

THE INDIAN CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS

E. M. Philip



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THE INDIAN CHURCH OF
ST. THOMAS

by
E.M. Philip

Edited by
Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil

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The Indian Church of St. Thomas

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by Chev. (Adv.) E.P. Mathew,

Edavazhikal, Kottayam

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Part II

The Indian Church of St. Thomas - Twentieth century
 Added by Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil



Dedicated

To

THE BLESSED MEMORY OF
THE MOST REVEREND
MOR DIONYSIUS V

The Syrian Metropolitan

WHO WAS FOR FORTY-FOUR YEARS
A TRUE SHEPHERD OF
THE INDIAN CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS



Mr. E.M. Philip Edavazhikal
Kottayam

who is known as the
Lion of the Nazaranees who valiantly and
intellectually dedicated his life for the
Syrian Church in India.

Editor's Note

The Indian Church of St. Thomas was first published posthumously by the author's son Adv. Chev. E.P. Mathew, Kottaym in 1908. He also prepared the Malayalam translation and published two editions.

In 1992 another Malayalam edition was published from the *Seminary Publications* Mulanthuruthy, under my supervision. This is the 2nd English edition. I was prompted for this edition in view of the increasing number of the non Malayalam speaking generations of the Syrian church living outside Kerala and the researchers outside the church.

I have taken absolute care to retain the originality of the author, even the curious spellings and place names are kept as it was. The following changes and notes should be read for clarity.

1. *Catholic* was changed to *Catholicos* to refer the Syrian Church dignity, also known as Maphrian. The word was also used as the adjective of the Church, universal.

2. *Coonen Cross* is used as it is. This is a Malayalam word meaning 'a bent cross'. But this refers to the cross at Mattancherry, near Kochi, where the Syrians assembled to take the famous pledge in the year 1663.

3. *Mar* is changed mostly to *Mor*, where it is suffixed to a West Syrian bishop. For the East Syrians the word is kept unaltered. This is to suit to the West Syriac pronunciation. The meaning of both the words are the same, *my lord*. The word is a respectful suffix added to the titular name of a Syrian Bishop.

4. The place *Tholiyoor* was changed to *Thozhiyoor*. The latter form is the correct one and the popular usage now.

5. *Metran* is the constrict colloquial usage of *Metropolitan*.

6. *Ramban* is the Malayalam derivation of the Syriac word *Rabban* meaning a *monk* in the Syriac tradition.

7. *Peter III* Patriarch is referred at times as *Peter IV*, including St. Peter, the apostle as the first in the Patriarchal line.

8. *Catanar* or *Cassanar* is a Malayalam equivalent to the Christian *priest*. He is also referred as *Kaseesa*, the Syriac word for priest or elder.

9. *Throne of St. Thomas* is used by E.M. Philip to refer the *diocese* of St. Thomas, not in the controversial usage by the present Catholicose faction in the Malankara church.

10. The term *Jacobite* is widely used in this book to refer the Syrian Christians. The church now prefers the term *Syrian Orthodox* rather than *Jacobites*. E.M. Philip sparingly uses the name *Orthodox Syrian* as it is now widely used by the Catholicose faction. It was a time when the Syrian church had to face a group called *Reformed Syrians*. He used the adjective *Orthodox* to *Syrians* not to the *Church*. When we use *Orthodox* to qualify the *Church*, grammatically it should be the *Syrian Orthodox Church*, not the *Orthodox Syrian Church*. When E.M. Philip used the term the Syrian church had two factions, *Reformed Syrian Church* and the *Orthodox Syrian Church*. Now the two Orthodox families emphasise on *Church*. So the correct usage is *Syrian Orthodox*.

11. *Anna* denotes a coin of worth 6 paise, now in disuse.

12. *Chogon* is a reference in page 246 to a Hindu community. The community is better known today *Ezhava*.

13. *K.M*: After a few footnotes the mark '*K.M*' is given to demarcate the footnotes added by the present Editor.

14. The present editor has given chapterwise page headings.

15. *Andrew* referred in Chapter 17 is considered by many as a bishop who came from the Patriarch. E.M. Philip refers to him as a layman. But at Manarcadu and Kundara churches his memorial is commemorated as festivals. The Vettikunnel family at Manarcadu believes to have the priestly ordination from Mor Andrews. The view of E.M. Philip on Mor Andrew is not subscribed by many.

Introduction

The history of the Syrian Church in India is seriously at loss in keeping the documents related to its heritage and history. The Pre-Portugal period is totally in darkness due to the lack of primary evidences. There is very little or no trace of any books or manuscripts of this period written by Indians. The scanty informations we have are the writings of the travellers from abroad. These secondary evidences are the basic source materials to bridge the black spots in the Indian Church History.

The first systematic history of the Syrian Church in India was written by Pukadiyil Itoop writer in Malayalam. Later by the beginning of the 20th century the scholar and the secretary of the Syrian Church, Mr. E.M. Philip prepared the most authoritative and methodologically written history of the Indian Church, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*. This is the first attempt of a Syrian Church member to present the history of his church in English. The books written by the outside scholars were biased and at times disparaging. The rejuvenation achieved by the English education prompted young scholars of the Syrian Church give impetus to present their Church's heritage and to defend the faith and doctrines in a convincing scholarly manner. Rev. Dr. P.T. Geevarghese M.A.(later Mor Ivanios, Archbishop of Trivandrum) wrote a thesis on the Pre-portuguese theological position of the Syrian Church titled *Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?* He could arrive at a decisive conclusion that the Malankara Church *could not have been anything but Jacobite before the fifteenth century*.

These books in its English rendering were out of print for almost a century. It is my earnest conviction that these books in

its originality will bear much light to the exact understanding of the history of the Syrian Church.

Mor Adai Study Centre is presenting these books in two volumes.

1. *The Syrian Christians in India* by Claudius Buchanan, *The Ancient Syrian Church in Mesopotamia* by O.H. Parry, *Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?* by Rev.Dn. P.T. Geevarghese and the article of the Hon. Justice K.K. Lukose titled *Christians in Malabar*.

2. The famous book *The Indian Church of St. Thomas* by E.M. Philip.

We are sure these books will help all those who are interested in the history of this ancient Church.

Dedicating to the glory of God and the adoration of the holy and universal church.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil
Fr. Dr. George Mathew Nalunnakal
Directors
Mor Adai Study Centre

Cheeranchira
11-06-2002

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Ever since the advent of the Portuguese into India at the close of the fifteenth century, the Syrian Church of Malabar has been a subject of special interest to a very wide circle of readers in the West. To European Christendom there was something grand and fascinating in the existence, in an apparently flourishing condition, of a sister Church in so far-off and unsuspected a corner of the world. The history of the Syrian Church has been published in various European languages, and by very able writers of different schools of thought; but so far as I am aware, none has been written from a *Syrian* point of view, and even the best writers are not free from bias or misunderstanding. Many of them, like Asseman, Geddes and Gibbon, had not the chance of visiting the Church about which they proposed to write, or of holding intercourse with her members; others, like Gouvea, Raulin and Paoli, had their compilations dictated by Roman Catholic prejudices: while a great many, like Visscher, Claudius Buchanan and Hough, had to collect their materials in flying visits along the coast of Malabar. Rev. G.M. Rae, formerly a professor in the Christian College, Madras, has attempted to make a revolution in the history of the Syrian Church, by placing too much reliance upon far-fetched and strained arguments, based on ambiguous inscriptions on stones and coins. Several of these authors were more or less prejudiced by incorrect information received from interested persons; and none, so far as I am aware, gives a full connected history or all the available accounts of this ancient Church. The real position of the Syrian Church as an *orthodox* branch of the universal Church of Christ is not correctly presented to the English public: not a few European theologians regard the Syrians as followers

and admirers of the heresiarch Eutychus, and call them Eutychians, not discerning that they condemn Eutychus and his teachings as vehemently as the followers of the Council of Chalcedon. To remove such misunderstandings is one of the principal objects of the present work.

Since the discovery of a maritime route to India, the Syrian Church has been an open field for the labours of Western missionaries, both Roman Catholic and Protestant. But their treatment of the native Church was, in many aspects hostile and derogatory to the doctrine of Christian brotherhood which they advocated. The history of the Roman Catholic oppression of the Syrian Church is so well-known in Europe, and has been so minutely commented upon by critics of diverse views, that a writer living in the twentieth century may have little new matter to contribute. But the only access, which English readers have to the history of the labours of the Church Missionary Society among the Syrians, is through the writings of the missionaries themselves or of their friends and sympathisers. Therefore it has also been one of my objects in the compilation of this work to expose a critical view of that part of the history of this ancient Church, for the consideration of Anglican Churchmen.

The history of the Syrian Church has been one of the principal subjects of my study for the last twenty-five years. As Secretary of the *Malankara* Jacobite Syrian Association, it fell to my lot to conduct the celebrated Syrian Church case in Travancore; it was followed by other litigation in Travncore and Cochin, not less conspicuous in the vehemency of the contest between the parties concerned, in the change of front in respect of the nature of the contentious, and in the bulk of the records. Papers supporting or confronting the contending parties made their first appearance in open court, and were subjected to the most severe criticism and close scrutiny which the tact and wisdom of experienced lawyers and keen-sighted Judges could suggest. New light thus revealed prompted me to extend my researches further, and the result is embodied in the following pages. I am also indebted in no small measure to the diaries and manuscripts of my late grandfather,

Rev. *Edavazhikal Philipose Catanar*, and my late uncle, Rev. *Edavazhikal Philipose Chorepiscopa*, both of whom were priests of tact and literary attainment among the Syrians. The last-named gentleman is known in England as the author of a small treatise, *The Syrian Christians of Malabar*, edited by Rev. G.B. Howard, B.A. and published in London in 1869.

A few remarks on the subject matter of the present work deserve to be made. The Syrian community of Malabar was an undivided body till the close of the sixteenth century. A portion of the community was then induced to detach itself from the mother Church and adopt Roman Catholicism. From the main body have recently sprung other sects, such as the Syro-Protestants and the "Reformed" or schismatic Syrians. From the Portuguese period, I have followed the history, in its direct line, of those rightly designated "Syrians proper" or "the ancient Syrian Church", and have referred to other sects, only where they come in contact with them. However, special chapters are devoted to the consideration of such detached sects, and of the labours of the C.M.S. missionaries which led to their separation. Chapter XXIII, in which the last named subject is discussed at considerable length, may seem to some of my readers too severe a criticism of the apparently benevolent work of that venerable Society. But the facts recorded therein are part of the real history of the Syrian Church, and ought not to be omitted. To exonerate myself from an unpleasant charge of having published a biased or one sided view of their work, I allowed the main facts in the chapter to appear in the columns of the *Malankara Edavaka Patrika*, the vernacular organ of the Syrian Church, of which I was the editor; and I offered facilities for criticism by the local members and agents of the C.M.S., from whose views it has been my misfortune to differ. I was promptly attacked by the *Malayala Mitram* a local vernacular organ of the C.M.S. In the course of the contest, friends and agents of the Society left no stone unturned to defend the dealings and attitude of the missionaries towards the Syrian Church; but ultimately they failed, and retired from the field of contest. With fresh light received in the course of this journalistic debate, I have recast the

chapter in its present form; and I now insert it in this work, with the full satisfaction that, in giving publicity to it, I am not making a surprise attack upon the Society.

The main facts in the historical part of this work were also laid at the feet of adverse critics in South India. In a lawsuit in connection with a church (*Cheria-pally*) at Kottayam, in which the Syrian Church history was legally discussed by the High Court of Travancore, Mr. *Justice* Hunt, a European barrister, passed in January 1901 a dissenting judgement, upholding revolutionary views of the history, doctrines and rituals of this Church. In a pamphlet in which I made an attempt to review the judgement, the main features of the history narrated in the following pages were brought forward in a condensed form. Copies of this pamphlet were circulated widely among friends and foes alike, and were also sent to the leading newspapers in Malabar and Madras. Very few persons thought it worthwhile to criticise it; many passed complimentary remarks.

I have next to express my gratitude to the many friends and sympathisers from whom I had help in one way or other in the compilation of this little work. Among them, Rev. G.B. Howard, B.A., author of *The Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*; Mr. E.J. John, B.A., B.L.; the Very Rev. V.J. Geevarghese and Mr. K.C. Mammen, B.A., Principal and Headmaster, respectively, of the Mar Dionysius Seminary, Kottayam; and Rev. Dr. S.D. Bhabha, representative of the Syrian Church in England, deserve special mention. And, last but not least, my warm gratitude is due in no small measure to the Most Rev. Mar Dionysius, my esteemed Metropolitan, under whose fostering care I was trained and by whose kind help I have been able to bring out this humble work on behalf of the ancient and venerable Church over which he holds episcopal sway.

In conclusion, I crave the reader's indulgence of my literary shortcomings. Educated as I was in this extreme corner of India, I can scarcely advance any claim to efficiency as a *litterateur* or as a historian. The London *Times*, in reviewing a certain book on Turkey, written by a Turk, observed that it would be read with

pleasure by "all who wish to see something of the East *from within*, and not through the spectacles of the tourist or the romancer; for we get the East here in its proper proportions, as it appears to the man who has lived in it, and not to the impressionist who looks at it *from without* and makes up a picture mainly composed of the points which strike his eye as being different from the West." If the reader will apply this remark of *The Times* to the present work, the object of its compilation will be more than accomplished.

E.M. PHILIP

Kottayam, S. India

St. George's Day, 1907

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The south-western corner of the Peninsula of India is celebrated from a very early period as the abode of an ancient and venerable Christian community known variously as Nazaranies,¹ Syrian Christians, or Christians of St. Thomas. The present Syrian Archdiocese, officially designated *Malankarai* from Malankara near Cranganore, where the Apostle St. Thomas is believed to have first landed, comprises the strip of land lying within the ninth and twelfth parallels of north latitude and includes the two Native States of Travancore and Cochin and a portion of British Malabar.

This insignificant Christian community, so long deprived of the solace and strength to be derived from union and intercourse with the rest of Christendom, would have been, in the natural course of things, either swallowed up in the Hindus around them or would at least, have been subjected by their fellow countrymen to a good deal of oppression and persecution with a view to compelling them to conform to the dominant religion of the country. That such a misfortune did not actually overtake the Syrians was due, it is sometimes argued, not so much to the goodwill of their Hindu community. According to these rules, one could not become a Hindu except by birth. The adherents of other religions

1. Nazaranies means followers of the Nazarene – Jesus Christ who was brought up at Nazareth.

and even those who were once Hindus but had become converts to any other form of religious belief, could under no circumstances, be received back into the ranks of the Hindu community. Thus it may be said that, in one sense, the Syrian community is indebted to Sankaracharia, the great Lawgiver of Malabar, for the preservation of their religion through the vicissitudes of several centuries. But we have to admit at the same time that the same rules of caste prevailed all over India, and yet the Church founded on the Coromandel Coast could not survive. The unity of the Christians of Malabar as a body, their exemplary moral character in the midst of very unfavourable surroundings, their attachment to their spiritual superiors, their devotion to the faith once delivered to the Saints, their loyalty to the ruling powers and their patriotism as displayed in their readiness to fight for their adopted country—characteristics peculiar to the early Syrians—secured for them the regard of their Hindu Rulers and a vast influence over their heathen neighbours. Moreover, from their eighth to their twenty-fifth year, all Syrians were carefully instructed in the use of arms, and thus they became excellent warriors. The more Christian subjects a Hindu Raja had in his dominions, the more he was feared and esteemed by his neighbours. For their services on battlefields and for other causes, too, their rulers granted them very many rare privileges. If the slightest infraction of such privileges was attempted by anybody, they rose as on man to defend their common cause. They even enjoyed a sort of semi-independence. Occasionally individual Syrians rose to high favour with the ruling Chiefs of the country, and were put into positions of great trust and responsibility. That such mutual trust and regard between the rulers and the ruled have continued down to our own times is proved by the following

highly flattering compliment paid to them by His Highness the late Visakam Thirunal Maha Raja of Travancore, generally recognised as the most enlightened native Ruler that India has produced in modern times:

"Your community is the very embodiment of antiquity and historical association, and the very model of contentment, peacefulness and loyalty. Were Parasurama himself (the mythical creator of the Malabar coast) to revisit this ancient land, he could not find a more loyal and well-behaved people than the Syrian Christians of Travancore."²

From the above remarks, the reader is not to infer that the Syrians were entirely free from persecutions. Oppressions and servitude of the worst type they had to endure though generally not on religious grounds. It is true there never was a Nero to force them to worship an Emperor's statue or to offer incense before an idol. But life and property were insecure, and coercion to menial servitude, especially in connection with the festivals of Hindu temples and other such heathen celebrations, was not uncommon. It has, however, to be admitted that Christians were not the only people affected by such a state of things. Irrespective of caste or creed, the weak were in those days at the mercy of the strong and had to submit perforce to such tyranny.

In religious matters also, though, as has already been remarked, there was no persecution in the strict sense of the term, the early Syrians had to contend against a much more insidious foe. Their religion was not indigenous to the soil. Its professed followers formed but an inconsiderable fraction of the people of the country. For several centuries they

2. The Maha Raja of Travancore's reply to an address of welcome presented by the Syrian Metropolitan Mar Dionysius and his community on the occasion of His Highness's visit to Kottayam in 1880.

formed an isolated body. The existence of other sister churches in far-off western lands was only dreamt of. The occasional visit to them of one or two ecclesiastics from Syria or Persia served but imperfectly to bring home to the minds of the Malabar Syrians the grandeur or the might of their Church as a whole. There were occasions when they were deprived of ecclesiastical superiors of any kind. Nothing was, therefore, more natural than that in course of time their zeal for the purity and integrity of their religion should wax cold and that they should assimilate more of the idolatrous customs and beliefs of the all-powerful community in the midst of which they existed as a speck in the wide ocean. Hence, it is a matter for no small wonder and thankfulness, that they so long preserved the fundamental doctrines of Christianity unblemished. Nothing short of a special interference of God Almighty could have kept burning so long the light of the Gospel, kindled in the first century by the hand of an Apostle, in this remote corner of the world.

The Syrians have been rightly compared to the Waldenses, and the valleys of Malabar will awaken in European minds the memories of the valleys of Piedmont. As remarked by a recent writer in a Bombay paper, "The presence on the shores of India itself of a large body of Christians possessing venerable historic associations and even claiming and Apostolic origin, must command the profoundest interest of all with whom the conversion of the whole of India is a matter prayed and striven for." To trace the history of such a Church in all its aspects and through all its evolutions is, indeed, a noble task and one for which far abler hands than mine are required, and I would never have launched my ship on the wide ocean, knowing as I do, that it is unseaworthy, this humble undertaking may serve to show that the

Syrian Church of Malabar fully deserves and will amply repay all the sympathy, attention and time that the highest minds of any race or country can afford to devote to it, and that it may lead many a devout heart to pray earnestly that the Great Divine Author of the Holy Catholic Church may graciously turn it to be of some service in lending a mite of help to the accomplishment of her visible union for which He Himself prayed.

Chapter II

EARLY COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN SOUTHERN INDIA AND PALESTINE

It is almost a generally admitted fact that commercial communications existed between the coasts of India and Palestine from a very early age. The Hindus of that period were not influenced by that aversion to foreign travel which seems to have pervaded their minds in later times. They had settled in the island of Socotra,¹ whose very name had a Sanskrit origin (Sukhatara: fortunate). Ptolemy conversed with Indians in Alexandria,² and Indian residents were found in Egypt in Pliny's time (1st century A.D.). Nay, it is even asserted, not without evidence, that Solomon's ships traded with Southern India. Sopara, Sopar, or Supark, of Puranic and of even Vedic times, is identified by some well-known writers, as Benfey, Reland, Reinaud and others, with Ophir of Solomon's age.⁴ The articles imported into Palestine by Solomon's ships—gold, precious stones, sandalwood, ivory, peacocks and apes were productions of Southern India. Gold is even now washed out of the beds of the Nilambur river in Malabar and is the monopoly of the Raja of Nilambur. At one time, the river Ponnani (Pon: gold), of which the

1. Sir James M. Campbell's, *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. XIII, part 2, p. 714.

2. *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. XI, pp. 137, 138.

3. *Ibid.*, Vol. XI, p. 138, note 1.

4. Henry Lord's *The Jews in India and the Far East*, p. 50.

Nilambur river is a tributary, yielded a large supply of gold. Ivory has been and still is an important article of export. The peacock is a common bird in the hills of Malabar. The ape, an animal so common in the country, needs no special mention. Some scientists have even identified the cloth in which Egyptian mummies were wrapped with calico, particularly noted as an article of manufacture in Malabar. Our Lord was placed in the tomb enwrapped in *sindun* or Indian muslin (Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon). Dr. Caldwell, the famous scholar of Dravidian languages, has conclusively proved the identity of certain Greek and Hebrew words with pure Tamil or Malayalam expressions. Tukiiai, almug, shenhabbim, and kop—words used in Hebrew to denote peacock, sandalwood, ivory and monkey respectively— are pure vernaculars of Southern India. The Hebrew names for cotton, nard and bdellium are of Sanskritic origin. Karipien, the Greek word for cinnamon, used by a Greek physician, about 400 B.C., is a modification of the Malayalam word karuva; and zingiber is equivalent to the Malabar product inchiver. Phoenician characters were introduced into Southern India long before the beginning of the Christian Era; vattezhuthu characters, in which Tamil and Malayalam were anciently codified, were Phoenician alphabets. And more than these, "Southern India is full of Roman money to this day. Coins of copper, of silver, and of gold— sometimes in hundreds together— have been found in many districts of the Madras Presidency, in Nellore, Coimbatore, Salem, Madura, and Malabar," representing "all the emperors from Augustus to Hadrian, and not a few of later date."⁵

5. In May 1842, an earthen pot was discovered near Coimbatore, containing 522 silver denarii, 135 of which were coins of Augustus, and 378 of Tiberius. (*Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XIV, p. 212.)

These are undisputed facts conclusively proving that naval communications existed between Southern India and the Red Sea, most probably from Solomon's time.

Further, if we turn to early Greek writers, we find that detailed accounts of the Malabar coast are left on record by navigators. Megasthenes, for example, writing in 300 B.C., describes Malabar as if it were familiarly known to his readers. He was a Greek ambassador at a court in Bengal, and in that capacity made great researches. Hippola, a daring Greek sailor, discovered the possibility of direct navigation to the coast of Malabar by the aid of trade winds, which till then were kept a secret by Arabian seamen. Starting from Bab-el-Mandeb, he succeeded in reaching Craganore in forty days. The following extracts from Pliny support the above statement.

"In after times (*i.e.*, since the voyage of Nearchus, the admiral of Alexander the Great) it was considered an undeniable fact that the voyage from Syagrus, a cape in Arabia, reckoned at 1,335 miles, can be performed by the aid of a west wind which is there called Hippalus. The age that followed pointed out a shorter route, that was also safer, by making the voyage from the same cape to Sigerus, a seaport of India; and for a long time this route was followed, until one still shorter was discovered by a merchant, and India was brought nearer us through the love of gain. So then, at the present day (*i.e.*, the time of Pliny who was born in A.D. 23) voyages are made to India every year; and companies of archers are carried on board, because the Indian seas are infested by pirates... If the wind called Hippalus⁶ be blowing,

6. The discovery by Hippolus of the direct course to India across the ocean is also mentioned in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* (c. 57).

Muziris,⁷ the nearest mart of India, can be reached in forty days... At the time I was writing this Caelobothras⁸ was the sovereign of that country... Travellers sail back from India in the beginning of the Egyptian month Tybis—our December—or at all events before the 6th day of the Egyptian month Mechir, that is, before the Ides of January. In this way they can go and return the same year. They sail from India with a south-east wind, and on entering the Red Sea catch the south-west or south."⁹

We have sufficient authority to state that in the Apostolic age, Cranganore was the nearest Indian port to Egypt, that Egyptian ships, taking great advantage of trade winds, carried on direct navigation to the Malabar Coast, and that this part of the country was fully known to the Greeks and the Egyptians by the very name India. There is also proof that during the emperor Tiberius's reign, ambassadors were sent from the king of Ceylon to the court of Rome, and that in the first century the Romans had a force of two cohorts at Muziris (Cranganore) to protect their trade on the Malabar coast.¹⁰

If we turn our attention in the direction of the Persian Gulf, we meet with a not less conspicuous maritime trade

7. Sir H. Yule and Bishop Caldwell take Muziris to represent Cranganore. This great emporium of commerce is thus described in *Periplus* (c. 54): "Muziris which pertains to the realm of Keprobotras is a city in the height of prosperity from ships coming to it from Ariake and from Hellenic ships coming from Egypt. It is situated on a river at a distance of 500 stadia from Tyndis by the river and by the sea coast its distance from the river mouth being 20 stadia." (Ancient India by M'Crindle, pp. 111 and 112, footnotes).

8. "The king has called Caelobothras, but more correctly Celebotras, belonged to the Kelaraputra dynasty. The district over which it ruled is that in which the Malayalam language is now spoken. In Ptolemy's *Geography* (VII.1.86) the name appears as Keprobotras, and in *the Periplus* as Keprobotras." (Ancient India, p. 112, footnotes).

9. Ancient India, pp. 111, 112.

10. Quoted in Ancient India, p. 104, from Pliny, Bk. VI.

between India and the head of the Euphrates. The prophet Isaiah refers to the Chaldeans as a nation "whose cry is in ships."¹¹ Nebuchadnezzar is said to have traded with Ceylon and Western India.¹² Nearchus successfully opened naval communication between the north of India and the Euphrates. He was followed by other navigators. The invasion of India by Alexander the Great also opened a land route to the Indian continent. Strabo writes: Aristobulus says that the Oxus is easy to navigate and that large quantities of Indian merchandise are conveyed by it to the Hyrcanean Sea and are thence transferred into Albania by the Cyrus and through the adjoining countries to the Euxine. From the Cyrus, the merchandise was conveyed in four days along a carriage road to the fortress of Sarapana whence it was carried down the Phasis to the Euxine.¹³ Appian, who flourished in the second century A.D. writes that the people of Palmyra brought from Persia to Arabia Indian commodities which they disposed of to the Romans.¹⁴

Who can say that all these were not the arrangements of a wise and Almighty Being to pave the way for the introduction of His Gospel into those distant regions of the East? To a zealous missionary who loved his Divine Master more than self, every possible convenience for travel was available in the Apostolic age. Ships manned by Greek and Egyptian sailors, probably including Christian converts in their crew, were plying between Cranganore or Muziris on the coast of Malabar and the ports of Egypt and the Persian Gulf, at the time when the holy Apostles of Christ dispersed from Jerusalem to sow the seed of the Gospel in the wide field of nations.

11. Is. xliii. 14

12. Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. XIII, pt. 2, p. 405, note.

13. Ancient India, p. 110, footnote.

14. De Bell Civ., v. 9 quoted in Ancient India, p. 214.

Chapter III

THE APOSTOLIC FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH OF MALABAR

CENTURY I

Tradition ascribes the origin of Christianity in Malabar to the Apostle St. Thomas. In A.D. 52, he landed at Cranganore, which was then "in the height of prosperity from ships coming to it from Ariake and from Hellenic ships coming from Egypt." Preaching the glad tidings of salvation, first to the Jewish residents of the town and then to the Gentiles, the Apostle secured large conversions chiefly from high-caste Brahmins. He founded seven churches on this coast, *viz.*, at Maliankara (near Cranganore), Palyur, Parur alias Kottakayal, Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal alias Nilakal, and Kurakkeni Kollam (Quilon). Four of these churches still exist and are venerated as the earliest of the churches in Malabar, hallowed by the touch of the holy Apostle whose hands felt the bosom of our Divine Saviour; while there is little difficulty in identifying the sites of those churches which have in the course of ages ceased to exist. After sowing the seed of the Gospel in Malabar, the Apostle left the infant church under charge of the priests ordained by him in the four converted Brahmin families of Sankarapuri, Pakalomattam, Kalli, and Kaliankal, and departed to the opposite, or Coromandel, coast. There also he founded churches and thence he

penetrated to Malacca and China. On his return, however, he was assassinated at Mylapore near Madras, where the tomb is still preserved. Such is the traditional history of the origin of the Malabar Church.

The Apostolic origin of this Church had never, up till recent times, been seriously questioned. Roman Catholic writers generally, and Jesuit writers in particular, support the tradition. Among Protestants Vischer, a well-known Dutch chaplain, Dr. Buchanan, Dr. Kerr, Bishop Heber, Archdeacon Robinson, and other illustrious sons of their Church, such as Howard, Collins and Whitehouse, Colonel Yule, the translator, of "Marco Polo," Alex. D'Orsey who examined all the Portuguese writings and authorities, and a host of other writers, are all in favour of the tradition. Although La Croze, Hough and a few other writers have expressed a doubt they base their disbelief on the insufficiency of direct proof. It was only towards the close of the last century that a missionary writer— to wit, the Rev. G.M. Rae of the United Free Church— of Scotland, for some time a professor of the Madras Christian College, advanced the novel theory that St. Thomas did not visit and could not have visited any part of Peninsular India, and that the sphere of his labour was India west of the Indus.¹ Our critic also claims to have discovered new historical lights in inscriptions on stones and coins, and holds that it was not the Apostle but a tradition concerning him that migrated from Persia to South India.

All that he has attempted to show is that there is no satisfactory historical evidence to prove the existence of Christianity in South India before the beginning of the sixth century; or, in other words, that the Apostolic origin of the South Indian Church is not proved. He has not succeeded in *disproving* the tradition (in the legal sense of the world). To

1. The Syrian Church in India, by George Milne Rae, M.A., London, 1892.

show that a certain fact is not amply proved, it is not sufficient to deny the fact, especially in the case of the tradition in question, which has come down to us in unbroken succession, and has been believed almost by the whole of Christendom till recently. To refute his fancy, one has only to repeat the well-known axiom, *Quod gratis affirmatur gratis negatur*. The burden of proof devolves on our critic and, until disproved by some direct substantial data, the tradition holds good.

All ancient authorities allude to the tradition by use of the wide expression *India*, and our critic has availed himself of it to explain away the various incidents that support the ancient tradition, by introducing an Afghanistan-India, an Arabian-Indian and an Abyssinian-India. Fortunately, when he came to the testimony recorded by Cosmas Indicopleustus in his *Universal Christian Topography*, he could not but admit that the Indian church, visited by that Egyptian sailor, in A.D. 522, was really the Church in Malabar, and from this date he fixes the origin of this Church to the beginning of the sixth century and assigns the credit of its foundation to the Nestorian missionaries of Persia. In other words, the Church first planted in South India was a branch of the heretic Nestorian Church, and never was there an orthodox Church in India until the introduction of Roman Catholicism in the sixteenth century, or perhaps of Protestantism at a much later date. How far this presumption is correct, we shall see in the following pages.

We have already mentioned the names of the seven churches founded by St. Thomas. Every one of them has its own traditions affording circumstantial evidence of the credibility of its connection with the Apostle. The church at Palayur, for example, is said to have been one of the Hindu temples of the place turned into a Christian church. Palayur

was Brahmin village. One of the sixty-four famous Brahmin *gramams*, the whole population of which with the exception of a few bigus embraced Christianity and dedicated their temple for Christian worship. The Apostle, it is said, met the Brahmins of Palayur and preached the Gospel to them at a time when they were performing their religious ablutions in a large tank, still pointed out. They were convinced of the truth of Christianity by a miracle worked then and there. In this and other tanks situated near the present church of Palayur are still preserved several idols said to have been thrown away by the converted Brahmins. The names attached, from time immemorial, to several of the plots of ground surrounding the church premises, support the tradition to a great extent. One of them is known by the name *Othuparampa*. *Othu* is the technical term applied exclusively to the Brahminical system of giving instruction in the Vedas. Another site, called *Ampala parampa*, indicates the existence of an *ampalam* or temple therein. A third site known as *Kalianveeduparampa* expressly refers to a temple dedicated to the goddess Kali. Another piece of ground called *Thaliyil Parampa* is the property of the Zamorin of Calicut. It is said that this was the original site of the *Thaliyil* pagoda, under which name there exists at present a Hindu temple at Calicut, belonging to the Zamorin; the tradition being that when the Brahmins of Palayur accepted Christianity, the bigots carried away the image to Calicut and dedicated it in a compound there, thenceforth called *Thaliyil*. A vernacular proverb in current use among the Christians and Hindus of Palayur and its suburbs, to indicate a feeling of indignation when one deceives his friend, runs in these words: "The next bath at *Vamanadu*." The tradition concerning it is that when the Brahmin tank at Palayur was defiled by the conversion of those who were performing ablutions in it, the unconverted Brahmins left the place saying, "We shall next bathe

at Vamanat," a village situated three miles away, where there was a large tank set apart for religious ablutions. A small hill situated not very far away from the Palayur Church is called Jews' Hill, where there existed in early times a Jewish synagogue, the remains of which are still visible. It may be that the presence of those children of Abraham at Palayur might have induced the Apostle to visit that locality and preach the Gospel among them as well as the heathen.

The conversion of the Brahmins of Palayur so enraged the Brahmin population in general that they made it a rule either not to enter Palayur at all, or, if circumstances compelled them to set foot there, never to eat or drink within the precincts of the village,— a rule still rigidly observed by them. It may not be out of place to remark here that at Palayur and in the Syrian village of Kunnamkulam (an offshoot of the Palayur parish) there are several Syrian Christians bearing family names identical with those of Brahmins in the neighbouring villages.² It may be reasonably inferred from this circumstance that it was one branch of the same family that embraced Christianity and still retained the old family name, while the other branch remained Hindu; the more so when it is considered that both the Christian and the Hindu branches point to Palayur as their original abode. Here is a case, in which the facts of the present day bear out in a striking manner the traditional belief of the past, and which may, therefore, be taken as fairly affording stray circumstantial evidence of the credibility of the whole tradition concerning St. Thomas, of which the conversion of the Brahmins of Palayur forms an inextricable part.

2. *Kakachery* is a very ancient Christian family at Kunnamkulam, holding a high social status. It is also the family name of a Battathiri Brahmin—a sect superior to ordinary Namboories—in a neighbouring village. Kalady, Cheruvathur, Mackat, Thaykat, Puliannoor, Vazhappally, Kidangam, etc., are other similar family names common to Christians and Brahmins.

Niranam, Paravoor, and the other churches founded by St. Thomas have their own local traditions and circumstantial evidence, similar to the above, in support, of their connection with the Apostle. Chayal, situated in the Ghats, ceased to be an inhabited place centuries ago. It is said that wild elephants compelled the Christians of the place to migrate to the low country. Recently, an expedition was sent, by the present Syrian Metropolitan to survey the ancient locality. The remains of old buildings, tanks and streets, extensive paddy fields which once were arable, the foundation of a building which has the appearance of a church, broken stones which, when put together, resemble crosses generally set upon graves, and other signs of human habitation and Christian origin were found to exist there. The hill tribes inhabiting the Ghats point out the exact locality where, according to their tradition, a church stood in a remote age. It may be tedious to multiply such traditions and circumstantial evidence, but we cannot avoid referring to an important vestige of the Apostolic age, which has continued uninterruptedly to the present day, and which is repeatedly mentioned in Portuguese writings. We mean *nerchas* or the *agape* of the Apostolic age. It is not uncommon even in these days for people to bring their sweetmeats to the church and divide them among the communicants of the Holy Sacrament. It is not a custom prevalent at Antioch or Babylon, and hence, it could not have originated in Malabar from any source other than that of the Apostolic age.

Chapter IV

THE ACTS OF ST. THOMAS

The chief authority relied on by Professor Rae to fix the labours of St. Thomas in Afghanistan is an apocryphal book called the "*Acts of St. Thomas*," alleged to have been compiled by Bardesanes (A.D. 154-222), a Syrian Gnostic of Edessa, with a view "to advocate celibacy as a Christian institution". It describes the mission of St. Thomas to India somewhat in detail. An Indian merchant of the name Abbanes was sent by king Gondophares to procure a carpenter to build him a palace. Our Lord met him in the market of Jerusalem and introduced St. Thomas as a fit person for his purpose. The Apostle was bought of Him for three pounds of silver. St. Thomas started with Abbanes, embarking at Caesarea. They arrived first at Andrapolis, where they took part in the marriage festivities of the daughter of the king of the place. Starting from Andrapolis, they went direct to the court of king Gondophares to whom the Apostle was duly introduced. The construction of the contemplated palace was then formally discussed. "I shall begin", said St. Thomas "in October and finish in April." The king wondering said, "Every building is built in summer, but canst thou build and make a palace in the winter itself?" After long deliberation, the work, was entrusted to St. Thomas, who instead of attending to the business for which he had been brought, spent his time and energy in preaching the Gospel and in building

a spiritual palace. The king, displeased with the Saint, put him in prison with Abbanes, eventually to be martyred. In the meantime, the king's brother died and was carried to a magnificent heavenly palace built by St. Thomas for King Gondophares. Elated with its magnificence, he requested permission to return to this world to enable him to purchase it from his brother. So when they were about to bury the corpse, it returned to life. Apostle and Abbanes from confinement, embraced Christianity and received baptism. Such in short is the narrative of the *Acts of St. Thomas*.

Our learned critic eliminating from this narrative what he believes to be romantic vagaries, extracts certain geographical and historical facts from it, and professing to have discovered new light in inscriptions on coins, arrives at the startling and revolutionary conclusion that the sphere of the Apostle's labours was confined to the kingdom of king Gondophares, which comprised the present Afghanistan, or the India west of the Indus, and that St. Thomas did not visit and could not have visited any portion of Southern India. The discovery of gold coins at Kabul bearing the name of Gudapharasa or Gadapharasa is suggested as conclusive proof that king Gondophares owned sway over Kabul, Kandahar, Sistan, and Western and Southern Panjab. Further, certain inscriptions on a stone now in the Lahore Museum are referred to as making Gondophares a contemporary of the Apostle.

We have no mind either to deny or to accept the authority of the *Acts of St. Thomas*. The arguments deduced from the Acts are, in our humble opinion, inconsistent and untenable, for the following reasons.

The *Acts of St. Thomas* is an apocryphal book unauthenticated and questionable, although it was written in the second or the early part of the third century. Its author was

living thousands of miles away from the scene of his narrative, and must have written from hearsay reports and conjectures. He cannot be expected to be correct in every detail of his statements, though the outline of his history may be correct in many points. Any inference drawn from such a source requires our careful investigation and scrutiny, before we recognise it as proof to discredit a universally accepted tradition like that of the Apostolic origin of the Church of South India.

The evidence relied on by our critic to fix the kingdom of Gondophares in Afghanistan is the discovery of certain coins at Kabul and in the Panjab. But then, what about the discovery of Roman coins in various parts of the Madras Presidency? Are we to infer that the authority of the Roman emperors from Augustus to Hadrian extended as far as Malabar and Coimbatore?

Allowing for agreement's sake that Gondophares really ruled in Afghanistan, how can one say that the theory of his connection with St. Thomas is not a myth? The author of the *Acts* had perhaps heard of St. Thomas having preached to a king in India. Living at Edessa, he could not distinguish India west of the Indus from Southern India. He might also have heard of a powerful monarch Gondophares somewhere in India,— in which India, of course, he could not know. It is not improbable that he might connect the Apostle with a well-known king. Before drawing a conclusion from the alleged connection of Gondophares with the Apostle, it is necessary to prove, at least, that Christianity really existed in Afghanistan at a very early age, claiming an Apostolic origin. No trace of it is shown, nor even a tradition to that effect. In the absence of such a local tradition or even a hint in any ancient historical book, it cannot be believed that St. Thomas ever had anything to do with Afghanistan, or with king Gondophares wherever he might have ruled.

Again, admitting the soundness of the argument to the extent that the holy Apostle laboured in the kingdom of Gondophares, the fact does not and cannot operate as an obstacle to his penetrating to Southern India. The apocryphal book on whose authority St. Thomas is carried to Afghanistan, does not fix him there for the rest of his life, but carries him to "another Indian kingdom or satrapy, where he made the acquaintance of another Indian king, at whose court he began to work afresh, and at whose hands he was ultimately put to death." What proof is there that this second kingdom was not in Southern India? No coins, stones or inscriptions are forthcoming to fix the later labours of the Apostle at a place beyond the limits of Peninsular India.

The Syrian Christians of Malabar have an *Acta Thoma* in the form of a drama in the vernacular Malayalam. According to the theory established by the author of a renowned vernacular work on Malayalam literature, the style and language of the first part of the drama are very ancient. Instead of Gondophares, we have in this drama a Chola Perumal of the kingdom of Chola, who sent a merchant Abban to fetch a carpenter. This was undoubtedly a South Indian king.

Further, there is enough proof in the Edessan *Acts* itself to connect the story with Southern India more than any other part of the world. Our critic steers the ship on which St. Thomas embarked along the route pursued by the P. and O. mail steamers at present. According to him, the Apostle took ship at Caesarea for Alexandria, and thence he went by boat up the Canopic branch of the Nile to Andrapolis, and after halting there, he pursued his course to Coptos and thence by land to Bernice on the shore of the Red Sea, where he again embarked, and sailing along the Arabian shore to the promontory Syagrus, the ship held her course along the coast of Persia and Cedrosia and directly reached Pattala at the head

of the lower delta of the Indus. Then she sailed up the Indus as far as Attock, where she struck to the left, up the valley of Kabul river, and finally reached the capital of Gondophares. This, of course, is the imagination of Professor Rae. We would, on the other hand turn the course of the Apostle's ship from the mouth of the Red Sea direct to the Malabar coast and land him at Cranganore for various reasons.

The discovery of the trade winds had, before the time of St. Thomas, facilitated navigation from Egypt to Southern India. We have seen from Pliny that Muziris (Cranganore) was then regarded as the nearest Indian mart to Egypt. We have also the authority of the *Acts of St. Thomas* to say that the Apostle embarked at Caesarea and took a Sea voyage from Egypt to India. He must have availed himself of one of the Egyptian or Hellenic ships which frequented the port of Cranganore along the direct route across the ocean—a route then pursued by all Egyptian ships trading with India. The direct route of communication between Afghanistan and the shores of the Mediterranean was by land. Baradesanes himself met at Edessa a caravan embassy sent from Northern India to the court of Rome. From information collected in his conversion with the members of the embassy, he wrote a book on the people of Northern India, in which he described in some detail the customs, food, marriage, occupations, religion etc. of the Brahmins and Shamans of India, but he made no mention of Christianity in Northern India. He himself being a Christian, though a Gnostic, would he have failed to refer to his fellow-religionists, if they had existed in Northern India at that time? If the India mentioned in his *Acts of St. Thomas* was the India of Alexander the Great, if Gondophares, to whom the Apostle is said to have preached the Gospel was a king of that part of India, if communications from Northern India used to be carried on to the west

through Persia and Edessa, it is natural to suppose that Baradesanes would never have dared to represent St. Thomas and Abbanes as embarking at Caesarea and pursuing a Sea voyage to the court of Gondophares, instead of taking a caravan route to Kabul, of which he himself was fully aware.

If St. Thomas had a mind to visit the supposed court of Gondophares at Kabul, he would have pursued a caravan route through Persia. In that case, the Apostle, who took so deep an interest in the conversion of Edessa as to send one of his disciples to work there, would have certainly touched that great Eastern city, and the author of the *Acta Thoma* would never have failed to record the fact as giving a direct Apostolic origin to his own Church.

The description of the voyage of St. Thomas as recorded in the *Acts* amply supports our view. We have the *Acts of St. Thomas* in Syriac and in Greek of which the former is admittedly the original. The author was a Syrian in nationality and one of the earliest of Syrian poets. His other writings were all in Syriac. Edessa was a famous seat of learning, where Syriac was the medium of instruction. The book was written for the use of Eastern Christians, to whom Greek was little known. In the Syriac original of the *Acts*, the place where the Apostle first landed with Abbanes was Sandrom Mahosa. (City of Sandrok) and not Andrapolis. *Sandrok*, it must be remembered, is the Sanskrit form of Cranganore. The significance of the word *Sandrok* and its identity with Cranganore may well be illustrated by the aid of Hindu mythology. In Sanskrit, Sandrok is a compound word made up of *Sandra* or *Chandra* meaning moon, and of *Oku*, a dwelling place, so that the name literally means the abode of the moon. The god Siva, according to a well-known Hindu myth, is the abode of the moon, the planet being his head-dress. Siva is called

by various names, all referring to the moon, such as Sandra chooda (one who has covered his head with the moon), Sandra sekara, (one who has collected the moon on his head), and so on. Thus, Sandroka (abode of moon) is one of the different names applied to Siva, and *Sandrok Mahosa* means the city of Siva. Cranganore or its vernacular equivalent Kodingallore is a form of Kodilingore. *Kodilinga* is one of the various names of Siva, and *Ore* means city, so that Kodingallore or Cranganore means the city of Siva. It is thus clear that Sandrok Mahosa of the Syriac *Acts of St. Thomas* means the same thing as Cranganore and is only a different form of the same name in Sanskrit.¹ The Syriac expression *Sandrok Mahosa* (city of Sandrok) was rendered idiomatic in Greek by making it Sandrapolis. It is not unnatural if it finally took the form of Andrapolis in a foreign language.

As already observed, Cranganore bore the name of Siva to whom it was dedicated. Among the various names of Siva is *Kandaparasu*, and the country of which Cranganore was the capital could very well be designated "the Land of Kandaparasu", which when converted into a foreign language, may easily assume the form of Kandapares, Gondophares or Gundapar. It has to be remembered in this connection that the name of the king to whom the Apostle preached was, according to the original Syriac *Acts*, Gundapar and not Gondophares. The king of Mylapore bore the Tamil name Kandapparaja.² A writer in the *S. India Christian Repository* informs us that "the existence of such a chieftain as Kandapparajah seems tolerably well authenticated." If such

1. The name of most of the ancient towns and village in Malabar are connected with the names of deities. For example Trivandrum is the town of Anandan, Padmanabhapura is the town of Padmanabha, etc.

2. *S. India Christian Repository* for 1837, Vol. I, pp. 263-256.

a prince ruled in S. India, he can very well represent the Gundapar of the Edessan *Acts*. Similarly, the name Abbanes also has a close connection with a South Indian name. "Now it happens", writes a contributor to *Indian Engineering*, "that Telugu sailors or sailors of the Andhra country were formerly, as they are even to this day, renowned for their sea-faring ability; and Appana is a common Telugu name."³ It is thus clear that the name of the king to whom the Apostle preached and that of his agent who conducted him to India are both pure South Indian names.

Another incident that supports our view is the marriage celebration in which St. Thomas is alleged to have taken part at Andrapolis. We read in the *Act* that our Lord appeared to the bride and the bridegroom and called on them "to remember all that his brother [St. Thomas] had said to them against matrimony", and promised that "if they would *undo the knot* which has been tied that day, they would partake of the true marriage and enter the bridechamber full of light and immortality." Here we have a decisive proof of the fact that the place where this marriage was celebrated was not Andrapolis in Egypt. The place where the Apostle landed was in a country where knot-tying was an important part of the marriage ceremony. It must be remembered that among all classes and castes of Hindus in Southern India, the most solemn and sacred function in the performance of a nuptial ceremony is the *tying of the tali* (an ornament) by the bridegroom on the neck of the bride. The solemnity and sacredness of it is so great that the very idea of marriage is always conveyed by the simple word *tie*. There is no record to show that tying was ever a sacred function in Egyptian marriages.

3. *Indian Engineering*, Sept. 5, 1896,

Hence, if any truth can be gleaned from the narrative of the *Acts of St. Thomas*, it is that the Blessed Apostle first landed at Cranganore, and after taking part in the wedding festival of the daughter of Raja of Malabar, he went to the court of Kandapparaja on the Coromandel coast. The reference made by Gondophares to the season in which St. Thomas proposed to build the palace is equally inapplicable to Afghanistan. On the Coromandel coast, the rainy season is the period between October and March, when the north-east monsoon blows, whereas the rainy season in Afghanistan nearly follows the south-west monsoon.

The learned critic again observes that the business of the author of the *Acts* "was to supply a fictitious genesis for a Church of whose existence he was well assured in such a manner as to make it appear that the Indian Church was a younger sister of the Church of Edessa, both having sprung directly or indirectly from the Apostolic efforts of St. Thomas."⁴ We have to remember in this connection, that the Church of Edessa where *Acta Thoma* is supposed to have been composed does not claim St. Thomas as its founder, but ascribes its origin to Thaddeus, one of the seventy disciples. If Edessa claims any connection with St. Thomas, it is only in respect of the ordination which its founder had received from the Apostle—a claim which the Church in New Zealand can equally advance in respect of the ordination of her bishops. By allowing direct Apostolic origin to the Indian Church the Church of Edessa confers on her a predominance and a prestige which she had not, and which she would naturally have grudged, had she been concocting a document. The version of the *Acts*, as it now stands, makes the

4. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*, p. 61.

Indian Church an elder, and not a younger, sister of the Church of Edessa. It cannot, therefore, be presumed that Bardesanes ever had an evil design in his composition. He must have stated what he had heard or believed to have been facts. Of course, he lived in a credulous age, and he is not to be condemned if he added incredible romance in his narrative.

In like manner, Seleucia owns Mari as its founder. It is alleged by our critic that the South Indian Church was founded by Nestorian bishops from Seleucia. Can it be believed for a moment that the Nestorian founders of the Malabar Church would confer on their daughter a privilege and dignity which the mother Church had not? And yet we know the Nestorian Church always admitted that Malabar was a field of the labours of St. Thomas.

That there was a church at Mylapore at least in the 8th century is an admitted fact, and it is contended that church was founded and governed by Nestorian missionaries and bishops. But the Nestorians with all the Eastern Churches celebrate, on the 3rd of July, a festival in honour of the translation of the remains of St. Thomas from Mylapore to Edessa as if they were not aware of their own claim as progenitor of the Mylapore church.

Calamina the site of the Apostle's martyrdom, is another evidence of his labours in Southern India. The earliest mention of the site is said to be in Hippolitus, who died between A.D. 235 and 239. Our critic identifies the place with Caramana, the modern Kerman in Eastern Persia, or with Calama on the seaboard of Gedrosia.⁵ We would offer the following explanation.

5. Rae, p. 59.

Mylapore, venerated from a very early time as the site of the Apostle's martyrdom, means the city of peacocks. St. Thomas is represented in Indian art as sitting in the midst of this beautiful bird.

In the ninth century, Alfred the Great, the Anglo-Saxon king, in fulfilment of a vow he had taken probably during his Danish war, sent to the tomb of St. Thomas in India, an embassy headed by Sighelian, Bishop of Shirburn, on a voyage of pilgrimage. Gibbon remarks thereon that neither the author of the Saxon Chronicle nor William of Malmesbury was capable in the 12th century of inventing this extraordinary fact.

In the same century, an ancient account of India and China by two Muhammadan travellers makes mention of a place in India which they name *Bethuma*, which word, in the Arabic and the Syro-Chaldean languages, means the house of Thoma.⁶

In the time of the celebrated Venetian Marco Polo (A.D. 1220), Mylapore was a place of pilgrimage frequented by Christians and Saracens.⁷

Among the Syrian Christians of Malabar, there are hundreds of families that venerate the names of some ancestors who had gone on a pilgrimage to the Apostle's tomb at Mylapore several generations ago.

In 1653, Bishop Ahatalla, who was kept in prison by the Portuguese at Mylapore, wrote "In Calamina men who make a trade of persecution have arrested me."

The reference to Caramana or Calama as the site of the Apostle's martyrdom is a guess of Professor Rae. It cannot

6. Renadotus, *Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, p. 136.

7. Yule's edition, p. 290.

stand unless supported by some local tradition. If mere euphonic harmony can be taken as sufficient to fix the disputed site, we may point out another Caramana in Southern India itself, within a distance of 25 miles from Quilon, being the place of one of the seven churches founded by St. Thomas. For a correct explanation of Calamina, we need not go to Persia or Gedrosia. The site on which the holy Apostle really suffered martyrdom is on a hill not far from Mylapore known in English as "Little Mount" – a literal translation of the vernacular name, *Chinnamala Glamona*, the diminutive form of *glama*, meaning a *hill* is the Syro-Chaldean word literally conveying the sense of "Little Mount." Hence *Calamina* points to the very hill which now represents the site of the Saint's martyrdom. In the next chapter we shall see that a Hebrew Gospel of St. Matthew was discovered in the Malabar Church in A.D. 190, when Pantaenus visited it. It is almost an acknowledged fact that St. Matthew wrote a Gospel in Hebrew and that his Hebrew was Aramaic, the language spoken by our Lord. The words used by Eusebius are *augios te hebraion grammasi*, which probably means Syriac, not Hebrew. It may thus be presumed that there was ample convenience in that age to carry on communication with the Christian centres in foreign countries through the Syro-Chaldean or Aramaic language, and *Glamona*, passing from Syriac into Greek, could easily undergo a slight change into *Calamina*. To one who has studied the curious manner in which proper names have undergone changes in early times in passing from the Indian vernaculars to foreign languages and *vice versa*, the conversion of *Chinnamala* into *Glamona* or *Calamina*, Chandroka into Sandrok Mahosa or Andrapolis,

Kundapparaja into Gundapar or Gondophares, etc, is not astonishing.⁸

If the names *Gudapharasa* on the coins discovered at Kabul and *Gadapharasa* in the inscription on a stone preserved in the Lahore Museum can be identified with Gundapar or Gondophares in the Edessan *Acts of St. Thomas*, and if this presumption can create a field in Afghanistan for the mission of that Apostle, independently of any history, local tradition, or even a hint to that effect anywhere, why should not the names *Kandapparaja* of the Coromandel coast or *Kandaparasu* of the Malabar coast be identified with Gundapar, and the labours of the Apostle be confined to Southern India, especially as the latter is supported by history, tradition and a host of circumstantial evidence?

Let us next turn our attention to the writings of the early Fathers and the liturgies and rituals of the Eastern Churches.

8. The following curious changes of proper names may be cited as examples.

<i>Vernacular</i>	<i>Foreign</i>
Kottayam	Cotete
Kaduthuruthy	Cartarte
Kollam	Quilon
Kodungallore	Cranganore
Udiamperoor	Diamper
Parampil Alexander	Alexander de Campo
Hamilton's Bridge	Barber's Bridge
Marthanda Varma	Iniquitribirim
Avira, Itty, Ittan	Abraham
Chandy	Alexander
Uthup, Ittoop	Joseph

Parampu in Malayalam means a compound. It is also the name of a Syrian family. Hence "Parampil Alexander" was converted by the Portuguese into Alexander de Campo.

Ambitton is the vernacular equivalent of barber. Hamilton's Bridge was first expressed *Ambitton's Bridge* and then translated into Barber's Bridge.

The slave converts of St. Francis Xavier used to speak of the Raja of Travancore as *Enaku Thampuram* (my Lord or my Raja). Xavier understood it as the real name of the Raja. Hence the name of the Raja Marthanda Varma in Xavier's writings was Iniquitribirim.

The Chaldean Church in its office for the Apostle's day, speaks of St. Thomas as having been "pierced with a lance in India by the seashore." The Jacobite Church in her special service for Whitsunday refers to the Apostle as the preacher of the Gospel in India. In the Roman Breviary, St. Thomas, surnamed, Didymus, is proclaimed as preacher of Christ's Gospel to the Indians, by whom "he was pierced with arrows at Calamina." In the Paschal Chronicles, in a fragment of a work by Bishop Dorotheus (born A.D. 254), it is said that St. Thomas suffered martyrdom at Calamina, "a town in India."⁹ St. Hippolytus, Bishop of Portus, A.D. 220, refers to Calamina, "a city in India", as the place of St. Thomas's martyrdom.¹⁰ Philothorgius, an Arian writer, informs us of a missionary bearing the surname Indicus who on visiting the Hindu Peninsula, was not surprised to meet with fellow Christians, whose peculiar rites attested their antiquity as well as their isolation from Christendom at large. The date of this testimony is about the year 350.¹¹

Jerome, who flourished in the 4th century and who was the ornament of the literary world of his age, speaks of St. Thomas's mission to India as a fact universally known and believed in his time.

St. Ephraim who died in A.D. 373 refers, in his hymn, to the Apostle St. Thomas among the "Indians" upon whose "sunburnt" and "dark" complexions the saintly poet dwells. He also refers to the remains of St. Thomas carried from India to Edessa as a "valuable treasure" — "*this pearl none greater doth India yield.*" This description of dark and sunburnt complexions and of a yield of good pearls applies to no country other than South India. Similarly, the Indian and Edessan date of the commemoration of the translation of the relics of

⁹. Cave's *Historia Literaria*, pp. 107 and 108.

¹⁰. *De Duodecim Apostolis*, Ed. Fabr. Appendi., p. 30.

¹¹. Hardwick's *Christ and Other Martyrs*, CII. p. 180.

St. Thomas from India to Edessa is July 3, and Theodorus (A.D. 590) who seems to have visited the shrine of the Apostle, informed St. Gregory of Tours that the remains were carried at a time of exceptionally heavy rains. June and July are the seasons of the heaviest rain of the south-west monsoon. All these point to a South Indian apostolate of St. Thomas.

To be short, we may direct our readers to Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Tours, Necipherus, Sephrenius, Gregorius Bar Hebreus, and a host of other historians and chroniclers who confirm the ancient tradition.

Among modern authors, Asseman, writes: that St. Thomas was the Apostle of India is attested by all ecclesiastical records Greek, Latin, and Syrian.¹² Bishop Heber observes: "I see no reason for doubting; there is as fair historical evidence as the case requires, that St. Thomas preached the Gospel in India and was martyred at a place called Mylapore."¹³ Dr. Buchanan expresses his conviction that "we have as good authority for believing that the Apostle Thomas died in India as that the Apostle Peter died at Rome."

It is true the ancient liturgies and the early Fathers and writers allude to the circumstance by the use of the wide expression *India*. But when it is considered that the chain of history is connected link by link from the second century up to A.D. 522 when Cosmas actually witnessed an organised Church on the coast of Malabar, the early testimonies could not but have reference to the latter Church, unless it is conclusively shown by direct evidence that Christianity was planted in Afghanistan by St. Thomas and did exist in that country for a considerable time, during the period in which these early writers lived. The fact that the countries in which

12. *Dissert, de Syro-Nestoriani*, Tom. IV. p. 439.

13. *Journal*, Vol. III, p. 212.

these Fathers and writers lived had direct communication with South India, and that this part of the Peninsula was known to them by the name India, further strengthens the view that they really meant Peninsular India and not an Afghanistan-India. Some of these authorities refer to India, along with and distinguished from Persia, Media, Ethiopia, Scythia, Bactria, etc., so that it is clear that they regarded the India of St. Thomas as being outside an Ethiopian or Afghan India. We have in Pliny a definite description of the boundaries of India as then known: "Where the chain of Emmodius rises, the nations of India begin, which borders not only on the eastern sea, but on the south as well, which we have already mentioned as being called the Indian ocean." A little further down he says in unequivocal language that the river Indus was the boundary of India in the west.¹⁴ In the *Periplus* also we have a similar definition in these words: "On the east of that river, *i.e.*, the Indus, is the commencement of India proper, the boundary of which on the North is Tarus, on the South the Ocean, on the West the Indus."¹⁵ A passage in Cosmas' work shows that in his days the country lying east of the Indus was regarded as India and that Malabar was part of it. On the other hand, if the countries lying to the west of the Indus are referred to in any of the early writings as India, it is rather an exceptional usage than a rule. We have enough evidence to prove that from the time of Pliny to that of Cosmas the boundaries of the continent of India were definitely fixed, and the country lying within these boundaries was known as India to the writers of that age.

The question for solution is whether the king Kandappar mentioned in the *Syriac Acts of St. Thomas* was Gondophares, king of Afghanistan, or he was a South Indian king. Professor Rae's argument is this: Coins were discovered in Kabul

14. Pliny's Natural History, Book VI, Chapter XXI, p. 38.

15. *Periplus*, p. 16.

bearing the name of Gudapharasa, and a stone preserved in the Lahore Museum shows that a king bearing the name of Gadapharasa was a contemporary of St. Thomas. Countries like Afghanistan, Abyssinia, and Arabia were in ancient times referred to in certain writings as India. Therefore, the king Kandappar named in the *Acts* was Gondophares and he was ruler of Afghanistan, and St. Thomas did not work and could not have worked in any country other than Afghanistan, no matter whether there is or is not any history, or tradition, local or foreign to support the presumption.

Allow us to bring a counter argument, assuming for the present that the history of the Roman Caesars is as obscure as the history of St. Thomas. Coins bearing the name of Claudius were discovered in hundreds and thousands in Southern India. Claudius is said to have been an emperor of Rome. But Rome was a wide name in ancient times. Paul a native of Tarsus says that he was a born Roman. So there was a Tarsus-Rome. St. Peter, or rather the commentators on his Epistle, identify Rome with Babylon. So we see there was a Babylonian Rome. We also know that troops carrying Roman banners were found stationed on the coast of Malabar in the first century. So we may presume that Malabar also was at that time a Roman province. A certain king bearing the name Coelobatras ruled in Southern India at that time. From the discovery of coins, the wide application of the name Rome, and the similarity of the name Claudius and Coelobatras, we may conclude that Claudius and Coelobatras were one and that the country ruled by him was Southern India.

If arguments of this kind are acceptable, Professor Rae's arguments to deprive the Church of Malabar of her Apostolic origin are tenable, and we leave it to our readers to decide the question for themselves.

Chapter V

PANTAENUS, THE FIRST MISSIONARY TO INDIA

CENTURY II

Even if the foundation of the Church in Southern India by the Apostle St. Thomas is not satisfactorily proved, there are enough facts to show that a church existed there almost in the sub-apostolic age. History records the Mission of one Pantaenus to India in A.D. 190. He was sent by Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, in response to an application sent by the Christians of India. Eusebius, the learned bishop of Caesarea, testifies to the effect that Pantaenus "displayed such ardour and so zealous a disposition respecting the Divine Word that he was constituted a herald of the Gospel of Christ to the natives of the East, and that he went as far as India and there found his own arrival anticipated by some who were acquainted with the Gospel of St. Matthew, to whom Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached and had left them the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Hebrew, which was also preserved until this time."¹

This account of the mission of Pantaenus is confirmed by Jerome. Pantaenus was the head of the famous Catechetical School of Alexandria, and during the period of his voyage to India his chair was occupied by Clement. From information received from Pantaenus, Clement and Jerome

1. Ecclesiastical History, Book V, chap. X.

describe the India of Pantaenus as a place inhabited by *Brahmins* and *Philosophers*, and of the last-mentioned sect, Clement says that "they know not marriage nor begetting of children".

In the first place, we have to see if the above description of the country and people visited by the Alexandrian missionary applies to Malabar. If it does, there is no room to doubt the Syrian tradition of the Apostolic origin of the Malankara Church. Had Clement and Jerome failed to refer to the Brahmin population of the country, our learned critic would have carried Pantaenus to Abyssinia or Arabia Felix, defining India in its widest sense. The narrative, as recorded by the famous writers of Alexandria, leaves no room to suspect the genuineness of Pantaenus' visit to India proper; and the only allegation made against the applicability of the term to Malabar by Professor Rae is that it was colonised by the Brahmins only in the seventh century; and on that presumption, our critic takes Pantaenus to Northern India or the India of Alexander the Great. It has been the opinion of almost all writers in all ages that Pantaenus was sent as a missionary to Malabar to help and confirm the converts of St. Thomas, and now we are asked to disbelieve this unanimous verdict on the strength of a gratuitous assumption that Brahmins colonised Malabar only in the seventh century. Hence, all that we have to prove is that Brahmins lived in Malabar in the second century; and if we succeed in this undertaking, our task is done.

As already pointed out in a previous chapter, the general route pursued by Greek and Egyptian navigators at the time with which we are concerned was from Bab-el-Mandeb to the coast of Malabar; and Pantaenus had no alternative but to avail himself of one of such ships. It is also seen that the Egyptian missionary was sent in response to an earnest

application of the native Christians, who complained that they were in need of religious teachers. The Christians of Malabar had ample opportunity to send that complaint through the Egyptian navigators who annually visited their coast in pursuit of commercial business. Had St. Thomas preached in the kingdom of Gondophares which included part of Northern India, and had the Christians in that region been in a straitened condition for want of religious teachers they had greater convenience and opportunity to send their application to the nearest Christian centres in Persia or Seleucia with which they were in direct touch through caravan trade, than to communicate with Alexandria.

The allegation that Malabar was void of Brahmins till about the seventh century is a gratuitous assumption supported by no proof. *Malabar Puranas* and *Keralolpathy* record that Kerala was reclaimed from the sea by Parasurama several centuries previous to the Christian era, and that he imported a colony of Brahmins and portioned out the country among them as an act of propitiation for his crime of having assassinated his innocent mother. The story is no doubt a myth, but the aforesaid works that record it came into existence in the early part of the Christian era, and it cannot be imagined that their authors would concoct such a story, had Malabar been not occupied by Brahmins. Parasurama, the leader of the Brahmin colonists of Malabar, is referred to in the *Ramayana*, whose date has been fixed to be between 1400 and 1000 B.C. That Brahminism was introduced into Malabar long before the Christian era is also attested to by Dr. Wilson, Sir W. W. Hunter and a host of other authoritative writers. According to Dr. Dutt, the whole of Southern India had been Hinduized, and the three great kingdoms of Cholla, Chera and Pandya were established by the fourth century B.C.

Local history further records that for several centuries since 58 B.C., Malabar was under a mixed Government composed of a Brahmin aristocracy under Viceroys or Perumals, sent from the neighbouring country. Many of the oldest Hindu temples of the country, which were founded before the dawn of the Christian era, have their own traditions of Brahminical origin. Arian an Alexandrian Greek who lived in the reigns of Hadrian and Antonius Pius, made several voyages to Malabar and left a book, which subsequently served as a practical manual for sailors and merchants. That book gives a detailed account of Cape Comorin as a place frequented by female pilgrims in numbers to worship the goddess Kali, bride of Siva. The worship of Durga or Kali is Brahminical. Just as the existence of a church dedicated to St. Peter or St. Paul in a certain place in a certain century is a decided proof as to the existence of Christianity in that particular locality at that particular period, so the existence of a temple at Cape Comorin dedicated to Kali is a positive testimony to the existence of Brahmins and Brahminical worship there.

P. Shangoonny Menon, late Dewan Peishkar in Travancore,² testifies in his *History of Travancore* to his having examined a copper *sasanam* in the possession of a Brahmin in the village of Chera Mahadevi, one of the old capitals of the Travancore kings. It purports to have been executed by one Narayanappaya of the Kannadian family of the Bharadwaja Gothram (line) of Brahmins professing the Rig Veda. He, having received a donation called *Kalapurussha Danam* from Maharaja Gajapati Pratapa Rudra, resolved to perform some charity with the money, and repaired to the southern kingdom called Thiruvadi Desam (Travancore

². The post of a Dewan Peishkar in Travancore is equivalent to that of a Collector in the Madras Presidency.

country), where in the Malayachala mountain he met a sage by whose order he excavated an irrigation canal for the benefit of Brahmins, and with the surplus money he built a *Sathram* whose management was entrusted to the receiver of this *sasanam* who was himself a Brahmin of this *Srivatsa Gothram* (line) professing the *Yajur Veda*. The document purports to have been executed on Thursday, *Shravana asterism, Panchami Aushada* month, *Sowmmiya-nama* year of *Kali* 3342 (A.D. 242)³. This ancient document definitely shows that Brahmins lived in Malabar in the early part of the third century, (only fifty years after the arrival of Pantaenus).

The Travancore historian again says, "Tradition shows that on the 12th *Magarom*, 3412 of the *Kali* year, corresponding to the 24th January, A.D. 311, King Veera Kerala Varma, after assembling all the Brahmins of the several *Gramams*, both *Chowara-Koor* and *Panniara-Koor*, and the family priest *Tharanallore Namboory-paud* performed these important ceremonies"⁴ (like *Hirannya Garbham* and *Padma Garbham*).

In the next chapter, we hope to refer to the Syrian copper plates and to show decidedly that one of them originated in the third century. The reference in the aforesaid copper plate to the Brahmins of *Panniyur* and *Chovoor Gramams* further helps us in our conclusion that Malabar was peopled by Brahmins at least in the beginning of the Christian era, if not much earlier. The presumption that Brahmins colonised the south-western coast of India only in the seventh century A.D. is the result of a misunderstanding. Sankarachariyar, the great law-giver of Malabar, lived in the seventh or eighth

3. History of Travancore by P. Shangoonny Menon, Dewan Peishkar in Travancore, Higginbotham & Co., Madras, 1878, p. 36.

4. Ibid. p. 55.

century. He introduced such sweeping reforms in the customs and social manners of Brahmins, that Brahminical institutions underwent a thorough change. From this circumstance, our critic seems to regard the seventh century as the date of their first colonisation of Malabar.

There is thus no reason to transfer the sphere of Pantaenus' mission from Southern India to the India of Alexander the Great. No writer ever dreamed of such a strange explanation until it was suggested by Professor Rae. His inference based on the alleged absence of Brahmins in Malabar until the seventh century is unfounded, and the tradition of Pantaenus' mission to Malabar remains as firm as ever. There was thus a Christian Church on the Malabar Coast in A.D. 190, and that Church had been in existence long previous to his arrival. In fact, the Alexandrian missionary was sent in response to an application of the local Christians for religious teachers. It follows from this that the Church that existed in Malabar before Pantaenus' period could not have been founded by any other than by one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

One point in Pantaenus' history needs explanation. The historian of his mission-refers to *Bartholomew* as the founder of the Indian Church. The oriental practice of prefixing the honorific title *Mar* to the names of their spiritual Fathers perhaps led to the mistake of regarding it as part and parcel of the Apostle's name. In his unacquainted ears the expression *Marthoma* could easily sound *Barthoma* or *Bartholomew*. The discovery of St. Matthew's *Aramaic* Gospel in the Malabar Church on Pantaenus' arrival confirms the possibility of communication in the Syro Chaldean language.

