

# Four Historic Documents

## Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil

SYRIAN  
CHRISTIANS  
IN KERALA

Claudius Buchanan

THE ANCIENT  
SYRIAN  
CHURCH

O H Parry

WERE THE  
SYRIAN  
CHRISTIANS  
HISTORIANS?

Dr. P T Geevarghese M H  
(Archbishop Mor Ivanios)

CHRISTIANS  
IN  
MALABAR

Dr. Justice K K Lukose

Mor Adai Study Centre

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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

# FOUR HISTORIC DOCUMENTS

Edited by  
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Published by  
Mor Adai Study Centre  
Cheeranchira, Changanacherry  
686106



## Four Historic Documents (English)

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June 2002

Printed at D C Press (P) Ltd.

Price: Rs. 150/-

U.S.\$ 20 (including postage)



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## 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 in two volumes of these books.

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

# Four Historic Documents

Part I

Chapter on

The Syrian Christians in India

from

Rev. Dr. Claudius Buchanan's  
*Christian Researches in Asia*

## Editor's Note

The visit of Dr. Claudius Buchanan to the Syrian Church in India is an epoch making event in the history of the Syrian Church. His travelogue on this journey attracted historians of all times.

The preliminary discussions on the translation of the Bible, the presentation of the very ancient Syriac manuscript, written during the time of Patriarch Michael Rabo, by the venerable Metropolitan Mor Dionasius and the conversations recorded at various places are rich resources to connect the faith, culture and history of the Syrian Church in earlier centuries.

The Chapter on 'The Syrian Christian in India' in the book, *'Christian Researches in Asia'* is reproduced here. I am sure all the students of Church History will most cordially welcome this publication.

I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Kurian Thomas for helping me to find the rare copy of this most valuable document. I express my sincere gratitude.

Dedicating this part to the honour of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, who loved the Syrian Church and its members by supplying copies of the Syriac Bible on the gospels in Malayalam. May God give him rest and peace.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil



*W. H. Storer 1875*

CHRISTIAN RESEARCHES

IN

ASIA:

WITH NOTICES

OF THE

TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

INTO THE

Oriental Languages.

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“ And I saw another Angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the  
“ EVERLASTING GOSPEL to preach unto them that dwell on the  
“ Earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”  
Rev. xiv. 6.

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BY THE

REV. CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN, D. D.

LATE VICE-PROVOST OF THE COLLEGE OF FORT-WILLIAM IN BENGAL,  
AND MEMBER OF THE ASIATIC SOCIETY.

.....  
TENTH EDITION.  
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LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY T. CADELL AND W. DAVIES, STRAND  
G. SIDNEY, Printer, Northumberland-Street.

1814.



## CHRISTIAN RESEARCHES IN ASIA

### The Chapter on THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS IN INDIA (Pages 106-150)

THE Syrian Christians inhabit the interior of Travancore and Malabar, in the South of India, and have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity. The first notices of this ancient people, in recent times, are to be found in the Portuguese histories. When Vasco de Gama arrived at Cochin, on the coast of Malabar, in the year 1503, he saw the sceptre of the Christian King; for the Syrian Christians had formerly regal power in Malay-Ala.\* The name or title of their last King was Beliarte; and he dying without issue, the dominion devolved on the King of Cochin and Diamper.

When the Portuguese arrived, they were agreeably surprised to find upwards of a hundred Christian Churches on the coast of Malabar. But when they became acquainted with the purity and simplicity of their worship, they were offended. "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 1300 years past, they had enjoyed a succession of Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch. "We", said they, "are of the true faith, whatever you from the "West

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\* Malay-Ala is the proper name for the whole country of Travancore and Malabar, comprehending the territory between the mountains and the sea, from Cape Comorin to Cape Ill or Dilly. The language of these extensive regions is called Malay-alim, and sometimes Malabar. We shall use the word *Malabar*, as being of easier pronunciation.



may be; for we come from the place "where the followers of Christ were first called "Christians."

When the power of the Portugese became sufficient for their purpose, they invaded these tranquil Churches, seized some of the Clergy, and devoted them to the death of heretics. Then the inhabitants heard for the first time that there was a place called the Inquisition; and that its fires had been lately lighted at Goa, near their own land. But the Portugese, finding that the people were resolute in defending their ancient faith, began to try more conciliatory measures. They seized the Syrian Bishop, Mar Joseph, and sent him prisoner to Lisbon, and then convened a Synod at one of the Syrian Churches called Diamper, near Cochin, at which the Romish Archbishop Menezes presided. At this compulsory synod, 150 of the Syrian Clergy appeared. They were accused of the following practices and opinions, "That they had married wives; that "they owned but two Sacraments, Baptism and "the Lord's Supper; that they neither invoked "Saints, nor worshipped Images, nor believed "in Purgatory: and that they had no other "orders or names of dignity in the Church, "than Priest and Deacon'."\* These tenets they were called on to abjure, or to suffer suspension from all Church benefices. It was also decreed that all the Syrian books on Ecclesiastical subjects, that could be found, should be burned; "in order,"

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\*In the conferences with Malabarian Brahmins," printed in London, 179, p.15 from which this quotation is made, the word priest is omitted (the expression is, "than bishop and deacon"), which the author thought was probably a mistake, as the priesthood, or order of Kasheeshas, in Malabar was notorious; and, therefore, he inserted it in the former editions. But, on referring to the Decrees of the synod of Diamper, he finds that there is no mention of bishop, but only of priest and deacon. The words are, "That there are only two orders, diaconate and Priesthood." Decree 14, of Action 3d. Possibly the reason might be, because the head of the Syrian's in Malabar is not properly called Bishop, but Metropolitan; and a distinction might have been admitted between order and name of dignity.

said the Inquisitors, "that no pretended apostolical monuments may remain."

The Churches on the sea-coast were thus compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope: but they refused to pray in Latin, and insisted on retaining their own language and Liturgy. This point they said they would only give up with their lives. The Pope compromised with them: Menezes purged their Liturgy of its errors: and they retain their Syriac Language, and have a Syriac College unto this day. These are called the Syro-Roman Churches, and are principally situated on the sea-coast.

The Churches in the interior would not yield to Rome. After a show of submission for a little while, they proclaimed eternal war against the Inquisition; they hid their books, fled to the mountains, and sought the protection of the Native Princes, who had always been proud of their alliance.

