

Madras Representative
Christian Council

Conference on
Rural Reconstruction
6-7 Feb. 1930

Report
(Rural problems)

INTRODUCTION

THE Kingdom of God cannot be successfully built in a rural country like India, unless a strong foundation is laid among the village people. Too often our rural brethren are illiterate, fever-ridden, half-starved, exploited by many and neglected by our better educated workers. Such conditions confront Churches and Missions with serious rural problems that provoke thought. We are trying to solve them each in our separate way, largely ignorant of each other's success and failures. The time has now come to pool our experience and work in union.

As a beginning in this direction a Conference was arranged by the Madras Representative Christian Council on February 6th and 7th at the Y. W. C. A., Madras, for a discussion of our rural problems. The Conference, which was preceded by preparatory group-meetings in Ikkadu, Vellore, Coimbatore, Alwaye, Martandan and Madura, had the advantage of the help and inspiration of prominent thinkers and leaders, such as Dr. K. L. Butterfield of America and others. One session was public at which heads of Government Departments and representatives of other agencies addressed the Conference. The other sessions were confined to Christian workers. The papers read at the Conference were so valuable that it was found advisable to collect them and publish them in book form. Our thanks are due to all who kindly consented to read papers and to give their manuscripts for print. The booklet is available from the C. L. S. or the Secretary, M. R. C. C., 'Gurukul', Kilpauk, Madras.

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The Ideals of the Jerusalem Conference Regarding Rural Uplift and their Application to South India

I wish to express my appreciation of the opportunity of addressing a Conference so thoroughly representative as this one. I came to India in almost complete ignorance of the country. During the ten weeks of my stay I have had my eyes open for all they are capable of seeing, ears for all I could hear, and my mind eager for all it is capable of understanding. But even now I speak with diffidence on the application of the ideals of the Jerusalem Conference to South India. It is my conviction that the ideals of the Jerusalem Conference are themselves sound and practicable, but I am aware that in making applications, local situations that lie deeper than the surface things that even the careful traveller sees, may make all the difference in the world.

I wish to mention three things that seem to me fairly to represent the idealism of the Jerusalem Conference with special reference to rural work.

There is a sub-heading in one of the paragraphs of the report that runs as follows :

'Education as fundamental method.'

I find myself in India increasingly impressed with the importance of this statement as indicating the way in which all the village problems must be handled—education in season and out of season. But when we say education, we must not fall back upon the thought of mere instruction. I am thinking of the influence of the teacher upon the taught, and of such a response of the taught as calls for a considerable amount of stirring of imagination, development of insight, and arousing of sympathies, as well as a study of facts and the attempt to deduce from these facts certain general principles. Teaching in other words must be vitalized.

And then again, we do not mean by education simply schooling. We have also, organic in education, the problem of adult education. I would prefer to use the term 'continued education' rather than adult education. We all recognise that every child and youth should receive some amount of schooling, but we are now coming to see that education must go on throughout life and, indeed, in cases where adults have not had the opportunity of schooling in childhood and youth they must in some way be reached with the processes of education for the remainder of their lives. I fear there are those who are anxious lest the dignity of the idea of education be lost in thus dealing with ignorant or illiterate people, but this problem of illiteracy has now come to take on the proportions of a great world problem. At the World Conference on Adult Education in Cambridge, England, last August, a good deal was made of the point that we must abolish illiteracy. I think we must make even more of the idea that even the illiterate are to be educated. The main

weakness in the school and college is that the education there given has too little relation to actual life and its experiences—while adult experience has too little relation to intelligence and reason.

In this matter of adult education, I suppose the demonstration idea is the most fruitful. It may interest you to know that for more than a generation in America, efforts for the education of rural adults were only partially successful. When the demonstration method was used there was a tremendous expansion and development of effective continuing education for our farmers. The demonstrator must not be merely a parrot or a gramophone, he must know how to make his word vivid. As one missionary stated to me the other day, we must dramatize rural reconstruction to the villagers. We must try to get the villagers excited about solving their problems.

Another ideal that runs through the whole report of the Jerusalem Conference is the community idea, that is, the development of intensive work in comparatively small areas. I believe there should be an intensive campaign in which all the parts of a comprehensive programme can be integrated. I keep hearing about the golden age of the Indian village and of the desirability of reconstructing the old type of village life. I cannot help questioning whether the small village is to be the main unit of the new rural India. I wonder if it does not lie rather in groups of villages with a natural centre in which there will be not only a local patriotism developed but also a full range of service for all the people of the entire local area.

May I suggest three or four main lines for Missions to consider as the beginnings of a plan for rural reconstruction?

1. Map out an area in each Mission for some degree of intensive work—an area including perhaps a dozen or fifteen villages.

2. Consider the feasibility of forming some sort of development committee for the area—a committee representative of all the different groups and institutions in that area that are willing to co-operate.

3. Secure the appointment either by Government or by the Mission itself of a satisfactory person as a sort of co-ordinating officer, who will give his time and thought to the task of getting intensive work done within the area by all people who can make a contribution of service.

4. The development committee under the leadership of the co-ordinating officer to map out and from time to time to re-cast an adequate programme for the reconstruction work of the area.

If this minimum programme can be put into operation, it will at least bring the Jerusalem idea to the front and it will, furthermore, discover the strength and the weakness of the plan as well as help to train workers to go into other areas for a similar service.

The third point I wish to mention this morning is to stress the need of the full programme of uplift as a part of a full Gospel. We do not need to raise the question of contrasts between evangelism and something else, or to emphasise the danger of neglect of the most important part of the Christian Message, but rather to stress the need of fulfilment of the Christian Message. I do think, however, we need the deepest spirituality among leaders in educational, economic, and social work. I know there are some who fear lest the general uplift programme will rob the spiritual of its significance. Is not the issue rather, how we may put the spiritual into all areas and activities of life?

How Best the Christian Life and Spirit in our Villages can be released for Rural Uplift

The subject given me implies that there is a Christian life and spirit that can be released for rural uplift. I want, however, to say at the outset that it needs to be strengthened at the centre if it is to be effective. Our Christian living to-day does not differ very convincingly from the living of the community around us, and we must see that the Christian influences we release are of the best quality. What is needed is a more vivid representation of Jesus Christ. Granting, however, that there is this rich reserve of Christian life and spirit in our villages, how can it be released for rural uplift? The answer is, by harnessing it to rural service in some form or other. But before discussing this question we must ask another: Why is it not released already? To this there are many answers; but the chief answer that this does not lie primarily within the Christian mandate concerns the fundamental conception of the Christian Gospel. There are many who hold, and hold conscientiously, that the Gospel is essentially individual—a calling out one by one of a peculiar people, a shepherding of a flock, a way of life that finds its highest expression in worship rather than active service; that rural uplift belongs to the realm of the secular and that, even where legitimate, all forms of social service are a second best to the preaching of the Gospel. This view suggests that Christian life and spirit need to be conserved rather than released. I take it, however, that we have not so learnt Christ, and that we accept without reserve the essential social implications of the Gospel of Christ. I deprecate the term, a social Gospel. The Gospel is of necessity social, for the simple reason that the individual to whom it appeals is a social being, for no man liveth unto himself. Man cannot be extracted from his community and live. We have no hesitation, therefore, in accepting the position that Christianity is a real and organised fellowship with relations and responsibilities towards God and with relations and responsibilities towards men.

If the Christian life and spirit in our villages is to be released for rural uplift, these preliminary things need stating:

1. Our Christian life must be strengthened at its source—the heart must be right and the feelings enlisted.
2. The Gospel of Christ must be understood to cover the whole realm of life—there must be the assent of the mind.

3. We must consecrate ourselves to a more sacrificial way of living by obeying the Master's law that he who would save his life must lose it—there must be the will to serve.
4. We must face frankly the evils that oppress village life, and holding them to be alien and hostile to the Spirit of Christ regard it a Christian duty to remove them.
5. To us rural uplift must belong to the being rather than the well-being of the Gospel of Christ.

We now discuss ways and means how this can be done. Rural uplift means raising the standard and improving the quality of living. It has always in view 'the manufacture of souls of good quality', and thus it sets out to create a climate in which men will be unfettered to glorify God and enjoy Him. It covers then the whole range of village life—economic, educational, political, social and religious. Here and now, we set out to build the city of God, to make the Indian village a gladsome home for the Son of Man.

It will serve our purpose best if I describe how Christian life and spirit were released for rural uplift in a village of my acquaintance. It was a small village of some fifty families mainly belonging to a depressed class but lying within the pale of Hinduism, and numbering altogether a community of 250. Like other villages of its kind in Bihar it was weighed down by poverty, debt, litigation, drink, illiteracy and despair. When we knew it first, not a single person in the village could read or write; the holdings were small and the people were largely landless labourers. The need for reform was desperate. The first glimmer of hope came with the starting of a Co-operative Society. There being no writer in the village, the books were written in the early days by a missionary. Later a young Christian preacher and his mother made the village their home and with their coming there came a gracious accession of Christian life and spirit to the village. Their Christian home became the centre of a quiet but effective scheme of village uplift which attacked in the first instance the triple evils of debt, illiteracy and drink. But let us note here some important things about this preacher. (1) His educational qualifications were not high, as he had only passed M. E. Standard, but he was always a student. 'He grows old still learning'; (2) He was an earnest Christian and an ardent patriot; He loved Christ and loved India; (3) He chose the simple life, dressing in khaddar, and identified himself with the life of the village; (4) He had courage to accept leadership; and in the fitness of things he became the secretary and soul of the Co-operative Society. What happened? Progress was slow. 'The path of reform is very hard', as the villagers reminded Mr. Brayne. But things began to happen. Debt was the first citadel to be carried, and the day came when the Panchayat of the Co-operative Society was able to declare that no debts were now due to money-lenders.

That meant a great weight lifted. Then illiteracy began to feel the impact of this new life and spirit. The preacher opened a Boys' school, and, although the claims of cattle and goat herding were clamant, the school prospered. A Night school was also started to which the elders came, and so successful did it prove that ultimately one of the early illiterate leaders of the Co-operative Society qualified himself to write the books of the Society. That was another important mile-stone on the way to rural uplift. The drink evil was bravely faced and we gladly pay tribute to the help received from Mr. Gandhi's prohibition campaign. But the fight was a long one. A toddy shop by the road side and on the very door step of the village, made the situation very difficult and much patient propaganda had to be done. However, at long last, a great move was made when the Co-operative Society in its Annual Meeting, which I attended, passed a resolution asking the District Magistrate to take steps to have the toddy shop removed. This, I am happy to say, was done and the village freed from the baleful influence of the drink shop. Surely a happy way of indicating how Christian life and spirit can be released for rural uplift. Little could be done in these early days in the matter of agricultural improvement as the villagers had very little land of their own to improve. But as the difficult habit of thrift grew and the credit of its members became stronger, the Co-operative Society was able to advance money for the purchase of land, and in this way some of the landless labourers were able to acquire some holdings of their own. That was a great step on the upward way to manhood. Marketing presented no difficulties, for bazaars were within easy reach and the Co-operative Society was usually able to see that its members were not exploited. It rendered this further service that it was able to obtain good seed for its members on easy terms.

We have seen then that a Co-operative Society having its inspiration in a Christian home is able to deal effectively with the economic condition, and I am one of those who hold that the rural problem in India is primarily an economic problem. I am conscious of many defects in the working of the Co-operative Movement and am prepared to admit that its achievements are over-rated; but at the same time, I know no other constructive movement on foot that is dealing so effectively with the economic ills of rural India, and I have no hesitation in suggesting that here is a channel through which Christian life and spirit might very well be released for rural uplift. A Co-operative Society does these things: It provides banking facilities for the poor, it removes debt and encourages thrift, it improves business, it promotes education and discourages litigation, and seeks in every way to promote the well-being of the village. It needs and needs badly an accession of disinterested workers, who are competent to lead and yet content to follow, a thorough system of training alike for official and non-official workers in co-operative principles and practice and, most important of all, an adequate and sustained motive. Here I cannot do

better than quote from the Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture :

'To break the inhibition on the will to live better there is required a *strong central driving force* that will encourage enthusiasm, develop public spirit and provide suitable material for active workers in their campaign in favour of the improvement of the village life.'

To me as a Christian that strong central driving force means the Church of Christ whether represented by a Christian home or a Christian congregation, and in the Co-operative Society I recognize a worthy outlet for Christian life and spirit. But to turn to the story of our village: we all know how circumscribed the life of the Indian village is, and how few are the opportunities for healthy recreation and enjoyment. It therefore occurred to the village preacher that something might be done to make things a little brighter and he invited the co-operation of the Co-operative Panchayat. Thus it came about that when the Society held its Annual Meeting a comprehensive sports programme was arranged, and we had the pleasure of seeing the village at play. The most stirring event in the programme was a tug of war between two sections of the village, and the titanic struggle provided enough healthy excitement to tide over many a weary day. We may record here that this impulse towards healthy amusement spread to other districts, and we heard later that many similar sports programmes had been successfully carried through. In another important respect the young preacher opened the gates of a fuller life to the village. He discovered, as we all do, that the drama makes a great appeal and that the ordinary Indian villager is a born actor. Again he invited the co-operation of the Co-operative Society, which was readily given. Together they prepared a simple village play. The subject chosen was the Prodigal Son and it was duly produced on the night of the full moon a few months later. The players were the bank members taught by the village preacher, the stage was the village threshing-floor, the scenery was provided by nature herself, and the village to the youngest child made up the audience. Beautiful in any setting the old parable glowed with new beauty as these simple villagers with simplicity and reverence re-lived the great love story of God. It was all real: the wealthy village home, the discontented son, the flight to Calcutta, the spendthrift and his friends, the unfeeling landlord, the pigs, comical and important, made up of the small boys of the village, the hour of repentance, the welcome home, the strange behaviour of the elder brother and the final feast were all set out in vivid detail. That night we touched the true pathos of Indian village life. The preacher has ever played the part of the peacemaker, even at the cost of personal sacrifice. It happened once that a villager incurred the severe displeasure of his landlord, who

out of revenge instituted a false case in the court against him. Convinced that the man was entirely innocent the preacher ventured to expostulate with the landlord and as a reward for so doing was badly beaten. This, however, had an unexpected outcome. The landlord repented of the wrong he had done to the preacher, sent for him and asked his forgiveness. He went further and withdrew the law suit. Here again the Christian life and spirit in the village was released to a noble purpose. It is an old way, the way of suffering, but we know not a better way for the Christian life and spirit to express itself whether for rural uplift or any other cause that needs assistance.

In this brief survey we have seen the Christian home, the school and the bank all striving against the evils of poverty, debt, illiteracy, drink, litigation and apathy, and making for healthier conditions and a better village life. We suggest that along these three highways the Christian life and spirit in the villages may be readily and confidently released for village uplift. But we would emphasize again the necessity of vital Christian living, genuine love to the country and the will to serve.