Chapter VI

SYRIAN COPPER PLATES

CENTURY III

The proofs referred to in the previous chapters in support of the extreme antiquity of the Church of Malabar are corroborated by a yet stronger proof in the well-known Syrian Copper Plates. These are two *sasanams* issued by two princes on different occasions, one being in favour of the Christians of Cranganore, and the other of those of Quilon. The first comprises a single instrument written in old Tamil characters mixed with a good many *grantha* letters purely Dravidian. It was issued by King *Sri Veera Raghava Chakravarthi* to *Iravi Corttan* of *Mahadevarpatnam*,¹ creating him Grand Merchant of the Cheraman world, and granting him the lordship of *Manigramam* with remission of taxes and certain social privileges including supremacy over particular classes of artisans. The second *sasanam* consists of four plates containing seven pages in all, and was granted under command of King *Sthanu Revi Gupta* by *Ayyan Adigal* to the *Tharisa Church* established by *Isodata Viran* of *Kurakkeni Kollam* (Quilon), transferring several heathen families and a strip of land to the church and congregation, with certain privileges and remission of tax. The church authorities are also empowered to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction within the land granted. This

1. Mahadevarpatnam was the Christian quarter in Cranganore.

sasanam is in Tamil-Malayalam characters, but two pages are *Pahlvi* and *Arabic*.

The genuineness of these documents is admitted on all sides. Dr. Burnell assigns the date of the first document to A.D. 774 and that of the second to A.D. 824, for reasons known to himself. The first of these *sasanams* begins in these words: "The blessed rule having devolved from the earth-ruler Man-lord Chakravarthi Vira Kerala (the first of the line), through regular succession, upon Sri Vira Raghava Chakravarthi, now wielding the sceptre for many lakhs of years, (in the year) Jupiter in Capricornus, the 21st of the Mina month, Saturday, Rohini asterism, the following grant was made in the royal palace."² Here we have data to fix definitely the date of the copper plate by means of calculations based on the Hindu science of astronomy.

Fifty years ago *Kookel Kelu Nair*, then a District Munsiff and afterwards a Sub-Judge in the service of the Government of Madras, one who had considerable historical attainments and was himself an accomplished astronomer, made calculations from the data given in the plate and found the date of the document to be A.D. 230.³ The calculation was made at the instance of Madras Government, and the result was embodied in his report. Some thirty years afterwards, another independent calculation was made by the Government Astronomer at Trivandrum, at the request of P. Shangoonny Menon, Dewan Peishkar and author of the *History of Travancore*, and the result of this calculation may be stated in his own words.

"There appears to have been a good deal of discussion as to the dates of these documents as well as to the use of such

2. The reader may read translations of the plates in Logan's *Malabar Manual*. Government Press, Madras, 1887. Vol. II, pp. CXVII.

3. The *Madras Journal of Literature and Science*, Vol. XXI, p. 39.

words as *Anjuvannam* and *Manigramam* in these plates. I think it will not be out of place here to say a few words on these relics of an ancient period. We find on consulting a learned astronomer of Travancore that the date of the first document is *Kali* year 3331 (*i.e.*, A.D. 230). This was found by an astronomical process calculated from the data given in the first document, the working of which cost no small labour to the astronomer. The period and data specified in the plate are 21st *Meenam*, Saturday, Rohini asterism, Jupiter in Capricornus. This phenomenon occurs once in twelve years. From this current year, the astronomer calculated back to the first day of the *Kali* year, and from that date he calculated forward and ascertained the year in which Jupiter was in Capricornus on the 21st of the month of *Meenam*, Saturday, *Rohini* asterism; and by this process, he fixes the *Kali* year 3331 to be the date on which all the given conditions were found to exist."⁴

The date of the first *sasanam*, as fixed by two independent authorities on different occasions, one in reply to an inquiry of the Government of Madras and the other for the preparation of a history of Travancore, is one and the same, *viz.*, the astronomical *Kali* year 3331, corresponding to A.D. 230. The absence of foreign characters in this plate such as Pahlvi and Arabic, which form part of the inscriptions in the second *sasanam*, makes it clear that the former must have come into existence anterior to the connection of the Malabar Church with Persian Bishops, or before the introduction into Malabar of Pahlvi, "the language of the Persian Empire during the Sassanian Dynasty" (A.D. 226 to 661). It is, therefore, a very strong, almost conclusive proof of the existence of Christianity in Malabar, at least during the early part of

4. History of Travancore, p. 45.

the third century. A Christian community that thrived in a Hindu country in A.D. 230, in such an influential condition as to be favoured by a conservative Hindu Ruler, must certainly have had its foundation long previous to that age.

Among the witnesses to the document are the "two Brahmin divisions of *Panniyur* and *Chovur* villages," besides the feudatory Chiefs of *Venadu* (Travancore), *Odanadu*, *Eranadu* and *Valluvanadu*. In the face of such express authority, we are asked to believe that Brahmins settled in Malabar only in the seventh century, and that consequently the mission of Pantaenus could not have been to Southern India. The antiquity and the Apostolic foundation of the Church of Malabar cannot have a better confirmation than in the copper plates and in the mission of Pantaenus almost within the sub-Apostolic age. The far-fetched reasonings, carrying Pantaenus to Alexander's India and denying Apostolic origin to the South Indian Church have no pegs to hang on. The ancient history of England, nay, the history of any country or nation in the world, cannot be substantiated by better proofs. The annals of the Phoenicians, the Greeks the Romans and the Hindus are rich in legends and traditions, and yet these traditions and legends have formed the beginnings and the foundations upon which the superstructure of all historical truths is raised. To say that the above authorities mean nothing or to demand stronger authority in proof of the existence of a Church in Malabar in the earliest ages of Christianity is analogous to the argument of that notorious genius who once tried to startle the world by alleging that Napoleon Bonaparte or his achievements were only a myth.

Chapter VII

JOHN, BISHOP OF PERSIA AND GREAT INDIA

CENTURY IV

In the fourth century, when Christendom was agitated by the Arian controversy, the Emperor, Constantine the Great, convened the first Ecumenical Synod at Nicaea or Nika. Invitations were issued to the Bishops all over the world, and arrangements were made to accord them a safe conduct and a hearty welcome. 318 Bishops representing as many Sees assembled at Nika in A.D. 325. The Church in India was represented, at least nominally, by Bishop John, the Persian. In the history of the Synod by Gelasius of Cyzicus, he is said to have subscribed as "John, the Persian, for the churches in the whole of Persia and India *Magna*." Our critic, Professor Rae, contends that India, represented by John, was Afghanistan or Alexander's India and not Peninsular India.

In the same list of subscribers to the decrees of the Council of Nicaea, we find Alexander of Alexandria signing for the churches of all Egypt, Libya, Pentapolis and the neighbouring regions. As a matter of fact, the Bishop of Alexandria had no right to represent churches not included in the episcopal diocese of Alexandria, unless it is presumed that he did so by virtue of his elevation to the rank of a Patriarch with primacy over the Bishops of the above-mentioned regions. In a like manner, it may be taken that John signed

for Persia and India, not perhaps because he was then actually exercising the powers of a Bishop over the Church in India, but probably because he was raised to a higher rank with the right of appointing Bishops in India.

It is an undisputed fact that the See of Antioch was raised to the rank of a Patriarchate with supremacy over all the East, either in the great Synod itself or by Constantine the Great. "The Patriarchate of Antioch," says Mosheim, "embraced originally the whole diocese of the East and likewise extended over the churches beyond the limits of the Roman Empire in Asia, quite to India."¹ The 33rd or, according to some writers, the 38th, of the Arabic canons of the Council of Nicaea elevated the Metropolitan of the East, whose See was in Seleucia, to the rank of *Catholicos*, with power over the East but *in subordination* to the See of Antioch. Some writers question the genuineness of the Arabic canon. Gibbon speaks of it as a code "equally revered by all the Eastern communions", and one that was "probably finished before the schisms of the Nestorians and Jacobites."² Dean Stanley writes that they "are received by the Eastern Church as binding with the validity of Imperial Laws," and that "they are in fact a collection of all the customs and canons of the Oriental Church, ascribed to the Nicene council, as all good English customs to Alfred."³ "The Catholicate of Chaldea," says Neale, "was, as it were a vicarial jurisdiction of the See of Antioch."⁴ In the canons of the second General Council, held at Constantinople, as found in the Syriac manuscript No. 14528 in the British Museum—a manuscript of the year A.D. 500—

1. Murdoch's translation of Mosheim's *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*. New York, 1852. Vol. 1, pp. 232 and 234.

2. *Decline and Fall*, chapter XLVII.

3. *Lectures on the History of the English Church*, Lecture V, p. 162, 2nd Edition.

4. *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. 1, p. 125.

we find the following injection: "The Bishop of Alexandria shall govern those that are in Mizraim, and the Bishop of the East those of the East only, the seniority which is given by the canons of Nikia to the Church of Antioch being preserved."⁵ This shows that whether the so-called canon 33 or 38 of Nikia be spurious or not some arrangement was made at Nikia giving the See of Antioch. Mosheim again says that the Patriarch of Antioch "voluntarily ceded a part of his jurisdiction" to Seleucia.⁶ The Nestorian Church which now represents the ancient See of Seleucia acknowledges that she once depended upon Antioch, although the admission is damaging to her claim to independence. It thus appears that the whole East was placed under the paramount supremacy of Antioch, which transferred part of its jurisdiction to Seleucia, retaining, however, a certain seniority in itself. We have reason to believe that Seleucia likewise conceded to her suffragan, the Metropolitan of Persia, some sort of primacy over the Indian Church, probably in the Council of Nicea itself. That the Metropolitan of Persia exercised some such power over the Malabar Church in after years is a historical fact. Cosmas met in Malabar in A.D. 522 a Bishop sent from Persia. Asseman refers to a letter of the Nestorian Patriarch Yesuyab (650-660), accusing Simeon, Bishop of Persia of negligence to maintain episcopacy in regular succession in India, which extended "as far as Quilon, a space of more than twelve hundred parasangs."⁷ We may, therefore, presume that John signed the decrees of the Council of Nicaea on behalf of the Indian Church because he was authorised, probably in the Synod itself, to exercise the functions of an Archbishop over

5. *Canons of Primitive Church*, translated by Rev. G.B. Howard, James Parker & Co. London, P. 56.

6. *Institutes of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 1, p. 324. See also "Eighteen Centuries of the Orthodox Greek Church," by A.H. Hore, p. 246.

7. Asseman, III, p. 131.

it. If, as proved already, a Christian Church existed in South India before the date of the Synod, John of Persia literally represented not the India of Gondophares or Alexander's India, where there existed no church in any age, but India *Proper* which includes Malabar, in the same manner as Alexander of Alexandria signed for the Churches in Libya, Pentapolis etc. Probably Bishop John had not exercised any jurisdiction over the Malabar Church till then, but was rather assuming an authority newly vested in him. Further, it is not said that John was the Bishop of India. He only subscribed for the Church of India, in a representative character— a position he could well assume on his elevation to an archiepiscopal dignity. This is more apparent when it is considered that in early ages bishops were overseers of individual churches. We seldom see bishops exercising control over groups of churches or provinces until the time of Constantine the Great; and even then, the private arrangements made by the Emperor could not have affected churches in Persia and India, which were beyond the borders of the Roman Empire. Originally John must have been the bishop of a town-see in Persia. He was later raised to the rank of an Archbishop in the Council of Nicaea by the consent and ordinance of the Patriarch of Antioch and the Catholic of Seleucia.

So far as our researches go, there is no history or tradition affirming that a Christian Church existed in the so-called India of Alexander the Great, at or about the date of the Council of Nicea. If there was one, it is strange that the zealous Nestorian missionaries, who a little more than a century after John's period succeeded in planting churches in the East, as far as China, could not revive the Church in Afghanistan over which Bishop John had exercised episcopal authority. On the whole, it appears that no Church ever existed in the

so-called India of Gondophares, and Bishop John could never have represented a Church in such an India. This view of the question gets stronger confirmation from the use of the qualifying word *Magna*. The distinctive use of the words *major* and *minor* to denote respectively India Proper and the India west of the Indus, was a common practice in the fourth century. In fact, the term *India Major* or *India Magna* was applied exclusively to the India of the present day, while under the designation *India Minor* they meant the country lying immediately west of the Indus, distinct from Persia.⁸ Such being the case, the addition of the qualifying word *Magna* becomes meaningless, unless we presume that it was used as mark of distinction between the India west of the Indus and the India east of the Indus; and this makes it more probable that the Church represented by Bishop John was in Peninsular India, of which Malabar was part and parcel. The fact that Persian Bishops did exercise episcopal authority over the Malabar Church at a not-much-later date, removes all doubts as to the possibility of John subscribing to the decrees of the Synod for his own Church and for the Church in Southern India. At any rate, the existence of an organised Christian Church in South India in the early part of the fourth century is clearly indicated by Bishop John's signing the decrees of the Council of Nicaea.

8. *Ancient India*, pp.211 and 212

Chapter VIII
THE FIRST SYRIAN COLONY
CENTURY IV

Even if the attempt made in the foregoing chapters to prove the Apostolic origin of Christianity in South India has not succeeded to the extent anticipated, we believe the reader will at least admit that a Christian Church existed in Malabar at a period long anterior to the date conceded by our critic. We shall next proceed to continue our history.

In A.D. 345, *i.e.*, within twenty years from the date of the Council of Nicaea, or rather of the investiture of the See of Antioch with power of supervision over the whole East, extending as far as India and China, we have a historical fact in the assumption of this supremacy through a colony of Syrians, headed by Thomas of Cana. The company consisted of a Bishop Joseph of Orfa, two priests and two deacons, besides laymen, including men, women and children to the number of four hundred souls, representing seventy-two families from seven tribes or clans. They landed at Cranganore and were cordially welcomed by *Cheraman Perumal*, the then Ruler of Malabar, in the hope that they would add a further impetus to the cause of trade. Thomas secured high privileges for the Christian community from *Cheraman Perumal*. Though the copper plate *sasanam* received by Thomas of Cana is missing, copies of it are preserved in some ancient

families. By this grant, a piece of land in Cranganore to the extent of 264 elephant cubits was made over to Thomas, with special social privileges, remission of certain taxes, and lordship over certain classes of low-caste artisans, on Saturday the 29th Kumbham (February–March) A.D. 345. The Christian quarter at Cranganore was called Mahadevarpatnam.

Some European writers have assigned the period of this colonisation and the reign of Cheraman Perumal to the eighth or ninth century. But the tradition maintained by the Syrian community is definite in fixing it to A.D. 345. They have very old songs, to commemorate the event in detail. Day author of *The Land of the Perumals*, made investigations in the old Sanskrit College of Trichur (Cochin State) and has conclusively proved that Cheraman Perumal reigned from 341 to 378.¹ The copper plates by which Thomas of Cana got the privileges, together with other plates, were entrusted to the Portuguese at Cochin for safe custody, and were lost.² Since the annexation of Cochin by the British Government, Col. Macaulay discovered some of them, which he returned to the Syrian Metropolitan; but the one in the name of Thomas of Cana is still missing. A manuscript volume dated 1604, in the British Museum, containing reports of the Jesuits on the Malabar Coast, has a Portuguese version of the grant on Cheraman Perumal's copper plate, and the manuscript goes on to say that it was "a thousand two hundred and fifty years since Perumal died on the 1st of March".³

The state of the Church in Persia in the fourth century lends strong colour to the possibility of colonisation. Sapor II, who was then king of Persia, anxious to restore the

1. Day's *Land of the Perumals*, p. 48.

2. Gouvea's *Jornada*, p. 4

3. Mackenzie's *Christianity in Travancore*, pp. 60 and 61.

religion of his forefathers in supersession of all other forms of religion then prevalent in his dominions, did not scruple to imitate, in greater cruelty, the character of Nero and Diocletian, to crush the Church of Christ. The history of his persecutions, which lasted for thirty-five years, beginning with A.D. 343, records the martyrdom of 16,000 Persian Christians. Catholicos, heads of the Church, Bishops and priests, as well as laymen, women and children, were tortured in the most cruel manner and had to surrender their lives for Christ's sake. It was at such a time that an enterprising merchant, Thomas of Cana, suggested the colonisation of Malabar, and that the hope of settling in a country far away from the reach of their oppressor cheered up the suffering Christians of Persia.

Further, it was at a time when the Malabar Church had no ecclesiastical ruler that Thomas visited her. The native Christians hailed the foreigners as patrons and benefactors, and placed themselves under Bishop Joseph. Thenceforth the Malabar Christians were called *Syrians*. They adopted the rituals and practices of the immigrant foreigners in the worship of God. The *Catholicos* of Seleucia thus became the acknowledged Head of the Church, and he himself being dependent upon the See of Antioch, the Malabar Church indirectly acknowledged the Patriarch of that great See as its supreme pontiff. *Nestorius* had not been even born at that time and the faith and ritual introduced by Bishop Joseph could not have been anything but orthodox.

That the colonisation of Malabar by Thomas of Cana and the company of his followers was not a myth is proved by a living witness. Socially speaking, the Syrian Christians of the present day are made up of two distinct sects known as Thekkumbagars and Vadakumbagars (Southists and Northists), so called because their ancestors once lived

separately in the southern and the northern streets of *Mahadevarpatnam*. The distinction has been continuously preserved ever since. When the Portuguese first visited Malabar, they found the distinction jealously maintained as at present. Both sects follow the same religion, the same form of worship and the same ritual. Both acknowledge the same Bishop. In the matter of commensality, they have not that scruple which pervades the Hindu caste system; and yet the two do not intermarry, and they maintain their distinct social customs. The Southists claim that they are the direct lineal descendants of Thomas of Cana and his Syrian colony, and even try to trace their descent by reference to the name of the particular tribe, to which each one of them claims to belong. The seven tribe names they refer to are Raji, Hadhai, Koja, Belkoth, Kujalik, Majamoth and Thejamuth. I am a member of the Southist sect, and if the tradition of my family be correct, I have descended from the stock of Hadhai.

The Northist sect, which forms the major portion of the Syrian community, contends that the colony of Thomas had mingled with native Christians by intermarriage. But they grant that the Southists are the descendents of Thomas by a second wife. Though both sects admit converts from heathens, the Southists decline to intermarry with them, while the Northists make no scruple to do so. Both parties regard Thomas of Cana as their progenitor and venerate him with a strong filial affection. At any rate, one thing is clear, *viz.*, the tradition of the arrival of a colony from Persia cannot be gainsaid; and the date of the colonisation, A.D. 345, is another proof of the existence of Christianity in South India in the middle of the fourth century.

Chapter IX

NESTORIAN AND JACOBITE CONTROVERSIES

THE FIFTH AND SIXTH CENTURIES

It is the general opinion of modern writers that the Church of Malabar was entirely *Nestorian* till the close of the sixteenth century. We have seen that our critic Professor Rae even assigns the origin of the Church to the labours of the Nestorian missionaries of Babylon in the early part of the sixth century. The influence which the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch has exercised, and does still exercise in the Indian Church, is considerable. Hence, it is desirable to trace the origin of these forms of Christianity before we proceed further with the history of the Church of Malabar.

In the fifth and sixth centuries, Eastern Christendom was agitated by two opposite schools of theology, the Nestorian and the Eutychian. Nestorius was originally a monk of Antioch, where he won great repute as an eloquent preacher. His fame was so great that before his judgement and piety attained sufficient maturity to qualify him to hold the highest position in the Church, he was raised to the rank of Patriarch in the See of Constantinople, which at that time was considered second only to that of Rome. The Church of that age was infested with numerous sects, among whom Arians, Novati and Mecedonians were prominent. Nestorius was so imprudent and indiscreet that "before he had tasted

the water of the city" he began to persecute the heretics one by one. In his attempt to crush heresies, he was supported by the Emperor and the Orthodox Christians of his diocese. But, unfortunately, his Archdeacon, Anastasius, in a sermon preached in the church at Constantinople, perverted the use of a certain epithet with reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nestorius supported him. The agitation consequent upon it resulted, in the end, in his proclaiming that in our Lord Jesus Christ, there were two *distinct* persons, and that the Incarnation was the simple indwelling of the *Logos* in the *man* Jesus as in a temple. He was vehemently opposed by Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria. The controversy was so zealously carried on by both sides that Cyril and Nestorius excommunicated each other. A General Synod thus became inevitable, which was accordingly held at Ephesus in A.D. 431; and after long debates and vehement disputes between Cyril of Alexandria and John of Antioch, to which it is not necessary more than to allude; the Fathers unanimously deposed Nestorius and condemned his teachings. He was immediately banished, and his teachings left no followers in the Patriarchate in which they were first proclaimed.

We have already noted the elevation of the Bishop of Seleucia to the rank of Catholicos with power over all the East, but *in subordination* to the Patriarch of Antioch. Seleucia continued in this position for nearly a century and a half. The great College of Edessa fell into the hands of professors who were tainted with Nestorian views, and it gradually served to propagate their peculiar teachings in the East. From the chronicles of Gregorius Bar Hebraeus, an intelligent and well-informed writer of the thirteenth century; we learn that Nestorianism was forced upon Seleucia by a treacherous act of Bar Souma, Bishop of Nisibin. The Catholicos, who was an orthodox deputy of the See of Antioch was invited to a

Provincial Synod to be held at Antioch. In reply, he communicated to his superior the dangers consequent upon his leaving his station. The letter contained some references to the hostile attitude of Pheroz, King of Persia, towards the Orthodox Church. This letter fell into the hands of Bar Souma, who availed himself of the opportunity to instigate Pheroz against the orthodox¹. The result was that the Catholic was martyred, and a nominee of Bar Souma was elevated to the See of Seleucia. Not long after this, in a Council held in A.D. 498, Seleucia adopted the teachings of Nestorius, and its Head declared himself *independent*, assuming the title of "Patriarch of Babylon."

Eutychus was an Archimandrite of Constantinople. He adopted a view directly opposite to that of Nestorius, and declared that the divinity and the humanity were so *united* in the person of our Lord that the one absorbed the other, leaving but one nature. The Council of Chalcedon, held in A.D. 451, condemned Eutychus, and upheld the theory that in our Lord were two natures *hypostatically united* without mixture, confusion and divisibility. The Patriarchs of Alexandria and of Antioch and the Christians under them adopted a *middle course* and taught that the two natures are so united that both are preserved in their entirety, but, being inseparably united, they are no more to be *called* two, but one. Those who followed these teachings were severely persecuted by the Emperor and the adherents of the Council of Chalcedon, and were about to be annihilated, when a zealous hardworking monk *Jacob Bardaeus*, receiving episcopal consecration, travelled from town to town, revived the party, and confirmed them in their faith. Thus, the Eastern Christians were divided into three sections. The Christians in the Patriarchate of

1. See also Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. 1., p. 142

Constantinople adhered to the doctrines upheld by the Council of Chalcedon, and, being supported by the Byzantine Emperors, they were called Melkites. Major portions of the Christians under the Patriarch of Antioch and Alexandria followed Jacob Bardaeus. Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, consolidated them and regulated their doctrine and ritual. They were since called *Jacobites* or monophysites by their opponents. The Armenian Christians, though independent under a separate Patriarch, adopted the theories of the Jacobites, and hold intercommunion with the Christians of Antioch and Alexandria. The Christians comprised in the See of Seleucia were partly Jacobites and partly Nestorians.

The success of Nestorianism in Seleucia was not of long duration. Kobab, son of Pheroz, when ousted from his throne by his brother, sought the help of the Huns and got himself reinstated. He ruled more than thirty years and died in A.D. 531. During his reign, Nestorianism was partly checked by the freedom accorded to the Jacobites. Kabad's son and successor Chosroes (or Nushirvan) hated the Melkites, and tolerated both Nestorians and Jacobites. His reign witnessed the great revival of Syrian Jacobitism under the guidance of their patriarch Severus (512-542) and his disciple Jacob Bardaeus. They very soon outnumbered the Melkites and the Nestorians. As an instance of the favour accorded to the Jacobites by the kings of Persia, Gibbon says that "a colony of 300,000 Jacobites, the captives of Apama and Antioch, was permitted to erect an hostile altar in the face of the Catholicos (who was a Nestorian) and in the sunshine of the court".² In the list of the Catholicos who presided over the See of Seleucia in the sixth century, Orthodox (or Jacobite) and Nestorian prelates are intermingled. In A.D. 559 Jacob

2. *Decline and Fall*, chap. XLVII.

Bardaeus consecrated Abudemmeah as Catholic of Seleucia, and the new dignitary bore the same relation to the Patriarch of Antioch as the Catholicos of Seleucia did to that See *before* the introduction of Nestorianism.³ This prelate acquired such an influence in the East that he succeeded in converting and baptising a near relative of the Persian monarch. Since then *two lines* of Catholicos, one Nestorian and the other Jacobite ruled in succession, claiming the See of Seleucia and its dependencies. The ascendancy attained by the Jacobites in the East in this and the succeeding centuries was so great that their Patriarch of Antioch reckoned a hundred and three Episcopal and twenty Metropolitan. Sees under him, and we have reason to believe, as will be shown later on, that his authority extended *up to Malabar* at that early period.⁴

One thing follows from the above survey of the history of Christianity in Persia; it is that a general statement to the effect that the Church of Malabar received Bishops from Persia does not help one to decide whether it was to the Jacobite *or* to the Nestorian Church in Persia that the South Indian Church was affiliated. It is also clear that the presumption made by some writers that the Malabar Church was *all along* Nestorian is vague, if it rests upon such a general statement.

3. Neale *History of the Eastern Church*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

4. Hough *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. 1, p. 81.

Chapter X

COSMAS INDECOPLEUSTUS AND PERSIAN CROSSES ETC.

SIXTH TO TENTH CENTURIES

We now come to that period of the history of the Church of Malabar, of which even sceptics feel no doubt. It is the period covered by the testimony of Cosmas Indecopleustus who visited South India in A.D. 522. In his *Universal Christian Topography*, Cosmas writes: "We have found the Church not destroyed, but very widely diffused and the whole world filled with the doctrine of Christ, which is being day by day propagated and the Gospel preached over the whole earth. This, as I have seen with my own eyes in many places and have heard narrated by others, I as a witness of the truth relate. In the Island of Taprobane (Ceylon), in the interior India where the Indian Ocean, is there exists a Christian Church where clergy and faithful are to be found; whether also further beyond, I am unaware. So also in the Male (Malabar), as it is called where the pepper grows. And in the place Kalliana, there is a Bishop generally ordained in Persia."¹

It is assumed by some writers that Cosmas himself was Nestorian and that the Church of Malabar which he witnessed was an offshoot of the Nestorian Church of Persia,

1. Sir Henry Yule's edition of *Cathay, and the Way Thither* Vol. 1, Introduction p.(ixxi)

having been founded by Persia missionaries since their adoption of Nestorianism.

Cosmas was a native of Alexandria and a descendent of the flock of St. Cyril, who had vehemently opposed Nestorius and who had left behind him a lasting impression of his religious views in the Alexandrian Church. His successor Dioscoros was a supporter of Jacobite theories. In fact, Nestorianism never entered the precincts of the Church in Egypt. Under such circumstances, we must presume that Cosmas was a Jacobite or at least that he was not a Nestorian.

There is stronger evidence to confirm the view stated above. Cosmas was originally a merchant. "When he had realised the hopes of his roving commercial career and had gathered all the observations he wanted in support of his impossible cosmical theory, he assumed the habit of a monk and retired to a monastery, where between the years 535 and 550 he wrote, in Greek, an account of his travels." Here we have an instance of a layman—a merchant—taking the vow of celibacy and the habit of a monk, which he would not have done, had it not been for the simple fact that it was considered a virtue. But in A.D. 499, Babeus, the Nestorian Catholicos of Seleucia, had at a Synod, authorised remarriage among the clergy and condemned celibacy². If Cosmas was a Nestorian and a "friend of the Metropolitan of Persia," he would never have assumed a rank or order condemned by his Church.

Another reason to regard Cosmos as a non-Nestorian is that he makes use of the term "*Mother of God*" when he mentions St. Mary.³

2. Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Tom. IV, pp. 3108; Medlycott, "India and the Apostle St. Thomas," p. 188.

3. J.W. Mc Crindle, "Introduction to the Universal Christian Topography," p. 9.

On the whole, we may reasonably conclude that Cosmas was not a Nestorian. If he was not a Nestorian, the probability is that he was a Jacobite rather than a Melkite.

His testimony to the existence of a Church in South India is so conclusive that even sceptics are compelled to admit that a Church existed in Malabar at the beginning of the sixth century. Suppose Cosmas had failed to refer by name to the Island of Ceylon and the pepper-growing coast of Malabar, what would have been the result? Our critic would have created a fourth India somewhere near the Persian Gulf and assigned the origin of the Malabar Church to a much later date. Happily Cosmas' description is unambiguous. His India was *India Proper*, which is separated from "the country of the Huns" by "the river Indus."⁴ His India included Malabar since the king of Malabar is alluded to among the kings of the various parts of India.⁵ And last but not least, he visited Ceylon and the Malabar Coast in person, and saw with his own eyes a *fully organised Church* with a Bishop, priests, deacons, congregations and all the necessary apparatus of public worship, and he even suggested the possibility of the existence of Christians "further on in that direction," "as if he had heard something to that effect."

We have seen that the Catholicos of Seleucia adopted the Nestorian creed *only in A.D. 498* and it is within a quarter of a century from this date that Cosmas met, in Malabar and other parts of India, a Church organised in a parochial form. The missionaries of the Church of England have been working in India under the auspices of the British Government, which owns suzerainty over the whole continent. In spite of the prestige and influence which they had as representatives of the Ruling Power, it took them nearly a century

4 & 5. *Ancient India*, pp. 166. 165 and 164.

to establish an organised Church in India. The Portuguese missionaries, with their inquisition, threats and offers of pecuniary aid under the influence of a bigoted intolerant Government could not establish the Church of Rome in India within so short a period. Still we are asked to believe that in spite of troubles and commotions that attended the change of creed at home. The poor mendicant missionaries and agents of the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon who had no regular support from their headquarters and no political influence in India, and who were not endowed with the supernatural gifts of tongues or of working miracles, could within the short space of *twenty four years*, establish a Church in South India, extend it from the coast of Malabar to the Coromandel and "the rest of the Indians" and even to the island of Ceylon, and organise it in the fully developed manner in which Cosmas met it. The testimony of Cosmas is enough to convince an unbiassed mind that the Church of Malabar must have been planted *many years earlier than A.D. 522*, and by some hands not tainted with Nestorian heresy.

Again, when Cosmas visited Malabar, the Church was ruled by a Bishop from Persia. He does not say that the Indian Church was then Nestorian. The passage quoted from his *Topography* speaks of the wide expansion of the Church Catholic throughout the world. "We have found the Church not destroyed, but very widely diffused, and the whole world filled with the doctrine of Christ." In these words he refers to the Indian Church as a branch of the Universal Catholic Church. It is strange that an Alexandrian Christian a disciple of St. Cyril and Dioscoros, one who was fully aware of the contemptible manner in which Nestorianism was treated by the Christians of the West, makes no allusion to the peculiar tenets of the Indian Church. He would never have kept such a silence, had this Church been Nestorian.

We have shown in the last chapter, that, at the time Cosmas visited Malabar, Persia was ruled by a king who tolerated Nestorian and non-Nestorian Churches in his dominions and that both Nestorians and Jacobites had their representatives to contend for supremacy over the See of Seleucia. We have also seen that a general statement to the effect that the Church of Malabar received Bishops from Persia does not at all help us to decide whether it was to the Nestorian or to the Jacobite Church in Persia that the Indian Church was affiliated. We do not know when and by whom the Bishop, met by Cosmas, was deputed to Malabar, whether the Bishop was himself aware of the changes at home, and whether it was the Nestorian or the Jacobite Catholicos who had influence in India. Further, Cosmas' own words that the Bishop of Kalliana was *generally* ordained in Persia enable us to imagine that the prelate met by him had predecessors, who probably were consecrated and deputed *before* the introduction of Nestorianism into Persia. It follows from the above facts, (1) that the origin of the Church of Malabar was far earlier than the promulgation of Nestorianism in Persia. (2) that the supremacy of the See of Seleucia was established in India, at a time when the Catholicos was an orthodox deputy of the See of Antioch; (3) and that when the Indian Church placed herself under the See of Seleucia, she had also accepted the control of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch as her supreme Pontiff. When Seleucia rebelled against Antioch and declared independence, the Indian Christians were probably not aware of the change. Bishops representing either of the contending parties in Persia might have occasionally graced the field by their presence. The Indian Christians were not so well educated in theology as to discriminate the minute questions affecting the person and natures of Christ, on which Jacobites, Melkites and Nestorians contended with one

another. The questions of *Parsope*, *K'yono*, were perhaps novelties to the Christians of Malabar. They could not be expected to be able to detect any heresy in the matter, even had they been informed of the agitations abroad. *The Nicene creed* which formed the basis of their faith in the Holy Trinity *was the same to the Jacobites and to the Nestorians* and no difference was perceptible. At that time, Indians were not admitted to episcopacy. The local Church depended upon Seleucia for bishops. Episcopal succession was not always regular. The Jacobite and the Nestorian Catholicos of Seleucia claimed jurisdiction over the diocese of Malabar, and bishops sent by both occasionally made their appearance in this country. The Indian Christians indifferently welcomed all, whether under a Jacobite *Antioch* or under a Nestorian *Babylon*. They indiscriminately regarded both as their lawful superiors. However, Nestorian teachings might have gradually penetrated into Malabar through the agents of the Nestorian *Babylon*; but they did not take a deep root in the country until some years previous to the arrival of the Portuguese in India.

The next historical records that give us an insight into the nature of the South Indian Church are three *stone slabs* with bas-relief crosses engraved on them and with certain inscriptions in *Pahlavi*, the language of the Persian Empire when it was governed by the Sassanian dynasty. One of these stone slabs was discovered by the Portuguese in 1547, when digging on St. Thomas Mount, near Mylapore, Madras and it is preserved in the Roman Catholic chapel there. The other two are kept in the old Church at Kottayam, called *Valiapally* Church. All the three crosses are similar in structure, and all bear the same inscriptions. Dr. Burnell, on palaeographical grounds, assigns the date of the first two to the seventh or eighth century and that of the third to the tenth.⁶ This last

6. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III, pp.308-309

one contains a line in *Estrangelo Syriac*, in addition to the *Pahlavi* inscriptions which are common to all the three.

When the Mylapore cross was discovered the captain and the vicar of the town applied to a Brahmin of the kingdom of *Narasinga*, who was much famed for his learning, to decipher the inscriptions. His opinion was that the inscriptions were Indian hieroglyphical signs. His translation ran thus: "Since the Law of the Christians appeared in the world and thirty years afterwards, on the 25th of the month of December, the Apostle St. Thomas died at Mylapore where there was the knowledge of God, a change of laws, and the destruction of the demons. God was born of the Virgin Mary, was under obedience to her for thirty years and was an eternal God. This God taught His law to twelve Apostles, and one of them came to Mylapore with a pilgrim's staff in his hand and there built a church, and the king of Malabar and the king of Coromandel and the king of Pandya and other various nations and sects determined of their own will to submit to the law of St. Thomas, a holy and penitent man. The time came when St. Thomas died by the hands of a Brahmin and his blood formed a cross."

This translation, it is asserted, concurred with another translation made independently by a different Brahmin.⁷

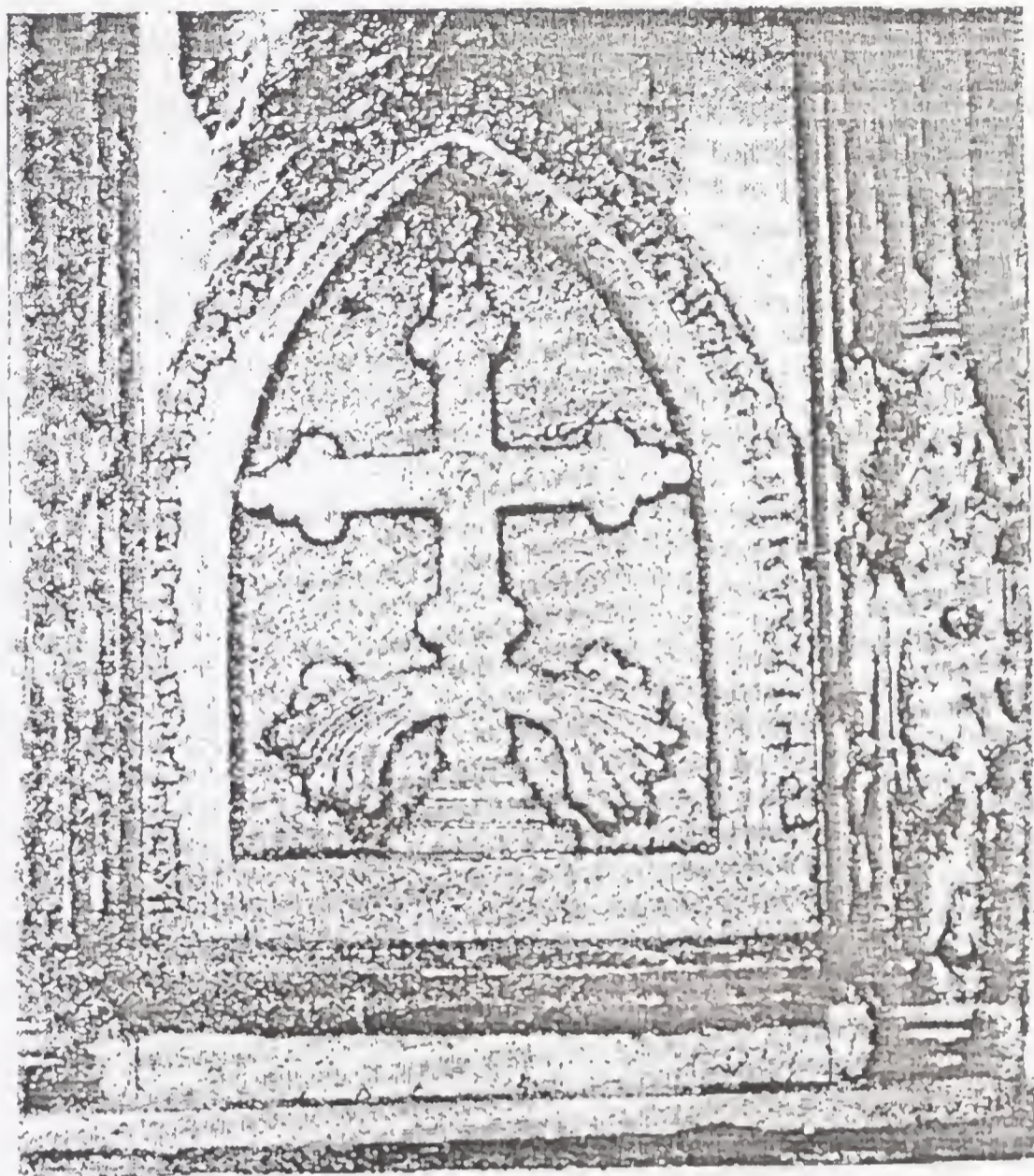
The inscriptions have since been scientifically translated by European professors, among whom Dr. Burnell is considered a reliable authority. His version is thus:

"In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering of this one;

"He who is true God, and God above, and guide ever pure."

Before commenting upon the translation, we have to

7. M. Labbe Hue, *Christianity in China, Tartary and Tibet Vol. 1, p. 27.*



The Stone Cross at *Valiyapally* Kottayam, 7th century

remark at the outset that there is a discrepancy in Mr. Rae's description of the inscriptions. He says: "The monument referred to is the cross which was discovered on St. Thomas Mount in 1547. The inscription, which is divided into two unequal parts by a mark like the *plus* sign in Algebra, is in *Pahlavi*, the language of the Persian Empire during the Sasanian dynasty, and according to Dr. Burnell, may belong to the seventh or eighth century. The same *Pahlavi* inscription appears on a similar cross of the same date in a church at Kottayam, in North Travancore;" and further down he says: "There is one more cross, though of a much later date, in the same old church at Kottayam; and this more modern cross, similar in form to the older cross in the same church, has in part the same inscription. In other words, it bears the second

half of the Pahlavi inscription, written in a sort of running hand; whereas the first part is replaced by a quotation from Galatians vi. 14, in *Estrangelo Syriac*, which is, to judge from the MSS, of a period not older than the tenth century."⁸

As a parishioner and trustee of the old Church at Kottayam, we had, and still have, ample opportunities to compare the two crosses there. Though we are ignorant of the *Pahlavi* language, our comparison enables us to say definitely that both crosses contain the same *Pahlavi* inscriptions in their entirety, with the difference that in the more modern one the writing is "in a sort of running hand" and there



The Stone Cross at St. Thomas Mount, *Mylapore*, 7th century

8. G.M. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*, pp. 119 and 120.

s an additional line in Syriac. In other words, the *Pahlavi* inscription in the one is not merely the second half of that in the other, but is an exact copy, containing both the parts, divided by the plus sign. We also compared this inscription with that on the cross in St. Thomas Mount, and we were unable to discover any difference or deviation worth remark. We may, therefore, observe that all the three crosses contain the same *Pahlavi* inscriptions in their entirety, while the third has an additional line in Syriac, being the verse, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The bearing of these inscriptions upon the creed of the Church of Malabar as then received will be explained in Chapter XIII. Suffice it to say for the present, that these monumental crosses go to prove the former identity of the Churches on the Malabar and the Coromandel Coasts.

There is a record of the arrival in A.D. 825, of a second colony of Syrians, headed by a merchant *Sapor Iso* and two bishops *Sabor* and *Aproth* or *Pheroz*. Some persons regard these bishops as Nestorians, but there is no evidence to support the view. In the works of Asseman and some other writers, we have a list of the bishops sent out to the East by Timotheus, the then Nestorian Patriarch. But the names of Sabor and Aproth are not included in this list.⁹ Jacobites were at this period more prosperous in Persia and their Maphrian (Catholicos) was contesting the supremacy of the East with his Nestorian rival.¹⁰ The colony headed by *Sapor Iso* landed at Quilon and secured the favour of the Ruling Prince. The second *sasanam* spoken of in Chapter VI is that record, and was granted to the head of this colony in favour of the Church they founded at Quilon. Their descendents

9. Asseman, Tom. III, Part II, pp. 443 to 444. Thomas Marg. Historia Monast. Lib. V, chap. 7. Cod. Syn. No. 165

10. Gibbon Decline and Fall, chap. XLVII.

settled at Quilon and in the surrounding localities. They did not insist on avoiding intermarriage with the native Christians, the result is that Syrians of the southern parishes in the Archdiocese of Malankara now claim to be the descendents of this colony. The Syrian Christians of the present day ascribe their descent to either of the two colonies named above, and until 1867, when registration of deeds was introduced in Travancore, all their title-deeds of landed, properties described the names of the executors and acceptors with special mention of *Mahadevarpatnam* (Cranganore) or *Korakenikollam* (Quilon), as the case might be, to which the Syrians concerned claimed to belong.

The next important circumstance of which there is historical proof is the political independence which the community enjoyed in the tenth century. It is said that they so



The Big Cross at *Valiyapally* Kottayam, 10th century

prospered in wealth and influence that they succeeded in throwing away the yoke of their Hindu Rulers, and in raising up one from themselves to be their king. *Belliarte* (Villiarvattam), the Syrian royal dynasty, ruled at *Diamper* (Udiyamperoor, near the Cochin frontier) and played an important part in the wars of the local princes. It is also said that the dynasty finally became extinct, and the Raja of Cochin assumed sovereignty over Diamper. The Syrians preserved the sceptre of their king, which they afterwards presented to the Portuguese, whose description of it was that it was a red rod, tipped with silver, having three small silver bells at the upper end.

The ninth and tenth centuries were the palmy days of the Jacobite churches everywhere. The Patriarchs of Antioch and Alexandria were able and far-sighted administrators. The See of Antioch enjoyed a regular succession of eminent divines. As many as a hundred and three *Episcopal*, and twenty *Metropolitan*, sees recognised the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch.¹¹ His authority at this time extended to Persia, Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia and even to Malabar.¹² Under the reign of the Caliphs, "the Jacobite Church was diffused from China as far as Jerusalem and Cyprus."¹³ In Egypt, too, the Jacobites were not less prosperous. Mar Yacub who occupied the throne of St. Mark (837-852) did his utmost to extend the Church to the coast of the Red Sea and to the islands of the Indian Ocean, so much so that "when the Portuguese penetrated into the Indian Ocean they found that in the parts towards the Red Sea the faith of the inhabitants was Jacobite."¹⁴

11. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. 1, p. 151.

12 and 13. Hough, "Christianity in India", Vol. 1, pp. 84 and 116. Ed. 1847.

14. Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church," Vol. II, p. 151.

But the state of the Nestorian Church at this period was the reverse. She was no longer "encouraged by the smile and armed with the sword" of Persian despotism. "In many cities where the Nestorians had formerly been the only Christians, they were no longer in sufficient numbers to constitute a Metropolitan Church. Consequently in some places they united with their neighbours; and in others they were totally extinct."¹⁵ In short, the Nestorian Church was on the decline, while her rival, the Jacobite Church, was advancing and conquering new lands. "The Maphrian (Jacobite Catholicos) who in his station at Mosul itself defied the Nestorian Catholicos with whom he contested the supremacy of the East,"¹⁶ was not idle; he strengthened his hold on the See of Malabar by sending out bishops to that distant community.

Here a question naturally arises. If such was the case with the Church of Malabar, how was it that no trace of Jacobitism was discovered in her when she was first visited by the Portuguese? We hope to devote a whole chapter to the consideration of this important question. In the meantime, we shall connect the chain of history by a few remarks. The palmy days of the Jacobites *ended in the thirteenth century*. Weak and powerless persons began to occupy the Patriarchal throne of Antioch. A new generation of selfish and worldly minded bishops succeeded the old divines. "Luxury crept equally into the palace of the Bishop and into the cave of the monk." Internal struggles weakened the Church at home. The distant Diocese of Malabar was not cared for. The clergy and the laity became spiritually degenerate. As the result of all this, the Malabar Church was deprived of any regular suc-

15. Hough, "Christianity in India," Vol. 1, p. 87.

16. Gibbon, "Decline and Fall", chap. XLVII.

cession of Bishops, and parishes were widowed. Many of the churches fell into decay. This state of affairs induced the Church of Malabar to apply for bishop to the various Patriarchal Sees of the East. But no reply was received. At last, the Syrian community of Malabar sent a deputation of three faithful members of their Church to obtain a bishop from one of the ancient Sees. The deputation started in 1490. One of the members died on the way. The survivors, Joseph and George, were conducted to the Nestorian Patriarch Mar Simon, to whom they communicated their errand. He was so glad at this unexpected opportunity of extending his jurisdiction, that he immediately consecrated two monks of the monastery of St. Eugene under the names Thoma and John, and sent them with the Indian envoys to take charge of the Church of Malabar. Since the Malabar Church had been void of Episcopal oversight for a long time, the new incumbents had to consecrate altars and ordain a large number of priests. Mar John remained in India, but Mar Thoma returned to the Patriarch with Joseph, taking firstfruits and offerings. In 1493, Joseph returned to India, leaving Mar Thoma at home.¹⁷

In 1502, the successor of Patriarch Simon sent three Bishops, David, Denha and Jacob, with Mar Thoma. They found Bishop John still living. In a report sent by them to their Patriarch in 1504, they give the following account of the Church of Malabar. "There are here about thirty thousand families *common in faith* with us, and they pray to God for your prosperity. Now they have commenced to build more churches, and there is abundance of all things, and they are mild and peaceable. Blessed be God. Also the Church of St. Thomas is now again inhabited by Christians. It is a distant

17. Asseman, III, 589.

journey of twentyfive days, situated on the sea near a city called Mylapore in the province of Silan. Our Province, in which the Christians dwell, is called Malabar and has about twenty cities; of which three notable and firm cities are Carangol (Cranganore), Palor (Palayur) and Colom (Quilon); and others nearly come up to them. In all these, Christians live and churches have been built. Near by, there is a large and rich city, Calicut, which the infidels inhabit."¹⁸

It was *these bishops* who firmly established Nestorianism in Malabar. However, they could not entirely extirpate Jacobite practices, as we shall see later on.

18. Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, III, p. 587.

Chapter XI

ROME'S PREPARATORY WORK AMONG THE SYRIANS

The first of the Roman Catholic missionaries who is known to have visited the South Indian Church was one John of Monte Corvino, sent by Pope Nicholas IV. (1228-1294) as a missionary to China. On his way, he remained some months in India, and in his letters sent to Europe he says that he met with a church of St. Thomas in India and baptised a hundred persons. The next missionary was a Dominican Friar, Jordanus, who, in company with some others, paid a visit to the west coast of India in 1319. His companions were all killed by Muhammadans. Jordanus alone escaped and returned home. In 1330 he was again sent to India, this time as Bishop of Quilon. He carried with him a Papal Bull inviting the Syrian Christians to abjure heresy and enter into the "unity of the Catholic Church." His account of the Indian Church as set forth in *Mirabilia* is not, of course, complimentary. "They call themselves Christians," says Jordanus, "but are not so, nor have they baptism, nor do they know anything else about the faith. They believe St. Thomas the Great to be Christ." We need not pause to enquire too minutely into or to refute this sweeping condemnation, since it is unreasonable to expect a Roman Catholic missionary, especially in those bigoted times, to write in a tolerant spirit about a Church not in communion with his own. If the facts stated by Jordanus are correct, it lends some colour to the view expressed in Chapter X, that the intro-

duction of Nestorianism into Malabar in the 14th century was due to the long absence of episcopacy and the consequent confusion in the Malabar Church.

Another Latin traveller, Friar Odoric, passed down the Malabar coast in 1321 and touched at Quilon, "where there were Christians, and at Mylapore where there were fifteen houses of *Nestorian* Christians."¹

It is significant that the epithet *Nestorian* is omitted in reference to the Christians of Quilon and is specially applied to Mylapore Christians.

In 1439 Pope Eugene IV is said to have sent envoys with a letter addressed "to my most beloved son in Christ, Thomas, the illustrious Emperor of the Indians." No such emperor existed in India. The Pope might have been misled by some vague report that the Indian Christians had a king of their own. The envoys sent with this letter did not reach India.

Rome does not seem to have taken any further action to secure a hold on the Malabar Church until the discovery of a direct route to India by Vasco Da Gama in 1498. In the year 1502, during the second visit of Da Gama to India, a deputation of the Syrian community waited on him, and after presenting him with the sceptre of their former king, applied for protection against their Mussalman and Hindu oppressors. Da Gama sent them back with presents, promising them effective assistance against all their oppressors. This connection, entered into with much sanguine expectation on the part of the Syrians, for the avowed object of securing relief from temporal oppressions, was directly instrumental in opening the floodgates of a far more ruinous and prolonged spiritual oppression at the hands of their new-found protectors.

Systematic work of the Roman Church among the Syr-

1. *Cathay, and the Way Thither*, I, pp. 73 to 81.

ans was for the first time organised by John de Albuquerque, the first Bishop of Goa. In 1539 he sent to Malabar a Franciscan Friar, Vincent de Lago, with special instructions to work for the accomplishment of the subjugation of the Syrian Church to the See of Rome. An Inquisition was also set up at Goa to try and punish cases of heresy. Rome's policy at the start was a conciliatory one. Fr. Vincent established an orphanage at Cranganore and offered to maintain Syrian orphans. Finding that education was a better instrument to diffuse the seed of Papacy, he soon converted the orphanage into a seminary for the instruction of candidates for holy orders. Costly presents, free boarding and free education induced many Syrians to avail themselves of the facilities provided in the seminary. For some time it worked without a hitch. St. Xavier writing in 1549 to the General of the Jesuit Society, about the work carried on in this institution, said that "as many as a hundred native students were maintained and formed in piety and learning." St. Xavier was also on friendly terms with the Syrian Bishop Jacob, of whom in 1549 he wrote to the King of Portugal as follows: "It is now five and forty years that a certain Armenian² Bishop, by name Aboona Jacob, has served God and your Highness in this country. He is a man who is about as dear to God on account of his virtue and holiness as he is neglected and despised by your Highness and in general by all who have any power in India." The missionaries also set up a printing press and published a *Catechism*, *Rudiments of Catholic faith*, *Flos Sanctorum*, and other devotional books.

Here we must digress a little and glance at the state of the parent Nestorian Church. About this time dissensions arose in Babylon. Patriarch Simon V died in 1541. Succes-

2. Probably *Aramean*, which means Syrian.

sion to the Patriarchate had been for some years hereditary in the family of the deceased. The nephew of Simon at once stepped into the shoes of his uncle. Three Bishops, assisted by a strong party in the Church, protested against hereditary succession and elected one Sulaka as their Patriarch. To make his position stronger still, Sulaka applied to Rome for confirmation in his office, submitting his profession of faith and offering to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. It was not in the nature of Rome to let go so fitting an opportunity. Sulaka's election was confirmed in 1553. He died soon after, and was succeeded by one who styled himself Mar Elias. Thereafter, two distinct lines of Patriarchs continued to rule the Nestorian Church one bearing the name of Elias resided at Mosul or Alkosh and the other under the name of Simeon established itself in Kurdistan.

The Mosul branch, however, proved unfaithful to Rome, and reverted to Nestorianism. But Roman intrigues created various divisions and schisms among the Nestorians and in 1681 Pope Innocent XI. created a third Patriarchate at Diarbekir under the designation of Mar Joseph. Thus, there came into existence three separate branches (*exclusive* of the Jacobite Maphrian) of the ancient See of Seleucia, and they continued in this manner till 1778, when Mosul Patriarch once more tendered his submission to Rome. The Patriarchate of Diarbekir was then declared abolished, although Mar Joseph V, the then Patriarch, quietly ignored this abolition and continued as of yore to exercise his ecclesiastical jurisdiction till his death.³ Both the Kurdistan and the Mosul lines claimed the Indian Church as belonging to their respective jurisdictions and both occasionally sent Bishops to represent their authority in India.

The native Christians of Malabar welcomed the repre-

3. Badger's "Nestorians and their Rituals," Vol. 1, pp. 144 to 149

representatives of both the lines without any discrimination. Whether the Bishop who arrived in their midst was a representative of the rightful occupant of the ancient See which had previously ruled them, or whether he was the deputy of an intruder, the Syrians did not care to know. These were matters of absolute indifference to them. This circumstance is another confirmation of our view expressed in Chapter X to the effect that in an earlier age when Nestorianism and Jacobitism split into two Churches and each contended for supremacy, the Malabar Church maintained the same attitude to the Nestorian Church at Babylon and to the Jacobite Church at Antioch.

To resume our history— While Father Vincent was conducting his Seminary at Cranganore, a Bishop named Mar Joseph arrived from Babylon, professing open obedience to Rome. He was recognised by the Syrians as well as by the Portuguese Christians. Some time after his arrival, when he found himself secure in his position, he threw off his assumed garb and showed himself in his true colours as a pronounced Nestorian Bishop. He refused to ordain Fr. Vincent's students on the score of their ignorance of the Syriac language. The community, too, which always cherished a great veneration for their ancient ecclesiastical language, declined to make use of the Seminary for the education of their children. Thus Rome's first attempt to proselytize the Malabar Church through education eventually turned out a failure. Not discouraged by such a result, and attributing the discomfiture of Fr. Vincent to his neglect of the Syrians' predilection for their ancient language, the Jesuits devised another expedient. They opened at Vaipicotta in 1581 another college and theological seminary, where they taught their scholars Syriac, and allowed them to retain the accustomed dress of their priests. For the moment, this step had the desired effect of

inducing the Syrians to send their children for educational purposes. But eventually this scheme also proved a failure, and the institution failed to realise the hopes of its founders.

The next step taken by the Portuguese was the arrest and the transportation of Bishop Mar Joseph to Europe to answer charges of heresy. Somehow he managed to win the favour of Queen Catherine of Portugal, and was allowed to return to his diocese, on his promising to clear the Church of Malabar of all taint of heresy. But on his way to his diocese, the authorities at Goa, who altogether distrusted his professions and promises, detained him in their custody.

The transportation of Mar Joseph led the Syrian community to apply to Babylon for a successor, and a prelate styled Mar Abraham was sent to them. At this stage, the Roman Catholics, thinking that Mar Joseph would be more serviceable to them in their ulterior designs upon the Syrian Church, allowed him to return to Malabar. Mar Abraham opposed him, and a struggle ensued between the two rival Bishops. This was made a pretext to deport Mar Abraham to Europe. Mar Joseph, now in sole possession of the field, soon established his authority and once more reverted to his Nestorianism. This so displeased the Portuguese that they soon despatched him to Portugal, and thence to Rome, where he became a victim of the inhumanity of the reigning Pope, of whom La Croze writes that "he caused every one that dissented in the least from the dogmas of Rome to be put to death, how irreproachable so ever his character might be, or popular his talent and learning."⁴

Mar Abraham, who had preceded Mar Joseph to Europe, escaped from Portuguese hands and presented himself before the Pope, and by abject submission secured permission to return to India as Archbishop of the Syrian Church.

4. La Croze. Lib. I. pp. 62, 63

He too was detained at Goa, but again managed to escape, and made his way to Malabar. The Syrian Church cordially welcomed him. In a letter he wrote to his Patriarch, he excused himself for his ignoble deeds on the ground that "the Portuguese were over his head as a hammer upon an anvil." He applied to the Patriarch for a coadjutor bishop and one Mar Simeon was sent from Babylon. Unfortunately he also was arrested and sent to Europe where he had to end his days. Several attempts were made by his enemies to rearrest Mar Abraham, but he eluded all traps set for him. He was repeatedly invited to attend the Provincial Synods held at Goa, but he declined to accept the invitations, alleging old age and infirmity as excuses. In 1597 he died in his Nestorian faith, leaving the diocese in charge of Archdeacon George, a member of the old Pakalomattom family.

In 1594 the Archbishopric of Goa was conferred on Alexis de Menezis, with full power to bring the Syrian Church of Malabar into complete submission to the See of Rome. He was a most resolute man, unflinching in the pursuit of the objects he had in view. Moreover, he had the unqualified support of the secular power. He determined to "put the thing through" at all risks. One of the first steps that he took was to set a strict watch over all the Portuguese ports in India and in the Persian Gulf, so as to cut off the supply of Syrian bishops from Babylon. This arrangement was carried out so vigilantly that the next bishop sent by the Babylonian Patriarch was intercepted at Ormuz. Abp. Menezis next offered the widowed Church of Malabar to Archdeacon George on condition of his complete submission to the Roman faith. The latter met the offer with scorn, and at a Synod of the diocese, convened by him at Angamali, it was firmly and solemnly resolved not to acknowledge any bishop not sent by their Patriarch. The Archdeacon closed the doors of all Syrian

churches to Latin priests and pupils of the Vaipicotta Seminary.

Matters assumed so serious an aspect that Abp. Menezis resolved at last to visit the Church of Malabar in person, and do everything that lay in his power to destroy the influence of the Archdeacon and to reduce the hostile Church to submission.

On the 1st of February 1599, he arrived at Cochin with an armed escort. His first attempt was to secure the support and friendship of the Rulers of the Coast. The chief among them at the time was the Raja of Cochin, already an ally of the Portuguese. He was induced by a present of 30,000 ducats to support the Archbishops's cause. Abp. Menezis next invited the Archdeacon for an interview at Cochin. After some delay and deliberation, the invitation was accepted. Three thousand Syrians accompanied him as a bodyguard. In the interview, the Archbishop expressed his determination to visit the Syrian churches, and asked the Archdeacon to accompany him. The latter, overawed by the stern attitude of Abp. Menezis, reluctantly consented, but when once he had left the Archbishop's presence, he declined to go on the proposed tour. Not deterred by this refusal, Abp. Menezis set out by himself on the undertaking. Vaipicotta Seminary was the first place visited. At Edappally, he delivered his first sermon, from John x 1, in the course of which he referred to the Patriarch of Babylon as a thief, and represented the Church of Rome as the only true door of the fold. His language was so intolerant and provoking that the congregation lost all patience and became greatly excited. Thereupon the Governor of Cochin, fearing that the Archbishop would imperil his very life, advised him to be as mild and inoffensive as possible in his public utterances and dealings. But the Governor had reckoned without his host.

Nothing daunted by these apparent dangers, the Archbishop went on his characteristic fashion without paying any attention to the opposition from the Archdeacon and the community. He visited church after church, everywhere holding up Babylon to ridicule and execration, and singing the praises of the Church of Rome; wherever his stratagems proved successful, he administered the rite of confirmation to as many children as he could get at. At a second meeting with the Archdeacon, after some heated discussion, he secured the concurrence of the latter to the convening of a general meeting of the representatives of all Syrian churches, for a public discussion of religious questions, the Archbishop undertaking in the meanwhile to desist from pushing forward his authority any further among the Syrians. He was to exercise none of his ecclesiastical functions, but could, if he liked, visit churches merely as a friend. Abp. Menezis was not the man, however, to be deterred by such a promise. Besides preaching, Popery and administering confirmation, he ordained wherever he went a large number of priests, so that he might leave behind him a powerful party bound to support him in the proposed Synod. The Archdeacon, thereupon, issued a notice forbidding the acceptance of holy orders from the Archbishop, who in turn retaliated by issuing an edict of excommunication against the Archdeacon. In every church, Abp. Menezis made it his fixed policy to entice all the leading members to his side by presents of gold coins and by ordaining as priests the sons or near relatives of such as seemed influential among the parishioners. He visited sick persons and invalids in their houses and assisted them with money, declaring at the same time that to help the helpless in this manner was one of the fundamental duties of a bishop, which the prelates of Malabar seldom attended to. The ruling Hindu Princes were prevailed upon by presents and

threats to issue proclamations requiring their Christian subjects to submit to the Archbishop.

The Archdeacon's position was insecure. Some of the leading churches and influential members of the community withdraw their support; all the newly ordained priests were unfriendly to him; he was himself excommunicated; the ruling Princes, in whom he had had implicit trust, also turned hostile to him. He had, thus, no alternative but to submit. At this juncture, Abp. Menezis required him to sign an agreement by which he was to conform to the faith of the Church of Rome and acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, to accept none but bishops appointed by Rome, to deliver all religious books for correction or destruction according to the discretion of the Archbishop, and to issue a notice convening a public Synod. The draft of the agreement was forwarded to the Archdeacon for his signature, with covering letters from the Rajas of Cochin and of Alangad. Finding no other means of escape, Archdeacon George put his signature to the agreement, and contended himself with sending a humble request that the Synod be held at Angamali, the seat of the Bishopric. The Christians at Angamali were devoted to the Syrian rite, and the power of the Portuguese Government could not make itself felt so far inland, as easily and effectually as near the coast. Abp. Menezis saw all this at a glance and refused the request. He insisted upon the Synod being held at Diamper (*Udiamperur*) within easy reach of Cochin, a centre of Portuguese influence. The Synod was fixed for the 20th of June 1599, and notices were issued over the joint signatures of the Archbishop and the Archdeacon. A proclamation was also published by the Raja of Cochin, threatening that if any parishes failed to send representatives to the Synod, all properties belonging to the defaulting parishes would be confiscated and added to the State Exchequer.

The object of the Synod was plainly intimated to the community. It was convened for the increase and exaltation of the Catholic faith among the Syrians in Malabar, for the destruction of the errors and heresies which had been sown in the diocese by several heretics and schismatics; for the purging of books from the false doctrines continued in them; for the perfect union of this Church with the whole Church, Catholic and Universal; for the yielding of obedience to the supreme Bishop of Rome, the universal pastor of the Church and successor in the chair of St. Peter and Vicar of Christ on earth, from whom they had for some time departed; for the extirpation of simony which had been much practised in the diocese; for the regulating of the administration of the holy sacraments of the Church, and the necessary use of them; and for the information of the affairs of the Church and the clergy and the customs of all the Christian people of the diocese." Every town and village in the bishopric, and, where there was no church, all that used to assemble at any church as belonging to it were invited to choose four of the most influential persons among them and to send them to Synod "with sufficient powers to approve, sign, confirm and consult in their name, so as to oblige themselves thereby to comply with whatsoever should be determined in the Synod."

Abp. Menezis did not invite the Syrians for an open discussion or for free deliberation. The purposes were predetermined and the community was called to accept his terms. He did not consider that any attempt to convince the Syrians of the truth of the faith of his Church was indispensable or even necessary for a conscientious acceptance of its doctrines. The proceedings of the Synod were no less arbitrary than the notice. During the interval between the issue of the notice and the meeting of the Synod, the Archbishop ordained as many as fifty priests, whose votes he could rely

upon to swell his majority. He assured himself of the support of the laity and rulers by a lavish distribution of jewelled rings and gold crosses studded with diamonds and rubies. He honoured the Rajas of Porcad and of Gundra with the title of "Brother-in-arms of the King of Portugal," and thus secured their powerful aid in furthering his designs.

Chapter XII

THE SYNOD OF DIAMPER

The famous Synod of Diamper was opened precisely on the appointed day. The Archdeacon and the representatives of all but two churches were present. The European ecclesiastics of Cochin and all the newly-ordained Syrian clergy were also there. As if to overawe the Syrians and make assurance doubly sure, the Portuguese Governor of Cochin with his officers and an armed escort attended the meeting. Their presence considerably added to the terror and panic with which the Syrians had already been seized.

The Synod having assembled, the proceedings began with a solemn mass and a sermon against schism. The pressure applied was so irresistible that all the members present had to take an oath, in their own names and in names of all whom they represented, of conformity to the profession of faith that was to be proposed in the council. Resolutions previously drawn up were read one by one, and forced upon the community. They were compelled to swear obedience to, and acceptance of none but bishops, pastors and governors appointed by the Pope of Rome. The details of the Synod are so well-known that we need not refer to them here at any length. Suffice it to say that the doctrines, practices, rituals and forms of government which had existed among the Syrians from immemorial times were condemned, and those of the Church of Rome were substituted. The only

exception made was in favour of the retention of the Syro-Chaldean language in the services of the Church. All books which were used in the Syrian Church were committed to the flames; the Marriage of priests was forbidden; Married priests were compelled to divorce their wives; Jesuits were licensed to preach without the permission of parochial clergy; and "the people of this ancient Church were to submit themselves to the Holy Office of the Inquisition in these parts established." There were in all nine sessions and two hundred and sixty seven decrees, "most of them of considerable length, and if fairly treated, demanding long and careful discussion. Yet, they were so hurried through the house, that the business was closed on the sixth day. This indecent haste clearly proves, if proofs were necessary, that this so-called Synod possessed nothing but the outward form of a deliberative assembly, and that its real purpose was to disguise the true nature of the proceedings, to pass without amendment the decrees carefully prepared by the skilful hand of Menezis, and to bind, as he thought, for ever, the afflicted Syrian Church to the throne of the triumphant Pontiff."¹ The decrees were signed, not without murmurs of dissatisfaction, by one hundred and fifty priests and six hundred and sixty three lay representatives, for themselves and for the parishes that deputed them. A tradition widely current among the Syrians says that when the Archbishop called upon the members to sign the decrees, a priest, standing up in the midst of the assembly, with his trousers on his shoulders and shirt on his legs, expressed as his opinion that matters were all turned upside down. He was immediately thrust out of the church. Thus was concluded the famous Synod of Diamper on the

1. *Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies and Missions in Asia and Africa*, by the Rev. Alex J. D'Orsey, pp. 230 and 231.

26th of June 1599. The Church of Malabar was placed under the protection of "His faithful Majesty the King of Portugal," who in turn agreed to grant 15,000 *cruzadoo* annually, for the maintenance of vicars of churches, exclusive of a large supply of wine for the celebration of masses.

Abp. Menezis next undertook a second tour through almost all the churches, and by his strong will and well-nigh inexhaustible resources, saw the decrees of the Synod carried out in all the parishes. In the course of the tour, priests who had unfortunately learned to love and be loved by their *baskiammas*,² had to cast them away like a worn cloth, at the bidding of the Archbishop. It was chiefly on this occasion that Abp. Menezis distinguished himself by an action which the world had hitherto associated only with the name of Caliph OMor in the destruction of the most precious and most laboriously – collected file of the records of human progress that had ever been brought together progress that had ever been brought together under the roof of the famous library of Alexandria. "If these books," said OMor, "contain less than what is in the Koran, there is no need of them. If on the other hand, there is more in them than in the Koran, they should not remain, since all true knowledge is in the Koran and all knowledge existing outside of it must be false and pernicious." The same appears to have been the view of Abp. Menezis. In every church visited by him he paid particular attention to the collection of all available books and manuscripts and destroyed them without any exception.³

2. Honorific title by which wives of priests are generally called.

3. This has been the practice of the Roman Church everywhere. The Latin missionaries, after they had succeeded in obtaining a footing among the Nestorians, made use of the same artifice to destroy all relics of early Nestorianism. The extensive library of Mosul, "consisting of many thousands of volumes," was carried in baskets to the Tigris and thrown into that river. (Badger Vol. II, p. 1).

This act of vandalism accounts for the entire absence of any material to reconstruct any tolerably satisfactory account of the early and middle ages of the history of Syrian Church in India. As an example of the manner in which Abp. Menezis secured the sympathy and support of the common people, it may be noted that at *Kalloorkat* Church the Archbishop distributed among Syrian boys ball-like sweetmeats (known in Malayalam as *kozhukatta*). Inside each ball was placed a gold coin in lieu of the honeyed coconut kernel usually found there; and it has since become a bye-word that "crows can be caught by arrows and *Kalloorkat* by *kozhukatta*."