Two centuries had elapsed without any particular information concerning the syrian Christians in Malay-Ala. It was doubted by many whether they existed at all; but if they did exist, it was thought probable that they must possess some interesting documents of Christian antiquity. The Author conceived the design of visiting them, if practicable, in his tour through Hindostan. He presented a short memoir on the subject, in 1805, to Marquis Wellesley, then Governor-general of India; who was pleased to give orders that every facility should be afforded to him in the prosecution of his inquiries. About a year after that Nobleman had left India, the Author proceeded on his Tour. It was necessary that he should visit first the Court of Rajah of Travancore, in whose dominions the Syrian Christians resided, that he might obtain permission to pass to their country. The two chief objects which he proposed to himself in exploring the state of this

ancient people, were these: First, to investigate their literature and history, and to collect Biblical manuscripts. Secondly, if he should find them to be an intelligent people, and well acquainted with the Syriac Scriptures, to endeavour to make them instruments of illuminating the Southern part of India, by engaging them in translating their Scriptures into the Native Languages. He had reason to believe that this had not yet been done; and he was prepared not to wonder at the delay, when he reflected how long it was before his own countrymen began to think it their duty to make versions of the Scriptures, for the use of other nations.

#### 'Palace of Travancore, 19th Oct. 1806

'I have now been a week at the place of Trivandrum, where the *Rajah*\* resides. A letter of introduction from Lieut. Colonel Macaulay, the British resident at Travancore, procured me a proper reception. At my first audience His Highness was very inquisitive as to the objects of my journey. As I had servants with me of different casts and languages, it was very easy for the Brahmins to discover every particular they might wish to know, in regard to my profession, pursuits, and manner of life. When I told the Rajah that the Syrian Christians were supposed to be of the same religion with the English, he said he thought that could not be the case, else he must have heard it before; if, however, it was so, he considered my desire to visit them as being very reasonable. I assured His Highness that their *Shaster*\* and ours was the same; and shewed him a Syriac New Testament which I had at hand. The book being bound and gilt after the European manner, the Rajah shook his head, and said he was sure there was not a native in his dominions who could read that book. I observed that this would be proved in a few days. The

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\*Rajah – King; Shaster – Science



*Dewan* (or Prime Minister) thought the character something like what he had seen sometimes in the houses of *Sooriani*. The *Rajah* said he would afford me every facility for my journey in his power. He put an emerald ring on my finger, as a mark of his friendship, and to secure me respect in passing through his country; and he directed his *Dewan* to send proper persons with me as guides.

'I requested that the *Rajah* would be pleased to present a Catalogue of all the Hindoo Manuscripts in the Temples of Travancore to the College of Fort William, in Bengal. The Brahmins were very averse to this; but when I shewed the *Rajah* the Catalogues of the books in the Temples of Tanjore, given by the *Rajah* of *Tanjore*, and of those of the Temple of *Ramisseram*, given me by order of the *Rannie* (or Queen) of *Ramnad*, he desired it might be done: and orders have been sent to the Hindoo College of Trichoor for that purpose.'\*

'Chinganoor; a Church of the Syrian Christians, Nov. 10th, 1806.

'From the palace of Travancore I proceeded to *Mavelycar*, and thence to the hills at the bottom of the high Ghauts, which divide the Carnatic from *Malay-Ala*. The face of the country in general, in the vicinity of the mountains, exhibits a varied scene of hill and dale, and winding streams. These streams fall from the mountains and preserve the valleys in perpetual verdure. The woods produce pepper, cardamoms, and cassia, or common cinnamon; also frankincense and other aromatic gums. What adds much to the grandeur of the scenery in this country is, that the adjacent mountains of Travancore are not barren, but are covered with forests of

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\*These three Catalogues, together with that of the *Rajah* of Cochin, which the Author procured afterwards, are now deposited in the College of Fort-William, and probably contain the Hindoo literature of the South of India.

teak wood (the Indian oak) producing, it is said, the largest timber in the world.

'The first view of the Christian Churches in this sequestered region of *Hindustan*, connected with the idea of their tranquil duration for so many ages, cannot fail to excite pleasing emotions in the mind of the beholder. The form of the oldest buildings is not unlike that of some of the old Parish Churches in England the style of building in both being of Saracenic origin. They have sloping roofs, pointed arched windows, and buttresses supporting the walls. The beams of the roof being exposed to view are ornamented; and the ceiling of the choir and altar is circular and fretted. In the Cathedral Churches, the shrines of the deceased bishops are placed on each side of the altar. Most of the Churches are built of a reddish stone,\* squared and polished at the quarry; and are of durable construction. The bells of the churches are cast in the foundries of the country, some of them are of large dimensions, and have inscriptions in Syriac and *Malay-alim*. In approaching a town in the evening, I once heard the sound of the bells among the hills; a circumstance which made me forget for a moment that I was in *Hindustan*, and reminded me of another country.

'The first Syrian Church which I saw was at Mavelycar: but the Syrians here are in the vicinity of the Romish Christians; and are not so simple in their manners as those nearer the mountains. They had been often visited by Romish emissaries in former times: and they at first suspected that I belonged to that communion. They had heard of the English,

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\*This stone possesses a singular property. At the quarry is so soft that it may be pared with a knife, and modelled in any fashion with ease, but when exposed to the air, it indurates like adamant. Dr. Francis Buchanan, of Bengal, wished me to bring home a specimen of this stone, which he had not seen in any of the collections of Britain.



but strangely supposed that they belonged to the Church of the Pope in the West. They had been so little accustomed to see a friend, that they could not believe that I was come with any friendly purpose. Added to this, I had some discussions with a most intelligent priest, in regard to the original language of the Four Gospels, which he maintained to be Syriac; and they suspected from the complexion of my argument, that I wished to weaken the evidences for their antiquity.\* Soon, however, the gloom and suspicion subsided; they gave me the right hand of fellowship, in the primitive manner