In villages where the Co-operative Society does not exist, an endeavour should be made to organize one. In any case, the Christian home and the Christian school will be available, and they should be utilized to the full. If possible, each school should have a scout troop; and an endeavour should be made to organize a League of Service in the village. Where the will is, the way will be found. As a last word we remind ourselves that rural reconstruction will fail of its true objective unless it leads men to God. More impressive than the school and the bank and the various forms of social service referred to in the village we have been describing is the service on Sunday evenings when practically the whole village assembles to worship God. In this service simplicity is the prevailing note and much of the time is given to singing accompanied by the simple instrumental music, including the kettle-drum, in which the villagers delight. This is the best way in which the Christian life and spirit in our villages can be released for rural uplift.

How best the Christian Life and Spirit in our Villages can be released for the Preaching of the Gospel of Christ by Word and Life

What I have to say on this subject may all be said in one sentence : *I believe in simplicity.*

This belief contains eight points :

1. I believe that the *Gospel itself* is the chief thing in evangelistic work. If we bring the real Gospel, the question about the ways and manner of bringing it is not very important.

2. I believe in the *simplicity of the Gospel*—not in the simplicity of the villagers. They are shrewd enough. Just because they are what they are, they need the Gospel in its purity, i.e. in its simplicity.

3. I believe that the Gospel is *divinely* simple, i.e. a deep *mystery* which can be grasped only when the Law of God has done its pedagogical work in the human heart, deepening and 'unifying' it. Ps. 86 : 11.

4. I believe that the decisive point in the Law is the 'First Commandment', referring to our attitude to God. Here again the matter is *very simple*, a simple 'either—or': our attitude to God is either right or wrong.

So I have to begin the preaching—in villages as elsewhere—with the First Commandment in some way or other. There are many ways of doing so ; I can here only hint at two of them :

(a) We approach God with *namaskaram*, acknowledging thereby that He is great and that He is our Lord. If we are sincere in this acknowledgment, *His* purposes—not ours—must be our chief object, especially when we approach Him. We know His purposes, the purposes of Him who gave us our hands and eyes and our lifetime and put us into the situation we are in ; we know they are purposes of unselfishness, truthfulness and *sanmarga*. If we really care for *Him* we shall approach Him chiefly for getting through Him the fragrance of *sanmarga* as 'the string of the garland gets the fragrance of the flowers.'

(b) In the life of Jesus we can show what zeal for God's purposes means.

Regarding the Gospel itself, *I believe*

5. that it is *a history* and that, therefore, Gospel-preaching means simply telling selected portions of this great history, visualising and picturing them, especially the crowning portion : the Cross, and

6. that this history is *daily* and everywhere *repeating itself*, His holy love being frustrated by us and still conquering and ruling, calling us to share its harvest. He has sown the toil of love and is reaping the joy of love, the joy of sharing with us His joy, the joy of the Spirit which is crying 'Abba, Father.' This Gospel can be understood in every Indian village.

Regarding Christian life, *I believe*

7. that it is after all also *a very simple thing*, much too simple for us, unless we allow God to make us simple, and that in simplicity it has its reality, power and beauty : it is the living of a child with his Father in the remembrance (*smaranam*) of the Father, a remembrance which overcomes all those '800 millions of thoughts' (cares, temptations etc.) by which the human heart is beset. And finally

8. that the First Petition of the Lord's Prayer, the petition for this *smaranam*, *is being heard* and that so the shaping of Christ-like character becomes possible, which is the 'central driving force' for rural as well as for every other 'uplift.'

The Place of the Village Teacher

The supreme importance of rural service in a scheme of national reconstruction has of late been widely recognised in this country. Rural problems are coming to receive increasing attention from the Government and other patriotic and philanthropic bodies. It is obvious that those who would serve India need to study and get closer to the life in the villages. At a time when the call of the Indian village has become urgent and an increasing number of agencies are coming into being to undertake the task of education and emancipation of the villager who is under the sway of ignorance and superstition, it is required of Christian Missions who have for many years carried on the work that they should, in accordance with the demands of the present situation, seek to improve the means and methods of village work.

In the work of the Missions, village evangelism and education have gone hand in hand. The village teacher, who is often the catechist also, has been in a real sense the messenger of light. Having duties both in the school and in the congregation he has often brought the service of the community and the school into close relation. He has served as the people's friend and guide and as the champion of their cause. Arbitrating in disputes, reconciling divisions, nursing the sick, administering medical aid in times especially of epidemics, fighting for the freedom of the oppressed and doing many such services, the village teacher has won for himself a position of leadership in the life of the village. This of course is not true of every teacher or even of most of them.

In the past, however, the work of the village teacher *in the school itself* has not been of any very great value. There are various causes for what one may call the failure of our village education. In the past the quality and qualification of the teacher had necessarily to be very inadequate for the purpose of attaining educational success. The people in the villages have not sought the benefits of education, and even the few who have been keen on their children attending school have only desired that they should learn to read and write, and be able to do small sums in arithmetic. This attitude on the part of the parents explains the fact that the majority of pupils in the village schools belong to the first and second standards. In many places the grant that is made by Missions for village schools does not permit any improvement in building and equipment or a more adequate pay for the teachers. The village teacher is often found to be engaging himself in outside occupations in order to supplement his income. It should also be remembered that the teacher's interest in outside matters, however needed it may be, is bound to have an adverse effect on his work in the school. In not a few cases the school has been almost a secondary occupation for the teacher.

The conditions of rural life are undergoing a real change, though it may not be as rapid as in cities. The life of the village is gradually becoming homogeneous, and the people of various castes are feeling after a common ideal and becoming conscious of common needs. The desire for freedom and self-respect, and the claim for equality, are some of the motives that move even the slave and the under-dog in village social life. The national spirit has gradually penetrated into the villages and is making many a landlord realise that communalism and untouchability are an enemy to progress. And as the simple villager and the landlord become conscious of the incoming of a new life of freedom and progress, they are becoming increasingly aware of the social evils that mar life and retard progress in any direction. This constitutes the call of the village to those who have ears to hear, to enter this sphere of service in order to help them to fight against every form of social evil, to attain the freedom they seek and finally to realise the ideal of life that has come to them. While such are the hidden but formative forces of rural life to-day, they cannot effectively mould life until and unless the evils that grip rural life are removed. Such evils are well known and scarcely need mentioning. Ignorance and illiteracy breeding fear and superstition, low vitality of body and unclean habits working together to the unchecked spread of disease and resulting in large mortality, perpetual dissensions and litigation, immorality and social diseases, alcoholic drink, gambling, indebtedness and habits of laziness that make economic progress almost impossible—such are some of the maladies that affect village life.

These people are in dire need of help to overcome these evils and disabilities, to fight against custom and tradition which have sanctioned inequality and oppression and to set them in the path of freedom to realise their new-born hope of a purified, strong and united people. The teacher, especially if he is a Christian, has a mission and a message to people who are in a situation like that. The opportunities for service are many and varied. As a teacher, he undertakes to serve the village cause in and through the school. The place of the village teacher is in the school and it is by the many activities and services of the school that he has to seek a place in the life of the village. Thus the work in the school will come more and more to be related to the needs of the village as a whole. It is in any case not very easy to educate or guide the conservative villager, but it is possible so to organise the activities of the school as vitally to influence the rising generation. And through the pupils the influence of the school will reach the homes. But as there are generally parties and prejudices in the village, the teacher's usefulness will be considerably reduced if he interferes in local disputes. In systematically working to create rural citizenship among the pupils the teacher will be rendering a service of abiding value and indirectly influence the spirit and public opinion of the village itself. Many are the disabilities of the

village teacher. The new ideal does not seem to have taken hold of the existing village teachers to any large extent. Further, they have not in most cases had the training necessary to realise the task that the present situation sets for them. The school building and equipment are very meagre. Missions, especially in some parts, are obliged to carry on a large number of schools for village Christians with very limited grants. And in such areas a teacher is also in charge of several village congregations near his station. If the schools are to make any real contribution to the task of rural reconstruction they will necessarily cost a great deal more. The average villager is not sufficiently interested in education to render any real help or offer co-operation to the teacher. The teacher leads a lonely life and does his work in fear of the Government inspector and the Mission supervisor or manager. The irregularity of attendance of the children and the indifference of parents often level the ambition of the teacher, and cool down his enthusiasm. The capacity and training of the average village teacher are not adequate for the task that he is called to in these days. Instances are not, however, wanting of teachers who in very trying circumstances have made the school a centre of much useful work and wholesome influence.

The village teacher is thus undertaking a very important work under conditions that do not make the work easy. Also he is generally drawn from a class that has not received any liberal education and therefore has not the necessary knowledge of men and affairs. Therefore if we are to improve the quality of work done in the villages we have first of all to make a beginning by offering the teachers a better training. Everything should be done to help would-be teachers to obtain a sense of vocation and a love for the work in the villages. An understanding of the conditions and needs of village life is essential as the basis of such training. The teacher-in-training should be helped to realise his work as being part of a great movement for the making of a New India. Thus passion for service and an eager desire to work for the regeneration of India through the work of the school, should take the place of the motive of earning one's livelihood. A large and varied programme of activities suitable for village schools should be taught. The organisation of games, scouting, gardening, and other interesting items should also form part of the training curriculum. They should be taught in such a way, that with the lowest possible expense they may be carried on in any ordinary village school. Preventive and curative treatment during times of epidemics, ordinary rules of sanitation, educative and entertaining programmes for use of leisure hours and slack seasons, physical exercises for the building up of a strong physique, lessons on temperance and the evils of impurity, and ways and means of improving the economic condition of the villager, with special emphasis on local industries and handicrafts, should form part of the syllabus of the training institution. Definite ways of developing a

spirit of co-operation and mutual helpfulness among the pupils should be emphasised in the training of every teacher. The general educational standard of those accepted for training should be sought to be improved by necessary modifications in the curriculum of the higher elementary classes, for the scarcity of candidates for teaching work is not at present a serious difficulty. But those who do offer for training have had a kind of education that is not a suitable preparation for the training that is offered on modern lines in some of our newly started training schools.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the teaching of Scripture in the work of our training schools. Every Christian teacher should be taught Scripture stories, especially on the life of Our Lord, based upon a carefully prepared Scripture syllabus for our elementary schools. And the same syllabus should prove of value as providing a scheme of Scripture teaching in village schools. While they must learn to do everything in the spirit of Christ and through all their work seek to make Christ real to the children, spiritual teaching should find a rightful place in the work of the school. The appeal that Jesus Christ makes is simple and yet all comprehensive. While much that is advanced may be beyond the intellectual comprehension of the poor village teacher or his pupils, yet, Jesus has a message which every one can understand. He enables the poor and ignorant to see visions and inspires all men with the hope of a glorious new life. He constrains by His love, until it becomes the driving force of one's life, and the experience of His grace brings enlightenment and imparts true knowledge. It saves men from weakening and wasteful influences. Every true ideal comes to life in Him, and in the light of His presence all social evils being exposed and condemned lose their power. Any training, therefore, that does not include the spiritual prescriptive of faith in Christ misses something fundamental, and any work that misses Him stands to lose ultimately its permanent and essential value. Even in the existing circumstances efforts can be made to improve the work of the village teacher. Close supervision and guidance ought to prove very helpful. It is not as a check on the teacher's work but rather as meeting a need felt by the teacher himself for the fellowship and guidance of someone who is interested in the work of the school. Better planned and less hurried monthly meetings for teachers should prove very valuable. The programme of such meetings may include a general conversation about the work each teacher is doing, a model lesson or two, and instructive addresses followed by a discussion on interesting items of work. Such meetings can bring much inspiration and encouragement to the teachers. A circulating library of suitable books and a teachers' magazine, if possible, will help to continue their education and training. Teachers' summer schools or teachers' camps may be organised once in two years or so, where problems of village teachers' work could be studied with a view to find practical ways of improving the work. A very heavy responsibility rests

upon the managers of village schools for the organisation of such auxiliaries to the training of teachers. And where that is not possible managers should render every possible assistance to teachers by frequently visiting the schools.

Those who have to deal with boys and girls who in ten or fifteen years will form the bulk of the nation have the key to the future of India. It is in and through these schools that a new order of life can be ushered in, especially in Rural India. And it is the village teacher, and not any other agency, that can exert the biggest influence on the thought and life of the people. This vast sphere of service, with unlimited opportunities for corrective and creative work, is the place of the village teacher.

5.

Adult Education in regard to Rural Reconstruction

Principles

In these seventeen years of experimentation in Rural Reconstruction work in South India, we of the Y. M. C. A. have arrived at a few fundamental principles. I shall try to state them as clearly as I can.

1. Rural Uplift is impossible if service is directed to one or other of the villager's needs in isolation. The programme should be sufficiently comprehensive, and its execution should be simultaneously directed to all the main needs of the villager. In other words it is practically futile to confine Rural Reconstruction work to the economic, the health, the social, the moral or any other needs of the villager. Success is possible only when all of these are approached together and that simultaneously. This we claim to be our discovery, made and placed before the public before any one else did so.

2. Another principle is that Rural Reconstruction is impossible except in so far as it is a process which wells up from within. All work directed from without is transitory, and it has value only so far as it secures action by and from within the village itself. When this is forgotten much of the service that is done, however valuable in itself, is quickly lost. Not only is it a waste, but also it undermines faith and retards true normal progress.

3. This leads on to another central principle. All Rural Reconstruction work should be severely conceived and carried out with every self-restraint as a species of Education. Not education as ordinarily understood; but as Adult Education totally irrespective of literacy. That is the only method that is really possible or justifiable. Every line of service should be conceived and worked out as a part of education. Take for example the most ordinary line of service, Co-operative Credit. Even that service should not be worked out merely as a Bank for relieving individual villagers from the grip of the usurer, but as an educational agency in regard to economic values and combined action, and for educating and training leadership in the village community. It is one thing to work the Co-operative Society as a Bank and a totally different thing to work it as an educational agency, even when confining what may be called the curriculum of that education to purely economic affairs. In the same way service along all the other lines should be thought out and carried out as various means of the one central process of Adult Education. This will mean slower and more difficult work. But every thing that is done will abide and become creative in its turn.

The place of Adult Education in regard to Rural Reconstruction is therefore very clear. The place is the central place. It is the one method which is justifiable as tested by experience or by canons of modern psychology. We must remind ourselves that we are dealing with one of the most settled communities in the whole world, which is now finding it impossible to adjust itself to certain modern requirements and standards which have come upon it with relentless insistence and loaded with unassailable advantages. That is why we talk of Reconstruction and not of construction or uplift. The process must be from within what was once a completed structure and which is still a substantial structure even though bombarded on many sides. It has yet to be reconstructed. The resources for the reconstruction must be provided as far as possible from within the village, and reconstructors must arise there. Ours is the office of education towards this end.

Four Main Means

There are four main means readily available for starting and carrying out a scheme of Adult Education. They are :

1. The Drama.
2. The Sandai. (The weekly market).
3. The Co-operative Movement.
4. The Day School Plant.

1. The Drama

The traditional means of adult education employed for thousands of years in India is music, song and story. A combination of these in the dramatic form is the most effective means for reaching the whole community, men, women and children. The didactic purpose has not detracted from the artistic standard of the drama. Plays with a purpose like Harischandra and Nandanar judged by purely artistic criteria compare very well with the front rank productions in any literature, not excluding the Augustan age of India. Therefore in the revival of the Drama which has been proceeding in these three decades we find some of our best talents interested in the writing of new plays suited to the needs and the tastes of this generation. And it should be our endeavour to keep the material improved all the time and to give the villager always the very best available. We should be having newer plays written all the time, and they should be better and better every time. The main aim being education the play should clearly convey certain ideas which are practicable to-day and by the villager as he is. These special ideas which a play aims to convey should be in song form and set to popular and easy tunes. Then they catch the attention, grip the memory, and circulate in all the villages, literally singing themselves into the minds and eventually the lives of the people.

