CONCLUSION

The interesting story of the coming of the Missionaries and the growth of education in Travancore has been described in the early chapters. The natives of Travancore, a set of people having strong convictions and conventional laws, were never hesitant to adopt what they considered good for them. The Travancoreans abandoned Buddhism but continued the practice of running educational institutions attached to temples. When the Brahmins migrated, the people and the rulers of Travancore were forced to accept them.

When the missionaries became part and parcel of the life of the people and strained every nerve for educating them, they could not refrain from rushing into the fray with the missionaries. Neither the government nor the missionaries could coerce them to abandon their age-old practices in the field of education. On the contrary they had to absorb some of the local practices to appease the natives. Absorption of Kudippallikudams is a fitting example. Even now the people have not given up the paraphernalia connected with Ezhuthiniruthu.
Both L.M.S. and C.M.S. missions worked hard for the conversion of heathens through education. The L.M.S. selected South Travancore as the venue for their long battle for the emancipation of the illiterate. Ringeltaube the simple hard-working missionary laid a firm foundation for proselytization through education in South Travancore. He won the heart of poor and needy by his kindness and simplicity. His successors kept the tradition of their predecessor besides clashing with the Government for the poor and needy. Many schools were established by them in South Travancore and Quilon. They admitted students irrespective of caste or creed. By sowing the seeds of protestantism through schools they reaped the fruits of conversion in large quantity. Protestantism took root in Travancore, as planned by Munro. He was a source of encouragement and hope to the missionaries. The rulers of Travancore helped them with money, land etc. in order to please the Residents. It helped the missionaries to impart education free of cost.

The genuine contribution of the missionaries was the emancipation of the untouchables. Untouchability and unapproachability were the sores of Travancore Society and it was their strong conviction that they
were created for the well being of the upper-castes. Pleasures, nay, even bare necessities of life were forbidden for them. Nothing could persuade the upper-castes to change their attitude towards the untouchables. The Government also shared their views making the emancipation of the downtrodden difficult.

The missionaries were in a state of flurry when they mingled with the society of Travancore. Inter-course with the untouchables lessened the status of the missionaries, for they also began to be considered untouchables. Luckily for them the Residents of Travancore came forward to help the missionaries and assisted them to get some Acts like those against slavery, &c. passed in favour of the depressed classes. The depressed classes regarded the missionaries as their saviours and sent their children to the mission schools, which paved the way for the emancipation of mental slavery, though they could not achieve it fully in the nineteenth century.

Freedom from slavery by law was a landmark in the history of Travancore. Emboldened by the revelation of their rights by the missionaries, the slaves began to disobey their owners. The land owners realised that

Footnote: P.O. Cons. dt. 23 December 1855, No. 276-284. P. 248 (MSS)
the slaves could not be used at their will. That was
the beginning of a social change in Travancore.

The C.M.S. their counterparts in North Travancore
did the same work. They were invited by colonel Munro,
the Resident of Travancore, to weed out the superstitious
practices that existed in the Syrian Christian Church.
They worked honestly with the Syrians and the Syrian
college and schools prospered well under their superin-
tendence. Ideological differences with the Syrians
compelled the missionaries to sever all connections with
them and this led to the establishment of C.M.S. Mission
in Travancore. They established schools through the
length and breadth of North Travancore. They considered
it their duty to impart knowledge about Christianity to
the people irrespective of caste or creed. To accomplish
that aim they established schools. They centred also
their attention on untouchables and hill tribes. Slave
congregations and schools had been set up by them. The
work done by Henry Baker Junior for the hill tribes
could not be forgotten.

The women of Travancore undoubtedly should be indebted
to the missionaries for their emancipation. The missionary
women permeated to their houses bearing the torch of knowledge. The women of Travancore were in pupal stage and would never have dared to try to come out of the imposed shell, but for the missionaries. Economic emancipation to some extent also was made possible by introducing lace making, knitting, embroidery, etc. They revealed the truth that posterity could be reformed only through women's education.

Schools were established for them. Caste discrimination forbade the high caste as well as low caste parents to send their children to common schools. To attract them the missionaries established separate schools for uppercastes and slaves. Even though they could not bring all the girls of school going age to their educational institutions they created a zeal for education among women which bore fruit later.

It is doubtful whether anyone could strike at the root of the strong convictions of the women of Travancore. They assumed responsible jobs and proved their excellence in every field of activities from academic to trade union. The missionaries succeeded in their endeavour to enlighten the women.
The credit goes to colonialism for prompting the government to interfere in mass education. It could undoubtedly be assumed that the activities of Christian missionaries and the keen interest shown by the Residents for their projects motivated the government to act positively for education. By issuing a "neet" in 1817 Rani Lakshmi Bai inaugurated the establishment of some public schools. Swati Tirunal Maharaja in 1834 commenced the work of English education. Education imparted by the government was not universal. The government schools were out of bounds for the depressed classes because of untouchability and unapproachability.

As the depressed classes were being educated and brought to the fold of Christianity by the missionaries, the government was forced to think of doing something for their education. The parents of upper caste children would not send their children to government schools if the depressed class children were admitted. So alternative arrangements had to be made by the government for their education and hence it started separate schools for the depressed. The dawn of the twentieth century saw the government proclaiming the eligibility of students of all castes for being admitted in all schools. Thus the government also started to take active steps for mass education.
Many legislations upholding humanism were the result of missionary activities in the field of education. The importance of their prolonged struggle for the emancipation of women and slaves could never be underestimated.

People who attained the knowledge of liberty, equality and fraternity through reading English works began to think of freedom for their country. Missionary education enhanced national pride. They began to see the Missionaries and British officials as intruders. The native Christians, who were expected to support the British though a little later than others, plunged their lot to fight for freedom. British officials had already become vociferous against English education, mainly, university education, imparted to the natives for they believed that English education had enlightened them. It was too late because the people were determined in their demand to get education. In their efforts to liberate India, people broke the barriers of religion to some extent and stood under the same flag.

In the long run a section of people began to hate West, its imperialism and capitalism. This feeling of
resentment found its expression in the growth of communism in Travancore. Thus the advent of communism in the state can be considered an offshoot of English education.

The missionaries and through them, English education overhauled the society of Travancore. changes were brought about in the traditional set up. The gentle waves of education caressed one and all. The result of its all encompassing influence was a new era for the people of Travancore.

2. I.P. Desai, "Western educated Elites and Social changes in India" In Economic and Political Weekly Vol XIX, No. 15, April 14, 1984, p. 641.