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'You concede,' said the Syrian, "that our Saviour spoke in our language; how do you know it?" From the Syriac expressions in the Greek Gospels. It appears that he spoke Syriac when he walked by the way (Ephphatha), and when he sat in the house (Talitha Cumi), and when he was upon the cross (Eli, Eli lama sabachthani). The Syrians were pleased when they heard that we had got their language in our English books. The priest observed that these last were not the exact words, but 'Ail, Ail, lamono sabachthani.' I answered that the word must have been very like Eli, for one said 'He calleth Elias'. "True," said he, "but yet it was more likely to be Ail, Ail (pronounced Il or Eel) for Hil or Hila is Syriac for Vinegar; and one thought he wanted Vinegar, and filled immediately a sponge with it. But our Saviour did not want the medicated drink as they supposed." – "But," added he, "if the parables and discourses of our Lord were in Syriac, and the people of Jerusalem commonly used it, is it not marvellous that his disciples did not record his parables in the Syriac Language; and that they should have recourse to the Greek?" I observed that the gospel was for the world, and the Greek was then the universal language, and therefore Providence selected it. "It is very probable," said he, "that the Gospels were translated immediately afterwards into Greek, as into other languages; but surely there must have been a Syriac original. The poor people in Jerusalem could not read Greek. Had they no record in their hands, of Christ's parables which they had heard, and of his sublime discourses recorded by St. John, after his ascension?" I acknowledged that it was believed by some of the learned that the gospel of St. Matthew was written originally in Syriac. "So, you admit St. Matthew: You may "as well admit St. John. Or was one gospel enough for the "inhabitants of Jerusalem?" I contended that there were many Greek and Roman words in their own Syriac Gospels. 'True,' said he, "Roman words for Roman things." They wished, however, to see some of these words. The discussion afterwards, particularly in reference to the Gospel of St. Luke, was more in my favour.

and one of their members was deputed to accompany me to the Churches in the interior.

'When we were approaching the Church of *Chinganoor*, we met one of the *Cassanars*, or Syrian Clergy. He was dressed in a white loose vestment, with a cap of red silk hanging down behind. Being informed who he was, I said to him in the Syriac Language, 'Peace be unto you.' He was surprised at the salutation, but immediately answered, 'The God of peace be with you.' He accosted the Rajah's servants in the language of the country to know who I was; and immediately returned to the village to announce our approach. When we arrived, I was received at the door of the Church by three *Kasheeshas*, that is, Presbyters, or Priests, who were habited in like manner, in white vestments. Their names were Jesu, Zecharias, and Urias, which they wrote down in my Journal, each of them adding to his name the title of *Kasheesha*. There were also present two *Shumshans*, or Deacons. The elder priest was a very intelligent man, of reverend appearance, having a long white beard, and of an affable and engaging deportment. The three principal Christians, or lay elders, belonging to the Church, were named Abraham, Thoma, and Alexandros. After some conversation with my attendants, they received me with confidence and affection; and 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 Hindoo woman and the Mahomedan women, and in short, all women who are not Christians, are accounted by the men on 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. But at the same time,



I perceived all around symptoms of poverty and political depression. In the Churches, and in the people, there was the air of fallen greatness. I said to the senior Priest, 'you appear to me like a people who have known better days.' 'It is even so,' said he. 'We are in a degenerate state compared with our forefathers.' He noticed, that there were two causes of their present decay. 'About 300 years ago, an enemy came from the west, bearing the name of Christ, but armed with the inquisition: and compelled us to seek the protection of the native princes. And the native Princes have kept us in a state of depression ever since. They indeed recognize our ancient personal privileges, for we rank in general next to the Nairs, the nobility of the country, but they have encroached by degrees on our property, till we have been reduced to the humble state in which you find us. The glory of our Church has passed away; but we hope your nation will revive it again'. I observed that 'the glory of a Church could never dies, if it preserved the Bible.' 'We have preserved the Bible,' said he, 'the Hindoo Princess never touched our liberty of conscience. We were formerly on a footing with them in political power; and they respect our religion. We have also converts from time to time; but in this Christian duty we are not so active as we once were; besides, it is not so creditable now to become Christian, in our low estate.' He then pointed out to me a Namboory Brahmin, (that is, a Brahmin of the highest cast) who had lately become a Christian, and assumed the white vestment of a Syrian Priest. 'The learning too of the Bible,' he added, 'is in a low state amongst us. Our copies are few in number; and that number is diminished instead of increasing; and the writing out a whole copy of the Sacred Scriptures is a great labour, where there is no profit and little piety.' I then produced a printed copy of



the Syriac New Testament. There was not one of them who had ever seen a printed copy before. They admired it much; and every Priest, as it came into his hands, began to read a portion, which he did fluently, while the women came round to hear. I asked the old Priest whether I should send them some copies from Europe. 'They would be worth their weight in silver,' said he. He asked me whether the Old Testament was printed in Syriac as well as the New. I told him it was, but I had not a copy. They professed an earnest desire to obtain some copies of the whole Syriac Bible; and asked whether it would be practicable to obtain one copy for every church. 'I must confess to you,' said Zecharias, 'that we have very few copies of the Prophetical Scriptures in the Church. Our Church languishes for want of the Scriptures.' But he added, 'the language that is most in use among the people is the *Malayalim*, (or Malabar,) the vernacular language of the country. The Syriac is now only the learned language, of the Church: but we generally expound the Scriptures to the people in the vernacular tongue.'

'I then entered on the subject of the translation of the Scriptures. He said 'a version could be made with critical accuracy; for there were many of the Syrian Clergy who were perfect masters of both languages, having spoken them from their infancy.' 'But,' said he, 'our Bishop will rejoice to see you, and to discourse with you on this and other subjects'. I told them that if a translation could be prepared, I should be able to get it printed, and to distribute copies among their fifty-five Churches at a small price. 'That indeed would give joy,' said old Abraham. There was here a murmur of satisfaction among the people. 'If I understand you right,' said I, 'the greatest blessing the English Church can bestow upon you, is the Bible.' 'It is so,' said he. 'And what is the next

greatest?' said I. 'some freedom and personal consequence as a people.' By which he meant political liberty. 'We are here in bondage, like Israel in Egypt.' I observed that the English nation would doubtless recognise a nation of fellow Christians; and would be happy to interest itself in their behalf, as far as our political relation with the Prince of the country would permit. They wished to know what were the principles of the English Government, civil and religious, I answered that our Government might be said to be founded generally on the principles of the Bible. 'Ah,' said old Zecharias, that must be a glorious Government which is founded on the principles of the Bible.' The Priests then desired I would give them some account of the History of the English nation, and of our secession from their enemy the Church of Rome. And in return, I requested they would give me some account of their History—My communications with the Syrians are rendered very easy, by means of an Interpreter whom I brought with me all the way from the Tanjore country. He is a Hindoo by descent, but is an intelligent Christian, and was a pupil and catechist of the late Mr. Swartz. The Rev. Mr. Kolhoff recommended him to me. He formerly lived in Travancore, and is well acquainted with the vernacular tongue. He also reads and writes English pretty well, and is as much interested in favour of the Syrian Christians as I myself. Besides Mr. Swartz's catechist, there are two natives of Travancore here, who speak the Hindostanee Language, which is familiar to me. My knowledge of the Syriac is sufficient to refer to texts of Scripture; but I do not well understand the pronounciation of the Syrians. I hope to be better acquainted with their language before I leave the country.