Remembering again that our purpose is education and not instruction we should get the actors only from the villages.

Happily the histrionic art comes naturally to us Indians, whether we are urban or rural. In every group of say twenty villages, anywhere in India, there is enough talent for any play we wish to stage for their education. But we should get as able a man as possible to do the training. And there should be as much continuity as possible about it, so that the acting, the singing and the music do improve all the time.

It should be pointed out in passing that in this whole process of educating through the Drama literacy is not indispensable. The whole cast that plays could be illiterate. The audience of the night and those many more who are not there but who will be singing the songs of that play for years, none of those need be literate. Valuable and even dynamic ideas—warnings, suggestions, counsels—would have been communicated, which will bear their fruit in 60^s and 100^s of times.

2. The Sandai

In India there is a ready-made adult school in the weekly market (*sandai* or *hai*). Practically the whole village is there; and the same folk are there every week. Any one who hires a few stalls and offers something attractive gets his chance freely with the whole crowd. Striking exhibits and charts should be displayed. The talks should be simple and related to a problem that is really felt as a pressing problem at the time, as for instance the price of ground nut or a pest which attacks a standing crop. More general topics should be introduced gradually in the course of the discussion of the specific problems of the villager. Lecturers are not far away. In every district the Government has trained 'experts' in several lines which are of practical importance to the villager. But these experts do not 'educate'. They only do things themselves, when and if called upon to do so. Most villagers do not even know that there are such experts floating about the country. The stall in the Sandai is a very natural means for bringing the two together.

Here again we must not forget that even the conducting of sandai work is a process of education. The stalls had better be taken by a Panchayat, either the nearest Village panchayat or the Co-operative panchayat, or preferably by the Co-operative Union panchayat which is concerned with all or most of the villages served by that Sandai. And let the whole arrangement be executed through them and at their financial charges.

It should be noted here that in the Sandai work the villager is definitely challenged by the advantage which comes from literacy. He can and does get an enormous amount of information and suggestion through the eye and the ear though he is not able to read and write. But he comes every now and again to a situation when he observes the advantage of those who are literate. He begins to crave for that advantage at least for his children. This

effect is analogous to what has been proved to have happened among the Negroes of the United States when the peripatetic schools from Hampton and Tuskegee went among them.

More than the Drama the Sandai work lends itself to continuous instruction in sufficient detail. It is mostly conducted in the form of questions and answers; and so, results can be gauged and judged as time goes on.

The Sandai stall is also used for the sale of the implements, seeds, fertilisers, better poultry and other things which we wish to introduce. Every such transaction is an occasion for more questions and answers. The Sandai work is also very convenient for the work of the village library. Books and pamphlets are received and issued on that occasion.

In all these operations one should constantly keep in mind the educational aspect. As far as possible our share should be confined to guidance. The actual work should be shared more and more and finally taken over entirely by the villagers themselves.

3. The Co-operative Movement

We need waste nobody's time here to show that the working of a Co-operative Credit Society is in itself a very rich means of education. That thesis will be considered self-evident by everyone here. Still my claim is that if the Co-operative Credit Society is looked upon as a means of education it will receive much more attention from people like us here who are devoted to the welfare of India. I may therefore be permitted to emphasise two values:

(a) The Co-operative Credit Society is related to an utterly desperate need of the villager, and therefore when wisely handled it becomes a powerfully effective lever for his uplift along many lines.

(b) The Co-operative Credit Society is a species of social organisation. It trains people in combined action, it disciplines them in following the leader they have chosen, and it chastens the leaders in having their policies and actions guided in a democratic way. It therefore furnishes a model for corporate activities along many lines, and also draws out workers from the community and trains them as it goes along.

Besides these two values there are the other direct values, ethical and economic, which need no recounting at this time. Here I have set out two values which confer on the Co-operative Credit Society the distinction of being a means of Adult Education to any one who is willing to take advantage of it.

4. The Day School Plant

The Day school is for the young. The teacher's duty is done when the sun has set and the pupils have left. The building is then shut up for the night.

An opportunity for Adult Education begins just at that point.

The teacher could come back, and he does come back when it is worth his while. The building is reopened when the lamp is lit and the village folk have returned home from the day's toils. Talks, lectures, songs, bhajanas, lantern shows, classes, readings from newspapers, bulletins or pamphlets—any thing could be done, provided two things are taken care of :

(a) Our Normal schools should prepare our teachers to consider their schools as community centres, and to work them as such ; and (b) assistance should be given to the teachers by people like us, to keep this side of their work up to the standard.

Enough has been said to show that the means for Adult Education are available already in the rural areas themselves. Extensive lectures, university settlements, community centres and the like are not necessary except for training workers and for administrative convenience. For the Education itself it is far better to utilise existing opportunities.

The Curriculum

The question will now be asked, what is to be the curriculum ? In answer to this I should refer to the first of the three fundamental principles with which I opened this paper. The programme for Rural Reconstruction should be widely comprehensive and the execution of the various lines of service should be simultaneous. This is not the occasion to sustain this thesis by argument or illustration. Assuming its correctness, it is obvious that the curriculum for Adult Education should be as comprehensive as are the actual practical needs of the villagers. The plays written should cover the problems of Temperance, Health, Disease, Usury, Mortgaging, Marketing, Litigiousness etc. At the Sandai stalls talks should be given by the Government officers of the Agricultural, Veterinary, Industrial, Educational and Health Departments, and by Y.M.C.A. Secretaries, Servants of India Society Members, and Missionaries. These stalls provide a weekly exhibition of articles pertaining to many occupations and problems. They should head up in an annual summer school and exhibition where the exhibitors will be the villagers whose emulation had been sustained and directed throughout the year mainly through the Sandai work. This implies that the curriculum for the Sandai work should be as wide as the programme of the annual summer school and the exhibition. So also in using the Day school plant it should be possible for the average rural teacher to draw widely upon the resources in the towns with practically no limitation. The actual practical needs of the villagers will be his main guidance. Also he will be guided by what is easily available by way of outside help, whether personal or literature or other material. These two practical considerations, viz. actual needs and available assistance, should determine also the work of outsiders like ourselves who are desirous of using the Day school plant as an agency for adult Education in the village.

Literacy ?

One more point should here be made clear before I conclude. More than once I have referred to literacy in this paper. That is because there is a current fallacy that Adult Education should begin with conferring literacy, and then proceed to build on it more or less along lines of modern school education for the young. Such a procedure will be clearly like putting the cart before the horse.

(a) The situation in the country is too grave to await such a slow process. Take e.g. our vital statistics. More than a third of all the children born in the Madras Presidency never see their first birthday; and our Presidency has the best ratio among all the Provinces or States of India. How can such a situation wait?

(b) If literacy is indispensable for Adult Education we should give up the task at once for one very cogent reason at least. Our population is increasing by colossal figures. At the last census e.g. when the rate of increase was the lowest, as low as $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, the increase was on an average of $1\frac{1}{2}$ millions a year, 15 millions in the decade. If we are dependent on literacy, how will it ever be possible to overtake the education of a continental population of 300 millions when it is adding to itself by such numbers.

(c) But literacy is not indispensable. Education is dependent only on the transference of ideas from one mind to another, and that can be done in more ways than one, as everyone of us knows perfectly well. In the situation in India, with the problems so many, so diverse, so complicated, so urgent, and all the time becoming more and more grave with the steady and enormous increase of population, we should in fact definitely relegate the conferring of literacy to a subordinate and incidental position, and endeavour by all means to perfect a system of Adult Education, which is totally irrespective of literacy. In all our plans and programmes the question should be: how much will the illiterate person get out of this? If the literate person gets more, all to the good. But the test should be the effect on the illiterate person. Nothing should be reckoned as satisfactory or sufficient which benefits only the literate and leaves the illiterate aside.

At the same time I should, in justice to myself, recall that I have already cited the case where the education of the illiterate awakens in him the desire for literacy at least for his children. This is no fancy but a fact based on experiences abroad and in India. Educate the community aright, which means, as practically as possible, and the community will demand more education and better education. One of the serious difficulties now before the spread of literacy in the land is the inability of the children to stay long enough at school. This inability is due partly to economic reasons and partly to lack of appreciation of the value of the school by the parents. This latter problem, which is psychological, will be entirely and automatically solved with the success of Adult

Education. In fact the desire for literacy will be so keen that the economic problem also will begin to be solved.

While I have said all this I should make it clear that the conferring of literacy should certainly be designed as a part of the general curriculum of Adult Education. But it must only take its place among all the other objectives, and that place cannot and need not be a central place.

The Indian Village-woman and the Home

A

The part of the woman and the home in rural uplift

One of the most important questions in the problem of rural uplift is that of the village-woman and her home. As long as the home does not form an adequate background for the improvement of the economic conditions, for the safeguarding of health and for the spiritual growth of a community, no real progress is possible. Homelife is the foundation upon which a nation is built. Therefore it is natural that a general need is felt to do something for the village-woman. But to do just *something* is not enough: our help must be of the right kind, otherwise all efforts will be useless. We should have it clearly before us, what the present conditions are, what knowledge we wish to impart and what results we hope to achieve. The responsibilities of a good wife and mother can be roughly divided into three groups:

- i. She must add to the material wellbeing of her home;
- ii. She must be the guardian of the health of the family;
- iii. She must create and maintain the moral and spiritual atmosphere of her home.

1. Increasing the material wellbeing

There are several ways open to a woman who desires to work for the material uplift of her family.

(a) **Judicious spending of money.** There is not much money to be found in a villager's home. Generally the custodian is the wife. The need of meeting all necessary expenses with very little ready cash has taught her to be very careful. She buys things thoughtfully. Up till now she has been very careful to get good value for her money. Often a woman has something in store about which her husband knows nothing. If she succeeds in saving up a larger sum, she is frequently at a loss where to keep it. Some provision should be made for such women in order to protect them from losing their savings by entrusting them to doubtful persons.

(b) **Care of the family-possessions.** A villager does not have many possessions to speak of. But the less there are, the more one should care for them. A mat, for instance, lasts much longer, if it is duly rolled up and not just tossed into a corner. A piece of cloth will serve twice as long, if any little rent is mended in time and every hole patched up at once. This the village woman does not realize at present.

Then there is the dhobi-system. Even the poorest home depends upon the dhobi. If the women would do their own washing, they would keep their clothes in good condition much longer and would not have to pay the dhobi.

(c) **Leisure-time industriously and profitably spent.**

I do not have much faith in so-called cottage-industries for the village-woman, if the aim is to provide some additional income. In this age of competition any industry, to be profitable, must be taken very seriously and requires more skill and organization than the woman in her home can give. But there is another aspect of industry in the home, and that is--not to *make* money, but to *save* it. Therefore all the practical things which a village-woman ought to learn should be of immediate use to her in her home and require no initial expense. Here are a few suggestions.

1. She should learn, as suggested above, to wash her clothes. She can easily procure the same sand which the dhobies use for this purpose. In districts, where firewood instead of cowdung is used for fuel, she can be taught the much more satisfactory way of soaking her clothes in water saturated with ashes.

2. She should learn to do patching and mending. To teach her to make blouses and shirts would be useful only in districts where these things are generally worn.

3. Mat-making is useful in places, where the required space is available. In addition to space preliminary expense is needed. Therefore it can be done by only a few women. There is another kind of mat largely used in some villages, which is plaited of palmyra-leaves (ஒப்பாறு). It is easy to make, and very little room is required. Wherever palmyra-trees are abundant women can be taught to make these mats.

4. In places where there are many cocoanut-trees every woman should know how to plait keerroos (கேற்று) for the roofing of huts.

5. Coir ropes can also be made at home during leisure-hours.

6. Baskets are used in every village-household, particularly the quite simple kind for carrying mud and sand (கட்டுக்கூடை). Material for these is readily available and the skill to make them is easily acquired.

7. Where it is not already done, the making of castor oil might be encouraged.

8. In cotton growing areas leisure-time can profitably be spent in carding and spinning home-grown cotton. The yarn can be exchanged for ready-made cloth in khaddar-centres.

2. The health of the family

A woman who wishes to be the guardian of the health of her family has to learn many things.

(a) **Observance of cleanliness.** In this respect the Adidraida woman is very backward. She should be taught to bathe both herself and her children regularly. She bathes occasionally on her way home from her field-work, but there may pass weeks without her pouring any water at all over her body. She must be made to understand why bathing is necessary. Only if she sees that it is really of value, she will take the trouble to do it. For bathing purposes there should be a screen of palm leaves outside every village-hut.

The woman should be taught to comb her hair and to kill lice not in the primitive and rather ineffective way in which she does it at present, but by using kerosene oil, which is available everywhere.

The houses are generally kept reasonably clean. Every woman should know how to white-wash her hut and should be encouraged to do it as often as possible. She should never keep dirty clothes in a heap in a corner but wash them as soon as they are soiled. All the sleeping-mats of the household ought to be exposed daily to the sun.

In order to keep the outside of the house clean a good housewife will take the rubbish to the village dust-heap daily. Some women bring it even to their fields, but there are still many villages where it is not regularly done.

Every mother should herself learn and teach her children to use for their private needs some definite spot, one not just in front of the hut. She might dig a little trench, about one foot deep, which can be used for that purpose, refilling it gradually with the loose earth turned out when the trench was dug.

(b) **Observance of the elementary laws of hygiene and of the prevention of diseases.** Much harm is done by using unboiled water for drinking purposes. Nevertheless, it is useless to ask a village-woman to boil the water every day. She cannot afford to do it. But she might be taught to do it in times of an epidemic, such as cholera. In ordinary times the only practicable way for her is to get her water from as clean a source as possible.

Next to water in importance comes fresh air. Its absence at night-time causes a number of diseases, the worst of which is tuberculosis. Yet, if there happens to be a window in the house, the mother will always close it carefully with shutters or even dirty rags before putting her children to sleep.

Many mothers spoil the eyes of their children by putting all kinds of mixtures into them. One of the worst things often practised by mothers is the use of kalikam (கலிகம்), a very pungent eye-salve, put into the eye, if the child has fever or headache. They could surely be taught how very delicate an organ the eye is; only simple and attested remedies, such as alum water, should be used. When these prove ineffective, women must learn not to grudge the expense of consulting a doctor.

Further, every woman ought to realize what a danger flies can be, and how to minimize this danger.

Every good housewife duly washes her pots and pans after the meal is over and puts them in the sun to dry. That is a very good custom. But she puts them on the ground, where they are covered quickly with dust from the road. A much better way would be, to fix in the ground a small dry tree with several branches on which the pots might be placed.

All mothers must be taught to protect their children from being branded. An elementary knowledge how to treat sores and itch will be found very useful.

Lastly, a custom must be mentioned, which is both disgusting and destructive to health. Some village-people eat animals which have not been killed for the purpose, but have died from natural causes. Every housewife ought to learn to avoid such food completely.