Having thus achieved his highest ambition within the short period of ten months, Abp. Menezis triumphantly returned to his See, appointing Francisco Ross a Jesuit, as Bishop of Malabar.

Though forced to submit, the Syrians regarded the Roman yoke as unbearable, and the Roman Catholic teachings and rituals, as pills too bitter and unwholesome to remain long in the stomach. They, therefore eagerly longed for the earliest opportunity to throw them off. The new prelate, Francisco Ross transferred the seat of the bishopric from Angamali to Cranganore, which was within easy reach of the central Portuguese authority. Outwardly the Syrians showed every sign of submission to their oppressors; but all this time, they were sending urgent confidential messages to Antioch and Babylon praying for the immediate despatch of bishops from either of those places. Accordingly, a bishop was actually sent to Malabar in 1653, which proved an epochmaking incident in the history of the Syrian Church. But before entering into its details, it will be proper that we review briefly the main features of the doctrines and rituals of the Malabar Church at and before the date of the Synod of Diamper.

Chapter XIII

THE CREED OF THE CHURCH OF MALABAR BETWEEN THE SEVENTH AND THE SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

1. THE FAITH AND PRACTICES IN VOGUE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE SYNOD

In the decrees of the Synod of Diamper, references are made to the faith and practices then prevalent in the Church of Malabar. These go to power beyond a shadow of doubt that the Syrian Church was at that time Nestorian, and in full communion with the See of Babylon. Gouvea, the historian of the Synod, appears to enumerate the following among the so-called errors of the Syrian Church. She (i) condemned the Pope's supremacy, (ii) denied transubstantiation, (iii) did not adore images, (iv) had no use of the holy oil, (v) denied Purgatory, (vi) acknowledged only three sacraments, *viz.*, baptism, eucharist, and holy orders, (vii) knew nothing of confirmation and extreme unction, (viii) did not practise auricular confession, (ix) permitted the clergy to marry, and (x) held two orders only, namely, those of priesthood and diaconate.

Some of these so-called errors simply mean that the Malabar Church was not in communion with the Church of Rome. Denial of the Pope's supremacy, refusal to adore images, marriage of priests— all these prove in the clearest way possible that in this ancient Church no trace of Roman

Catholicism existed till it was forced upon her at the point of the bayonet. The other "errors" referred to by Gouvea need to be carefully inquired into, in as much as they convey an incorrect impression of the actual doctrines and rituals of the undivided Church of Malabar. If Gouvea's account were correct, it would follow that in certain essential points there was some difference between the Malabar Church on the one hand, and the Nestorian Church, as well as most other Oriental Churches, on the other. But we have already seen that the Malabar Church was for many years immediately before the Synod of Diamper, in full communion with the Nestorian Church at Babylon.

It cannot for a moment be supposed that a Church so fully subject to the Nestorian Patriarchs would have abandoned doctrines and rituals maintained by the mother Church, or that the Nestorian Bishops who ruled her would have allowed such deviations to pass unnoticed, unless the daughter Church can be proved to have attached unusual importance and sacredness to such deviations. That this was not the case, but that there was the closest identity between the beliefs and practices of the two Churches is proved by the very authorities relied on by Gouvea.

Taking these "errors" on by one, we find that transubstantiation is a word which has no equivalent in Syriac, and transubstantiation, *as* understood by Menezis and Gouvea from the decrees of the Council of Trent (these decrees being accepted by the Roman Catholics), could not have been the teaching of the Nestorian Church or any other Eastern Church; but, as shown by the liturgies of Babylon, especially those of Nestorius and Theodore, which as Decree II of Session I of the Synod of Diamper clearly proves, were at the time in use in Malabar, she believed in "the Real Presence of the Saviour," and that "the elements are changed" by the

all-sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost."¹ Abd Yesu, the greatest theologian of the Nestorian Church, who lived in the thirteenth century, says that the "bread is changed into His holy body and the wine into His precious blood." "Whenever we approach these sacraments", he continues, "we meet with Christ Himself, and His very self we take into our hands and kiss".² It has to be remembered in this connection that the very book of Abd Yesu from which this quotation is taken (*The Jewel of Faith*) was one of the books condemned by Abp. Menezis in the decrees of the Synod.³

As regards the holy oil, there could be no doubt that unction was an important ritual in Babylon. According to several of the best Nestorian theologians of early ages, "oil of unction" was one of the sacraments of their Church.⁴ In Decree XIV of Session IV of the Synod of Diamper, Abp. Menezis refers to the use of some oil in Malabar, though he accuses them of using it "without any distinction and without being blessed by the Bishop."⁵ In this connection we have to remember that the Eastern Church allows the multiplication of the holy oil, when it falls short, by the addition and mixture of unconsecrated oil with the consecrated. Abp. Menezis' accusation, therefore, seems to have been the result of his ignorance of this practice.

In respect of Purgatory, all Eastern Churches deny the purification of souls through a temporary punishment in a mediate place, but they hold a strong belief in the efficacy of prayers and oblations offered for the departed. The liturgies

1. Badger, *Nestorians and Their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 169.

2. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 409.

3. Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, p. 156.

4. Badger, Vol. II, p. 150.

5. See the translation of the Decrees of the Council of Diamper, in Hough's works (appendix); or Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, p. 201.

of Nestorius and Theodore are replete with prayers for the dead.

Concerning the number of sacraments, Badger says: "Nestorian rituals do not determine the number of the Church sacraments, but several of their best authors reckon them as seven, and so many are generally allowed by the Nestorians of the present day. Their theologian Abd Yesu expressly mentions seven sacraments."⁶

Confirmation is not generally administered in Eastern Churches as a separate rite as in the West, but forms part of the baptismal service and is performed along with it by priests. Hence Abp. Menezis failed to notice it in the Malabar Church. In respect of confession, the Nestorian practice is thus: "Such as wish to communicate of the holy Eucharist assemble together, and individuals consult priests privately," and afterwards "the priests read over them one or more absolutions in the form of petitions." Besides, the "sacerdotal authority of the priest to absolve is most unquestionably maintained by the Nestorians."⁷

The wording of the decrees of the Synod of Diamper does not negate the practice of confession in the Church of Malabar, but is only to the effect that it was not enforced as a matter of obligation and that a great many had not confessed at all.⁸ Apart from these facts, we find that in Malabar priests used to bless the people, when applied for, by using the form of absolution in the words, "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father" etc.⁹ The practice of confession in the Malabar Church is also recorded in the book of travels compiled in Europe from materials supplied by

6. Badger, Vol. II, p. 150.

7. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 154 and 159.

8. Session VI, Decree 1.

9. Session VI, Decree XV.

Joseph the Indian,¹⁰ several years previous to the Synod of Diamper.¹¹

The statement that the Indian Church had held only the two orders of priesthood and diaconate must be a gross error. The traveller Joseph goes on to say that there were priests, deacons and subdeacons in Malabar, and in describing the system of church government, he enumerates Patriarchs, Archbishops, and Bishops. Mor Abd Yesu reckons nine orders of ministers.¹² It cannot be denied that episcopacy had been, in Babylon and in India, the most venerated office in the Church and the pivot on which the whole government of the Church turned.

It thus appears that Gouvea's description of the doctrines and practices of the Indian Church prior to the Synod of Diamper is not an exact representation of the state of things then prevalent, but was merely the outcome of his inferences based on insufficient information or of a prejudiced view of variations from the Roman Catholic system of administering the sacraments of the Church. Relying on Gouvea's statements, Geddes and Hough make an attempt to prove the antiquity of certain Protestant theories on sacraments; rituals and practices. The aforesaid remarks are enough to show that these writers were equally unwarranted in drawing such a conclusion.

II. WAS THE SYRIAN CHURCH NESTORIAN?

Was the Syrian Church *Nestorian all along*, from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries? This is an important question that

10. Joseph is mentioned in Chapter X as having visited the Nestorian Patriarch in 1490 and afterwards accompanied Cabral to Europe and from information received from him a small book called "The Travels of Joseph the Indian" was published.

11. Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, p. 13.

12. Badger, p. 190, Vol. II

we have next to answer. It was, no doubt, Nestorian from 1490 to 1599, but *previous to that period* the Church of Malabar was a branch of the Jacobite Church of Persia. To enable us to form a correct idea of the creed and practices that were in vogue in this Church in early years, let us rapidly glance over the past history from the sixth century onwards.

a. Our review of the life and work of Cosmas and the condition of the Persian Church in his days clearly indicates that it is more than doubtful if Nestorianism ever penetrated into Malabar in the sixth century.

b. In the seventh century, a gleam of historical light reveals to us that in A.D. 696 a Bishop of the Church of the Jacobites arrived in Malabar from Alexandria, in response to a deputation sent from Malabar to the Jacobite occupation of the throne of St. Mork.¹ This fact is confirmed by Dr. Neale also.² The statement made in a letter of the Nestorian Patriarch Jesuhabus (A.D. 650 to 660) to the effect that "India which extends from the shores of the kingdom of Persia as far as Quilon" lay in darkness "deprived of the light of divine doctrine which shines forth through Bishops of the Truth"³ is another proof that Nestorianism did not spread to Malabar in the seventh century.

c. For the eighth century, we have definite unequivocal testimony to the prevalence of Jacobitism in Malabar, in the *Pahlavi* inscriptions on the stone crosses preserved in the churches at St. Thomas Mount and at Kottayam. We have referred to these crosses in Chapter X. Dr. Burnell's translation of the inscription is as follows: "In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering of this one; He who is true Christ, God above, and Guide ever pure."

1. Francis Day, *Land of the Perumals*, p. 216.

2. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. II, p. 88.

3. Asseman II, 131.

Professor Rae accepts this translation as correct and admits that "the inscription on a cross, set up as symbol of Christianity within the limits of a church surrounded on all hands by heathenism, might be expected to exhibit the belief of the church concerning the Crucified One;" and the inference, drawn by him with regard to the belief concerning the Crucified One, is that it 'sets forth a view of person of Christ characteristic of Indian Nestorianism," viz., that "in Christ each of the persons of the Trinity was incarnate".⁴ Was this the belief of the Malabar Church concerning the crucified Christ, as set forth in the above inscription? Certainly not.

In the first place, *Pahlavi* was never the vernacular language of Malabar, nor was it ever the ecclesiastical language of the Indian Christians or of the Persian Nestorians. The services of both these Churches were conducted in Syriac or Chaldaic. The native Christians could not have any veneration for the court language of Persia. The monuments must be taken as the work of some Persian Christian, either engraved in Malabar or imported from Persia. The theory that each of the persons of the Holy Trinity was incarnate in Christ was never the teaching of the Nestorian Church in Persia. "In no other theological literature," says Mr. Rae, "so far as I am aware, will the notion be found which this inscription seems intended to convey"; nor is there any reliable evidence that such a theory was believed by the Nestorians of Malabar except the prejudiced statement made by Archbishop Menezis in the decrees of the Council of Diamper. Even were such a notion held in the Malabar Church, it could not be expected to find a place in the monument, since the inscription could not have originated from anyone but a Persian Nestorian; to

4. G.M. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*, p. 121.

the latter, the idea that each of the persons of the Trinity was incarnate was a heresy. As a matter of fact, the peculiarity of this notion is the basis of a charge brought by Nestorians against the Jacobite Church, for we find that Mor Abd Yesu, the greatest of Nestorian theologians, in his celebrated work *Morghianeetha*,⁵ vehemently condemns the Jacobite doctrine of the incarnation and the title *Theotokos*, for the simple reason that they imply that the Virgin "brought forth the Trinity and not the one only Son."⁶ In other words, in the eyes of a Nestorian the idea that the Trinity was incarnate in Christ was a blasphemy, deducible from the Jacobite formula of incarnation. Hence, if we were to accept Mr. Rae's interpretation of Dr. Burnell's translation, we are obliged to conclude that a Persian Nestorian set up a doctrine which he himself believed to be a blasphemy.

What, then was the doctrine concerning the Crucified One, which the inscription in question exhibits? It is that "the One who is the true Christ, God above and Guide ever pure," suffered "in punishment by the cross." The meaning of this sentence is plain, and no far-fetched argument is necessary to show that this inscription attributes Divinity to Christ in His crucified position. A Nestorian always objects to the use of such language as "God suffered," "God died," in reference to the Passion and Death of our Lord. "Woe and woe again to all who say that God died"⁷ is a particular form in which he anathematizes those who attribute Divinity to Christ in His crucified position. His conception of Jesus Christ is that he has two persons, one human and the other divine, and that it was the man Jesus or the human person

5. This was one of the books met by Abp. Menezis in the Church of Malabar and condemned in the Council of Diamper (*vide* Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, p. 161).

6. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 401.

7. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 89.

that suffered on the cross. In this respect there was nothing peculiarly characteristic of Indian Nestorianism. Archbishop Menezis condemned several theological books of Malabar because they taught that "the Divine Word did not assume flesh," and that "it was no God that suffered."⁸

On the other hand, let us compare the wording of the inscription with the doctrine taught and believed by the Jacobite Church. A Jacobite bishop has to confess at the time of his consecration that Christ is of one person and one nature *compounded* of divinity and humanity, that "at the time of His death, His divinity never separated from His humanity," that "His death was the separation of His soul from the body, His divinity having never separated from His body or from His soul."⁹ The Jacobite *trisagion* contains the following clause: "God that was crucified for us, have mercy on us." The peculiar Christological dogma of the Jacobite Church set forth in their theological books and Church ordinals is plainly visible in this monumental inscription of the eighth century, and it is a clear proof that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite in that century.

d. For the ninth century, we have the record of the arrival of two Syrian Bishops, *Sabor* and *Peroz*, with a colony, at Quilon, and we have shown in Chapter X that they were not Nestorians. The second *sasanam*. (copper plate) spoken of in Chapter VI. was one granted to the head of this colony. By this, the Raja of Quilon, Sthanu Ravi Guptha, conferred certain privileges on the Christians under him and certain lands on the Tharisa Church at Quilon. *Tharisa* is a Syriac word meaning *straight* or *orthodox*, and it is a title applied by

8. Decrees of the Synod of Diamper, Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, pp. 167, 169, etc.

9. *Shalmooso*, or confessions of a candidate for consecration as Bishop in the Jacobite Church, is the authority from which these quotations are taken.

the Jacobites to their Church. In all prayers for the prosperity of their Church, the phrase used in their theological books to express their communion is *tharisa church*.

e. The next piece of monumental evidence and this indicates the nature of the creed of the Indian Church in the tenth century— is the second stone slab in the *Valiapally* Church at Kottayam. We have already stated in Chapter X, that the *Pahlavi* inscription in it is exactly a copy of the inscription in the two earlier crosses, and our remarks about the latter apply to this also with equal force. The creed of the Malabar Church in the tenth century, during which the latest cross came into existence, must, therefore, have been anti-Nestorian or Jacobite.

f. As regards the condition of the Syrian Church of Malabar in the eleventh century, evidence is very meagre. Paoli, a Roman Catholic writer, observes that Renaudot quotes Allatius as saying that the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch claimed jurisdiction in India and that Nilas Doxopatrius affirmed in A.D. 1043 that the authority of Antioch extended over Asia, the East and the Indies.¹⁰

g. For the twelfth and the following centuries, we have the very strong evidence of a record now preserved in the archives of the University of Cambridge. We mean the old manuscript copy of the *Syriac Bible* which was presented to Dr. Buchanan in A.D. 1807 by the then Metropolitan of the Syrian Church of Malabar. It is written on vellum in *Estrangelo-Syriac* characters and had been preserved in a church situated among the mountains of Travancore. How long this Bible was in the possession of the Syrian Christians of Malabar, is an important point to be considered. It was presented to Dr. Buchanan with the following remarks: "It

10. Paoli, *India, Christ*, pp. 25 and 94.

will be safer in your hands," said the Bishop on presenting it, than in our own; we have kept it as some think a thousand years;"—thereby alluding to the revolutions in Hindustan. And yet", said he, "we have kept it, as some think, for near a thousand years."¹¹ The Syrians of Mavelikara (Central Travancore) informed Dr. Buchanan that they had had the true Bible in the mountains of Malabar for fourteen hundred years or longer. "Some of our copies," said they, "are from ancient times." Dr. Leyden, an expert, thought of the manuscript presented to Dr. Buchanan that it was of the fifth or sixth century.¹² The MS. itself purports to have been written during the lifetime of Patriarch Michael the Great, who died in A.D. 1199. The date ascribed to the manuscript on purely palaeographical grounds is also the same.¹³ It may be argued that, though the manuscript in question was written in the twelfth century, it was brought down to Malabar only after the Portuguese period, and after Jacobitism was firmly established in the country. But then it has also to be granted that the only possible occasions on which it could have been imported, were arrivals of Jacobite bishops from Antioch, *viz.*, in 1665, 1685, or 1751. The Syrian Bishop who presented it to Dr. Buchanan was seventy-eight years old at the time he parted with it.¹⁴ Hence his birth must have been in 1729, *i.e.*, just sixty-four years after the arrival of the first of the aforesaid Jacobite bishops. And yet this Grand Old Metropolitan was not only quite ignorant of the exact date of its importation, but even claimed that it was preserved in the mountains of Malabar for nearly a thousand

1. Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, p. 173 (1812 Edn.)
2. Hugh Pearson, *Memories of the Life and Writings of Rev. Claudius Buchanan*, 4th ed., pp. 244, 259 and 415.
3. *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the University of Cambridge* p. 1043.
4. Buchanan, *Christian Researches*, p. 169 (1812 Edn.)

years. The library of the present Syrian (Jacobite) Metropolitan of Malabar contains a manuscript copy of the New Testament brought by the Patriarch's Delegate in 1665. The sacerdotal vestments and sacramental cups used by some of the early Delegates of the Patriarch of Antioch are still preserved. If the "Buchanan Bible" were brought to Malabar by any of the delegates of the Jacobite Patriarch in or after 1665, the fact could not have been a secret. If this manuscript Bible is a purely Jacobite Bible, as we hope to prove, and if it could not have been brought into the country after 1665, it must have been in the possession of the Church of Malabar long before 1490, since no Jacobite came to this country between 1490 and 1665. As a matter of fact, this Bible was preserved and used from the twelfth century in the church at Angamali, which was the seat of the Syrian bishops till the episcopal residence was removed by the Portuguese to Cranganore.

Let us next see whether this manuscript was Jacobite or Nestorian. It contains unambiguous *internal* evidence that it was written for and used by a Church which was Jacobite in her tenets, rituals and forms of worship. The New Testament portion of this manuscript is divided into paragraphs with special rubrics indicating the occasion on which each paragraph is to be read. The rubrics unexceptional conform to the Jacobite lectionary. A few instances may be given below.

There are more than a dozen rubrics for days set apart for the commemoration of the Blessed Virgin, described therein as "Mother of God"—a title which the Nestorians abhor.¹⁵ This itself is sufficient to show that the manuscript could not have been one used by the Nestorian Church.

15. See, for example, the rubrics heading the lessons beginning with Matthew xii. 38; Mark iii. 31; Luke viii. 16 etc.

Again, according to the practice in vogue among the Nestorians, the celebration of the Eucharist is forbidden on Saturdays in Lent. But to the Jacobites the celebration of the Eucharist on Saturdays in Lent is compulsory.¹⁶ This manuscript Bible conforms to the Jacobite practice. We find in it several rubrics which run in these words: "For the Eucharist of the first (second or third, as the case may be) Saturday in Lent."¹⁷

Some differences in the reading of certain verses are also worthy of notice. An instance may be pointed out in Acts xx. 28, where the Nestorian Bible has the words "to feed the Church of Christ," instead of "the Church of God" which the manuscript contains.

The rubric heading the lesson beginning with II Timothy iii. 10 is *decisive*. It is for the day of the commemoration of Mor Severus, Patriarch of Antioch—that patriarch who was Jacobite in the full sense and who consolidated the Jacobite community and regulated their rituals and worship.

These examples, only a few out of many, *conclusively* show that the "Buchanan Bible" was the property of the Jacobite Church. The legitimate conclusion from these circumstances is that the Church which preserved and used the celebrated manuscript since the twelfth century forward was Jacobite in her tenets and rituals.

Before taking leave of the manuscript Bible, it is worth while to mention that the Vatican Library contains a New Testament said to have been translated into Syriac at Cranganore by the Nestorian Bishop Mor Jacob on Wednesday the 6th of Morch 1510.¹⁸ Both the Church of Babylon

16. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. II, p. 713.

17. See, for example the rubrics as above; e.g. Matthew viii. 14, vii. 1, xx. 29; John ii. 12 etc.

18. Commentary of Joseph Aloysius Asseman, 212

and the Church of Malabar had the Bible authoritatively translated into Syriac long ago, and there was no necessary for attempting a new translation; and it is not shown that Mor Jacob was a Greek scholar to undertake such an arduous task. This alleged translation may, therefore, be taken to be a rewriting or revision of the existing New Testament which in the reviser's opinion did not suit a Nestorian Church as it was full of rubrics conforming to the Jacobite calendar and lectionary. And it must have been these revised copies in which Archbishop Menezis detected a few deviations in readings, supposed to have been intentionally made to support Nestorian teachings—deviations not met with in the manuscript presented to Dr. Buchanan.

h. We have shown that between 1490 and 1653 the Jacobite Church of Antioch and Persia had no dealings with the Christians of Malabar. The latter were ruled by bishops sent by the Nestorian Patriarchs, and the creeds, rituals, and liturgies of the Indian Church were entirely Nestorian. And yet we shall presently show that, in the decrees of the Council of Diamper, there are direct and indirect references to *certain practices which are entirely non-Nestorian and peculiar to the Jacobite Church*. These Jacobite practices could not have crept into Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. They could not, therefore, have been anything but the remnants of the Jacobitism which once prevailed here. We shall now notice a few of these Jacobite practices.

In Decree II of Session V of the Synod of Diamper, certain liturgies bearing the names of Nestorius, Theodorus and Diodorus are said to have existed "in the missals of the diocese" of Malabar, "appointed to be said on some days," thereby intimating that other liturgies, not specified, also existed for use on ordinary days. The only liturgies which the Nestorian Church had were those of Nestorius, Theodore

the Interpreter, the Apostles (Adaeus and Moris), Narses the Leper, and Barsumas. The first three of these are very common, while the other two are rare.¹⁹

The so-called Liturgy of Diodorus which existed in Malabar was, therefore, non-Nestorian. The Jacobites have a very large number of liturgies in use among them, ascribed to various saints of their Church. Some say the number of recognised liturgies is ninety-six. They are all offshoots of the Liturgy of St. James and are drawn up on the same model. Among the saints venerated in the Jacobite Church and remembered in their prayers is one Raban Theodorus,²⁰ who is also believed to have been the author of a liturgy, though it is not in use at present. If, as we have shown above, the Nestorians had no liturgy ascribed to Diodorus, the one that prevailed in Malabar was probably that of Raban Thoedorus, a Jacobite saint.

That a Jacobite Liturgy was actually in use in Malabar may be plainly inferred from the decrees of the Synod of Diamper itself. In Decree III of Session V, Archbishop Menezis condemns a particular ceremony observed in the celebration of the Eucharist. He describes it as follows: "In the masses of the Bishopric, there is an impious sacrilegious ceremony which is that the priest, after having dipped that part of the host, after his having divided it, which he holds in his right hand, and, has made the sign of the cross upon the other part that upon the paten, opens this latter part that was upon the paten with the nails of his right thumb to the end, in order that, according to their opinion, the blood may penetrate the body, that so the blood and the body may be

19. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 24; Palmar *Origines Liturgicae*, Vol. I, p. 195; Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, vol. 1, p. 335.
20. Howard, *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, pp. 253 and 254.

joined together."²¹ Though Abp. Menezis through ignorance describes this as a Nestorian ceremony, it is in fact a ceremony *peculiar to the Jacobites*. The corresponding ceremony in the Nestorian Church is as follows the celebrant "shall break the bread which is in his hands into two pieces and shall put the piece which is in his left hand back into its place, yet not as it was before but in such wise that the broken part shall face the cup. With the piece in his right hand he shall sign the blood which is in the cup, from east to west, and from right to left, and shall dip a third part thereof into the cup in such a way that the broken part may be wetted."²²

A comparison of the two practices reveals the following differences:

1. The Nestorians cross the blood with the broken part held in the right hand, whereas the Syrians of Malabar cross the other half of the bread in the paten with the piece in the right hand.

2. The Nestorians first cross the wine and then dip the bread into it, whereas the Syrians first dip a piece of the bread into the wine and then cross the other half of the bread.

These differences indicate that the practice of the Church of Malabar in this respect was not Nestorian but Jacobite, being introduced into all Jacobite liturgies by Mor Jacob of Edessa (A.D. 684 - 708;²³ the prevalence of this peculiar practice, together with the Liturgy of Diodorus, which was not of the Nestorian Church, clearly indicates that Jacobite liturgies were in vogue in Malabar *before* the sixteenth century.

With reference to baptism, Abp. Menezis testifies that the Church of Malabar at the date of his Synod had been using different forms in its administration, introduced at

21. Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, p. 246.

22. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 946.

23. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. II, p. 946.

divers times by ignorant and schismatical prelates.²⁴ One form used by some curates was this: "N. is baptised and perfected in the name of the Father" etc. This is exactly the form given in the Nestorian ordinal of baptism.²⁵ What the other 'various forms introduced at divers times by ignorant and schismatical prelates were', we are not informed. Yet this much is certain, *viz.* that the Nestorian form of baptism was employed at the date of the Synod *only* in some of the churches and by some of the priests.

Another, but clearer, indication of the survival of a Jacobite practice in Malabar is revealed to us in Decree XVI of Session VII of the Synod of Diamper.²⁶ It is that the clergy of the Church of Malabar in the sixteenth century used to reMorry after the death of thier first wives, as well as to Morry widows and to Morry after their ordination as priests, and that those who were parties to such Morriages were habitually performing priestly functions; *though some few*, "after they had been twice Morried, gave over celebrating and performing all other exercises and ministries of priests." The Romanist writer Osorius says that among St. Thomas Christians "the priests Morry; yet the first wife being dead they cannot Morry again."²⁷ Ever since the adoption of Nestorianism in Seleucia, the Nestorian Church had been allowing all the aforesaid kinds of Morriage to her priests, with full freedom to continue the exercise of their ministerial functions.

When Baboeus was the Nestorian Catholicos of Seleucia, a Synod held in A.D. 499 authorised their clergy to reMorry.²⁸

24. Synod of Diamper, Session IV, Decrees I and II, Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, pp. 189 and 190.

25. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p. 210.

26. Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, p. 306.

27. Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, p. 85.

28. Asseman, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, Tom. IV, pp. 80 and 83.

"It is lawful," says Badger, "for all priests and deacons among the Nestorians to Morry after having been admitted to holy orders as well as before. They may also Morry a second or a third time, being widowers, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godliness"²⁹ whereas *among the Jacobites*, reMorriage, Morriage of widows, and Morriage after ordination as priests, entail forfeiture of priesthood, and reduce the person concerned to the status of a layman.³⁰ We may definitely conclude from these circumstances that the few clergymen in the Church of Malabar who, after having contracted reMorriages and Morriages with widows, willingly abstained from performing the functions of their sacerdotal office, were following the practice implanted in this Church in an *earlier* age, at a time when she was governed by Jacobite bishops and Jacobite canons.

Another remnant of former Jacobitism may be detected in the names of the saints commemorated in Malabar at the time of the Synod of Diamper.³¹ Among the saints repudiated by Abp. Menezis as Nestorian herectics are included Zaca, (or Bishop Nicholos, commemorated by the Jacobites on 6th December), Raban Sapor (or Mor Abhai, on 1st October), Asaya (15th October), Abda (3rd June), Aaron Buchatixo for Aaron the Holy, on the first Monday after Whitsunday),³² Raban Theodorus, Abraham, Daniel, Abbot Zinai and Bishop Isaha (who are all commemorated in every Eucharist)³³ Saurizoor John Sarighto (964-985), who had to suffer persecutions for his adherence to Jacobite tenets,³⁴ is

29. Badger, *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II. 0. 178

30. The Jacobite Canons of Hudaya.

31. Synod of Diamper, Session III, Decrees IX and XIV, Geddes, *History of the Church of Malabar*, pp.146, 164 and 165.

32. Jacobite Calendar, p. 192.

33. Howard, *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, pp. 253 and 254.

34. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. 1, p. 329.

also mentioned as one of the saints venerated in Malabar. We do not meet with the aforesaid names in the calendar of the Nestorian Church; we are unable to explain the veneration of such saints, unless we admit that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite until the fifteenth century, when circumstances compelled her to accept bishops of the Nestorian communion.

We have in a previous page referred to the accusation made by Abp. Menezis against the Christians of Malabar that they believed that the Holy Trinity was incarnate in Christ. We have also shown from the work of the Nestorian theologian Mor Abd-Yesu, that in the eyes of a Nestorian the idea that the Trinity was incarnate is a blasphemy deducible from the Jacobite formula of incarnation. Had the Church of Malabar been Nestorian all along from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries, it is impossible to imagine how such a blasphemous theory could have found its way into the tenets of the same Church. The following quotation from Mosheim will help us to discover the circumstances that led Abp. Menezis to record such a misunderstanding.³⁵

"Peter, surnamed Fullo, from the trade of a fuller which he exercised in his monastic state, had usurped the see of Antioch and after having been several times deposed and condemned on account of the bitterness of his opposition to the Council of Chalcedon, was fixed in it at last in A.D. 482 by the authority of the Emperor Zeno and by the favour of Acacius, Bishop of Constantinople. This troublesome and contentious man excited fresh discords in the Church and seemed ambitious of forming a new sect under the name of Theopaschites; for to the words 'O God most holy etc., in

35. Mosheim, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol.2, pp. 80 and 81 (Murdoch's translation)

the famous hymn which the Greeks called *Trisagion*, he ordered the following phrase to be added in the Eastern Churches: 'Who has suffered for us upon the cross.' His design in this was manifestly to raise a new sect and also to fix more deeply in the minds of the people the doctrine of *one nature* in Christ, to which he was zealously attached. His adversaries and especially Felix, the Roman Pontiff, interpreted this addition to the hymn above mentioned in a quite different manner, and charged him with maintaining that *all* the three Persons of the Godhead were crucified; and hence those who approved of his addition were called Theopaschites. The consequence of this dispute was that the Western Christians rejected the addition inserted by Fullo, which they judged relative to the *whole* Trinity, while the Orientals used it constantly after this period and that, without giving the least offence, because they applied it to Christ *alone*."

According to Dr. Neale, the *Trisagion* of the Nestorian Church runs in these words: "Holy, Glorious, Powerful, Immortal, Who dwellest in the holies, and Thy will resteth in them; look Lord, upon us, be merciful, and pity us, as in all things Thou art the Helper of all." The same author also informs us that in the room of this Nestorian *Trisagion*, the Malabar Liturgy had the simple *Trisagion* which runs thus: "Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy upon us."³⁶

The Jacobite formula is the simple *Trisagion* of Dr. Neale with the *addition* made by the Patriarch Peter Fullo. Whether the Malabar Christians were using this additional clause, we have no direct evidence. But since the notion that the Trinity was incarnate or was crucified with Christ was due to a prejudiced interpretation of the *Jacobite* *Trisagion*, and since the

36. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, Vol. 1, p. 368.

Nestorian Church was always opposed to such a theory, it is difficult to imagine the possibility of the existence of such a blasphemous doctrine in Malabar. In fact, no Church at any age ever upheld such a theory. Hence it has to be concluded that the accusation made by Abp. Menezis, against the Church of Malabar, of her believing in the incarnation of the Trinity, was most probably the result of his detection of the Jacobite *Trisagion*, it being the simple Trisagion as modified by the Patriarch Peter Fullo.

One more example from the proceedings of the Synod of Diamper. In prescribing the various fast days which the Synod desired the Christians of Malabar to observe, Abp. Menezis refers to five as having been in vogue in the Malabar Church. They are (1) "The holy and the solemn fast of Lent, which according to the custom of this Bishopric, begins upon the Monday after *Quinquagesima*;" (ii) "The holy fast of Advent, which is kept in this Bishopric from the Sunday that is next to the first day of December;" (iii) "The fast of our Lady's assumption, which begins on the first day of August;" (iv) "The fast that is called the Apostles', which begins on the first day after Whitsuntide;" and (v) "The three fasting days of the Prophet Jonas, which begins eighteen days before the first day in Lent."³⁷ These five are *all* the fasts which the canons of the Jacobites have enacted for observance in their Church, and the dates named correspond exactly with the dates on which the Jacobite Church observes them. The Nestorian Church observes in addition to these five, which are common to her and the Jacobite Church, four others, *viz.*, (1) the fast of Mor Zeyya, three days; (2) the fast of the Virgins, three days; (3) the fast of Mor Eliah, seven weeks; and (4) the fast of Moses, from one to four weeks.³⁸ We find

37. Geddes, pp. 350 and 352.

38. Badger, Vol. 2, pp. 187 and 188.

no reference to these peculiarly-Nestorian fasts in the records of the Synod of Diamper. This shows that in respect of fasts also, the Malabar Church had been following the Jacobite canon.

The next evidence as to the prevalence of Jacobitism in Malabar is from the records of the Church of Angamali, which was the seat of Syrian Bishops until the Portuguese period. Gouvea, the historian of the Synod of Diamper, informs us on the authority of the said records that the island of Socotra had been formerly receiving a suffragan from the Church of Malabar.³⁹

The Christians of Socotra were Jacobites.⁴⁰ If the Church at Socotra was Jacobite, the Church of Malabar which used to send a suffragan to govern her could not have been any other than Jacobite.

Another point that we wish to impress upon our readers in this connection is that when the Christians of Malabar were deprived of the patronage of the Jacobite Church of Antioch and were compelled to accept Nestorian bishops in the fifteenth century, they were under the bona-fide impression that the Patriarch of Babylon was even then *deputy* of the Patriarch of Antioch. Joseph, a member of the deputation sent to the Nestorian Patriarch in 1490 undertook another foreign journey after his return from Baghdad. This time he visited Lisbon, Rome, Venice and other European cities. From the information conveyed by him, a pamphlet called *Travels of Joseph the Indian* was published in Venice in 1507. From this booklet, it is seen that when, at Rome, Joseph was asked by Pope Alexander VI as to the authority by which the Nestorian Patriarch governed the Church of Malabar, he

39. Neale, *The Patriarchate of Antioch*, p. 6.

40. Sir, H. Yule's edition of Marco Polo, Vol. II, p. 343; Neale, *Alexandria*, Vol. 2, p.151

plied in these words "Originally the Apostle Peter presided over the Church at Antioch, but when the Church at Rome suffered from the atrocious schism caused by Simon Magus, St. Peter was called to Rome to confound Simon and to succour the distressed Christians. However, before leaving Antioch, he appointed a vicar to act for him, whose successor the present Patriarch is."⁴¹ Among the supreme rulers of this Church, he mentioned many Archbishops, and Bishops, besides two Patriarchs, meaning no doubt the Patriarch of Antioch and the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon. This allegation of Joseph, made at a time when the Church in Malabar was exclusively under the jurisdiction of the Nestorian Patriarch, will be meaningless unless it is granted that the Patriarch of Antioch, ever since he assumed supremacy over the Malabar Church, through his *deputy*, the *orthodox* Catholicos of Seleucia (Patriarch of Babylon), was regarded as the *supreme* ecclesiastical head of this Church.

Dr. Claudius Buchanan reports a dialogue said to have taken place between the Syrians and the Portuguese when they *first* met each other. "These churches', said the Portuguese, 'belong to the Pope!' 'Who is the Pope?' said the natives; 'we never heard of him.' The European priests were yet more alarmed when they found that these Hindoo Christians maintained the order and discipline of a regular Church under Episcopal Jurisdiction; and that for one thousand three hundred years past, they had enjoyed a succession of Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch. "We, said the natives, 'are of the true faith, whatever you from the West may say; for we come from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians."⁴² This dialogue explains the statement of Joseph in the booklet quoted above. It was the belief

1. Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, pp. 81 and 82.

2. Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, p. 147 (1812 Edn.)

of the Malabar Syrians that for about one thousand three hundred years past (previous to A.D. 1503) they had been subject to the See of Antioch. Ever since the Melkites were superseded in the East by the Jacobites, the Greek prelates, though they had assumed the title of the Patriarch of Antioch, had no intercourse with the Syrians of Malabar; it is clear that all references made by the Syrian Church to the Patriarch of Antioch apply exclusively to the Jacobite occupants of that See.

We shall close the examination of the important question whether the Syrian Church was Nestorian all along, with the testimony of three authors, who, though inclined to hold that the Church of Malabar was all along Nestorian, are yet compelled to recognise that Jacobitism was introduced into this Church long before the Portuguese period.

Le Quien states that about the middle of the fourteenth century the Christians of Malabar applied to the Jacobite Patriarch of Alexandria for a Metropolitan so as to preserve the Christian law from total extinction, and that the Patriarch accordingly deputed a Syrian Jacobite.⁴³

Hough, the author of *Christianity in India*, allows that "it is now well-known that their creed has for many ages past been more in accordance with that of the Jacobites; there can be little doubt that it was changed at the time when their Patriarch at Seleucia adopted the Jacobite tenets."⁴⁴

Etheridge in speaking of the Nestorian persuasion, writes: "In this form of expression there is reference to the Nestorian communion, as distinguished from that of the Jacobites, who had possessed for several centuries a considerable interest in India. *Praeter Nestorianos*, says Asseman, *etiam monophysitae*

43. Quoted in Le Bas' Life of Bishop Middleton, page 272, from Vol. II, p. 1275.

44. Hough, *Christianity in India*, Vol. 1, p. 57.

Indiam pervaseruent."⁴⁵ Collins, a C.M.S. missionary who lived and worked for many years among the Syrian Christians of Malabar, writes thus on the point: "At the present time their Bishops are consecrated by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch alone. Nor can there be really much doubt that from the time when Jacob Albardai, in the sixth century espoused the causes of the Eutychians and enabled them to secure the Sees of Antioch and of Alexandria, the Syrian churches in Malabar owned the Eutychian Patriarch, who was the most powerful Bishop in the East, and were, therefore, Eutychians, or, as they are also called from Jacob Albardai, Jacobites."⁴⁶

Thus, from the various pieces of evidence, internal, external and circumstantial, through which we have gone in this chapter, we may legitimately conclude that the Syrian Church of Malabar was Jacobite in her tenets *from the sixth to the fifteenth century*. The notion generally held, to the effect that Nestorianism prevailed in Malabar from the days of Cosmas in the seventh century till the Synod of Diamper (1599), is the result of not carefully studying the history of this ancient Church. Probably, Nestorian bishops also had their supporters here and there in Malabar, but they were always received *under the impression* that the Patriarch (Babylon *Catholicos of Seleucia*) was the *deputy* of the Patriarch of Antioch whom they had regarded as their supreme pontiff. The questions of the Person and Nature of Christ were so minute that the poor uneducated native Christians could not comprehend any difference between the Jacobites and the Nestorians.

Both the Jacobites and the Nestorians had the same creed; both had similar rituals and ceremonies; both were opposed

⁴⁵. Etheridge, *The Syrian Churches*, p. 156.

⁴⁶. Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, p. 76.

to the use of images; both used the ancient Syro-Chaldean language in their worship; the advent of Nestorian bishops or their exercise of functions could not involve any glaring changes in the outward forms of rituals and discipline; the result was, as already stated, that the Syrians received such of the Nestorian bishops also as happened to visit them occasionally, especially when the Church was in a state of widowhood. And what we find is that they could not totally eradicate all the Jacobite practices that had long prevailed in the country. This accounts for the absence of any difficulty for the Jacobite bishops in the way of their reviving Jacobitism in the Malabar Church when the latter revolted against Rome in 1653.

Chapter XIV

THE COONEN CROSS OATH AND SEPARATION

We shall now resume our history. Bishop Francisco Roz whom Archbishop Menezis appointed to rule the Church of Malabar concluded his episcopal career in peace and was followed in 1624 by Stephen de Brito. In 1641, a Jesuit named Garcia was appointed to direct the destiny of the poor Syrian Christians. He ruled with a rod of iron, and attempted to *substitute Latin* for Syriac in the services of the Church. The Synod of Diamper may be reckoned as the beginning of the downfall of the Portuguese influence in India. The Dutch, destined to crush their power, began to acquire ascendancy in the East. One by one, the Dutch captured the Portuguese stations in Ceylon and India, culminating in the fall of Cochin in 1663. About ten years before the total extinction of the Portuguese power in Malabar, an oriental prelate whom European writers call Ahatalla arrived in India in disguise. The Portuguese arrested him at Surat and sent him to Mylapore, where he was detained in custody, pending orders for his removal to the Holy Inquisition at Goa.

Some writers take him to be a Coptic Bishop from Alexandria, others regard him as a Jacobite owing allegiance to the See of Antioch, while a few reckon him as a Nestorian. Early Roman Catholic missionaries have referred to him as a Jacobite,¹ which is rather significant. It was well-known that

1. Hough, Vol. 2, p. 301.

at the time of the Synod of Diamper, the Syrian Church at Malabar had a strong attachment to the Nestorian Patriarch. When she, later on, in 1653, revolted against Rome, there was probably no perceptible vestige of Jacobitism in the country. The enthusiasm which Ahatalla roused in the country could have been, one would naturally suppose, called forth by none but a representative of the *Nestorian* Patriarch. In spite of such obvious circumstances, the early Roman Catholic writers have represented him as a *Jacobite* sent by the Patriarch of Antioch. Their testimony cannot, therefore, be set down as due to pure guesses and presuppositions, but must have been the result of a careful enquiry.

Whether Ahatalla was Jacobite or a Nestorian, it cannot be denied that the Syrian Church at Malabar always believed that he was Mor Ignatius, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, who had come in person to relieve his suffering Church from the yoke of Rome. While in imprisonment at Mylapore, he accidentally met two Syrian deacons, Itty and Kurien who had gone on a pilgrimage to the sacred tomb at St. Thomas the Apostle; and learning from them the condition of the Syrian Church at Malabar and her anxiety to be relieved of Roman oppression, he issued a Bull authorising the consecration of Archdeacon Thoma (successor or Archdeacon George) as a temporary Bishop, on condition that he was not to confer orders or consecrate holy oil until he had secured valid consecration through apostolic imposition of hands.

Not long after, Patriarch Ahatalla was brought in chains to Cochin, to be carried thence to Goa. The Syrians somehow got wind of it, and in a body they went and applied to the Raja of Cochin to intercede with the Portuguese in their behalf for the release of their prelate. The Raja, supporting the cause of his Syrian subjects, remonstrated with the Portuguese officers in Cochin, but was appeased by a liberal

present. Five thousand Syrians Morted to Cochin, determined, if possible, to release the Bishop by force. The authorities in the Fort were so terrified that they closed the gate and manned the walls for defence. In the meantime Ahatalla was privately taken on board and despatched to Goa, where, according to the Latin writers Jarri and Paolo, he was burned by the Inquisition, A report was circulated that the unfortunate prelate was drowned in the harbour by tying a huge stone round his neck and dropping him into the sea.

The indignation of the Syrians knew no bounds. They met at Mattancheri church (Cochin Town), and holding a rope tied to a large stone cross commonly called the *Coonen Cross*, they took a solemn oath that they would never again recognise the Jesuit Bishop and the Church of Rome which had murdered their dear Patriarch. The oath was taken on Friday, the 3rd of *Makaram* (January) 1653. They also drew up an agreement to the same effect, binding themselves by the terms of the oath. The revolt was not local. Every parish throughout the diocese, with the exception of four hundred souls in all cast off the Roman yoke.

The Raja, who had first remonstrated with the Governor of Cochin about the incarceration of Ahatalla but who was afterwards silenced by a liberal present offered by the Portuguese, died suddenly at the very moment when the rumour of Ahatalla's drowning was reported abroad, and cries of simultaneous lamentations were reciprocally re-echoed from both sides of the Cochin backwater. The Syrians who took this as a sign of God's vengeance upon the Raja were yet the more encouraged in their revolt against the Roman Catholic Bishop.

Not long after, they held a general meeting in the church at *Alengad*, and under the alleged authority conferred by Patriarch Ahatalla, they appointed the Archdeacon as Bishop

under the title *Mor Thoma*. A provisional system of Church government was also introduced, with a council of four members, presided over by Mor Thoma. The members elected were the four priests, Kadavil Chandy *Catanar*, Anjilimoottil Itty Thoman *Catanar*, Vengoor Givarghese *Catanar*; and Palliveetil Chandy *Catanar*. Thus was set up a Church independent of Rome, but without a duly consecrated bishop to guide it.

Intriguing Romanists at once began to make much of the invalidity of the consecration of Mor Thoma, and the inefficacy of sacraments administered under the orders of a self-constituted Bishop, with the result that within a few years a considerable party submitted to Rome again, preferring the Jesuit yoke to the spiritual perils which the episcopacy of Mor Thoma was supposed to bring upon them. Those who adhered to the Roman faith thenceforth called themselves *Pazhayacoottoocar* (*old* partisans) and they gave to the followers of Mor Thoma the name *Poothencootttoocar* (*new* partisans).

When the news of the revolt reached Rome, Pope Alexander VII deputed certain Carmelite missionaries in 1657, with special directions to bring back the dissenters into union with the "Holy See." They held meetings in different centres and had discussions with leading parishioners. They found a peculiarly sensitive spot to work upon, *viz.*, the doubt of the Syrians that Mor Thoma was not a properly constituted Bishop. By persistently and artfully dwelling upon the consequence of depending upon such a doubtful source for spiritual needs, the agents of the Pope succeeded in producing a deep impression upon a considerable section of the Syrian community. By this means, as well as by the distribution of presents, and recourse to other peculiarly Roman devices, they induced two of the members of the Bishop's

own council to join the Church of Rome, against which they had taken a solemn oath at the *Coonen Cross*. But Itty Thoman *Catanar*, a leading member of the Council and faithful friend of the *Metran* (Mor Thoma), strongly supported his cause and infused fresh life and vigour into his party. A letter written by Itty Thoman *Catanar* to the address of Kadavil Chandy *Catanar*, one of the two apostate members of the council, is very interesting not only as showing the zeal and attachment of the writer to the *faith* of his forefathers, but also as representing the views of the community at the time as to what was the system of their *former church* government. The following is a translation of the letter.

"To my dear brother Kadavil Chandy *Catanar*. The honoured Patriarch of Antioch being the Lord of Malankara, and our sacraments having been from early times conducted by prelates coming therefrom, padres of Sampalur (probably, of St. Paul) resolved that we should not have them. As soon as we took the oath as Mattancheri, some laymen said that differences and dissensions might arise among us. Then I broke a stick and said that the Portuguese and we should never unite unless and until the two pieces of the broken stick united. You, my brother, then said, 'What Itty Thoman Achen spoke is a prophecy that cannot fail.' My little finger now desires to touch my brother's tongue that uttered these words. Remember that the agreement which we all together executed to the *Metran* is not lost. To this effect, written by Itty Thoman *Catanar* from the Church of *Chungam*."²

We know the Syrian Church at Malabar was under the direct supremacy of the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon, when Abp. Menezis visited her. But Itty Thoman *Catanar* writes to a former colleague that the Church was under Antioch and

2. This translation is made from a copy found in an old vernacular manuscript of Chronicles in the possession of the author.

Bishops were sent from that quarter. This confirms our view, expressed in Chapter X, to the effect that the local Church was always under the impression that she was in communion with Antioch and that the Nestorian Patriarch's rule was accepted in the capacity of a *deputy* of the Patriarch of Antioch. Apparently when the connection between Babylon and Antioch ceased, the fact of the ceasing of the connection was not known in Malabar.

Chapter XV

THE CARMELITE PERSECUTION

Several circumstances conspired to work together in favour of the Carmelites. The first batch of these missionaries, sent by Pope Alexander VII after the Syrian revolt, had at first to carry on their work in opposition to Jesuit missionaries. The Portuguese civil power, which at the outset offered resistance to the Carmelites, gradually learning that their cooperation was important to conciliate the rebellious Church, received them as ambassadors of peace and rendered them every possible help, while Garcia, the Jesuit Bishop of *Tranganore*, intrigued against them in vain. The Syrians hated the Jesuits. To many of them the change from Jesuits to Carmelites was a welcome relief. The lingering suspicion about the legitimacy of the consecration of Mor Thoma could not be eradicated. All these reasons accounted for the early success of the labours of the Carmelite missionaries.

At last, Friar Joseph, one of the Carmelites, was consecrated Bishop of Hierapolis and Vicar Apostle of Malabar. On returning to Malabar in his new dignity, he felt dissatisfied with the moderate success till then made, and he made up his mind to rival the glories of Abp. Menezis by bringing the whole Syrian community once more under the power of Rome. With this object, he held conferences with Mor Thoma and endeavoured to conciliate him by arguments and presents. Finding they were of no avail, he turned his attention

to the local Rulers and prevailed upon them to espouse his cause. Many of them, especially the Chief of *Porokat*, forced the Syrians in their territories to acknowledge the authority of the Vicar Apostolic.

With the support of these native Rulers, Bishop Joseph hunted Mor Thoma from church, to church. The Raja of Cochin issued an order threatening the congregations of the churches at *Mulanthuruthi* and at *Kandanad* with heavy fines if they failed to arrest and deliver Mor Thoma to the Portuguese. A young prince of Cochin set a watch round a church in which the Metran was reported to have hidden himself. Bishop Joseph went to his help with armed men.

At last Mor Thoma and his faithful adviser Itty Thoman *Catanar* were caught in the net. They were detained in one of the palaces of the Raja of Cochin, pending an opportunity to deliver them to the Portuguese Governor. Fortunately two old laymen from the parish of *Mulanthuruthi* Church paid a visit to the prisoners to bid them a last goodbye. They offered to lay down their lives, provided their death would help the prisoners to free themselves. Acting upon the advice of the sagacious Itty Thoman *Catanar*, the two laymen exchanged their clothes for those of the Bishop and of the priest and took their places, while Mor Thoma and Itty Thoman *Catanar*, attired as laymen, escaped undetected by the Hindu guard. A few days after, the disguised laymen were formally handed over to the Portuguese Governor, who, discovering how he was duped, severely chastised them and then allowed them to return to their homes.

Escaping from imprisonment, Mor Thoma and Itty Thoman *Catanar* retreated to the inland mountainous tracts of the country far away from the reach of the maleficent influence of the Portuguese Government and the machinations of Bishop Joseph. The latter, feeling indignant at the

unexpected escape of his enemies, returned to the Church at Mulanthuruthi and took possession of all the properties that belonged to Mor Thoma. Of these, while he made a present of the ornaments to his friend the Prince of Cochin, he burned the books, holy oil, garments and palanquin, and expressed his keen regret that the body of Mor Thoma also was not here to be disposed of in a like manner. From this incident originated a Malayalam proverb, "*If so much to the palanquin in which the Metran sat, how much to the Metran himself?*"

The time of retribution was, however, close at hand. Before the increasing power of the Dutch, the Eastern Empire of Portugal began to languish. The fall of Cochin the most important Portuguese Settlement in these parts, in the year 1663, cleared the Malabar coast of all trace of the Portuguese power. The Christians of St. Thomas once more began to breathe the air of civil and religious freedom. Mor Thoma was now free to go wherever he liked in his diocese. On the other hand, the Dutch conquerors, who dreaded the presence of the intriguing Romish priests in the country, as likely to lead to future troubles, insisted on the immediate departure of all Jesuits and Carmelites from the country. Bishop Joseph who, until a few months previously, had been hunting Mor Thoma from place to place, had himself now to hang "on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai." Before quitting the country, he consecrated Parampil Chandy (called in Portuguese works, *Alexander de Campo*) as Bishop in his room. Born of a branch of the same Pakalomattam family to which Mor Thoma belonged, Bishop Alexander drew to himself a share of the deep personal attachment which the Syrians had always shown to the archdeacons and bishops of this family, claiming to have been set apart by the Apostle St. Thomas himself to supply prelates to this Church.

Mor Thoma was further handicapped by the difficulties

about his consecration. Consequently, he was unable to recover any of the parishes which had gone over to Rome during the late Carmelite persecution. The letter adhered to Bishop Alexander and were confirmed in the Romish faith. In a letter sent to Bishop Joseph at Goa, Bishop Alexander wrote that "he wanted nothing but money to remove the Archdeacon's name from the face of the earth." This gives us a clue to another weapon he had employed to retain so many churches under him, in spite of the solemn oath made at the *Coonen Cross*.

As already stated, Mor Thoma was nominated only as a temporary head to keep up the anti-Roman agitation. He had no valid consecration, and the alleged Bull of Patriarch Ahatalla on which he rested the validity of his dignity did not allow him to "confer orders or consecrate holy oil on any ground." Rival preachers represented him as a pretender and a mere laymen. Had it not been for the indefatigable exertions and wise policy of the noble-hearted, patriotic, self-sacrificing councillor Itty Thoman Catanar, of blessed memory, the Syrian Church of Malabar would not have survived the persecutions and artifices employed by the emissaries of the Church of Rome. It was he who kindled the fire of revolt on the murder of Patriarch Ahatalla; it was he who dictated the oath at the *Coonen Cross*; as the leading member of the council, it was he who guided Mor Thoma; when two of his colleagues in the council turned traitors, he remained steadfast and worked hard to consolidate the scattered remnants and to guard them against the intrigues of Bishop Joseph and the Carmelite missionaries. When not only individuals but whole parishes began to desert Mor Thoma, it was he who comforted him in his despair. He shared all the privations which the *Metran* suffered in imprisonment and in wandering through the wilderness. Had it not been for

the almost miraculous escape from imprisonment in disguise, he would have died a Martyr, with his Bishop (Mor Thoma), in the Inquisition at Goa. He wrote to the Patriarch of Antioch on behalf of the community for a duly-consecrated Metropolitan to validate the dignity of Mor Thoma. After a faithful, honest, and almost single-handed fight for his Church and community, but, as in the case of Moses, before he could see his labours crowned with the success he had long desired, this valiant and devoted soldier of the Church died on the 7th of Medam (May) 1659, and now lies buried in his parish church at *Kallicherry*, near Chenganoor.

Chapter XVI

REVIVAL OF JACOBITISM: MOR GREGORIUS AND MOR THOMA I

The earnest longing of the Syrian community for a duly ordained Metropolitan was satisfied by the arrival in Malabar in the year 1665 of Mor Gregorius, Bishop of Jerusalem,¹ who was directly under, and in full communion with, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. It is the belief of many recent writers on Syrian history that Jacobitism was first introduced into Malabar by Mor Gregorius and that the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch began to be acknowledged only from 1665. We have shown in an earlier part of this work that the Jacobite creed and rituals were in vogue in the Malabar Church even long before the Portuguese period. Renaudot fixes the year 696 as the date of the first introduction of Jacobitism into Malabar.

Mor Gregorius was welcomed with unbounded enthusiasm and was hailed as a deliverer. The episcopal dignity of Mor Thoma I was validated by apostolic imposition of hands by Mor Gregorius, and both these prelates ruled the Church in harmony. According to Raulin,² hatred of Nestorianism, submission to the See of Antioch, and introduction of

1. The Bishop of Jerusalem is honorifically styled "The fifth Patriarch." Mar Gregorius is, therefore, known among the Syrians as the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

2. Raulin, p. 444; Pauli pp. 98 and 99.

cobitism, were among the changes made by Mor Gregorius. In an old Syrian manuscript in the possession of the present writer, there is a copy of a general epistle written by Mor Gregorius to the priests of the churches at *Parur*, *Mulanthuruthi* and *Kandanad*, dated 5th February 1668, setting forth the orthodoxy of the Syrian creed and rituals as against the heterodoxy of the Roman Church. Throughout, the author speaks of the Syrian Church of Malabar as having been, up to the arrival of the Portuguese, orthodox in her creed and rituals, following the canons of the Council of Nicea. The following (translated) extract from the epistle will, it is hoped, be of some interest to our readers.

"I am informed of the persecution you suffer from the blind men who, forsaking the true and orthodox canons of the Syrian Church, have adhered to the *idolatrous* Romanists. They were *originally* Syrians, following our true faith, but have afterwards turned heretics by the *influence* of the wicked kings and queens of Portugal. They held an *unawful council* (Synod of Diamper) and *Changed* the true faith taught by the Apostle of our nation. They upset the established canons of the holy Synod of Nicea; *confused* the valuable rites and ceremonies of the early age; introduced proud and novel rituals in their stead; fell into impure heresies; and now they endeavour to let others fall into their pits. The heresies of the Romanists are many, which we have no time to enumerate in detail, and of which we hope to speak to you in person. We request you to be zealous in the canons of the Syrian Church. Remember that suffering in this world will bring you happiness in the future life. The Lord commands: 'He that endureth to the end shall be saved;' 'The kingdom of heaven is taken *by force*.' St. Peter, the head of the Apostles, writes in his Epistle: 'Hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should

follow. His steps' St. Paul, the tongue of the Holy Church, thus writes in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Ye stand fast in one spirit with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel." St. James, the blessed, says: 'Take the prophets for an example of sufferings, affliction, and patience. You have heard of Job's patience and his final glory.' St. Ephraim, the Syrian, writes: 'Suffer suffering, but do not turn from the truth. Accept death for the truth of your fathers.' Again our prayer book says about Mortyrs in the ordinance for Thursday evening: 'Mortyrs say, "We do not forsake Him and His Son. We are of the Stock of Abraham and heirs of Isaac. We die for the God of our fathers and inherit eternal life."' Look at the holy Mortyrs. They died for the faith of their fathers. The false Christians of India forsook the laws of the Syrians and accepted *new* laws one thousand and six hundred years after the arrival of St. Thomas. For 1,600 years, the Romanists had no authority in this diocese. Many bishops, priests, deacons, and other Christians of both sexes, whose number God alone knows, have during the last 1,600 years, died in this diocese. Do you think that all of them are doomed to hell? Never. Those who say so are blaspheming and have devils in them. *Till now*, priests were *allowed to Morry* according to the canons. The Romanists *forbade* the Morriage of priests and deacons. Many of them fall into the impurity of fornication. It was for this sin that God punished the world with the deluge, saving only Noah and his wife and his sons and their wives. The same sin was the cause of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by a rain of fire and sulphur. These unhloy people now curse holy matrimony and love adultery. The wrath of God awaits them. Know that Morriage is holy and the Morriage bed is undefiled and that God judgeth all adulterers and fornicators. Again, the Romanists *have not the fast of Nineveh*, which we have. They *do not observe the*

Assumption fast of fifteen days in August which we observe. They *do not keep the Advent fast* of twenty-five days in December, which we keep. *In Lent, they eat fish and drink liquors*, which the Syrians do not. So there are many differences in practices between them and us. I have told you on a former occasion about *their heretical teachings* on the incarnation of the Word of God, and on the union of His divinity and humanity, and on His person, natures and will; and so I need not repeat them here. The name 'Church of Rome' is *nowhere mentioned in the Holy Scriptures*, neither in the law and prophets, nor in the gospels the Acts of the Apostles, the general epistles of James, Peter and John, and the fourteen epistles of Paul. In none of these holy books is the Church referred to as the Roman Church. In the holy creed established by the three hundred and eighteen Fathers in the Holy Synod of Nicea at the time of the orthodox Emperor Constantine, they laid down the faith in '*one catholic and apostolic*', and not in the Church of Rome. In the book of the Holy Eucharist, it is written: 'O Lord God, Almighty, Thine is the Holy Catholic;' and again, 'O God, Lord Almighty, receive this offering on behalf of the Holy Catholic Church'; and then again, 'O Messiah, the peace of heavenly beings and Hope of earthly beings, vouchsafe. Thy peace and tranquillity to the four quarters of the world and especially to the Holy Catholic Church.' See that; in all these, there is no mention of the Church of Rome. It was from the Romanist missionaries of Sampalur, that the Christians of India learned to believe 'in the Roman Church'. They *forsook* the true faith and the famous rituals of the Syrian Church, and *fell into the heresies* of the Romanists from love of money... Woe to them in that day of retribution in which the Great Judge shall occupy His throne with the holy Apostles on twelve thrones. Pray, therefore, that you may fully appreciate

the truth and stand steadfast in it until the end; walk in His footsteps, and become fit to attain a good end."

When we compare the policy of Mor Gregorius as revealed in this letter, and the fruits of that policy, with the method and outcome of Romish propagandism, we are struck by one great difference. We know tenacious the Syrians were with regard to their ancient belief. It was with the utmost difficulty and only by using force that Rome succeeded in gaining converts; at the very first opportunity, many of them hastened back to their ancient heritage; so that, after Roman Catholicism had exhausted all its energies and resources, a goodly number of the Syrian churches remained true to their ancient traditions, having emerged from the Romish storm with a clearer, bolder and harder outline.

Now look upon the other picture. Mor Gregorius did not hide his Jacobitism. He did not disguise himself as a Nestorian. He openly proclaimed his doctrine. He had not the assistance of secular princes, or the money to make liberal presents. What is more, he claimed that the Malabar Church was *from the beginning*, Jacobite. He quoted passage from the liturgy of St. James, used in the Jacobite Patriarchate, and assumes that the faith, rituals and customs which he defends were originally observed in the Church of Malabar. He does not conceal his position, but he does not stop to argue the point either. He *takes it for granted*, and yet all the people *take him at his word* and follow him without any reserve.

If Nestorianism was the ancient and only creed of the Malabar Church, if Jacobitism was *a new importation*, is it conceivable that no voice would have been lifted in condemnation of the open and audacious intruder, no seceding or discontented members have arisen within the Church to work either by themselves or in unison with the Romanists (who

ould have been only too glad to "divide and rule"), and to let at least a handful of devoted and consistent followers to keep alive the Nestorian origin of the Church? No trace of any lingering veneration for the Babylonian Church existed anywhere afterwards. On the other hand, Antioch was always a name to conjure with. All Syrians who emerged from the Romish traps followed Mor Gregorius without murmur or dissatisfaction. The utmost that Jacobitism, if it were a fresh importation could possibly hope to achieve, was, by any kind of stratagem, to secure a few thousands of adherents. But with all its open professions and its poor resources, it did nothing more, nothing less, than efface all trace of the alleged parent-Church of Malabar.

The irresistible conclusions are that Jacobitism had been introduced into Malabar *long before* the arrival of Mor Gregorius; that Babylonian bishops were tolerated here because the Patriarch of Babylon was taken to be a *deputy* of the Patriarch of Antioch; that it was only through ignorance of the rupture between Babylon and Antioch, and of the minute doctrinal differences between Jacobitism and Nestorianism, that it came about that the Malabar Christians owed allegiance to the Nestorian prelates for a time; but that they followed Mor Gregorius without any hesitation when he once re-established Jacobitism, as well as direct relations between Antioch and Malabar.

Among the reforms introduced by Mor Gregorius, the marriage of priests deserves special notice. How strongly he deprecates priestly celibacy is evident from the foregoing extract. It is not said that his endeavours met with wide or immediate success, though he himself performed the ceremony to several willing persons. After a short, but useful and self-sacrificing, period of service, Mor Gregorius died on the 14th of Medom (April) 1670 and was buried in the

church (*Cheriapalli*) at Parur, where the anniversary of his death is still observed as an important festival of the Church.

Mor Thoma I died on the 12th of *Medom* (April) 1670 and was buried in the Jacobite church at *Angamali*. In the absence of any reliable record evidencing the elevation of a native of Malabar to episcopacy prior to the Portuguese period Mor Thoma I. has to be regarded as the first bishop ordained from the Syrians of Malabar; he was a *Jacobite* in creed, having been consecrated by Mor Gregorius *in full accordance* with the rule of the Jacobite Church of Antioch that the consecrated should give to the consecrator "a writing under his signature containing his confession of faith and his submission to the Patriarchal See."

Chapter XVII

MOR THOMA II TO MOR THOMA V

Mor Thoma I. was succeeded by his nephew Mor Thoma II., who was consecrated by Mor Gregorius and Mor Thoma I. Little is known of this second bishop, except that he was a man of amiable character. He died on the 3rd of *Medom* (April) 1686 and was interred in the church at *Niranam*. During his time, a foreigner, Andrew by name, came to Malabar. To what sect he belonged or whether he was an ecclesiastic at all, nobody knows certainly, nor is it anywhere related of him that he exercised any of the functions of a bishop. It is even said in an old manuscript that he never celebrated the Holy Eucharist. He was drowned while bathing in the Kallada river in 1692.

In 1685, two Jacobite prelates, Mor Baselius and Mor Ivanius, arrived in Malabar, having been deputed by Mor Ignatius Abdal Messiah I, Patriarch of Antioch.

They landed at Tellicherry, and, fearing that the Portuguese were still powerful in the country, wandered in disguise among the eastern mountains and made their first public appearance at Kothamangalam, a mountainous district of North Travancore. They were conducted to the place by a Hindu, whose descendants are even now enjoying certain benefits from the church at Kothamangalam for the service rendered to the venerable Bishops. Mor Baselius was a Maphrian¹ and Mor Ivanius a bishop. The former was a very

¹. In the Jacobite Church, Maphrian is a rank equivalent to the Catholicos of the Nestorians. In fact, it was a rank created when the Nestorian Catholicos declared himself independent of Antioch.

old man and died on the thirteenth day after his arrival. He was buried in the church of Kothamangalam, where the anniversary of his death is now celebrated with great pomp and ceremony. Mor Ivanius was a very able, energetic, zealous, hardworking bishop, a profound Syriac scholar, a renowned poet, and a sound theologian. He reclaimed several Syrians from the Roman Church, and reaffirmed with special emphasis several of the most important doctrines of the Church. The chief of these were: (1) that the Catholic and Apostolic Church described in the Nicene Creed is not the Church of Rome, as some erroneously believed, but the Church Universal, founded on the orthodox doctrines of the three holy Synods of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus; (2) that our Lord Jesus Christ is of one person and one nature, *viz.*, His divinity and humanity were inseparably united without mixture or confusion and without destroying the properties and perfection of either; (3) that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and is glorified with the Father and the Son; (4) that the use of images as objects of veneration is erroneous; (5) that celibacy of priests is not catholic or canonical; and (6) that fermented bread should be used in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Mor Ivanius also consecrated Mor Thoma III as successor of Mor Thoma II. The third Thoma did not live long. On his death on the 9th of *Medom* (April) 1688, Mor Ivanius consecrated his successor Mor Thoma IV. After a useful career of eight years in Malabar, Mor Ivanius departed this life on the 3rd of *Chingam* (August) 1693. He lies buried in the precincts of the church at *Mulanthuruthi* where his anniversary is still celebrated.

During the regime of Mor Thoma IV a Nestorian Bishop Gabriel arrived in the country in 1708, having been sent by the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon. He was not cordially

acknowledged by the community. There is a story concerning him that a Syrian Christian discontented with Mor Thoma, hearing of Mor Gabriel's arrival at Cochin, paid a visit to him, and on his return, referred to him in words which have since become a proverb, *viz.*, that he was "*neither a father nor an uncle, but fit for the present purpose*" (of opposing Mor Thoma). Mor Gabriel was a time-serving man. He had to serve his own interest rather than the interest of Nestorianism. When he started for Malabar, he submitted his Confession of Faith to the Pope, with a request that he be confirmed as the Bishop of Malabar. Failing in that direction, he tried to exact the sympathy and acknowledgement of the Jacobites, by imitating Jacobite rituals and practices in his worship, and this enabled him to win the partial acceptance of a few parishoners. A Carmelite friar of Verapoly obtained from him an agreement that he would live a retired life.² It is said this agreement is still preserved in the archives of Verapoly. Mor Thoma IV treated him as an intruder and heretic. He wrote to the Dutch Governor at Cochin, complaining against Mor Gabriel's intrusion and soliciting the Commodore's help to oust him from the diocese. Mor Gabriel died in 1730 and was buried in the Jacobite (*Cheriapalli*) church at Kottayam. His tomb was afterwards desecrated by the congregation of the church, and the materials were utilised in the construction of a staircase in their parochial building.³

Mor Thoma IV. opposed Mor Gabriel as long as he lived. In Europe in 1714, Mor Thoma is described as a monophysite and the Church of Malabar is represented as receiving bishops from the Patriarch of Antioch.⁴ Two letters written

2. *History of the Christian Church* by a Carmelite Missionary of Verapoly p. 208.

3. Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, pp. 45 & 46

4. Hough's *History of Christianity in India*, Vol. II, pp. 384 & 385.

by Mor Thoma and addressed to the Patriarch are also extant. In the first, written in 1709, he complained of the schism introduced by Mor Gabriel and requested the Patriarch to send bishops and theologians to teach the Church. In the second letter, dated 1720, (a copy of which may be seen in Asseman, IV, 466), the Patriarch is designated head of the Universal Church of Christ by the appointment of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers of Nicea; reference is made to the former Antiochian bishops, Mor Gregorius, Mor Baselius, and Mor Ivanius, whose death, it is said, reduced the Malabar Church to the state of a ship without a rudder; Mor Gabriel is alluded to as a Nestorian who taught that Christ had two natures and two persons, and who consequently was not recognised except by a single priest; and the Patriarch is requested to send bishops and priests well versed in philosophy and in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, as well as to write letters to the Dutch Commander at Cochin soliciting his help to the Bishop against his enemies and against infidel kings. Unfortunately this letter did not reach its destination, but somehow escaped to Europe and was published there. Asseman, who saw it, or perhaps a copy of it, concludes from its terms that the writer was a Jacobite who depended upon the See of Antioch.