**Ranniel, a Syrian Church, No. 12th, 1806.**

'This Church is built upon a rocky hill on the banks of the river, and is the most remote of all the Churches in this quarter. The two Kasheeshas here are Lucas and Mathai (Luke and Matthew). The chief Lay members of Abraham, Georgius, Thoma and Philippus. Some of the Priests accompany me from Church to Church. I have now visited eight Churches, and scarcely believe that I am in the land of the Hindoos; only that I now and then see a Hindoo temple on the banks of the river. I observed that the bells of most of the Churches are building, and not in a tower. The reason they said was this. When a Hindoo temple happens to be near a Church, the Hindoos do not like the bell to sound loud; for they say it frightens their God – I perceive that the Syrian Christians assimilate much to the Hindoos in the practice of frequent ablutions for health and cleanliness, in the use of vegetables and light food.

'I attended divine service on the Sunday. Their Liturgy is that which was formerly used in the Churches of the Patriarch of Antioch. During the prayers, there were intervals of silence: the priests praying in a low voice, and every man praying for himself. These silent intervals add much to the solemnity and appearance of devotion. They use incense in the Churches; it grows in the woods around them, and contributes much; they say, to health, and to the warmth and comfort of the Church during the cold and rainy season of the year. At the conclusion of the service, a ceremony takes place which pleased me much. The Priest, (or Bishop, if he be present) comes forward, and all the people pass by him as they go out, receiving his benediction individually. If any man has been guilty of any immorality, he does not receive the blessing; and this, in their primitive and patriarchal state,



is accounted a severe punishment. Instruction by preaching is little in use among them now. Many of the old men lamented the decay of piety, and religious knowledge; and spoke with pleasure of the record of ancient times – They have some ceremonies nearly allied to those of the Greek Church. Here, as in all Churches in a state of decline, there is too much formality in the worship. But they have the Bible and a scriptural Liturgy; and these will save a Church in the worst of times. These may preserve the spark and life of religion, though the flame be out. And as there were but few copies of the Bible among the Syrians, (for every copy was transcribed with the pen) it is highly probable that, if they had not enjoyed the advantage of the daily prayers, and daily portions of Scripture in their Liturgy, there would have been in the revolution of ages, no vestige of Christianity left among them.\*

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\*In a nation like ours, overflowing with knowledge, men are not always in circumstances to perceive the value of a scriptural Liturgy. When Christians are well taught, they think they want something better. But the young and the ignorant, who form a great proportion of the community, are edified by a little plain Scriptural instruction frequently repeated. A small Church or Sect may do without a form for a while. But a national Liturgy is that which preserves a relic of the true faith among the people in a large empire, when the Priests leave their ARTICLES and their CONFESSIONS OF FAITH. Woe to the declining Church which hath no scriptural Liturgy! For when the Bible is gone, or when it ceases to be read to the people, what is there left? Witness the old Presbyterians in England, and some other sects, who are said to have become Arians and Socinians. Eight chapters of holy Scripture, on an average, including the Psalms, are read to the people on every sabbath day, in the Church of England. Four chapters are recommended to be read on every Sabbath by the "Directory for public Worship" in the Church of Scotland, viz, "One chapter of each Testament at every meeting." But, in consequence of its not being positively ordained, (as in the Church of England) it has come to pass that, in very many churches, nay, in most, not one chapter is now regularly and statedly read, as a distinct part of the service; a portion of scripture is merely read in the way of lecture or paraphrase. When, therefore, a minister of Kirk chooses to deviate

'The doctrines of the Syrian Christians are few in number, but pure, as far as I could learn, and agree in essential

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from the evangelical doctrines of the CONFESSIO OF FAITH, (which will sometimes happen) what, we would ask, is there left for him to give to the people.\*

The Puritans of a former age in England, did not live long enough to see the use of an evangelical Formulary: By them, the experiment of a pure church, devoid of form, was made under the most favourable circumstances. I know not what was wanting of human and local circumstance, according to their own principles, to give their peculiar doctrines perpetuity, for they assumed that an establishment and human ordinance are of no service in supporting or perpetuating the Church of Christ. But yet with the first generation of men (who had their education in Halls and Colleges), the spiritual fervor seemed to pass away. Instead of increasing, it decreased and declined in most places, till little more than the name was left. For when the spirit is gone, (in a church having no form) nothing is left. In the mean time, there was a revival of religion in England (not amongst them, but in Halls and Colleges;) in the midst of rational forms and evangelical articles; 'FOR SO IT SEEMED GOOD UNTO GOD; and from that source is derived the greater part of pure religion now professed in this land, under whatever form it may exist.

These observations are not made in a spirit of disrespect for any mode of Christian worship: every form, we know, is human, and therefore imperfect: nor its perfection required; for that form is best for the time, which is best administered. Christ left no form; (though he approved of the forms which he found) because Churches in different climates must have different forms. "There are differences of administrations, (saith the Apostle) but the same Lord." 1 Corit.12. "One man esteemeth one day above another. He that regardeth the day, (as Easter and Pentecost) regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." Rom. xiv. 6. We are not to "despise a weak brother, for whom Christ died," though he be destitute of learning, and think he possesses all that is necessary for regulating a Church, when he has got the leaves of the New Testament; when the truth is, that a knowledge of contemporary history and languages is as necessary to understand certain facts of the New Testament, as the facts of any other book. But the above remarks have been made with this view, to qualify the contempt which ignorant persons in small sects frequently express for the established worship of a CHRISTIAN EMPIRE.

\*I would not insinuate that the people neglect the reading of the Scriptures at home, although they may not hear them read regularly in church. I am persuaded, that there is not a nation in the world where the Bible is more read by the people, than in Scotland.



points with those of the Church of England: so that, although the body of the Church appears to be ignorant, and formal, and dead, there are individuals who are alive to righteousness, who are distinguished from the rest by their purity of life, and are sometimes censured for too rigid a piety.

'The following are the chief doctrines of this ancient Church:

1. They hold the doctrine of a vicarious ATONEMENT for the sins of men, by the blood and merits of Christ, and of the justification of the soul before God, "by faith alone," in that atonement.