(c) **The bringing up of babies.** The appalling infant-mortality in Indian villages is largely due to the complete ignorance of the

mothers. They should be strongly advised to get the help of a trained midwife wherever possible. The babies should never be allowed to be nursed by other women during the first few days. Mothers must be taught to bathe their babies daily, and to wean them when they are ten months old. A little garment put on the baby during cold nights and rainy weather would often save it from severe colds and even pneumonia.

3. The moral and spiritual atmosphere of the home

(a) **Moral duties.** A wife and mother ought to realize, that it is *she* who has to set a good example in her home. At present quarrels, backbiting, falsehoods and stealing are prevalent amongst most village-women. Mothers laugh when their children use obscene words, and do not care when they see them behaving in an impure way.

All women should be taught to realize the evil of drink and gambling. They must both be temperate themselves and influence their husbands not to use liquor and not to gamble away their hard-earned money.

(b) **Intellectual duties.** It will take still many years before the Indian village-woman is able to help her children in intellectual matters. She should be encouraged to learn at least to read. Learning the value of education even for girls, she will send her daughters more readily to school and will be less tempted to keep them at home to mind babies.

(c) **Religious duties.** Every Christian woman should know the elements of the Christian Faith, such as the ten commandments, the beatitudes and above all the Life of Christ. She should pray daily and teach her children to do likewise. Frequently a village-woman finds it difficult to pray in her own words. It would be a great help to her to know a few short prayers for different occasions.

In every Christian home the Sunday should be observed. It is a day of rest for the whole family.

Women must be trained to do their share of work for the Church. They can keep the village-church clean, whitewash it, smear the floor with cowdung and sweep the compound. Each Christian woman would do well to give daily a handful of rice as an offering (பரிசு அளித்தல்). A very good custom is to offer to the Church the first yield of everything.

Our village-women need to learn, that a Christian woman should be ashamed to seek help from all kinds of soothsayers and secretly to try to propitiate evil spirits by offerings in order to be on the safe side, as that really means to profess idolatry by deed.

Lastly, she should give a good example to her neighbours by being patient, compassionate and helpful to the sick and needy.

B

By what means can we expect to educate and influence the village-woman in the above mentioned direction?

1. **Boarding-homes** for village-girls and small boys. They should be situated in a village and conducted on community-school

lines. A small model-village, consisting of ordinary village-huts, should take the place of the boarding-building. These boarding-homes should be places where the adult village-woman also can get any help she needs. The manager of the boarding-home should keep in touch with all the girls who have left school, and once or twice a year meetings lasting for about two days might be arranged for all the old pupils.

2. **Village-teachers' wives** should undergo a special course of training and should be asked to impart their knowledge to other women. They might be given some remuneration for it. A lady-missionary could very profitably control their work and visit every village at least once a month. In connection with these visits she could organize:

3. **Magic lantern lectures** about some such subject as we here have been discussing. Some able agent might tour the villages in the off-season for the same purpose.

4. **Lyrical addresses**, Kalakshebams, intended specially for women might be arranged as occasion arises.

5. **A special course for village-women** in some central place would be beneficial to those who were able to attend it. Such a course should last at least a month and should comprise religious and other subjects, such as lessons about health, instruction in reading and writing and some variety of handwork.

6. **Annual conventions** or conferences lasting about two days may be held in some central village, if the necessary arrangements as to lodging can be made. The women who participate in those conferences ought perhaps to pay a certain amount towards the food expenses.

7. **Manuals** giving brief helpful suggestions to the village-women should be carefully composed and distributed among those women who are able to read. As people generally do not value leaflets which they get for nothing, these manuals are better sold for a nominal price.

8. **A very remarkable piece of work** is done in Puram by Miss J. Taylor of the N. M. S. and her co-workers. She is a real help to the village-women amongst whom she lives as one of themselves. Her co-worker, an English nurse, attends to the health of the mothers and babies in the surrounding villages. Such a centre is a great blessing, but it would be very difficult to get many such centres adequately staffed, because a great readiness to serve, a loving heart, a patient mind and an ability to live a very simple life are the essentials required for such a worker.

When considering the immense and yet quite untouched field of work, which awaits every one who is willing to serve the village-woman in this country, one can only pray, that more people will come forward, who actually take up the work and find in it their calling for life.

7.

Village Literature

During the last four years, the C.L.S. has been making an effort to produce literature which will meet the needs of villagers who have but little education, and also the very large number of children who leave elementary schools before reaching the Fourth Standard. According to Government statistics two out of every three children have left school by the time this stage is reached. They are unable to read ordinary Tamil or Telugu, and consequently the little knowledge they have laboriously gained is soon lost, and they relapse into illiteracy.

To check this tendency, the C.L.S. has been producing the VILLAGE LITERATURE SERIES of booklets. There is a wide range of subjects, and they are dealt with in a very simple style. The language is carefully graded, so that the Third Standard boy can read them. The price is low, the greater part being priced at one pie, so as to place them within reach of the poorest. The success of the experiment is demonstrated by the fact that over half-a-million copies have been sold within the last three years.

But the publication of booklets at a purely nominal price means a loss to the publishers, and it is evident that there is a very definite limit to what can be done by private enterprise. As, however, the success of the experiment has been amply demonstrated, it would seem that the time has come for those interested in rural reconstruction and village education to take up the matter, possibly with financial assistance from Government, and produce similar literature on a far wider scale.

But what can be done for the more remote villagers, where literacy is practically non-existent? Adult education can hardly be said to have been started yet, and at best it is a slow laborious process. It seems to me that, in our effort to propagate new ideas in the villages, we might do far more with pictures. Many of you will have seen in copies of *Punch* 'Stories without words' a series of little pictures which carry the mind from one action to another, and thus tell the story. The plan is also increasingly used in commercial advertising. A series of booklets consisting entirely of these consecutive action pictures would make an instant appeal to the illiterates, and could be used to convey much useful information. At any rate the idea is worth studying.

Co-operation between Missions and Government

The subject that has been allotted to me is that of Co-operation between Missions and Government in the matter of Rural Reconstruction. For Government I should like, if I may, to substitute the word State in order to avoid the associations which the word Government may bring with it. I should like also to say by way of preface that, if I seem to be concerned more specially with the depressed classes, it is not because I think that they can be dealt with in isolation, but because it is with them that I have been most closely in touch during the last two years.

I should like to approach the problem from the side of each of the parties concerned. Let us begin with the side of the State.

If it is the function of the State to promote the highest life of its citizens, then it is clear that the State has certain definite responsibilities among which we should include the improvement of agricultural and sanitary conditions, the promotion of education, the removal of social disabilities and so on. And this duty of the State will be most binding in respect of those classes which are in most need of such help. The need is generally held to be greatest in the villages and especially at the bottom of the scale, viz. among the depressed classes. The State has already undertaken work along all these lines in India and no doubt will make further advances along the same lines. And no private body can ever take the place of the State in this respect in India because the work to be done is far too large.

But here arises a question. Are we satisfied that, having provided co-operative societies, education, improved methods of agriculture and a larger number of meals per diem, we have done all that is needed, and that the villager will develop like a flower in the sun? Is nothing further required? If so, there is no need of Missions and no problem for us to consider. But this was not the idea of the Jerusalem Conference. There was in that Conference continual stress laid on the 'Formation of Christian character.' This was the first item in the final statement of the Council at page 290 of the report. For the purpose of this meeting, as we are not all of one creed, I will omit the word 'Christian' and merely use the word 'Character' in its fullest sense.

What do we mean by character? I will suggest a definition. By character we mean at least 'the habit of subordinating the lower or selfish instincts to the higher or altruistic instincts'. Now how far do we find character in this sense developed in the villages? The villager, even the least educated, has certain definite ideas of what is right and wrong. But he does not therefore necessarily

act on them. Enquiry will show that he is prevented by rigid custom, by economic pressure, by fear or other causes. His final answer will often be, 'In this Kaliyuga what can I do?' He is hopeless about the possibility of right action. Then again the higher instincts are often dormant and in need of awakening or very elementary. Hence character in the sense defined of being able to resist circumstances and act on the higher principle is largely wanting.

Now can we have any real Rural Uplift without such character? If so, again Missions are not needed. But if not, how is such character formed? Here surely comes in the function of religion. For, what is the function of religion? I will again suggest a definition: that it is 'the presentation of the highest ideals of life and the attempt to reveal the secrets by which they may be attained.' In this three elements are involved. First there is the presentation of the new ideal. The man who has always lived in the narrow and depressing conditions of the cheri has little or no conception of a life of freedom and self-respect. He has first to be shown that something else is possible. Secondly there is the emancipation from the bondage of the past. The man must be set free from fear, from custom and from the many other things which have kept him down. Thirdly he will need not only these things but he will need also to learn the secret of the power to live a new life.

Now I am prepared to admit that ideals can be presented in other ways than through religion, but I should urge that the highest ideals have been presented through the religious literature of the world. It is also a certain fact that education has a large power of emancipating by destroying belief in things which had been the objects of fear. But I would claim without fear of contradiction that the secret of the power to live a new life lies only with religion and cannot be communicated without its aid. Hence religion is vital to uplift and if you want to get character you must call in the aid of religion.

But here in India the State is debarred from taking any part in the work of religion because of the theory of its neutrality. This neutrality in practice turns out to mean, 'secularity,' as has been pointed out elsewhere. In our education we have a deplorable situation and we risk having the same in the work of reconstruction. The State cannot do all that is needed for this reason that it is debarred from taking part in that which is most essential. And it is at times actually dangerous to do only half the work.

I can remember a case within my own experience that illustrates this. I was travelling from a village in one of the Madras districts to the main road in a bandy. There followed me a young man dressed in a long cloth and a coat who entered into conversation with me. He told me that he was preaching to his people in the village and trying to teach them to respect themselves. I did not pay much attention to the fact at the time. But some months

later I heard that the cheri people in this village had refused any longer to do village service, saying that they were not slaves. The villagers had resented this and had set fire to two of the cheri houses. The cheri had retaliated by setting fire to the whole of the caste village. Here was a situation which would produce a village feud for years. I do not doubt that the body which had sent out this young man (I do not know exactly who they were) had the best intentions in the world, but they had forgotten or did not know that to awaken the selfish instinct without imparting the ideals of sacrifice and service is a dangerous thing.

Hence we reach this point, that the State cannot do all that is required to effect real uplift and that it is dangerous to do half work.

We have seen too that religious bodies can do what the State cannot do. Does this mean that these two aspects of the work must always be dealt with in separation? It does not appear that there can be anything like co-ordination between the State and Missions. The State cannot delegate its power to a religious body, nor can it take into its service the agents of Missions without incurring the suspicion that it is breaking its neutrality. Can the Missions do the whole of the work and thus combine in one hand the two sides of the work required? This depends on what we mean by the word 'Reconstruction'. Some people may be surprised that I should raise this question at this stage in the Conference. But it is vital. What are we aiming at? The word conceals that issue, and I much prefer the term 'Rural Uplift' which has been used by some of those who have read papers. Do we seek something merely external or aim of something internal? Is it a change of things or a change in men? Is our aim in fact comfort or character? Is it reconstruction or is it regeneration? If the aim is merely to alter external things I do not see how Missions can give up their present work and devote their whole time to it. If on the other hand we are aiming at character it is absolutely necessary that this aim should be kept in the foreground from the outset. Everything else must be subordinate to it.

When I made this suggestion yesterday I was met with the reply that man is not two beings but one, and that we must not separate the different aspects of his life. There may be some truth in this, but it is more false than true. The difficulty is that man *should be* but *is not* wholly one. We know it in ourselves. We find the higher and lower struggling with one another. In the village the only unified life possible at present would be life on the lowest plane and we do not want a life of that sort. We are out to lift it on to a higher plane. Hence we need to keep before us all the time the relation between physical and spiritual. Now the first secret of character, the secret for which Christianity stands, is the absolute supremacy of spirit. In the finding of this secret life may find its unity and character be formed. And character is the one thing we need, whether it be for the village or for India. This fact underlay all the papers read yesterday, e.g. those of Mr. Ranga-

ramanujam and Mr. Hodge. Where you get character there you get real progress. If so, then all other things, economic and sanitary improvement etc. and even medical work itself, are all secondary to character. These other things cannot be made an end in themselves. For if they are so regarded their purpose is merely the creation of comfort. To make quite clear what I mean I will put it in a stronger form and say that the mere creation of comfort is not Christian work, that a comfortable life is not a Christian ideal but a pagan one, that there is nothing to show that Our Lord ever did anything merely for the creation of comfort or would ever have done anything for that purpose. Hence Missions can never make the mere creation of comfort their end in any work that they do. They must always retain as their primary object that which has been their object in the past, the creation of character. I am prepared to admit many failures in the work of Missions: that they have failed in their choice of men, that they have been too narrow in their views on method etc. But I am not prepared to admit that they need a change in aim or that they can ever have but one aim. My conclusion, then, would be that Missions must give their first time and thought to the work of training character. That is the first need of the country and the work which Missions should be specially fitted to do. Any method of work which will produce character is legitimate, and if Rural Reconstruction means the suggesting of fresh methods for such an end it should be welcome to all those who have this end in view. And Missions should be willing to revise their methods if they can be shown others which are more efficient for the purpose.

But how far can they go along the lines of assisting in material development without hindering this end? This is a much more difficult question and one which I do not feel competent to dispose of. I will only draw attention to one or two things. There are certain positions which might arise out of the methods suggested which so far as I can see are bound to compromise the work of a Mission. I cannot see how a Mission can be a landlord without getting into difficulties. This position has been held by many Missions in the last thirty years. But difficulties always seem to arise out of it. If rent is not paid, either the Mission has to relinquish it, which is very bad for the tenant's character, or it has to go to court, which is bad both for the character of the tenant and for the character of the missionary.

Similarly I cannot see how a Mission can ever be a money lender. If the borrower does not repay, his loan must be remitted, which is bad for him in every way. Or he must be pressed for payment, which at once creates a relation between him and the missionary which seems to me incompatible with any work in the direction of character.

I fear that I have done little to elucidate the problem that was set to me, but if I have done anything to throw light on the general question of Rural Uplift I shall be entirely satisfied.

The Labour Department and Rural Reconstruction

It is now about 11 years since the Government of Madras, which had in 1916 begun an exhaustive inquiry into the work that had already been done in this Presidency for the improvement of the depressed and backward classes, and the scope of the work that had still to be undertaken, placed an officer on special duty to deal with the various ameliorative measures which were found to be necessary for the uplift of these unfortunate people. The duties assigned to this officer were to study the economic condition of the depressed classes, to submit to Government proposals for improving it, to see that philanthropic bodies working with the same object received from the Government such help as they might require and to deal with the problems connected with the education of the depressed classes and with the best means of raising their standard of living by providing them with house-sites and wells, by encouraging co-operation amongst them and by improving their labour conditions. Soon after the appointment of this special officer the inquiry which had been commenced in 1916 was completed and a large volume of useful information became available. In the light of this information Government came to the conclusion early in 1920 that it was not sufficient to confine the duties of the special officer to what are commonly known as the depressed classes but that it was necessary to include within the scope of his duties all the depressed and backward classes, in other words labour in general. In accordance with that conclusion Government decided to develop the duties of the Special Officer for the depressed classes into those of a Commissioner of Labour. Amongst the additional duties entrusted to the Labour Commissioner then, were the general control and management of criminal settlements, the administration of the Factories Act, the control of the factory inspection staff, and the general conduct of the quinquennial census of agricultural wages. The Labour Commissioner was also directed to concern himself with all matters affecting emigration of labour both within and outside the Presidency, and with other labour questions such as the organization of labour, recognition or registration of labour unions, co-operative housing etc. Various other duties have since been assigned to the Labour Commissioner, for example, he is the Registrar of Trade Unions for Madras Presidency under the Trade Unions Act of 1926, he is the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation for Madras Presidency under the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1923, he is in charge of the special work for the reclamation of the Kallars in Madura and Tanjore districts and of the Koravars in Salem district.