Mor Thoma IV died on the 13th of Meenam (Morch) 1728, after consecrating his successor Mor Thoma V, and was buried in the church at Kandanad.

The new Metran was not satisfied with the manner in which he was consecrated. It was always the belief of the Syrian Church (at least since 1665) that consecration not received from the Patriarch of Antioch, or his authorised delegate, was not valid. Having been ordained by his predecessor without the mediation of an authorised delegate, Mor Thoma V was oppressed with a doubt about the validity of

is dignity, and applied to the Patriarch for delegates to confirm him. Paoli, a Roman Catholic missionary, calls Mor Thoma V a lay intruder. This, no doubt, was a prejudiced view of bigoted Roman Catholic. We find similar expressions recorded by an earlier Roman Catholic bishop, with reference to all the Babylonian bishops who ruled the Church of Malabar previous to the Synod of Diamper.⁵

Mor Thoma V appears to have had several communications with the Dutch authorities at Cochin. In one of his letters, he thus expressed himself as to his faith and the system of government of his Church: "We acknowledge the Church of Antioch for our head, that the Messiah has one nature, and the Holy Ghost comes out (proceeds) from the Father."⁶ It appears the Dutch made an attempt to instil into Mor Thoma a belief that Jacobitism, and that Protestantism alone was orthodox. To this, Mor Thoma answered in a letter dated 11th February 1730, that he could not reply to it "until he had received permission from his Patriarch"⁷.

In 1739, one Hezekiel, a Jewish Merchant through whom Mor Thoma forwarded his correspondence to Antioch, brought a bishop named Mor Ivanious. He was of a fiery temper, a strict disciplinarian, and a rigid iconoclast. Such a temperament easily excited the displeasure of the community. Besides, he had procured no authority to reconsecrate the native Metran, which so exasperated Mor Thoma that he renewed his application to Antioch praying for the deputation of authorised delegates to reconsecrate him. This time, the application was sent through a deacon Antonios who had arrived in Malabar on commercial enterprizes. An

5. Geddes' *History of the Syrian Church*, p. 435.

6 & 7. Hough's *History*, Vol. II, p. 392.

agreement was also made with the Dutch East India Company, by which Mor Thoma promised to pay the Company all the expenses incidental to the voyage of delegates in one of the Company's ships.

His appeal was rewarded in 1751, by the arrival of a group of ecclesiastics, consisting of Mor Baselius, a *Maphrian*, Mor Gregorius, a bishop and John, a *ramban* (monk), besides a chorepiscopa and a deacon. When the news of their arrival was reported to Mor Thoma, he was so elated with joy that he immediately despatched his representatives to conduct the delegates and the himself made grand preparations for their reception. Unfortunately, an event occurred which marred the joy of the occasion. The Dutch Company demanded Rs. 12,000 as passage money, and detained the delegates in their custody pending payment by Mor Thoma. He was however not able to satisfy so heavy and so exorbitant a demand. The Dutch then filed a civil action before the Travancore Government, which issued a warrant for the arrest of Mor Thoma. For some time, he hid himself, but was at last arrested and delivered to the Dutch, who in turn threatened to deport him, if he failed to pay the sum demanded of him. In despair, he consecrated his successor under the title Mor Thoma VI. Meanwhile, some money was collected from the Syrian churches, and a large sum was realised by the attachment and sale of properties belonging to the church at Niranam. The debt was thus partially paid, and the delegates were released from custody; but having been dissatisfied with Mor Thoma in consequence of his inability to release them earlier, and as the latter was seen to be afraid to appear before them, they refused to reconsecrate him. Thus he failed to attain the greatest ambition of his life, not on account of any fault in his part, but through his inability to

atisfy the demand of the Dutch Company.⁸ Mor Ivanios, the iconoclastic Bishop, is represented in certain Roman Catholic writings as a Jew brought by Hezekiel, a Jew in the

8. In a Syrian MS. in the possession of the present writer, there is a copy of an autograph diary of Mor Baselius, describing his journey and the question of the passage money. The following translation of it may be of interest to our readers:

"In the month of Morch 1748, came to the city of Beruva, Deacon Antonios, bringing with him letters from Mor Ivanios Metropolitan [*i.e.* the iconoclast] and Mor Thoma to the addresses of Mor Ignatius Geevarghese III., Patriarch of Antioch, and myself. At that time, I was ill. The letter to Mor Ignatius was sent to Amid [Diarbekir], and I intimated to him that I had been ill two months. Afterwards Deacon Antonios went to the Patriarch and informed him that the people of Malabar wanted a Maphrian, as written in the letters of Mor Ivanios and Mor Thoma. After recovery, I visited the Patriarch at Amid, which was distant from Beruva by fifteen day's journey. On the way robbers attacked me, but they did not do any injury to me. I was consecrated Maphrian and after a short stay I returned to Beruva on the 25th of August, and was again ill for some days. Mor Ignatius sent Mor Gregorius and another Metropolitan and a Chorepiscopa, who travelled along the River Tigris and reached Baghdad. Afterwards, owing to illness, the other Metropolitan and Chorepiscopa returned to Amid and Gregorius remained at Baghdad awaiting my arrival. But I was delayed by the absence of caravans to Baghdad, through rumours of robbers in the wilderness. So I had to remain four months at Beruva. In the meantime, I collected Rs. 3,000 besides articles and books required for the voyage and for the Church. On Sunday the 7th of January 1749, I left Beruva with the Chorepiscopa, Deacon Antonios and my own deacon. On Sunday the 28th, robbers fell upon us and wrestled with us for fifteen hours, killing two Turks and wounding many men. Many horses and camels also died. At this time another band of robbers arrived, who saved us from the other robbers. The head of the second band took from the caravans nine thousands gold coins each worth Rs. 3, and from us all our books and articles. He also demanded money from me. We paid him Rs. 1,500 and received back our books and articles, and glorified God for having saved our lives. We then reached a place called Aneh and remained there two months, no one daring to go forward from fear of robbers. On the 1st of April, we crossed the Euphrates and reached Helleh, and thence we went to Baghdad incurring large expenses on the way.

At Baghdad, we met Mor Gregorius, The other bishop and the chorepiscopa had returned to Amid owing to illness and difficulties. Gregorius did not look behind, but patiently suffered with Ramban John all the difficulties in the way and at Baghdad, waiting eleven months for me. Afterwards we hired a vessel and we all went down the Tigris to Bassorah, spending Rs. 500 in all. On the way, we were again attacked by robbers, but they could not do us any harm. God saved us from their hands. All the expences from

disguise of a Syrian bishop. It is true that an application of Mor Thoma for a bishop was forwarded to Antioch through the merchant Hezekiel and Mor Ivanios was actually brought

Beruva upto Bassorah were Rs. 5000. On the 8th of May we reached Bassorah and interviewed the head of the [Dutch] Company. He hired for us a house on Rs. 80. We asked him a loan of money, which he refused, saying that he could not lend any sum from the Company's funds, since he had no letter for that purpose. Deacon Antonios told him that he had brought a letter from the [Dutch] Commodore [at Cochin] to the person who was lately head of the Company at Bassorah, authorising him to lend the Maphrian, from the Company's funds, all the sums that he demanded. But he replied that he could not give anything from the Company's assets, but proposed to lend us money from his own funds on interest at 20%. Our creditors were pressing us; they would not let us go without payment; and we had need of money to reach Cochin. For these reasons, and because we wanted to go to Cochin at any cost, we borrowed from him Rs. 6,666 on which he charged an interest of Rs. 1,334, and we gave him a bond for Rs. 8,000. We paid the house rent Rs. 80, and then, because there was no ship at Bassorah belonging to the [Dutch] Company, we hired an English ship for Rs. 700 and also paid from this sum of Rs. 6,666 our debts and all our boarding expences in Baghdad, in Bassorah, and in the ship. As the time was one of famine in Bassorah and in the surrounding places, articles were very dear and we had to pay very high prices.

On the 24th of June we left Bassorah and reached Bushire, where there were some of the Company's men who honoured us. After leaving this place, the wind was contrary to us, and we had to encounter many troubles. The prayers of the Mother of God preserved us from the danger of the sea. Next we reached Bundarabbas where too there were the Company's men who showed us every Mork of respect. Here a ship arrived from Batavia, the captain of which informed the Chief Officer of the Company that other ships from Batavia were expected in ten days. The latter then asked us and other passengers to wait for the coming ships and informed us that the expected ships were larger than the one they had there and that by those ships we could go direct to Cochin, whereas if we were to start in that ship, it had to go by Bombay and would involve us in heavy expenses. We therefore remained at Bundarabbas, especially to avoid unnecessary expenses. After twenty days, there arrived a ship from Batavia. A few days after, we purchased articles required for our voyage and sent our baggage to the ship, when a report that robbers were coming to plunder the fort caused the Chief Officer of the Company to detain the ship. Next we heard another rumour that there was a mutiny among the robbers, in which they murdered their captain and ran away. Besides, there was war among the chiefs of Persia, and one of them had come somewhere near Bundarabbas, which also caused the Chief Officer to detain the ship. There was no other ship, and so we had to remain seven months, suffering from diseases, panics, and

by him, but that he was a Jacobite bishop is a matter beyond the shadow of suspicion. We have in reply only to say, in the words of the Roman Catholic Rector of Ealing, that "truth is not a characteristic of pronouncements from the Roman Curia."

other troubles of various kinds. We spent Rs. 1,000 here. From that time up to the present, the Chorepiscopa has been incessantly ill.

Then on the 24th of February 1751 we left this port in the Company's ship and reached Surat. Before entering the harbour, two large ships and about twelve small ships met us and made war with us for about five hours; but they had to retire in the end. On the 17th of Morch, we anchored, God having saved us from the pirates. We remained in the ship and did not land at Surat. Here we embarked on board another ship, which conveyed us to Cochin. Before we reached Cochin, there were troubles from adverse winds, and rain for three days, fulfilling in us David's words, "All Thy waves and all Thy billows are gone over me."

When we anchored at Cochin, the Commodore sent us the Company's boat, took us to the Fort with honour, and enquired after our health. We had our meals with him that day. We entered the Fort of Cochin on the 23rd of April (*Medom*), in the year 2062 of the Greek era (*i.e.*, A.D. 1751) being St. George's Day. Then the Commodore detained us, in order that Mor Ivanios and Mor Thoma might come and receive us. After twenty days, the Metropolitan Mor Ivanios come to us, but not Mor Thoma. We sent the latter four letters, but he did not come. The Metropolitan always quarrelled with us. He would not permit us to deal lovingly and peaceably with Christians. Every day he quarrelled with those with whom he came in contact, beating some and kicking others. Therefore we kept him in the Fort, waiting for a ship to send him back to Mor Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, in conformity with the directions contained in Mor Ignatius' letter concerning him, *viz.* to keep him with us if submissive or to send him back otherwise. All our expenses the Company bore. When the Commodore saw that Mor Thoma did not put in his appearance, he allowed us to go to Kandanad and compel Mor Thoma to submit. But he did not come. During the seventy-two days we remained [at Cochin], the Company charged us Rs. 429. On the 3rd of July (*Karkadagam*), being St. Thomas's Day, we were sent to the Raja of Cochin with the Company's men and soldiers and a Jew named Hezekiel. We saw the Raja and presented him with five gold coins each worth Rs. 5, which we got from the Commodore. That night we slept in Hezekiel's house. On the next day we went to *Kandanad*. Our debts to the Company are Rs. 8,000 at Bassorah, Rs. 1,000 at Bundarabbas, and Rs. 454 at Cochin, including the price of the gold coins presented to the Raja. Besides these, the Company demand from us Rs. 2,000 said to have been borrowed by Mor Ivanios and given to Deacon Antonios when he started for Antioch. So the whole amount the Company demand is Rs. 11, 454."

Mor Ivanios returned home on production of the Patriarch's letter of recall. Mor Baselius built a church at Mattancheri, near Cochin, at this own expense, and residing there, worked hard for popularizing the Morriage of priests more largely than hitherto. Mor Thoma could not reconcile himself to the foreign bishops; and Mor Baselius, therefore, at Kandanad church, and in 1752, consecrated Ramban John, who had accompanied him from Antioch, as the Bishop of Malabar under the title Mor Ivanios, and entrusted to him the care of the Church of Malabar in the room of Mor Thoma. A reconciliation was however, brought about between Mor Thoma and Mor Baselius, towards the close of the latter's life; but before the accomplishment of reconsecration, Mor Baselius died on the 9th of *Thulam* (October) 1764 and was buried in the church at Kandanad, where his annuversary is still celebrated on a grand scale. Mor Thoma V. followed him to the grave on the 27th *Medom* (April) next.

Chapter XVIII

MOR THOMA VI *ALIAS* MOR DIONYSIUS I

As above noticed, Mor Thoma VI. was consecrated in despair, and a time when the Dutch were threatening to report Mor Thoma V The young Metran, as anxious as his predecessor to have his dignity perfected, applied to the surviving delegates for reconsecration, but for some time without success. At last, on a certain Sunday, when Mor Gregorius was celebrating the Holy Eucharist in the church at Niranam, Mor Thoma VI suddenly entered the church, and falling at the feet of the celebrant, earnestly implored pardon, with the result that the delegates at once extended the right hand of fellowship and was reconciled with him. Not long after, Mor Thoma VI was reconsecrated by Mor Gregorius and Mor Ivanios on the 29th of May 1770. At his reconsecration he was called Dionysius and was invested with the cross and the crizier sent from Antioch for his predecessor. Thenceforth the government of the Church was vested in Mor Thoma VI. (*alias* Dionysius I) and Mor Ivanious conjointly, and Mor Gregorius retired to the church at *Mattancheri* built by Mor Baselius, and was maintained at the expense of Mor Dionysius. Gradually he became blind and in his old age was ministered by a monk, *Kattoomangat* Geevargese Ramban, shrewd and intelligent, but also a scheming man. He made approaches to Mor Gregorius to consecrate him bishop. The latter who had entertained ill-feeling towards

Mor Dionysius, probably because of irregularities in forwarding the sums necessary for his expenses, readily fell in with the proposal and consecrated the Ramban under the title Kurilos on the 17th of November 1772, without the knowledge or approval of Mor Ivanios and Mor Dionysius, Mor Gregorius died on the 27th of June next, and was buried in *Mulanthuruthi* church in the State of Cochin. Before his death, he executed a will in the presence of the Dutch Governor, transferring all his assets to Mor Kurilos, with the exception of some money, part of which was set apart for the maintenance of the poor and part for that of a medical dispensary.

Mor Kurilos raised a faction, but the dispute was decided against him by the Rajas of Travancore and of Cochin. Thereupon, he escaped to British Malabar, where he founded a church at *Thoziyur* (also called Anjoor) and spent his remaining life in seclusion. We shall have to refer to him later on.

Mor Dionysius I was a man of rare abilities and attainments. He was the greatest and most influential of all the bishops of the *Pakalomattam* family, and is therefore usually called Mor Dionysius *the Great*. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, who visited him in his old age, describes him thus: "He is a man of highly respectable character in his Church, eminent for his piety and for the attention he devotes to his sacred functions. I found him to be far superior in general learning to any of his clergy whom I had yet seen."¹

During Mor Dionysius' time, the States of Travancore and of Mysore, and the Syrian Christians were by no means exempt from the universal sufferings that resulted. The churches at *Arthat*, *Parur* and *Angamali* were set fire to and

1. *Christian Researches in Asia*, p. 163 (1812 Edn.)

Syrian shops were plundered. Some Christians who happened to fall into his hands were forcibly circumcised, though happily none was converted to Islam. The interference of the East India Company and their declaration of war in Mysore compelled him to return, before he had time to complete the devastation of Travancore and Cochin.

Tippu's persecution was followed by another one soon after. Travancore was then governed by a feeble Raja, One Mathu Tarakan, a rich Romo-Syrian landlord, gained the Raja's confidence and favour. Though not a friend of the European Roman Catholic bishops and missionaries, he was a staunch adherent of the Roman Catholic Church, and was eager to have a native bishop, following the Chaldean rite and *in communion with Rome*, to rule the Romo-Syrian churches in Malabar. With this view he sent to Portugal two priests, Kariattil Joseph Catanar and Paremakel Thoma Catanar, to be consecrated bishops for the Syro-Roman churches. They won the favour of the King of Portugal, who nominated Joseph Catanar for the bishopric of Cranganore; he was consecrated bishop in Europe. On their way to Malabar, Bishop Joseph died at Goa. The general impression among the Syro-Romans is that the death was due to the effect of poison administered by European missionaries who did not like to have a native Bishop in Malabar. However, Thoma Catanar was appointed Vicar General. The Syro-Roman community headed by the Vicar General were so indignant at the supposed murder of Bishop Joseph, that they immediately met in Synod and drew up a resolution, denying the authority of the Latin Bishops of Verapoly and of Cranganore over them, and acknowledging the newly appointed Vicar General as their temporary head till he was consecrated by the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon (in communion with Rome).

After thus consolidating the Syrians of the Roman rite, Mathu Tarakan turned his attention to Mor Dionysius, and contemplated the amalgamation of the Jacobites and the Romo-Syrians under the same native Roman Catholic Bishop. He also offered to acknowledge Mor Dionysius as the Bishop of the united Church, provided the latter adopted the Chaldean creed and rituals, recognised in Rome. Mor Dionysius was a man of policy. At first, he thought of winning over the Romo-Syrians to his side by some concessions. But when the terms of the union were proposed by Tarakan's party he could not accede to them. Tarakan next proposed to hold a public discussion to convince the Jacobite party of the orthodoxy of the Roman Church. The Raja of Travancore, who was at Tarakan's beck and call, was ready to comply with any proposal of his favourite. Mor Dionysius therefore had no alternative but to accept the challenge. A meeting of both parties was held at *Kayamkulam* on the 20th of September 1791, and was about to begin discussion, when a messenger brought the melancholy tidings of the sudden death of Tarakan's mother. The meeting had to be postponed to the 22nd of November.

The second meeting was held as previously arranged at *Niranam*, and the Roman party, were *so confident of success that they arrived with all the equipment necessary for the celebration of the Eucharist according to the Romo-Chaldean rite*. Fortunately, just when the discussion was about to begin, a messenger brought the sad intelligence of the demise of Tarakan's son, who had been confined to his bed. The parties had again to disperse without achieving any result. Mathu Tarakan was so distressed by this sad domestic occurrence that for some years he dropped the question of amalgamation.

About this time, Mor Dionysius' nephew was ordained

Ramban by Mor Ivanios, eventually to be raised to the rank of a bishop, as co-adjutor to the Metropolitan. But before he had time to accomplish this object, Mor Ivanios died on the 7th of April 1794, and was buried in the *Chenganur* church. The Ramban was in April 1796 consecrated Bishop by Mor Dionysius under the title Mor Thoma VII.

Not long after this, Mathu Tarakan revived his old scheme of amalgamation, again convened a meeting at Kayankulam. Discussions were vehemently *carried on for fifteen days*, but without resulting in any decision. Conciliatory means failing, Tarakan applied to the Raja of Travancore for help. A fine of Rs. 25,000 was imposed on the Metropolitan on the pretext that he had concealed the properties of a Dewan (Prime Minister of the State) who had recently been removed from office for misconduct. *The churches at Niranam and at Chenganur*, together with the properties appertaining to them, as well as those of the Metropolitan including his episcopal cross, crozier and sacramental vessels, *were confiscated*,² Rs. 5,000 being realised thereby. Another sum of Rs. 5,000 was remitted, and the balance was collected from other churches and paid. During the commotion, Tarakan offered to remit the whole fine, *if the Syrian community would sign an agreement accepting Romanism*; but they chose to give up their property rather than betray the faith of their forefathers. Finding that neither conciliatory measures nor considerations of money could induce the Syrians to accept his proposal, Tarakan finally *adopted the policy of Archbishop Menezis*; bringing armed men from the Raja, he *arrested the Metropolitan* and many of the leading members of the community and carried them to *Alleppey*. There the *Metropolitan was put to*

2. It is said that the large bell still hanging at the eastern gate of the Trivandrum Fort was one of the properties of the church at Niranam confiscated on this occasion.

starvation for several consecutive days and was eventually forced to sign an agreement accepting "the profession of the faith prescribed by Pope Urban VIII for the Orientals, and submitting himself and his Church "to the Holy Father the Pope, performing the Mass, reciting the breviary, and observing the fasts and other rites as they were *prescribed by the Synod of Diamper.*" It was thus Mor Dionysius celebrated the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic church at *Tathanpalli* (in Alleppey) on the 30th of *Edavam* (June) 1799.

Within a fortnight from this incident, Mathu Tarakan was called away to Trivandrum to putdown a rising of the Hindu population of South Travancore. The rebellion was caused by the discontent of the people about the exorbitant price of salt, which had been granted as a monopoly to Tarakan. The rebels got hold of him on his way, scourged him most severely, and cutting off one of his ears, made him eat it with leaves of plants boiled without salt. The Raja, however, honoured him with the present of a golden ear; but it was the beginning of his downfall from which he never recovered. Tarakan's sudden and unexpected fall enabled Mor Dionysius to escape to *Niranam*, where he *publicly apologized* for having administered the sacraments in the Roman rite, and as a penalty for his guilt, *he had the Holy Eucharist celebrated in all the Syrian churches* at his private expense for the remission of his sins.

Towards the close of his life, Mor Dionysius received a visit from Dr. Kerr, Senior Chaplain of Madras, who had been deputed by the Government of Fort St. George to investigate the state of Christianity in Malabar. More about will be stated in a subsequent chapter.

Soon after Dr. Kerr's visit, the Syrian Church received a visit from another European clergyman in the person of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College of Fort William. He was sent by the Government of Bengal on a

mission of Christian research. He visited the Syrian churches at *Mavelikara, Chenganur, Kallicheri, Ranni, Kandanad, Angamali, Kunnankulam* (Cochin State), and other places, and had more than one audience of Mor Dionysius. His chief aims were the collection of Syriac manuscripts and the translation of the Holy Scriptures into the vernacular. The following extracts from Buchanan's writings are interesting. "You have come", said the Metran, 'to visit a declining church, and I am now an old man, but hopes of seeing better days cheer my old age, though I may not live to see them.' I submitted to the Bishop my wishes in regard to the translation and printing of the Holy Scriptures. 'I have already fully considered the subject,' said he, 'and have determined to superintend the work myself, and to call the most learned of my clergy to my aid. It is a work which will illuminate these dark regions, and God will give it his blessing."

With reference to Dr. Buchanan's proposal of a union between the Syrian Church and the Church of England, there was a long discussion between him and the Metran's chaplain. In reply to the enquiry as to the advantage of a union, Buchanan observed: "One advantage would be that English clergymen or rather missionaries ordained by the Church of England might be permitted hereafter to preach in the numerous churches of the Syrians in India and *aid them* in the promulgation of pure religion *against the preponderating and increasing influence of the Romish Church*; and again that *ordination by the Syrian Bishop might qualify for preaching* in the English churches in India." The Bishop said, "I would sacrifice much for such a union; only let me *not* be called to *compromise anything of the dignity and purity of our Church*." 'I told him we did not wish to degrade, *we would rather protect and defend it*. The next day the Bishop returned an answer in the words, 'that a union with the English Church,

or at least, such a connection as should appear to both Churches practicable and expedient would be a happy event and *favourable to the advancement of religion in India*'.³

On the subject of the translation of the Scriptures, Mor Dionysius promised to do all that he could, and he fulfilled his promise. The four Gospels translated into *Malayalam* (vernacular of Malabar) under his direction by Ramban Philiose of Kayankualm were afterwards printed at Bombay and circulated in the Syrian churches. He also made a present of a very old manuscript copy of the Syrian Bible to Dr. Buchanan. It was the one preserved in the Syrian church at *Angamali*, the seat of the Syrian bishopric till its removal to *Cranganore* by Romish prelates. Dr. Buchanan says: "The Inquisitors condemned many books to the flames, but they saved the Bible, being content to order that the Syrian Scriptures should be amended agreeably to the Vulgate of Rome. But many Bibles and other volumes were not produced at all. In the Acts of the Council of Nicea, it is recorded that Johannes, Bishop of India, signed his name at that Council in A.D. 325. The Syriac version of the Scriptures was brought to India, according to the popular belief, before the year 325. Some of their present copies, are certainly of ancient date."⁴

Dr. Buchanan has left behind him a lasting memorial of his name. Besides publishing the four Gospels in the vernacular, he got the whole Bible in Syriac printed in England for the use of the Church of Malabar. The Syrian Christians still venerate his name with feelings of sincere gratitude.

In 1807, a Jacobite bishop, Mor Dioscorus by name, commissioned by Mor Ignatius Matthew, Patriarch of Antioch, arrived in Malabar. He being a man of fiery temper, his behaviour or attitude was not welcomed; he was sent

3. *Christian Researches*, pp. 165 and 166. (1812 Edn.)

4. *Christian Researches*, p. 172. (1812 Edn.)

ack by Col. Macaulay, the first British Resident in Travancore.

The last act of Mor Dionysius the Great—an act whose benefit the community is destined to enjoy for ever—was the investment in Government Securities of three thousands staragodas, equivalent to Rs. 10,500, for "charitable purpose." There are three versions of the origin of this investment. One version is that the amount was a gift of the Madras Government. But this view has not support in the Government records. The communications between Col. Macaulay and the Madras Government on the subject of the endowment not only do not make even an allusion to such a gift, but expressly refer to it as an amount actually deposited by the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church.⁵ The second version is that the amount was realised by Col. Macaulay by sale of the properties of Mathu Tarakan (the Romo-Syrian persecutor of Mor Dionysius) and invested in the Metran's name. This view also is quite improbable. It is true that a large sum of money in the shape of arrears of tax was due to the Travancore Government from Mathu Tarakan, and that his properties were attached for the purpose. But what Col. Macaulay did was to support Tarakan in his defence and to oppose strongly the realisation of the arrears. It also appears that Tarakan's dues were realised only after Col. Macaulay's resignation. Hence, it cannot be that an investment made through Col. Macaulay was the outcome of a sum of money collected after his severance from the State.

But the tradition on the subject current among the Syrian Christians, and the version most probable in the nature of the circumstances, is as this: It was a period of pressure and anxiety of Col. Macaulay. The subsidy due from the

Vide Col. Macaulay's letter to the Govt. of Madras dated 25th October 1808.

Travancore Government was in arrears for two years. The Residency treasury was consequently empty. There were remonstrances and disagreeable correspondence passing between the Resident and the Native State of Travancore, the former speaking of the Dewan as "a temporizing, equivocating prevaricating, and Morauding boy." The Resident demanded the immediate retirement of the Dewan, but the Raja appealed to the Madras Government, praying for immediate recall of Col. Macaulay. This unpleasant incident assumed such a serious aspect, that the Resident's confidential mediator was put to death, and an attempt was even made upon Col. Macaulay's life. This was followed by a general insurrection. In the absence of any regular postal communication delay was inevitable in obtaining timely help from the British authorities. To meet the emergency, Col. Macaulay borrowed moneys from his Christian friends, *viz.*, the Syrian Metropolitan and the Bishop of Verapoly; and these sums not having been repaid, they were afterwards converted into perpetual investments bearing interest at the then usual rate of 8 *per cent per annum*. The bond for investment was, however, issued five months after the demise of Mor Dionysius, in the name of his successor Mor Thoma VII. The investment has since become one of the funds for the maintenance of education in the Syrian Seminary at Kottayam.

After a long and glorious reign, partly interrupted by a Roman persecution, Mor Dionysius I expired at the ripe age of eighty, on the 25th of *Meenam* (Morch) 1808 and was, at his own request, buried in the Syrian church at *Puthencavo* (near Chenganur), —a church built and endowed by him at his own expense.

Chapter XIX

THE EXTINCTION OF THE PAKALOMATTAM FAMILY

Mor Thoma VII, who had been acting as suffragan during the late Metropolitan's time, was unanimously acknowledged as the head of the Church. He did not survive his predecessor long. After a short career of fifteen months, he died on the 20th of Mithunam (June) 1809 and was interred in the church at *Kolancheri* (near Muvattupuzha). He was a meek prelate, not strong in mind and body, but pious and strictly religious. When he was about to die, such of the members of the community as were present at his death-bed, entertaining anxiety regarding the succession to the episcopacy, got his successor (Mor Thoma VIII) suddenly consecrated by laying on his head the hands of the unconscious *Metran* who was lying on the point of death. This was done on the distinct understanding that the dignity would be perfected by a delegate from Antioch. An application was accordingly forwarded to Col. Macaulay to get a delegate from the Patriarch, and the Resident consented to undertake the transmission of the letter to Antioch.

No sooner did Mor Thomas VII die than a dispute arose about the succession. One party in the Church contended that, Mor Thoma VIII, not having been canonically consecrated, he should not exercise any of the functions of a bishop until his dignity was perfected by a Patriarchal delegate, while the opposite party maintained that the Church should not

be reduced to a state of widowhood till the arrival of the delegate from Antioch. Rival complaints were laid before the British Resident, one party accusing Mor Thoma VIII of arbitrary conduct in exercising the duties of a bishop before getting his dignity confirmed by the Patriarch, and the other party charging Joseph *Ramban*, leader of the opposition, with insubordination to the Bishop. All this was without any effect for some years. About this time, Col. Macaulay retired (March 1810), and was succeeded by Col. John Munro (1810-1819). The rupture between Mor Thoma VIII and Joseph *Ramban* was further widened by the former's negligence in not establishing a seminary for the instruction of candidates for Holy Orders, contemplated in the investment of the 3,000 star-pagodas by Mor Dionysius I. The dispute was brought to the notice of the Madras Government, which thereupon issued seventeen questions to Mor Thoma VIII, enquiring about the history, government, rituals and maintenance of the Syrian Church. The latter's reply, dated the 20th of April 1812, is very interesting.

The first question referred to the origin and history of the Church of Malabar, and the *Metran*, in reply, reiterated the tradition of the preaching of the Apostle, St. Thomas, his conversion of Brahmins, his Martyrdom at Mylapore, and the arrival of a *Syrian group* headed by Thomas of Cana.

In reply to questions which concerned the nature of the supremacy exercised by the Patriarch of Antioch and the succession to the episcopacy, it was said that the Malabar Church was always subject to the See of Antioch, that its supremacy began with the colonisation of the country by Thomas of Cana, and that the consecration of bishops was performed by delegates of the Patriarch of Antioch.

To the question which referred to the work and qualification of priests and to the number of churches, he replied

that there were 55 churches, 167 clergymen and 30,000 Christians under his rule; that the duties of priests were the celebration of the Holy Eucharist on Sundays and festival days, and the administering of the rites of baptism, Marriage, extreme unction and confessional absolution to the faithful, as well as the daily offering of prayers in the churches, both in the morning and in the evening. He further said that priests were supported by certain fees paid for the aforesaid services, especially for the Eucharist celebrated for the souls of the deceased, that generally, vicars of churches were selected from priests who had a fair knowledge of the Scriptures and service books; that the education of candidates for Holy Orders comprised the study of the Holy Scriptures, and was conducted by three *malphans* (Professors of Syriac), one in the northern, and two in the southern districts of the diocese; and that some of the priests were well versed in both the Testaments, though a great many knew only the four Gospels.

Concerning the finances of the Church, the *Metran* stated that the churches had no funds; that church receipts consisted of burial fees, and tithes on Marriage dowries, which in several churches were too small for their maintenance; and that, in a few churches, the trustees were not honest men.

With regard to general education, Mor Thoma acknowledged that total absence of any public school for the purpose. In respect of doctrines and rituals, the reply simply stated that the Syrian Church followed the teachings of the Apostles and of the three hundred and eighteen Fathers, and that she conducted rituals in accordance with books received from time to time from the Patriarchal See of Antioch. Alluding to mission work, the *Metran* remarked that no Syrian ever became a Hindu, and that conversions from Hinduism were rare and occasional.

With reference to Government (*Sircar*) officials, it was stated in the *Metran's* reply that the Syrians often suffered oppression and ill-treatment, but that there was none in matters of religion. The last question was about the antiquity of the *Pakalomattam* family, to which it was replied that for one thousand three hundred and eight years from A.D. 345, this family supplied Archdeacons to rule the Church in succession, and that since the Portuguese period there had been in the family six Bishops and one Metropolitan, exclusive of the author of the reply.

Of course, there are historical inaccuracies in the answers above referred to; but it is clear that the Syrians always believed that they had been subject to the See of Antioch, with the exception of the short period of their subjugation to Rome. Since the Portuguese period they were unquestionably so subject; and their doctrines and rituals were purely Jacobite. The aforesaid answers also indicate the low state of education among the clergy.

The rupture between Mor Thoma VIII, and Joseph Ramban reached its climax in 1813, when Col. Munro visited Trichur (Cochin State) and was interviewed by Mor Philexinos, Bishop of *Thoziyur*, who supported the Ramban's cause. The Resident issued a notice inviting representatives of all churches to meet him at Quilon (Travancore State) and also deputed an officer to take possession of the *Metran's* credentials and personal properties. After a nominal enquiry, Col. Munro declared the *Metran's* consecration null and void, forbade him from exercising any of the functions of a bishop until the arrival of delegates from Antioch, and declined to pay him the interest on the endowments due from his treasury. Grieved and disheartened, Mor Thoma VIII died on the 12th of *Meenam* (Morch) 1816, after having appointed a successor, under the title Mor Thoma IX. But this dignitary

was at once forced to abdicate, and after depositing all properties of the former *Metrans* in the Syrian Seminary at Kottayam, he passed the remaining years of this life as a private priest in the *Kadamattam* church (near *Kolancheri*). With him, the succession of episcopacy in the old *Pakalomattam* family became extinct. The family had, in the direct male line, already become extinct even before. Mor Thoma VIII and Mor Thoma IX. were not really members of this historic family, being born of adopted parents. The deep interest which the community had in, and the almost instinctive reverence it entertained to, the bishops of this ancient family was not, and could not be, shown to the same extent to the bishops of an adopted line, and consequently there was no murmur or dissatisfaction in any quarter when a member of a different family succeeded to the episcopacy.

Chapter XX

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SYRIAN SEMINARY AT KOTTAYAM, AND ANGLICAN CO-OPERATION

Joseph Ramban, the leader of the party that opposed Mor Thoma VIII, was a native of Kunnankulam and a parishioner of the *Arthat* church (Cochin State). When the army of Tippu Sultan (1782-1799) invaded the country, the Syrians of Kunnankulam deserted their village and hid themselves in the neighbouring hills and mountains, but Joseph *Ramban* remained in the church at Arthat, praying for the people. Tippu's men set fire to the church and got hold of the Ramban; they were about to kill him for not accepting Islam, when the sudden recall of the army to Mysore compelled them to leave the place abruptly, and before they could execute their design upon him. When peace was restored, the Ramban repaired the damage done to the *Arthat* church, and leaving the parish in charge of other priests, he travelled through several of the northern parishes, preaching the necessity of establishing a theological institution for the education of the Syrian clergy. He was well versed in the Indian science of architecture, and had prepared a plan and estimate of the building for the proposed institution. At first, Mor Thoma VIII was in favour of the scheme, but when it was suggested that the interest on the endowment due from the British Government treasury should be spent in the erection of the Seminary, he declined to support the noble

design of the Ramban. This was one of the chief causes of his rupture with Mor Thoma.

At last, the Ramban laid his plans before Col. Munro, who heartily welcomed them. The arrears of the endowment-interest were placed at the disposal of the Ramban, with instructions to utilise the money for the accomplishment of his scheme. The site necessary for the purpose was provided at Kottayam by the Travancore Government free of tax. The enthusiastic Ramban lost no time in availing himself of the opportunity. He laid the foundation of the present Kottayam Seminary (*the Old College*) in February 1813 and opened it as an educational institution Morch 1815. In the interval, the Government of Madras had disapproved of the Resident's procedure in paying the interest on the endowment to one who was not a bishop. Joseph Ramban was therefore asked to accept consecration at the hands of Mor Philexinos of Thoziyur, or refund the money drawn from Resident's treasury. To evade the difficulty, the Ramban accepted consecration from Mor Philexinos under the title Mor Dionysius II. on the 9th of *Meenam* (Morch) 1815. The Travancore Government, prompted by the British Resident, issued a proclamation dated 21st *Makaram* (January) 1816 requiring all Syrian Christians to obey Mor Dionysius II as their Metropolitan. This was followed by a similar proclamation issued by the Cochin Government.

Our readers may be anxious to know who this Mor Philexinos was. We have already referred in Chapter XVIII to the consecration of a certain Mor Kurilos in 1772 and his founding a church at Thoziyur in *British Malabar*, in opposition to Mor Dionysius I. This Mor Kurilos was succeeded at Thoziyur by his brother Mor Kurilos II who in turn appointed *Cheeren* Philexinos as his successor. He was followed by another Philexinos surnamed *Kidangan*. It was this second

Philexinos who visited Col. Munro at Trichur and who evidently became the consecrator of Mor Dionysius II. In this connection, it must be remembered that Thoziyur was and still is a diocese only in name; and the founder of this diocese having been banished from *Malankara* (the Syrian Diocese of Malabar) the successor-prelates of *Thoziyur* were not on friendly terms with Mor Dionysius I and his successors, and were always on the look-out for an opportunity to step into the diocese of the latter. The unhappy disputes between Mor Thoma VIII and Joseph Ramban, as well as the influence of the British Resident, presented the opportunity which Mor Philexinos longed for.

Mor Dionysius II had the support of the British Resident, and, through him, of the two Native States as well. It was from his time that the Travancore and Cochin Governments began to interfere in the appointment and removal of bishops in the Syrian Church. It became a law that not a Bishop could freely exercise his episcopal authority unless he was recognised by the States through proclamations enjoining all Syrian Christians to obey him. If a Bishop was once recognised, it was considered penal for a Syrian to disobey his orders thereafter. Freedom of choice was not heard of for several years thereafter. Any pretender who could court the favour of the British Resident, could be freely recognised by the Hindu States, whether or not his consecration was valid or he possessed the confidence of the Syrian community. We shall see that later on the English missionaries of the C.M.S. had the ear of the British Resident, and an aspirant to the episcopacy had to court the friendship of the missionaries.

Whatever may be the views of our readers about the character and behaviour of Mor Dionysius II in his contest with Mor Thoma VIII, it has to be remembered in favour of the former that he was one sincerely desired to advance the

prosperity of the community and the Church. He was pious, fearless, impartial in his dealings, open-hearted, a rigid ascetic in his mode of life, a friend of education, a well-read scholar of Syriac, and an eloquent preacher. In fact, he was the pioneer of education, not only in the Syrian community, but throughout the whole of the Native States of Travancore and Cochin, in as much as the Seminary he built at Kottayam was the first educational institution of the kind in the country; the old *Cranganore* and *Vaipicottah* Seminaries of the Portuguese period (which had long since ceased to exist) being, of course, excepted. He did not aspire to episcopacy, and but for the necessity of drawing the interest on the endowment fund from the Residency, he would gladly have ended his days as a mere Ramban. Having been consecrated by a bishop who was not an authorised delegate of the Patriarch, Mor Dionysius II doubted the validity of his title to bishopdom; consequently, he declined to exercise any of the sacerdotal powers of a bishop, and contented himself with the mere signing of receipts.

In lending his support to Mor Dionysius II, Col. Munro had the noble motive of improving the condition of the Syrian community, socially, politically, morally and religiously; and to carry out this object, he subsequently imported English missionaries to work among the Syrians. However sincere he was in his intentions, and however beneficial his scheme might have seemed at the outset, its effect in after-years was injurious to the Syrian Church, as will be seen later on. Again, the Syrian community is indebted to Col. Munro for much of the material and social freedom they now enjoy. He was a sound Christian and a sincere friend of this ancient Church. To one who goes farther into the subject, the view is possible that Col. Munro had a political motive also in taking so much interest in the Syrian Church. In one of his

reports to his Government, after stating certain proposals for help to be rendered to the Syrians by the Madras Government, he writes: "The British Government would receive, in their grateful and devoted attachment on every emergency, the reward due to its benevolence and wisdom."¹ In connection with this statement, we have to remember that the attempt made upon the life of Col. Macaulay in 1808 and the general insurrection that followed it were fresh in Col. Munro's memory; and probably he was afraid of a repetition of similar acts of disloyalty, whether of the Native States or of their Hindu subjects. Under such circumstances, it is quite natural that he should regard the loyal devotion and attachment of the Syrian community – of whom, in the same report, he remarks in the words of La Croze (1723) that "the more Christians a pagan prince has in his dominions, the more he is feared and respected" – as essential, in that dark age, to the peaceful security of the British power in Travancore and Cochin. In this view of the matter, it may be even doubted whether, in lending a strong helping hand to the Syrians, Col. Munro was actuated by more of philanthropy and sympathy than of political considerations. However that may be, to the Syrians he appeared as a sincere friend and protector, though *unfortunately* the means employed by him to elevate this Church *spiritually*, turned out to be a source of unending mischief in after-years.

To continue the history: one day Mor Dionysius II received a letter from Col. Munro, inviting him to Quilon for a meeting. He went, accompanied by two priests, one of whom was his Vicar General (afterwards Mor Dionysius III), and by two deacons, one of whom was the grandfather of the author of this work. The first day's meeting with the

1. Report dated 30th March 1818.

resident passed in friendly conversations, and it concluded with an invitation for another meeting the next day. On their way back to their residence, the young deacons whispered to the priests in a spirit of wonder about the beauty of a baby had seen in an adjoining room in the Quilon Residency. The Bishop, who knew that Mrs. Munro and her children were in England, overhearing the whisper, expressed a disbelief in the deacons' statements and scorned their supposed incapacity to distinguish a doll or a picture from a live baby. On the following day, Col. Munro naively said that he meant to offer further assistance to the Metran and his community by stationing a European in the Kottayam Seminary to act as the medium of communication between himself and the Bishop. With this proposal, the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Norton with their young child were introduced to the Bishop. On further enquiry, the *Metran* was told that the new European was an ordained missionary of the Church of England, intended to reside in the Seminary and work for the religious and social advancement of the Syrian community. The open-hearted *Metran* at once thanked the Resident for his good wishes, but objected to the intrusion of the missionary for work in the Syrian Church. "He is a member of a different creed," said the *Metran* to Col. Munro; "*his faith and our faith are not one; if he were to live in the Seminary, it might lead to religious feuds, and the result might be deplorable.*" The colonel was *disappointed*. He had expected a cordial welcome for the missionary. The *Metran*, who was actually foreseeing the trouble and calamity which the community is suffering at present, thought it better to incur the displeasure of the Resident than betray his Church. Col. Munro next proposed that the missionary should *be stationed at Alleppy*, and be asked to *visit Kottayam occasionally*. To this, Mor Dionysius reluctantly consented. On his return home, the *Metran*

expressed to the attendant priests in bitter terms, with tears running down his furrowed cheeks: "I repent having sought the Sahib's help in the construction of the Seminary; *since the days of Dr. Buchanan, the eyes of Europeans are fixed upon our poor Church as those of a kite upon chickens; God knows the end;* as long as I live, I will, under God's guidance, guard this poor Church. May God preserve it for ever."² Such was the way in which the C.M.S. missionaries were first introduced into the Syrian Church, and such was the spirit in which they were welcomed.

Some time before this, an incident happened which eventually helped to augment the Seminary fund. The Syrians at Tiruvalla, in spite of opposition from the wealthy Hindu landlords of the place, set up a new church for public worship in 1818. One night, the leaders of the Hindu community set fire to the temporary church building and inflicted wounds on the priest who was sleeping within it. The case reported to the Resident (who was also the Dewan from 1811 to 1815), who levied a heavy fine on the offenders. On the application of the Syrians of Tiruvalla, the Rani of Travancore graciously made a grant, half for the construction of the destroyed church, and the other half for the Seminary at Kottayam to enable the Syrians "to prosecute the study of Holy Scriptures *according to the custom of their sect.*" The Government of Travancore also issued a notification that complaints of ill-treatment of the Syrian Christians by members of the Hindu community and officials would be seriously dealt with; and for an example to others, Col. Munro punished a few Government (*Sircar*) officers on a like charge.

2. The author is indebted for this narrative to the autograph diary of his grandfather, the late Edavazhikal Philipose Kathanar, a priest who had an extraordinary reputation and influence in the Syrian Church, and who was himself an eye-witness of the scene.

Mor Dionysius II did not live long. He died on the 12th of *Vrichigom* (November) 1816 and was buried in the Syrian seminary chapel at Kottayam. Mor Philexinos of Thoziyur immediately assumed the Metropolitanship of Malankarai and was proclaimed as such by the States of Travancore and of Cochin. However, he was not allowed to enjoy this position long. He had to consecrate the Vicar General George as Mor Dionysius III on the 26th of *Thulam* (October) following and to retire to his residence at Thoziyur, without relinquishing the high-sounding title of "Metropolitan of Malankara." Another proclamation was immediately issued announcing the appointment of Mor Dionysius III. as assistant to Mor Philexinos and enjoining upon all Syrians the duty of implicit obedience to the new prelate.

The new *Metran* was a man of a very unusual type. Three missionaries of the C.M.S., Revds. Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Penn and Henry Baker, arrived in Malabar and were cordially entertained. One of them entered the Seminary as Principal and Joint Manager along with the Metropolitan, another occupied himself in opening parochial schools, and the third took upon himself the work of translating the Bible and other religious books. Col. Munro was still the British Resident, and for some time he was the *Dewan* of Travancore as well. As *Dewan-Resident* he was ready to render every possible help to the Syrian community. Through the missionaries, the *Metran* secured a vast influence over him. Competent Syrians were admitted to Government service as judges, magistrates, *tahsildars* and in other responsible posts of superior and inferior grades. To secure a Government post, one had only to provide himself with a letter of recommendation from the *Metran*. Hindu officials trembled in his presence. The *Rani* (Queen) of Travancore honoured him with a grant of Rs. 21,000 as an endowment for the support of the

Seminary. It was afterwards supplemented by a second grant of an estate called "*Munro Island*" yielding some thousands of rupees annually. English, Sanskrit, Latin, and Hebrew were introduced as second languages taught in the Seminary along with Syriac and Malayalam. The funds of the Seminary were brought under the joint administration of the Metropolitan and the missionaries.

Not satisfied with these signs of progress, the missionaries applied to the Resident for permission to take possession of some of the Syrian churches then under Romo-Syrian control. The Valiapally church at Kottayam and the church at Piravam were till then under the joint possession of the Roman and the Jacobite sects, while the churches at Changanacherry and at Alleppey had been once chapels under the Syrian parish church at Niranam. These grounds were made the justification for the issue of a royal mandate to empower Mr. Fenn to take possession of these four churches. He succeeded in easily ousting the Roman party from the churches at Kottayam and at Piravam, but it was not easy to oust them from the other two, which had been in the sole possession of the Roman party for several generations. However, Mr Fenn, assisted by Government officials and the Syrian Christians, forcibly took possession of the Changanacherry church and appointed a Syrian priest to officiate in it. On the withdrawal of the missionary and the officials, however, the Romo-Syrians met in a body and put the Syrian party to flight. There upon, Mr. Fenn brought the military to drive out the occupants and to retake the church for the Syrians. The Romo-Syrian Vicar General who arrived to help his flock was put in prison. Notwithstanding threats and punishments, the Roman party, which included women and children, could not be driven out. They were so determined, that nothing short of death could make them move

om the church. Mr. Fenn had to retire in discomfiture. About this time, Col. Munro was succeeded by Col. McDonnell, and, at his instance, the order in regard to the churches at Changanacherry and at Alleppy was revoked.

The missionaries enjoyed full freedom in the Syrian church. They were allowed to preach in the churches. They arrogated to themselves the right of removing such things as seemed to them abuses; wherever pictures and images were found, they destroyed them, as if by authority, although they perfectly knew that the Syrian Church did not consider them to be "more than ornaments."³ In short, they regarded themselves as lords and proprietors of the Syrian churches, free to dictate to the Syrians rules of discipline and forms of worship. On the 3rd of October 1818, they called a meeting of the community in the church at *Mavelikara* with the view of introducing sudden reforms. Among the proposals made on this occasion were included *the removal from prayers of all mention of the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary and a radical revision of the Liturgy.*⁴ But the community was not yet prepared to act according to these instructions. Mor Dionysius III, who had till then implicit confidence in the missionaries, thenceforth suspected their sincerity. Conscious of the imperfection of his dignity, he had applied to Antioch for a delegate to confirm him. The application was delivered to the Rev. James Hough, author of *The History of Christianity in India*, for safe transmission to the Patriarch.⁵ When the *Metran* began to distrust the missionaries, he privately wrote to the Patriarch again for the immediate deputation of a bishop to guard against the encroachment of the missionaries. He, however, wanted to retain his honour and influence by a

³ Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, p.87

⁴ Proceedings of the C.M.S. for Africa and the East for 1819-20. pp. 334 and 345.

⁵ Hough, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, footnote p. 389

pretence of friendship with the European missionaries, while at the same time he desired to have an Antiochian Bishop in Malabar whose presence or objection could be urged as an excuse for his inability to comply with their suggestions of innovations.

On the 5th of *Edavam* (May) 1825, Mor Dionysius III expired, on account of a sudden attack of cholera, and was buried in his own parish church, the *Cheriapally* church at Kottayam. A priest who was intimately acquainted with him and who received ordination from him, has in a manuscript thus described his character: "He was kind, liberal to the poor, patriotic in his sentiments towards his country and community, subtle in his dealings, a lover of worldly pomp and money, and outwardly a friend of the missionaries but inwardly suspicious of their aims. Before he started for the meeting at *Mavelikara* (already referred to) in 1818, he entered the chancel of the *Cheriapally* church and privately prayed for a long time; and when he was about to step into his boat *en route*, he said in confidence to his trustworthy friends then present: "I am standing on the brink. Tomorrow I must either fall out with the *sahibs* or betray my Church. They want to change our faith. I would rather lose my honour than be a traitor. Pray for me that I may pass through this ordeal unscathed."

The Rev. James Hough, author of *The History of Christianity in India*, had a long conversation with this Bishop on the subject of reforms which the missionaries had in view. The result of his interview is thus summarised by a missionary: "The Metran never commits himself. He approves of what is done, but shows no inclination to go beyond the canons of his own Church."⁶

6. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, p. 108.

In a letter (see Appendix VIII) written by him in 1821 to Lord Gambier, President of the C.M.S. in England, the *Metran*, styling himself "Mor Dionysius, Metropolitan of the Jacobite Syrians in Malabar, subject to the supremacy of Mor Ignatius, Patriarch of the Apostolic See of his Church," narrated the past history of the Church, her then condition, and the services done by her English friends from Col. Macaulay onwards, with special reference to the Portuguese persecution and to the redemption and confirmation of the Church in the true faith through bishop sent from Antioch; he also applauded the missionaries as benefactors.⁷

On the death of Mor Dionysius III, a general meeting was held to elect a successor. Three candidates were proposed. The missionaries insisted upon the choice of one who seemed most favourably disposed to their schemes, the southern parishioners nominated another, and the northern parishioners a third. To avoid the difficulty the election was made finally by lot, which fell to Philipose *Malpan* of *Chepat*, the nominee of the southern parishes, and he was consecrated by Mor Philexinos as Dionysius IV on the 15th of *Chingam* (August) 1825. The consecration was followed, as usual, by a Royal proclamation, appointing him successor to the deceased *Metran*. A few months after this event, a foreign Bishop, Mor Athanasius, arrived in Malabar with a *Ramban*, having been deputed by Mor Ignatius Geevargese IV., Patriarch of Antioch, in answer to the application of the late *Metran*. Mor Philexinos and Mor Dionysius IV cordially welcomed them. The former lost no time before issuing a notice inviting representatives from all the churches to meet at Kottayam, to have the credentials of Mor Athanasius publicly read. A meeting was held on the 29th of December 1825, under the direction of Mor

⁷ *Missionary Register* for 1822, p. 431.

Philexinos. At this meetings, the *Statikon* (Bull) of appointment was read, and Mor Athanasius was formally installed.⁸

The missionaries were puzzled. They seem to have foreseen a possible frustration of their aims in case the Antiochians were to rule the Church; they eagerly sought an opportunity to get rid of the Antiochian foreigners. The opportunity presented itself soon afterwards. One day, when the foreigner *Ramban* visited the Seminary, he discovered among the books in the library an Arabic manuscript written by Mor Ivanius who had died in 1794. The uncalled - for consecration of Mor Kurilos by Mor Gregorius in 1772, the banishment of the former from the States of Travancore and of Cochin, and his setting up of an independent diocese at Tholiyur were described in detail in the manuscript, which also expressed grave doubts as to the genuineness of the alleged consecration. "I tried to ascertain the truth of the matter," wrote Mor Ivanius, "by personal interview with Mor Gregorius, but could not, as Kurilos threw obstacles in my path." The doubt about the validity of the consecration of Mor Kurilos affected the consecration of all the Bishops in the Thoziyur line, including that of Mor Philexinos and Mor Dionysius IV. On the authority of the manuscript, Mor Athanasius demanded the production of their credentials, and though, as a matter of fact, Mor Kurilos I was consecrated by Mor Gregorius in 1772, and though the fact was certified by the latter in his will executed before the Dutch Commodore, there was no reliable document in the possession of Mor Philexinos to prove the point. The foreign Bishop, therefore, mildly asked the native Bishops to abstain from exercising episcopal functions until he had communicated the facts to the Patriarch,

8. See letter of Archdeacon Thomas Robinson, Chaplain to Bishop Heber of Calcutta, on p. 80 of Howard's *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*. (1864 Edn).

and got his permission to reconsecrate them, if necessary. To this, they consented at the time. But the missionaries to whom they referred for advice took it as a timely opportunity to intimate that the decision of Mor Athanasius was not worth their acceptance. Petitions were drawn up in the names of the native Bishops addressed to the British Resident, who, being at the beck and call of the missionaries, was ready to uphold their cause. The *Dewan* of Travancore issued immediate orders to deport Mor Athanasius and the *Ramban*, and to imprison all priests who adhered to them, the charge against the priests being that they were guilty of disobedience to the Royal proclamations previously issued in favour of the native *Metrans*. The imprisoned priests were released only after ten months and on payment of heavy fines.

Bishop Heber of Calcutta, whom Mor Athanasius had met at Bombay, was on his way to Malabar, with a view to heal the differences referred to above. Unfortunately, he died at Trichinopoly. Before his death, he wrote to his children (the missionaries) in Travancore, "not to interpose the authority of the heathen Government in Travancore, as defining anything in the affairs of the Church, but to suffer all things to continue as they were from the old time, even since the heathen princes gave the Syrian Church of Malabar independent privileges, the people choosing their ecclesiastical governors according to the rites and usages which they held from the day of the blessed Apostle St. Thomas to this time, the Government allowing their elections and receiving those they elected, while they thus rendered to Caesar the things which were Caesar's and to God the things which were God's."⁹ And as soon as Bishop Heber heard of the arrest of Mor Athanasius, he wrote to the Resident, "to stop all those

9. Archdeacon Robinson's letter to the Patriarch of Antioch, in Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 80,81,83.

proceedings against Mor Athanasius, to wait for his [Bp. Heber's] coming before he listened to any accusation against the person bearing the commission of⁹ the Patriarch of Antioch, and not to disgrace the name of Britain by reviving the old policy of the Portuguese Governors. Though Bp. Heber's letter, addressed to his missionary children in Travancore, reached them in time, it was powerless to bring about any change in their attitude. But the one addressed to the Resident induced him to issue immediate orders to the *Dewan* "to stay all further proceedings against Mor Athanasius and to authorise his return to the country,"⁹ but it was too late to have any effect, since the Resident was then far away in the hills.

To show how unjust the Travancore Government were in their dealings with Mor Athanasius, the foreign Bishop, and how far they were prejudiced against him, we may refer to a letter of *Dewan Venkata Rao* addressed to Mor Philexinos, dated the 15th of Ani (June) 1826. The Judge of the court of *Vycome*, who was a Syrian Christian, visited the foreigner Bishop, Mor Athanasius, and kissed his hands, which is the form of salutation usual with the Syrians when they meet a bishop. In the letter referred to, the *Dewan* asked Mor Philexinos to state his view as to the nature of the punishment to be inflicted upon the Christian Judge for his audacity in kissing the hands of the foreigner, and in rendering him the respect due to a Bishop.¹⁰ This indicates the extent of religious toleration prevailing in Travancore at a time when she was under the protecting wings of the European (Protestant Christian) representative of the Christian King of England, whereas the policy of Native Princes when they were not under the suzerainty of a Christian Power was, in the

10. Vide Exhibite XXII filed in the Syrian Church Case.

words of Bishop Heber, to allow people to choose "their ecclesiastical governors according to the rites and usages which they held from the day of the blessed Apostle St. Thomas to this time, the Government allowing their elections and receiving those they elected." No doubt, the Residents were naturally as liberal-minded as Englishmen generally are. But the C.M.S. missionaries who functioned in Travancore at that time were an exception; when the Residents allowed themselves to be influenced by such bigoted or narrow-minded agents of the C.M.S., they were not always true to those traditions of strict impartiality and absolute non-interference in religious matters, which alone made Britain what she is, - the trusted guide, philosopher and friend of the heterogeneous races which go to make up the fabric of the mighty British Empire.

The deportation of Mor Athanasius made the position of the missionaries secure. The business of the Seminary was carried on as before, under the joint management of the missionaries and the *Metran*, and harmony prevailed for some years. Mor Philexinos expired, and Mor Dionysius IV. was a weak prelate. The Rev. Joseph Peet, "a youth then newly ordained," assumed the management of the Seminary. It was thought that a fit opportunity had come to anglicize the Syrian Church as a whole. In their preachings in the Seminary and the parish churches, *the missionaries began openly to abuse the doctrines and rituals of the Syrian Church. They so arranged the boarding system in the Seminary that, during fast days when the use of meat is forbidden, animal food alone was served to students.* The *Metran* was annoyed. The more he remonstrated against such arbitrary actions of the missionaries, the less they respected Syrian rituals and usages. Matters reached a climax in 1835, when Dr. Daniel Wilson, Bishop of Calcutta, visited Kottayam. In a private interview with the *Metran*,

Bishop Wilson, attended by his chaplain and the Assistant to the British Resident, *proposed to the Metran the desirability of introducing certain changes in the worship and the Liturgy of the Church, and offered a donation of a thousand rupees to carry out the proposals.* "The suggestions were received with courtesy and apparent acquiescence by the *Metran*; but no opinion was pronounced and no decision given by him. He promised to consult the Church and make known the result to the Bishop."¹¹ In sermons preached in the churches at *Kottayam* and at *Kandanad*, Bishop Wilson gave expression to his schemes of radical reform, which, among others, included the discontinuance of prayers and oblations for the faithful departed and a revision of the ancient Liturgy, removing all those passages which appeared objectionable from the standpoint of the Protestants of the Anglican Church. Before leaving the country, Dr. Wilson was careful to arrange with Mr. Bailey to translate the sermon and circulate it "amongst the 250 clergy and 100,000 laity of the Syrian Church," and with the British Resident "to see the Metran and put things in train to meet his wishes."¹²

Though Mor Dionysius gave a verbal promise to discuss the proposals with his clergy, he did not do anything in the matter until the Resident again came upon the scene and pressed the *Metran*.¹³ At his instance, a meeting was held at *Mavelikara* on the 5th of *Makaram* (January) 1836. Mor Dionysius IV., and Mor Kurilos III. of *Thoziyur* (successor of Mor Philexinos), met in Synod with the representatives of most of the churches. One of the missionaries also went to the meeting to influence the members by his presence, and

11. Bateman's Life of Wilson, p. 299

12. Ibid., p. 302

13. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, p. 125.

et the unanimous verdict of the Synod was that no change could be allowed without the permission of the Patriarch.¹⁴

In the opinion of the Syrian community, Bishop Wilson was a *Menezis of the 19th century*. It is true he did not oppress the Church, but this they attribute to the altered circumstances of the time and to the change from the *Portuguese* to the *British* Government. Captain F. Gresley, of the 4th Bengal Native Infantry, was quite right when he remarked: "For my part, he [Dr. Wilson] always gave me the idea of a superior Roman Catholic priest - Wilson would have shone more on the stage than in the pulpit."¹⁵

The resolutions of the Synod all the more vexed the impatient missionaries. The freedom they enjoyed to preach in churches and to manage the Seminary affairs was availed of to enforce Dr. Wilson's proposals, without the mediation of the *Metran* or his priests. *The clerical students of the Seminary were openly taught in doctrines contrary to the Syrian faith; the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England was introduced for divine service in the Seminary chapel and in some of the parish churches. Students had to repeat the Litany and the Nicene Creed with the filioque clause. Promotions and prizes were refused to such of the students as seemed hostile to the proposed reforms. Prayers and Eucharists for the faithful dead were ridiculed. The missionaries failed to recall to memory the admission once made by Mr. Fenn that "it is a college of the Syrian Church, not of the Mission."*¹⁶ Such autocratic dealings of the missionaries annoyed the *Metran*. He forbade deacons to attend the Seminary and formally excommunicated such of them as defied his orders.

14. Vide copy of the resolutions, kept in the Residency.

15. The Indian Church Quarterly Review, for January 1901.

16. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, p. 112.

Still, the missionaries were restless. They appointed four discontented priests on fixed salary to revise the Liturgy in accordance with Dr. Wilson's proposals; but when the revision was completed, three of the revisers refused to use it when they themselves celebrated the Holy Eucharist. They would rather die than celebrate a "half mass," as the revised liturgy was then, and still is, called. The split between the *Metran* and the missionaries was widened on Palm Sunday in 1836. While Mor Dionysius was engaged in solemn divine service in his cathedral church at *Kottayam*, situated half a mile away from the Seminary, the Rev. Joseph Peet who had been in the habit of vilifying the Syrian Christians as profaners of the Sabbath, entered the Seminary with a blacksmith, as if to set them an example of the manner in which the Lord's day was to be observed *and forcibly opening the treasury (Besgasa) room which till then was kept under the joint lock of the Metran and the missionaries, carried away all the valuables, documents and records to his residence.* The helpless *Metran* had not one to take his complaints to. The native officials of Travancore would not and could not, especially in those days, summon courage to go against the wishes of a white man. There was no systematised administration of civil or criminal law in the State. Under such circumstances, the Resident was the only authority to whom he could appeal. But that personage was a friend of the missionaries. He made a partition of the properties, allotting the lion's share to the missionaries. The *Metran* appealed to the Madras Government, by whose order an arbitration court consisting of three European members was created to decide the dispute. Their award followed the line of the Resident's partition, with slight modifications. Thus, with a heavy loss of property, the Syrian Church got rid of that influence of missionaries from which they had originally expected great advantages. As we

intend in a subsequent chapter to refer in detail to the work of the missionaries we do not lengthen the matter here.

Mor Dionysius IV next became a victim of the oppression of missionaries. There was a dispute in the church at *Piravom*. The trustees in office misappropriated church funds, upon which the congregation appealed to the *Metran*. Finding the trustees guilty, he dismissed them from office and appointed new trustees in their room. In the exercise of his episcopal authority, he could not but do this and thereby give offence to the dismissed trustees. Eighteen months after the occurrence of this event, finding that Mor Dionysius had fallen out with the missionaries, the dismissed trustees sought their assistance, and, with their advice, preferred a complaint of criminal trespass against the *Metran*. The Government officials declined to interfere. They thought it was within the province of the *Metran* to resort to disciplinary measures, but the missionaries were not satisfied. They moved the British Resident to instruct the Native State to issue strict orders directing the subordinate authorities to entertain criminal complaints against the *Metran* and to issue warrants to arrest him.¹⁷ It was, and it still is, the prerogative of Syrian bishops in Travancore that they are generally free from personal attendance in the Courts of Justice in the land. But at the instance of the missionaries, this time-honoured privilege was interfered with in the case of Mor Dionysius, IV, apparently because he dared to exercised lawfully his episcopal functions. The poor *Metran* was arrested and tried, but, by god's special providence, he escaped punishment, to the bitter disappointment of his missionary brethren.

The remaining years of Mor Dionysius IV were spent in seclusion. From fear of the missionaries he could not freely exercise the duties of his office; since all parties who had any

17. The order referred to was No. 96 of 1011 M.E.

fancied grievance against him were sure to seek and obtain the powerful assistance of the missionaries. The Seminary was closed for want of funds. The Resident offered to pay him the beggarly sum which had been adjudged by the Court of Arbitrators as the share of the Syrians in the trust funds, but he declined to touch it as being too arbitrary and unjust. Instead, he continued to make fruitless appeals to the Government of Madras and to the Honourable Court of Directors (of the East India Company) in England.

The character of Mor Dionysius IV is thus described in a manuscript by one who had intimate acquaintance with him: "He was pious and tenacious of the doctrines and rituals of his Church, but not strong in mind; simplicity characterised all his dealings." Complaints were sent from Malabar to the Patriarch of Antioch against Mor Dionysius, which resulted in the consecration and appointment of Mor Mathew Athanansius. Mor Dionysius IV died on the 27th of *Kanni* (September) 1855 and was buried in his parish church at *Chepat*, not far from *Kayenkulam*.

Chapter XXI

MOR MATHEW ATHANASIOUS AND THE SCHISM OF THE *MOR THOMA SYRIANS*

Among the Syrian deacons who adhered to the missionaries during their rupture with Mor Dionysius IV was *Palakunnathu* Mathew, a nephew of Abraham *Catanar*, one of the four salaried priests engaged by the missionaries to revise the Syrian Liturgy, and the only one of the four who had the courage to adopt his own revised liturgy in the celebration of the Eucharist. Mathew was born in 1818 in the parish of Moramannu and was ordained a deacon by Mor Dionysius IV. He received his early education in the Seminary at *Kottayam* from his uncle, Abraham *Catanar*. He distinguished himself during his school career and obtained several prizes. When dissensions arose between the missionaries and the *Metran*, he stood against his Diocesan to whom he had sworn obedience, with the result that he was *excommunicated*, along with his colleague George Mathan, and his uncle Abraham *Catanar*. Deacons Mathew and George Mathan availed themselves of the assistance offered by the C.M.S to proceed to Madras, where they prosecuted their studies in Bishop Corrie's GramMor School, and prepared themselves for *Holy Orders in the Church of England*. Deacon George Mathan eventually became *the first ordained native pastor of the C.M.S.* in Travancore. As regards Deacon Mathew, "A.H." the wife of the Rev. Mr. Hawksworth, missionary of the

C.M.S) wrote thus: "After being some time under instruction and having his mind well stored with general knowledge—while his heart, it is feared, remained unimpressed—he fell into the snare of the devil, and was dismissed from the institution where he had been learning. He then started for Antioch, and by various ways and means to which it is not necessary more than to allude, he reached Mordin where the Patriarch was residing... It is said that he represented matters in such a light as to get himself consecrated and then returned to this country."¹ The Rev. H. Baker, Junior, thus spoke about him in *the Missionary Conference* held at Ootacamund in 1858: "One of the present Bishops is a man who has had a good English education in our institution, but was *dismissed by us as unfit for the ministry*, although he had been one of the Syrian deacons who had adhered to the missionaries at the time of the separation. On finally leaving us, he went to Mordin in Mesopotamia and was there made a Bishop, and is the one now recognised by the Governments of Travancore and Cochin."²

It was at a critical time that Deacon Mathew visited the Patriarch. Just before his arrival, the Patriarch had received a letter from the Syrian community of Malabar, stating that they had addressed him eleven times since 1825, "soliciting that a Metropolitan might be sent, but that none had come; that in consequence, the Syrian Church in Malabar was in a state of widowhood; that its spiritual concerns were in a declining state,... and that if the Patriarch should still fail to send a Metropolitan, he will have to account in the day of judgement for all the transgressions which the Syrian people of Malabar were then committing."³ After the receipt of this

1. Day Dawn in Travancore, by A.H., Kottayam pp.63 and 64.

2. *Proceedings of the South India Missionary conference held at Ootacamund, 1858, p. 68*

3. *Vide* letter of the Syrian Community quoted in the decision of the Quilon committee, dated 1848.

strongly-worded letter, the Patriarch was contemplating the advisability of sending a bishop to Malabar, when Deacon Mathew presented himself before him with a spurious letter of recommendation from the Malabar churches. Mor Dionysius IV had reported to the Patriarch the names of the priests and the deacons excommunicated by him for their adherence to the missionaries. "Deacon Mathew" was one of the reported names. To avoid detection, Deacon Mathew represented himself as "Priest Mathew" and claimed that "on the death of the only Jacobite Bishop in India, he was sent to be consecrated as his successor." At Mosul, which he reached on his way to the Patriarch's residence, the Syrians of the place, on hearing that he was a priest, requested him to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in their churches. He tried to avoid committing such a sacrilegious act by resorting to another subterfuge, *viz.*, representing "that he was not a validly ordained priest, *as the Bishop was a corpse when his hands were laid upon his head.*" But his assertion that he was a recognised priest and was accustomed to celebrate the Eucharist in Malabar induced the Mosul Christians to press him so much that he waived all scruples and "he did celebrate."⁴

From Mosul, Deacon Mathew went to Mordin where the Patriarch Ignatius Elias II was. Since he alleged that he was ordained by the imposition of a deceased *Metran's* hands, the Patriarch declined to recognise the validity of his previous orders. He was *accordingly reordained to all the ranks* up to that of Metropolitan, under the title Mor Athanasius, and was sent back in 1843 to take charge of the Diocese of Malabar. On his arrival in the country, the Syrian community met in Synod in the church at *Kandanad* to have his

⁴ Badger's Nestorians and their Rituals, Vol.I, p.71. Also Badger's letter in the Colonial Church Chronicles, Dec. 1871, p. 49. Dr. Badger was a missionary at Mosul when Deacon Mathew reached there.