2. They maintain the REGENERATION, or new birth of the Soul to righteousness, by the influence of the Spirit of God.

3. In regard to the Trinity, the creed of the Syrian Christians accords with that of St. Athanasius, but without the damnatory clauses. In a written and official communication to Col. Macaulay, the English resident of Travancore, the Metropolitan states is to be as follows:

"We believe in the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, "three persons in one God, neither confounding the "persons nor dividing the substance, one in three, and "three in one. The Father generator, the Son generated, and the Holy Ghost proceeding. None is before or after the other; in majesty, honour, might, and "power, coequal; Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in "Unity." He then proceeds to disclaim the different errors of Arius, Sabellius, Macedonius, Manes, Marcianus, Julianus, Nestorius, and the Chalcedonians; and concludes, "That in the appointed time, through the "disposition of the Father and Holy Ghost, the Son appeared on earth for the salvation of mankind; that he was born of the Virgin Mary,

through the means of the Holy Ghost, and was incarnate God and "man."\*

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\*In an account of the Syrian Christians, published by the Author at Calcutta in 1807, and afterwards republished in England by Dr. Porteus, the late Bishop of London, there are some particulars which are not contained in the above account. The following is an extract relative to the name or denomination of the Syrian Church.

"The number of Syrian churches is greater than has been supposed. There are at this time, fifty-five churches in Malay-ala acknowledging the Patriarch of Antioch. The last church was erected by the present bishop in 1793. "The Syrian Christians are not Nestorians. Formerly indeed, they had bishops of that communion; but the liturgy of the present church is derived from that of the early church of Antioch, called 'Liturgia Jacobi Apostoli.' They are usually denominated Jacobite; but they differ in ceremonial from the church of that name in Syria, and indeed from any existing church in the world. Their proper designation, and that which is sanctioned by their own use, is, 'Syrian Christians;' or, the Syrian Church of Malay-ala.'—The Syrians have continued, till lately, to receive their bishops from Antioch. But that ancient Patriarchate being now nearly extinct, and incompetent to the appointment of learned men, the Christian Church in Malay-ala looks henceforth to BRITAIN. for the continuance of that light which has shone so long in this dark region of the world." — *Dr. Buchanan's Account of Syrian Christians, Calcutta, 1807; p.3.*

It appears, then, that the Syrian Christians have latterly been denominated Jacobite or Jacobites; so called according to their books, from (Jacobus) James the Apostle. The Jacobites are also called Eutychians, as following the opinions of Eutychus; and are sometimes styled Monophysites, or those who hold that Christ "*had but one nature.*" This opinion is the distinguishing dogma of the Eutychians. When the Author visited the Syrian Christians, he found a few of the priests who held this tenet; but they seemed to explain it away in words, for they spoke of Christ's human nature like Protestants. The bishop did not once mention the subject; and as for the people in general, they seemed to know no more of Eutychian doctrines, than the common people of England. In the Author's discussion with the Syrians, as he did not think fit to propose to them the points in the Athanasian creed in which they differed, so they did not trouble him with Eutychian difficulties. His chief object was to forward the translation of the Bible, knowing that this was the fountain of light, and that, if they were once possessed of this, it would be easier to adjust particular doctrines. He perceived, too, that the minds of the people were in a fluctuating state; the effect of a very obvious cause. The nation in general are called the St. Thome Christians. This is their name in all parts of India, and it imports an antiquity that reaches far beyond the Eutychians or Nestorians, or any other sect. But, in process of time, certain Nestorian bishops obtained supremacy among them; and after them Eutychian; and now the Roman Catholics



'In every Church, and in many of the private houses, there are manuscripts in the Syriac Language: and I have been successful in procuring some old and valuable copies of the Scriptures and other books, written in different ages and in different characters.'

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constantly assail them, when opportunity offers. The author, therefore, finding a people in such interesting circumstances, professing the doctrines of the Bible, and resisting that antichristian spirit which had "deceived the nations of the earth," sought rather, in what things they might agree, than in what they might differ.

It ought not to be alleged, that we cannot unite with the Syrians because they are denominated Eutychians, for we have seen that this is little more than a name. The Society for promoting Christian Knowledge have lately published a letter from their missionaries in India, in which they say, that they cannot unite with the Syrian Christians, "because they are Nestorians, and admit" superstitious practices. The reader has already seen, that they renounce the heresy of Nestorius... But these Missionaries had no knowledge of the Syrians themselves, and had never seen one of them, for they live in a country far remote; but they merely refer (in answer to a query of the Society) to the old journals of the former Danish Missionaries, nearly a century ago; not having seen, probably, Dr. Kerr's account, recently published.\* These former Missionaries had not themselves seen the people. They had, indeed, seen some Nestorian Syrians, who were subject to the Church of Rome; but it does not appear that they had seen one of the Christians in Malay-ala, who are separated from that church. The Christians of Malay-ala are sometimes called Eutychians; but the peculiar Eutychian doctrine is probably as little known among them as the Arian doctrine in England. Whatever their errors in doctrine or practice may be, they are not so objectionable as those of the Roman Catholics. But it is well-known that Archbishop Wake, when President of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, was engaged in a correspondence with Doctors of the Sorbonne, the object of which was a union with the Gallican church.

The Syrian Christians of Malay-ala possess the two chief requisites for junction with any pure church; namely, they profess the doctrines of the Bible, and reject the supremacy of the Pope. Both the Syrians in Malay-ala, and the Christians of Ceylon, are, at this time, in a state to become what we may choose to make them. It will possibly be thought easier for the Church of England to maintain some alliance with the Episcopal Syrians, than with a church of Presbyterian form; and yet we must form a union with the Protestant Christians in Ceylon, who were formerly members of the Dutch church. Or will it be said, that we cannot unite with the Calvinists of Ceylon,

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\*See Dr. Kerr's Account, p. 148

'Cande-nad, a Church of the Syrian Christians, November 23, 1806.

'This is the residence of Mor Dionysius, the Metropolitan of the Syrian Church. A number of the Priests from the other Churches had assembled by desire of the Bishop, before my arrival. The Bishop resides in a building attached to the Church. I was much struck with his first appearance. He was drest in a vestment of dark red silk; a large golden cross hung from his neck, and his venerable beard reached below his girdle. Such, thought I, was the appearance of Chrysostom in the fourth century. On public occasions, he wears the Episcopal mitre; a muslin robe is thrown over his under garment, and in his hand he bears the crosier, or pastoral staff—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. He told me that all my conversations with his Priests since my arrival in the country had been communicated to him. 'You have come', said he, 'to visit a declining Church, and I am now an old man: but the hopes of its 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

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any more than with the Eutychians of Travancore? These are not times when we ought to scan too accurately the Creed of our neighbour, particularly in heathen lands. "We that have knowledge, ought to bear the infirmities of our weaker brethren." The great dispute in these lands is not between shades of Christian doctrine, but between light and darkness, between the true God and an idol. At all events, it will be time enough to enter on particular points of doctrine after we have given them the Bible, and can refer to a common testimony.



aid. It is a work which will illuminate these dark regions, and God will give it his blessing.' I was much pleased when I heard this pious resolution of the venerable man; or I had now ascertained that there are upwards of 200,000 Christians in the South of India, besides the Syrians, who speak the Malabar Language.—The next subject of importance in my mind, was the collection of useful manuscripts in the Chaldaic and Syriac Languages; and the Bishop was pleased to say that he would assist my inquiries, and add to my collection.—He descanted with great satisfaction on the hope of seeing printed Syriac Bibles from England; and said they would be 'a treasure to his Church.'