At a Conference convened for the special purpose of discussing what is known as rural reconstruction it is perhaps appropriate that I should confine my remarks on the work of the Labour Department to those activities which are directly connected with the improvement of the social and economic condition of the untouchables. I shall not on this occasion attempt to deal with the problems of the aboriginal and hill tribes, or of the criminal tribes of the Presidency. In this Presidency the untouchables number about $6\frac{1}{2}$ millions or about 17 per cent of the total population. They are scattered throughout the 26 districts into which the Presidency is divided. In 20 of those 26 districts the Labour Department is conducting systematic investigations into, and regular operations for the improvement of, the condition of these untouchables. These regular operations were at the outset confined to 2 or 3 districts but they have gradually been extended until now only 6 districts remain to be taken up for systematic work. Of these 6 districts, 2 more are likely to be taken up next April. In each district where regular operations are in progress there is a District Labour Officer, usually drawn from amongst the Tahsildars of the district. He is assisted by a number of Inspectors lent by the Revenue Department who deal with the preliminary investigations, acquisition of land for house-sites, wells, pathways, burial and burning grounds etc. In regard to the co-operative side of his work the District Labour Officer is assisted by trained Inspectors lent by the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. Where the number of labour schools is large the District Labour Officer has generally one or more Superintendents of Schools possessing qualifications prescribed by the Education Department. To assist him in the preparation of estimates for the construction or repair of wells, school buildings and other works the District Labour Officer has one or more Overseers with special technical qualifications. The District Labour Officer and his staff work under the immediate orders of the Collector of the district but are subject to the general control and supervision of the Labour Commissioner whose duty it is to lay down the lines on which the work should proceed.

Having described briefly the administrative machinery for giving effect to the ameliorative measures undertaken by the Labour Department on behalf of the untouchables, I shall now refer to such of those measures as seem to be most important from the point of view of rural reconstruction. Perhaps the most beneficial although one of the simplest of those measures is the provision of separate drinking water facilities. In a Conference of people actually engaged or otherwise interested in rural reconstruction it is hardly necessary perhaps to explain that the Adi Dravidas, Adi Andhras and other untouchables generally live by themselves in quarters separated from the main village and that as a rule the village wells, whether constructed by the local boards or by private benefactors of former times, are situated in the main villages and are inaccessible to the untouchables. In many cases these unfortunate people

have to depend for their drinking water supply on a dirty pond or tank which dries up in the hot weather. In some places, especially in the deltaic tracts, they may be fortunate enough to have a river or canal to which they can resort for drinking water. But even in such cases, the water supply generally fails in the hot weather and the untouchables therefore have no recourse but to walk to the nearest village well—it may be a mile or more—where they have to wait until they can induce some kindly disposed person to draw a little water for them. They are never of course allowed to draw water themselves from the caste people's wells. In some cases the untouchables depend on irrigation wells, which may be a long distance from their homes and to which access may at any time be denied them by the caste owner. The hardship that the untouchables suffer in regard to the supply of drinking water is of course greater in some districts than in others, but there are few areas where the hardship is not acute, at least in the hot weather. The provision of adequate drinking water facilities for the untouchables is therefore of great importance alike for the alleviation of their misery and for their physical well-being. Since the Labour Department was started some 10 years ago about 14½ lakhs have been spent on the provision of new drinking water facilities or the repair of existing wells and tanks for the depressed classes. The total number of wells and tanks constructed or repaired is a little over 2,800. There is of course still a vast amount of work to be done in this direction.

In this connection it may be mentioned that some local bodies are alive to their duty of providing drinking water facilities for the members of the depressed classes, but even where this duty is recognised these bodies are too often handicapped by the meagre nature of their financial resources and the large demands which the maintenance of existing services makes upon them.

Other measures by which the Labour Department is attempting to improve the conditions under which the depressed classes live are the provision of adequate burial and burning grounds in places suitable from the point of view of public health, the construction of pathways joining up the cheries with the main roads or with the burial and burning grounds, the raising of the level of house sites in cheries and other similar improvements, the provision of latrines and so on. Since the Department was instituted, about 5½ lakhs have been spent on such pathways, burial grounds etc. For the purpose of creating a spirit of self-respect amongst the depressed classes there is perhaps no single activity of the Labour Department which is more helpful than the measures taken for the improvement of housing conditions by the provision of more and better house sites. The congested and insanitary condition of the cheries in most districts in the Presidency, and more especially in the Delta districts where the value of land is high, is too well-known to require any detailed description. Unlike the caste ryot, the Adi Dravida or Adi Andhra agricultural labourer rarely possesses and

is seldom in a position to buy patta land on which to build when he requires more house room. Vacant house sites at the disposal of Government are comparatively few. The way in which the problem of relieving congestion and the consequent insanitation in cheries is tackled by the Labour Department, is by the acquisition of private land for house building purposes if no suitable land at the disposal of Government is available in the neighbourhood. These acquisitions are made at the cost of the persons requiring new house sites, the major portion of the cost being advanced by Government as a loan and recovered in easy instalments over a long period. In some districts this work is done on a co-operative basis. In other districts the acquisitions are made on behalf of individuals, the amount being recovered direct and not through co-operative societies. About 19½ lakhs have been advanced by Government in this way since 1920 as loans for house site acquisitions on behalf of untouchables. The total number of house sites provided in this way, that is by acquisition, since the Department began work is now well over 30,000. That is in addition to some 25,000 house sites provided for the depressed classes by the assignment of lands already at the disposal of Government.

It may be mentioned here that in the case of one or two districts, where relics of the old Mirasi system still survive, the relief of congestion is not the sole motive for the acquisition of house sites. In those districts the Mirasdars claim ownership of the land on which the huts of their agricultural labourers (who are generally members of the depressed classes) are situated, and this claim has in many cases been recognised by the Civil Courts. The ownership by the Mirasdars of their agricultural labourers' house sites is sometimes used as a means of oppression, in order, for example, by threats of eviction to compel the labourers to work for less than the market rate of wages or to prevent them from transferring their services to other employers, and so acquisition is resorted to in order to free the labourers from their economic bondage.

An important measure for the economic uplift of the depressed classes, a measure which, although not under the direct control of the Labour Commissioner, is closely related to the activities of his department, is the reservation of cultivable land at the disposal of Government for assignment to members of the depressed classes. The work of reservation and assignment is carried out by the Revenue Department; but in cases where large blocks, *e.g.* disafforested lands, are reserved for the depressed classes, the assistance of the Labour Department is invoked in regard to the sub-division of the land and the selection of assignees. In addition to land available for assignment outright, there are in certain districts considerable areas of lanka and padugai lands which are leased to co-operative societies consisting of members of the depressed classes.

Since the system of reserving cultivable lands to meet the

requirements of the depressed classes was introduced some nine or ten years ago, a total area of nearly 2,80,000 acres has been assigned to members of that community out of a total of nearly seven lakhs of acres reserved for them. How much of the land assigned is actually cultivated, it is difficult at present to say, but arrangements have recently been made for the regular periodical inspection of all lands so assigned in order to find out whether the assignees are really cultivating the lands for themselves and whether the assignment is of real benefit to them. The most useful form of assignment, of course, is of large blocks of new land to colonies of members of the depressed classes, but such colonies if they are to be successful, require very careful organization and supervision, adequate finance and considerable industry on the part of the colonists. Where good organization and supervision are forthcoming, success is assured if the land is moderately fertile, as disafforested areas generally are, and if the colonists have really got grit and backbone. In such cases finance does not present a serious obstacle as Government is prepared to advance loans on suitable terms.

Another activity of the Labour Department which I ought to mention here is the formation and supervision of co-operative societies for members of the depressed classes. There are now some 2,000 societies of this kind consisting mainly of untouchables. Many of these are societies which have been formed in connection with the acquisition of house sites for the members, Government advancing to the societies a major portion of the cost as a loan. With the exception of a few societies formed for the joint cultivation of blocks of land assigned to the depressed classes, almost all the remaining societies are of the credit type. The main objects of these societies ought to be to encourage thrift and to facilitate saving, but these objects have too often been forgotten and most of them require much better and more intensive supervision if they are to be of any real benefit to the members. That is a matter in regard to which, I hope, there will be a considerable advance in the near future.

The last measure for the amelioration of the depressed classes to which I shall refer is the provision of educational facilities. It is well known that in the past caste prejudice has operated to keep children of the depressed classes out of the ordinary local board and aided schools. Poverty has also prevented the spread of education amongst the depressed classes as the children are required to supplement the family income as soon as they are old enough to earn an anna or two or a little food as herd boys etc. Until the Labour Department began work practically the only schools open to the depressed classes in rural parts were the few special schools maintained for them by local bodies and the schools run by Missions and a few philanthropic agencies. In order to overcome the obstacles set up by caste prejudice the Labour Department opens and maintains elementary schools for the depressed classes,

when there are no schools at all in the locality or where the existing local board or aided schools are actually inaccessible to the depressed classes. The total number of elementary schools which the department conducts is now over 1,600. In order to overcome the obstacles to the spread of education arising from the low economic status of the depressed classes, the Labour Department grants scholarships to boys reading in standards IV to VIII in elementary schools and forms I to VI in secondary schools. In providing educational facilities for the depressed classes the Labour Department is not of course competing with other agencies and its policy is to close labour schools where it is reported that they act as rival institutions to existing Taluk Board or aided schools actually admitting the depressed communities. It is perhaps hardly necessary here to refer to the other educational activities of the Labour Department, such as the maintenance of Government hostels (now four in number), the subsidising of a few privately-managed hostels and other institutions and the award of residential scholarships, boarding grants and industrial scholarships.

This account of the origin, the departmental machinery, and the activities of the Labour Department in relation to the economic and social uplift of the depressed classes is necessarily very brief. But I hope it is sufficiently clear to be of some assistance to this Conference. I must gratefully acknowledge the co-operation that already exists between the many non-official agencies working for the betterment of the depressed classes and the officers of my Department. We have received and are receiving from Mission and other non-official agencies assistance, the value of which can hardly be over-estimated, in connection with the formation and supervision of co-operative societies and of colonies for the cultivation of large blocks of land, in connection with investigations of many kinds, in the starting and supervision of schools and in many other directions. Any suggestions which will tend to make that co-operation even closer and more effective will be most welcome to my District Labour Officers and myself.

The Industrial Department and Rural Reconstruction

My subject is Industrial development in rural parts.

If there is one problem that has been engaging the serious attention of the world of late, it is the question of 'unemployment.' How best to keep the people engaged in order that every able-bodied member may earn his daily bread and lead an honest life, seems to be the topic of the day. In whatever direction one turns his attention, whether in the enlightened countries, or in less favoured parts, he meets this all-absorbing problem demanding immediate solution. Some countries have attempted vainly to find a solution to this problem by a forced levelling of capital and labour. This not only disorganizes society but is devoid of counteracting advantage. Some other practical remedy has therefore to be discovered.

History teaches us that the countries which have turned their attention to the development of their industries have solved this problem and have fared well in the inevitable race of life. There seems no need to labour the point further.

Looking around us, we find in this country agriculture engaging the attention of about 72 per cent of the population while industrial pursuits claim 11 per cent. We know for a fact that the rural population take to agriculture more readily than to any other form of work. It is in agriculture that the average villager finds ready satisfaction. There is an old saying in Tamil—'The fruits of the field are sweeter than those of service'. But it is not possible to find lands for all.

Further, owing to the division of family holdings and their consequent fragmentation, the plot of land which once supplied the needs of a single family has become no longer capable of doing so, the divided members seek other walks of life to eke out their livelihood—for instance railway and private services, and manage to earn a living—but only a small percentage can do so. It is absolutely necessary to look to some substantial means of livelihood besides agriculture. What else can it be if not industry? Lands cannot satisfy all our demands. People require clothes, dwelling houses, utensils, and all other accessories of life. The higher man rises in the scale of life, the greater are his wants.

From early times the village artisans, such as the carpenter, the blacksmith, the potter, the washerman and the cobbler, have laboured, each in his own sphere, to meet the wants of the rural population. But man's wants know no end. They vary with his position and status in life. The higher one rises in the scale the greater are his wants. More skilled labourers than the village artisans are called to his aid.

Apart from this, there is need to work the industrial crops raised by the agriculturist. The cotton has to be ginned, spun and woven, groundnut and castor have to be treated and oil extracted, sugarcane has to be crushed and the juice converted into jaggery, fibre and husk have to be plied into serviceable ropes. Men require mats to sleep on, cumblies and carpets to protect them from cold. Increased comforts give rise to new industries, for instance silk manufacture, making of lace cloths, bronze and metal vessels, gold and silver ornaments and artistic wares.

All these industries have been practised from time immemorial, but only some have survived modern competition, while others have succumbed and have ceased to exist. Among the latter class we may cite muslins and glass bangles as examples. These have yielded to modern taste and have totally disappeared. Among the former we may mention notably the handloom weaving. In spite of the keen competition with imported goods, handloom weavers have striven to hold their own.

Government have long recognized their responsibilities in the matter of reviving indigenous industries and resuscitating those struggling for existence and it is this aspect that forms chiefly the subject of our attention this evening. It will occupy considerable space and time to detail what Government have done to encourage indigenous industries. Thanks to their increasing efforts, several of our industries have received a fresh impetus and a new career of usefulness. Men like Sir Alfred Chatterton, Sir Frederick Nicholson, and Sir Charles Innes rose from time to time, and gave a new turn to Indian industries. If some of the industries have survived the onslaught of modern conditions, it is mainly due to their selfless efforts. The Victoria Technical Institute, managed by a band of earnest workers, has rendered yeomen service to keep alive the demand for some of the prominent Indian industries. A peep into the Institute show room will show what work is being done there.

During the past forty years enormous amounts have been spent by Government in encouraging industries. Since my time is limited, I would confine my attention to a few of the outstanding industries that have received support at the hands of Government.