Statikon (Bull) of appointment publicly read. Finding this document not free from grave suspicions as to the policy adopted by him to get himself consecrated, they wrote to the Patriarch, stating his past history and his inclination towards innovations. The Patriarch became puzzled. He deputed a bishop named Mor Kurilos Joachim to investigate the allegations, and gave him letters of excommunication *to be used* against Mor Athanasius, *if he was found really guilty*. Mor Kurilos arrived in Travancore in 1846.

Although Mor Athanasius was one dismissed from their institution "as unfit for the ministry", the C.M.S missionaries found him well inclined to carry out the reforms suggested by Bishop Wilson. Easily he won their friendship and, through them, the support of General Cullen, the then British Resident. Mor Dionysius IV and the majority in the Syrian community desired to have Mor Kurilos as their *Metran in suppression of* Mor Athanasius. Mor Dionysius even made over charge of the diocese to Mor Kurilos. Thereupon, disputes ensued. On the recommendation of the Resident, the Travancore Government appointed a committee of two European and two native officers to investigate the question. The Committee met at Quilon in 1848 and finally decided that the appointment of Mor Athanasius was valid and irrevocable, while they condemned Mor Kurilos as having been guilty of forging excommunicatory mandates in the name of the Patriarch.

When the report of Committee's decision reached Antioch, Mor Ignatius Jacob II, who had succeeded Patriarch Elias, deputed another bishop, Mor Athanasius Stephanos, in the capacity of Patriarchal *Delegate*, to settle the dispute in Malabar. The Resident again interfered, and he forbade both Mor Kurilos and Mor Stephanos to remain in the States of Travancore and of Cochin. Mor Kurilos

retired to a church in British Cochin, and Mor Stephanos proceeded to England, where he appealed to the Honourable Court of Directors of the East India company. In pursuance of the policy of non-interference in religious matters, always adopted by the British Government, the Honourable Court cancelled the illegal order of the Resident, and left it to the free will of the community to recognise or reject any bishop coming from Antioch. Mor Stephanos never returned to Malabar, but Mor Kurilos was allowed to go about in the country. In spite of the above-mentioned order of the Court of Directors, the Native States were prevailed upon by the Resident to issue the usual Royal proclamation recognising Mor Mathew Athanasius, on the strength of his alleged appointment by the Patriarch, as the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church, and enjoining all Syrian Christians "to obey him and act as heretofore." Thus, after a hard fight of ten years, Mor Mathew Athanasius was, in spite of excommunication, acknowledged in 1852 as the legitimate Metropolitan of Malabar, duly appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch.

Mor Kurilos and his adherents continued to agitate against this position. To put down all such movements, the *Dewan* of Travancore issued in 1863 a circular order empowering petty magistrates to punish and summarily dismiss from churches all persons, whether they be priests or laymen, who dared to oppose the Metropolitan. In other words, magistrates were made executors of the *Metran's* ecclesiastical orders. Mor Athanasius was thus confirmed in the usurped position. To incur his displeasure meant summary dismissal from churches, forfeiture of benefices, and the suffering of fines and imprisonment.

The community as a body were staunch in their attachment to the See of Antioch and to the ancient creed and forms of worship. Though a friend of the missionaries and a

supporter of reforms on the lines proposed by Bishop Wilson, Mor Athanasius could not, from fear of a general insurrection, openly deny the supremacy of the Patriarch or introduce sweeping changes in ritual and worship. While, on the one hand, he claimed to be the accredited representative of the See of Antioch, continued the usual prayers for the Patriarch in divine services, and in all cases of ordinations, invariably administered the customary oath of obedience to himself and the Patriarch; on the other hand, he attempted to introduce innovations where he could do so without rousing violent opposition. In fact, he was an opportunist, in the worst sense of the term. Where people were found jealous for the old faith and rituals, he showed himself an out-and-out Jacobite in the fulness of ardour for the time-honoured practices of the Church, as befitting a man who was fresh from his visit to the Patriarch. But where parishioners were found lukewarm, he showed his hand and dabbled in reformation. It is not a pleasant task to have to write of his character. The old adage goes that one should not speak ill of the dead. At the same time, truth compels one to say that on every side, in both his public and his private dealings, his conduct was far from exemplary... *His example in this respect has undoubtedly done irreparable mischief to the community... *He sold the properties, which formed the patrimony of the bishops of the *Pakalomattam* family, as well as some the Seminary properties... *In spite of all this, he was, in the opinion of the missionaries of the C.M.S., the most pious bishop the Syrian Church ever had, and one who deserved their special sympathy and support; so much so, that, when the Patriarch of Antioch visited England in 1874 to prefer a complaint against the Bishop before the Secretary of

*Dealings of Mar Athanasius' moral qualities, given by the Author in his MS., are omitted by the Editor of this work.

State for India, his missionary friends recommended, through the Bishops of Madras and of Calcutta, that Mor Athanasius should be recognised and supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury against the contentions of the Patriarch.⁵

We are indeed very sorry to write of the Bishop in this strain, but the facts are so well-known all over Malabar that we do not expect his staunchest adherents will seriously challenge these statements. We gladly own that the great influence Mor Athanasius had with the British Resident and the higher officials of the Travancore Government was often successfully used by him to deliver the community from certain forms of degraded social oppression and tyranny which had, at least among the poorer people in some of the rural parts, survived the days of Mor Dionysius III and of the British Residents who functioned previously. However, "to all thinking men, the first question that must arise when a man raises himself up to be a leader of a great religious movement or to attack the existing abuses of a Church, is not so much, was he a great genius, but, was he called by God, was he a great saint".⁶ In Mor Athanasius, the evil genius was so much in the ascendant that the Syrian community could not endure him. The Royal Proclamation and the *Dewan's circular order* had bound them in the adamantine chains. The Travancore Government were deaf to their complaints. The British Resident was always ready to uphold the cause of the autocratic Bishop. The C.M.S. missionaries lent him their support. Higher education had not then made any progress in the country. The few Syrians who had received any English education had been drawn by no creditable methods into the Anglican fold. Therefore, there was no one in the community

5. *vide* the Archbishop's letter to the Patriarch, published in the *Guardian* of 16th September 1874, p.1186.

6. *The Church Times*, 18th March 1904, p.379.

who knew enough of the British Government and the British nation to realise that justice and fair play could be obtained by persistent agitation on constitutional lines and by appealing through proper channels to the Christian conscience of Britain. Such of the members of the community as had nothing but their personal and private interests to serve, remained selfishly quiet, ready to follow the winning side. But after all, there survived, though scattered in the different parts of the country, a small band of faithful, consistent and devout "servants of the God of Israel who had not yet bent the knee to Baal." These turned their eyes to Antioch, as the only source from which salvation could come. They selected *Pulicott Joseph Catanar* of *Kunnankulam* (Cochin state) and sent him to the Patriarch with an earnest request to have him consecrated and appointed Metropolitan of Malabar in supersession of Mor Mathew Athanasius. He was a grand-nephew of Mor Dionysius II, the founder of the Syrian Seminary. From his youth upwards, he had been a strong supporter of Mor Kurilos Joachim, and consequently was an object of special aversion to Mor Athanasius. *Joseph Catanar* undertook the perils of the journey to the Patriarchal See, and after various sufferings and hairbreadth escapes, reached Diarbekir where the Patriarch was then residing, and received consecration as Metropolitan of Malabar at the hands of Mor Ignatius Jacob II, under the title Mor Dionysius V. He came back to Malabar in 1865.

The first thing that Mor Dionysius V did on his return was to forward a petition to the *Dewan* to the effect that the Royal Proclamation and the *circular order* which had been issued in favour of Mor Athanasius should be cancelled. The *Dewan*, of course, referred him to the Resident and directed him to apply with the latter's recommendation. This was impossible, as the Resident, under missionary influence, was

a pronounced partisan of Mor Athanasius. Finally, at the instance of the Resident, the *Dewan* directed Mor Dionysius "to go to law" and observed that "if the case of one church be taken to Court and there decided, the principle involved would be settled and would apply to all similar cases."⁷ Against this decision an appeal was preferred before the Madras Government, which only confirmed the order appealed against.⁸ Thereupon, the case "of one church" was taken to the civil court. But the highest court in Travancore decided that "no Metropolitan claiming to be such can be recognised by the courts unless he has been so recognised by the State, and we must act on the principle that Mor Athanasius is, in law as well as in fact, the Metropolitan till the nomination of his rival has been stamped with the sanction and authority of the Travancore State."⁹ The Government, instead of, at least, extending to Mor Dionysius that religious toleration which the British Sovereign accords to subjects of all castes and creeds in India, advised him to go to the civil court, and the civil court redirected him to the Government. Thus, both the Government and the court closed their doors against him, and the Government of Madras also turned a deaf ear to his complaints. The influence which Mor Athanasius had with the British Resident and with the C.M.S missionaries was at the bottom of all these troubles.

The activities of Mor Dionysius V, though so far fruitless, led Mor Athanasius to take steps to make his position as secure as possible. We have already seen that the share of the trust funds adjudged to the Syrian community by the Court of Arbitrators in 1840, was rejected by the then *Metran* as

7. *Dewan's* letter No. 2530, dated 4th July 1866.

8. Endorsement, dated 3rd March 1869, on Petition No. 408 of 1869.

9. Judgement of the Travancore High Court dated 14th *Avani* (August) 1873, in A.S.No. 154 of 1044 M.E.

being altogether insufficient. This sum was lying in the Resident's Treasury, and the interest on the investment made by Mor Dionysius I. in 1808 was also accumulating. In 1869, Mor Athanasius, with a view to appropriate the sums, applied to the Resident for their payment to him. The fund now amounted to Rs.35,000 in all, Rs. 6,000 being share of the capital allotted to the Syrians by the Arbitrators, and the remainder, the accumulated interest for 35 years on the investment above alluded to.

Counter-petitions were presented by Mor Dionysius and by several parishes, praying that the amount should not be paid to Mor Athanasius; but little attention was paid to them. At a meeting held in the house of the Rev. Henry Baker, Junior, then senior missionary of the C.M.S. in Travancore, Mr. Ballard, the then Resident, made a nominal investigation of the rival claims. This meeting has been well described as "analogous to the Pope's holding an Ecumenical Council in the Vatican."¹⁰ As the result of this investigation, the Resident reported in favour of Mor Athanasius, and, on the strength of that recommendation, the Madras Government sanctioned payment of the fund to that prelate, despite the opposition of a rival Metropolitan and of a vast number of influential Syrians. That the investigation was a farce and that the payment of the money to Mor Athanasius was an unjust and illegal transaction brought about *solely by the influence of the C.M.S missionaries* may be clearly seen from two circumstances.

1) The Award of the Arbitrators required, for the administration of the funds, the *election of two trustees* along with the Metropolitan for the time beings, and none but the community *as a whole* could elect them. When Mr. Ballard

10. *Colonial church Chronicles*, for November 1870, p.440.

made the investigation, he found that the community were not unanimously in favour of Mor Athanasius, and that they could not elect the trustees in accordance with the terms of the Award. Thereupon, the Resident himself made the election, *in flagrant violation of the terms of the Award.*¹¹ Except by some strong underhand influences, would the British Resident have resorted to these unconstitutional measures?

2. We have other and more convincing evidence from a most unimpeachable source. In a letter dated 3rd January 1870, addressed to the Bishop of Madras, with reference to the sanction accorded by the British Government for payment of the fund to Mor Athanasius, Mr. Baker, in whose house Mr. Ballard, the British Resident, held the sham investigation, writes: "I feel that your Lordship's kindness *in pressing the matter upon him* (Mr. Ballard) has been the means, under God, of *putting things so far straight.*"¹²

Baffled in all his attempts, Mor Dionysius V, as a last step, appealed to the Patriarch for help. In response to the urgent request, Mor Ignatius Peter III, who was then occupying the See of Antioch in succession to Patriarch Jacob II, visited England in 1874, and agitated the matter. The Patriarch also appealed to the Secretary of State for India. The Archbishop of Canterbury at first assumed a hostile attitude, saying he had been instructed by his Bishops in India that Mor Athanasius deserved the support of the Church of England. But the British Government were friendly to the Patriarch and asked the Madras Government to consider his case as favourably as possible. He was also furnished with letters of introduction. Her Majesty the Queen honoured him in several ways. He was granted private audiences and

11. *Vide* Memorandum by the Advocate-General of Madras, dated 17th December 1892.

12. *Colonial Church Chronicles*, for November 1870, p.439

asked to dine in the Palace. His Holiness was also decorated by Her Majesty. The English public seem to have been captivated by his remarkable personality. His piety and profound knowledge of the Bible made a deep impression wherever he went. It was recorded of him that he "knew the Old and the New Testaments by heart," and that "his conversations were full of allusions to and quotations from the Bible."¹³ Having earned the respect and good wishes of all such Englishmen as were not amenable to the influence of the C.M.S. missionaries in Travancore, the Patriarch set sail to India. Soon after his arrival in this country, the Travancore Government became aware of the injustice of their past dealings. A fresh Proclamation was soon issued, disavowing the Government's right thereafter to interfere in the appointment and dismissal of bishops in the Syrian Church and directing all parties to settle their disputes through the medium of the recognised Civil Courts of the State. This was in March 1876.

The beneficent policy of religious toleration, which the Hindu rulers of Malabar had pursued towards their Syrian Christian subjects from the days of the Apostle St. Thomas down to the arrival of European missionaries, both Roman Catholic and Protestant, was thus re-established on the 4th of March 1876. This was a bitter disappointment to the C.M.S. missionaries, who had hoped, by applying methods of coercion, to proselytize the whole body of Syrian Christians. The enthusiasm created among the Syrians by the arrival of H.H. the Patriarch Peter III knew no bounds. His Holiness was hailed as a deliverer. Even the bosom friends of Mor Athanasius deserted him when the Patriarch arrived in the country and the former Proclamation was cancelled. His Holiness held a General Synod of the community in the

13. *Sunday at Home*, for February 1875.

church at *Mulanthuruthi* (Cochin State) in July 1876, at which Mor Dionysius V was installed as the Metropolitan of Malabar; an Association, consisting of twenty-four members representing the whole community, and presided over by the Metropolitan, was formed to advise him in the government of the Church; and six Suffragan Bishops were appointed under the Metropolitan to administer the six divisions into which the Archdiocese was split up. Abuses of practice which had crept into the religious observances of the people, and of which they had shown themselves most tenacious in the past, were removed without any difficulty and without raising even a murmur of discontent or disapprobation from the people. Marriage was made compulsory in the case of candidates aspiring to ordination for parish work. After a stay of about two years in Malabar, the Patriarch returned to his See in 1877.

Before the advent of the Patriarch, the Jacobite Church in the country seemed destined to disappear altogether. Yet, within the space of less than two years, he was able to rebuild the old edifice on stronger, broader and deeper foundations. He was a stranger to the country and its customs. He did not know a word of English. When he set out upon this memorable journey, he had not been aware of any human agency to guide and support him. And yet, single-handed, he overcame all obstacles. He had a volcanic presence which he achieved in the face of the well-nigh insurmountable difficulties that confronted him on every side, his was the greatest personality that ever crossed the stage of Syrian history within historic times. Though it is now more than quarter of a century since he left this country, and more than ten years since he departed this life, his visit and the incidents connected with it are as fresh and vivid in the minds of the people as if they had occurred only yesterday. Surely so long as the

Syrian Church in Malabar lasts, aye, and longer far, will endure the name and fame of His Holiness Mor Ignatius Peter III, Patriarch of Antioch.

The return of the Patriarch was followed by the death of Mor Mathew Athanasius on the 3rd of *Karkadagam* (July) 1877. Some time before the arrival of the Patriarch, he had consecrated a cousin of his as his successor under the title of Mor Thomas Athanasius. During his illness, he crowned his various acts of damage to the Syrian Church and the Church funds, by mortgaging to another cousin valuable properties that belonged to the Seminary...* Thus ends the life of the Mor Mathew Athanasius who, historically speaking, came to be the first bishop of the party that seceded from the Syrian Church in the latter part of the 19th century—afterwards known as the *Reformed Syrians* or the party of the *Mor Thomas Syrians*. He lies buried in his parish church, now become attached to the side of the Mor Thoma Syrians, at *Moramannu*.

*The mortgagee-son of the aforesaid Abraham *Catanar*, and the brother of the two bishops (themselves brothers) who succeeded Mar Mathew Athanasius, one after the other the properties were large blocks of paddy lands and of garden lands, known as the *Koodalloor properties*, in Pathanamthitta Taluk (Travancore).

Chapter XXII

THE LITIGATION BETWEEN THE SYRIAN CHURCH AND THE PARTY OF THE MOR THOMA SYRIANS

The Royal Proclamation of 1876, which is rightly regarded as the Magna Charta of the Syrian Church, directed the contending parties to establish their respective rights through the civil courts of the country. Mor Mathew Athanasius was in possession of the churches and other properties. On his death, possession was transferred to his cousin, Mor Thomas Athanasius. When the old Proclamation was cancelled, the possession existing at the time was not disturbed. A civil suit thus became inevitable, and it was filed in the District Court of Alleppey in March 1879, by Mor Dionysius V as plaintiff, against Mor Thomas Athanasius and his co-trustees as defendants. The suit was filled with the double object of securing the recognition of the plaintiff's episcopal dignity by right of his appointment by the Patriarch of Antioch, and of recovering the Syrian Seminary at *Kottayam* and the properties appertaining thereto, for the common use of the (Jacobite) Syrian community for whose benefit they were originally intended.

It was a case which took ten years in passing through the original, the appellate and the Royal Appeal courts. In the course of its proceedings, it was handled by six judges in three courts, of whom all but two were disinterested Hindus; and of the two Christian judges, one was a native Roman Catholic and the other a European Protestant. The C.M.S missionaries were not less anxious about the result of the

case than the actual parties. But times had changed. The Government of Travancore was not then what it had been before. It had by this time forged ahead and earned the proud appellation of "the Model State of India." The sovereigns were enlightened Princes, and the officials of the Government were not of the old type who trembled in the presence of a European missionary. The powers of the Government were wielded by educated men, graduates in arts and in law. The British Residents were no longer the autocrats of the past. Their power to interfere in the internal government of the State was limited, and they scrupulously kept within bounds. Some members of the Syrian community had also betaken themselves to English education. In such circumstances, the influence of missionaries could not extend very much beyond the limits of the local European society, and even there it was not always effective.

Of the six Judges who handled the case in three courts, all but one decided it in terms of the plaint. They found that the Patriarch of Antioch has been, at least since 1665, the recognised head of the Syrian Church; that it was the firm conviction of the community, and of the Syrian *Metrans* in all ages, that consecration by the Patriarch or under his orders was essential to constitute a validly ordained bishop of the Church; that Mor Dionysus V was such a bishop, while the defendant, Mor Thomas Athanasius, was not; and that the properties comprised in the suit were founded for the use of the Syrian community in communion with the See of Antioch. It was also held that the Patriarch's supremacy was limited to spiritual matters, the administration of the temporalities being vested in the Metropolitan appointed by the Patriarch and recognised by the majority in the Syrian community owing allegiance to him. Dr. Ormsby, the European Protestant Judge who sat with two native colleagues in the final appeal court, was, however, of a different opinion.

He upheld the contention of Mor Thomas Athanasius, and found that the Syrian Church was independent of the Patriarch of Antioch. Of course, the majority Judgement prevailed, and Mor Dionysius V was established on the throne of St. Thomas.

The Rev. Mr. Rae, author of *The Syrian Church in India*, strongly criticises the Judgment of the Hindu Judges, as being bad in history, law and evidence. As a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, he had little respect for the validity and sanctity of episcopal ordination, which formed part of the issues in the case; his qualification as a lawyer to criticise a Judgement in its legal aspects has yet to be proved; and almost every page of his book amply proves his bias as a historian. As remarked by Mr. G.T. Mackenzie, a British Resident in Travancore, and a Civil and Sessions Judge for many years in British India, "the decision of the Travancore High Court was the decision which the Scottish courts had pronounced a few years previously. When, in 1843, the Free Church of Scotland separated from the Established Church, the material fabrics and funds remained with the Established Church, and the Free Church had to build for themselves." "One blot in the case," says Mr. Mackenzie again, "was lightly passed over by Mr. Justice Ormsby. It is that Mor (Mathew) Athanasius claimed the See and obtained it on the strength of credentials from Antioch, and afterwards turned against the Patriarch. Professor Milne Rae meets this by saying that *Mor Athanasius may have honestly changed his mind*. That is possible, but the question before the court was whether Mor Athanasius, who had obtained the property on his Antioch credentials, could, *when he changed his view*, keep the property against a man who came with similar credentials from Antioch."¹

1. The first pamphlet on "Christianity in Travancore", p.40: compiled in October 1901 for the Travancore State Manual published in 1906; see Travancore State Manual, Vol.II, p. 114.

Chapter XXIII

THE WORK OF THE C.M.S. MISSIONARIES AMONG THE SYRIANS (1816-1837)

- A. The early connection of the Syrian Church with Protestant clergymen, and the origin of the idea of a union between the Syrian Church and the Church of England.
- B. The object of the establishment of a Mission of the C.M.S. among the Syrians.
- C. Bishop Wilson's visit and the cause of separation.
- D. The unsympathetic attitude of the missionaries towards the Syrian Church.
- E. The educational policy of the missionaries.
- F. Disintegration of the Syrian Church.
- G. Administration of the Syrian Church endowments.

- A. The early connection of the Syrian Church with Protestant clergymen, and the origin of the idea of a union between the Syrian Church and the Church of England.

The first Protestant clergyman with whom the Syrian Church came in contact was J.C. Visscher, a Dutch chaplain who visited some of their churches in the early part of the eighteenth century. His letters contain some notices of the Church in Malabar and of her tenets and customs. The Dutch do not seem to have taken any deep interest in the Syrian community except in the matter of making money on a pretty large scale, by conveying in their ships bishops from Antioch to Malabar and back.

The first clergyman of the Church of England who took any interest and whom the Syrian Church had the honour of welcoming in their midst was Dr. Kerr, senior Chaplain in the Presidency of Madras, specially deputed in 1806 by the Governor, Lord William Bentick, for the purpose of investigating the state of the native Church. A report presented by him to his Government is all that remains of the fruits of his investigation. He divides the Christians of the Malabar coast into three sects, *viz.*, "(1) the St. Thome or Jacobite Christians, (2) the Syrian Roman-Catholics, and (3) the Latin Church." About the creed and practices of the first, he says: "The supremacy of the Pope is denied and the doctrine of transubstantiation never has been held by them.¹ They also regarded and still regard the worship of images as idolatrous, and the doctrine of Purgatory to be fabulous.² Moreover, they never admitted as sacraments, extreme unction, Marriage and Confirmation.³ *It has been believed* that these Christians held the tenets of the *Nestorian heresy*... However, it appears the *creed they now hold denies that heresy*, and seems to coincide in several points with the Creed of Athanasius, but without its damnatory clauses."⁴ Regarding the character of the Syrians, Dr. Kerr remarks: "The character of these people is marked by a striking superiority over the heathens in every

¹ Transubstantiation as understood by Dr. Kerr from the definitions of the Council of Trent, is here meant. The Syrians have no such word as transubstantiation in their liturgy and canons. They did, and do, believe in the Real Presence and that the elements undergo a change by all-sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost.

² Yes, but they believed and still believe in the efficacy of prayers for the faithful departed, in common with the Greek Church and all other Eastern Churches.

³ These were and are regarded as sacraments, but only as of *secondary* importance to Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, *e.g.*, Confirmation, as a rule, is administered *along with* baptism.

⁴ See Buchanan's *Christian Researches* (1812 Edn.), p. 180; the italics in this sentence are Dr. Kerr's.

moral excellence, and they are remarkable for their veracity and plain dealing. They are extremely attentive to their religious duties and abide by the decision of their priests and Metropolitan in all cases, whether in spiritual or temporal affairs. They are respected very highly by the Nairs and the Rajahs of Travancore and Cochin admit them to rank next to the Nairs. Their number, it is generally supposed, may be estimated at seventy or eighty thousand." Dr. Kerr also tells us that he expressed to the Metropolitan a hope that one day a union might take place between the Syrian and the Anglican Churches, and that he seemed pleased at the suggestion.⁵

The next friendly Anglican visitor was Dr. Buchanan, Vice-Provost of the College at Fort William, Calcutta. We have referred to him in Chapter XVIII. When he proposed to the Syrian Church the subject of a union with the Church of England, the Syrians gave expression to great misgivings. "The Bishop's chaplains", he says, "confessed to me that they had doubts as to English ordination. "The English", said they, "may be a warlike and great people, but their church, by your own account, is but of a recent origin. Whence do you receive your ordination?" "From Rome." "You derive it from a Church which is our ancient enemy, and with which we would never unite." They acknowledged that there might be salvation in every Church where 'the name of Christ was named'; but in the question of an union, it was to be considered that they had existed a pure Church of Christ from the earliest ages; that if there was such a thing in the world as ordination by laying on of hands, in succession from the Apostles, it was probable that they possessed it; and that there was no record of history or tradition to impeach their claim. I observed that there was reason to believe that the same

5. For an extract of the report, see *op. cit.* pp. 179-182.

ordination had descended from the Apostles to the Church of Rome. "It might be so, but that Church had departed from the faith." I answered, that the impurity of the channel had not corrupted the ordinance itself or invalidated the legitimacy of the imposition of hands; any more than the wickedness of a high priest in Israel could disqualify his successor. The Church of England assumed that she derived apostolical ordination *through* the Church of Rome, as she might have derived it *through* the Church of Antioch. I did not consider that the Church of England was entitled to reckon her ordination to be higher or more sacred than that of the Syrian Church. . . . They expected that in any official negotiation upon this subject, the antiquity and purity of Syrian ordination should be expressly admitted." Dr. Buchanan's objects in proposing a union with the Syrian Church were (1) to aid her "in the promulgation of pure religion against the preponderating and increasing influence of the Romish church." and (2) to secure the ordination, by the Syrian Bishop, of ministers to preach "in the English churches in India." The *Metran* accepted the proposal only to the extent that "should appear to both Churches practicable and expedient", and that too, on the distinct understanding that he would not be 'called to compromise anything of the 'dignity and purity of our Church." To this Buchanan replied, "We did not wish to degrade, we would rather protect and defend it."⁶

It follows from these extracts, that the Syrian Church from the first was anxious to safeguard her catholic position, and was not without serious misgivings about the aims of a foreign Church that was seeking a union with her, and that, in agreeing to the proposed union she was careful not only not to commit herself to, but expressly and emphatically to

⁶. Buchanan, op. cit., pp.165 and 166; the italics are Buchanan's.

guard against, any line of policy or action that would undermine her dignity, liberty and teachings.

B. The object of the establishment of a Mission of the C.M.S. among the Syrians.

The first missionary of the Church of England who appeared upon the stage to carry out Dr. Buchanan's proposal of Union was the Rev. Thomas Norton; but in consequence of an objection (against the latter's proposal to reside in the Syrian Seminary at Kottayam) raised by Mor Dionysius II he had to reside at Alleppey. It was only in 1817, soon after the consecration of Mor Dionysius III, that three other missionaries, *viz.*, Revs. Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fenn, and Henry Baker (Senior), arrived in the country and established direct relations between the C.M.S and the Syrian Church.

The object which the C.M.S had in starting work among the Syrians was, it is said, "to reform without disintegrating the Syrian Church, to help it in fact to reform itself from within."⁷ By this, it is meant that the missionaries had *no desire to Anglicanise* the Syrian Church by forcing upon her doctrines and rituals of the Church of England, but that they were only anxious to strengthen and enlighten her, so that she might adopt reforms, if and when she deemed them desirable. "The business of the Society's missionaries," said the Rev. H. Baker, Senior, "*is not to pull down the ancient Syrian Church and to build another on some plan of their own out of the materials; our object is to remove the rubbish and to repair the decayed places of the existing Church. We are but advisers and helpers and instructors, to such as are willing to hear.*"⁸ "Their policy" said another missionary, was "to alter as little

7. Rae, *The Syrian Church in India*, p. 285

8. *The Missionary Register*, for 1829, p.328.

as possible, so that the character and individuality of the Church might be preserved."⁹ The nature of the reforms contemplated by the C.M.S and the meaning of the expressions "rubbish" and "decayed places" were fully intimated to the Syrians by the first missionary. In respect of the footing on which he was to stand connected with the Syrian Metropolitan, Mr. Norton writes: "It appeared that some apprehension existed in his mind, and much more in the minds of the clergy and people, lest we should innovate, and endeavour to do away with some of their legitimate rites, and bring them under English ecclesiastical power. Indeed, this fear so possessed the minds of a few that they have actually left the Syrian, and joined the Romish Church, intimating that the Bishop was about to betray them to the English. I endeavoured, therefore, in the first place to convince the Metropolitan, in the presence of several of his *catanars* that we had no other object in view than the benefit of the Syrian church; and assured him that it was our sole desire to be instrumental, by the Divine assistance, in strengthening his hands for removing those evils which they had derived from the Church of Rome, and which he himself lamented." The result of the explanation was that the *Metran* received him as one "sent by the Lord to be their deliverer and protector."¹⁰

These were the initial objects of the Mission, and the C.M.S. authorities in England appear to have sincerely cherished them and insisted upon that policy being adhered to. It is even recorded that the instructions issued by the Society for the guidance of its missionaries in Travancore contained an express direction that the Syrians should not be "induced to adopt the liturgy and discipline of the English Church; and that should any consideration induce them to wish such

9. Rae, op. cit., p. 285

10. Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, pp.98 and 99.

a measure, it would be highly expedient to dissuade them from adopting it, both for the preservation of their individuality and entireness, and greater consequent weight and usefulness as a Church; and to prevent those jealousies and heartburnings which would in all probability hereafter arise."¹¹

Although these were avowed designs of the Mission, as reciprocally agreed to, it is more than doubtful whether the local representatives of the C.M.S. ever worked on this basis at all. As early as 1821, it was represented to Bishop Middleton of Calcutta that "there was great reason to hope for a rapid approximation of the ancient and venerable community to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, and that it was really in contemplation to introduce the English liturgy into the Syrian Church." The good Bishop who was at first not in favour of a C.M.S. Mission in the midst of a native independent Church and who always wished the Syrian Church "to be the Church of Travancore," hurried to Cochin to ascertain if the work of the Society's missionaries had borne fruit so rapidly as was represented to him. The result of his conversation with the *Metran* was, as the Bishop himself writes, that "the Syrians are much in the same state in which I left them four years and half ago" and "that there is no visible approximation to the Church of England."¹²

The true position, however, of the Syrian Church was such that she would never even dream of introducing the English liturgy into her services; but the missionaries (generally speaking), probably out of a lack of vision, were so presumptuous as to imagine such a possibility, in spite of their avowed statements to the contrary. But the incident is very

11. *Ibid.*, p. 105

12. Le Bas, *Life of Bishop Middleton*, vol. II, pp. 205 and 206.

significant in as much as it throws light on the method, which they had in mind, of "removing the rubbish and repairing the decayed places." In the opinion of the missionaries, the reformation of the Syrian Church was to be effected by "the approximation of the ancient and venerable community to the doctrines and disciplines of the Church of England" and by the introduction of "the English liturgy into the Syrian Church." That they really had contemplated this design is also clear from their earnestness to translate into Malayalam the Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England, before the publication of the Bible, catechism and other religious books. In the absence of any facilities for printing, the translation of the Book of Common Prayer was transcribed; manuscript copies of the same were presented to every parish of the Syrian Church, as if it were the book best calculated to "remove the rubbish and repair the decayed places" and to "reform without disintegrating the Syrian Church." "Another favourable circumstance," writes Mr. Fenn, "is the pleasure with which the Metropolitan and several of the clergy received Mr. Bailey's *present* of the English liturgy in their native tongue." "On Sunday the 29th November 1818 Mr. Norton read the English liturgy in the Syrian church at *Mavelikara*."¹³ "The circulation of the Scriptures and the introduction of the [English] Church service into all the Syrian Churches were certainly two objects of the greatest importance which Mr. Bailey accomplished."¹⁴

The person who wrote to Bishop Middleton the astounding letter that the Syrian Christians were ready to "introduce the English liturgy" into their services could not have had any difficulty in detecting signs of pleasure in the

13. Proceedings of the C.M.S 1819-1820. pp.178 and 345.

14. *Church History of Travancore*, by C.M. Agur, p. 979. The translation of the Book of Common Prayer was first printed in 1830. Till then, MS. copies were in circulation.

way in which the Metropolitan and the clergy received the copies forced upon them. But it is obvious that if the writer had waited some time longer, he would have noticed different signs too, as did Mr. Peet some years after (about 1833) when he "spoke more unguardedly and forcibly of the errors of Syrianism than his predecessors had done." "It grieves me, however," says Mr. Peet, "to add that in the prosecution of this duty I have met with every kind of opposition, short of personal violence, from some of the leading men."¹⁵

If however, it be argued that these extracts do not conclusively prove that the local missionaries had entertained any such questionable motives at the very outset, it cannot be gain said that the idea did get into their heads not long afterwards. Rev. H. Baker, Junior, in trying to vindicate the policy of his father and his colleagues, admits that some of the old missionaries had pleaded for a change of system, and were desirous of commencing an independent Mission", but he exonerates them from all blame by saying that by the death of Mor Dionysius III and by the departure of Col. Munro, "the English clergy had lost a portion of their influence and hence were not regarded in the same favourable light by the body of the people."¹⁶ It must be noted in passing that the change of attitude, admitted by Mr. Baker, refers to a period *previous* to the open rupture and separation (about 1836).

The subsequent labours of the missionaries tended to confirm the bad impression produced by their previous policy. A party within the Syrian congregation of the parish church at *Mallapally*, not far from Kottayam, feeling discontented with their vicar, applied to the *Metran* for permission to set up a rival church; but he declined to grant the required sanction. The missionaries thereupon appropriated the *Metran's*

15. Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, pp. 114 and 126. *Madras Church Missionary Records*, Vol. III, p.34

16. Sherring, *History of the Protestant Missions in India*, p. 314.

episcopal prerogative to themselves and issued the requisite permission; and when the rival church was set up (evidently for the Syrian form of worship), they sent a dismissed Syrian priest with directions to use the English service as well as the Syrian Liturgy *at intervals*. After a short time, when it was found that the parishioners had got accustomed to the English form of service, the church was *dedicated for public worship according to the usages of the Established Church of England*. Thus, by means of an encroachment upon the authority of the *Metran* and by subtle dealings, the C.M.S. authorities got possession of a Syrian church originally founded for Syrian worship, and induced a congregation of about two hundred families to adopt the English liturgy instead of their own. "*Mallapally*" writes Mr. Peet in April 1836, 'has been going on well hitherto, and is, I am still happy to state, in a thriving condition. The people *regularly attend to our own church service as well as to one of their own much modified*; they are also building a substantial church entirely at their own expense; the only aid they receive from us is the service of a *catanar*. The brethrern (other missionaries) laid the first stone of their new church, on which occasion we had a most solemn and interesting service."¹⁷ Again, in September 1838, Messrs. Bailey, Baker and Peet write in a general letter: "At *Mallapally* the *catanar* goes through the English service on the Lord's Day morning in a manner truly gratifying, and a considerable number of people with books [Common Prayer] in their hands read the responses in a very orderly and devout manner. At *Collat* [another station near *Kottayam*, opened by the missionaries] the members have increased considerably. The leading man has been excommunicated by his church at *Puthupally* [near *Collat*], for having his child baptised by one of the missionaries... The

17. Mad. Ch. Mis. Records, Vol. IV, p.60

demand for copies of the scriptures and of the liturgy continues. Of the liturgy, we cannot get them ready fast enough to supply the demand... We regret that though the present edition is nearly expended, the revised one is not ready for the press."¹⁸

It may be contended that the incidents referred to were the natural outcome of the ill-feeling which had manifested itself since the visit of Bishop Wilson in 1835. But there is enough evidence to prove the contrary; for we have it from the lips of one of the missionaries that they had predetermined even in 1834 that, should their first attempt to introduce reforms through the authorities of the Syrian Church fail, "*they were bound according to scripture, no longer to bear with Syrian corruptions, but openly, and avowedly, to invite and encourage catanars and people boldly to protest against the errors of their Church and to refuse to read or join in those parts of the service which [in their opinion] are plainly repugnant to the Word of God.*" It was also settled that "in case of a layman protesting, they should protect him and, if necessary, admit him to the benefits of the Church of England."¹⁹

C. Bishop Wilson's visit and the cause of separation.

When it was found that the immediate introduction of the English liturgy into the Syrian Church was not as easy a task as at first thought of, *Bishop Wilson of Calcutta suggested that certain changes should be made in the government, discipline, and Liturgy of the Syrian Church.* These proposals (among others) were.²⁰

18. *Ibid.*, Vol.IX, pp. 129 and 130. It has to be remembered that in those days books were not sold, but distributed *gratis*. If one had offered copies of the Vedas or of the Koran *gratis*, the demand would not have been less.

19. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, pp.118 and 119.

20. *Vide* sermon preached by Bp. Wilson at Kottayam, translated and published by the missionaries in the vernacular.

1. That the accounts of receipts and expenditure in parish churches should be subjected to the scrutiny and approval of the British Resident or of persons nominated by him.

2. That no candidate for holy orders should be ordained without a certificate from the Principal of the College (the Syrian College at Kottayam)

3. That the practice of celebrating the Eucharist for the dead and the system of maintaining priests "by that illegal means" should be discontinued.

4. That the Liturgy should be translated in a condensed form, removing all objectionable parts.

The action of Bishop Wilson was open to objection from two points of view. In the first place, the Syrian Church could not regard these proposals as emanating from disinterested motives. Bishop Wilson had known that "spiritual power vested according to the usages of the Syrian churches, partly in the Metropolitan, partly in the Synods of the clergy and the laity, and partly in the Patriarch of Antioch."²¹ When in after-years, an English Mission was started among the *Nestorian* Christians of Assyria at the request of the Patriarch and other authorities of that community, the Archbishop of Canterbury, who perfectly knew that the Nestorian Christians were an *independent* body, thought it advisable to apply for the indulgence and benediction of the Greek Patriarch of Antioch for the simple reason that the "Assyrian Christians anciently formed a part of that flock which His Holiness's predecessors were set by the Head of the Church to feed and guard."²² Bishop Wilson's attempt to have his proposals immediately accepted without a reference to the Patriarch of Antioch or to a General Council, could not but be taken as

21. Bp. Wilson's Charge, quoted in the *Missionary Register for 1838*, p. 321.

22. *The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians*, S.P.C.K. 1892, p.42

an encroachment upon the liberty of an independent Church. Secondly, there was grave danger that the proposals themselves, if given effect to, were likely in the long run to subvert the whole Church, as is apparent from the following considerations.

To all outward appearances, the first proposal was intended as a means of safeguarding church funds from waste and misappropriation. The British Resident, in the midst of his multifarious duties, and not possessing any knowledge of the details of church matters, was not at all likely to undertake the task of checking accounts by himself. If the proposals were agreed to, the Resident would naturally transfer the duty to the missionaries, than whom he could find no more competent or trustworthy agents, especially at that time; and as a result, the missionaries could control the finances of the Church, which in a sense meant controlling all things connected with the Church. By the second proposal, they could prevent the ordination of candidates not favourably disposed to carry out their ideas about reforming the doctrines and rituals of the Syrian Church. The third and the fourth proposals demanded the abolition of some of the most essential doctrines and practices of the Syrian Church. On the whole, as remarked in his *Christianity in Travancore* by Mr. Mackenzie, the late British Resident in Travancore and Cochin, these were "conditions imposing a bondage to which no Christian bishop ought to submit"²³ Hence, the community, in Synod assembled, declined to accept the proposals without the sanction of their Patriarch.²⁴

Thereupon, the missionaries began to revise the syrian Liturgy themselves, with the help of four paid employees (*catanars*), and the outcome of their pious labours was a

23. p. 90

24. *Vide* Appendix X. for a copy of the Resolutions of the Synod.

curious liturgy now condemned even by most of the so-called reformers, and everywhere ridiculed as a "Half Mass." The errors of the Syrian church, says a missionary, "are grievous,"²⁵ but after all, what were the errors which the missionaries detected?

They were:²⁶ (1) prayers for the faithful dead, without any belief in the Roman doctrine of purgatory or purgatorial punishment; (2) belief in the Real Presence, without admitting Transubstantiation in the *literal* sense in which it is defined by the Council of Trent; (3) invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, in the simple words "Pray for us," without any adoration or image worship; (4) an acknowledgement that the Holy Eucharist is also a bloodless sacrifice;²⁷ (5) the communion of the laity in consecrated bread dipped in consecrated wine;²⁸ and (6) the unction of the sick, in which priests pray for the spiritual and the bodily restoration of the sick man, and anoint his body with holy oil in conformity with the injunction of the Apostle St. James.

We know that all or almost all the above so-called errors of the Syrian Church are now openly advocated and practised by a most influential, enlightened and devout section

25. *Mad. Ch. Mis. Records*, Vol. IV, p.1

26. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p.164.

27. In the opinion of the C.M.S Missionaries, the Syrian Church which believed in Eucharistic sacrifice was in error. What would have been their feeling about the Anglican Church, if they had lived to read the joint reply of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Papal Bull of Leo XIII which denied that Anglican priests were commissioned to offer sacrifices? "We truly teach", say the Archbishops, "the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice, and do not believe it to be a bare commemoration of the sacrifice of the Cross."

28. The late Bishop Creighton of London advised his clergy that in the case of those who think it unwise for them to partake of the wine, they "should administer the bread and give the cup into the hand, but be satisfied with a *symbolical* action of drinking" (*The Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton*, Vol II, p.62). In the opinion of the C.M.S. agents, a *real* action of partaking of the wine, in bread and mixed with it, was grievous error.

of the Church of England. Bishops Cossin, Barrow and even Heber, the predecessor of Bishop Wilson in India itself, believed in praying for the faithful departed.²⁹ Recently, the Archbishop of Canterbury sanctioned the use of prayers in the English Church for the souls of the Englishmen slain in the South African War, justifying this by reference to a precedent of the eighteenth century. That section of the Church of England which observes all or almost all the above-mentioned so-called errors is, at least, as much orthodox and catholic as the opposite party and is entitled to all the privileges and benefits in the Established Church.

To recapitulate briefly: by the proposals of Bishop Wilson, the missionaries were trying to arrogate to themselves the right, of dictating as to who were eligible for admission to holy orders in an Independent Church; of approving or disapproving items of expenditure out of the revenues of churches, towards which they had not contributed a single farthing; of removing, all of a sudden, doctrines and practices that had been in vogue in the Syrian Church and in other Christian Churches throughout the world from the earliest ages of Christianity; and finally, of revising a Liturgy of which the Rev. William Palmer, one of the great liturgiologists of the modern age, remarked that it had existed in the third, nay, even in the second century.³⁰ All these they claimed on the strength of a guarded consent given by the Syrian *Metran* to such a union with the Church of England as "should appear to both Churches practicable and expedient," and that, too, on a distinct understanding that the Syrian Church would "not be called to compromise anything of her dignity and purity."

29. Canon Luckock, *After Death*, pp. 247 to 252

30. *Origins Liturgicae*, Vol.1. p.42

One may further observe that in the revision of the Liturgy itself, there is ample room for doubting the sincerity of the missionaries. Bishop Wilson's proposals may seem to a disinterested person the outcome of the best of motives to remove what was supposed to be "rubbish", and to repair the so-called "decayed places in the existing building", without compelling the Syrians "to adopt the liturgy and discipline of the English Church." But it has to be remembered in this connection, that the revision of the Liturgy was undertaken by the missionaries as soon as Bishop Wilson returned from Malabar and that the revised liturgy was first made use of on the 13th *Kanni* (September) 1837, on the occasion of the opening of a Syrian Church at *Pallam* (near *Kottayam*), this church having been since converted into an Anglican church. We also find it recorded that, before as well as after this date, great hopes continued to be entertained by the missionaries that "the people would be willing ere long to *substitute* our English Sacrament service instead of their own."³¹ One finds it difficult to reconcile this hope of the missionaries with their avowed motive, unless it is assumed also that the revision was intended as a stepping-stone for the introduction of the English liturgy into the Syrian Church. In fact, it appears to have been an attempt to prepare the people to accept the English Sacrament service without murmur or dissatisfaction. This assumption is fully borne out by the similarity of the procedure adopted by the missionaries in the Syrian churches at *Mallapally* and *Pallam*. As already pointed out, these churches were originally designed by their founders for worship according to the *Syrian* rite. The Syrian liturgy in its *modified* form was first introduced into them, and when it was found that the congregations

31. *Mad. ch. Mis. Records*, Vol.IV, pp.60, 118; V, 39; VI, 45.

had got accustomed to changes and reforms, the Syrian liturgy though revised and freed of "rubbish" was set aside and the English ordinal was substituted. "Our object", the missionaries latterly admit, "is, when the way shall have been sufficiently prepared, to form congregations in their several centres."³² Such was the manner in which the local agents of the C.M.S adhered to the instructions given by the Society for their guidance, *viz.*, that should any consideration induce the Syrians to adopt the English liturgy, "it would be highly expedient to dissuade them from adopting it!"

This question may be viewed from another aspect also. As already shown, the mission was started on the assurance that the sole desire of the missionaries was to strengthen the *Metran's* hands "for removing those evils which had been derived from the Church of Rome, and which he himself lamented". To the extent of removing the evils, the Syrians fully complied with the suggestions made by the missionaries. But when the missionaries found themselves firmly established in the country, they demanded more. A missionary of a later period thus writes on this point: "The errors of Syrianism were the errors of Antioch, not Rome. No sooner was the *Roman yoke* taken off her shoulders than the Syrian Church returned to *her old liturgies, and her old faith*, under the auspices of bishop commissioned to this work by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch himself. The false teachings and customs of the Syrians Church were not mere excrescences, grafted on to an otherwise pure stock by Rome, and which needed only to be pointed out in order to their speedy excision; they were entwined amid the very vitals of the system. The right of Morriage among the clergy was indeed once *conceded*, because the prohibition was not a necessary

32. *Ibid.* Vol. VI, p. 45

part of the discipline of the Church of Antioch. The Syrians had no objection to be purged from every stain they had received from Rome, and this *probably* was one; for though Antioch approved of celibacy, she did not enforce it upon the common clergy. They hated Rome—as well they might,—but they had no idea of purging the errors of Antioch; and the missionaries only deceived themselves when they spoke of helping them to return to their 'primitive state, that they might *again* become a holy and vigorous Church.' The real nature of that primitive state to which the Syrians were entreated to return, should have been more accurately examined. The whole history of the Jacobite Syrian Church should have been studied, and their liturgies understood, as a necessary preliminary to the establishment of a mission among the Jacobites of Travancore. Here, then, we can point out one cause of failure, which operated from the very first, and probably for some years."³³

We have here an admission by a missionary that the Syrians were not guilty of any breach of promise. They did not hide from Buchanan, Munro or the C.M.S. the Jacobite nature of their religion and their attachment to the See of Antioch. The local missionaries, however, appear to have omitted to disclose their real design when they at first declared that they only meant the removal of those evils which the Syrians had received from the Church of Rome. It is, therefore, quite plain that the unfortunate rupture of 1836 was the natural or inevitable result of a definite departure from the original undertaking on the part of one of the parties to the original promise, *viz.*, the missionaries. Hence, as the same writer again observes, "though five-eighths of the *Catanars* had by that time passed through the College, not

33. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, pp. 100 and 101.

one appeared in the light of a reformer even in minor matters; nay, it was stated by the missionaries themselves that the *Catanars* who had been educated in the College were, in anything, more inimical to them and to any measures of reform, than the rest."³⁴

D. The unsympathetic attitude of the missionaries toward the Syrian Church.

Let us pursue the subject further. Bishop Wilson visited some of the Syrian churches and met with "no Virgin Mary, no crucifix, no gaudy ornaments, no shrine for the host." He found the Syrian Service "a mixture of admirable and most spiritual prayers with superstitious language about the Virgin Mary and Saints." In his opinion, "they pay some worship to the Virgin and Saints; they believe something like Transubstantiation; they pray for the souls of the dead; they hold solitary communion,"³⁵ and, in his judgement, the general moral character of the Syrians who believed in such errors or superstitions "much surpassed that of the Romo-Syrians of the Portuguese Catholics and of the heathen,"³⁶ and (if one may quote the words of the Earl of Beauchamp) as published in an Indian Christian (Protestant) newspaper at Madras, that of the average European traders in the East "who with their whiskey bottles are the greatest hindrance to the work of Missions,"³⁷ notwithstanding the latter's profession of pure Low Church Protestant views.

34. *Ibid.*, p.113

35. By solitary communion is meant, not the Roman practice communicating the bread alone, but the Eastern practice distributing particles of the consecrated bread dipped in the which is acknowledged as "merely a variety of discipline does not in the slightest degree affect the verity of the communion in both kinds" (*Origines Liturgicae*, Vol.II, p.151)

36. *Bishop Wilson's Journal Letters*, pp. 95, 97, 101 and 102.

37. *Christian Patriot*, Supplement to the issue of 30th May 1903.

The Rev. Mr. Fenn writes: "They [the Syrians] possess what seems to me to be the glory of the Church Militant—*fortitude and patience in sufferings*—they give way to no reviling, but seem to commit themselves to Him who judgeth righteously... Indeed, my dear Sir, I am a learner in the midst of them."³⁸

In spite of such complimentary remarks, however, the missionaries appear to have shewn themselves considerably lacking in sympathy. They did not enter into the feelings of the Syrians. During Church services they stood on verandas or in adjacent rooms abusing the Syrian liturgy and forms of worship.³⁹ They counselled the Syrians to disregard the *Metran's* letters and injunctions.⁴⁰ They gave "express instructions" to *Catanars* about how they should officiate.⁴¹ One of them designated the Syrian services as "mummies" and their Eucharist as "a most wretched piece of buffoonery", notwithstanding the "admirable and most spiritual prayers" met with by Bishop Wilson. Another Anglican pastor spoke of himself as a distressed spectator of their Mass and remarked about the celebration of the Eucharist that "a young *Catanar*, during the whole hour, made a great fuss before the altar." The Rev. Henry Baker (junior) reported that he used to punish people for attending the Syrian Mass and that he actually dismissed a teacher "for paying more respect to the Syrian than his own [adopted] Anglican Church."⁴² As remarked by a European clergyman of the Church of England—one who has visited the Syrian Church and studied her liturgies and other services in the original Syriac—"So enamoured were those C.M.S men of their extreme notions, that, though they

38. Proceedings of the C.M.S 1819-20 p.173.

39. *Mad. Ch. Mis. Records*, Vol. I, p. 184; III, 34 and 35.

40. *Ibid.*, III, 59; iv, 115.

41. *Ibid.*, IV, 118

42. *Ibid.*, I, 183; IV, 114; II, 82; XII, 27, 212.

were the ordained clergy of the Church of England, they translated the Assembly's Catechism into Malayalam, and made it one of the textbooks at the College; nay, one of them even used it, alternately with the Word of God, as the basis of his Sunday lectures."⁴³

To show, further, how extreme these missionaries were in their notions of religion or propriety, we may quote from an article contributed to a vernacular magazine by Mr. John Kurian, B.A., B.C.E., M.E., Assistant Engineer in the service of the Government of Travancore, (subsequently Raza Bahadur Rev. John Kurian, Retired Executive Engineer) himself a Syro-Anglican attached to the C.M.S., and grandson of one of the earliest of the C.M.S. pastors and nephew of three living Indian ministers of the Anglican Church. He writes: "It was usual for one of the missionaries to preach every Sunday in the Old Seminary. In one of his lectures, he tried by a series of arguments that seemed satisfactory to him to prove that the Blessed Virgin Mary had brought forth other children than Our Lord. It is needless to remark that this lecture appeared offensive to the audience, which consisted of deacons and other Syrian students. When the lecturer had gone homeward, the students applied to the Syrian *Malpan* (professor) for an elucidation of their doubts, whereupon, he criticised the missionary's lecture most vehemently. At this moment, the missionary suddenly returned to the lecture hall, and overhearing the criticism, dismissed the *Malpan* then and there, saying, "Either you or I must remain here." The *Malpan* had to return home that very night, forfeiting his professorship in the Seminary,"⁴⁴ simply because he could not acquiesce in the view that the Blessed Mary was

43. *The Indian Church Quarterly Review*, July 1901, p. 290. Also compare *Maalankavala Ch.Mis. records*. Vol. III. p.33

44. *Malankara Edavaka Patrika*, Vol. XI, No. 7

not an ever-Virgin. The writer of the passage also tells us that he got the information *direct from his grandfather*, who was at the time one of the students of the Seminary and subsequently an ordained pastor of the C.M.S: This matter is not without proof in Mission publications as well, though only indirectly. "On more than one occasion, a missionary in charge of the College, returning suddenly to his classroom after going homeward, caught the *metran* or one of the other native professors, in the act of teaching some doctrine, the very opposite that which he had just laid down."⁴⁵

In this connection, it will not be out of place, if we make mention of a circumstance described by a disinterested person as an "error and inconsistency into which the London Bible Society had fallen in their edition of the Syriac Bible." We have already referred to the kind help accorded to the Syrians by Dr. Buchanan in inducing the venerable Society to publish the Syriac Bible "for the special use of the Syrian Christians of Malabar." The text for this edition was supplied by Buchanan himself *from the old manuscript* which had been presented to him by the Syrian *Metran*. It is also said that the *New Testament* was printed under his supervision, he himself correcting its proofs almost to the last page.⁴⁶ It was printed after the order of the Jacobite *lectionary*, in which each lesson was headed with the title of the commemoration on which it was appointed to be read in churches. Some of these headings had reference to prayers for the dead and to *practices and doctrines* deemed erroneous by the missionaries. Slips of papers bearing different readings were pasted over the original headings, and thus the edition became neither the plain letter of the Scripture nor Scriptural lectionary of the Jacobites. "To give an instance," writes Dr. Badger, "of the object aimed at by this singular proceeding on the part of the Bible Society, I refer to page 34 where the slip bore the following: 'For the second service of the Nocturn of the Passion Tuesday and for (the festival of) Stephen.' But underneath this, the original print can thus. 'For the second service of the Nocturn of the Passion Tuesday and for (the festival of) *Mor* Stephen;' so that all the trouble, in this instance at least, was taken to deny to the disciple Stephen the title of (*Mor*) Saint."⁴⁷ The copies of the New Testament received in Malabar *before* the arrival of Bishop Wilson were in the original print, but those subsequently received had the slips of altered headings

44. *Malankara Edavaka Patrika*, Vol. XI, No. 7

45. Mullens, *Missions in south India*, p. 130. See also Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, p.114.

46. Pearson, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Dr. Buchanan*, p.415.

47. *Nestorians and their Rituals*, Vol. II, p.85

pasted over them. Rightly or wrongly, it was believed by the Syrians that this singular procedure on the part of the Bible Society was the result of representations made therefore by the local missionaries; this circumstance also lent its mite to widen the rupture between the C.M.S and the Syrian Church.

A recent instance of the unsympathetic attitude of the missionaries toward the Syrian Church may also be referred to. I have referred in Chapter XX. to the unjustifiable removal of the funds, documents, jewels, books etc., till then preserved in the Old Syrian College under the joint lock of the *Metran* and one of the missionaries. Among the books carried away on that occasion were included a large number of Syriac manuscripts, which were the property of the Syrian Church. These subsequently formed part of a library in the C.M.S College at Kottayam. In 1903, it was reliably reported that some of the Syriac manuscripts were actually destroyed and that others were about to be burnt as being useless. Thereupon, the Principal of the local Jacobite Syrian High School forwarded a formal application to the Rev. F.N. Askwith, Principal of the C.M.S College, requesting him that in case the report were correct, such MSS. as were deemed useless, might be given to the Syrian library, either as gifts or on payment of a nominal price. Mr. Askwith in reply informed the applicant that none of the Syrian MSS. in his College library was to be destroyed. Some time after, a servant of the C.M.S College, who was aware of these communications, kindly made a present of two MSS. to a Syrian priest, alleging that a number of Syriac books were committed to flames by order of and under the vigilant supervision of Mr. Askwith and that two manuscripts then being presented were secretly saved from fire by this servant. We are now in possession of these two MSS. that were among the books entrusted to a College servant to be destroyed by fire; they are being preserved as monuments of the unsympathetic attitude of the missionaries towards the Syrian Church,—of course, on the basis that the allegations referred to are true.

Another example of the prejudice of the missionaries may be noticed in the C.M.S church building at *Mavelikara* (Central Travancore). The Syrians have the custom of placing the emblem of the Cross on the roofs of their church building. When Mr. Peet built the C.M.S church at Mavelikara, he wanted some kind of a finish on its roof; but he "could not and would not" put up a cross, *because it was a Syrian custom*. Hence and as the result of many days, thought and meditation, he invented a design which, in the opinion of a later missionary, was one for which the Society of Arts would have given no prize. "To me", he says, "it suggested the idea of an antediluvian pineapple—if there were such things then—not quite developed. In short, it looked like a pineapple in an early stage of the 'struggle for existence', as we may suppose a swan has struggled from a plesiosaurus."⁴⁸

48. Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, p. 209.

E. The Educational policy of the missionaries

Two material advantages the Syrians have received through the labours of the missionaries, these we acknowledge with gratitude. They are the spread of English education and the publication of the Bible in the vernacular (Malayalam). But even here the system adopted by the missionaries was not altogether creditable; they exhibited such objectionable tendencies that the Syrians could not show them that high degree of gratitude to which they would be otherwise entitled. Take, for instance, their policy of education. Education was carried on first in the Old College (Syrian Seminary) under the joint management of the *Metran* and one of the missionaries; and, subsequent to the separation, in a college of their own under the exclusive supervision of the missionaries. An Englishman living in England to whom the annual reports prepared by their local representatives are the only means of testing the work of the missionaries, might fancy that they were conferring a great boon upon the Syrians by their educational policy, but, in the eyes of a patriotic, orthodox, Syrian Christian, the instruction imparted in mission schools appears only as one of the means of disintegrating the Syrian Church. This statement may be illustrated by a few instances. I was a student in the C.M.S College, Kottayam, from 1869 to 1876; and I make the following remarks from my own experience in the school.

(1) It was the constant practice of the teaching body in the College to argue against the doctrines and rituals of the Syrian Church during class hours, especially in the course of Bible lessons; so much so, that immature pupils who had little knowledge of the tenets of their own Church, unconsciously imbibed much of the strange doctrines thus imposed upon them.

(2) Apart from what was taught in classes, Syrian students who appeared zealous in the cause of their own doctrines, were occasionally invited to the house of the Principal or the Vice-Principal to be talked to on religious matters. While a student, I was on several occasions called to the bungalow of the Rev. Mr. (now Dr.) Richards, then Vice-Principal of the College (now a missionary at Alleppey), and was advised to abstain from having recourse to prayers for the dead and from other similar practices of the Syrian Church. On one occasion, I was so much pressed that I felt compelled to give him a promise to follow his advice. Considering the well-known characteristics of my family (living not far from the College), the missionaries must have known that I was the least likely of all their students to make such a promise; yet I had no alternative but to acquiesce.

(3) All Syrian students had to attend divine service in the College chapel twice a day, *while all Romo-Syrian students were ungrudgingly exempted*. Every Wednesday and Friday, the Syrian students had to repeat the English Litany in the words, "O God, Holy Ghost, that proceedeth from the Father *and the Son*, have mercy on us." The insertion of the *Filioque* clause in the Creed of the Church was one of the main causes of schism between the East and the West. Some of the greatest of the Popes and Emperors devoted all the energies of their lives to conciliate the parties, but without success. In a discussion between the Greek Archbishop of Syria and the Anglican *Bishop of Ely* in 1870, the latter, on behalf of the Church of England, admitted the orthodoxy and sufficiency of the Eastern Creed as well as the illegality of the addition of the *Filioque* clause, made by Western Christendom.⁴⁹ The Rev. G.B. Howard, an Anglican of Anglicans, openly suggests, in his *Schism between the Oriental*

49. Report of the Russo Greek Committee, 1870, p.22

and Western Churches, that the Church of England "should unconditionally remove" the passage from her Creed.⁵⁰ Yet the missionaries in this country apparently thought they could do, as far as their Syrian students were concerned, what Popes and Emperors could not do.

(4) The missionaries seem to have thought that all Syrian students were or should be Anglicans in their profession of faith; they urged them to submit themselves to be confirmed in the Anglican faith by the bishop of the Anglican Church, in disregard of the sentiments of their parents or guardians in this respect. I was one so urged, but I was finally exempted under the vigorous remonstrance of my uncle and guardian who was a Jacobite priest of no ordinary repute;⁵¹ but all my classmates and schoolmates, many of whom are now staunch Jacobite Syrians, were confirmed in the Anglican faith, in supersession of their previous confirmation in their own Church.

(5) Under another rule, all non-Roman students of the College who were to appear for the Matriculation Examination of the University of Madras, whether they were Anglicans or Syrians, were required to partake of the Lord's Supper at the Anglican communion table in the College chapel.

(6) A student who, after passing the requisite examination, was receiving a scholarship from the College, had to forfeit it by reason of his having worshipped on a Sunday in a Syrian church.⁵² It will astonish our readers when they are told that the scholarship which this poor student had to forfeit through his attachment to his mother Church was one given from

50. *Op. cit.*, p. 92

51. The guardian was the Rev. Edavazhikal Philipose Chorespiscopa, author of *The Syrian Christians of Malabar*, 1869.

52. This student is now a teacher in the Syrian High School and is ready to testify to this charge.

the proceeds of a fund invested by the Rani of Travancore for the "exclusive benefit of the Syrian community."

(7) In 1833, a new rule was passed by the Principal of the C.M.S. College, restricting scholarships to Anglo-Syrians. In his report⁵³ on the College for 1883, the Principal writes: "In the revised rules of the College which have been issued during the past year, the alterations chiefly affect the scholarships and exhibitions. The ages of the candidates for both scholarships and exhibitions have been lowered by one year. They have also been confined to the boys of Syrian parentage, attached to the Anglican Church. It was thought that the time had now come when those members of the Anglican Church who are also of the Syrian community, were sufficiently numerous to furnish from their own body a supply of candidates able to pass the required examination, and that, whilst the College was for the benefit of all of Syrian descent, those attached to the Anglican Church had a special claim on a college under the control of, and partly supported by, the C.M.S." We may remark here that, while the fund which furnished means to grant scholarships and exhibitions was an endowment made for the exclusive benefit of the Syrian community, which at the time the investment was made was Jacobite, the missionary Principal of the College, who was only a trustee appointed to execute the trust, converted it for the exclusive benefit of such Syrians as had left their Mother Church (Jacobite). What could have been the motive of the framers of this new rule? It looks as if it was to induce poor helpless Syrian students to reject their mother Church and adopt Anglicanism. Again, how did the number of Syro-Anglicans grow sufficiently numerous "to furnish from their own body a supply of candidates able to pass the

53. Printed at the C.M.S Press, Kottayam, 1884.

required examination," if the missionaries had not been pursuing a vigorous policy of proselytism from among the Jacobites? The above-mentioned rule, it appears, was revoked after a few years. The revocation was not due to the goodwill of the missionaries but because they took warning from the signs of the changed times, and probably realised that the time was nearly at an end when the Syrian community would put up with actions such as these, however, unjust and high-handed. Yet the revoking of this rule a few years later is a condemnation of the former policy.

That these incidents, which illustrate the educational policy of the missionaries and which took place within my own experience, do not exaggerate matters may be amply proved, if proof is required, by a quotation from the writings of an English lady—the wife of a former Principal of the C.M.S. College at Kottayam. In describing the life of a Syrian landlord, Koshi Curian, she writes: "In early life he had been trained in the doctrines of the Protestant Church, but for some years he had gradually gone back step by step to Syrianism. An increasing desire for gain was probably the ruling cause of this apostasy."⁵⁴ Here we have a quasi-authoritative admission that the instruction imparted in the C.M.S. College was such as to train students in the doctrine of the Protestant Church, and that the return of the students to their mother Church was regarded as an act of apostasy.

One may notice, in further confirmation of the aforesaid remarks, what a Principal of the C.M.S. College himself says about the nature and result of the system of education imparted by him. He writes: "Great pains were also taken, as you would suppose, in the explanation of Christian doctrine, and in exposing the errors and superstitions *both of the Syrians and of the Roman Catholics.*" And further on, he adds: "Another thing I cannot resist mentioning, and that is, that I find the vast majority of the sons of Syrians—indeed I can point now to no one exception, though no doubt as years pass on, some exceptions will manifest themselves—leave the College, either as professed Protestants in communion with the English Church, or as decided members of the Reforming party in the Syrian Church; the few deacons who have been my pupils, forming no exception, so far as I can judge at present... The College acts directly on all educated in it; and they indirectly, to a greater or less degree, on their homes and kindred. But you would expect much more. You would expect the College to furnish, in

54. *The Kottayam College Quarterly Magazine*. Vol.1 of July 1864, p.35. "An increasing desire for gain" is often a cause which leads Syrians to leave their mother church and join the C.M.S. The Syrian Church offers no scholarship or salaried employment to induce any Anglicans to join her.

course of years, some Chrysostoms and Luthers, and Melanchthons for our missions."⁵⁵ Yes, indeed, they wanted to change the Syrians into Lutherans and Presbyterians, for what else could have been their motive in teaching and preaching from the Assembly's Catechism⁵⁶ instead of the Church of England catechism, in abusing the doctrine of the Real Presence, and in denying the doctrine of the Real Presence, and in denying the doctrine of baptismal regeneration?⁵⁷

In justice to the missionaries, we may observe that the above mentioned policy in education, of attempting to gain proselytes from the non-Romans, is no longer pursued by them as far as the day scholars of their educational institutions are concerned, one reason being that the Syrian community have now started English schools of their own at Kottayam and elsewhere.

We must say, however, that this tendency is even now not altogether absent, as one may infer from the following. No Syrian student can enjoy the scholarships and exhibitions awarded from the funds endowed for the exclusive benefit of the Syrian community, unless he studies in the C.M.S. College at Kottayam as a boarder; every Syrian boarder, whether he be one who enjoys a scholarship or pays for his boarding, is compelled, by the rules of the College, to present himself in the local Anglican Cathedral for his Sunday worship; he is, on no ground, allowed to attend his own church, although there are three or four Syrian churches within a mile from the College boarding-house. In July 1906, the missionary Principal of the C.M.S. College issued a notice compelling all the Syrian students to purchase, and regularly use, the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in place of their own Prayer Books which they had been using for their devotions; and when the Syrian students—both the *Jacobites* and the *Reformers*—unanimously protested against this rule and requested permission to attend Syrian churches on Sundays, not only did he not comply with the request, but also threatened them with fines and dismissal. Of course, the students had to submit, much against their will and conscience. How rigid the Principal was in enforcing this rule upon his Syrian students may be imagined from the fact that, while the fine imposed on one who absents himself from class without permission or fails to pay his fees in due time is only an *anna* or even half an *anna*, one who declines to use the Book of Common Prayer or dares to attend the services of the Syrian Church on a Sunday is threatened with a fine of a rupee (sixteen *annas*).

55. Collins, *Missionary Enterprize in the East*, pp. 151, 157 and 158.

56. *Mad. Ch. Mis. Records*, Vol. I pp.131, 161; III,34; IV. 35, VI, 123; etc.

57. What they taught in respect of baptismal regeneration peeps and in *Mad. Ch. Mis. records*. Vol IV, p.116 where they speak in complimentary terms of one who explained new birth from Christ's conversation with Nicodemus "without at all alluding to the common notion in the country that it means nothing but baptism.

We would here ask our readers to form their own conclusions about the nature of the education imparted by the missionaries in their institutions. We are unable to detect any distinction between the system of instruction pursued by the local representatives of the C.M.S. and the one that was conducted in the *sixteenth* century by Roman Catholic missionaries in the seminaries at *Cranganore* and at *Vaippicottah*. The C.M.S. schools are open to students of all castes and creeds. But, while the Hindu and the Roman Catholic students were free to follow their own creed, fines and other such penalties, and even dismissal, awaited a Syrian Christian student who dared to violate any of the above-mentioned rules or practices of the C.M.S. educational institutions.

F. Disintegration of the Syrian Church

The great Apostle of the Gentiles says: "While I was careful not to preach where the name of the Messiah had been invoked, lest I should build upon another man's foundation; but as it is written, 'They, to whom mention of Him had not been made, will see Him; they, who had not heard, will be obedient.'"⁵⁸ The missionaries of the C.M.S. who claim to follow the footsteps of St. Paul instead of working in a field where Christ was not named, entered the house built by the Apostle St. Thomas and so long preserved by the blood and tears and prayers and sufferings of so many Syrian Fathers, pulled it down, and set up a new building "on some plan of their own out of the materials." "They built churches *close to those* of the Syrians at *Kottayam, Trichur, Pallam*, and many other places, and began a course of proselytising amongst

58. From. xv. 20,21 Syriac *peshito* version of the *New Testament* Dr. Murdock's translation (1859).

the members of the Syrian Church, in spite of the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the Metropolitan."⁵⁹ They set up altar against altar. They did not feel ashamed to report in these words: "The Gospel has been preached to all alike, Syrians and heathen, and all have been exhorted to come out and separate themselves from false communions and join themselves with a pure scriptural communion. Since 1838 [up to 1868] twelve thousand persons have come out and joined the Protestant churches of England."⁶⁰ "The churches at *Kollatta* and *Ericatta* now consist of Syrian Christian and *slave* converts, and that at *Thottakatta* is composed of Syrian and *Chogon* Christians."⁶¹ "At *Niranom* all are converts from Syrians."⁶² It may be noted in passing that out of the large number of Syrian converts in the stations named in these extracts given above, very few remained faithful in the Anglican communion. So long as the rules of the missionaries required that all schoolmasters "should on the Lord's Day attend the nearest church of our communion in their neighbourhood and take with them as many of their scholars as are willing",⁶³ and so long as they threatened to dismiss such of them as paid "more respect to the Syrian than their own Church", these teachers had no alternative but to show themselves as professed members of the Anglican Church; but when they became too old to draw the stipend they had been receiving from the Mission, many of them returned to their mother Church, proving to the world that their conversion was not the result of conviction but was rather the

59. *Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies and Missions in Asia and Africa*, p.339

60. *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Oct. 1868, p. 314.