Cande-nad, 24th November, 1806

Since my coming amongst this people, I had cherished the hope that they might be one day united with the Church of England. When I reflected on the immense power of the Romish Church in India, and on our inability to withstand its influence alone, it appeared to be an object of great consequence to secure the aid and co-operation of the Syrian Church, and the sanction of its antiquity in the East. I thought it might be serviceable, at least, to lay such a foundation by the discussion of the subject, as our Church might act upon hereafter, if she should think it expedient. I was afraid to mention the subject to the Bishop at our first interview; but he himself intimated that he would be glad if I would communicate freely upon it with two of his clergy.—I had hitherto observed somewhat of a reserve in those with whom I had conversed on this matter: and now the cause was explained. The Bishop's chaplains 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 derive 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 the laying on of hands, in succession from the Apostles, it was probable that they possessed it; that there was no record of history or tradition to impeach their claim. I observed that there was reason to believe that the same 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 successors. 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. This was the point upon which they wished me to be explicit. They expected that in any official negotiation on this subject, the antiquity and purity of Syrian Ordination should be expressly admitted.

'Our conversation was reported to the Bishop. He wished me to state the advantages of an Union. One advantage would be, I observed, 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; for we had an immense Empire in Hindostan, but few preachers: and of these few scarcely any could preach in the native languages.— The Bishop said, 'I would sacrifice much for such an 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. All must confess that it was Christ's Church in the midst of a heathen land. The Church of England would be happy to promote its welfare, to revive its spirit, and to use it as an instrument of future good in the midst of her own Empire. I took this occasion to observe that there were some rites and practices in the Syrian Church, which our Church might consider objectionable or nugatory. The Bishop confessed that some customs had been introduced during their decline in the latter centuries, which had no necessary connection with the constitution of the Church, and might be removed without inconvenience. He asked whether I had authority from my own Church to make any proposition to him. I answered that I had not: that my own Church scarcely knew that the Syrian Church existed: but I could anticipate the wishes and purposes of good men. He thought it strange that there was no Bishop in India to superintend so large an Empire; and said he did not perfectly comprehend our ecclesiastical principles. I told him that we had sent Bishops to other countries; but that our Indian Empire was yet in its infancy—next day, the Bishop, after conferring with his clergy on the subject, returned an answer in writing to the following effect: "That an 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." In making this communication, he used his official designation, 'Mor Dionysis, Metropolitan of Malabar.'—I asked the Bishop if he would permit two of the young *Cassanars* to go to England to finish their education, and then return to India. He said he should be very happy to give his permission, if any should be fond who were willing to go. I have accordingly made the offer to two youths of good abilities, who are well skilled in the Syriac Language.'

'Udiamper, Dec. 1806.

'From *Cande-nad* I returned to the sea-coast to visit Lieut-Colonel Macaulay, the British Resident in Travancore.\* He is at present on the Island of *Bal-gatty*, called by the natives the Pepper-Jungle. I have derived much valuable information from this intelligent officer, who possesses a better knowledge of the South of India than I suppose any other European. He is a gentleman of a highly cultivated mind, of much various learning, and master of several languages. To these attainments he adds a quality which does not always accompany them—he is the friend of Christianity. After residing with him a few days, he accompanied me in a tour to the interior. We first visited *Udiamper*, or as it is called by the Portugese writers, *Diamper*. This was formerly the residence of *Beliarte*, King of the Christians; and here is the Syrian Church at which Archbishop Menezes from Goa, convened the Synod of the Syrian Clergy in 1599, when he burned the Syriac and Chaldaic books. The Syrians report,

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\*This officer is now in England.



that while the flames ascended, he went round the Church in procession chaunting a song of triumph.

'From *Udaimper*, Colonel Macaulay accompanied me to *Cande-nad*, to visit the Syrian Bishop a second time. He told us he had commenced the translation of the Scriptures. He was rather indisposed, and said he felt the infirmities of advanced years, his age being now seventy-eight. I promised to see him once more before I left the country.'

'Cranganore, 9th Dec. 1806

'This is that celebrated place of Christian antiquity where the Apostle Thomas is said to have landed, when he first arrived in India from Aden in Arabia. There were formerly a town and fort at Cranganore, the Portuguese having once thought of making it the emporium of their commerce in India; but both are now in ruins. There is, however, one substantial relic of its greatness. There is an Archbishop at *Cranganore*, and subject to him there are forty-five Churches; many of which I entered. In some of them the worship is conducted with as much decorum as in the Romish Churches of Western Ireland. Not far from *Cranganore* is the town *Paroor*, where there is an ancient Syrian Church, which bears the name of the Apostle Thomas. It is supposed to be the oldest in Malabar, and is still used for Divine Service. I took a drawing of it. The tradition among the Syrians is, that the Apostle continued at this place for a time before he went to preach at Melapoor and Sr. Thomas's Mount, on the coast of *Coromandel*, where he was put to death.—The fact is certainly of little consequence; but I am satisfied that we have as good authority for believing that the Apostle Thomas died in India, as that the Apostle Peter died at Rome.



'Verapoli, Dec. 1806.

'This is the residence of Bishop Raymondo, the Pope's Apostolic Vicar in Malabar. There is a College here for the Sacerdotal office, in which the students (from ten to twenty in number) are instructed in the Latin and Syriac Languages. At *Pulingunna* there is another College in which the Syriac alone is taught. Here I counted twelve Students. The Apostolic Vicar superintends sixty-four Churches; exclusive of the forty-five governed by the Archbishop of Cranganore, and exclusive of the large Dioceses of the Bishops of Cochin and of Quilon, whose Churches extend to Cape Comorin, and are visible from the sea. The view of this assemblage of Christian congregations excited in my mind mingled sensations of pleasure and regret; of pleasure to think that so many of the Hindoos have been rescued from the idolatry of Brahma, and its criminal worship; and of regret when I reflected that there was not to be found among the whole body, one copy of the Holy Bible.