Handloom Weaving

We shall take first handloom weaving. It is needless for me to say that mill-made cloths are cheaper and finer than hand-made fabrics. However, there are certain lines in which hand-made cloths score over mill-made products, notably the silk and cotton sarees of Indian women, the lace cloths worn by men, the kailies, lungies and Madras handkerchiefs favoured by Mussulmans, the embroideries of upper classes, the lace and jigina work—these are some of the lines in which the power mills have failed to compete with handicraft. At a heavy cost, Government have been devising measures to enable the handloom to hold its own against the power

loom. In fifteen out of the sixty-eight aided industrial schools in the Presidency weaving forms the main subject of training. There is a Textile Institute in the Madras City where adults are taught improved methods of weaving and dyeing. There is a highly qualified officer at the head of the Textile branch whose duty it is to find out the ways and means of resuscitating the handloom industry. There are six peripatetic weaving parties stationed at different centres of the Presidency and engaged in educating the weavers in improved methods of weaving.

A machine has been invented which does away with street warping and the crude form of sizing, and combines warping and sizing in a single process to enable the weaver to produce the maximum output at the minimum expenditure of labour and money. The peripatetic weaving parties are engaged in popularising the new appliances. There is a dyeing party under a trained expert going about from place to place demonstrating improved methods of dyeing.

The work of these parties is being supervised by the Sericultural Assistant, the Assistant Director of Industries (Textiles) and the Director of Industries. Large sums of money are being spent year after year in devising measures calculated to secure maximum production at minimum cost. Weavers' co-operative societies have been formed to help and sustain the weavers. Sixty-three co-operative societies are at work. It is under the consideration of Government to establish a central depot at Madras with a number of weavers' co-operative societies affiliated to it, to facilitate the marketing of handloom products. It is up to the rural population to take advantage of the facilities so generously provided by Government.

Silk Industry

The rearing of silk worms and the reeling of cocoons has been undertaken by the Industries Department for some years past. Silk farms have been established at Coonoor, Kollegal, Hosur, Kamakarai and a few other stations. Manufacture of silk is being carried on at these places as a cottage industry. Several families have taken to silk farming and have been able to earn a fair living. The process is easy and remunerative. It seems possible to start sericulture in several centres of the Presidency. It was the belief once that a mild climate is necessary for sericulture, but it has now been found by experiment that silk worms will thrive even in districts like Tinnevely and Chingleput. The results of the experiments carried out at Vadukankulam, Tinnevely District, and Melrosapuram, Chingleput District, have proved the possibility of starting silk farms in several parts of the Presidency. This industry opens fresh avenues for the employment of rural people. The silks manufactured at Kollegal are held superior to those imported from China and Japan. This industry has a great future

before it, provided people take advantage of the opportunities now opened to them to start silk farms wherever it is possible to do so.

A silk throwing plant has been installed at the Textile Institute, Madras, at a cost of about Rs 20,000, and due to the efforts of the Textile Branch, Madras, two new installations have sprung up at Peddapuram and Salem and a third is under contemplation in Kollegal. There is every reason to expect an increase in the number of such installations. The scope for employment of rural classes in this industry cannot thus be overestimated.

Woollen Manufacture

Similarly in cleaning, carding and spinning wool, a start has been given by the Textile Branch. A wool-spinning plant at a cost of Rs 15,000 has been installed at the Textile Institute. It produces woollen yarn of even texture and enables the weaving of cumblies. The example was copied by the Jail Department which installed a woollen spinning plant at the Central Jail, Bellary, where the output of cumblies has considerably increased so as to cater not only for the Jail population but also for the labourers in planting areas in India and abroad. The use of machine-spun yarn will give employment to several cumby weavers and, provided cut wool is used, there seems no fear for the revival of the carpet industry at Ellore, once famous for its exquisite designs, durability and texture.

Coir Manufacture

This is another rural industry with immense potentialities. The seacoast villages abound in coconuts. Except on the West Coast, where fine coir ropes are manufactured, the husk is mostly used as fuel elsewhere or in the manufacture of a rough kind of rope. Being full of pith, these ropes last only for a short time, and are of very little value. The Industries Department has taken this industry in hand and has started experiments in coir retting in Topputturai village, Tanjore District. A man trained in rope-making has been got down from Travancore and is engaged in soaking the husks and extracting the fibre required for the manufacture of fine coir ropes. It is under contemplation to employ this and a few more professional coir makers in spreading the knowledge of rope-making so that large quantities of husk now burnt as fuel may be turned into ropes, bringing more money, and engaging an increased number of labourers.

Paper Manufacture

The manufacture of rough paper useful for packing and similar purposes, is as much a cottage industry as handloom weaving. Waste paper thrown out as useless is collected, soaked for a day or two until it becomes soft, kneaded by pressing under foot and converted into pulp. The soft pulp is mixed with water in some

proportion, sieves made of steel wires or bamboo splits are deftly passed through the mixture and the film deposited on pieces of damp cloth. The deposit of paper is separated from the cloth, dried in the sun, arranged and pressed under an ordinary screw press. To give the paper some glaze and to avoid spreading of ink each sheet is given a coating of conjee. They are then packed and sold. A number of families in the suburbs of Madras practise this industry and earn a fair living. In order to bring down the cost of preparation, while at the same time improving the quality of paper, experiments are being conducted at the Government Industrial Institute. This is an interesting experiment and is full of object lessons for people inclined to make a living on the manufacture of rough paper.

With a view to deal systematically with these and other industries affording employment to the rural population, Government had a survey made recently of the several rural industries in the Presidency. The Special Officer appointed for the purpose conducted exhaustive enquiries and the results of his investigation are embodied in the reports of the several districts and in a comprehensive review of the whole Presidency. These are available for nominal prices at the Government Press, Madras. With a view to find which of the rural industries are capable of being organised to the advantage of the cottage workers, Government have appointed a representative Committee consisting of members of the Legislative Council and independent workers. This committee has been examining the Special Officer's reports and his recommendations. Its proposals will be formulated shortly.

Industrial Education

Turning to Industrial Education which serves really as the basis of the future industrial development of the country and helps in the creation of an industrial mentality among rural lads, Government are maintaining four Industrial Schools at Madura, Calicut, Mangalore and Bellary at a cost of over a lakh of rupees where young men are trained in mechanical engineering, carpentry and metal work. Motor mechanism also forms a part of the curriculum in some of these schools. Besides, there are 68 aided Industrial Schools under the supervision of an experienced European officer of the department, who devotes his sole time and attention to the imparting of a sound technical education to the youths who show an aptitude for manual work. These cost Government over Rs 1,70,000 a year. In addition, there is a central School of Arts and Crafts in Madras City where training in artistic work in wood and metal is given. There is also the Madras Trades School, with a Preparatory class attached to it, to turn out educated young men as trained artificers, mechanics and electricians. In this Institution 12 scholarships of Rs 20 each have been instituted for the benefit of mofussil boys of limited means. The Institution costs Government nearly Rs 70,000 a year.

There is thus considerable scope now, unlike a few years ago, for the training of youths possessing an aptitude for industrial training.

I should not omit to note the valuable work that is being carried on by the industrial Engineering Branch in tapping subsoil sources of water supply to help irrigation and to provide drinking water in several dry parts of the Presidency. There are at the disposal of the Engineering Branch 21 power drills, 106 hand boring sets, 41 pumping sets and 6 sugarcane crushing mills, scattered throughout the Presidency under the supervision of an able officer possessing a unique training in this branch of industry. The Department has to its credit a record of 21 artesian subsoil springs tapped and harnessed for the use of the suffering ryot population.

It would be ungracious on my part if I made no mention in this connection of the efforts made by various Missionary and private institutions engaged in this labour of industrial training. I refer to the Wesleyan Mission Industrial Weaving and Knitting Institution at Ikkadu under Miss Tweddle, the weaving, embroidery, needle work conducted at the Madras Seva Sadan by that selfless worker Mrs. Venkatasubba Rao, the Wesleyan Mission Industrial School at Karur, St. Joseph's Industrial School at Coimbatore, the Peelamedu Industrial School, the Chengalvaraya Naicker's Technical Institute, Madras, the Industrial schools at Tanjore, Trichy, Dindigul, Nazareth, Tindivanam, Panruti and other places conducted by Christian Missions, the Anjuman at Madras and Vellore, the Industrial Institute at Katpadi and various other centres. These are doing most valuable work in spreading industrial training.

The cumulative effect of all these agencies at work is far-reaching. They are conducted with such singular enthusiasm and ardour that one need hardly doubt that Rural Uplift in the Industrial line is already in view.

Temperance Propaganda

I share with you the regret that Mr. C. Rajagopalachariar is not here to talk to us and I am sure that I can claim your sympathy in the rather difficult task I have to discharge because I cannot in any sense fill adequately the place of Mr. Rajagopalachariar who is giving so much of his time and life to this work.

I am not quite sure what is it that you want to know under this head 'Temperance Propaganda'. I find that this appears under the General Heading '*Co-operation with the Existing Agencies*'. Well, there are a number of agencies at present doing temperance work. There is the Central Propaganda Committee which has been lately established under the aegis of the Government. There is the All India Prohibition campaign working on an All India basis in which Mr. Rajagopalachariar is taking a very prominent part. There are very many other Associations under one name or another which are devoting themselves to this temperance work. Now, if your question is whether the Missionary Bodies might co-operate with one or the other of these numerous agencies and if so to what extent, it seems to me the answer is very simple. The other day my District Collector asked me if I would serve on the District Propaganda Committee of my district. Well, I answered at once 'Yes'. I am supposed to belong to a Party which is opposed to the Party in power and was by no means sure that the Government would care to give me a place in their committee. However, I acted on the principle that I have no right to refuse an opportunity to serve, from whatsoever quarter it may come, even if it be from a quarter which thinks itself to be opposed to me. The result is that I am not only on the District Committee but its Chairman as well. So, I think Missionary Institutions should be always prepared to co-operate with any other agency or agencies that are working on lines more or less similar to this.

Now, these different agencies perhaps may be classified under one or other of these heads. There are Religious Bodies, for example, The Ramakrishna Home of Service, The Theosophical Order of Service, or one or other of the Revivalist movements connected with Hinduism or Muhammadanism. I should say you must be prepared to co-operate with these bodies so long as their aims and yours are identical in regard to the temperance questions.

I won't stop with religious institutions only. I would certainly make use of Educational Institutions and I would help them perhaps to revise their syllabus in the Schools, and have suitable

lessons incorporated in their text books. I would help teachers to turn out cultured pupils with a natural aversion for all things evil, be they physical or mental or emotional. I know it is rather hard work to try to reform the adults. I myself tried one method to cure the adult population addicted to drink of their bad habit. I organised a kind of story-telling institution, employed a man to explain to the assembled people stories and point out their morals at the time when the drink shops would be open so that they may be kept elsewhere than in their homes where they would be tempted to go out and drink. For a short time, the thing worked well and the attendance was good. I had not asked the people to pay even a pie towards remuneration for the man employed but they felt it was not fair to put the burden on me. They endeavoured to pay whatever was due to the man by collecting subscriptions. Having done that, they began to slip off one by one to the toddy shop. Then I thought it was better to turn to the younger folk and I started a night school. I began with religious instruction the first thing they came. I am glad to say it had better results. I do not think I ever told them about the evils of drink but the very fact they were kept in an atmosphere which gave them a healthier outlook on things in general than they were accustomed to turn them away from drink.

I would also avail myself in the interests of my temperance work of suitable Social organisations, more especially the Co-operative movement. It is a wonder to me that comparatively so few realise the full possibilities of the Co-operative movement. To my mind it is essentially a Moral movement, and I recall to my mind an account vividly related by one of the co-operators in the Salem District. He was a European and a great employer of labour. He had very fine people but they were addicted to drink and quarrelling among themselves. He did not know what to do with them, till at last he came to know of the Co-operative movement. He thought that was the movement which would redeem his employees. So he started a Co-operative society for the benefit of his employees and infused in their minds ideas of thrift, etc. After a certain time, he was able to achieve the thing which he never thought he would be able to achieve. He did it through the Co-operative movement.

I will not even discard Government agencies. Perhaps, some of you may be sceptical as to whether I can ever get the Government to help me in a matter like this—especially those of you who are acquainted with the auction sales periodically held by Government officials. You know how in their very presence their subordinates have the bids raised by unfair competition, by holding out to the bidders dubious promises, and how the department connives at offences which, if taken note of and dealt with, would result in the dropping of the revenue. So you may well doubt whether any good can ever come from that quarter. Well, I am not so despondent as that. When the Central Propaganda Board

was established and when I found my way into it and was made the Chairman of the District Committee of Bellary, I thought the first thing to be tackled was the department itself. I approached the Commissioner of Excise and told him, 'You have made me an agent for weaning people from drink; on the other side you are trying your level best, so to speak, to make people consume more of your stuff.' He asked me what I wanted him to do. I told him that if he would only enforce the rules laid down in his excise manual, I should be much obliged to him. If illegal transport of liquor, sale at unlicensed places, and many other breaches of the conditions of license were severely punished, the consumption of drink was bound to go down very much. He then wanted me to bring to his notice instances of breaches of rules, and promised to deal with his erring subordinates very severely. I told him that that was not my object and that what he should do was to instruct his subordinates, telling them to treat me and my fellow-propagandists as their allies and not enemies. I asked him to put it in black and white and I am grateful to him for having issued a circular to that effect. The circular reads as follows :

1. The attention of all Assistant Commissioners and Inspectors is drawn to G. O. No. 1597 P. H. dated 26-6-1929 communicated with C. P. 1459 Abk. 29, dated 3-7-1929 sanctioning the formation of the Central Propaganda Board and District Committees with the object of creating active public opinion against the use of alcoholic liquors and intoxicating drugs. Doubts exist in some non-official quarters whether the District Committees will have the co-operation of the officers of the Excise Department in their work. The Chairman of a District Committee has expressed to the Commissioner his view that much drinking is due to breaches of rules about sale and possession and is afraid that if he brings cases to notice he may earn the dislike and distrust of departmental subordinates who are likely to get into trouble.
2. The Commissioner desires to impress on all ranks of the Department that the Government are genuinely anxious to put a stop to excessive drinking and to encourage temperance and abstinence in every way—even at the expenses of Revenue—*provided only that illicit liquor does not take the place of licit*. All officers are therefore expected to co-operate with the Central Board and District Committees that are trying to expose and prevent illicit sales, etc. These bodies are not to be regarded—as the tendency may be to regard them—as the natural enemies of the Department. All officers should remember that not only crimes affecting the Revenue should be prevented and detected but that all conditions of licenses, many of which have been framed in the interests of public morality, should be rigorously enforced.

3. The object of the Department should *not* be to show an increase of Revenue at all costs. It should be first and foremost to see that all the provisions of law are strictly carried out and that the consumption of liquor is confined entirely to licit liquor licitly possessed and sold. Provided these aims are achieved, the less liquor of all kinds that is consumed, the better.

You will agree, that this is a very good start.

I have told you how outside agencies may be made use of by us. You may ask, How about our Propaganda work and what should we do to make it most effective? The first and the most important thing, to my mind, for any propaganda to be effective and useful, is that the propagandist must be a man of a large heart, not merely a man of ideas. He must not look down upon any person. In a word he must be able to see Christ in every one of those so called degraded people. Our attitude towards these people must be kindly. Our work will never prosper if we think that we are superior and that from our high pedestals we must not lend a helping hand to those who are down below. We should feel that though they may be weak and in need of our help in one respect, they may be as good as ourselves or even better in other respects. So our attitude towards them must be one of love. We should try to develop in them a kind of self-respect by moving with them on an equal footing, and keeping not merely our hearts but also our doors open to them. They must feel that if hitherto they were a little apart from us, it was all due to themselves and, so far as we were concerned, they were always welcome.