61. *Church Missionary Records*, Oct. 1869, p. 305, and Oct. 1868, p.298.

62. In proof of proselytizing, see also *Church Missionary Records*, Vol.II, p.116; III 114 and 151; IV, 122 and 123; VI, 45, 110 and 125.

63. *Mad. Ch. Mis. Records*, Vol.VI, p. 45

effect of an indirect offer of bribes in the shape of salaries. (However, this was not the case with the next generation of converts who were, for the most part, induced in their early years, through the system of education and offer of scholarships, to join the Anglican communion). According to the latest returns (before 1907) the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin comprises 38,000 Christians. Though the returns omit to give the statistics of Syrian and Hindu converts separately, we may, with some amount of confidence, say that nearly a *third* of this number is made up of *Syrians* converted by means of a subtle system of education, offers of salaried employment, and various other tactics. As an instance of the strategic manner in which the Syrians were induced to adopt the Anglican communion, one may point out how the conversion, within the last decade, of a whole village of twenty-five or thirty families of "*Reformed Syrians*" at *Ezhumatoor*, a few miles from the Anglican parish of *Mallapally*, took place. From private information received from an ordained clergyman of the "Reformed party" (the Mor Thoma Church), it transpires that when the Christians of *Ezhumatoor* were subjected to much vexatious treatment on the part of the Hindus around them, the Anglican pastor of *Mallapally* rendered them substantial help against the oppression, but that it was only on condition of their joining the Anglican Church.⁶⁴

A case of proselytizing of a similar kind which occurred so recently as November 1906—only a week before the installation of Dr. C.H. Gill as Bishop in Travancore and Cochin at *Kottayam*—was brought to the notice of the Bishop; his Secretary replied that "it will have his Lordship's careful attention." In this particular instance, however, it has to be

64. *The Christian Patriot* (Madras), Vol. XIII, No. 29. The statement in the newspaper was not refuted by the missionaries.

remembered that the person proselytized was one in whose case a conference of missionaries had decided in 1903 not to interfere, in order "that there should not be any appearance of proselytizing."⁶⁵

It is not pretended that Christian salvation is confined to the Low Church party in the Church of England or that a Syrian Christian, as such, cannot get salvation by following the doctrines and rituals of his own Church; and yet, the missionaries appear to have taken so much pains to *transform good Syrians into bad or indifferent Anglicans*. In spite of such activities as are described above, on the part of the missionaries and their agents, we are asked to believe that they never had the desire to disintegrate the Syrian Church, and that "the attitude of the C.M.S. towards the sister body, which has survived the vicissitudes of so many centuries, and has bravely battled with so many trials and persecutions, is not wholly alien to the principles following the lines laid down in the letter of the late Archbishop Benson to the Patriarch of the Assyrian Nestorian Christians, of giving respectful and friendly succour to a Church, viewed as still a sister Church, with the view of helping to strengthen the things that remain; meantime restricting proselytizing efforts to those who are not Christians at all."⁶⁶

The work of disintegration was brought about in two ways. One was, as already stated, by the formation of a Protestant Church composed of Syrian Christians; and the other was by the encouragement of discontented Syrian priests and laymen to create schisms or disorders within their own parish church. As the result of the first, a large number of Syrians now claim to be members of the Church of England. As a sequel to the second, there has arisen within the Syrian

65. *Vide "C.M. Intelligencer,"* February 1903, p. 129.

66. *The Christian Patriot*, Vol. XIII, No. 16, p. 6

Church itself a *schismatic* party called "reformed Syrians," admittedly the outcome of the work of the C.M.S.

As if to bring about these results, it appears to have been the policy of the agents of the C.M.S. to misrepresent and abuse Syrian doctrines and rituals and to vilify the character of Syrian ecclesiastics from the highest downwards. Several columns of the local (Kottayam) vernacular organs of the C.M.S. were devoted to abusing or misrepresenting the doctrines and rituals of the Syrian Church, so as to encourage the growth of schism. *The Treasury of Knowledge*, a vernacular magazine issued from the C.M.S. Press, Kottayam, was during the lifetime of Mor Mathew Athanasius (1843-1876) the sole master of the field in journalism, as the Syrians had no organ of their own to reply to the grossly unfair criticisms that appeared in this journal. Anyone turning over the files of *The Treasury of Knowledge*, as well as *The Malayala Mithram*, also issued from the C.M.S. Press, will be struck, no less by the tone of uncompromising hostility, ridicule and contempt adopted by them for so many years towards the Syrian Church, than by the complete change that came over the utterances of the latter organ (the other paper having ceased to exist) as soon as the Syrians also started an organ of their own, *viz.*, the *Malankarai Edavaka Pathrika* and gave expression to their own views. Any fair-minded person who peruses the back numbers of these journals and some of the books and pamphlets published under the auspices of the missionaries will, we doubt not, be convinced that the publications of the C.M.S. Press have done much to sow the seeds of schism in this ancient Church, as well as to encourage misunderstanding and ill-will between the Anglican and the Syrian Churches which it will not be easy to remove for long. One must content oneself with one or two instances of the kind.

Rev. R.H. Maddox, a C.M.S missionary working in Travancore about the time the Patriarch Peter III of Antioch visited Malabar (1876), wrote that the Patriarch's conduct was so violent and his greed for money so insatiable that in the Syrian church at Parur he dug into the grave of an eminent Church dignitary in the hope of finding treasure.⁶⁷ We can most emphatically assert on the highest authority, including that of all the parishioners of Parur and especially of the bishop Mor Paulose Athanasius, a native of the place, who was with the Patriarch throughout his tour in this country and who was consecrated in this very church, that there is not even a shadow of truth in this accusation. This appears all the more regrettable when it transpires what it was that actually did take place at the Parur church. Mor Gregorius, Bishop of Jerusalem, who arrived in Malabar in 1665, is the only "eminent Church dignitary" who lies buried in the Syrian church at Parur. He was interred within the chancel of the church and a tomb was erected over his grave. In 1856 (*i.e.* twenty years before the arrival of Patriarch Peter III) another Jacobite Metropolitan of Jerusalem paid a visit to Malabar. While at Parur, finding the church not sufficiently spacious, the Metropolitan suggested to the church authorities, the advisability of removing the tomb to some other place. Following his advice, the parishioners removed the tomb, collected the sacred relics, and laid them in one of the side walls of the nave. This was what actually happened. But Mr. Maddox, probably grossly misinformed, printed such an entirely baseless statement as we have detailed already.

A second instance of the same kind may be pointed out from the *Malayala Mithram*, the C.M.S. Magazine. In its issue of August 1901 (No.8 of Vol.XI) this journal published an abstract history of the Syrian Church in an attempt to show that all the former *Metrans* of Malabar were anti-Jacobites, and that Jacobitism was never a part of the tenets of the Church till very recent years. To support the schismatics and their attack upon the customs and rituals of the Orthodox party, the *Mithram* quoted a passage from Vischer's work to the effect that when he visited the Malabar Church in the 18th century, he found that the laity were communicated in bread and wine separately, just as the schismatic party (Reformed Syrians) now do. By this quotation the *Mithram* strove to prove that the present practice of communicating consecrated bread dipped in consecrated wine is a recent innovation. But, as a matter of fact, Vischer, in the very passage quoted, has put in an explanatory clause that the communion he alluded to was in bread *dipped in wine*. But, suppressing this clause, the C.M.S. organ tried to create the wrong impression that the present Jacobite practice was not in vogue in the 18th century. It has also to be remarked that even when the omission was pointed out by the Syrian Church organ, the *Mithram* neither apologised for, nor admitted, its error, but kept silent over the whole matter.

67. *The Report of the Missionary Conference, South India and Ceylon, 1879.* Vol.II, p. 181.

One more instance of prejudice may be referred to, for what it is worth. The local representatives of the C.M.S. appear to have been instrumental in misleading their immediate superiors in Madras into adopting a particular attitude towards the Syrian Church. The Right Rev. Dr. Frederick Gell, Bishop of Madras, was as we all know, a very sincere, pious, Godfearing man. In 1869 when Mor Mathew Athanasius (who had been deposed by the Patriarch) tried to get possession of the Syrian Fund held in the treasury of the British Resident of Travancore and Cochin, Dr. Gell was induced to press the matter upon the Resident in support of the deposed *Metran* (leader of the Reformed Syrians) against the claims of Mor Joseph Dionysius.⁶⁸ In 1870, when the matter was publicly discussed in the columns of the *Colonial Church Chronicles*, the Bishop candidly admitted: "I have seen Mor Dionysius... If the Patriarch had a right to depose Mor Athanasius, and did depose him, it would seem to be the duty of the British Government to secure the recognition of the rightful *Metran* by the Travancore Government; and the duty of the Church of England, in such intercourse as we have with the Syrian Church, is to recognise the same person."⁶⁹ But in 1875, when the Patriarch of Antioch visited England to agitate against the attitude of the Travancore Government in recognising the deposed *Metran*, the same Bishop was seen to recommend strongly to the Archbishop of Canterbury that Mor Athanasius, and not Mor Dionysius, should be recognised by the Government and the Anglican Church.⁷⁰ Nobody who has a fair knowledge of the character of Bishop Gell as well as of the uniformly sympathetic attitude of the C.M.S. towards the Reformed Syrians, will accuse the Bishop of wilful inconsistency in the matter; one may reasonably infer that the good Bishop was pressed by the local agents of the C.M.S. into making the inconsistent recommendation.

G. Endowments

Reference was made in Chapter XX to the appointment of an Arbitration to settle the respective rights of the Syrian Church and the C.M.S. to the Syrian Endowments, which consisted of Rs.62,000 in round numbers, exclusive of the estate called *Munro Island*. This amount was made up of: (1) 3,000 Star Pagodas or Rs. 10,500 invested in the Resident's Treasury in 1808 by Mor Dionysius I; (2) Rs.8,000 granted by the Rani of Travancore; (3) Rs.20,000 granted by the same

68. *Colonial Church Chronicles*, November 1870, p.439.

69. *Colonial Church, Chronicles*, February 1872, p.63

70. *The Guardian*, 16th September 1874, p.1186.

Rani; (4) Rs. 14,035 collected from Europeans; (5) Rs. 2,960 realised by the sale of properties and jewels of early Syrian *Metrans*; and (6) Rs.6,746 the cash surplus in the College account. Of these, the first item was invested for educational purposes long before the co-operation of the missionaries was even contemplated. With the interest on this investment was built the Kottayam Syrian College (The Old Seminary or College), whose object, in the words of Col. Munro, "was to instruct the *Catanars* and officiating priests among the Syrians in a complete knowledge of the Syriac language. With the study of the Syriac language would of course be combined that of the Scriptures and other religious books written in that language. Another object was to procure copies of the Scriptures in the Syriac language... The plan of the College was intended to comprehend a system of instruction in *Malayalam* to the priests and the laity, and translating the Scriptures and other religious books into that language, for circulation and use."⁷¹ The second item of the fund named above was granted by the Rani of Travancore some time before the arrival of the missionaries, to enable the Syrians "to prosecute the study of the Holy Scriptures *according to the custom of their sect.*"⁷² The third item and the estate of *Munro island* were granted by the same Rani after the arrival of the missionaries, as endowments for the support of the College.⁷³ The fourth item was collected by the missionaries from Europeans for the education of deacons (ordinands) and for the construction and enlargement of Syrian churches. The fifth, no doubt, was the private property of *Metrans*. The arbitrators awarded items 1, 2 and 5, and a proportionate part of item 6, or a total sum of Rs.24,000 to the Syrian

71. quoted in the Award of Arbitators, paragraph 3

72. Ibid. 3

73. Ibid. 4

Metran to be administered by him in conjunction with two trustees, they being a clergyman and a layman of the Syrian persuasion *to be elected* by the Syrian community. Items 3 and 4, and a proportionate share of item 6, or a total Rs.38,000 together with *Munro Island*, were awarded to the missionaries to be administered by them as *trustees* for the *exclusive benefit of the Syrian community*. Besides the above, a loan of Rs.2,779 due to the C.M.S. had to be paid to the missionaries from the common fund. *In spite of this award*, the missionaries *were actually paid* an aggregate sum of Rs.47,484 and the Syrians only Rs.16,580.

The Syrian *Metran* and the Syrian community were not satisfied with the Award. Refusing to accept the paltry sum awarded to them, they appealed against the Award to the Government of Madras, under whose authority the Arbitration was appointed. The Government declined to interfere in the matter.⁷⁴ But the last Court of Directors in England, to whom appeal was ultimately carried, *annulled* the Award and directed that the dispute should be settled by a Court of Justice.⁷⁵ In the meantime, the Resident in Travancore disbursed from his treasury not only the whole amount awarded to the C.M.S., but something more,—taken from the items due to the Syrians. Thereupon, the Government of Madras informed the Resident that those who had received payment *should refund the amount*, in order that the contest might be settled by a Court of Law, observing at the same time that this course was the most becoming under the circumstances of the case and "*indispensable in the absence of the Hon. Court's sanction to the proceedings of the Arbitrators*"⁷⁶ this view of the Government was approved by the Court of Directors.⁷⁷

74. Extract from Minutes of Correspondence, 15th July 1840.

75. Despatch dated December 1841, No. 39, paragraphs 10 and 11.

76. Extract from Minutes of Correspondence, 19th April 1842, No. 380.

77. Despatch No. 7, dated 30th May 1843, paragraph 76.

though the C.M.S. Committee were asked to restore immediately the fund paid to them, they declined to give a final reply till eight years after, and then they communicated to the Resident *their refusal to comply with the requisition*, alleging that the award was "conclusive".⁷⁸ The Resident took no further steps for the settlement of the question, *nor did he communicate the final decision of the Court of Directors to the Syrian Metran.*

Unaware of the facts, the Syrian *Metran* and the community continued to petition the Government of Madras against the Award, declining to draw their share as adjudicated by the Arbitrators.⁷⁹ This state of things continued till 1870, when Mor Mathew Athanasius, who was struggling under the ban of excommunication and deposition by the Patriarch, thought fit to strengthen his position by getting hold of the Syrian share, mutilated as it was. The then Bishop of Madras prevailed upon or (to use the very word of a missionary) pressed upon the Resident to carry out the terms of the Award *without reference to the decision of the Court of Directors.* The Resident took upon himself to nominate two trustees in direct violation of the terms of the Award. Thus, the Syrian portion of the fund was made over to Mor Athanasius, and the missionaries hoped that the Award was formally accepted by the Syrian community. Here was the reason for the missionaries espousing the cause of Mor Athanasius, in spite of his having been once dismissed from their institution "as unfit for the ministry." They were legally bound to refund the portion of the Syrian Endowments received by them. Their keeping possession of the Endowments was insecure, so long as the Syrian Church declined to accept the Award. The missionaries seem to have adopted

78. Reply dated 1th July 1854, No. 21

79. Rev. Henry Baker's letter in *Col. Ch. Chronicles*, October 1870, p.440

a policy of "divide and rule;" the result was that they served their own ends by securing some evidence of the acceptance of the Award, though through a dismissed *Metran*.

One thing follows from the afore-stated history of the Endowments. The Award of the Arbitrators was null and void. The C.M.S. got possession of the funds by the execution of the Award *before* it became a final decision, or, in the words of the Madras Government, by the Resident's "precipitate disposal." They hold them *in defiance of the* repeated orders of competent authorities, which demanded that they should be refunded. One should call this entrustment and appropriation or retention, a kind of usurpation, to use a technical term.

Having thus far pointed out the manner in which the C.M.S. authorities got possession of the Endowments, we shall next show how they manage them. As already observed, the object of the Syrian College was the education of the Syrian community in the doctrines and rituals of the Church, as inculcated in their ancient Syrian books; and the object of the first donation of the Rani was the religious education of the Syrians "according to the custom of their sect," and not according to any scheme of revision contemplated by anybody else. The subsequent donations of the same Hindu Ruler were, in the words of the C.M.S. Committees, "endowments for the support of the Syrian college," and the grand object therein contemplated by Col. Munro was, it is alleged, "the political, moral and religious renovation of the Syrian community". We have already seen that the religious reform proposed by the C.M.S. and Col. Munro and accepted by the Syrians was limited to the removal of the evils derived from the Church of Rome.⁸⁰ Col. Munro himself writes that he

80. Award, paragraph 4

was aware that the missionaries "*were sensible of the propriety of maintaining the integrity of the Syrian Church as a separate establishment, standing as it has done for so many centuries as a bright monument of Christian truth in the midst of the darkest scenes of idolatry and wickedness.*"⁸¹ It therefore stands to reason that the religious renovation, aimed at in the subsequent grants of Rs. 20,000 and of the *Munro Island* estate, could not have been anything different from or adverse to, the avowed original object of the College itself, and of its first endowment granted by the same donor at the instance of the same Resident. But we have seen that the motives of the missionaries were different from the original objects of the Endowments. Their proselytizing policy, already described in sections 5 and 6 of this chapter, was probably unknown to the Hindu donor. The system of education imparted in their College, as testified by one of its Principals, does not appear to conform to the terms of the trust. One cannot say that an issue as to a breach of trust on the part of the missionaries does not arise in this matter.

Again, we are informed by the Arbitrators that the endowments in question were placed under the management of the missionaries to be administered by them for the "exclusive benefit of the Syrian community."⁸² By "Syrian community" is meant that the community which follows the doctrines and practices of the ancient Syrian Church as taught and believed, at and about the time the endowments were made. This, no doubt, was the Jacobite Syrian community. The Syrian community of Malabar was divided into two sections in 1665, one adopting Popery, and the other adhering to Jacobitism. That these two divisions continued

81. Proceedings of the C.M.S for Africa and the East, 20th year, pp.172 and 173.

82. Award, paragraphs 4, 5, 9, 12, etc.

to exist up to the dates of the endowments and of the Awards as a matter of history. No doubt, from a racial point of view the two sections (Syrian and Roman) were of the same Syrian community, though under separate ecclesiastical Heads from 1665. But neither during the time the endowments were administered conjointly in the Syrian college, nor after the separation, was the expression "Syrian community" construed as applicable to the Romo-Syrian section, and never was this body regarded as a beneficiary of the trust. The term, "Syrian Christian" as understood by the donors, by the administrators, and by the missionaries, was exclusively applied to those Syrian Christians, for whom the Old College (Syrian) was founded and over whom the Syrian *Metran* exercised his episcopal jurisdiction. In lending his good offices on behalf of the community, Col. Munro did not mean to help the Syrians as a race, but only as a religious body. "The Roman Catholics," he writes, "especially the Syrian communities still united to them, would be induced by the great melioration of the religious and temporal state of the Syrians to *join them*."⁸³ This clearly shows that the Syrian community as a race or tribe was never in his contemplation when he induced the Rani of Travancore to found the endowments. On the contrary, he even aimed at the conversion of other religious bodies among the Syrians into that of the Syrian Church.

The Church or community which Col. Munro and the Rani desired to help was the Jacobite Syrian. The former even desired that the endowments should operate indirectly as a means to expand this particular Church and to amalgamate with her other sections of the Syrians. One who goes

83. Col. Munro's Report to the Government, dated 30th March 1813.

carefully through the Award can clearly see that the Arbitrators also understood the term "Syrian community" in this sense.

The missionaries are trustees appointed to administer the endowments for the exclusive benefit of this ancient Syrian community and the Syrian Church. But they administer them in such a way as to encourage schisms and to benefit dissenters and schismatics. The C.M.S. College at Kottayam, mainly supported by these endowments, is open to all castes and creeds. The Jacobite Syrian students of the College have to pay the same rate of fees as Protestants, Reformed Syrians, Romo-Syrians and Hindus. The scholarships and exhibitions given from these endowments are open to all who claim to be Syrians, whether they be Romans, Protestants or Jacobites; while the children of Syro-Protestants and of Hindu converts are allowed the concession of half the usual rate of fees, if their parents assert the claim of being Mission agents. If Jacobite Syrian students desire to take advantage of these endowments, they are, by the rules of the College, bound to attend the Protestant church every Sunday, and are not allowed to enjoy the blessings of the services of their own Church.

For the sake of brevity we refrain from discussing at present the various other aspects of the administration of the endowments in question. Suffice it to say that the missionaries have failed to fulfil the terms of the trust whether you consider the intentions of the donor or the conditions under which the Arbitrators entrusted them to the missionaries.

Moreover, the endowments are, in reality, properties belonging to the Syrian Church. The missionaries have neither a proprietary right nor a beneficiary interest in them. All that they may claim is the right of administration under the Award of the Arbitrators. This right they enjoy as the

result of their having been allowed in the early part of the 19th century, to co-operate with the Syrian *Metran*. What induced Col. Munro to engage the services of the missionaries, and the Syrian *Metran* to admit them to co-operation with him, was the impotency of the Syrians "as a fallen Church" to resume themselves "the high station which they had formerly occupied." In other words, the position of the missionaries in the administration of the Syrian endowments was that of a warden to a minor. The Syrian Church is no longer a minor. She has attained her majority and is quite able to look after her business without the help of warden. It is the duty of the warden to deliver the properties back to her when she is able to manage them herself, and to return even much more, in case the management of the warden proves injurious to her interests. Recently the Syrian Church made an attempt to induce the C.M.S to return the endowments to her, but she failed, since to her misfortune the C.M.S. turned a deaf ear to her just prayers.

Chapter XXIII A

THE WORK OF THE C.M.S. MISSIONARIES AMONG THE SYRIANS (Continued)

A STUDY OF THEIR WORK AND POLICY, AN APPEAL

- A. A comparison of the work of the C.M.S. in Malabar with that of the Church of Rome.
- B. Opinions about the work of the C.M.S. in Malabar, of persons unconnected with the Mission.
- C. An examination of the defences of the missionaries.
- D. (1) The relation of the Church of England to Oriental Churches in general.
- D. (2) How the C.M.S. deals with other Protestant missionary bodies working in Malabar.
- E. An appeal to the English public.

A. A comparison of the work of the C.M.S. in Malabar with that of the Church of Rome.

We shall next summarise the work of the C.M.S. missionaries, and by comparing it with that of the Roman missionaries of the Portuguese period, try to show how far the two agree with or differ from each other.

ROMAN MISSIONARIES

1. Rome opened seminaries and colleges at Cranganore and Vaipicottah and partly succeeded in imposing the acceptance of Popery upon the Syrians, under the

C.M.S. MISSIONARIES

1. The C.M.S. missionaries did correspondingly in regard to the C.M.S. college at Kottayam and to their schools, with similar effect upon the doctrines and tenets of

guise of helping them by education.

2. Rome banished three bishops and killed one or two in the Inquisition.

3. Archbishop Menezis on his first visit to the Syrian Church preached from John x. 1, and stated that the Syrian Church was *heretical* from a Roman Catholic point of view.

4. Archbishop Menezis proposed ten changes that were calculated to deprive the Syrian Christians of the liberty, dignity and purity of their Church.

5. Archbishop Menezis offered money to the Syrian Archdeacon, and enticed many others by presents and pecuniary help.

6. By force exercised through the Portuguese Power and the Raja of Cochin, Archbishop Menezis succeeded in holding the Synod of Diamper and converting, *at least for a time*, the whole Syrian Church to Romanism.

7. Archbishop Menezis destroyed all the liturgical books and introduced a new liturgy for adoption by the Syrian Church.

the Syrian Church.

2. Through the endeavours of the missionaries, Mor Athanasius, the Antiochian Bishop was deported from Malabar in 1825.

3. Bishop Wilson of Calcutta preached from Rev. iii. 7, 9 and stated that the Syrian Church was superstitious from a Protestant point of view.

4. Bishop Wilson proposed six changes, most of which were calculated to produce the same effect upon the Syrian Church.

5. Bishop Wilson offered to pay Rs. 1000 to the Syrian *Metran* to carry out his proposals, while the missionaries induced a large number of Syrians to adopt Protestantism by offers of salaries, employment, scholarships etc.

6. The C.M.S. missionaries exerted pressure through the British Resident to call a Synod of Mavelikara in 1839 to consider the adoption of Bishop Wilson's proposals, though fortunately without success.

7. The C.M.S. missionaries tried to substitute the English liturgy for the Syrian Liturgy, and when they failed in that attempt they got the ancient Liturgy, of the second or third century A.D., revised as they pleased, and offered it for adoption by Syrian priests.

8. The Romans (Portuguese) arrested Mor Thoma I. and his adviser, Itty Thoman *Catanar*, and had them imprisoned, eventually to be disposed of in the Inquisition.

9. Rome proselytized half of the Syrian community and founded a Roman Catholic Church composed of Syrians.

10. Archbishop Menezis trespassed into Syrian churches and got possession of them with their properties and converted them into a Roman Catholic trust.

8. The C.M.S. missionaries assisted the dismissed trustees of the Syrian church at Piravam to lay criminal complaint against the Syrian *Metran*, and they caused the Resident to issue an order for his arrest, in order that he might be punished as a trespasser.

9. The C.M.S. missionaries set up in Malabar a branch of the Church of England composed to a great extent of Syrian Christian proselytes.

10. A C.M.S. missionary forcibly opened the lock of the Old Seminary treasury and removed all the valuables kept there; the missionaries converted a large portion of the Syrian endowments into an Anglican trust.

This comparison shows that, so far as their dealings with the Syrian Church are concerned, the Jesuits and the C.M.S. missionaries had but the same ultimate design, *viz.*, the absorption of the Syrian community into their respective Churches; and both have succeeded to a great extent, as may be judged from the nationality of the numbers that constitute the branches of their Churches in Malabar. There is however, one difference. The Roman Catholics (Portuguese) resorted to force and cruelty to attain their end, whereas the C.M.S. agents did not resort to these, but adopted gentle methods, though more subtle, and none the less dangerous. Further, the difference between the two methods may be taken as partly due to the change in the times and to the change in the nature of the civil government of the country. There can only be one answer if any Anglican who prides himself upon the comparative gentility of the methods of the C.M.S. agents

is asked whether Archbishop Menezis himself, had he been carrying on his work in the nineteenth century under the aegis of the British Government, instead of in the 16th century under the protecting wings of the Portuguese Government, would have resorted to methods different from those adopted by the C.M.S. missionaries. It is true that Archbishop Menezis came to the Syrian Church "with the wiles of a deceiver and the rod of an oppressor"; but one is unable to agree that the C.M.S. representatives came "with the olive branch of peace in their hands." If, in the Romo-Syrian church at *Tripunithura* (Cochin State), where in 1836, there was a dispute between the vicar and some of the trustees, in which the Bishop of Verapoly espoused the cause of the former, a C.M.S. missionary could, on the strength of an invitation from the dismissed trustees, take the courage to enter the church by force and perform services there,¹ forgetting that he was living in the 19th century in the broad daylight of religious toleration under the British Government, one may safely opine that these missionaries, if they had been placed under conditions similar to those in which Archbishop Menezis found himself, would not have scrupled to follow lines of policy not far different from those now associated with the Roman Church.

B. Opinions about the work of the C.M.S. in Malabar, of persons unconnected with the Mission.

The Rev. G.B. Howard, who had resided in Travancore, visited several Syrian churches, and studied their history and liturgy on the spot, thus writes in *the Indian Church Quarterly Review* for July 1901:

"The C.M.S. missionaries reached Travancore in 1816-17, and for a few years got on well with these simple-minded

¹ Mad, Ch. Mis. Records, Vol. III, p. 115.

people. But they had no sympathy with them in regard to their religion or their Services. It was not that they deplored their adherence to the heresy of the Jacobites; one may search the letters and reports sent to the Society at home for any allusion to this matter, but one will search in vain. But they looked upon the Syrians as superstitious formalists, and idolaters. Their magnificent Liturgy, inherited by one of the missionaries— a youth then newly ordained— as 'a most wretched piece of buffoonery'. Efforts were made to induce *Catanars* (parish priests) to modify their offices by omitting all that is 'opposed to the Word of God', and a hope was expressed 'that the people would be willing ere long to substitute our English Sacrament Service instead of their own'! But this was not all. So enamoured were these C.M.S. men of their extreme notions that, though they were the ordained clergy of the Church of England, they translated the General Assembly's Catechism into Malayalam, and made it one of the textbooks at the College' nay, one of them even used it alternately with the Word of God, as the basis of his Sunday lectures. Actual *iconoclasm* was also part of the missionaries' work... It is difficult to write of these things, so indignant and ashamed does one feel but they are part of the history of the Church; and they occurred in the lifetime of the writer of this article. He too has witnessed the devotions of these Syrians, and was deeply impressed by the dignity and solemnity with which they were conducted.² He noticed the ornaments of their churches, but saw no image worship,³ nor does anything of the kind appear in the liturgies and other offices which he has examined."

2. Note the different points of view. An Anglican clergyman unconnected with the C.M.S. was deeply impressed by the dignity and solemnity with which the Eucharist was celebrated; to the missionaries of the C.M.S. it appeared as *buffoonery* and *fuss*.

3. Dr. Kerr, Dr. Buchanan, Bp. Wilson and other visitors too could not discover any trace of image worship in the Syrian Church.

The same writer remarks in his *Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*⁴: "To alter the liturgy of a Church is matter of the gravest consequence, even when alterations are made under the sanction of proper authority, but that men in the position of the missionaries at Kottayam should tamper with and modify the liturgy of an independent Church, into communion with which they had been admitted by mere courtesy, is a height of presumption almost incredible... The missionaries built churches in close proximity to those of the Syrians, as at *Kottayam, Mavelikara, Mallappally, Collata (Kollattu)*, and elsewhere; and persisted in a system of proselytizing, undeterred by the sentence of excommunication which was pronounced by the Metropolitan against all who joined them. They encouraged the people to disregard his injunctions, and not to fear his threats; they induced some of the *catanars* to adopt their modified ritual... and the lamentable spectacle of this new schism is continued to the present day."

The Rev. J. Henry Lord, a missionary attached to the Society of St. John the Evangelist working in Bombay, writes from information collected in his tour among the Syrians.

"The work of the Church Missionary Society in Malabar commenced in the early part of the last century, and from the first, bore a special reference to the Syrian Church. Dr. Claudius Buchanan had visited Malabar in the years 1806-08, and it was largely in response to his earnest appeals in England that the Society took up the work. For the first thirty years the work was carried on in more or less friendly co-operation with the Syrians, and in a spirit not wholly alien from the principles of Archbishop Benson's Mission to the Nestorians, as put forth in the words quoted above. But, *in*

4. Pp. 105 and 107.

1836, a disruption took place under circumstances which our space will not here permit us to detail; and since that time the C.M.S. has worked on its own independent lines amongst the Syrian Christians, and has not hesitated to proselytize from amongst them, with the result that a large number of their adherents now consist of those who were once Syrian Christians... It is well-known that the principles of the C.M.S. require them to work everywhere in the way they do. The cry which comes from the Syrians of Malabar is one which comes no less from the various scattered portions of ancient Churches – whether Greek, Armenian, Coptic or other – amongst whom the C.M.S. proselytizes, whether in Palestine, Egypt or elsewhere. They consider it their bounden duty to work in this way. The state of things around to Syrian Church in Malabar may be a call to them earnestly and in the fear of God to put their own house in order; but in the humble opinion, once more, of the writer – and there will be a large number of churchmen throughout the length and breadth of the Anglican communion who will be found to re-echo his sentiments – it does not justify the C.M.S. or any other body, in encouraging persons to detach themselves from allegiance to their own historic body in order to join a form of Christianity which, after all, is not perfection itself. There is better and a more catholic way of acting – which is recognised in the words, already quoted, of Archbishop Benson, and acted on in the Mission to the Assyrian Christian – that of *giving respectable and friendly succour to a Church viewed as still a sister Church, with the view of helping to strengthen the things that remain (Rev. iii 2); and meantime restricting proselytizing efforts to those who are not Christians at all.* It could be wished that the Anglican Church in India might in her corporate capacity stretch out a kind and helping hand to the *much persecuted, yet bravely enduring, Syrian*

Church of Malabar on the lines of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Christians."⁵

Professor Milne Rae, author of *The Syrian Church in India*, remarks: "There is one contingency to which the Syrians and their friends should not shut their eyes. Although there seems no reason to fear that this ancient Church will lapse into heathenism or otherwise *vanish from history in the same way as the sister Church on the Coromandel Coast did*, yet there is some danger of its being absorbed. With an English Protestant Mission on the one side, and a Roman Catholic Mission on the other, it will be difficult for the Syrian Christians to hold their ground apart.⁶ These stronger Churches will doubtless receive from time to time into their respective communions individual members of the Syrian Church; and if this *disintegrating process* goes on, if the weaker gives way to the stronger, if the Syrian Church be absorbed by the more vigorous organisations around her, history will probably interpret her fate as the penalty of intellectual stagnation and lack of faith."⁷

Another English clergyman who professes to review the question "from the English platform" has recorded the following remarks. "With every desire to do justice to the good intentions of the zealous missionaries, one cannot help feeling that these attempts to tamper with the liturgy of an independent Church are quite indefensible. Granting that there are expressions in the Syrian liturgy which demand reform, and which no sound churchman would desire to retain, it by

5. From a pamphlet by the Rev. J.H. Lord, which was also reproduced in some Indian newspapers *viz.*, in *The Christian Patriot* of Madras, 29th March 1902, in *Prakashak* (a Marathi Christian newspaper), and in *S. Peter's Magazine*, Bombay.

6. We have no fear of the Syrian Church being absorbed by the Church of Rome in the future, unless Travancore and Cochin come again under a Roman Catholic government.

7. p. 356.

no means follows that three or four private clergymen of another communion were in a right position when venturing to alter without due authorisation the services of a Church into which they had been admitted by courtesy. *Make the case our own*, and we shall see the question in its true light. The conduct of these missionaries, admirable in every other respect, seems, so far as we can judge, even from their own testimony, to have been an illustration of the difficulty of doing the right thing in the right way."⁸

C. An examination of the defences of the missionaries.

It is argued that the C.M.S. missionaries acted to the best of their light, that is, that they were really and sincerely attempting to remove superstitions and bring the Syrian community to the right path of salvation. One would easily answer that the same may be said of the policy of Archbishop Menezis with greater justification. The latter was as anxious as the C.M.S. for the salvation of the Syrians. He believed that no Christian outside the pale of his own Church could be saved; he was ready to sacrifice his life for the "redemption" of the Syrian Christians from eternal damnation. The C.M.S. missionaries, however, had never held that the Syrian Church was beyond the pale of salvation. Let it be admitted for the sake of argument that the Syrian Church was sunk in the abyss of superstition and idolatry as asserted by the missionaries; what was the policy they should have adopted in that case? One would like to answer this question in the unpublished words of a Church of England clergyman: "If it be true that the people in some places do at times worship images, the proper course, I imagine, would be to

8. *Portuguese Discoveries, Dependencies and Missions in Asia and Africa*, by D'Orsey, pp. 337 and 338.

refer the subject to the *Metran*, and to urge his prompt interference in a matter which is so utterly opposed to Christianity. If it be found to prevail generally, a Council of the whole Church should be called to put down the abomination, and to pass orderly decrees concerning it. And in all abuses, orderly reformation is to be sought after, not leaving it to each one to do that which is right in his own eyes. If you plead that this course, would be useless from their obstinate adherence to custom, I answer, first, you show want of faith, and next want of sound reason in expecting to accomplish in a desultory manner what you despair of doing in the proper course. Try it; if you do not succeed, you have done your part, and failing, must simply retire or try again; *but do not make a schism.* "

It has also been urged on behalf of the C.M.S. that the Syrians themselves, apart from any material consideration, prefer the Church of England to their own Church. This may at first appear a plausible theory, but will not bear close scrutiny. For with the exception of a few Syrian households which, owing to some quarrel, went over to the Protestant Church, almost every member of the so-called Syro-Anglican community is or has been in enjoyment of pecuniary assistance from the C.M.S., or, they are most of them the children of persons who had changed their faith after being under some monetary obligation to the local agents of the Church Missionary Society. This might seem to be a somewhat bold and sweeping statement. But we challenge anyone examine carefully the history of all Syro-Anglican families. We are convinced that upon such an examination, if properly conducted, our contention will be fully substantiated. The C.M.S. say that they did not proselytize among the Syrians, and that those, who have become Anglicans have done so of their own free choice. If this is a really correct

statement of facts, one cannot account for the almost total cessation of such voluntary movements in favour of the Anglican Church as had been once taking place in the past. One explanation is that the resources of the C.M.S. are now exhausted; they are not sufficient to meet the wants of the by-no-means inconsiderable Anglican community that has come into existence. Again, instances are not rare of persons who adhered to the Anglican Church so long as they were paid by the missionaries, but who returned to the Syrian Church as soon as their paid services were dispensed with. Here we may, from memory, refer to a paragraph from the file of one of the local vernacular organs of the C.M.S. It commemorates in the following terms, the valuable services of a Syro-Anglican catechist 'We regret to state that a catechist who had been for over thirty years in the service of the C.M.S. and who was eating the salt of the Mission, got down a Syrian priest when he was about to die and after receiving the last rite of the sacrament as ordained by Orthodox Fathers, attained to his *good way*.⁹ We fear there may be more of this stamp in our fold.' Further, we can, if necessary, give a list of the so-called orthodox Syro-Anglicans, including a clergyman, who occasionally sent offerings to a Syrian priest to have the Holy Eucharist offered up for the souls of their deceased parents; but they were always accompanied by a condition that the fact must be kept strictly private and confidential. And yet these very persons preached against prayers for the dead and against Syrian rituals.

We have already referred to a pamphlet published by the Rev. J. Henry Lord, of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, criticising the proselytizing policy of the C.M.S. in Travancore, and accusing them of having invaded the Syrian

9. This is a vernacular idiom used by the Syrians in speaking of a penitent Christian's death.

Church. In a speech delivered by the Rt. Rev. Dr. Hodges, lately the C.M.S. Bishop in Travancore and Cochin, before a public meeting held in a C.M.S. institution at Kottayam, on 31st March 1902, he severely criticised Mr. Lord's statement and emphatically denied that the C.M.S. ever countenanced proselytism among the Syrians, and as proof thereof, he adduced the fact that when he found among the boys brought to him for confirmation on a recent occasion, one who openly declared himself to be an Orthodox Syrian, he sent him back unconfirmed. But the question naturally arises here as to how the boy happened to be presented for confirmation, he was brought there by a Mission agent.

D. (1) The relation of the Church of England to Oriental Churches in general

We know that the Church of England does not encourage proselytism from Oriental Churches. When the Nestorians of Urumia applied to the English nation for help, missionaries were sent to them with strict injunctions that the formation of an Anglican Church composed of proselytes from the Nestorians was not to be thought of, *although* Nestorianism was a heresy condemned by the *General Synod of Ephesus*. The Nestorian idea of the Incarnation, as expressed to an agent of the Archbishop of Canterbury by a Nestorian priest, a teacher in one of the schools maintained by the Mission, was: "that by the power of God, the Blessed Virgin brought forth a man who was called Christ; that during His whole life Christ was but a man, not God in any sense; but that when He worked miracles, it was by the power of God, as the prophets of old were enabled to perform them; that Christ was crucified and was buried, being mere man; and that afterwards God took Him up to heaven, where He became God, and was no longer man, still existing in heaven,

simply God."¹⁰ And yet the object of the Mission, as expressed by Archbishop Benson in his letters to the Nestorian and the Greek Patriarchs, was "not to bring these Christians to the communion of the Church of England, not to alter their ecclesiastical customs and traditions, nor to change any doctrines held by them which are not contrary to that faith which the Holy Spirit, speaking through the *Ecumenical Councils* of the undivided Church of Christ, has thought a necessary to be believed by all Christians."¹¹ If we examine the work of the Assyrian Mission, we find the injunction strictly adhered to. The missionaries have opened schools for the Nestorians, in which, among the subjects taught, are included the service books of the Nestorian Church in their original form. Students in the Mission schools are allowed to attend divine services in their own church and to worship in their own way. On week days, the Mission chapel is left to be used for the private prayers of the students in their own manner. They are supplied with service books of their own printed in their unrevised form.¹²

Compare this with the policy adopted by the C.M.S. agents when they entered the Syrian Church. Instead of issuing Syrian service books, they issued the Book of Common Prayer translated into the vernacular, and recommended its adoption in the room of the Syrian Liturgy. They openly preached against the teachings of the Syrian Church. They forced the Syrian students to repeat the Anglican Creed, to be confirmed in the Anglican faith, and to partake of the Lord's Supper administered by Anglican clergymen; and they would insist that when the Syrian students of their colleges

10. "The Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Assyrian Church" S.P.C.K. 1891, pp. 10 and 11.

11. E.L. Cutts, *Christians under the Crescent in Asia*, p. 348.

12. Arthur John McLean, *The Catholics of the East and his people*, Chap. VIII

(who pay full boarding fees) attend their own church for their Sunday worship, they can do so *only* on payment of a penalty of one rupee for each occasion. They dismissed a Syrian professor simply because he supported the view that Mary of Nazareth was always virgin, as against their own. They treated the Syrian Liturgy with contempt. Though the Nestorian Liturgy is in every respect inferior to the Syrian Liturgy, even from an Anglican point of view, how sympathetic was the treatment accorded to the former by the Assyrian Mission! The latter, as the author of *Origines Liturgice* observes, has existed *at least* from the second or third century, whereas the Nestorian Liturgy is admittedly of a much later date.¹³

Again, after Egypt was brought under the suzerainty of Britain, the C.M.S. made an earnest attempt to start mission work there, as well as in Nubia and the Sudan; but the English Government and the English public were against the proposal, not because the English nation is opposed to the preaching of the Gospel among the non-Christians of those countries, but because it was considered almost an act of trespass for the C.M.S. to carry on mission work in a land which properly falls within the sphere of the influence of the *Coptic Church*. "The Sudan must be evangelised," remarked the *Church Times* of 23rd August 1901, "but it will not necessarily be evangelised by English preachers. There are Christians who, by the claim of neighbourhood, of kinship, and of language, are more obviously called to this work. To that National Church (Coptic) which has endured for centuries grinding oppression and active persecution, we would rather leave the work of spreading the Gospel through the valley of the Nile... If it be objected that the Egyptian Church is slow

13. Rev. W. Palmer, *Origines Liturgice*, pp. 42 and 196.

to move and unlikely to make any rapid progress, we would ask whether any English enthusiast would look for the *speed* of conversion of the Sudanese... Where a native Church already exists, it seems a mistake to begin work independently."

This will show that in modern times the policy of the Church of England towards other Christian Churches in the East is different from that which was pursued by the C.M.S. towards the Syrian Church. If we inquire into the practice that was in vogue in the past, the same policy may be noticed. In 1677 when Joseph Georgirenes, the Greek Metropolitan of Samos, who was driven from his see, took refuge in England, the Bishop of London and other Anglican prelates, as well as several other prominent persons who interested themselves in the refuge far from making any attempt to proselytize him, erected for his use in England a church "for the nation of the Greeks." When, in 1725, the *non-jurors* were carrying on correspondence with the Greek ecclesiastics in the East, Archbishop Wake of Canterbury wrote to the Patriarch of Jerusalem: "We, the true Bishops and clergy of the Church of England, as in every fundamental article we profess the same faith with you, shall not cease, at least in spirit and effect, to hold communion with you and pray for your peace and happiness." In 1868, the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury adopted a resolution, "humbly praying his Grace the President and the other Bishops to open direct communication with the Eastern Patriarchs, with the object of enabling the clergy and laity of either Church to join in the sacraments and offices of the other."

When the first Bishop of the "United Church of England and Ireland" to reside at Jerusalem was appointed Archbishop Howley was careful to explain to the Bishops in the East that he was sent to Jerusalem to exercise spiritual superintendence over the clergy and laity of the Anglican Church

and that he had been charged "in no wise and in no manner to invade the jurisdiction of you, the Bishops and others bearing rule in the Churches of the East, but rather to show you due honour and reverence and to be ready, on all occasions and by all means, to cultivate whatever promotes brotherly love and unanimity". Though the bishopric at Jerusalem was created with such disinterested motives, its operations transgressed these fair limits, and the bishopric was discontinued in 1881. Since then, the increase in the number of Englishmen in the East, consequent upon the acquisition of Cyprus and Egypt, by England, led to the re-establishment of an Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem, "simply in connection with Anglican communicants and in friendly relation with the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Jerusalem."¹⁴ Let us hear what *Bishop Blyth* himself says about his position in Jerusalem: "I am myself not the Bishop of Jerusalem, but the Anglican Bishop resident in Jerusalem and representing the Church of England here at the centre of the Christendom. I am here with the assent and goodwill of the Orthodox Patriarch. With regard to the Eastern Christians, they are Christians already, and though we are willing enough to educate their children in our schools and to befriend them in any way we can, we not only do not attempt to make them members of the Church of England, but refuse to receive them, on the ground that they have their own churches and their own priests."¹⁵

Such has been the policy of the Church of England towards the Orthodox Eastern Church which, as regards its doctrines and rituals, is almost in the same boat with the Syrian Church. And yet it was on the alleged superstitious

14. G.B. Howard, *Schism between the Oriental and Western Churches*, pp 98 and 107-114.

15. *The Guardian* of 10th June 1903.

teachings and practices of the latter that the C.M.S. missionaries based their justification to carry on their work of proselytism among the Syrians. Had these missionaries who came to Travancore been sent to countries occupied by the Greek Church, what would have been the policy adopted by them? The answer is supplied by the missionaries themselves. The Rev. H. Baker, Junior, writes: "Some of these old missionaries had pleaded for a change of system and were ever desirous of commencing an independent Mission. They argued that though they had been the means of diffusing some light, *yet that while the Syrians used the Syriac language in their Church Services and as long as all the errors of the Greek Church were cherished and adopted by them, the cooperation of the Church missionaries with them, as with a Church regularly constituted, tended rather to strengthen the rule and system of that Church, than to reform it.* Hence there would appear to be no prospect of permanent good effected for the Syrian body."¹⁶

We feel confident that very few churchmen who have fully understood the spirit of the Church of England, will endorse the sentiments of Mr. Baker.¹⁷ The scapularies which a large number of Syrian Christians (Syro-Romans) carry round their necks are a most heartrending spectacle to all true Syrians, since they remind them of the bitter persecutions their forefathers had to endure at the hands of the

16. M.A. Sherring, *History of the Protestant Mission in India*, p. 314.

17. The following prayer drawn up by Bishop Grafton of Fondu-Lac for use in the Anglican Church (American) under his jurisdiction, during the trial of Dr. Craprey for doctrinal heresy, is interesting in view of the unappreciative attitude of the C.M.S. missionaries towards the Syrian Church. "O St. Mary Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, pray for us. All Holy Angels and Archangels, and all holy orders of the blessed Saints, pray for us. All holy Patriarchs and Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins, and all the blessed company of heaven, pray for us" (*The Living Church*, 28th April 1906)

Portuguese and other emissaries of the Church of Rome. However, the realisation that the Church of Rome could not adopt any other attitude towards the Syrian or any other Christian Church, consistently with her recognised policy, is a palliating circumstance. But who can describe the feelings of the true Syrians when they witness so large a number of their brethren going to Anglican churches, with the Book of Common Prayer in their hands, being in the manner detailed above led to forsake their ancient Church by the representatives of the very Church which had condemned the policy of Rome?

D.(2) How the C.M.S. deals with other Protestant missionary bodies in Malabar

Mission work is carried on the Malabar coast, by three independent Protestant bodies, *viz.*, the Church Missionary Society in North Travancore and Cochin, the London Missionary Society in South Travancore, and the Basel Mission in British Malabar. Of these, the London Missionary Society represents the Congregationalist Nonconformists of England, whose order of ministry is so little regarded by the Church of England, according to the *Church Times*.¹⁸ The Basel Mission represents the Lutheran Church of Switzerland. The doctrines and practices of these bodies differ in many vital points from one another, more widely than do those of the Syrian Church from those of the Church of England. But on no account does one Society enter the field occupied by another; all closely adhere to the principle that proselytism from one another or entrance of one into another's field is detrimental to the cause of common religion. Does not the antiquity and other attributes of the ancient Syrian Church

18. *The Church Times* of 3rd December, 1902, p. 672.

entitle her to similar treatment at the hands of the C.M.S. missionaries? Yet she is denied that freedom from hindrance which the English Church allows not only to Western Churches but also to the Coptic, the Armenian, the Nestorian and other Churches in the East. But for this mistaken policy how different would have been the present condition of both the Syrian and the Anglican Churches on the Malabar coast of India.

E. An appeal to the English public

"In accordance with the Divine idea," says the Rev. Dr. Arthur W. Little, "there is properly speaking, only one National Church in one land. The overlapping of jurisdiction is a modern and most unfortunate thing."¹⁹ The late Bishop Sandford of Gibraltar "would never ordain" a deacon or priest in the Crimean Memorial church at Constantinople, because "the church stands within the limits of the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch as Archbishop of New Rome." When recently the present Bishop, Dr. Collins, wanted to ordain a deacon in that church, he was careful to ask for "His Holiness" approbation and goodwill." Such is the courtesy of the Anglican Church towards the Eastern Church in general. But the C.M.S. have within the Diocese of the ancient Church of Malabar, set up a rival Church and a rival jurisdiction, consisting partly of proselytes from the ancient Syrian Church. Whatever may be the explanation brought forward by the missionaries, the fact remains that while the Church of England cordially recognises the many excellences of the Syrian Church and fully admits that there is no necessity whatever to change the tenets and rituals of that Church, the Church Missionary Society, representing in the eyes of the Syrian

19. The Hale Memorial Sermon, 1906, p. 26

community the whole Church of England and indeed the English nation in general, regarded the retention of "the Syriac language in their church services and all the errors of the *Greek Church*" as constituting an impassable barrier between the C.M.S. and the Syrians and deliberately worked to bring about "a change of the system". The result was the formation of a Syro-Anglican sect and of a "Reformed" Syrian sect within the Syrian community. The internecine feuds and the costly and prolonged litigation among the various sects, besides woefully weakening this already enfeebled community, present a most unseemly spectacle to the non-Christian population around them. It was with such unfortunate results that the subscriptions so freely given by the Christian public of England were expended; nor can the purposes for which the proceeds of the Syrian endowments, administered by the C.M.S., were and still are utilised, be strictly justified. How different the results might have been if the C.M.S. had directed their attention exclusively to the conversion of non-Christians or had worked among the Syrians just as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Nestorian Christians is now doing.

As observed by an Anglican clergyman, the C.M.S. as a body "has steadily refused to be regarded as other than Protestant and will do much more than any Protestant body I know of".²⁰ The Travancore branch of the C.M.S. was inaugurated and continued to work under the supervision of a Corresponding Committee at Madras, the policy of which Bishop Wilson of Calcutta *bemoaned in these terms*: "They appeared to me very little inclined to uphold the system of Church Government to which we are pledged... The fact is, as far as I can judge, the majority, though men whom I love in the truth, have contracted views of the Church and are scrupulous rather than conscientious; so afraid of doing evil that they scarcely dare to do good; and when an object spiritually good in their views comes before them, they care little whether it be attained by the rules of the Church of England or any other."²¹ The spiritual work of the Mission was directed by a Bishop whose attachment to "the Rules of the Church of England" was such that when he

20. *The Living Church*, 11th May 1907, p. 43.

21. Bateman's *Life of Bp. Wilson*, p. 274.

reordained one Irion who was previously in Luthern orders, he allowed one I.C. Kohloff who was himself in Lutheran orders to join in the laying on hands.²²

Such being the case, it is no wonder that the policy of the Mission was uncatholic and unscriptural. But to continue that system even in this age, when the Church of England strives to adhere to strict catholic principles in her dealings with sister Churches, is something that is inexplicable.

Hitherto, the Mission authorities in England were probably unaware of these facts, and her silence was excusable. Now that the matter has been brought home to all, is it not the bounden duty of every Anglican Churchman in England to end this state of affairs? Unconsciously though it may be, England has, through her missionaries, done a great wrong to the helpless Syrian Church; and it is her duty to make amends for it:

(1) By inducing the C.M.S. to retire from the field occupied by the Syrian Church from time immemorial, surrendering the Syrian Endowments to the Syrians to be administered by themselves for their exclusive benefit in conformity with the terms of the trust;

(2) Or, if retirement be too late now, by inducing the C.M.S. to confine their activities to the non-Christian population of the land, surrendering the Syrian Endowments to the Syrians and permitting and actively and honestly facilitating the return of all Anglicanised Syrians to their Mother Church;

(3) Or, if neither of these suggestions can be accepted at present, by rendering the Syrian Church some substantial help to enable her to carry on the secular and religious education of her children on catholic principles.

22. Ibid. pp. 258 and 259.

"If therefore thou shalt bring thy oblation to the altar, and shalt there remember that thy brother hath any offence against thee leave there thy oblation before the altar, and go first and be reconciled with thy brother, and then come and present thy oblation. Be at agreement with thy persecute, forthwith, and while on the way with him; lest the prosecutor, forthwith and while on the way with him; lest the prosecutor deliver thee up to the judge and the judge deliver thee over to the sheriff, and thou fall into the house of prisoners. Verily I say to thee, thou wilt not come out from them until thou hast paid the last farthing." Mathew v. 25, 26 (Syrian Peshito version of the New Testament—Dr. Murdock's translations, 1859).

We wish the C.M.S. every success in their endeavours to preach the Word of God to non-Christians. But we cannot with our past experience be expected to sympathise with them as long as they continue in their present course. If the London Missionary Society in South Travancore is justifiably credited with a far greater number of Gentile converts than the C.M.S. it must be due to the former having concentrated their energies upon the conversion of non-Christians. Let the C.M.S. show a timely disinterestedness and a Christian spirit, in an unmistakable manner; they may rest assured of the cordial support and brotherly sympathy of the Syrian Church in all their undertakings.

Chapter XXIV

THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH

As has already been pointed out, the period between 1890 and the present day has been a period of internal development of which the following remarkable results may be noticed.

1. The number of parish churches during this period rose from 175 to 282.

2. There were practically no schools in any of the parishes till the year 1875, though there were a few here and there, but they were not quite satisfactory. Some vernacular schools were started during the litigation period. Since then, these have so largely increased that the community can now boast of three English High Schools, eight English Middle Schools, and several English Primary Schools, besides no fewer than 250 Vernacular Schools scattered throughout the Archdiocese. The Mor Dionysius Seminary which is the central High School of the community, is situated at Kottayam. Attempts are being made to raise it to the status of a second-grade College. The Mor Ignatius High School at *Kunnankulam* in the north (Cochin State) is the second recognised institution started in commemoration of the resurrection of the Syrian Church, effected by the late Patriarch Mor Ignatius Peter III. The Mor Gregorius Memorial High School at Tiruvalla in the south was opened five years ago, in

memory of the valuable episcopal labours of the saintly bishop, Mor Gregorius, of the diocese of Niranam, who departed this life on 2nd November 1902. English Middle Schools and PriMory Schools are situated in different centres as feeders to the High Schools.

3. Students in English Schools alone number about three thousand, while the present condition of vernacular education may be seen from the fact that the number of illiterates in the community is now rapidly diminishing.

4. In higher education also, the Syrians are keeping pace with the age. Among those who take degrees at the University of Madras is included every year a goodly number of Syrians.

5. There are two printing establishments from which religious books in Syriac and Malayalam are issued.

6. A monthly magazine called the *Malankara Edavaka Patrika*, started some years ago, is doing very useful work among the Syrians. It is a record month by month of the progress of the community in all its aspects. It stimulates both clergy and laity to fresh exertions to sustain and advance their noble heritage. It disseminates among its readers all manner of news, and refers especially to the various Churches of the world. Above all, it has effectually stopped the flood of abuse, to which everything pertaining to the Orthodox Syrian community, from the most sacred part of its rituals, or the doctrines, down to the way the Syrians wear their moustaches and other such trivialities, had been subjected by the agents of the C.M.S. from both the pen and the pulpit. Of their behaviour in the pulpit, no record can now be adduced, but an incident may be related, which will shed a lurid light upon it. The Mission catechists used to visit most of the Syrian churches when a Saint's Day was being celebrated, and to preach long sermons ridiculing such

celebrations, as also the doctrines of the Church, of which such celebrations are the outward expression. This process went on merrily until the congregation of the church at *Niranam*, unable any longer to bear such insults, fell foul of the preachers. Immediately the all-powerful European missionaries took up the cause of the latter, with the result that the Court sentenced a number of unfortunate parishioners to long terms of rigorous imprisonment. As for the doings of their Priest we have already given a few instances in a previous chapter. When the missionaries discovered that the Syrian community had at last found its own tongue, they beat a hasty retreat from the field of vituperation so long occupied by them. It is for this service that the *Edavaka Patrika* is specially esteemed by the Orthodox Syrian community.

7. Another vernacular magazine, called *The Syrian Evangelist*, publishes articles inoculating the growth of piety and fear of God. A third magazine, entitled *Treasury of Life*, tries to popularise the Orthodox Syrian theology in the vernacular. A magazine in Syriac, intended to improve the knowledge of priests in that ancient language, has been experimentally started recently.

8. The oldest of the English and the leading vernacular political newspapers in Travancore and the only English daily paper on the Malabar Coast are owned and conducted by members of the Syrian Church.

9. Three theological seminaries, one at Kottayam, another at Pampakuda, and the third at Parumala train candidates for holy orders. They have been of great use in the awakening and uplifting of the community.

10. Attached to the above institutions, as well as independent of them, there is a number of libraries containing books in English and in Syriac.

11. An association called the Jacobite Syrian Evangelical

Society is in a very humble way carrying on Gospel work among the non-Christians, and has opened Sunday Schools in more than a hundred stations. On the annual prize-distribution day, the gathering of several hundreds of Sunday School children, of both sexes, and comprising Christians, Hindus and even Muslims, is a never-to-be-forgotten sight.

12. More than ten stations have been established with temporary chapels for the exclusive use of converts from *Pulayas* and other depressed classes. The Church is indebted to a clergyman of the American branch of the Anglican Church for the maintenance of one of these stations.

13. The ignorance of the Syrian priests was a standing reproach of our community. We hope the time is at hand when such a charge will no longer be applicable to us. Among the junior priests are included many educated energetic preachers. All deacons now receive English education some have matriculated, and one is a Master of Arts of the University of Madras.*

14. At Trivandrum the capital of Travancore, though far off from the border of our community, a temporary Syrian church was set up some years ago; but during the time of the late Mor Mathews Athanasius it was allowed to fall into decay. In its place, a fine church has now been constructed, with a resident priest to officiate there.

15. A large congregation of Romo-Syrians was reclaimed at *Chennankari*, and a new church is set up for their worship.

16. The shabby manuscript copies of Syrian liturgies and prayers, which alone were available in churches have now been replaced by neatly printed and well-bound books.

*He was subsequently raised to the episcopate (Mor Ivanios of Bethany but later he deserted the Syrian Church (1930) and became a Roman Catholic; he has now become the (Roman Catholic) Archbishop of Trivandrum—Editor.

17. A monastery has been established at *Vettikal* for the use of those priests who do not wish to get Married and who desire to become monks.

18. Public services are now conducted in the vernacular language.

19. Several of the old churches which were allowed to fall into decay during the former regime have been fully repaired. In some cases, the old structures have been pulled down and substantial buildings are being constructed on the sites.

20. Annual meetings of priests are held for the purpose of retreat, devotion and edification of one another.

21. Similar meetings of educated laymen and clergymen are held to discuss education and social improvements.

These encouraging signs are due to the indefatigable exertions of our esteemed, energetic and self-sacrificing Metropolitan, Mor Dionysius V. The difficulties he has had to contend against were of no ordinary nature. The opposition of the schismatic party, encouraged by the C.M.S. missionaries, imposed upon him the necessity of constant watchfulness. For years and years all his energies and the meagre resources which he could obtain by voluntary subscriptions from his poor flock had to be devoted to fighting the opposite party in the law courts. Unlike most other Christian bodies working in India, there is no agency in Europe or America to support him. In spite of such drawbacks, he has done a great work for his community, such as none of his predecessors in the See of Malankar had even attempted.

There are persons outside the Syrian Church who would condemn the Metropolitan as a litigious man. But even these accusers cannot deny that if he had not endeavoured to litigate *in defence*, against the growing schism, and thus conserve the Orthodox Syrian Church, the Church would still

have been a scene of confusion, feud and internecine strife, and none of the improvements noted above could have been introduced. None who has tried to fathom the depth of the present Metropolitan's mind, to examine his dealings, even with his bitter enemies, and to watch his system of Church Government has failed to admire his humility, condescension, peaceableness, and many other excellences that adorn his noble character.

A word about the condition of women among the Syrians may not be out of place here. Women have never been treated as slaves among them. Dr. Buchanan gave the following testimony to this fact: "The people of the neighbouring villages came round me, women as well as men. The sight of the women assured me that I was once more (after a long absence from England) in a Christian country. For the Hindu women and the Muhammadan women, and in short all women who are not Christians, are accounted by the men an inferior race; and in general are confined to the house for life, like irrational creatures. In every countenance now before me, 'I thought I could discover the intelligence of Christianity.'¹

It is true that education has not made much progress among Syrian girls. This is partly the result of the custom of early Marriage prevalent among them and partly due to the disinclination of parents to send their daughters to schools conducted by alien Churches on strictly sectarian lines. Signs are not wanting, however, to show that this defect will in

1. *Christian Researches*, p. 115. When the author was a boy, his great-aunt, who was a girl of 12 or 13 years when Dr. Buchanan visited the Syrian Church, used to rehearse Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments. Her knowledge was not from study of the Bible or any historical book but from songs and canticles. This shows that although the Bible was not translated into the vernacular, the early Syrians were not entirely ignorant of Biblical knowledge.

course of time be remedied. Girl's Schools conducted by the Syrians themselves are springing up in some directions and the tendency among people to get their daughters married before they are twelve or fourteen years old is also less marked now than in former times.

One is conscious, however, that the signs of progress recorded above, are not in themselves of any great moment; they are mere straws. But one hopes that as showing the trend of the current, they will be appreciated by the readers. The institutions now working require ample improvement and firm support; and many more remain to be introduced. It may also be observed here that the one difficulty which hinders the Syrians on all sides and cramps their energies is lack of money. The major portion of the funds which belong to the community is now held by the C.M.S. An effort made to induce the C.M.S. to disgorge this amount has unfortunately proved fruitless.

This chapter will not be complete without some reference to a recent demonstration of the community's good wishes and attachment to their venerable Metropolitan. Metropolitan Dionysius V was ordained a priest in August 1851, and his sacerdotal jubilee fell in 1901. At a representative meeting of the community, it was unanimously resolved to celebrate the whole year beginning with 19th August 1901 as a jubilee year. Throughout the year special prayers were offered in all the churches for the Metropolitan. The public celebration of the event was held on 25th November 1901 and conducted on a very grand scale. About thirty thousand laymen with three hundred priests assembled at Kottayam, the headquarters of the archdiocese. An address of congratulation containing the signatures of fifty thousand persons— the head of each family representing all the members—was presented to the Metropolitan. The address recounted the achievements

of the revered prelate and concluded, by praying Almighty God to vouchsafe to him all manner of blessing. The address was accompanied by numerous and valuable presents from churches as well as individuals. Telegrams and letters of congratulation were received from every part of India. H.E. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy and Governor General of India, H.E. Lord Ampthill, the Governor of Madras, H.H. the Maharaja of Travancore, *Dewan* Bahadur K. Krishnaswami Rao, C.I.E., the *Dewan* of Travancore, and a host of other persons eminent in various walks of life, sent their cordial greetings to the aged prelate. It is especially noteworthy that the Right Rev. Dr. E.N. Hodges the Anglican Bishop in Travancore and Cochin, was one of the speakers on the occasion. In addition to the meetings, there were that day a magnificent procession through the streets of Kottayam and the sumptuous feeding of about fifteen thousand poor persons of all castes and creeds and both sexes. Suffice it to say that the unanimous verdict of all assembled there was that the celebration was an unqualified, and so far as the Syrian community was connected, an unprecedented success.

Note: The history of the Syrian Church written by the celebrated scholar, E.M. Philip concludes here. The history of the Church in the 20th century in English is under preparation by the present editor of this book. A very brief glimpses of the 20th century events are given as Part II of this work. See pages..... (K.M.)

Chapter XXV

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DOCTRINES AND RITUALS OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH¹

- A. The Creed and Christological questions.
- B. The *filioque* question.
- C. The Sacraments
- D. Minor doctrines
- E. Certain rituals and customs
- F. Sacerdotal vestments.
- G. ReMorks on doctrines and rituals.

A. The Creed and Christological questions.

The Nicean-Constantinopolitan Creed without the *filioque* clause is the recognised symbol of the Syrian Church of Malabar. The Apostles' Creed and the Athanasian Creed have no place in her liturgy or prayer books. But there is nothing objectionable in them, except the clause in the latter which indicates a double procession of the Holy Ghost. The Orthodox Syrians, in common with their co-religionists in Syria or Mesopotamia in the Patriarchate of Antioch, are commonly called Jacobites, from a celebrated bishop, Jacob Baradaeus of Edessa, who flourished in the six century. We have already referred in Chapter X to the schism introduced

1. The subject-matter of this chapter was published above the author's signature in the columns of *The Church Times* (London) and *The Living Church* (America) in January and February 1904.

by Eutychus, a presbyter of Constantinople. He caused a great agitation in Christendom by proclaiming a novel teaching which seriously affects the doctrine of the Incarnation.

He taught that divinity and humanity were so united in our Lord Jesus Christ that the one absorbed the other and left but one nature in Him. The Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) condemned Eutychus and his teaching, and laid it down that "one and the same Christ, Son Lord, only Begotten, is to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly unchangeably indivisibly, inseparably united, the distinction of the natures being in no wise taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved." The Christians of Syria, Egypt and Armenia, equally condemned Eutychus and his teaching, but they disapproved of the definition of the Council of Chalcedon.² They upheld the view of one nature, but it was a one-nature formed by the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity, substantially and inseparably preserving the properties of the natures without mixture and without confusion. It must be observed that both the Council of Chalcedon and the Syrian Fathers upheld the same view in respect of the union of natures and the Incarnation. What the Council really condemned was the teaching of Eutyches in his conception of the Character of union *viz.*, that in our Lord the natures were so united that *one of them absorbed the other.*

The Syrian Fathers wanted to emphasise the *same* doctrine as that laid down by the Council of Chalcedon: but they were apprehensive that the statement in the definition

2. There were many causes tending to their persistence. In the first place, the proceedings of the Council of A.D. 451 had been marked by such unseemly passion and violence that it commanded little moral respect, and, secondly, "the opponents of the Chalcedonian theology were, for the most part, superior to attainments and ability to the orthodox." (R.L. Ottly, the *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, p. 433.)

of the Council that our Lord "is to be acknowledged *in two natures*" would convert the Trinity into a Quaternity, running to the conclusion that the Council was vindicating *Nestorianism* in a disguised form. The adherents of the Council, on the other hand, understood the Syrian doctrine of one nature as a reaffirmation of the Eutychian teaching. Hence we have the curious spectacle that *while the Syrians condemn*, in the strongest term possible, the *monophysite doctrine of Eutyches*, they have themselves been labelled for more than a thousand years throughout Western Christendom as "Eutychians" or "Monophysites". It does not appear that the Fathers of the Council of Chalcedon ever meant to lay much stress upon the word *two*. They intended their meaning to be understood not by any particular word or words, but by the whole definition which they laid down. On the contrary, the Syrian Fathers appear to have been very particular not only in the matter of the definition as a whole, but also in their expression of the number; and hence they disapproved of the decision of the Council.

The Emperor Justinian who supported the Greek Church and the Council of Chalcedon, could not tolerate the slightest departure from the wording of its decrees, and consequently he subjected the Syrian Fathers to severe persecutions for their alleged heresy on this point. Bishop after bishop was imprisoned, the Patriarchate of Antioch was trespassed into and a plot was laid to annihilate the Syrian party by imprisoning all their prelates and thus making it impossible to keep up episcopal succession among them.

At this critical period arose a zealous, earnest, indefatigable monk Jacob Baradaeus. Contriving, with great difficulty and through the help of some of his colleagues, to receive consecration from the imprisoned prelates, he succeeded, by his unquenchable fire and enthusiasm, in consolidating his

scattered followers. Succession to the See of Antioch was restored and bishops and priests were ordained throughout the land. For more than thirty years he so zealously worked in Syria and Egypt that his party, about to become extinct increased by thousands, in spite of the bitter persecutions of the ruling powers. Those Christians, thus saved from extinction through the undaunted labours of Mor Jacob, were henceforth called *Jacobites*, by their *adversaries*. For many centuries they had such ascendancy in the East that a hundred and three episcopal and twenty Metropolitan sees recognised the supremacy of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. The Churches in Armenia and in the Patriarchate of Alexandria also followed the same doctrines and they too are sometimes called Jacobites; and to this day the Armenians, the Copts, and the Jacobites under Antioch, including the Syrians of Malabar, hold mutual communion and recognise one another's orthodoxy.