'The Apostolic Vicar is an Italian, and corresponds with the Society 'de propaganda Fide'. He is a man of liberal manners, and gave me free access to the archives of *Verapoli*, which are upwards of two centuries old. In the library I found many volumes marked 'Liber hereticus prohibitus.' Almost every step I take in Christian India, I meet with a memento of the Inquisition. The Apostolical Vicar, however, does not acknowledge its authority, and places himself under British protection. He spoke of the Inquisition with just indignation, and, in the presence of the British Resident, called it 'a horrid Tribunal.' I asked him whether he thought I might with safety visit the Inquisition, when I sailed past Goa, there being at this time a British force in its vicinity. It asserted a personal jurisdiction over natives who were not British

subjects: and it was proper the English Government should know something of its present state. The Bishop answered, 'I do not know what you might do under the protection of a British force; but I should not like (smiling and pressing his capacious sides,) to trust my body in their hands.'

'We then had some conversation on the subject of giving the Scriptures to the native Roman Catholics. I had heard before, that the Bishop was by no means hostile to the measure. I told him that I should probably find the means of translating the Scriptures into the Malabar Language, and wished to know whether he had any objection to this mode of illuminating the ignorant minds of the native Christians. He said he had none, I visited the Bishop two or three times afterwards. At our last interview he said, 'I have been thinking of the good gift you are meditating for the native Christians; but believe me, the Inquisition will endeavour to counteract your purposes by every means in their power. I afterwards conversed with an intelligent native Priest, who was well acquainted with the state and character of the Christians, and asked him whether he thought they would be happy to obtain the Scriptures?—'Yes', answered he, 'those who have heard of them.' I asked if he had got a Bible himself; —'No,' he said; 'but he had seen one at Goa.'

'Angamalee, a Syrian Town, containing three Churches, January, 1807.

'I have penetrated once more inland to visit the Syrian Churches at the town of *Cenotta*. I was surprised to meet with Jews and Christians in the same street. The Jews led me first to their Synagogue, and allowed me to take away some manuscripts for money. The Syrian Christians then conducted me to their ancient church. I afterwards sat down on an

eminence above the town to contemplate this interesting spectacle; a Jewish Synagogue, and a Christian Church, standing over against each other; exhibiting, as it were, during many revolving ages, the LAW and the Gospel to the view of the heathen people.

'*Angamalee* is one of the most remote of the Syrian towns in this direction, and is situated on a high land. This was once the residence of the Syrian Bishop. The inhabitants told me, that when Tipoo Sultan invaded Travancore, a detachment of his cavalry penetrated to *Angamalee*, where they expected to find great wealth from its ancient fame. Being Mahomedans, they expressed their abhorrence of the Christian religion, by destroying one of the lesser Churches, and stabling their horses in the great Church. In this place I have found a good many valuable manuscripts. I had been led to suppose, from the statement of the Portuguese historians, that possibly all the Syriac MSS of the Bible had been burned by the Romish Church at the Synod of Diamper, in 1599. But this was not the case. 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. Though written on a strong thick paper, like that of some MSS in the British Museum, commonly called Eastern paper, the ink has, in several places, eat through the material in the exact form of the letter. In other copies, where the ink had less of a corroding quality, it



has fallen off, and left a dark vestige of the letter; faint, indeed, but not in general illegible.

There is a volume, which was deposited in one of the remote Churches, near the mountains, which merits a particular description. It contains the Old and New Testaments, engrossed on strong vellum, in large folio, having three columns in a page; and is written with beautiful accuracy. The character is Estrangelo Syriac; and the words of every book are numbered. But the volume has suffered injury from time or neglect. In certain places the ink has been totally obliterated from the page, and left the parchment in its state of natural whiteness: but the letters can, in general, be distinctly traced from the impress of the pen, or from the partial corrosion of the ink. I scarcely expected that the Syrian Church would have parted with this manuscript. But the Bishop was pleased to present it to me, saying, 'It will be safer in your hands than in our own; alluding to the revolutions in Hindostan.—'And yet,' said he, 'we have kept it, as some think, for near a thousand years'.—'I wish,' said I, 'that England may be able to keep it a thousand years.'— In looking over it, I find the very first proposed emendation of the Hebrew Text by Dr. Kennicott, (Gen. iv. 8) in this manuscript; and, no doubt, it is the right reading. The disputed passage in 1 John v.7, is not to be found on it; nor is this verse to be found in any copy of the Syrian Scriptures, which I have yet seen.\*

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\*Notwithstanding this omission, the author believes the passage to be genuine. The foundation on which he builds this opinion, is the following: Considering, as he does, that the learning and argument on both sides of the subject have been nearly equal, he would rest the genuineness of the verse on the answer to the following question: "Which is most likely to be true. That the Arians of the fifth century, in their fury against the Church should silently omit a testimony (in transcribing their copies) which, if true, destroyed their whole system; or, That the general Church should directly forge and insert it?"



The view of these copies of the Scriptures, and of the Churches which contain them, still continues to excite a pleasing astonishment in my mind: and I sometimes question myself, whether I am indeed in India, in the midst of the Hindoos, and not far from the equinoctial line. How wonderful it is, that during the dark ages of Europe, whilst ignorance and superstition, in a manner, denied the Scriptures to the rest of the world, the Bible should have found an asylum in the mountains of *Malaya-ala*; where it was freely read by upwards of an hundred Churches?

'But there are other ancient documents in Malabar, not less interesting than the Syrian Manuscripts. The old Portugese historians relate, that soon after the arrival of their countrymen in India, about 300 years ago, the Syrian Bishop of *Angamalee* (the place where I now am) deposited in the Fort of Cochin, for safe custody, certain *tablets of brass*, on

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That the general Church possessed it in the fifth centruy is proved from 400 Bishops having, on a public occasion, (when summoned by an Arian King, Hunneric, to defend their doctrine of the Trinity) referred to its authority. It is somewhat remarkable that that passage in the New Testament, whose existence in the fifth century is now chiefly controverted, should be that identical passage whose existence at that period is best authenticated. For what other verse has the testimony of so many Bishops of the Catholic Church? Two arguments have been urged against this historic fact. First, "That it is not probable that all the Bishops had copies, or that all the copies 'they had, contained the verse." This may be granted without detriment to the question. If a third of the Bishops had copies, and if a third of these copies accorded with Cyprian's copy in a remoter age, it suffices. But the Second argument is one which seems to be dictated by despair itself, and by a consciousness of the importance of the record to the affirmative proposition. It is this, and it certainly needs no reply: "That "the testimony of the volume which records the history, is "not to be received." If it be admitted that the verse existed in many copies of the fifth century, I presume the question is decided.