In the matter of lectures, it is becoming a fashion now to put up magic lantern slides showing the evils of drink. I am not quite sure that this is the most effective way of preaching temperance. I would rather prefer to impress on their minds the opposite virtues which if practised would result in their turning away from these evil habits. I should put before them grand religious stories, things which would exalt them, rather than create in them an exaggerated sense of their weakness. We should try to approach the subject from the point of view of the people we are dealing with. What is the use of our showing them pictures like *King Carol* or *Sister something* which to them are more amusing than educative. I think it is time for us to prepare slides of our own suited to Indian conditions and put them before these people. We must also try to enlist in our favour the public opinion of people, not merely of those who count from our own point of view but especially of those who count from the point of view of the people addicted to drink. I would get hold of Police constables and Revenue peons who are perhaps the worst sinners, because often they get liquor free. I know of a place where the Revenue menial staff was afraid to come and listen to what the propagandists say because they thought that the propaganda was against Government. In my own district it was not until we got a

Sub-collector to preside over one of our meetings, that the other subordinate officials had the courage to recognize us. In this work, I will not leave out even the toddy-renters. After all they are our brethren, and if they are carrying on this unholy trade, they are doing so because of the economic pressure on them. Even if they do not give up their shops, it will be something if they will sell liquor only during proper hours and in legal ways, not put improper temptations to drink in the way of men or give one already drunk still more liquor to consume or organize cock-fighting to draw people etc.

I shall close with one or two observations. To me a temperance propagandist is not one who has a cut and dry programme of work to do devoting his attention to that and nothing else. To me Life is one and its manifestations many and wonderful. I would speak not only to men with three meals a day but also to men with two or one meal a day or even no meal. Perhaps, the latter need my sympathy even more than their mere fortunately circumstanced brethren. I would try to help the people amidst whom my lot is cast, in all the ways I can. If a poor and deserving man wants a pair of bullocks, I will get them for him if I can. If it is something else, I will do that, even if it be merely a matter of writing petitions for getting grievances redressed. If the propagandist sets about his work with a big heart and high ideals, with sympathy and love and a burning desire to be of use to others, I think the work of such an one is bound to be exceedingly fruitful of good results.

Rural Uplift—A Vocation for Life

The problem of Rural Uplift has become a burning question both with the Government and with Christian bodies for the last decade or two. The question is viewed from different angles, and different methods are being tried to solve it; for example by the introduction of improved methods of agriculture, co-operative societies, social service etc. All these touch the outskirts of the problem without getting into the reality. And hence our subject 'Rural Uplift—a Vocation for Life.' The subject falls under two divisions, viz:

- I. What does 'Rural Uplift as a Vocation for Life' expect?
- II. How can we meet this expectation?

I

What does Rural Uplift as a Vocation for Life mean? The cry from rural parts is, 'come over and help us'. Help us out of our insanitary condition, immorality, poverty, indolence, ignorance, superstition and also out of our dead religion.

When entering a village the first sight that catches the eye and the nose in most of the villages is their insanitary condition. It is painful to the eyes, revolting to the spirit, and repulsive to the mind. The villagers call that condition *Naraham*, hell, and yet they continue to live in that *Narahal*, dirt. And after entering into the villages the ears get deafened with bad words and indecent expressions. And getting into their life, the life of the poor is miserable, being subject to sickness and starvation, having no work or earning for about half of the year. Partly fallen huts or huts with torn roofs, half-nakedness and scarcity of drinking water are common sights in their midst. There is oppression by the rich or by the high caste non-Christians ostracising the Christians from their share in most places. The middle classes, with whom the cultivation of the land rests, are confronted with the difficulty of finding money to buy bulls, seeds or manure. They are very often reduced to poverty for no fault of their own, as e.g. for want of seasonable rains or water in wells. They inevitably fall a prey to money lenders who eat away their substance and leave them miserable all their lives. And in places more favoured by nature the rich take it to be their birthright to be indolent and sensual and to make money at the expense of the poor who are generally indifferent to better their life, being addicted to drink and its sister vices. Their only consolation in their miserable life is the word *vidhi*, the unalterable fate, the root evil of their miserable life.

Life is full of ignorance and superstition which are their inheritance. This is supported by devout Brahmins, village priests and their gurus. It is perpetuated by puranas, legends, literature and pandits. The threats of pujaries, the anger of their frightful deities and the consequent sickness and losses keep them from faltering from the path of time-honoured superstitions, customs and practices.

With such miserable lives the villagers drag on year in and year out and generation after generation. So their cry is, 'come over and help us'. It is the cry of 9/10 of the population of India who live in the country.

Having heard and noted this cry, are we to pass by on the other side shutting our eyes? Are we not to take compassion on them, go to them, dress up their bleeding wounds, heal them and take care of them? If so, what is it that is expected of us in the attempt to uplift the rural people? We have to send consecrated and capable men and women leaders to serve as: 1. Sanitary workers, 2. Religious leaders, 3. Moral upbuilders, 4. Social workers, 5. Medical helpers, 6. Leaders of young people, 7. Teachers of children. 8. Tutors of cottage industries. 9. Economists capable of teaching people ways of thrift, 10. Indian musicians and such other persons whom the conditions of rural parts demand for reconstruction.

II

What are the agencies whose help is needed in the work of Rural Uplift? The responsibility of rural reconstruction entirely falls on the Government. It has power and means which it should concentrate on forming reconstructed model villages within reasonable areas. The Government should organise a board with the following functions: 1. To help the villagers to build model houses under the co-operative system. 2. To appoint men to educate the masses and to help them to observe principles of sanitation. 3. To distribute free literature on rural uplift and reconstruction. 4. To remodel the rural schools—the hours of working and the books and syllabus should be so drawn as to embody matters that immediately concern them and their life.

These are only auxiliaries, but the main work that is the backbone of reconstruction cannot be done by Government but by God alone for which we, the Christian bodies, are called on to serve as Divine power stations to send spiritual power to heal the people internally and externally. Where shall we find such powerful, consecrated and capable workers?

The Christian boys and girls mostly get their education and shape their future career in our boarding schools which are situated in towns. They become townsmen and after a few years stay there, they show an aversion to return to their village homes and to identify themselves with the village. It cannot be otherwise. A town boarding school can never foster rural interests. To

expect it, is only expecting to gather grapes of thorns. So rural boarding schools for boys and girls should be opened in rural areas, and workers, both Indian and European, ought to be thrown with them in rural parts.

Rural parts require workers trained in rural ways. So the training schools for teachers or seminaries or both should be located in rural areas, where lessons pertaining to rural life should also be given with practical rural work. At present the Church or Mission workers have no interest in rural problems but evince a longing to return to the towns. This is due to the nature of the training they undergo and to the locality where the institutions are situated. And hence for Rural Uplift the training institutions should be in rural parts.

Rural work should be made more inviting. At present it is more advantageous to be a worker in a town, for a town-worker has greater ease and leisure, less responsibility, more ways of earning and greater facility to get his children educated than an equally qualified rural worker. And to add to the discouragement of a village worker, the starting and maximum pay of his wife is only half of that paid to her equally qualified sister who is employed in a town or taluq board school. So the rural work should be made more attractive than it is now, for only then the dearth of rural workers will be remedied and capable persons will be found to work in rural parts.

Rural Reconstruction work requires men who are capable to lead others, i.e., leaders. At present only unqualified persons go in for Church or Mission work in rural parts. Their knowledge is limited; their capacity is poor; their imagination and constructive power is nil. To be fit for leadership one should have at least read in one of the highschool classes. Excepting in rare cases a worker with elementary education or from the depressed classes will not be fit to be a leader of a village. So highschools should be opened in rural areas where children and leaders for rural work can get education at a cheaper rate. One of the open secrets that led to the success of the C.M.S. Tinnevely Mission is the opening of highschools in rural areas.

What shall be our immediate action towards making people take up Rural Reconstruction as a vocation for life?

1. To insure progress and success in the work of Rural Uplift by Christian agencies, the Christian bodies must first make it a point to take measures to bring the Christian message to that remaining non-Christian section of the community to which the existing Christians in a village are related by blood or otherwise.

2. Indian and European workers should be set apart for that work and that work alone, whose main duty will be:

- a. To collect the villagers and educate them in the practical way of reconstruction, making the educated mirasdars reconstructors of their own homes and villages.

- b.* To find ways and means of creating rural interest in all our existing institutions, such as boarding schools, high-schools, training schools and congregations and to work to bring about that end.
- c.* To open organisations, such as reading rooms, young men's unions, rural scout troupes etc. and see to their progress.
- d.* To suggest healthy literature that will educate village folks and help them to become efficient workers.
- e.* To plan and conduct summer schools on rural reconstruction for the present workers.
- f.* To secure the help and co-operation of the Government and other bodies in the work of Rural Reconstruction.

A good beginning is half success.

The Part of Missions and the Part of the Church in Rural Uplift

Much of what I wanted to say has already been better said in the course of these discussions, and the practical suggestions I had in mind have already found adequate expression in the Findings we have just adopted, so, on the advice of my Chief—Mr. Sandegren—I fall back on a 'word of exhortation'—a call to action. Let me, however, at the outset express my appreciation of this Conference. Like many of you here my lot has been cast in a rural environment, and the Indian friendships I value most lie among the thickly sown villages of Bihar. It has therefore been a pleasure to meet so many rural enthusiasts like myself and share their thinking on this vitally important matter of rural uplift. This has been a distinctly *hopeful* Conference. The obstacles that block the way to better living in the villages have not been minimised; but I think we have got a better understanding of the strength and variety of the forces that are making for progress. We Christians are not alone in this task. Government officers, Congress workers, College students, members of Co-operative Societies and an ever-increasing army of men and women who love their country are striving as eagerly as we are in the cause of rural re-construction. So I read in this Conference an omen of hope and I think we should send a message of good cheer to the devoted workers in the villages, pastors, teachers, missionaries, bible-women and other helpers who work in seeming isolation. Let them take heart.

'For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain;
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.'

It is a gladdening circumstance that this Conference has shown its readiness to co-operate with the other forces that are working together for the good of rural India. This is well, for rural re-construction needs the help of all.

(1) I am probably voicing the thoughts of all here when I say that this Conference has been a recall to *Christian Duty*. Rural uplift is not an option: It is an obligation. It is not usual to associate the Apostle Paul with rural uplift; but some arresting words of his spring to mind as we consider the part the Missions and Church should play in this enterprise. We find them in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—'I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and unwise'. There lay a primary Christian obligation: he owed a debt that must be paid. How did he propose to pay it? Let him answer

himself—'So as much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel.' He held the necessary capital and he had the will to invest it. At the heart of true religion, as Dr. Frölich so finely reminded us, lies the obligation to love God and our neighbour; and this is surely the glory of the Gospel that it enables men to do this. Human life in these Indian villages is held down and maimed by many evils, to remove which is a clear Christian Duty. I am inclined to think we ourselves can do little to develop character; but we can do something equally essential: we can create that better climate in which men and women can develop their own character. It is ours to plant and water; the increase must come from God. The Christian Task, as I conceive it, is to make it possible for men and women to fulfil, with minds unfettered, and under no other pressure than the dictates of conscience, the purpose for which they were created—'to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever'. To this end we preach the Gospel of Christ which enables man to find God and then to find his neighbour.

(2) But if our Conference has been a recall to Duty it has also been a reminder that *Rural Uplift is a Christian Privilege*. Here again we fall back on some glowing words of St. Paul, words that we can verify in our own experience—'Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ'. To those who follow the law of Christ duty ever merges into privilege. In these days we have been thinking in terms of a generous Gospel that covers the wide and deep range of human need; but I doubt if we have travelled far beyond the frontiers of St. Paul's conception of 'unsearchable riches'. Here are reserves ample and accessible to pay all our debts and it is our privilege to use them to the full. A word that kept on recurring in the Jerusalem Conference was 'sharing'. There, within hail of Calvary, where redemption was won at such tremendous cost, the delegates were conscious in a new way of the rich heritage that was theirs in Christ and they resolved that it must be shared at all hazards. We have no monopoly of the Gospel of Christ: it is alike our duty and privilege to share it with our neighbours. Freely we have received, freely let us give. We have an old saying in Scotland—'Blessings are aye sweetest when they are shared', and it is our privilege, as it is our duty, to make the saying true in India.

(3) Finally, this Conference has been a noble reminder to us all that rural uplift has behind it the highest of all *Christian Sanctions*—'And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, *teaching* in their synagogues and *preaching* the Gospel of the Kingdom, and *healing* every sickness and every disease among the people'. Here is a programme of rural service drawn up and carried out by the Saviour Himself, and I can think of no better part Missions and Churches can play than to accept it as it stands. It is a programme that meets the needs of the whole man, and it reaches out to the whole community; but it needs these two

things—a sufficiency of labourers and a right spirit. I take it the Findings of this Conference will be widely circulated and I pray that all who read them will recognize anew the call to service. To the Missions they bring a mandate to strengthen the hands of the district missionary, the village pastor and the village teacher; to the Church, and more particularly to the young people in Church, they bring the Saviour's own finding, after studying at first-hand the rural conditions of His day—'The Harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few, pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest that He would send forth labourers into His harvest.' It is the experience of all engaged in this task that success depends on the presence within the village of a life-giving spirit, a spirit at once eager and patient, a spirit that never accepts defeat. Some call it 'a central driving force', others 'the missionary spirit'; to us it is the Spirit of God. Well might our hearts fail us, were we handed the programme of Jesus Christ and asked to carry it out unaided on these throbbing plains of life, where the powers of moral and material evil have so long held sway. This is not Christ's way: He takes His programme and works it out in the lives of those who obey Him. He follows the demonstration method. So, we come back to this: the Part of Missions and the Part of the Church in Rural Uplift is to apply the programme of Jesus Christ in the power of His Spirit to the farthest frontier of village life. Only thus can we overcome that intangible and malign spirit of evil, that ancient power of sin that meets us at every turn and defeats so many gallant attempts to build a happier and holier village life. This Conference is a call to consecration and a reminder that obedience is better than sacrifice.

Findings of the Conference on Rural Problems

A. What are our Guiding Principles?

1. *The Outreach of Christ.* We believe that God will utilize the Christian forces of South India in building our villages anew in fullness of life. We pledge ourselves to the goal stated by the Jerusalem Conference, 'The one inclusive purpose of the missionary enterprise is to present Jesus Christ to men and women the world over as their Redeemer, and to win them for entrance into the joy of His discipleship. In this endeavour we realize that man is a unity, and that his spiritual life is indivisibly rooted in all his conditions—physical, mental and social.' In fulfilling this purpose, we shall strive both to form Christ-like character in every villager and also to share in building 'a rural civilization that shall be Christian to the core'. Our whole enterprise in rural areas is an integral part of the gospel of Christ. The stream of spiritual life must be pure and strong at its source and then spread from that source to enrich all phases of living the whole life. Nothing must prevent the Church from assimilating God's highest gifts and sharing them in fullest measure with the whole village.