As has already been pointed out, the adherents of the Council of Chalcedon, called *Melkites* from the protection afforded to them by the Emperor, detected an unpardonable heterodoxy in the Jacobite use of the word *one* in respect of the natures of our Lord; and regarded the Jacobites as Eutychians. The Jacobites, on the other hand, construed the inclusion of the word *two* in the definition of the Council of Chalcedon as amounting to an acknowledgment and veneration of a Quaternity in the Godhead. Considering the circumstances of the time, one is inclined rather to condone the Early Fathers on both sides than to blame them for such extravagant abuse of one another. But the persistence, with which in this enlightened age western writers are slavishly reproducing the baseless assertion that Jacobites are Eutychians or Monophysites, is incomprehensible and less excusable. This is reputed to be an age in which writers of

distinction do not commit themselves to any view on secondhand evidence. But here is a question, the generally accepted view of which is demonstrably wrong, as will be clear from the following quotations taken from original and unimpeachable sources.

A candidate for episcopal ordination in the Syrian Church has to take ten oaths, including an abjuration of Eutyches and his doctrines, before he is admitted to the dignity. Those which concern the mystery of the Incarnation are in the following words:

"I believe and confess that one of the Three Persons (of the Holy Trinity), the Word of the Father *viz.*, the Second Person, descended from heaven of His own will and of the will of His Father and of the Holy Ghost, and was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel; He took flesh of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost; *Divinity united with Humanity* and at the end of nine months. He was born of her in mystery incomprehensible to nature and senses without breaking the seal of His mother's Virginity, either at the time of the Incarnation or at any other time before or after... In his Incarnation, His Divinity *was not mixed* with His Humanity, nor His Humanity with His Divinity; the natures *were preserved without mixture and confusion*; His Divinity was *not separated* from His Humanity, nor His Humanity from His Divinity; the union was miraculous, *substantial and inseparable*; and the Word was made flesh and lived with us..."

"I believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, is to be acknowledged in *one* nature, one will, one person, *perfect God* in Divinity and *perfect man* in humanity united in Godhead and manhood..."

"I believe and confess that at the time of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, His Divinity never separated from

His Humanity even for a moment; His Divinity never bore sufferings, crucifixion and death; His death was the separation of His soul from His body; His Divinity never separated either from His body or from His soul; on the fortieth day after His resurrection, He ascended to heaven in His human body; He sits at the right side of His Father; and He comes to reward every man according to his works good or bad."³

Mor Philexinos, Jacobite Bishop of Mabug in the sixth century, thus explains the Jacobite view of the union of the natures and the cause of their disapproval of the decrees of Chalcedon:

"Arius said that the Son of God was a creature. Paul of Shamishatin said that Christ was a simple son of man like one of the prophets and the righteous. And the addition that was made in Chalcedon speaks of a *Fourth number, and brings in the Messiah after the Trinity*.. Orthodox Christians, sons of the Holy Church (*i.e.*, the Jacobites who alone were orthodox in his view) confess one nature of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, believing that one of the Persons of the Essence, medial in Trinity, came down and was incarnate from the Holy Ghost and from the Virgin Mory, and took a body from her, though His embodiment did not make any addition to His person; for the Trinity remains as it was a, Trinity. Also after He was incarnate, He was one of the Trinity, God the Word. And He was truly born, and was seen in the world, and ate and drank, and was weary and was refreshed, and in truth tasted sufferings, and was crucified and was buried and rose the third day according to the Scriptures... Again we anathematize and set aside the Council of Chalcedon, because in the one Lord Jesus Christ, the only

3. These passages are literal translations from the original Syriac.

begotten Son of God, it separates the natures and the properties and the actions and the heights and the humiliations and the divinities and the humanities, and thinks of Him as two, and brings in *Quaternity*, and worships the simple son of man... My faith is in the Trinity, and the Trinity is not defective or wanting that it should be a Daulity; and not added into itself so that it should grow to a Quarternity: not defective from its perfection, not receiving another person extrinsic to itself. Everything extrinsic to the Trinity is a created thing, and whatsoever is in it, is Essence and adorable. There is not anything extrinsic to it be adored; nor within it is ought that doth adore... One of the persons, therefore of the Trinity came down from heaven by means of exinanition, and of the Holy Virgin became the Son of man because He is God. And in His entity, or rather in His becoming the Son of man, His nature was not changed, and addition to His Person there was none."⁴

These extracts, one from the ordinal of the consecration of bishops, and the other from an ancient Jacobite Father, will suffice to convince all unprejudiced theologians that the teachings of the Jacobite Church are scriptural and orthodox, and that the denominations "Eutychian" and "Monophysite", when applied to this Church, are unjust and inappropriate, and show that the writers and speakers who make use of such expressions totally misconceive the facts of the case. The mystery of the Incarnation is so deep that we are perfectly conscious of our own incompetency to discuss it. However, if we may be permitted to risk an opinion in the matter, which we have long entertained, and of the truth of which in our own mind we are fully convinced, we firmly

4. These passages were translated by the Rev. G.B. Howard from a Syriac MS. of the sixth or seventh century in the British Museum numbered Additional MS. 14529.

believe that the Chalcedon Fathers as well as the Church to which we belong differ only in the words they use, but hold the same doctrine. Both sides are unanimous in denying separability, confusion, change, and divisibility in the union, and also in affirming the preservation of the properties of the natures in their entity. The difference lies merely in the simple word, *one or two*. With such close identity in the definitions of the differing Churches, it must appear to us that the prolonged wrangle over the use of the words *one* and *two* is almost childish. Moreover, in the minds of the Early Fathers on both sides, the doctrines which they enunciated and the words in which they embodied them, were so merged in one another that even if they had calmly reviewed one another's position, it would have been difficult for them to realise that the same truth could be expressed in other words. What wonder then if, in the stress of the moment, those who were in the thick of the fray failed to understand each other's real meaning and laid undue emphasis on some trivial verbal discrepancy. It has also to be remembered in this connection that what the Council of Chalcedon condemned was the Eutychian teaching of *one nature absorbed*, and that the Jacobite teaching was not brought to the notice of that august body.

Since publishing these views in *The Church Times and The living Church* in January 1904, our attention has been drawn to Bishop Southgate's highly interesting work, *Visit to the Syrian Church*. After discussion almost innumerable, with the Syrian's Patriarch, bishops and other clergy, he has arrived at the very same conclusion as that which has been stated above; then he gives the following explanation for the apparent differences: "Here I will say that I have never been able to discover the slightest difference between their (the Syrians) meaning of the word *nature* when used to express

the result of the union of the two natures in Christ, and our meaning of the word *person*, when so used... It does seem to me that what they wish to assert by the oneness of the *nature* in Christ is precisely what we assert by the oneness of *person*. Why then do they use a different terms? Because they imagine that the word *person* implies only an outward person presence, as used by us, while the words *one nature*, with them, imply an inward and real union, by which the one Christ is spoken of as a single individual from whom, as from one, all His words and actions proceed. Thus they say, (to illustrate this union), it was the same Christ who performed miracle and who ate and drank— in both actions the same individual Christ. Yet they acknowledge that some actions belong to Him as divine, others belong to Him as human. For example they assert it was Christ in His humanity who suffered upon the cross, but to guard, again, against the notion of a separation of natures, they add that the Christ who suffered upon the cross was divine, for He forgave the penitent thief and promised him paradise and the Scriptures also say that God gave His *only begotten Son to die* for us. They say, moreover, that *generally* the actions of Christ are to be affirmed of Him as one — one by the indivisible union of the two natures. Thus, they use illustrations like these, which I have recorded from their own lips: it was Christ who asked where Lazarus lay; it was also Christ who raised Him from the dead; it was Christ who was sleeping in the storm; it was also Christ who calmed its rage. In each case appear by different acts, His humanity and His divinity. He inquired and He slept as man; He raised the dead and allayed the tempest as God; for this He did not as an instrument like the Apostle, but in His own power. Yet both the one and the other belong to the single individual Christ. They condemn Eutyches for confounding these two natures, and Nestorius for separating them, and

they refer to the writings of Cyril of Alexandria, especially his *Twelve Letters against Nestorius*, as giving a true exposition of their doctrine.⁵

"They think that their mode of stating the union of the two natures is necessary; in order to guard against the doctrine of their existing *distinctly* in the same person, or under the same outward presence, for so they declare they understand the word *persons* as here used. They supposed our doctrine, or rather the Latin doctrine, for of us they had known nothing, to be nearly the same with that of the Nestorians, *viz.*, the two natures act separately and independently of each other, as in the two individuals. They were, therefore, agreeably surprised with the definition of our Second Article, which declares that the two natures were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ; only they thought that the word *person*... as used by the Latins, denoted alone the outward and visible appearance, and that to say merely that the two natures are in one *person*, meant only that they coexist under one outward presence. The statement, therefore, of our article, that *they are joined together, and never to be divided*, and that of this union is *one Christ*, seemed to present to them a new view of the Western faith as recognising, *under the outward presence*, the very union of natures which they wish to affirm by calling the result *nature*, instead of *person*. They seemed never to have looked upon the one person of the Western Creed as the result of

5. The Syrians have a high respect for the writings of St. Cyril of Alexandria. Their teaching on the present question is either based on, or is deducible from the terms of his Letters. The one *nature incarnate* which Mor Philexinos of Mabug upholds is in fact the *mia phusis sesarkomeno* of St. Cyril's First Epistle to succesus (Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, Vol. 77, p. 232, Brit. Mus. 2011.d), was admitted says Dr. Newman, by St. Flavian at the "Latrocinium;" adopted indirectly at Chalcedon in Flavian's confessing; and received by the Fifth General Council and by that of the Lateran A.D. 649, (See his article in *Atlantis*, No. 11, July 1858).

the union of the two natures; but only as the external form which enclosed or contained them. In other words, they were not aware of our asserting an actual joining together of the two natures, but only of their coexistence under one presence... I was once called upon to act as arbitrator between a Syrian Papal Bishop, and *two Syrian* Bishops, who met for a discussion of this subject the nature of Christ. The conference continued for three successive days, and at the conclusion the two Syrian Bishops unanimously declared that they saw no real difference between the Syrian and the Western belief, that it was a mere logomachy, and that they were ready to assent to and affirm the Western tenet as their own and to enter into intercommunion, so far as this was concerned, with the Western Church. No other difficulty they thought remained with regard to the Church of England and our own; but as for the Latin, they could not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope. I say, then, that there is great reason to believe that the Syrians do not in reality differ from us on the nature of Christ... The Syrians, I may add, receive, without any exception, the first three General Councils of Nicea, Constantinople, and Ephesus, and the several minor councils approved by the Council of Chalcedon. They have also, and use daily, the Nicene Creed, and acknowledge the Apostolical Constitutions and Canons. What more can we ask?"⁶

We believe we have made it clear that no one who recognises the validity of the Council of Chalcedon can in justice treat the Jacobite faith in regard to this point as heresy; nor can we refrain from expressing the hope as did the two Syrian bishops who discussed the subject in the presence of Dr. Southgate, that the Syrians will assent to the

6. Southgate's *Visit to the Syrian Church*, Preface.

Western tenet and enter into intercommunion with the Western Church, so far as this question is concerned, provided the matter is thoroughly explained to them. There may be other points of difference which are altogether different matters. So long as the Athanasian Creed constitutes the belief of the Western Church in the matter of the Incarnation, the Syrians can have no cause for complaint against the West. In these circumstances, mutual explanations and admissions like the above on the part of the Western Churches and the separated Churches of the East will not be altogether futile.

An opportunity has now become available for such a friendly discussion. The present Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (Mor Ignatius Abdalla) is a man of wide culture in theology, both Eastern and Western, of conciliatory spirit, and of liberal views, and one anxious to be in friendly relations with Churches outside his communion; he travelled in England and India in 1874 and 1875 with the late Patriarch Ignatius Peter III. A friendly discussion with His Holiness, if opened by some authoritative representatives of the Anglican Church, is likely to produce some effect.

B. The *filioque* question

Another controversial question between the Syrian and the Western Churches is that concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost. The Syrians, in common with all other Eastern Churches, deny the legality of the addition of the *filioque* clause to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. However, explicable the addition may be, it was the main cause of the great schism between the East and the West. Famous divines of the Church of England Creed, as well as the injustice of the addition without the sanction and approval of a general Synod. "It arose, it seems, in the West of Europe; it was at first disowned by the Patriarch of Rome, though the doctrine

it expressed was admitted. Afterwards, when it was found to be a convenient instrument for extorting the acknowledgement of Supremacy, it was sanctioned and demanded as a condition of union. If this be permitted, what change in the symbol may not be similarly imposed? The enforcement of the *filioque* has been an act of Papal aggression; and the maintenance of the clause by those who have rejected the Papal claims as unfounded, and profess to return to Primitive order, can hardly escape the charge of inconsistency, may of a far more serious charge still, if it be found a bar to Christian unity and intercommunion."⁷ So we see that in this doctrinal controversy the Syrian Church adheres closely to the symbol of the Council and the Fathers of the early undivided Church. She has however, no objection to the retention of the *filioque* clause in the creed, if it is preceded by the word "receiveth" or "taketh" instead of "proceedeth."

C. The sacraments

Coming next to the secondary doctrines of the Church the Syrians acknowledge seven sacraments, *viz.*, baptism confirmation confession the Eucharist, ordination matrimony, and unction of the sick. Of these, baptism and the Eucharist occupy the foremost places.

In respect of baptism, they maintain the necessity and validity of infant baptism and baptismal regeneration. A single sponsor of the same sex as the child is considered enough. A mixture of warm and cold water is used. Threefold immersion was the ancient custom, but the present practice is to pour water three times over the head of the child so as to wash its whole body. In the case of the Holy Eucharist it is

7. *The schism between the Oriental and Western Churches*, by Rev. G.B. Howard, pp. 87 and 88.

believed that it is as much a memorial of our Lord's oblation on the Cross, as it is an unbloody sacrifice offered for the remission of sins for the living as well as the dead. *Transubstantiation* has no equivalent word in the Syriac language, and as far as we are aware, it is not explained in Syrian theological books in the same sense in which it is defined by the Council of Trent, but words signifying a change of the elements into the body and blood of Christ are met with in one of the Liturgies. However, the doctrine of the Real Presence is fully acknowledged. Communion at least three times in a year is insisted upon. The laity are admitted to communion in the cup also, though the elements are not communicated separately. In the course of the celebration, the consecrated bread is dipped in the consecrated wine, and particles thus dipped are communicated. The Syrians have no objection to communion in two kinds separately, as administered in the Church of England. But they strongly object to such communion in the Holy Eucharist *celebrated according to* the Syrian Liturgy. In the celebration, both the death and the resurrection of Our Lord are commemorated with special prayers and rituals. The bread and the wine are first consecrated separately, and the bread is broken in token of His crucifixion; afterwards, it is united with the wine as a memorial of His resurrection. From the moment of this union, both the bread and the wine are regarded as forming one risen body. The particle communicated is the *risen* body, whole and entire. To communicate in both kinds separately *after* this union is considered equivalent to a *second* crucifixion of Our Lord. Hence the Syrians communicate the particles dipped in wine; therein they believe that the communicant has partaken both of the body and of the blood of Christ crucified and risen.

Confirmation is administered *along with* Baptism, and

includes anointment, as is the case in all Eastern Churches. *Morone*, the holy oil used as an emblem of the Holy Ghost in Confirmation, is consecrated by the Patriarch and supplied from time to time from Antioch. There are two other oils, one used in the baptismal part of the ceremony and the other for the Unction of the sick, and these are consecrated by bishops.

Private confession of sins before priests, and the declaration of absolution by them, also form an important part of the tenets of the Syrian Church. Priests hear confession and declare remission as Christ's representatives and by virtue of His power. The following is the form of the declaration.

"May the Almighty and All-powerful God, the Father, bless you and lead you to eternal life. By the power of our Lord Jesus Christ which He entrusted to the Holy Apostles and the Holy Apostles to the prelates, and the prelates to me (literally, my weakness), by that power entrusted to me, O my beloved brother (or sister), I a humble servant, loose thee of all sins that thou hast confessed, and of all mortal sins that thou has forgotten, but which thou has committed by day and by night. By the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, I loose thee from all bondage, curses, censures and excommunications, in the name of the Father, Amen, of the Son, Amen, and of the ever-living Holy Ghost, Amen. May the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ and the mediation of the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, be for the remission. Of thy debts and the forgiveness of thy sins. Amen."

Ordination by Apostolic imposition of hands is insisted upon. Irregularities in ordination are supposed to invalidate it. No one who has not received valid imposition of hands can administer and of the sacraments. There are three grades of priesthood: episcopate, presbytery, and diaconate. The first is again subdivided into Patriarch, Maphrian or Catholicos

and Metropolitan or *Episcopa*; the second into *chorespiscopa*, *sovooro* (archdeacon) and *kasiso* (elder); and the third into archdeacon (in its literal sense), deacon and subdeacon. There are other minor orders, such as readers, psalters etc. Marriage is allowed to all grades below the episcopate, but Marriage after the death of the first wife, Marriage after admission to the order of presbyter, and Marriage of widows, are allowed only on condition of forfeiture of the right to administer the functions of priesthood. Celibacy is encouraged in special circumstances, but no celibate priest is allowed to take charge of a parish. Those unwilling to marry are allowed to enter monkhood and become *Rambans*. Priests who lose their first wives are also admitted to monkhood and are equally eligible for promotion to the episcopate.

Matrimony is a sacrament, and not a mere contract, and is indissoluble except by death. Although the canons allow divorce in certain extreme cases, it is not exercised on any ground at present.

Unction of the sick, that "lost Pleiad of the Anglican firmament", as Bishop Forbes of Brechin called it, is to the Syrians one of the seven sacraments. Priests are bound to visit the sick at any risk. Prayers intended for the recovery of the sick men as well as for the remission of his sins are offered, and after confession, he is absolved of his sins, and anointed with holy oil specially consecrated for the purpose by bishops.

D. Minor doctrines

Prayers, private and public, are enjoined seven times a day for the episcopate and monks three times for parish priests, and twice a day for laymen. During Lent, priests and laity meet in churches every day in the morning at noon and in the evening, for public prayers and reading of the Scriptures.

There are five fasts in a year. These comprise seven weeks in Lent, including Passion Week; twenty-four days in Advent ending with Christians Eve; two weeks in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, closing with the feast of the Assumption in August; thirteen days in commemoration of the Apostles ending on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul in June and there days in imitation of the fast of Nineveh. All Wednesdays and Fridays at other times, except those between Easter and Whitsunday, are also fast days. Abstinence from meat and other animal food is enjoined generally for all fast days while during Lent, total abstinence from food, up to 3 p.m. or at least up to 12 noon, every day except Sundays and Saturdays, is obligatory to all persons not suffering from any ailment.

Solemn observation of Sundays and festival days is insisted upon. Besides Sundays nine important festivals, usually called "Lord's festival" (*Moranaya*), are held in high estimation. They are Christmas (25th December), Epiphany or *Denaha* (6th January), the Presentation in the Temple or *Mayalto* (2nd February), the Annunciation to the B.V.M. (25th March), the Ascension, the Transfiguration (6th August), the Assumption of the B.V.M. (15th August), the Holy Cross or *Sleeba* (14th September), and the festival of Ss. Peter and Paul (29th June).⁸ These are held on an equality with Sunday, secular work of all kinds being forbidden on them. There are other festivals in commemoration of Saints but these need not be so rigorously observed. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist, preaching of sermons, offering of public prayers and reading of Scripture-lessons from the chief business in the churches of Sundays and other sacred days.

The Blessed Virgin and the Saints are invoked in prayers

8. These dates are according to the Julian calendar. (Now the Syrian Orthodox in India follows the Gregorian Calendar from 1952 onwards-Kuriakose Corepiscopa)

and are asked to pray to God for man. They are not worshipped, nor are any prayers addressed to them for favours to be accorded by on their merits. Images do not find a place in Syrian churches, though there may be various ornamental figures on the *outer front* walls in their western portion. Crosses are placed on the altar, and emblems of crosses are set on all sacred vestments and utensils. Pictures are painted on walls merely as decorative works. No prayers are offered before pictures, and people do not at all regard them as objects of worship; though crosses are held in the strongest veneration. All Services begin with the sign of the cross, and the cross is considered to be an indispensable adjunct to all places where Services are held. Churches are invariably built from east to west, and are dedicated to one or more of the Saints.

Prayers and oblations for the faithful dead occupy a prominent place in the Services of the Syrian Church. The Syrians do not believe in the remission of sins through purgatorial punishment. However, in common with all other Eastern Churches, they have a very strong faith in the efficacy of prayers offered for the faithful departed. It is believed that, by virtue of Christ's oblation on the cross, the Holy Eucharist administered for one who has departed this life in faith, will, through God's grace, purify him from the stains of sins committed by him when alive in the flesh, and make him fit for the final glorification. Almsgiving and feeding of the poor are also performed for the dead, especially on the anniversaries of their deaths. The souls of the dead, it is believed, remain either in paradise or in prison, awaiting the eternal happiness of heaven or the eternal sufferings of hell, as the case may be, which will be meted out to them on the final judgement day. In the intermediate state, the Holy Eucharist and prayers offered for the faithful dead sanctify them, so that they may approach the throne of judgement with cleaner hearts.

All sins are believed to be forgiven by God's grace through Christ's atoning blood shed on Calvary, provided the sinner trusts in Christ in true repentance. Free will in man is acknowledged but not predestination in its literal sense. God does not predestine any man for salvation or damnation which is the reward of his works, dictated by his free will. However, God foreknows every man's destiny, and by this foreknowledge. He sometimes separates certain persons for spiritual works, and glory. In the matter of justification, faith without works, and works without faith are both condemned. Man is justified not merely by faith without works, or works without faith, or by the free gift of God's grace alone, but by faith accompanied by works, through God's grace.

The Holy Bible commands the highest respect in this Church and is acknowledged as the chief authority in all doctrinal questions. No Service is complete without the reading of lessons from it. On important occasions, six lessons are read, three from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament. The Pentateuch, the Historical Books, and the Prophets respectively form the subject of each Old Testament lesson; while, in the New Testament, the lessons are one from the Pauline Epistles, another from the Catholic Epistles or the Acts, and the third from one of the Gospels, the last being always read to the accompaniment of incense and lighted tapers. The so-called Apocryphal books are recognised as inspired writings, but the Book of Revelation is not included in the list of canonical books. The study of the Bible by laymen is encouraged, but not its private interpretation except on the basis of Christian antiquity.

E. Certain rituals and customs

Though Syriac is the sacred language of the Church, all public prayers are now generally read in the vernacular. The study

of the Syriac language by those in orders is compulsory.

Incense and lighted tapers are used in almost every Service, and more particularly in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In large parishes, the Blessed Sacrament is reserved, for the communion of the sick in case of sudden calls. This is especially the case during Lent, during which the celebration of the Eucharist is not allowed except on Sundays and Saturdays and a few other prescribed days. Communion without fast is allowed only to those who are under severe ailment.

There are certain other ceremonies which deserve notice. During the night preceding Christmas Day, there is the custom of making a bonfire and going in procession round it, chanting praises including *Gloria in Excelsis*. On the day of the Epiphany, the baptism of Our Lord is commemorated by a special Service in which water is blessed. Everyone present in the church drinks a few drops of the blessed water. On the opening day of Lent, priests and their congregations assemble in their churches, and, after the usual morning prayer of the day, a special Service is held for the forgiveness of sins and the peace of the Church. In the course of this service, the officiating priest solemnly asks the congregation to forgive him if he has offended any of them in any way. The congregation in return makes a similar request to the priest and between themselves, and then they kiss the hands of the priest and embrace one another. This is a most solemn and awe-inspiring occasion, when most people, under the influence of the priest's exhortation and carried away by the sacred associations of the day, freely and fully forgive and forget all kinds of feuds and quarrels.

The special ceremony of Palm Sunday consists of the blessing of the leaves of coconut palms, and a procession round the church building, every one holding the blessed

palm leaves in imitation of the children of Jerusalem. The days of Passion Week are very sacred to the Syrian. The services of these days consist of long pathetic prayers and reading of lesson from the Bible, three times a day. On Maundy Thursday, all Syrians, men, women and even children are admitted to the Holy Communion. Washing of feet by bishops is a peculiar ceremony of this day in churches where they officiate. "The Adoration of the Cross" is a special ceremony of Good Friday. The services of the day continue almost uninterruptedly up to 4 p.m., the whole congregation fasting till the close of the Service. Kissing of the cross and drinking of bitter vinegar are the ceremonial parts of the Service.

Easter Day is greatest day of rejoicing among the Syrians. The services of the day commence at about 2 a.m. After the usual prayers commemorative of the resurrection of Our Lord, a procession goes round the church building, accompanied with fireworks and illuminations. A peculiar feature of the services of Passion Week is that they contain no invocation of the Virgin Mary and the Saints; in fact, it is forbidden during this week unless the feast of the Annunciation falls in it; but the invocation is resumed on Easter Day.

The period between Easter and Whitsunday is the season of the blessing of houses. Every dwelling house is visited by the parish priest, who blesses it with the sign of the cross and offers special prayers for the happiness of the inmates.

On Whitsunday (*Pente-coste*), there is a long Service in three parts, addressed individually to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, and praying for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

F. Sacerdotal vestments

A short description of the sacerdotal vestments in use in the Syrian Church will not, it is hoped, be out of place here.

The ordinary dress of a Syrian priest is a black gown and girdle and a tight cap; that of a bishop, a red gown and girdle and a cap (*masanapsa*) bearing the emblems of the cross. When out of doors, the latter wears over these a black garment like a surplice open in front, with long sleeves, and a head dress believed to be of the same shape as that worn by Aaron. The following sacerdotal vestments are common to all ranks who are above deacons.

- (1) A white robe, corresponding to the alb in the Church of Rome.
- (2) A stole, made in one piece, with a hole at one end for the head to pass through (*oororo*)
- (3) A girdle
- (4) Sleeves, or maniples, made to fit pretty close to the arms.
- (5) A cope, made of rich damask or cloth of gold.

In addition to the above, bishops and patriarchs have a head dress, covering the head and cheeks, and a stole made in one piece with a hole in the centre for the head to pass through, so that it reaches to the feet both in front and at the back over the cope (*patraseen*). A cross to hang on the neck and another to bless with, and a crozier, complete the episcopal ornaments. When fully dressed the priest is supposed to represent a two-winged angel and the bishop, a six-winged seraph.

G. Remarks on doctrines and rituals

Almost all points of doctrine and ritual that are in vogue in the Syrian Church of Malabar have been described. It was these rituals which the C.M.S. missionaries could not tolerate. In their eyes, these appeared so superstitious that they declined to deal with the Syrians "as with a Church regularly constituted". To an unprejudiced mind, these doctrines and

rituals cannot appear as anything but catholic and unobjectionable. The only point on which any divine of the West could advance in objection was the attitude of the Syrians towards the Council of Chalcedon. But it has been shown in the foregoing pages that this was the result of misunderstanding on both sides, which could have been averted by mutual explanations and close study of each other's position. As far as the Malabar Church was concerned, the several representatives of Western Christendom only presented obstacles to any consideration of a reunion on Catholic principles. The Church of Rome, with which the Syrians first came in contact, vigourously maintained an attitude of hostility. But a better understanding could have been arrived at when the C.M.S. missionaries worked among them. These later representatives of the Western Church did not meet with any heresy in the Syrian Church in respect of its Jacobitism. "One may search the letters and reports sent to the Society at home for any allusion to this matter, but 'one will search in vain. They looked upon the Syrians as superstitious formalists and idolaters." Instead of giving an opportunity to explain away the supposed differences, and of trying to accomplish that visible union of Christendom for which our Blessed Lord earnestly prayed, they sowed the seed of disruption and widened the gulf by misrepresenting and aggravating the seeming differences in unimportant rituals and customs. What those missionaries failed to accomplish directly is, however, being carried out, gradually and indirectly, by the divines of the High Church party in England and America through their theological publications. A conviction is now gaining ground in the minds of educated Syrians that the creed doctrines and rituals of the Church of England, as represented in the theological works of the divines of the Catholic party in it, bear a favourable comparison with

those of the Syrian Church, and that, had this field been occupied by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, instead of the C.M.S. there would never have arisen any occasion for an unpleasant rupture, mutual intercommunion would have been an accomplished fact long ago and both Churches could unanimously have worked for the conversion of the heathen, with far better results. However, it must be observed that as matters now stand, in the eyes of the mass of Syrians, the Protestant missionaries of the C.M.S. working in their midst, represent the whole Church of England, and indeed, the whole English nation in general; hence it is very difficult for them to conceive the Catholic aspect of that Church or to compromise her doctrines and rituals with their own. But it is earnestly hoped that the progress of English education among the Syrians, and along with it the spread of the Catholic publications of the High Church divines, will remove all prejudices.

Chapter XXVI

SOME NOTES ON THE PARTIES OUTSIDE THE SYRIAN CHURCH

- A. The Romo-Syrians
- B. The Anglo Syrians
- C. The "reforming" party
- D. Minor secessions

A. The Romo-Syrians.

We have already referred incidentally to the different sects that have from time to time seceded from the ancient Syrian Church. The first, and numerically by far the most important, secession was that of the Roman Catholics, now generally known by the title, Romo-Syrians or Syro-Romans. Whether those who joined the Church of Rome, or those who refused to do so, are the *true* inheritors of the tradition and history of the ancient Syrian Church does not admit of any doubt. All dispassionate students of history are convinced that the non-Roman section is the main stock, with which one is chiefly concerned in writing a history of the Syrian Church. Roman Catholicism was introduced at the point of the bayonet. The faith of the main stock at the advent of the Portuguese was no doubt Nestorian. We have shown that Nestorianism was not of long duration and that its coming into existence was due to a perfectly intelligible cause. The Church was in

communion with the See of Antioch. The Jacobites were patronised by the invaders (Muhammadans), and, having been thus enabled to support their ancient establishment, remain in undisturbed possession of their Sees, and represent the ancient Patriarchate of Antioch." Nestorianism was replaced by Jacobitism. The latter Church was recognised by the C.M.S. by the Anglican Church, by all the non-Roman writers of Syrian Church, history, and by the Governments of Travancore, Cochin and Madras, as the legitimate survivor and representative of the ancient Church founded by St. Thomas and is universally known as the Syrian Church or the ancient Syrian Church.

The Romo-Syrians claim that the Syrian Church of Malabar was originally under the Pope, and that in the 16th and 17th centuries they were only returning to their true original fold. But since the claim is based on the more comprehensive theory that the Bishop of Rome was, and is, the sole head of universal Christendom, a theory which has not yet been admitted by any body outside the Church of Rome, we do not at present stop to discuss this question

The Syro-Romans were originally subject to the Portuguese Archbishopric of Cranganore. The stratagems of the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly weakened the power of the Portuguese ecclesiastics. At last, a Papal Brief of March 1709 authorised the Vicar Apostolic to take over the churches within the Archbishopric of Cranganore and the Bishopric of Cochin, whereupon the major portion of the Romo-Syrian churches submitted to Verapoly. However, the rule of Latin bishops was not pleasing to them. Attempts were unsuccessfully made on several occasions to place the Romo-Syrian churches under native bishops directly responsible to the Pope, or under bishops owing allegiance to the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon, who was himself subject to Rome. At

last, an influential section among them sent a deputation to the Chaldean Patriarch, of Babylon and applied for a bishop of the Chalden rite to rule them. The Patriarch, who was seeking an opportunity to claim the Church of Malabar, sent a bishop named Thomas Rockos in 1861. He was warmly welcomed by the major portion of the community. At this critical period, the Patriarch was induced by some means to visit the Pope in the Vatican with the hope of securing His Holiness approval of his claim; but he could not return to his see before he consented to sign a letter recalling Bishop Rockos from Malabar. The jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly was thus re-established, though the Romo-Syrians did not submit themselves to him without murmur and dissatisfaction.

The Chaldean Patriarch later made another attempt to reclaim the Romo-Syrians by deputing another bishop, John Elias Mellus, in 1874. His mission, too, was a failure, and Bishop Mellus had to return to Mesopotamia, after a stay of eight years and after having appointed a successor in the person of Antonios Abd-Yesu, a native of Malabar.

In 1877, the Pope tried to pacify the malcontents by separating the Romo-Syrians from the Latin Catholics and placing each section under separate jurisdictions, the latter under the Archbishop of Verapoly, and the former under a Co-adjutor. Even this arrangement did not satisfy the Romo-Syrians. Thereupon, in 1887, Pope Leo XIII by the Bull *Quod Jampridem* created two Vicariates Apostolic exclusively for the Romo-Syrians, under two European bishops, assisted by native vicars-general, holding special privileges. This concession, too, failed to win the satisfaction of the community and hence, as the result of long-continued agitation and wire-pulling, the European bishops were recalled, and three native have now been ordained as Vicars Apostolic of Trichur, Ernakulam, and Changanacherry. Whether the change from

European direction and supervision to purely native control is on the whole beneficial remains to be seen. In education, this community is far behind all other denominations of Syrians. But it is only right to add that educational institutions are now springing up here and there, and signs are everywhere visible of a distinctly more hopeful and reassuring outlook.*

B. The Anglo-Syrians

The second secession from the Syrian Church was that of the Anglo-Syrians or Syro-Anglicans, the product of the labours of the C.M.S. missionaries. Numerically they are not very considerable; and from the circumstances of the case, they were necessarily drawn from the less affluent portion of the community. With a very few exceptions, the landholding classes were not affected, since the inducements held out by the C.M.S. were not of irresistible attraction for men in easy circumstances. Latterly the movement towards Anglicanism has almost ceased, for various reasons. The Syrians, who for a long time were too helpless to resist the encroachment of the missionaries, because conscious of their own noble heritage, and began to look upon it as a real disgrace to their own Church, especially if such desertion was associated with monetary considerations. The monopoly which the missionaries enjoyed in higher education was broken, first by Government schools started throughout the country, and later on by schools started by the Syrians themselves. In former years, one who passed through a Mission school was either totally alienated from his own Church or came out much shaken in his faith. But at present, even those who receive their education in Mission schools are for the most part, not less zealous in their faith and in their

*Readers are invited to assess the drastic changes and progress in all fields achieved by this community. (K.M)

attachment to the mother Church. Counter-influence exerted on them by the Syrian Church through her theological publications, and the example set by the bold attitude of persons who receive or have received their education in Government or Syrian schools, lead them to learn that apostasy is not the necessary accompaniment of higher education. Further, the missionaries themselves are now aware of this change of attitude on the part of the Syrians, and seem to have discovered the folly of squandering their resources in directions which might after all prove unproductive.

Though it is seen from the above considerations that the Syro-Anglicans cannot expect to have many more recruits from the Syrian Church, they at present enjoy several advantages. They are the most educated portion of the community, and occupy with credit several posts of great influence and prestige under the Government. Helped by the powerful aid of the missionaries, they are bound to rise still higher though, owing to numerical inferiority and certain other causes, it is possible that in the future they may be outstripped by the other sections, who, as a first and most important step in this direction, have already awakened to a full consciousness of their shortcomings.

Before leaving this subject, one may further say that, so far as one can judge, the sentiments of the Syro-Anglicans are none too cordial towards their missionary godfathers. In connection with the admission of low-caste converts to seats of equality in churches, the ordaining of converts as clergymen and certain other such subjects, an almost open rupture took place; the missionaries were in some cases compelled to bow to the objections and prejudices of their powerful proteges, and silently put up with the rebuff. Moreover, there are persons among them who bitterly condemn the proselytizing tactics of the missionaries. No Jacobite Syrian can pu

the case more strongly, more cogently and more convincingly than has been done in a highly interesting article, published above his own signature by a leading and highly educated member of the Syro-Anglican community. The writer of it is a prominent Government official. We have quoted a passage from his article in Chapter XXIII; we have the authority of some well-known persons in the same community for saying that the writer was but echoing the sentiments of several others of his co-religionists. It has been already mentioned that the Anglican and the Syrian communities have long been at loggerheads; the causes of the ill-feeling among the Syrians have been explained. The present Anglican Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr. C.H. Gill, seems to be a man of pacific character, anxious to cultivate friendly relations with the Churches outside his communion; and it is earnestly hoped that better mutual understanding and esteem, as well as more open explanations and admissions will pave the way for a closer union between the two parties.

C. The "Reforming" Party

The third secession from the Syrian Church is that of the "Reforming" party, admittedly another outcome of the labours of the C.M.S. missionaries. In the anxiety to convert his own Palakunnathu family into a Pakalomattom family, and retain episcopal succession in it, Mor Mathew Athanasius consecrated his first cousin under the title Mor Thomas Athanasius and appointed him to succeed him in the See of Malankara. But after ten years of litigation he had to abdicate the See, and to surrender the insignia of the office of the Metropolitan of Malankara to Mor Dionysius V. Thenceforth, the attention of Mor Thomas Athansius was directed to the consolidation of his adherents and their formation into a separate independent society. For some years they

proudly styled themselves "Reformed Syrians", but recently they assumed the designation "Mor Thoma Syrian Christians", a title suggestive of "I of Cephas," as if they alone represent the Christianity founded by the Apostle and claim that they alone represent the ancient Syrian Church founded by St. Thomas and repudiate all other sections as seceder from them. But even their friends, the missionaries of the C.M.S. are not prepared to allow this claim.¹

Mor Thomas Athanasius died in 1893, and was succeeded by his younger brother under the title Titus Mor Thoma. A nephew of his has since been appointed as his suffragan, under the title Titus Mor Thoma II. Numerically their adherents are not very considerable. According to the latest Census Report, they number 37, 199 in Travancore and 514 in Cochin. They still retain joint possession with members of the Orthodox (Jacobite) Church in some of the old churches in the southern districts of the Archdiocese of Malankara. Attempts were made on several occasions to induce them to reunite with the mother Church. The Patriarch of Antioch offered to reconsecrate the schismatic Bishops, to admit them to communion with him, and to invest them with dioceses in case they conformed with the unity of the Church. They were, it appears, partly willing, but were void of courage, the more so, because they were afraid of displeasing their missionary friends on whose support they rely. Although they have cut themselves off from communion with the mother Church and indulge in maintaining their schism, they persist in fighting for possession of churches from the faith and rituals of which they have departed. A

1. *Vide*, for example, a letter of Bishop Gill in the *C.V.S. Intelligencer*, Sept. 1906, in which he refers to the Jacobite Syrians as the ancient Syrian Church and to the Reformers as a body that split off from the old Syrian Church about thirty years ago *vid.* also Dr. Richards's letter in the *Intelligencer* of Oct. 1901.

few have, however, returned to the fold of the mother Church, but in many cases they are compelled by the civil courts to give up the old churches to the Orthodox party and set up new ones for their own use.

In higher education, they are not behind any of the other sections in the Syrian community. Recently they have opened two English High Schools of their own, one of which is maintained with the pecuniary help of a European lady, who represents some body of Dissenters in England.

The religious condition of the so-called Reformers is not one that is enviable. They are a body consisting of members of different schools of religious views. Preachers representing the C.M.S. the Salvation Army, the Keswick Convention, the Plymouth Brethren, the Baptists and other dissenting bodies are invited by them to teach religion. As the result of conventions and preachings conducted by leaders of such various schools of thought, one party in the "Reforming Syrians", represented by senior priests, follow the reforms proposed by Dr. Wilson, and the liturgy revised under the supervision of the missionaries in 1836; another party, headed by some of the junior priests, have adopted the theories of the Salvation Army; a third party led by a priest, refuse infant baptism and indulge in rebaptising his followers in the River *Pampa* while a considerable section despise the doctrine of baptismal regeneration and deny the need and efficacy of the Sacraments and the Apostolic ministry. Some again are holding an "American theory" denying eternal punishment.²

We are unable to give a definite description of the doctrines and rituals of the "Reformer Sect" as a whole, because no two persons among them can unite in the expression of

2. C.M. Agur *Church History of Travancore*, p. 189.

their religious views. Even the same man is constantly changing his views from one extreme to another. Some are in favour of an absorption in the Church of England; others desire to remain as an independent body of "St. Thomas Syrian Christians", on the basis of Bishop Wilson's proposals; a third party would rather die than recede from their peculiar views in regard to salvation; and so on. Their theories are so extravagant, so appalling and so unlimited that the late Archdeacon K. Koshy D.D., who was an authority in the Anglican Diocese of Travancore and Cochin, in a public meeting of the Reformers themselves and in the presence of their bishop and leading members, compared them to an old and worn out book whose leaves cannot be stitched together.³ An attempt was recently made to re-revise their liturgy in such a way as to suit the views of all the parties in their sect. The revision was carried out by a committee presided over by a C.M.S. missionary, the Rev. J.J.B. Palmer, Principal of the Cambridge Nicholson Institution, Kottayam. Probably a desire to moderate the extreme views of some of the revisers might have induced Mr. Palmer to take part in the undertaking; but it is curious to find a C.M.S. missionary dictating it liturgy to an alien Church. However, the liturgy thus re-revised did not secure the approbation of all members and a counter revision is now being undertaken by the dissentient party.

It may not be out of place here to say a few words on the nature of the validity of the ordination in the "Reforming Party." We have shown in Chapter XXII that Mor Mathev Athanasius was a deacon of the Syrian Church, who had taken the oath of obedience to Mor Dionysius IV. He was excommunicated and deposed by the very *Metran* who had ordained

3. *Life of Archdeacon Koshy*, by the Rev. E.V. John, C.M.S. p. 145.

him. The C.M.S. found him guilty of immorality and "unfit for the ministry." At Mosul, on his way to Antioch, he committed the sacrilegious act of celebrating the Eucharist when he was only in deacon's orders. At Mordin, he obtained consecration by deceit, misrepresentation, forgery, perjury; in short, by every act of immorality that one can conceive of. He was consequently excommunicated, deposed and anathematized by the Patriarch to whom and to whose successors he had sworn obedience. According to the canons and ecclesiastical laws of the Syrian Church, nay, of the whole Catholic Church, a consecration obtained in this way is void *ab initio*, and *a fortiori* so when the person so consecrated is deposed. No person consecrated by or through such a bishop can be a validly consecrated bishop. The present Bishops of the "Reforming Party" received their consecration exclusively through Mor Mathew Athanasius after his deposition, unassisted by any other bishop, validly or invalidly consecrated, and it is therefore held invalid by the Syrian Church. It is gratifying to observe that the decision of the Syrian Church on this important question is quite in consonance with the canons and ecclesiastical laws of the catholic Church, as explained by some of the authorities of the Anglican Church. According to Dr. Grafton, Bishop of Fond-du-Lac (America), in a parallel case of House of Bishops in the United States has decided that a consecration, obtained by misrepresentation, or when the consecrated was under deposition by his Diocesan authorities, is in itself null and void. This view was fully confirmed by Drs. Coppleston, Whitehead and Gill, Bishops of Calcutta, Madras and Travancore respectively.⁴ The Reformers themselves seem to be aware of the defect in their orders. In order to give a colour of validity to their

4. I rely on private letters received from Bishops Grafton, Coppleston, Whitehead and Gill.

ordinations they have published a canon with a clause authorising twelve ordinary presbyters to validly consecrate a bishop in case of necessity.⁵

Again, if we take the case in a legal aspect, the so-called Reformers cannot claim a valid ordination. The highest judicial courts of Travancore and of Cochin, as well as the Government of Madras, after legal enquiry, have declined to recognise the reforming *metrans* as bishops of the Syrian Church. They had to surrender to Mor Dionysius all the properties, funds and even the insignia of office of the Metropolitan of Malankarai.

As regards the sect or sects over which the Reformed *Metrans* preside it must also be observed that they are not entitled to be recognised as a regularly constituted Church. In the first place, they have no valid orders. Secondly, they are a body of schismatics. When Mor Mathew Athanasius was deposed, he raised up a schism which has since developed into a host of sects. If the Syrian Church as it existed in 1817, was the properly constituted national Church of Malabar, any secession from it must be treated as schism and not as a regularly-constituted branch of the Catholic Church.

D. Minor Secessions

There are two other minor sections that also claim the denomination *Syrian as their* national title. They are the Syro-Chaldeans and the "Six Years" Party. We have already referred to the attempts made by the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon to get control over the Romo-Syrian section. The last Chaldean bishop, Bishop Mellus returned from Malabar in 1882, after appointing a successor in the person of Mor

5. *Vide* their canon printed in the C.M.S Press, Kottayam, 1937, p. 9

Antionios Abd-Yesu. On the death of the latter, one Augustine, a native of Chaldea, has stepped into his place. His adherents, though numerically very few, stand aloof as an independent group, retaining, however, the liturgy and rituals of the Romo-Syrians.

What is called the "Six Years" Party, or, to use the denomination recognised by them, *Yooyomayam*, is small body of apostate Christians. Their founder was one Justus Joseph, originally a Brahmin convert, but afterwards an ordained pastor attached to the C.M.S. In 1875 he proclaimed that the second advent of Our Lord was to take place within six years from the date of his proclamation. A large encourse of people, both Syrian and Anglican, followed him. But when they found that his prophecy failed, the majority of them returned to their mother Churches. A few, however, remained faithful to their founder, contending that Christ did come in spirit and that they are now enjoying the happiness of the Millennium. Their number, according to the latest Census Report is 1,051.*

*This sect is now almost extinct (K.M)

Chapter XXVII

A RETROSPECT

As is the case with all nations and Churches, the Syrian community had its periods both of prosperity and of adversity. Between 345 and 1599, the church was in communion with the Great Eastern Sees of Antioch and Seleucia. It was during this period that the Syrians reached the zenith of their material prosperity, having kings of their own to rule them. We have also seen that so long as the Church held direct communion with the mother Church, she was contented and happy. When she was cut off from that communion, she could not be consoled till the *status quo* was restored. The reader will also notice that her staunch attachment to her ancient oriental customs and forms of worship and government, is not more striking than the Morked dislike she has consistently displayed to all Western innovations, whether Romish or Anglican. The Church of Rome was thrust upon the Syrians by the irresistible hand of the *Portuguese* Government. But they always chafed under the strange yoke, and shook it off at the earliest opportunity. Neither the prospects of pecuniary assistance and facilities for education, nor the threats and persecutions of the Inquisition, could permanently draw them to Rome. On the other hand, though they had an Apostolic origin, and for some centuries constituted an independent Church, yet when the See of Antioch claimed

supremacy over them by right of the decree of the Council of Nicea, and when Selucia claimed the right of exercising control over them as the deputy of Antioch, they submitted without any hesitation. Harmony and unanimity among themselves, and unquestioning obedience to spiritual superiors, were their guiding principles. When Seleucia presented an Orthodox faith, they heartily submitted to it; when that Church adopted Nestorianism, the change was not noticed by the Malabar Church. When Antioch appeared on the scene and explained how matters stood, they turned away from Nestorianism. The contention between Jacobites and Nestorians in Syria and Persia did not divide the Syrian Church of Malabar into parties. Whether subjected to Antioch or Babylon, whether Jacobitism or Nestorianism, as long as an oriental Church held sway over her, she was an *undivided* Church. Until the missionaries of the West set their feet in Malabar, the Syrian Church preserved that visible unity for which her Great Redeemer earnestly prayed, and schism was never heard of.

Another striking feature in her history is the religious toleration which the Syrian Christians enjoyed as long as they were subject to independent Hindu princes, and the change which came over them as soon as these princes began to be dependent upon Christian nations of the West. It is true that Hinduism tried to check the Church in her infancy. The Apostle Thomas had to die a Martyr. Tradition also says that one Manikavachakar, in his eagerness to check the progress of Buddhism and other non-Hindu religions, persecuted the Christians as well, so that while nominal Christians purchased protection by the surrender of their faith, a very large number of true believers laid down their lives for the glory of their Divine Master. But such things did not last long. Out of these clouds, the Church soon

emerged triumphantly. Even her Hindu neighbours were gradually forced to respect her.

The Syrians were characterised by honesty and uprightness in their everyday dealings, and by loyalty and devotion to their Rulers. They were, moreover, knit into a compact and homogeneous body in strict subordination to their religious superiors. Hence they became a formidable power for both offence and defence. The circumstances of the time were also favourable for the display of their special characteristics. That portion of the country now comprised within the State of Travancore and Cochin was for many centuries cut up into numerous petty principalities under independent Rulers. The Syrians, though scattered throughout these principalities, were united under one leader, *viz.*, the Bishop and whose bidding they were ready for everything. Consequently Hindu chiefs courted their friendship. The existence of Syrian subjects was a source of great pride and strength to them. Those Rulers who had no Syrian subjects invited them to settle in their dominions, and held out various attractions to induce them to accept these invitations. The Rajas of Kottayam and Mavelikara prevailed upon Syrian Christians to settle in their dominions by grants of land in their capitals free of tax or on *anubogam* tenure.¹ Other Rajas tried to please them by erecting churches for their use, with endowments from the State exchequer. The church at Kalloopara, for example, is said to have been built by the Raja of Edappally. His Syrian subjects were parishioners of the church at *Niranam*, several miles away from the centre of his dominion. One day when the Raja was going out on a tour of inspection he met a party of Syrians, carrying a corpse for interment at *Niranam*. On enquiry, the Raja was told that he

¹ By *anubogam* is meant a system of land tenure in which the occupant has to pay only a sixth or eighth part of the usual rate of tax due to the Sovereign.

Christian subjects were put to great inconvenience, owing to the absence of a church close to their homes. He was so moved by their sufferings that he directed the party to bury the corpse on the very spot where he met them and ordered the erection of a church there.

Similarly the Syrian church at *Parur* has a large endowment in landed property, presented as a gift by the Raja of the place. Almost all the old churches stand on lands which are exempt from taxes. In some cases, the land is taxed, but the tax is remitted to cover the cost of lighting the lamp in the church. The Hindus regarded the Syrians as a sacred sect. If ghee, oil or any other such article intended for use in a Hindu temple happened to be polluted by the near approach of a person of low caste, the rule was, and still continues to be that it cannot be utilised for its original purpose, unless purified by the touch of a Syrian Christian. Hindus generally regard the God of the Syrians as one of the many gods to whom they owe reverence and worship; and it is not uncommon to witness Hindus attending festivals in Syrian churches with offerings. To the credit of the Hindu princes of the country, it must in this connection be also acknowledged with gratitude that until the Syrians were rent into various sects, they enjoyed absolute religious toleration; and in the long line of Hindu sovereigns down to the sixteenth century, we do not meet with a Nero or a Sapor. Though there were after that time instances of persecution, it is anything but edifying to find that in every case the persecution was the result of pressure from representatives of other Christian sects, and in no way due to any desire to compel them to adopt the Hindu religion.

La Croze describes in the following terms the state of the Syrians a few years after the first arrival of the Portuguese.

"The authority of the Syrian bishops extends to all temporal and spiritual matters. They are the natural judges of all civil and ecclesiastical causes within their diocese. The Pagan princes and judges have no concern with them, excepting only in criminal causes... Men walk armed, some with fuses of which they know perfectly well the use, others with spears but the greatest numbers carry only a naked sword in the right hand and a shield in the left. They are carefully instructed in the use of arms from their eighth to the twentyfifth years, and are excellent hunters and warriors. The more Christians a Pagan prince has in his dominion, the more he is feared and esteemed. It is on this account as well as on that of their fidelity and strict attachment to truth in every thing, that the princes cherish and countenance them so much. They are second in rank only to Brahmins. The Christians, pursuant to the laws of the country, are the protectors of silversmiths, brassfounders, carpenters and smiths. The Pagans who cultivate the palm trees form a militia under the Christians. If a Pagan of any of these classes should receive an insult, he has immediate recourse to the Christians who procure a suitable satisfaction. The Christians depend directly on the Prince or his minister and not on the provincial governors. If anything is demanded from them contrary to their privileges, the whole unite immediately for general defence. If a Pagan strike one of the Christians, he is put to death on the spot or forced himself to bear to the church of the place an offering of a gold or silver hand according to the quality of the person affronted. In order to preserve their nobility the Christians never touch a person of inferior caste, not even a Nair... They are authorised to ride and travel on elephants. They sit in the presence of the king and his ministers, even on the same carpet-a privilege granted to ambassadors only. The King of *Paroor* having wished during the last century

extent this privilege to the Nairs, the Christians declared war against him and obliged him to restore affairs to their former state."²

La Croze's description is supported by other evidence. There are records showing that in 1442 a Syrian Christian held the office of Prime Minister to the King of Vizianagaram, then the greatest empire in South India.³ When the Portuguese entered Cochin under Cabral in 1500, it was a Syrian Christian who acted the part of diplomatic agent between Cabral and the Raja of Cochin.⁴ When the Portuguese conquered Goa, it was also a Syrian Christian who first entered the city.⁵ Another member of the Syrian Church appears to have served in the Portuguese army, and so distinguished himself that he was promoted to the rank of commander-in-chief and decorated by the King of Portugal with the order of the "Knights of the Military Order of Christ." When he died in battle in 1571, he had a military funeral.⁶ When an agreement was entered into between Albuquerque and the Raja of Quilon in 1503, a special clause was added to it stipulating that the Syrian Christians should be allowed to retain the civil and criminal jurisdiction in Quilon, *as they used to till then.*⁷

Compare this state of things with what obtained subsequent to the interference of the Western Christians in the religious matters of the Syrian Church. When the Portuguese first arrived in Malabar, bearing the name of Jesus Christ, the Syrians were overjoyed, and looked upon them as their deliverers and protectors. But alas! how false the expectation

2. See this passage quoted by Col. Munro in his report to the Government of Madras, published in "Proceedings of the Church Missionary Society for 1819-20", pp. 334 and 335.

3, 4, 5, 6, 7. History of *British India*, by W.W. Hunter, pp. 100 (footnote), 160, 163, and 111.

turned out to be. They deported three Syrian bishops, murdered one or two in the Inquisition, burned all religious books and forcibly imposed upon them a strange doctrine and ritual.

The very Rajas and princes who had hitherto vouchsafed religious toleration to them were now induced by the dread of the Portuguese to turn against these Syrians. The outcome of it all was that these people who for sixteen centuries had been a united nation, respected and feared by all, became "a house divided against itself."

Between 1665 and 1810, they were governed by the indigenous bishops of the *Pakalomattam* family, occasionally assisted by bishops from Syria. During this period, we do not come across any internal commotion or dissatisfaction except on four occasions, *viz.*, on the arrival in their midst of the Nestorian Bishop Gabriel, and of the Syrian bishops Baselius, Gregorius, and Ivanius, and on the appointment of Mor Kurilos of Thoziyur, and of Mor Thoma VIII. The first was due to the attempt of Bishop Gabriel to re-introduce Nestorian teaching, which the Syrians had totally repudiated; the second was the result of the demand by the Dutch of Rs. 12,000 which the Syrians were unable to meet; the third was a sequel of the same exorbitant demand; and the fourth could have been easily averted, had it been practicable at the time to obtain from the Patriarch a delegate authorised to validate the consecration of Mor Thoma VII.

The period between 1815 and 1836 witnessed the union between the Syrians and the C.M.S. missionaries. The Syrians at the outset naturally regarded the C.M.S. with suspicion. But the latter represented that they had come purposely to help the Syrian Church and to protect her from the encroachment of the Church of Rome. The credulous and simple-minded Syrians accepted these protestations with childlike faith. The missionaries had behind them the powerful

support of the British Resident, and, through him, of the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin. As the true intentions of the missionaries were gradually disclosed, the relations between the two parties become more and more strained, though the interference of the Government for a time prevented the Syrians from manifesting their discontent. Matters, however, reached their climax when Dr. Wilson made astounding proposal of apostasy; and the sequel proved to be as disappointing as ever. The labours of the C.M.S. immediately gave rise to two more divisions in the Syrian community.

Between 1836 and 1877, the parties within the Church were mainly occupied with their internecine feuds. It has already been shown that, but for the interference of the Government and the missionaries, the quarrels would not have attained such frightful proportions. The missionaries tried to cut off communication between Antioch and Malabar, and to introduce among the Syrians such innovations as were pleasing in their eyes. If the community had been allowed to have its own way, intercourse with Antioch, so dear to the Syrians, would not have been interrupted, and there would never have occurred any friction or misunderstanding in any quarter.

The years between 1879 and 1889 were occupied with litigation, traceable directly to the influence exerted by the missionaries upon the Syrian Church. From 1890 down to the present day (1907), though feuds and struggles, with the schismatics supported by the missionaries have not wholly disappeared, yet the Church was not wholly tied down as in the preceding periods, and so, had time to direct some attention to its development, the result of which is noticed in Chapter XXV.

Another remarkable feature of the Syrian Church is her

piety and her steadfastness in the Faith. These appear all the more striking when we realise how very helpless the Church was in those early days. The answers given by Mor Thomas VIII to the questions put to him by the Madras Government are explicit in acknowledging the humiliating backwardness of the community in education, secular and theological. There were no public schools for general education, and the four Gospels were all that many of the Priests knew in theology. It is nothing short of a miracle that a Church so destitute of education and guided by priests so ignorant, succeeded in maintaining without blemish for so many centuries the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion; and the preservation of this microscopic Church in this far-off land, surrounded on all sides by countless hordes of strange castes and creeds, can be accounted for only on the supposition that these people, in spite of their ignorance and insignificance, must have been full of the unquenchable fire and the sustaining grace of their Lord and Master. The lives of their early bishops afford sufficient proofs for this assumption. Take, for example, the courage and zeal of Mor Baselius and Mor Ivanius, who arrived in the country in 1685. In fear of the Portuguese, they landed at Tellicherry, and without even a morsel of food in their possession they plunged into the wilderness of the Western Ghats, which was infested with tigers, wild elephants and other ferocious animals. For days and days, eating nothing but leaves and wild fruits, they traversed this mountain chain and finally made their appearance at the *Kothamangalam* church, situated in the High Ranges of Travancore. When such fortitude and self-sacrifice animated their spiritual superiors, the Syrians could not have been poor in faith.

Ephesus, where the Apostles Paul and John long laboured, and Constantinople, where no Pagan worship was

allowed to enter, have long ceased to be strongholds of Christianity; but the Church of Malabar, subjects to heathen Rulers and surrounded by heathen nations, has not ceased to spread her lustre. The Jewish nation, with whom Jehovah was in close touch through prophets and urim and Thummim, were easily led astray from the worship of their God, when they came in contact with idolatrous nations; but the Syrian Church, even in the darkest period of her history, succeeded in preserving the integrity of "the faith once delivered to the Saints", and we hope she will continue to do so to the last day, in spite of the disintegrating policy, of rival sects.

We cannot better conclude this chapter than with a quotation from Mr. Lord's pamphlet, already referred to on a previous page. "It would seem almost impossible", he writes, "to overestimate the importance which, in a resuscitated condition, the Church of Malabar might become to the whole of the rest of India. Here we have a Church which has passed through centuries of training in administrative matters, which has solved the problem of self-support and other difficulties incidental to early planting, which has been disciplined by suffering, which has developed almost hereditary qualifications for positions so responsible as even the episcopate. Such a Church were the most made of its gifts, might supply Indian bishops for many an Indian See; it might become an example for the rest of India to emulate. Shall we put away such ideas as to Utopian? Shall we not rather ardently believe in every good possibility, under the reviving power of the Holy Ghost, and in response to rightly-directed earnest Christian effort?"

Appendices

Appendix I (Ref. Chapter VI)

THE FIRST COPPER-PLATE GRANT OF A.D. 230 (TRANSLATION)

Hari-Sri! Adoration to the Great Ganapati! Beginning from Sri Veera Kerala, the Earth Ruler, the man-Lord, the Emperor, the Sceptre had been swayed in regular succession for many hundred thousand years, when Sri Veera Raghava Chackravarthi (the Emperor Veera Raghava) was in possession of the country and was seated in the Royal Palace, (and the following grant was made), in the year when Jupiter was in Capricornus on Saturday, the twenty-first of Meenam, when (as it is further implied) Saturn was in Pisces, and on the day of Rohani the fourth Asterism. We have given Manigramam (the village called Mani) to Iravi Corten (Curten) of Mahodeverpatanam (the town of Mahodever) the grand Chettiar (merchant) of the Cheraman country. We have also given to him the right of Peelavata, of having the Pavanatungum house Pillar and of receiving Purooperooma and Kadatoo and further the honour of having Valinchiyem and Tanichett in Valinchiyem and moreover of having the privilege of Moora Cholloo and Moomata and Puncha Vaddium and Changoo and Pakel Veluka and Pavata and Aymtolom and Coda and Vadooca Para and Idopati and Thoranom and Tanichett, over the four cheries in the city of Manigramam. Moreover, we have given him as slaves the oil manufacturers and the Ainkoody Cummalers. We have given to the Lord of the Town, Iravi Corten, the Taragoo and Choongom of all that may be meted by the Para, weighed by the balance or measured by the string, of all that may be counted or carried—in a word, of all from salt to sugar, and from musk to lamp oil—within the Codungalore harbour and the twon between the four Talis and gramams (villages) adjoining thereto. We have written and given this copper plate with water etc., to Iravi Corten the Cheraman-lokaperum-Chettiar, and to his sons and sons' sons

in regular succession. With the knowledge of the Panniyoor and Chovoor Gramams we have given it; with the knowledge of Venadoo and Onadoo have we given it; with the knowledge of Ernadoo and Valwanadoo have we given it; we have given it for the time that Sun and Moon shall endure. With the knowledge of the above has this been written and engraved by the hand of Nambi Chadayen, grand goldsmith of the Cheraman country.

Appendix II
(Ref. Chapter VIII)

A VERSION OF THE GRANTS ON CHERUMAN PERUMAL'S
COPPER PLATE OF A.D. 345
(FROM A MS. VOLUME DATED 1604 IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM)

May Cocurangon be prosperous and have long life and live a hundred thousand years, divine servant of the Gods, strong, true, just, full of good works, reasonable, powerful over the whole earth, happy, conquering, glorious, prosperous rightly in the service of the Gods, in Malabar, in the city of the Great Idol.

During his reign in the time of Mercury, on the 7th of March before the full moon, the same Cocurangon being in *Carnellur*, there landed *Thomas Cananeo*, a chief man, who arrived in a ship, determined to see the farthest parts of the East. And some, seeing how he arrived, informed the king. The king himself came and saw, and sent for the same chief man Thomas, and he disembarked and came before the king, who spoke, graciously to him. To honour him, he gave him his own name Cocurangon Cananeo, and he received this honour from the king and went to rest in his place. And the king gave him the city of *Mahodevarpatanam* for ever. And the same king, being in this prosperity, went one day to hunt in the jungle, and the said king enclosed the whole jungle. And he called Thomas hastily, who came and stood before the king in a propitious hour. And the king questioned the astrologer, and afterwards the king spoke to Thomas that he should build a town in that jungle, and he made reverence and answered the king: "I require this jungle for myself," and the king granted it to him and gave it for ever. And forthwith on another day he cleared the jungle, and he cast his eyes upon it in the same year on the 11th of April and gave it for a heritage to Thomas in a propitious time and day, in the name of the king, who laid the first stone for the church and for the house of Thomas Cananeo. And he built there a town for all and he entered the church and prayed there on the same day. After these things Thomas himself went to the feet of the king and offered him presents, and after this he asked the king to

give that land to him and his descendants. And he measured out 264 elephant cubits and gave them to Thomas and his descendants for ever, and jointly 62 houses which were immediately erected there, and gardens with their circumferences and their paths and boundaries and inner yards. And he granted him seven kinds of musical instruments and all the honours and to travel in a palanquin and that at weddings his women should whistle with the finger in the mouth as do the women of the kings, and he conferred on him dignity and the privilege of spreading carpets on the ground and to use sandals and to erect a pandal and to ride on elephants, and besides these, *he granted five taxes to Thomas and his posterity and to his associates, both men and women, and for all his relations and to the followers of his Faith for ever.*

The said king gave him name, and these princes witnessed it:

Cadaxericenden; Cherukara; Putanchate; Comeren, Door-keeper of the King; Arcunden Couden, of the Kings' Council; amenate Couden; Gerulem, Captain of the Camp; Chiranmala Portati Reforamem Governor of East Malabar; Peni Incalatia Tanditen, Singer of the said King; Perbelenatacattoconte, Guarding of the Port Bichremenchingue of Carturte, Chamberlain of the King.

Ananiperumcovil, wrote these affairs with his own hand.

This Notrial Act (*escritura*) of the lowland of Cranganore which the Emperor of All-Malabar gave to Thomas Cananeo *the Armenian* and also to the Christians of St. Thomas.



The Copper plates of the Syrian Christians of Kerala

Appendix III
(Ref. Chapter X)

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TRANSLATION, BY DR. GUNDERT, AS FAR AS IT CAN BE MADE OUT (WITH SHORT REMARKS IN BRACKETS), OF THE COPPER-PLATE DEED IN FAVOUR OF THE
KOLLAM SYRIAN CHRISTIANS (A.D. 824)

a. Hail! In the time (literally, year) of Perumal (Co, king, o Go) Sthanu Ravi Gupta, who now rules gloriously for many hundreds of thousands of years, treading underfoot hostile heads, in his fifth year, this year under the concurrence of His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, governing the *Venadu* (the Travancore king is still called Venad Adigal, "the Adorable feet of Venadu") of *Anjuwannam* (the Jewish principality of Deed No.1) and of *Punnattala's* Lord (the next neighbour, vide d, below), the following grant of a freehold has been given by His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal to the *Tarisa* church (and community), established (or built) by Isodata Virai of *Kurakkeni Kollam*. (The name *Tarisa* is perhaps to be recognised in the *Dariaygal* of the Syrian tradition.)

b. (This sentence is the most difficult of the whole, first, on account of the many antiquated terms of country customs; secondly, on account of the construction, *perar* being the negative verb which gives no plausible translation. I prefer to read *perar* and take it as the nominative for the genitive.) And I also (one of the above lords or Maruwan Sapir or the church, vide n), who formerly had the possession of the share-staff (feudal tenure?) of the four families of Ilawar ("Simhalese, also Tiyar, Dwipar, Islander," now palmtree cultivators), and of the eight families of Ilakeyar (Sihala low castes or slaves?) belonging to them, and one family of washermen coming from the same stock as these—all these being entitled to the fetter-right (the foot-rope for mounting coconut trees?) and ladder-right (for reaping pepper?), to the tax for the elephant feeder, and to the wash-gold ("eri", perhaps *ari*), which the Chandan ("great person?sun?") is wont to get (*mattu* "hook in" (tamil), "get by ruse" (Malayalam), as well as to the harvest gold ("*polipon*", gold of interest? shining gold?), to the

nightly meal of rice and to the pot measure—I, possessed of this share-staff, and of the Cavvan (or *cappam*? "tribute"), and of those five kandis (pieces of ground or shares?), have given them by a free and unrestricted transfer.

c. Maruwan Sapir Iso (Maruwan, the Syrian lord?), who has received the water (hereditary possession) of this town, having arranged that these four families of Ilawar (with their servants and washermen), two families of —, one family of carpenters, and four families of Vellaler (Tamil agriculturists), the latter being Caralar (T. ploughmen, M. Temple-servants, used, *clause m*, for trustees; hence, *clause i*, the noun *caranmei*, "trusteeship") of the *Alave* (or *Aladeiya*) land — that all these may do their duty to the god, the planter by planting (rice, etc), the setter by setting (trees, or by building, offering?), so that the required ceremonies, such as the oil for the church, suffer no diminution, has enacted and given to the *Tarisa* church the land now to be described.

d. Decreed with the sanction of the Palace major (*Koyilatikarikal*) *Vyaraka Devar* (probably Commissioner of the Perumal, since he is repeatedly mentioned before the Travancore vassal), and power given with (the ceremony of) water-drops for seizing and possessing, under the concurrence of His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, His Excellency the second Raja Rama (brother of the former, and next heir), his officers and ministers, and of the *six hundred* (a local authority, *vide f*); also of the (neighbouring) lords of *Punnattala* ("place of *Calophyllum* trees") and *Pulacudi* ("dwelling of silk cotton trees"), the land bounded so that the east border be Vayalcadu (open waste plain) and the backwater included; the south-east border be the wall near the little door-gate(?) (*cheru watil-kal matil*); the west border the sea; the north border the Torana garden; the north-east border the garden of the unapproachable (*andilan*) of *Punnattala*; the land enclosed within these four borders I have empowered to take, and by executing this copper-deed have given, for the days that earth, moon and sun exist.

e. And it has further been settled, with the concurrence of His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, His Excellency Rama, and the Palace-major, that the Church people (*Palliyar*, probably heads of the *Tarisa* citizens) alone have power to punish the (heathen) families of this land for any offence whatsoever, and receive the fines,

expenses, head-price and breast-price (probably the right of selling males and females for serious caste-offences).

f. Mine own relations, whoever they be, whatever the charges be, shall never have the right there to speak as heads of the land dealing with subjects. Let the *six hundred* (*vide d*), the *Anjuwannam* and *Manigramam* (Jewish and Christian principalities) be the protectors.

g. Let them, even *Anjuwannam* and *Manigramam*, act both with the Church and with the land, according to the manner detailed in this copper-deed for the time that earth, moon and sun exist.

h. Ordered with the sanction of the Palace-major Vyaraka Devar, and with the sanction of His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, and His Excellency Rama, and free tenure granted to these (*Palliyar*) as follows:

j. (Again a difficult sentence, I take *ulaku*, *i.e. loke*, for the official name of the citizens, Christian freemen, formed into a corporation and distinguished both from the *Palliyar*, who their headmen, and from the Cudi or Heathen families, who live on their grounds as farmers or slaves.) There being sixty-one citizens, the number is not to be increased nor to be diminished; no personal tax is to be received for the slaves they buy (or "the person tax to be received" if you read *perar*); for admitting any conveyances or letting them out they are to receive eight coins (Kachu: *wayinam is vahanam*, understand horses, waggons); in the case of (female) elephants and of boats, whether for letting in or letting out, they are to receive four coins; merchandise belonging to the citizens is to be disposed of (or removed) by them with the cognizance of the above (the *Palliyar*? or the protecting lords?); they (the *Palliyar*) are to do all the business (rights and duties) of a lord (*swami*) on the place of packing the wares (or on spots where poles with leaves are set up as signs of prohibition) and elsewhere, only after deliberation with the above-mentioned (*Anjuwannam* and *Manigramam*?); *Anjuwannam* and *Manigramam* to protect the citizens in every coming generation; in the space within the four gates (or in the four public offices?) and on the spot where land for sale (or "under prohibition") is given in trust, the palace (or

Supreme Government) having received the king's tithe (*Ko-pata-waram*), Anjuwannam and Manigramam to receive the Lord's tithe (*Pati-pata-waram*).

k. With the sanction of the Palace-major Vyaraka Devar, who has given to these (the Palliyar) the 72 janmi right (*viduperu*), such as for marriages (or processions), the elephant's back, the earth, the water, etc. (or, "earth and water on the elephant"; at all events, marks of nobility), and with the concurrence of His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, His Excellency Rama, the ministers and officers, the *six hundred*, and the Lords of Punnattala and Pulacudi, let *Anjuwannam and Manigramam* carry out this unrestricted possession right in the manner described by this copper-deed for the time that earth, moon and sun exist.

l. If any injustice be done to these (the Palliyar? or Anjuwannam and Manigramam?), they may withhold the tribute ("the world-bearing hire") and remedy themselves the injury done to them. Should they themselves commit a crime, they are themselves to have the investigation of it.

m. And let whatever the to chieftains in *Anjuwannam and Manigramam*, who have taken the water (possession) as trustee for this town (caralar, *vide c*), may do in unison be counted for one act.

n. And let Maruwan Sapir Iso, who took the water for this town, since he acquired (or transferred? *peruttu*) the share-staff (*varakol* of b), and those five pieces (or *anjacandi*) which formerly were the property of the Palliyar, pay for it the full price to the church. This also I have given over by unrestricted transfer.

o. I have ceded to the *Tarisa* church people, by full and unrestricted tenure, every kind of revenue by this copper-deed for the time that earth, moon and sun do last.

p. Those Ilawar are permitted to follow their occupations (?) in the bazar and on the wall. The washerman may come and do his work in the bazar and on the wall.

q. Nor have the Island ruler (or Tiyar headman) and the wall officer, or whoever it be, any power to stop them on any charges whatsoever. Though they should commit a trespass, the Palliyar alone have to try them.

r. I have given this in the manner detailed in the copper-

deed, for the time that earth, moon, and sun do last, by full, free and unrestricted tenure.

s. The person who made this full, free and unrestricted transfer to the *Tarisapalli* through His Excellency the Ayyan Adigal, is Maruwan Sapir Iso.

t. To those who keep this and care to see it observed, let God himself be gracious. (What is *anugramam* or *anucramam*?) The writing of Ayyan; and may this benefit (vel, or is it a compound word?) be equal to Kula Sundara's (Vishnu?) Rule victoriously!

