to an intelligent, rational, logical understanding of the Divine Word. This was what his soul had been hungering and thirsting after. He gave himself wholly to the Lord and returned to his native land a representative of The International Bible Students Association.

GREAT WORK IN TRAVANCORE

Considering the entire circumstances to be a leading of Providence, we have co-operated with Mr. Devasahayam and are still co-operating. Our means are limited and our support of his work is necessarily limited. But so long as it seems to have the Divine blessing we wish to show no partiality as between India and Europe and America.

The people of Travancore District are extremely poor and church missionary work amongst them has met with some success, partly in what the natives call rice-conversions. The poor are willing to be enrolled anywhere for the sake of having a certain regular supply of rice, which is the chief article of food. We forewarned Brother Devasahayam that money must not be spent in this manner—that the only ones who would receive any assistance must be such of the natives as would give evidence of thorough conversion and of intelligence and ability to present the true Gospel Message to their brethren. These native teachers are supplied a very small amount per month to meet their very simple necessities. Already, in less than a year, there are twelve large congregations in Travancore, with invitations and opportunities for as many more as soon as native instructors can be properly prepared for serving them with the Truth.

The Message of the Love of God and the election of the Church now and the subsequent restitution blessings for the world appeals to the natives as it does to all intelligent, unprejudiced thinkers everywhere. Although we give no rice, the report is that many of the "rice-Christians" are leaving the missionaries who preach the bad tidings of great misery and are flocking to the true Gospel of the Love of God. The natives of this District seem to be childlike and need to be restrained from baptism, to make sure that they understand its real import as signifying a full burial or immersion of the will into the will of Christ—to be dead with Him to all earthly hopes, aims and objects.

THE DARKNESS HATETH THE LIGHT

It may surprise some of our readers to know that the missionaries who are a large expense to home societies misrepresenting the Divine character and the Divine Word and misrepresenting to the heathen their real belief are angry with Brother Devasahayam and his more successful work. His name has been published in Methodist journals with the suggestions that he is an enemy and should be opposed in every way that civilized laws will permit.

Is it not peculiar that people who no longer believe the Bible and who in their colleges are teaching that it is not the Divine Word—people who do not believe in either eternal torment or purgatorial sufferings—people who do not believe that Adam fell from Divine likeness and needed to be redeemed that he might be restored thereto—that these people insist on misrepresenting themselves and God and the Bible and are angry and at war with those who do believe the Bible and who show clearly its teachings of the Love of God and His provision through Jesus for the blessing of all the families of the earth, with an opportunity to each individual to return to harmony with God?

FURTHER WORD FROM INDIA - Reprint 4895 October 1911

My Dear Brother Russell:—

I praise the Lord for granting me another opportunity to inform you, our Pastor and beloved Brother in the Lord, of the glorious harvest work that is going on in Travancore.

Sectarian missionaries and their agents are very active, yet the glad tidings appeal to the hearts and minds of the poor, and they gladly hear the message and accept it heartily, and soon they themselves become preachers of the message to the aristocratic clergy.

You will be glad to know, dear Brother, that the Present Truth which the Lord has given to longing hearts everywhere through your instrumentality (though it seems "devilish" and "anti-Christian" to nominal Christians), is making great impression in the hearts of even orthodox Hindoos and Mohammedans.

I wish you could have heard the preaching by one of the latter who is interested in the Truth. He spoke of the coming Kingdom of Christ in such a way that I could hardly believe my own ears and eyes. There were some Orthodox Hindoos also present in the meeting.

Many of the Mohammedans ask me why they are not mentioned by you in your writings. They claim that they are the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. They want to know particularly whether they, as a nation, will have any special message from you on a Scriptural basis. I don't wish to say anything until I hear from you about the same.

I am very sorry to say that the \$200 you mentioned in your last letter has not reached me yet. This has put me into much difficulty, as all our Pilgrims and Elders are to be helped. I admire their loyalty to God and the Master; though they starved, they went and preached the Gospel without murmuring. I borrowed 200 rupees in order to help me carry on the Lord's work. I am very anxious to hear from you, dear Brother, in regard to this.

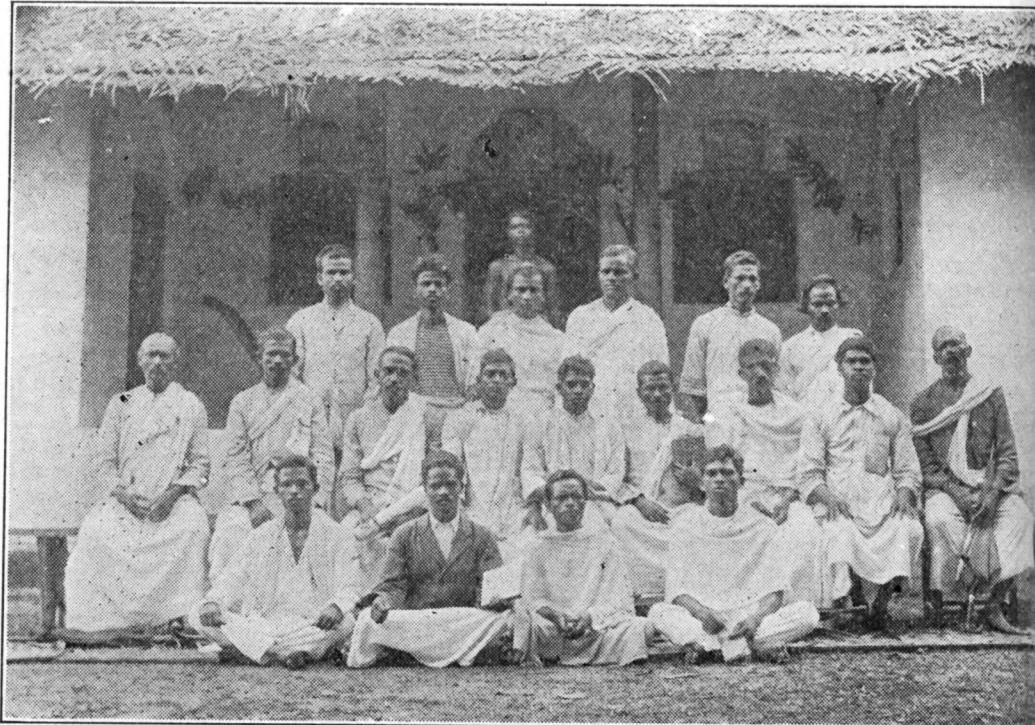
Every week we have new congregations added. People from far and near beg me to go and present the Truth to them. Already they are well informed that our society does not pay any salary to anybody, yet they do want to hear the Message. What shall I do? Truly the Harvest is great!

Again, the difficulty re tracts: I placed the order and paid 75 rupees in advance and now I am unable to go and get the printed tracts. We submit everything to the Lord's will.

Enclosed please find the statements for June and July, and the list of payments made to the brethren. Statement of the local fund and the work summary for July will follow.

The Friends all send their love to you, dear Brother, and they all pray that if it be the will of God they may be permitted to see you in person in due time. With my love and prayers,
Your brother and servant in the Lord,

S. P. DEVASAHAYAM.



Twenty works of the "I. B. S. A." in Travancore Dist. India



Bro. Davey and Helpers