2. *Rural Reconstruction Areas.* Our village brothers are so many and their problems so baffling that we are convinced with the Jerusalem Conference that, 'the only way practicable is to select suitable rural centres and demonstrate in them an intensive form of work that may eventually spread over wide areas as the Church grows in power and influence.' We suggest that South Indian Churches and Missions do intensive work in special rural areas small enough for each individual to take a conscious part in the life of the whole and large enough so as to make possible a wide range of essential services; such as: the 'development of Christian character, fellowship and service'; the education of children, youths and adults; health and sanitation; improvement in agriculture, village industries and co-operation, scouting and recreation; family life and social welfare. Such forms of work can best be accomplished through the co-operation of official, private and Christian workers.

3. *The Service of All.* Within this area our purpose is to serve every one, no matter what his religion or caste. To deal with only one section of the village is to maim the life of the village. Friendship with all and the service of all can well be made our immediate objectives.

4. *Many Rural Centres to be Developed.* Each Church or Mission may study its field with a view to selecting for intensive work an area that has some natural cohesive force, such as a village market, a co-operative union, easy communication in several directions or promising local leadership. A general programme may be laid down and steady advances made as opportunities offer until the whole scheme of service to the area is complete. We believe that a real start toward such a programme of village uplift can be made by regrouping the present forms of work and without large additional expenditure. If such enterprises, however, are too much for a single Mission, two or more may well co-operate for the purpose.

5. *A Few Training and Demonstration Centres.* In addition to such areas where the whole work will be for some years in process of growth, we also see the need for developing two or three centres where considerable advance would be made in the near future. These would serve as training and demonstration centres for South India. As such they will require larger funds. They could also study the methods by which rural centres can be multiplied.

6. *Co-ordination of Local Efforts.* The manifold services in a rural reconstruction area will have to be provided jointly by a number of agencies. Their efforts can best be co-ordinated by a man, or preferably a man and a woman, who will keep in close touch with all the official, Christian and voluntary agencies. We would welcome the Churches and Missions appointing persons, Indians when possible, with special experience in rural work, and allowing them opportunities for further training. They could devote all their time to studying rural work and helping their whole Church or Mission in fruitful service. They should live at the centres of rural regeneration. An advisory council on rural welfare, representing the various agencies at work, would be of assistance to them.

7. *Relations with the State.* The bulk of welfare work is too great for any private bodies to shoulder and must be done by the State. The distinctive function of Missions is to form Christ-like character by presenting ideals, emancipating persons and sharing with them the secret of realising the ideals. This work cannot be accomplished by the State. No matter in what form of service Missions may engage the development of character and not the spreading of comfort must remain their primary goal. We do not seek to have Government become allied or co-ordinated with Mission organizations. This is neither desirable nor possible. But we do feel that officers should do all they can to help all the people of rural uplift areas. Indian Christians require no more and no less assistance than any other citizens.

8. *The Labour Department.* We welcome the extensive and varied rural welfare measures that the Labour Department has taken for the depressed and backward classes. We believe that the

test for receiving departmental aid, including scholarships, should be the actual conditions of life and work, rather than religion.

9. *Christian Co-operation in Serving the Villagers of India.* Many Churches and Missions are doing valuable pieces of rural work but largely in isolation from each other. The great need is for fuller understanding of each other's efforts. More books, pamphlets and magazine articles should be published. We also call the attention of missionaries to the Rural Service and Research Bureau organized under the auspices of the National Christian Council at the Coimbatore Rural Conference in 1928. The Secretary is Mr. W. H. Wiser, Mainpuri, United Provinces.

B. What Forms of Rural Service are Specially Required?

10. *Adult Education.* Our basic method in rural reconstruction is education, for the villagers must learn to advance and to help themselves. Every phase of welfare work by Missions should contribute to education and character development in the people. Wherever possible, Churches or Missions should help to organize an extensive campaign for literacy. Simple books and village libraries are of the utmost importance for this. But for many years side by side with efforts for reading and writing must go other forms of adult education. Ideals can be well transmitted in other ways than by the printed page, for which the villagers cannot wait. The main methods we can use are dramas, songs and stories, the weekly village market, demonstrations and stereopticon lectures, and also the co-operative movement. At present many lectures, and even demonstrations, do not reach and firmly grip the minds of the people, for often the man makes a set speech and leaves without forming personal contacts or dealing with the application of his words. New ideas must be dramatized and made vivid to the villager. Literate people can render a great service by reading interesting material aloud to groups of illiterates. *Grama sangams* with reading rooms, lectures and games should be started on a basis of equality for all the villagers, no matter what their origin. Efforts to foster habits of thrift and temperance are also much required. Many are the forms of adult education, but in all of them the method is just as important as the contents.

11. *The Co-operative Movement.* Co-operative Societies offer large potentialities for good, which should be realized to the full. They can be exceedingly valuable provided they are constantly and wisely supervised. But without such guidance they very often fail in the purpose. We would call the attention of Missions to the need for other kinds of co-operative societies than those for credit. No limit exists to the range of community service that a properly run co-operative society can shoulder. It is an instrument of great promise that lies ready for development on sound lines.

12. *Village Industries.* We suggest that Christian agencies

explore the possibilities of introducing in the villages simple industries well suited to local conditions and markets. In this effort the advice and publications of the Department of Industries will be of great assistance.

13. *Village Women and the Home.* We are convinced that any form of rural service is bound to fail if the women are neglected. The woman is the main home maker, and the home is the basis of the village, the nation and the Church. Under the guidance of trained women who frequently visit the village, the rural mother can do much to further the material and physical well being of her family. She can also create and maintain the moral and spiritual atmosphere of the home.

C. How can we secure Adequate, Well-trained Leadership ?

14. *Leadership in the Village.* To accomplish any such scheme of Christian rural improvement as outlined above, we know that adequate leadership is an urgent necessity. Our rural congregations contain many men and women whose abilities for leadership can be developed under suitable guidance from the teacher. We feel that Churches and Missions must select teachers of a different type than was usual in the past, for on them rests the whole village life movement. New conditions and broader fields of service for Christ demand a higher kind of rural teacher—more consecrated and friendly, wiser and with a broader intellectual background. Better academic qualifications are needed, but they form only a fraction of the requirements. But we cannot draw such better men or free them from piercing anxiety unless we pay them an adequate living wage and improve their status so that they are well respected.

15. *Pastors and Missionaries.* We also feel the need for pastors with broader rural interests and enthusiasms. The district missionary of the past has had his area so increased that he now has less time for friendly contacts with individual villagers. Many general missionaries have also been drawn into town institutions. For these reasons, the villages do not receive the attention and study they fully deserve. The need is for pastors and missionaries of broad sympathies and understanding to engage in rural development. Churches and Missions should make further provision of scholarships for the training of rural workers, in technical as well as other lines. These men should preferably be drawn from the local area.

16. *Training for Teachers and Pastors.* The new type of teacher requires a new kind of training. In some schools and seminaries isolated rural subjects are offered, but in scarcely any is the rural problem treated as a whole. We feel it is essential to give a well rounded understanding of rural conditions and intensive training and practice in the various methods of improving village life. There is an urgent need for a book that might be called 'A Guide to the Study of Rural Sociology'. We request the National

Christian Council to undertake the preparation of such a book which could later be translated into the Indian languages.

17. *Supervision.* The teacher should also be trained during his service by well qualified supervisors who would frequently visit, encourage and guide him through his perplexities. We recommend that Missions appoint such supervisors for all their village schools.

18. *Colleges and Universities.* College staffs and students may play a leading part in building stronger villagers. More college students should turn their attention to the villagers and seek to solve their problems through investigation, study and actual service. 'The fields are white unto the harvest' and call for graduates to devote themselves to the regeneration of rural India. Moreover, the universities can do an important work in thinking through the urgent problems and co-ordinating the experience of various workers. They can also conduct village surveys and bring together the results of survey made by others.

List of those who attended the Conference on Rural Uplift, Madras

Chairman :

1. Rev. C. H. Monahan, President, M. R. C. C.

Secretary :

2. Rev. J. Sandegren, Secretary, M. R. C. C.

Findings Committee :

3. Dr. M. Olcott, (Convener), American Arcot Mission, Vellore.
4. Rev. J. Z. Hodge, 1, Staveley Road, Poona.
5. Mr. P. A. Krishnaswamy, 2, Miller Road, Kilpauk, Madras.
6. Mr. K. T. Paul, 5, Russell Street, Calcutta.

Members :

7. Rev. B. P. Appadurai, Church of Scotland Mission, Andreapuram, Karumbakam Post, Chingleput District.
8. Rev. R. V. Asirvadam, Pannaivilai, via Srivaikuntam, Tinnevely District.
9. Dr. A. J. Appasamy, Pallaveram, S. I. R.
10. Mr. J. D. Asirvadam, Landons Gardens, Kilpauk, Madras.
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14. Rev. D. Belavendram, Lutheran Church, Chingleput.
15. Mrs. P. S. Burgess, New Zealand.
16. Dr. K. L. Butterfield, U. S. A.
17. Miss Beryl Cooray, American Advent Mission, Guindy, Madras.
18. Miss E. M. Coon, Women's Christian College, Nungambakam, Madras.
19. Miss A. M. Cassie, Chingleput.
20. Rev. J. S. Clarke, Wesleyan Mission, Nagari Post, Chittoor District.
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23. Mr. J. J. De Valois, American Arcot Mission, Katpadi.

24. Mr. Thomas David, National Missionary Society, Vepery, Madras.
25. Rev. John Dhyriam, Wesleyan Mission, Periapallyam, via Ponneri, Chingleput District.
26. Rev. Isaac Devadas, D. M. S. Church, Melpattambakam, South Arcot.
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34. Rev. S. R. Gnanakkan, Bishop's Chaplain, Palamcottah.
35. Mr. P. M. Gopalakrishnan, American Arcot Mission Agricultural Institute, Katpadi.
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44. Rev. P. G. James, S. P. G. Sebathiapuram, Sawyerpuram, Tinnevely District.
45. Mr. J. N. Jayakaram, Y. M. C. A., Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore.
46. Miss E. L. Jones, American Advent Mission, Guindy, Madras.
47. Dr. T. C. John, Rural Sanitation Officer, Office of the Director of Public Health, Madras.
48. Mr. C. Joseph, Supervisor of Elementary Schools, Arcot Assembly, Tindivanam.
49. Rev. John A. Jacob, Professor, United Theological College, Bangalore.
50. Mr. W. Jeevaratnam, Tiruvellore, Chingleput District.
51. Mr. R. Joseph, Western Circle, Supervisor, Vellore.

52. Mr. A. Jeevaratnam, Church of Scotland Mission, Melrosapuram, Singaperumal Kovil, Chingleput.
53. Rev. S. S. Krishnan, C. M. S., Poonamallee.
54. Rev. R. G. Korteling, Punganur, Chittoor District.
55. Rev. W. Kanschat, L. E. L. M., Tranquebar, Tanjore District.
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57. Miss N. Logren, C. S. M., Trichinopoly.
58. Rev. K. Lange, Cuddalore, New Town.
59. Mr. C. J. Lucas, Union Teachers' Training School, Vellore.
60. Miss M. W. Lockhart, Wesleyan Mission, Tiruvellore, Chingleput District.
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64. Rev. J. H. Maclean, Conjeeveram.
65. Rev. Joseph Martin, U. F. C. M., Melrosapuram, Chingleput.
66. Mr. D. F. McClelland, Y. M. C. A., Espianade, Madras.
67. Rev. L. Nilsson, C. S. M., Dindigul.
68. Miss Edith J. Neve, C. M. S., Bethel Asram, Tiruvella, Travancore.
69. Rev. W. E. H. Organe, Bible Society, Park Town, Madras.
70. Mr. P. O. Philip, 1, Staveley Road, Poona.
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73. Rev. P. S. Rangaramanujam, Wesleyan Mission, Dharaapuram.
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79. Rev. G. T. Selwyn, C. M. S. Training School, Palamcottah.
80. Miss M. D. Sage, Buckingham and Carnatic Mills School, Madras.
81. Rev. K. Samuel, Lutheran Church, Tiruvellore, Chingleput District.
82. Rev. W. S. Sutherland, Church of Scotland Mission, Chingleput.
83. Miss E. Y. Sage, 47, Main Road, Royapuram, Madras.

84. Mr. J. Swaminathan, Supervisor of Rural Schools, American Arcot Mission, Ranipet, North Arcot.
85. Mr. R. P. Samuel, Supervisor, C/o Dr. Mason Olcott, Vellore.
86. Miss A. G. Stokay, Women's Christian College, Nungambakam, Madras.
87. Rev. Meshach Solomon, Wesleyan Mission, St. Thomas' Mount, Madras.
88. Mr. M. S. Thayapa, Secretary, Chingleput District Board, Saidapet.
89. Miss B. M. Tweddle, Wesleyan Mission, Tiruvellore, Chingleput District.
90. Mr. H. G. Thomas, C. L. S., Park Town, Madras.
91. Mr. J. S. Vedamanikam, Advocate, Y. M. C. A. Buildings, Esplanade, Madras.
92. Rev. S. A. Vedanayagam, Wesleyan Mission, Tiruveilore, Chingleput District.
93. Dr. J. S. Victor, Swedish Mission Hospital, Tirupatur, Ramnad District.
94. Mr. W. H. Warren, Secretary, C. L. S., Park Town, Madras.
95. Dr. G. Zechariah, Ophthalmic Surgeon, Marshall Road, Egmore, Madras.
96. Miss A. Cheriyan, St. Christopher's Training College, Kilpauk, Madras.
97. „ Sosa George, „ „ „
98. „ B. Gillette, „ „ „
99. „ Eatha T. John, „ „ „
100. Mrs. S. Kurien, „ „ „
101. Miss Anna Oornunni Pillai, „ „ „
102. Mr. A. Adeikalum, Gurukul, Kilpauk, Madras.
103. „ G. G. Achariam, „ „ „
104. „ S. Arockiasamy, „ „ „
105. „ J. Aruldas, „ „ „
106. „ D. Chimappan, „ „ „
107. Rev. G. John David, „ „ „
108. Mr. R. Devasagayam, „ „ „
109. „ S. Dureikkan, „ „ „
110. „ J. Emmanuel, „ „ „
111. „ G. D. Francis, „ „ „
112. Dr. R. Frölich, „ „ „
113. Mr. M. S. Gnanasigamani, „ „ „
114. „ R. J. Gnanavaram, „ „ „
115. „ V. D. Jesudas, „ „ „
116. „ Arthur Peter, „ „ „
117. „ S. S. Samathanam, „ „ „
118. „ N. Samuel, „ „ „
119. „ G. Stephen, „ „ „
120. „ G. T. Vedamanickam, „ „ „
121. „ Sam S. William, „ „ „

The following specially attended the Public Session :

122. Mr. W. Fyfe, Inspector of Industries, Chepauk, Madras.
123. „ J. Gray, Commissioner of Labour, Chepauk, Madras.
124. „ R. Ramachandra Row, Madras.
125. „ A. Ranganatha Mudaliar, Shanti Kunja, Adyar, Madras.
126. „ K. G. Sivasamy, Coimbatore.