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**Manual* (K.M.)

Appendix IV
(Ref. Chapter XVII)

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PATRIARCH
OF ANTIOCH BY MAR THOMA IV DATED 1720

To my Lord Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch I, the poor Mar Thomas, the fifth bishop of the Syrians of India, write and send.

In the name of Him who is eternal and of necessity exists: from Thomas the humble, Bishop of the *Orthodox Syrians* of the India of *St. Thomas*: to him who sits in the seat of the Pontiff, holy and glorious and magnificent, upon the throne of the principality of Peter, the Prince of the Apostles; whom Our Lord has called by his grace, and by his mercy has collected and firmly made to sit.

Most beloved Father of Fathers and Pastor of Pastors, who bindest and loosest with thy power in the highest and in the lowest, holy, and holily sanctifying, and resplendent with the triumph of the Apostles; who rulest upon the glorious soild of Antioch, which is celebrated and lovely through all the four quarters of the world and in the world to come. *Amen*. Because thou art Patriarch, the head of the Universal Church of Christ, as was ordered by the three hundred and eighteen Fathers who were assembled at Nicea, and the steward of the house of God obtaining the whole order of the Apostolic Church; and for as much as thou dost worthily govern the sheep which are in the Oriental flock, always introducing all the sheep of thy flock into the fold by the gate, and when, of all, one perishes, thou dost vehemently grieve, but when thou dost see it again, thou dost greatly rejoice. Our Father, who wast elect in the abundant blessings of Sion, therefore, I wish thee to be as a vessel chosen to receive the grace of the most high God.

I beseech, my Lord, that thou mayest bless me with thy right hand full of grace, and I shall hear whatever may be said or enjoined to me by thy benign mouth, and I subject myself to the power of they paternity, wherefore may God bless thy See for ever and ever. *Amen*.

My Lord, I am not worthy to worthily write to thy greatness.

But we write and we send letters because of the necessities of the *Orthodox Syrians* of India, and we pray that thou mayest send to us *one Patriarch* and one Metropolitan and twin priests, who may be philosophers and may understand the interpretation of the holy and divine scriptures. Previously there came to our country Mor Gregory, the fifth Patriarch of Jerusalem, and after him Mor Andrews Alveus, and after him came a certain *Maphrian* Mor Basilius *Catholicos*, and with him Mar John the Metropolitan, and the *Rabban* Mathews.

Since their death, we drift like a ship without a rudder. If thou wilt come to aid us, as God the Father promised to the sons of Israel, so may Jesus Christ, the Merciful and the Ruler, deal with you, and so may the Holy Spirit, *the Paraclete*, console you. *Amen.*

In the year of our Lord 1709, there came a Metropolitan, by name Gabriel, *the Ninivite*, whom Mar Elias *Catholicos* sent to me. But he held such a faith as that Christ had two natures and two persons; and therefore we did not believe him, except a certain priest called Mathew *Beticutel* and a few Portuguese Roman Catholics. We, however, have not wisdom that we may answer him. Therefore, we report it to thee, our Lord.

Charles, a Dutch Doctor, an Orientalist of repute, a learned man and a proved philosopher, our dearest and most beloved companion, dwells in Amsterdam, the first city of Holland. He has addressed us that we may proceed in this matter with one mind. We have written to him in order that this matter may be made known to Antioch; that you through the mercy of God may write one letter to the honourable Commandant who dwells in Cochin which town is subject to the King of all India, and another letter to us; that it may bring help to us against our enemies and the infidel kings for ever; and that above all, you will with the utmost care supplicate King Comphocius, who greatly honours the Dutch and is very illustrious among kings. This king gives judgement in accordance with equity and receives the petitions of the poor and greatly honours all this nation, and all these honour Antioch and despise Rome; and they are right. *Amen.* My Lord brilliant Ignatius take action without delay and diligently look after all this business, forgetting no part of it, through the living God. *Amen.*

Especially pray in order that we may obtain a blessing by your prayers. Pray to the beloved Father and the merciful Christ and the Holy Spirit, the Protector, and the Virgin Mary, *Mother of God*, and the Saints. *Amen*.

In the year of the epoch of our Lord 1720, this epistle is written from Pharabur Patona (*Pattamana Paravoor*), a church of *St. Thomas* the blessed Apostle, on the 25th day of the month Elul (September). *Amen*. Our Father *etc.* The Gate of all India.

[Asseman, IV, p. 466; Mackenzie, p. 86]

Appendix V
(Ref. Chapter XVIII)

STATIKON (BULL OF APPOINTMENT) OF MAR DIONYSIUS I
ALIAS MAR THOMA VI. (TRANSLATION)

Joseph, of the other name of Mor Thomas, was, by the hands of us, the feeble and weak Gregorius, Metropolitan of (Jerusalem) and Ivanios, Episcopa of India, under the command of the Exalted Moran Mor Ignatius Patriarch, ruling on the throne of Antioch, consecrated by the Holy ghost as the Metropolitan of our Jacobite people residing in the country of Malabar. We, after imparting our peace and blessing unto our dear and beloved children, heirs to the kingdom of heaven and the first body of servants, being the clean priests, graceful deacons, vicars, headmen, chieftains, noblemen, learned men, wise men, merchants, rich men, artisans, great and small, being our Jacobite Syrian people residing in Malabar, do hereby inform our spiritual children that this Joseph Mor Dionysius, Metropolitan, being thereunto chosen by the Holy Spirit has been made by that Holy Spirit worthy to be called by that name, to be a Shepherd, Prelate and Ruler of God's Church, and to walk in the ways of perfection in all goodness, meekness, fasting, incessant prayers, love towards the poor and the humble, and with all spiritual instruction; and you now hear and understand that he is worthy and competent to be Shepherd and Prelate. Just as our Lord Jesus Christ granted to His holy Apostles, we have, by the command of Moran Mor Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, given him power to bind and loose, to judge according to the law and precepts, to ordain priests and deacons, to consecrate sanctuaries and churches, to accomplish everything lawful to the people who follow his tenets according to the canons of the Jacobite Syrians, and to perform mass. You should honour him. You, ordained priests, should be unto him as priests ordained by him. Wherefore also, should henceforth this our brother Mor Dionysius, Metropolitan, interdict anyone, be that person a chorepiscopa, monk, priest, deacon, man, youth, woman, small or great, such person will be one cursed and rejected by God, by

Moran Mor Ignatius Patriarch, and by our feeble selves. Should this Mor Dionysius Metropolitan, bless anyone, that person will receive blessing from God, from Moran Mor Ignatius Patriarch, and from our feeble selves. We, feeble and weak, implore God that in His mercy He may fill you with joy, bless you with all blessings, amplify to you all goodness, and save you from all harassing trials and punishments. May He shelter you with His mighty right hand, and make you and your dead hear the joyful words addressed to those on the right-hand side: "Coe, ye blessed of my Father, enter in, and inherit ye the kingdom prepared for you before the beginning of the world." May this be, by the prayers of the Blessed Virgin Mary, *the Mother of God*, of Mor John the Baptist, St. Peter, St. Paul, the other chosen Apostles, Saints, Martyrs, and Confessors. *Amen.*

Given this 19th Haseeron (June) in the year 2081 of the Greek era (A.D. 1770).

Appendix VI
(Ref. Chapter XIX)

SEVENTEEN QUESTIONS PUT TO MOR THOMA VIII BY
THE MADRAS GOVERNMENT IN 1813

1st question. When were the Syrian practices and Church first introduced into the country? By whom? How were they confirmed and widened afterwards?

2nd question. As subject to the authority of what superior have the Syrians been obeying laws and rules? From where do *Metrans* and other dignitaries take their authority? To whom do you apply for determination of questions on ordinances?

3rd question. What kind of authority has the Patriarch of Antioch exercised over the Syrian Church?

4th question. What is the rule as to succession of Metropolitans in the Syrian churches, and what is done on the death of a Metropolitan?

5th question. What is the authority on which the measures for the propagation of the creed are now based in the Syrian Church? What are the orders of the clergy, the number of priests, their offices, their emoluments, and the number of Syrians therein?

6th question. What are the powers exercised by the Metropolitan over the clergy? How are affairs conducted when his government of the Church ceases? How are priests appointed to high offices? What are the laws and orders relating to priests and the usage thereon, the authorities relating thereto, and the punishments for the offending laity?

7th question. What arrangements are there for the education and instruction of priests and laymen? Are there any places for education? If there are, how many? What is taught there? What books are studied? What arrangements are there for the supervision of these places?

8th question. What books are there among the Syrians for the imparting of religious knowledge? Is the Holy Bible generally understood?

9th question. What properties do the Syrian churches own? What income is derived from the people? What is the usual expense in the churches? What are the means therefor?

10th question. Are there any schools and any funds for the education of children? If there are not, what aid is required?

11th question. Do the Sirkar officials and others oppress the Syrians in any way? Do they do anything obstructive to the performances of religious rites?

12th question. What orders or arrangements are required for the good of the Syrian Church?

13th question. Do any of the heathen join the Syrian persuasion? Do Syrians go off to the heathen religion?

14th question. What are the articles of the creed which the Syrians follow and believe? What are the differences from the heretical doctrines of the Greek Church?

15th question. What are the forms of worship of the Syrians? Are priests allowed to marry?

16th question. Give an account of the union that subsisted between the Syrians and the Latins. Is there any new (present?) correspondence between the basis of the faith, usages and practices of the Syrians, and the practices of the Roman Catholics?

17th question. How long has the *dignity* of Metropolitan been vested in the present family? How was ordination kept up when the connection with the Patriarch of Antioch broke up?

Appendix VII
(Ref. Chapter XX)

NINAVU, OR GRANT OF LAND, FOR THE ERECTION OF THE
SYRIAN SEMINARY AT KOTTAYAM, ISSUED BY HER HIGHNESS
THE RANI OF TRAVANCORE IN 1814.

(TRANSLATION)

To

Ouseph Rramban

(*Joseph Ramban*, afterwards Mor Dionysius II)

Whereas you have come here and represented that there is no seminary for giving religious instruction to the *Puthencoor* Syrian Christians and that some land should be given for building such upon, a site has been determined upon therefore, in the *Govindapuram Kara*, Kottayam *Proverthi*, the boundaries whereof being: west of the way lying north to south and used for taking the *Tirunakkarai Devan* in procession to the river for *Arat*; north of *Idanal*; east of the *Cownar river*; and south of the *Arat* landing place, the way, and the *Cownar river*. Within these four boundaries land to the extent of 120 *dennoos* north to south and 60 *dennoos* east to west is granted on *anubogam* tenure from the 6th day of Kartigai in M.E. 990 for building a seminary upon. The tax of $6\frac{1}{4}$ fanams per annum payable to the *Sirkar* thereon has been given up to meet the expense of a lamp to be lighted; wherefore a seminary shall be accordingly erected thereon and the money allowed for the light shall be used for such purpose; and the same shall be held and enjoyed thus by the Ramban and succeeding Rambans as *anubogam*. In witness whereof, this *ninavu* is written by *Valia Meleluthu Yogeewaran Raman*, this 6th day of *Dhanu* in M.E. 990 (A.D. 1814) by Royal Command.

Appendix VIII
(Ref. Chapter XX)

EXTRACTS FROM A LETTER WRITTEN BY THE SYRIAN
METROPOLITAN (MOR DIONYSIUS III) TO THE CHURCH
MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN 1821

(Translated from the Syriac original, by Professor Lee).

May this letter come in peace and safety to Lord Gambier, Head of the Society which is in the Church of England, from the School at Kottayam.

JAH

In the Name of the Eternal and Necessary Existence, the Almighty. From Mor Dionysius, Metropolitan of the Jacobite Syrians in Malabar, subject to the authority of our Father, Mor Ignatius Patriarch, who presides in the Apostolic See of Antioch of Syria, beloved of the Messiah, love from Christ, and from the people of all the churches, to Lord Gambier, the illustrious, honourable and renowned President; and to our Brother Mar Henry, the honoured Bishop and of the City of Gloucester; and to the Priests and Deacons, and true Christians, great and small, in the Church of England, who are devoted to these things and are mindful of them, who both assist and provide that we should teach and preach the precepts of our Lord Jesus Christ; love from God, and grace from His only begotten Son, and protection from the Holy Ghost, be with you all evermore. *Amen.*

Beloved, kind and honoured Brethren in Christ, we would make known to you, in a few words, what had happened to us from the depth of our poverty.

We, who are called Syrian Jacobites, and reside in the land of Malabar, *even from the times of Mor Thomas, the holy Apostle*, until the wall of Cochin was taken in the reign of King Purgis kept the true Faith according to the manner of the Syrian Jacobites of real glory, without division or confusion. But, by the power of the *Franks*, our Jacobite-Syrian fathers and leaders were prohibited from coming from Antioch and, because we had no leader and

head, we were like sheep without a shepherd; or like orphans and widows, oppressed in spirit without support or help. By the power and domination of the Franks, moreover and by the abundance of their wealth, and the exertions of their leaders, all our syriac churches in Malabar were subdued, and turned to the Faith of the Pope of Rome.

In the year of Our Lord 1653, came our spiritual father Mor Ignatius, the Patriarch, from Antioch to Malabar: but when the Franks knew this, they brought the holy man to the walls of Cochin, imprisoned him in a cell, and gave no small money to the King of Cochin. They then brought out the good man, and drowned him in the sea and so put him to death. But when we knew this, all the Jacobite Syrians in Malabar assembled in the church of *Mattancheri*, which is in Cochin, and we swore a great oath, by the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, that henceforth *we would not adhere to the Franks, nor accept the faith of the Pope of Rome*: We accordingly separated from them. A short time, after this, some of our people again joined them, and received the faith of the Pope.

Again, in the year of Our Lord 1753, came to us some holy Jacobite Syrian fathers from Antioch, who turned us to our true ancient faith, and set up a High Priest for us.

We now have fifty-five Jacobite Syrian churches in Malabar; and as the Franks are more powerful and rich than we are, they are hourly laying the trap of the Pope for us, and endeavouring to take us in it; and, by the power of a kingdom filled with idols, the heathen have subdued us Jacobite Syrians, just as Pharaoh, King of Egypt subdued the children of Israel, and had no pity.

And as the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, and delivered the children of Israel from the house of bondage of pharaoh, king of Egypt, so that Lord beheld our sorrows and afflictions and there have been sent to us an illustrious leader named Macaulay, and Mar Buchanan, the illustrious Priests and when they came to us, and saw our subjugation and sorrow and poverty, they brought us forth from the house of bondage, and consoled us with kind words, and assisted us with money.

After this, another illustrious leader was sent to us, named Munro: and as Joshua, the son of Nun, brought Israel to the Land

of Promise and put them in possession of Canaan, so did this illustrious, discerning and prudent leader bring back and save us poor people from the hand of violence and he built a school and a church for us in the place named Kottayam: which he did with great trouble labour and expense, in order that our eyes made dim by the depth of our poverty, might be opened by the knowledge of the declarations of the Holy and Divine Books. Moreover all the Deacons and children who are taught in the school of our place, are cherished by the assistance of this illustrious leader.

Again, the Priest Benjamin [Bailey], the Priest Joseph [Fenn], and the Priests Henry [Baker], our spiritual and temporal friends, brothers and assistants whom you have sent us that they may root out the thorns and tares from among the children of God, are anxiously seeking all the requisites for the redemption of our souls, as well as constantly teaching all the Deacons and children of our place the English language.

The books of the New Testament which you sent to us, we divided and gave to the Churches in Malabar; and with great joy every man presents his prayer unto God for you: and we trust in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is merciful to those who shew mercy, that He will give you a good reward in the Day of Judgment even thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold, for your work and labour for us, and that He will make us rejoice with you. But we are unable to recompense you by any earthly riches: the more, however shall we supplicate God daily that your dominion may be increased and that He will tread you under your feet: and daily may your preaching in Christ Jesus be increased; and may God raise up among you leaders who fear God, and who are kind to the poor, endued also with knowledge and prudence.

We have heard, too, that the people of your land are beseeching God for us, that He would supply and complete that which is defective and imperfect, both in our bodies and in our souls.

Respecting Samuel [Lee], the Priest, who is held in honour by us, we received the letter which he sent by the hand of Joseph the Priest, and we read and understood what was written in it, and very much did we rejoice, with exceeding great joy, on account of your friendship for us. And may the Lord, who both hears prayers and grants petitions, lengthen your lives and increase your peace.

But we call to mind the adage, "A glance is enough for the intelligent", and avoid prolixity. Besides, James [Hough], the honoured Priests, will make known to you all that is going on among us. And, I the Metropolitan, Mor Dionysius, your friend very cordially salute you; also Abraham, the Priest, our obedient servant, and all the Deacons and children that are in the school. All the Priests, moreover, and Deacons, and the churches in Malabar, salute you. May grace be with you all. Even so, *Amen.*

Our Father, which art in Heaven, etc.

Remain firm in the power of Jesus.

In the year of Our Lord 1821, on the 3rd of the month Ranung, the first Friday. From the School at Kottayam.

MOR DIONYSIUS
Metropolitan of Malabar.

Appendix IX
(Ref. Chapter XXIII)

EXTRACT FROM THE SERMON DELIVERED BY BISHOP WILSON
OF CALCUTTA IN THE SYRIAN CHURCHES AT KOTTAYAM AND
KANDANAD IN 1835

(Translation from *the vernacular*, published by the missionaries in 1835. See Howard, *The Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies*, p. 101)

If I may venture to give you a piece of advice, I desire to make certain suggestions calculated to the good of your Church, in order that you may enter this open door fully. They are:

1. That the college should be respected according to your agreement with Col. Munro and none but those who produce certificates of learning and piety *from the missionaries* should be ordained.

2. That the accounts of money and property of all churches should be annually audited by the *British Resident and the persons whom he nominates*.

3. That the clergy should be supported by some permanent means, instead of fees paid for the *illegal practice of prayers for the dead*.

4. That schools should be established in all parishes, and priests and teachers should be instructed there.

5. That arrangement should be made to expound the Word of God everywhere in the manner in which you now do in some places.

6. That all prayers should be read in the language which the people understand, as you now translate prayers in some places, and for this purpose, you should select one of the several Liturgies now in use, and translate it by the authority of the *Metran* and priests, *making necessary changes and corrections*.

Appendix X
(Ref. Chapter XX)

RESOLUTIONS OF THE MEETING HELD AT
MAVELIKARA IN 1836

(Translation from the vernacular copy preserved in the office (at Trivandrum) of the British Resident in Travancore and Cochin).

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the one true God: *Padyola* [agreement] drawn up in the year of our Lord 1836, corresponding to 5th Makaram 1011 M.E. in the church of the Virgin Mother of God at Mavelikara, by Mor Dionysius [*the Fourth*], Metropolitan of the Jacobite Syrian Church of Malankara, and his suffragan Mor Kurilos [of *Thoziyur* church], and the vicars, priests and parishioners of *Angamali* and other churches under the charge of the Metropolitan, subject to the supremacy of Mor Ignatius Patriarch, the Father of Fathers and Chief of Chiefs, ruling on the Petrine throne at Antioch, the mother of all churches.

Whereas at an interview held at Kottayam between the Rev. Daniel, Lord Bishop of Calcutta and the Metropolitan in November last, it was proposed by the former that certain changes should be introduced in the Liturgies and ordinances of our Syrian Church, and whereas it was stated in reply that a conference of the churches would be held on the subject and its determination made known; we the Jacobite Syrians, being subject to the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch and observing as we do the Liturgies and ordinances instituted by the prelates sent under his command, cannot deviate from such Liturgies and ordinances and maintain a discreet contrary thereto; and a man of one persuasion being not authorised to preach and admonish in the church of another following a different persuasion without the permission of the respective Patriarchs, we cannot permit the same to be done among us, the churches being built by the aid of the prelates that under the orders of the Patriarch and by the people of each parish, and ornamented by their properties and as the accounts of the annual income accounting to our churches under the head of voluntary contributions, offerings etc. are as required by the rule furnished to our Bishops, as is the custom in the churches of

Antioch as well as in the churches of this and other countries following different persuasions we are without the power and feel disinclined, to follow, and cause to be followed, a different procedure from the above.

The Hon. Col. Macaulay [the British Resident in Travancore] having taken a loan of three thousand pagodas from Mar Dionysius the Great [*the First*]. Who died in M.E. 983 [A.D. 1808], gave him a bond for the same. The interest on this amount having fallen in arrears Mor Dionysius [*the Second*], Metropolitan, who died in M.E. 992, made a representation to Col. Munro [the British Resident in Travancore] and received the interest, with which he (Dionysius) built the Seminary at Kottayam. Having also collected at the Seminary the money brought by the prelates that had come here from Antioch and the property left by the late Bishop of the Pakalomattam family, Mor Dionysius invested in landed property a portion of this, together with the donation made by Her Highness the Rani on behalf of Syrian youths, and therewith met the expenses of their education. The revered missionaries who have come to Kottayam in their profuse benevolence taught the youths at the Seminary English and other languages, protected our children like loving fathers caused books to be printed for the benefit of all classes of people, rendered all necessary help in maintaining the prevailing ordinances of our Church caused the affairs of the Seminary to be administered with the annual interest drawn on the receipt of the Metropolitan, and allowed ordinations to be made agreeable to the request of the people and the authority and discretion of the prelates. While affairs were being thus conducted the missionaries took to managing the Seminary affairs without consulting the Metropolitan and themselves expended the interest money drawn on the receipt of the Metropolitan, dispersed from the Seminary. Some of the deacons who were under instruction, conducted affairs in opposition to our discipline, and created schisms amongst us, all of which have occasioned much sorrow and vexation. For this reason we would not follow any faith or teaching other than *the Orthodox faith* and teaching of the Jacobite Syrian Christians, to the end that we may thereby obtain salvation *through the prayers of the ever happy, holy and ever blessed Mother of God*, the redresser of complaints, and *through the prayers of all saints*. May the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost be witness to it. *Amen.*

Appendix XI
(Ref. Chapter XX)

THE AWARD OF THE ARBITRATORS, 1840

Certain controversies having arisen between the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church and the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society in regard to their rights in certain property connected with the College at Kottayam, and the parties having agreed to submit their differences to arbitration, we, Conrad Baron D'Albedyll, John Scipio Vernede and William Henry Horsely, having been nominated and appointed by the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church and the Travancore Government respectively as Arbiters to enquire into and decide upon the points at issue, have according examined all the documents produced before us connected with the subjects in dispute, have heard what both parties have adduced in support of their respective claims, and, after a mature consideration of the whole case, have arrived at the following decision on the several items submitted to our arbitration.

2. *Star Pagodas 3,000.* This sum was invested in the Honourable Company's funds in the year 1808, through the then Resident, Col. Macaulay, by the Rev. Mor Thoma [Mor Thoma VI], the then Bishop of the ancient Syrian Church of Malabar, as a loan in perpetuity for charitable purpose solely, at the usual rate of interest for such loans, *viz.*, 8 per cent. per annum. This sum being indisputably the property of the Syrian Community, we are of opinion that the Church Missionary Society have no claim or right whatever to any future interference in the management. We therefore award that Col. Macaulay's bond or receipt for the said sum be returned to the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church; and that the purposes for which the high interest of 8 percent has been heretofore given by the Madras Government may be fully carried into effect, we further award that the disposal of the said interest shall in further be under the management of the Metropolitan for the time being of the Syrian Church conjointly with two others,

an ecclesiastic and a respectable Syrian of the same persuasion to be selected by the Syrian Community itself.

3. *Rs. 8,000.* This sum was a donation from the Travancore Government in 1816 in consequence of an application from the Syrians belonging to the church at Thiruvalla for assistance to enable them "to prosecute the study of the Holy Scriptures according to the custom of their sect" as the grant expresses it. It was paid over for that purpose to the then Metropolitan as the Head of the whole Syrian Community. The means by which this object was to be attained are ascertainable from an autograph letter of Col. Munro to the address of the Rev. Marmaduke Thompson, dated 5th January 1816, in which he states: "*The principal object of the establishment of a College in Travancore was to instruct the Catanars and officiating priests among the Syrians in a complete knowledge of the Syrian language in which they are at present too generally deficient. With the study of the Syriac language, would, of course, be combined that of the Scriptures and other religious books written in that language. Another object was to procure copies of the Scriptures in the Syriac language; and it was intended that the students in the course of their education should transcribe the Bible to the greatest possible extent "Many, I may say most, of the churches", says Col. Munro, "are destitute of the Bible, either in the Syriac or Malayalam language."* The plan of the College was also intended to comprehend a system of instruction in Malayalam to the priests and the laity, and translating the Scriptures and religious books into that language for general circulation and use. It further appears from the extracts from Col. Munro's letter given in the *Church Missionary Register* of 1816 that, previously to the arrival of English missionaries at Kottayam, the translation of the Scriptures into Malayalam was in progress under the supervision of the then Bishop of the Syrians. It is, in our opinion, therefore evident that the intention of the donor was that the prosecution of the study of the Scriptures was to be carried on through the instrumentality of their own Bishop and priests, and the grant was given not only irrespectively of the missionaries, but previous to their arrival at Kottayam. We therefore award that the said sum of Rs. 8,000 be delivered to the present *Metran* to be held in trust by him and his successors jointly with two others, an ecclesiastic and a respectable layman of the Syrian persuasion, to be selected by the Syrian

Community itself, and to be appropriated solely to the purpose for which it was granted— "the prosecution of the study of the Holy Scriptures by means of the dissemination of the Bible and other religious works in the vernacular tongue amongst the Syrians in general" - and we further award that the trustees shall be required to furnish to the Sirkar an annual statement showing the means in which the said sum of Rs. 8,000 is laid out or expended

4. *Rs. 20,000.* This sum was *granted in the year 1818 by the Travancore Government as an endowment for the support of the College at Kottayam*, with directions from Col. Munro, the then British Resident, to the Rev. B. Bailey to invest it in lands and to assume the direction and management of this and all the other funds belonging to the College, employing with him a Committee of the principal authorities attached to it. The money was accordingly laid out in lands and the title-deed drawn out in the joint names of the then *Metran* and the Rev. B. Bailey. Circumstances have, however, occurred which render it impossible for the trustees to continue to fulfil the duties of their trust jointly and it is therefore for us to determine which of the parties is entitled to a continuance of the trust; and to enable us to do so, we must refer to the objects of the endowment. The grand object contemplated by Col. Munro, through whose influence solely this money was obtained was the political, moral and religious renovation of the whole of the Syrian people through the instruction of English missionaries, and there is not the shadow of a reason to suppose that the benefactions then and subsequently granted by the liberality of the Travancore Government and of private individuals for a specific purpose to be attained by specific means, would ever have been conferred on the Syrians irrespectively of those means, *viz.*, the instruction to be afforded by the English missionaries and in this opinion we are fully borne out by the whole tenor of Col. Munro's autograph letters which have been produced before us. The *Metran* having, in Synod assembled, positively determined on having no further intercourse with the English missionaries, and having thus refused to execute the duties of the trust jointly with them, we have no alternative but to substitute a trustee in his stead. We therefore award that the future management of the said sum of Rs. 20,000 be entrusted to the

Rev. the Missionaries at Kottayam and their successors, the Secretary *pro tempore* to the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, and the British Resident for the time being or such person as the latter may authorise to act on his behalf, to be held by them in trust for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrians.

5. *Rs. 14, 035-1-6.* This sum having been raised by subscriptions from Europeans, solely on the representation and through the instrumentality of the Rev. the Missionaries at Kottayam, we award that it be held in joint trust by them and their successors the Secretary *pro tempore* of the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, and the British Resident for the time being or such persons as the latter may authorise to act on his behalf, to be appropriated exclusively to the purposes for which it was originally subscribed, *viz.*

1st, The circulation of useful works and especially the Holy Scriptures.

2nd. The instruction of youth.

3rd. The instruction of the clergy.

4th. The erection and enlargement of churches.

6. *The Cadamattam estate and money at interest thereon.* This estate having been the property of former *Metran*, we award that it and its title-deeds shall be made over to the present *Metran*, to be held in trust by him and his successors for the benefit of the Syrian Community in conformity to the custom which prevails in the Syrian Church in regard to the property of deceased *Metrans*.

7. *The land on which the College stands.* The *neet* or grant of this land being in the name of Joseph *Ramban* and his successors in office to be enjoyed on *arubogam* tenure, we award that it shall be given to the present *Metran* to be held in joint trust by him and two others, an ecclesiastic and a layman of the Syrian persuasion, to be selected by that community itself, for the benefit of the Syrians.

8. *The College at Kottayam.* This building having been erected principally from the interest of the three thousand star pagodas vested in the Honourable Company's funds, which is the undoubted property of the Syrian Community, we award that it be made over to the *Metran* and held in trust by him and two others, an ecclesiastic and a respectable layman of the Syrian persuasion, for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrian Community.

9. *The College chapel.* The chapel was built *by a donation of the Travancore Government of Rs. 500*, granted on the representation of the Rev. B. Bailey and through the influence of Col. Munro, and has ever since been entirely under the control and management of the former agreeably to the instructions of the latter. The presentation to it appears to have rested entirely with the Rev. the Missionaries, the officiating priest having always been selected from amongst the teachers in the College, and it does not see, to have been competent for the Metropolitan to have nominated anyone to it without the sanction of the missionaries as is the case with all the other Syrian churches over which he exerts unlimited control. It is therefore to all intents and purposes a benefice of the College; as then established; and the money expended on its erection belongs to the general funds of the College; but, as the latter building has been adjudged for the *Metran* etc. we are of opinion that it would not be advisable to place the chapel attached to it under a separate trust. We therefore award that this building also be held in trust by the *Metran* in the same manner as the College itself, and that the money expended in its erection, *viz.*, Rs. 500, be paid to the Missionaries from the general funds of the College for the purpose of building a chapel for the *new* College, which has been lately constructed by the Church Missionary Society solely at their own expense, for the purpose of continuing religious instruction to the Syrians by means of their own missionaries, and in fact, with the view of carrying into complete effect, in as far as in them lies, the objects contemplated by Col. Munro, both in obtaining endowment for the College, and funds for the erection of the chapel. The chapel so constructed shall be held in trust by the Rev. the Missionaries at Kottayam, the Secretary *pro tempore* of the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, and the British Resident for the time being or such person as the latter may authorise to act in his behalf, for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrian Community and their successors.

10. *Dining room and granary attached to the College.* These buildings being attached to the College, which has already been adjudged to be held in trust by the *Metran* etc., we award that they also shall be considered as belonging to the same trust.

11. *Rs 4,134-0-3, the produce of jewels the property of deceased*

Metran. Of this sum Rs. 1,174-14-0 were expended by *Ramban* Joseph, the then head of the Syrian Church, towards the erection of the College, which has been already adjudged to be held in trust by the *Metran*. The balance of Rs. 2,960-2-3, we view in the light of Church property, it being the produce of jewels which belonged to former *Metrans*, and as such, inalienable. We therefore award that it be repaid out of the general funds of the College to the present *Metran*, to be held in trust by him and his successors in conformity to the custom which prevails in the Syrian Church in regard to the property of the deceased *Metrans*.

12. *Munro Island or Culladay*. The *neet* or grant of this land being in the name of the Rev. Joseph Fenn and his successors, to be enjoyed on *anubogam* tenure, we award that it shall be held in joint trust for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrian Community, by the Rev. the Missionaries at Kottayam and their successors, the Secretary *pro tempore* of the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, and the British Resident for the time being or such person as the latter may authorise to act in his behalf. We would here remark that the circumstance of this property having been committed to the sole trust of the Rev. Joseph Fenn committed successors without any reference whatever to the Metropolitan is a strong presumption, nay, a proof; if further were requisite, as to the intentions of the Rani in regard to her donation of Rs. 20,000.

13. *The three years' interest on the three thousand star pagodas, amounting to Rs. 2,520, for the years 1835, 1836 and 1837*. This sum is arrears of income due to the College, and not drawn in consequence of the *Metran's* refusal to sign the necessary receipts. As the functions of the College, were never suspended, notwithstanding the differences that had arisen between the *Metran* and the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, we are of opinion that as the interest of three thousand star pagodas has always constituted a portion of the income of the College ever since its establishment, the interest for these years is due to the funds of that College up to the time of the sale of the College property by the Government Commissioner, and we therefore award that the sum in question *viz.* Rs. 2,520, shall be paid into the general funds of the College. The *Metran*, in his English

statement delivered to the Committee, alleges that the interest of the three thousand star pagodas was drawn by former *Metrans* for their subsistence. This, however, is evidently incorrect. The *Metrans* had no fixed income from the College till the Rev. Mr. Bailey proposed and Col. Munro sanctioned the appropriation for that purpose, as the autograph letter from Col. Munro expresses it, from the College funds of the sum of Rs. 50 per mensem, which was subsequently increased to Rs. 70. That the latter amount is the same as the interest of the above money, *viz.* three thousand star pagodas, is merely an accidental coincidence.

14. *The interest of the three thousand star pagodas subsequent to the arrival of the Government Commissioner.* The separation of the *Metran* and the Missionary Society having virtually taken place on the arrival of the Government Commissioner, we are of opinion that all the College expenses incurred subsequent to that event must be defrayed from the funds derived from the bounty of the Travancore Government and from other sources for that express purpose but not from the *bona fide* property of the Syrian Community. We therefore award that the interest of the three thousand star pagodas from the period of the sale of the College lands up to the present period be received by the *Metran*, to be held in trust by him and two others, an ecclesiastic and a respectable layman of the Syrian persuasion, to be selected by the Syrians themselves, for the *exclusive* benefit of the whole of the Syrian Community.

15. Rs. 1000. This was donation to the College from the Rev. Joseph Fenn on his leaving Kottayam. This sum having been expended for the building of a church in common with other College moneys by the donor himself he was in charge of the College funds, award that the church in question shall remain with the Community for whom it was built and who now hold possession of it.

16. *Amount of salaries due to the servants of the College viz. chackrams 5,170 and 4 cash.* It appears that these servant were continued in employ till November 1838 after the arrival of the Government Commissioner, by that other himself, their services having been acquired by him. We therefore arrived that the sum in question be given to the Rev. B. Bailey from the general funds

of the College for the purpose of it being and to the servants to whom it belongs.

17. Expenses of the College from	Rs.	A.	P.
24th May to 30th Sept. 1838...	668	12	0
Expenses of the College from			
1st Oct. to 31st Dec. 1839.....	2, 290	7	11 ³ / ₄
	<hr/>		
	2, 959	3	11 ³ / ₄
Deduct revenue of Munro Island for the whole of the above period which has been received by the missionaries.....		679	10
		<hr/>	
	Rs.2, 279	9	11 ³ / ₄
	<hr/>		
	<hr/>		

It appears from the College accounts and also from the evidence taken by the Committee that the operations of the College as before stated were never for a moment suspended, and that when the Government Commissioner arrived with powers to dispose of all the College property (with the sanction of both the *Metran* and the missionaries, as if proved from the letters of both parties, the former objecting only to the sale of property belonging to former *Metrans*) it became necessary to remove the boys to other building to which the Syrian Malpans and Syrian teachers together with some of the College property were also transferred. The tuition of the boys therefore was never for a moment interrupted, though necessity required a change in the locality of the place of instruction. On the sale of the property, however, no funds were available, with the exception of the revenue of Munro Island (which was not disposed of), the proceed of the College property having been deposited in the Resident's Treasury. The missionaries, considering themselves bound to continue the duties imposed on them by Col. Munro till formally relieved of the trust, were under the necessity of applying for assistance to enable them to defray the current expenses of the College, to the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society ³/₄ are fully and justly entitled to repayment of the same, and we therefore award that the sum so lent, *viz.*, Rs. 2,279-9-11³/₄ be repaid to them from the general funds of the College.

18. Rs. 1,000, a gift from the Sirkar which preceded the donation of Rs. 20,000. Of this sum, Rs. 500 has already been accounted for under the head of the College chapel. The remainder was appropriated by the directions of Col. Munro to the completion of the College itself, which latter has been awarded to be held in trust by the Metran for the benefit of the Syrian Community.

19. *Surplus in the Treasury after settlement of all demands* on original grants and loans, including the value of paddy in store as well as arrears of rent etc. due to the College of Kottayam

Rs.	A.	P.	
up to 31st December 1839, amounts to....	15,245	0	0
Surplus in cash in the Treasury	6,746	7	3 ³ / ₄
Arrears of rent etc. about	8,223	14	0
Value of paddy in store.....	274	10	8 ¹ / ₂
	<hr/>		
	Rs. 15,245	0	0
	<hr/>		

The surplus in the Treasury was derived from the disposal of the College lands, which realised a larger sum than their original cost in consequence of their improved condition at the time of the sale. As this improvement is to be ascribed to the good management of the Rev. Missionaries and of the committee of the Syrians associated with them and acting under their directions, we can see no more equitable mode of disposing of it as well as of the amount of arrears of rent and of the value of the paddy in store than to divide the whole sum (Rs. 15,245-0-0) into shares proportioned respectively to the capital invested by the Metropolitan and to the property of the College itself derived from the liberality of the Travancore Government and other sources.

The shares are as follows:

	Rs.	A.	P.
To the Metropolitan on Rs. 22,634.....	6,088	15	5
to the Corresponding Committee of the Church Missionary Society, for the College, on Rs. 34,035.....	9,156	0	7
	<hr/>		
	Rs. 15,245	0	0
	<hr/>		

and we award that they be added respectively to the former amounts adjudged to the parties, to be held in trust by them in the same manner and under the same conditions as the principal sums already entrusted to their respective management.

20. *Grants on copper-plates conferring privileges on the Syrians as well as ordination papers etc.* The Metropolitan as *head of the Syrian Church* is of course entitled to the possession of these documents which have reference to periods long antecedent to the foundation of the College and to the arrival of the missionaries. We award, therefore, that they be returned to the present Metropolitan.

21. Though aware that the complaint of the Metropolitan concerning the abstraction of certain little deeds etc. from his custody by the Rev. Joseph Peet was not cognizable by us, we considered it necessary both for the ends of justice and for the satisfaction of all parties to make such enquiries into the circumstance as might enable us to ascertain if the abstraction above adverted to had been followed by any loss of papers or documents which might have thrown light on the subjects submitted to our arbitration. We have accordingly examined the Rev. B. Bailey on this point, and from his evidence it appears that after his return from England, on receiving charge from the Rev. J. Peet of the box containing the documents in question, he found that they corresponded with a list drawn up in triplicate by the Rev. H. Baker previous to the latter's departure for England, one copy of which was deposited in the box containing the documents, another was given to the Metropolitan, and the third presented by Mr. Baker himself to the then British Resident.

22. As the realisation of the arrears of rent to the College would in our opinion be attended with great difficulties to any private individual, we beg to suggest the expediency of the appointment of a commissioner by the Sirkar for the purpose; and with regard to the Munro Island, as the management of landed property is quite foreign to the office of a missionary, tending, as it must unavoidably do, to divert his mind from the high duties of his calling, and as the missionaries themselves are very desirous of being relieved of the trouble necessarily attending it, we beg to recommend that this island be resumed by the Sirkar and that a

pecuniary equivalent be granted in compensation as proposed on a former occasion by Col. Munro and acceded to by His Highness the Raja of Travancore, the amount of such equivalent to be held in trust by the Rev. Missionaries at Kottayam and their successors, the Secretary *pro tempore* of the corresponding committee of the Church Missionary Society, and the British Resident for the time being or such person as the latter may authorise to act in his behalf for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrian Community.

23. We think it necessary in conclusion to state that the claims of either party not disposed of in the above Award have been rejected as invalid.

24. Not having been sufficiently explicit in regard to the manner in which the interest of the three thousand star pagodas, *viz.*, Rs. 2,520, for the years 1835, 1836 and 1837, is to be disposed of we further award that this sum on being realised shall be divided between the parties in the same proportion as has already been adjudged under the head of the surplus in the Resident's Treasury, to be held in trust by them in like manner and under the same conditions as the principal sums already entrusted to their respective management.

Done at Cochin this 4th day of April in the year of our Lord 1840.

D'ALBEDYLL
J.S.VERNEDE
W.H.HORSELY

Appendix XII
(Ref. Chapter XXI)

ROYAL PROCLAMATION DATED 15TH KARKADAKEM 1027
(A.D. 1852)

Whereas Mor Dionysius [the Fourth], Metropolitan, residing at Kottayam, has resigned his dignity on account of old age, and whereas Mor [Mathew] Athanasius, *who has brought a letter from Antioch for that dignity*, has been appointed as Metropolitan, it is hereby proclaimed:

That all, comprising Puthenoor Syrians in the Edavagay Diocese of Malankarai, should acknowledge the said Mor Athanasius Metropolitan, and conduct themselves in conformity with past custom.

Appendix XIII
(Ref. Chapter XXI)

ROYAL PROCLAMATION DATED 23RD KUMBAM 1051.
(A.D. 1876)

Proclamation by His Highness Sree Padmanabha Das Kireetapathi Mannay Sultan Maharaj Rajaj Rama Rajah Bahadur Shamsheer Jung, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Maha Rajah of Travancore.

Whereas by a Proclamation dated 15th *Karkadakam* 1027 was notified that Mor [Mathew] Athanasius has been appointed to the post of *Metran* of the Syrian Church by letter from Antioch and whereas representations have been made that the Patriarch of Antioch or his predecessor claims to have deposed the said Mr. Athanasius and to have appointed another *Metran*, this is to inform all whom it may concern, that:

The former Proclamation is not to be considered as in any way precluding the entertainment and decision by the ordinary Courts of Law of any questions as to the rights in, or ownership of, any churches or property connected therewith or as to the power of appointment or removal of officers connected therewith.

With regard to all such matters and to any other dispute that may arise from the alleged deposition of one *Metran* and the appointment of another, the action of His Highness the *Maharajah's* Government will be confined to the maintenance of peace and good order.

Any apparent connection with appointments relating to the Syrian Church which Proclamations issued under times and circumstances now altered may seem to indicate will henceforth be avoided.

All parties will be clearly given to understand that they are to seek such remedies as they may deem themselves entitled to through the established courts of the country.

Appendix XIV

LIST OF BISHOPS WHO HAVE PRESIDED OVER THE CHURCH OF MALABAR FROM A.D. 1490 TO A.D. 1909

- Mor Thomas and Mor John: Deputed in 1490; Thomas returned to the "Babylon" region; John remained in India.
- Mor Jaballaha (David) Mar Denaha (George) Mar Jacob (Musud): All chosen from the Monastery of St. Eugenius (a few miles east of Nisibin); sent together in 1503.
- Abuna* Jacob: (1504-1549) died in 1549; was on friendly terms with the Portuguese, especially with St. Francis Xavier, who designated him as *Armenian* bishop, and called him *abuna* Jacob, while he called himself "*Jacome abuna, Armenian priest.*"
- Mar Joseph (1558-1569); sent by the *Romanised* Nestorian patriarch at Mosul in 1555; arrived in 1558(?); was deported to Europe by the Portuguese; was allowed to return to Malabar when Mar Abraham took charge of the Diocese, but was again deported to Europe, where he ended his life at Rome, in 1569.
- Mar Abraham (1568-1597); sent by the *Romanised* Nestorial Patriarch at Mosul in 1568; was deported to Europe; escaped from Portuguese hands; presented himself before the Pope, who appointed him Archbishop of Malabar. Died in 1597, at Angamali.
- Mar Simeon: Sent by the Nestorian Patriarch(?) in 1578. Was deported to Europe, and died in 1599 at Lisbon.
- Archbishop Menezis: Visited Malabar, convened the Synod of diamper in 1599, forced the whole Syrian community to accept the supremacy of the Pope, destroyed the ancient books and manuscripts, and returned to Goa, leaving the Diocese in charge of a Roman Catholic bishop.
- Francis Roz: Roman Catholic. Ruled from 1601 to 1624.
- Stephen De Brito: Roman Catholic. Ruled from 1624 to 1641.
- Francis Garcia: Roman Catholic. Appointed 1641. Ruled with an iron hand. The Syrians revolted, took an oath at *Coonen Cross*, and renounced Roman Catholicism in 1653.

- Mor Thoma I: Was Archdeacon. Temporarily acted as Bishop or the alleged authority received from Mor Ahattallah. Was persecuted by Carmelites and by the Raja of Cochin. Received regular consecration at the hands of Mor Gregorius of Jerusalem in 1665, and reestablished Jacobitism, thus acknowledging the supremacy of the Patriarch of Antioch. Died in 1670.
- Mor Thoma II: Consecrated by Mar Thoma I and Mor Gregorius. Ruled from 1670 to 1686. Received two Antiochian delegates, Mor Baselius and Mor Ivanios.
- Mor Thoma III: Consecrated by Mor Ivanios. Ruled from 1686 to 1688.
- Mor Thoma IV: Consecrated by Mor Ivanios. Ruled from 1688 to 1728. Had some correspondence with the Dutch authorities at Cochin. In his time one Bishop Gabriel came, sent by the *Romanised* Nestorian patriarch at Mosul, but was not received.
- Mor Thoma V: Consecrated by Mor Thoma IV. Applied to Antioch for delegates to confirm him. Three delegates, Mor Baselius, Mor Gregorius and Mor Ivanios, arrived. The Dutch who brought the delegates demanded Rs. 12,000 as passage money, which was not paid immediately. Consequently, the delegates were not on friendly terms with Mor Thoma V. He died in 1765.
- Mor Thoma VI *alias* Mor Dionysius I : First consecrated by Mor Thoma V, but reconsecrated by the delegates Mar Gregorius and Mor Ivanios. Persecuted by the Romo-Syrian landlord Mathoo Tarakan, who had the support of the Travancore civil authorities. Was a friend of Col. Macaulay. Welcomed Dr. Kerr and Dr. Buchanan, who visited the Syrian Church. Translated the four Gospels into the vernacular. Invested three thousand star pagodas in the Resident's Treasury. Died in 1808.
- Mor Thoma VII: Consecrated by Mar Thoma VI. Ruled from 1808 to 1809. The bond for the investment in the Resident's Treasury was issued in his name.
- Mor Thoma VIII: Consecrated on the death-bed of Mar Thoma VII. The validity of his consecration was disputed. He was asked seventeen questions by the Madras Government on

the history, doctrine and discipline of the Syrian Church. Died in 1815.

Mor Thoma IX. Was nominally consecrated by Mor Thoma VIII, but had to abdicate soon after consecration.

Mor Dionysius II: Previously known as Joseph Ramban. Consecrated by Philexinos of Tozhiyur in 1815. A friend of Col. Munro. Received the interest of the star pagodas invested in the Resident's Treasury and built the Kottayam Seminary. The Travancore Government granted him a donation of Rs. 8,000 to enable the Syrians to "prosecute the study of the Scriptures according to the custom of their sect". He received the first C.M.S. missionary, the Rev. Thomas Norton, and died in 1816.

Mor Philexinos: Was Bishop of Tozhiyur in British Malabar. On the death of Mar Dionysius II, he was proclaimed by the Travancore *Sirkar* as Bishop of Malankarai, but had to consecrate Mar Dionysius III and return to his own diocese.

Mor Dionysius III: Consecrated by Mor Philexinos in 1818. Allowed C.M.S missionaries to conduct education in the Syrian community. Had vast influence with the British Resident, which was made use of to get many Syrian Christians appointed as Judges and Magistrates. The Travancore Government granted money and landed property as endowments to the Seminary. He was outwardly on friendly terms with the C.M.S. missionaries, but inwardly he suspected their sincerity. He died in 1825.

Mor Dionysius IV: Consecrated by Mor Philexinos in 1825. Was friendly with the missionaries so long as they abstained from interference in matters of doctrine and ritual. They gradually began to interfere in such matters, which led to misunderstandings. Bishop Wilson of Calcutta visited him and proposed certain changes in doctrines and rituals. Held a Synod at Mavelikara in 1836, in which Bishop Wilson's proposals were rejected. The missionaries tried to revise the Liturgy and to introduce a "half Mass". Disruption followed. An arbitration held in 1840 divided the endowments, giving the lion's share to the C.M.S to be administered by them for the *exclusive* benefit of the Syrian Community. He died in 1855.

Mor Mathew Athanasius: Consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch at Mardin in 1843. Proclaimed by the Travancore Government in 1852. Excommunicated by the Patriarch, but retained his office and dignity by the influence he had with the Resident and the missionaries. He encouraged schisms and supported the labours of the C.M.S, which led to the disintegration of the Community. He founded the new Church (the *Mar Thoma* Syrian Church) in 1868. The Patriarch of Antioch visited Malabar in 1875 and induced the Travancore Government to issue a proclamation withdrawing all connection with the appointment and removal of bishops. Died in 1877.

Mor Dionysius V: Consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch in 1865. Died on 12th July 1909.

Appendix XV
(Ref. Chapter XXIII A)

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH TO BE READ IN CHURCH BY
PERSONS RECEIVING CONSECRATION AND ORDINATION

In the name of the one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy ghost, I, a sinful and humble servant, openly declare my confession of faith, before the Holy Chancel of God, before the most respected Father and Prelate Mar Ignatius... the Patriarch now ruling over the exalted and established See of Antioch, before the holy Fathers and assembly of Clergymen and of the faithful people.

My heart believing in the truth and my mouth confessing the same, I first of all declare the faith of the holy Fathers of the three holy Synods, the faith entrusted to us by the three hundred and eighteen holy Fathers.

1. We believe in the Almighty Father, the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth and of all things both visible and invisible; and in Jesus Christ, the one Lord, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all the worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not created, equal in essence to the Father, by Whose hand every thing was made, Who for us men, and for our salvation, descended from heaven, according to His sovereign will, and became man, having taken His body by the Holy ghost from the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; Who was crucified for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; Who suffered and was dead and buried; and He arose on the third day, and ascended into heaven, and sat on the right hand of His Father: and he, to Whose kingdom there is no end, cometh in great glory to judge both the dead and quick; and in one Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father and is worshipped and glorified together with the Father and the Son; and Who spake by the Prophets and the Apostles: and in one Holy church, we believe it is the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and we look for the resurrection of the dead, and for the new life in the world to come: *Amen.*

2. I believe and confess: the three Holy Persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, are undoubtedly one true God, in three relations, in three names: the Father begets, the Son is begotten, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and receives of the Son and is glorified with the Father and the Son: the three Holy Persons are equal in glory, greatness, power, honour and majesty, of one nature, one authority, one power, one will, one superiority, and one essence, are one creator, one worshipped, three persons in one Godhead, separated unity and united separation, one in three, three in one, one God, self-existing and eternal for ever and ever.

3. I believe and confess: one of the three Persons, the Word of the Father, *viz.*, the second Person, descended from heaven of His own will and of the will of His Father and of the Holy Ghost, and was conceived in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary by the annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel. He took flesh by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin: divinity united with humanity; and at the end of nine months. He was born of her in mystery incomprehensible to nature and senses, without breaking the seal of the virginity of His Mother, either at the time of His incarnation or at any other time before or after; when He, by whose glory the heaven and the earth are filled, was found laid naked in a manger heavenly and earthly bodies glorified Him; He was wholly in the bosom of His Father and wholly in the manger, without being separated; in His incarnation His divinity was not mixed with humanity nor His humanity with divinity; the natures were preserved without mixture and confusion; His divinity was not separated from His humanity nor humanity from divinity; the union is a miracle and a substantial union; the unity of divinity with humanity was substantial and inseparable; and the Word was made flesh and lived with us, as believed by the one Catholic and Apostolic Church.

4. I believe and confess: our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God, one nature, one will, one work, perfect God in divinity and perfect man in humanity, united in Godhead and manhood; he wrought many miracles small and great, such as he raised the dead to life by His power, gave light to the blind, and so on; He was of His will crucified, of His might rose from the dead

on the third day; all these He did as one Messiah and not in separated natures after unity; He himself raised the dead, suffered death on the wood of the cross, was laid in the tomb as one dead: He is, Who raises the dead to life and is expected to come to judge the living and the dead and to reward every man according to his works, whether good or bad.

5. I believe and confess: at the time of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ His divinity never separated from His humanity even for moment; His divinity never bore suffering, crucifixion and death, His death was only the separation of His soul from His body or soul; on the fortieth day after His resurrection, He ascended to heaven in His human body; he sat on the right side of His Father, and He cometh to reward every man according to his works, good or bad.

6. I believe and confess: our Lord Jesus Christ, after His glorious resurrection, appeared to His disciples when the door of the upper room of Sion was shut; He breathed on them and gave them the exalted power of priesthood; the Apostle St. Thomas, having felt His hands and bosom, believed in His divinity, and exclaimed: "My Lord and my God"; He on the fiftieth day after His resurrection confirmed His promises made to His disciples by sending to them the Holy Ghost, *the Paraclete*, by whose gifts they were filled with wisdom and power; the Apostles entrusted the great mystery to the generations that walk in their footsteps to the end of the world.

7. I believe and confess in the *seven* holy sacraments, which our Lord Jesus Christ granted to His Church for the good of her children; but they are not all necessary to salvation. I acknowledge that the holy books of the Pentateuch and the books of the Prophets are from the Holy Ghost. I acknowledge that the holy Gospels are true declarations made by the holy mouth of Christ, *viz.*, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the four being one book. I also acknowledge all the canons of the holy Church, and all decrees, texts, and rules of the Apostolic Church, from no one of which I will sever myself. I again acknowledge I am bound to honour the relics of the saints of the Church, as it is due to us to respect them. I believe all that trust in god and in them, the same will have their prayers heard by god. I confess all that the

holy Apostolic Church confesses, and I deny all that the holy Church denies.

8. I believe and confess all that the holy Fathers of the holy synods of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus have resolved and established; their canons being established by the Holy Ghost, I am bound to follow them.

9. I curse all the heretics that introduced destrictible heresies and consequently cut off themselves from membership in the Catholic and Apostolic Church *viz.*, such as were cursed by the Apostles, the holy Fathers of the three holy Synods, and by the successive Patriarchs of Antioch: I curse Simon the magician, Mani, Arius, Macedonius, Nestorius, Eutychus, the wicked Leo of Rome, Urbanus VIII, Hermisda, Marcica Paul of Shemishat, Barsom of Nisibin, and all other heretics that have joined their false and ruinous teachings, and all people that follow their doctrines against the Holy Ghost.

10. I confess before God that I acknowledge and honour all the holy Fathers that followed the faith of the Apostles and of the three holy Synods. I acknowledge and honour Mor Ignatius Nurono, Dionysius, Athanasius, Julius, Cyrilus, Basilius, Gregorius, Dioscoros, Severius, Timotheus, Philexinos, Antimus, Mar Barsom the exalted of the chosen, and all the holy Fathers and Doctors that have existed and may exist in the church of God, like unto them: And it is always lawful for me to be subject as is my duty to the Pontifical Dignity of the exalted, Mor Ignatius Patriarch, now occupying the Apostolic See of Antioch, which is immutable. I bind myself always to acknowledge and obey his commands. I make these my promises of my own free will, and not by force. I promise to obey his commands without deviation to the right or left, all the days of my life. I make these confessions before God, before His holy Chancel, before His holy Mystery. May the holy Angels, the living cross, the worshipful Gospels, the honourable assembly of Clergymen and the respectable congregation be witnesses to these my promises whenever I break them, disobey the commands of his Pontifical Dignity, shamelessly withstand His Holiness, and become his enemy, or join any Church other than that of the Orthodox [Jacobite Syrian] Church or acknowledge anything against the rules and texts of our Church, or

believe a doctrine against that of the three holy Synods; in that day, I shall be cursed and anathematised by St. Peter, the chief of the holy Apostles, by the eleven other Apostles, by Mor Ignatius Nuroño, by all the holy Fathers of the three holy synods, by all the Doctors inspired by the Holy ghost, and by the Supreme Pontiff., Mor Ignatius Patriarch, the true Steward of Jesus Christ and successor of St. Peter. I shall also become dismissed from the Church of God, excluded from the communion of the holy Mystery and from the gift I have newly received, and divested of the white robe of pontificate and the wrath of God shall descend on me. I shall also become liable to the curse and dismissed by His Holiness, by virtue of the power vested in him from God to judge all.

I pray to God for His blessings that I may be enabled and strengthened to fulfil rightly the terms of the promises I have made now; and I also beg of your Lordship to mediate for me before our Lord Jesus, that he may guard me, conduct me by His grace, and make me fit to meet Him with joy at His second advent to judge the quick and the dead. *Amen.*

Appendix XVI

A LIST OF ANTIOCHIAN DELEGATES IN THE CHURCH OF MALABAR SINCE THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

- Mor Ahattallah: Arrived in India 1653. Arrested and deported by the Portuguese.
- Mor Gregorius: Previously Jacobite Patriarch of Jerusalem, Arrived in Malabar in 1665. Consecrated Mor Thoma I and Mor Thoma II. Reintroduced Jacobitism. Died in 1670.
- Mor Basilius - *Maphrian* and Mor Ivanios I - bishop: Arrived together in 1785. The former died at Kothamangalam ten days after arrival. The latter consecrated Mor Thoma III and Mor Thoma IV, and died at Mulanthuruthi in 1693.
- Mor Ivanios II: Arrived in 1748 – Was unpopular. Recalled in 1751.
- Mor Basilius - *Maphrian* and Mor Gregorius - bishop and Mor Ivanios - bishop: Arrived together in 1751. Basil died at Kandanad in 1763. Gregorius and Ivanios reconsecrated Mor Thoma VI under the title Dionysius I. Gregorius alone consecrated one Cyril, the founder of the Diocese of Tozhiyur. Gregorius died at Mulanthuruthi in 1772, and Ivanios at Chengannur in 1794.
- Mor Dioscoros: Arrived in 1806. Deported by Col. Macaulay in 1808.
- Mor Athanasius Abdul Messiah: Sent in response to the application of Mor Dionysius III, Arrived in 1825. Deported by the Travancore Government on the recommendation of the C.M.S missionaries.
- Mor Cyrilus Joachim: Arrived in 1846. Died at Mulanthuruthi in 1874.
- Mor Athanasius Stephanos: Arrived in 1849. Visited England and appealed to the Court of directors of the East India Company against the order of the British Resident forbidding Antiochian bishops from residing in the country. The Court overruled the Resident's orders, the delegate returned to Antioch.

Mor Athanasius Simeon: Arrived in 1884. Died at Kottayam in 1887.

Mor Eustaitus Sleebo: Arrived in 1908.

The following prelates visited Malankara in the 20th century (K.M)

Mor Julius Elias entombed at Manjinikara.

Moran Mar Ignatius Yacoob III stayed at Manjinikara for twelve years while he was a Ramban. He visited Malankara to consecrate Mor Augen I as Catholicos of the East in 1964.

Mor Aprem Poulouse (late Athanasius) Ramban served at Manjinikara as the delegate of the See of Antioch. He left India in 1964.

Mor Aprem Aboodi (later Themotheose) Ramban served at Manjinikara as the delegate of the Patriarch of Antioch till 1973.

H.H. Ignatius Zakka I was Patriarch visited Malankara in 1982 and in 2001.

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Part II

The Indian Church of St. Thomas
Twentieth Century

1874

The Indian Church
Ireneau

The Indian Church of St. Thomas Twentieth Century Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil

Introduction:

E.M. Philip's history of the church concludes where Mor Dionasius Joseph Metropolitan wins the case with the reformist group and regained the Seminary, churches and properties. In the Malayalam translation of E.M. Philip by Mr. E.P. Mathew, published in the year 1951, an appendix is added to give a very brief developments in the church upto 1940. Here in this synopsis of events I would like to give here only the glimpses of the events. *The detailed history will be published as a separate volume.*

Two Metropolitans consecrated at Jerusalem

The Metropolitans consecrated by H.H. Patriarch Ignatius Peter III expired, other than Mor Ivanios Poulouse of Kandanadu. The Malankara Metropolitan Mor Dionasius Joseph in his old age wished to have his successors elected and consecrated. In 1908 the representatives of the parishes assembled at Old Seminary, Kottayam and elected Poulouse Ramban Kochuparambil and Geevarghese Malphan Vattasseril. They went to Jerusalem and H.H. Ignatius Abdulla II consecrated them as Metropolitans under the titular names, Mor Coorelose and Mor Dionasius respectively. Mor Osthathiose Sleebea was also consecrated as the Patriarchal delegate to Malankara.

Mor Dionasius VI

Mor Dionasius Joseph expired on July 11, 1909 and in his place Mor Dionasius Geevarghese took charge as Malankara Metropolitan.

Patriarch Mor Abdulla in Malankara

In 1909 H.H. Ignatius Abdulla II came to Malankara for an apostolic visit. Mor Dionasius and the church leaders received His Holiness at Bombay and after meeting high officials H.H. came

to Kerala. Royal receptions were accorded to His Holiness, mainly at Trivandrum and Kottayam.

The Split Begins

The Malankara Association trustees Konattu Mathan Corepiscopa and Mr. C.J. Kurian had differences of opinion with the Metropolitan trustee, Mor Dionasius. The representative meeting held on Nov. 25, 1909 ended in confusion due to the division among the members who sided with the Metropolitan and the Trustees. Great rivalry grew up and the Metropolitan's party accused the Patriarch for all the problems. Finally H.H. the Patriarch had to excommunicate Mor Dionasius on May 31, 1911. The meeting held at Aluva on August 30, 1911 elected Mor Coorelose as the Malankara Metropolitan. The meeting held at Kottayam repudicated the authority of the Patriarch.

Mor Athanasius and Mor Severios

H.H. the Patriarch consecrated Poulouse Mor Athanasius on June 10, 1910 and Mor Severios Geevarghese on August 31, 1910. H.H. consecrated Holy Chrism (Holy Mooron) at Mulanthuruthy on August 19, 1911.

Mor Abdul Messiah in Malankara

Mor Abdul Messiah was reigning as the Patriarch of Antioch till 1905. He was removed from office by the Synod and the Sultan of Turkey withdrew the recognition due him. The Dionasius party brought Mor Abdul Messiah in 1912. He consecrated Mor Ivanios Poulouse as Catholicose and three other as Metropolitans. The catholicate of the East was discontinued by the Synod held in 1860 and the deposed Patriarch claimed to have re established it in Malankara without referring to any Synod or anybody of authority in the church. The Catholicose Mor Poulouse I died in 1914 and no one succeeded him till 1925 when Mor Phelexenose of Vakathanam took charge. He expired in 1928 and Mor Geevarghese II succeeded him till 1964. He was accepted by H.H. Patriarch Yacoob in 1958.

The Litigations

In 1913 the two groups started litigations in the interpleader suit at Trivandrum for the right to the interest of the Trust Fund. This suit was heard at different levels and in 1931 the High Court

decided in favour of Mor Dionasius Metropolitan. In 1934 the Metropolitan expired and in December Mor Geevarghese II Catholicos was elected as the Malankara Metropolitan and in 1935 Mor Athanasius Poulouse Metropolitan was elected by the Patriarchal party at Kuringachira. A second series of litigations started which continued till 1958. The final verdict came from the Supreme Court of India in favour of the Catholicose group.

H.H. Patriarch Elias III

H.H. visited India according to the invitation from the Lord Irvin, the then Viceroy of India. He arrived here in 1931 and took great effort to re establish peace in Malankara. In this persuit he died at Manjinikara on 13 February 1932.

Malankara Catholic Church

Two bishops of the Catholicose group Mor Ivanios and Mor Theophilose joined the Roman Catholic Church establishing the Antiochan rite. Their defection created a great flow of the people from both sides to the Roman Church.

New Metropolitans

Michael Mor Dionasius and Thomas Mor Dioscoros Metropolitans were consecrated in 1926 and Mor Themethose Augen was consecrated in 1927 for the Patriarch group. Mor Julius Elias came to India as the Patriarchal delegate in 1930. Catholicose group consecrated Mor Gregorios Pampady, Mor Severios Joseph and Mor Thomas Dionasius. In 1946 Mor Gregorios and Mor Severios. Abraham Mor Clemis and Poulouse Mor Phelexanose were consecrated in 1951 and 1952.

Peace in Malankara

In 1958 Patriarch Yacoob III accepted Moran Baselius Geevarghese II as Catholicose and in 1964 came to Malankara and consecrated Augen I as the Catholicose of the East. Both parties united and the church progressed till 1970. Then dissensions started again and the Catholicose Augen I declared equality with the Patriarch and declared that the Malankara Church is autocephelous and independent. The people agitated against this and requested the Patriarch Yacoob III to interfere. He consecrated bishops for Malankara and the universal Synod held in 1975 excommunicated the Catholicose and consecrated Basalius Poulouse II as Catholicose of the East.

Litigations Again

Mor Basalius Augen I and Mathews Mor Athanasius Metropolitan filed a suit at Kottayam District Court in 1974 to declare that the Malankara Church is autocephalous and the Catholicose cum Malankara Metropolitan is the spiritual, temporal and ecclesial authority of the Malankara Church and its parishes and properties. In 1980 Justice T. Chandrasekara Menon of the Kerala High Court declared that the Malankara is part of the Syrian Orthodox church and the parish churches are autonomous units. The Division Bench heard the appeal and declared that the Malankara Metropolitan has the rights over the parish churches and also held that the church is not autocephalous. The Supreme Court of India finally gave the verdict in 1995 which declared the following

- 1) The two groups should reconcile and unite.
 - 2) The Malankara Church is a part of the Universal Syrian Church.
 - 3) Patriarch of Antioch is the Spiritual Supreme Head of the Malankara Church.
 - 4) The Malankara Church is autonomous and the church properties are vested under the authority of the Malankara Metropolitan.
 - 5) 1934 constitution is binding on the Malankara Church.
 - 6) Malankara church is not autocephalous.
 - 7) Patriarch should exercise his authority over the Malankara Church through the Catholicose in accordance with the 1934 constitution.
 - 8) The Honorifics '*His Holiness*' and '*Seated on the throne of St. Thomas*' does not denote autocephaly.
 - 9) The Catholicose or the Malankara Metropolitan nor the diocesan Metropolitan have any authority over the parish church properties.
 - 10) The representation from the parish churches to the Malankara Association should portray the strength of the community.
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The Indian Church of St. Thomas

The History of the Indian Syrian Church from the coming of St. Thomas to the separation of the Marthoma Church is most scientifically and authoritatively dealt in this commendable work. Almost all of the available primary and secondary evidences in the history and heritage of the Syrian Church are included or appended here. This work is an indispensable authority for all researchers and scholars of the Syrian Church and the Christian churches at large. Mr. E. M. Philip, a great scholar of his times served as the secretary of the Malankara Association Managing Committee and was the intellectual backbone of the Hon. Malankara Metropolitan Mor Dionasius Joseph and the Church at large.

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