This appears to the author to be the just mode of stating the point in dispute; but he has certainly no wish to awaken the controversy concerning this verse. If it be genuine it is only one of the hewn-stones of the temple. If it be not genuine, it is not a corner-stone.

which were engraved rights of nobility and other privileges, granted by a Prince of a former age; and that while these Tablets were under the charge of the Portuguese, they had been unaccountably lost, and were never after heard of. Adrian Moens, a Governor of Cochin, in 1770, who published some account of the Jews of Malabar, informs us, that he used every means in his power, for many years, to obtain a sight of the famed Christian Plates: and was at length satisfied that they were irrecoverably lost, or rather, he adds, that they never existed. The learned in general, and the Antiquarian in particular, will be glad to hear that these ancient Tablets have been recovered within this last month by the exertions of Colonel Macaulay, the British Resident in Travancore, and are now officially deposited with that officer.

'The Christian Tablets are six in number. They are composed of a mixed metal. The Engraving on the largest plate is thirteen inches long, by about four broad. They are closely written, four of them on both sides of the plate, making in all eleven pages. On the plate reputed to be oldest, there is writing perspicuously engraved in nail-headed or triangular-headed letters, resembling the Persepolitan or Babylonish. On the same plate there is writing in another character, which is supposed to have no affinity with any existing character in Hindostan. The grant on this plate appears to be witnessed by four Jews of rank, whose names are distinctly engraved in an Old Hebrew character, resembling the alphabet called the Palmyerene: and to each name is prefixed the title of Magen,' or Chief, as the Jews translated it—It may be doubted, whether there exists in the world any documents of so great length, which are of equal antiquity, and in such faultless preservation as the Christian Tablets of Malabar—The Jews of Cochin indeed contest the palm of antiquity: for they also produce

two Tablets, containing privileges granted at a remote period; of which they presented to me a Hebrew translation. As no person can be found in this country who is able to translate the Christian Tablets, I have directed an engraver at Cochin to execute, on copper-plates, a *fac simile* of the whole, for the purpose of transmitting copies to the learned Societies in Asia and Europe. The Christian and Jewish plates together make fourteen pages. A copy was sent in the first instance to the *Pundits* of the Shanscrit College at Trichur, by direction of the *Rajah* of Cochin; but they could not read the character.\*—From this place I proceed to *Candennad*, to visit the Bishop once more before I return to Bengal.

### THE MALABAR BIBLE

After the Author left Travancore, the Bishop prosecuted the translation of the Scriptures into the Malabar Language without intermission, until he had completed the Four Gospels. The year following the Author visited Travancore a second time, and carried the Manuscript to Bombay to be printed, an excellent fount of Malabar types having been recently cast at that place. Learned natives went from Travancore to superintend the press; and it is probable that it is now nearly finished, as a copy of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Mark, beautifully printed, was received in England some time ago. This version of the Scriptures will be prosecuted

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\*Most of the Manuscripts which I collected among the Syrian Christians, I have presented to the University of Cambridge: and they are now deposited in the Public Library of that University, together with the copper-plate fac-similes of the Christian and Jewish Tablets.



until the whole Bible is completed, and copies circulated throughout the Christian regions of Malabar.\*

### THE SYRIAC BIBLE

It has been further in contemplation to print an edition of the Syriac Scriptures, if the public should countenance the design. This gift, it may be presumed, the English nation will be pleased to present to the Syrian Christians. We are already debtors to that ancient people. They have preserved the manuscripts of the Holy Scriptures incorrupt, during a long series of ages, and have now committed them into our own hands. By their long and energetic defence of pure doctrine against anti-christian error, they are entitled to the gratitude and thanks of the rest of the Christian world. Further, they have preserved to this day the language in which our blessed Lord preached to men the glad tidings of salvation. Their Scriptures, their doctrine, their language, in short their very existence, and all something to the evidence of the truth of Christianity.

The motives then for printing an edition of the Syriac Bible are these:

1. To do honour to the language which was spoken by our blessed Saviour when on earth.

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\*The Author received from the Syrian Christians the names of several Christian churches in Mesopotamia and Syria, with which they formerly had intercourse, and which constitute the remnant of the ancient church of ANTIOCH. These have, for the most part, remained in a tranquil state under Mahomedan dominion, for several ages; and the Author promised the Syrian Bishop that he would visit them, if circumstances permitted. For this purpose he intended to have returned from India to Europe by a route over land, and he had proceeded as far as Bombay for that purpose; but the French influence at the Coast of Persia at that time prevented him.

2. To do honour to that ancient Church which has preserved his language and his doctrine.

3. As the means of perpetuating the true Faith in the same Church for ages to come.

4. As the means of preserving the pronunciation, and of cultivating the knowledge of the Syriac language in the East; and

5. As the means of reviving the knowledge of the Syriac language in our own nation.

On the author's return to England, he could not find one copy of the Syriac Bible in a separate volume for sale in the kingdom. He wished to send a copy to the Syrian Bishop as an earnest of more when an edition should be printed.

The Syriac Bible is wanted not only by the Churches of Syrian Christians, but by the still more numerous Churches of the Syro-Romish Christians in Malabar, and by the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians in Persia, Armenia, and Tartary, and by the Maronite Christians in Syria, in the Island of Cyprus, in Tripoli, and many other places, all of whom use the Syriac language in their Churches.

### DR. KERR'S ACCOUNT OF THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

In the year 1806, the government of Madras sent the Rev. Dr. Kerr, the senior Chaplain at that Presidency, to Malabar and Travancore (before Dr. Buchanan went thither) to investigate the state of the Syrians and other Christians in those countries. The following is an extract from his office. Report, presented to Lord William Bentick, the Governor of Madras, which was printed soon after his return.

"In the creeds and doctrines of the Christians of Malabar, internal evidence exists of their being a primitive church; for



the supremacy of the Pope is denied, and the doctrine of transubstantiation never has been held by them. They also regarded, and still regard, the worship of images as idolatrous, and the doctrine of purgatory to be fabulous. Moreover, they never admitted as sacraments, extreme unction, marriage, or confirmation. All which facts may be substantiated, on reference to the Acts of the synod assembled by Don Alexis de Meneses, Archbishop of Goa, at Udiamper, in they year 1599.

"The Christians on the Malabar Coasts are divided into three sects. 1. The St. Thome or Jacobite Christians. 2. The Syrian Roman-Catholics. 3. The Latin Church.

1. "The St. Thome Christians still retain their ancient creed and usages, and consider themselves as the descendants of the flock established by St. Thomas, who is generally esteemed the Apostle of the East. Their ancestors emigrated from Syria; and the Syro-Chaldaic is the language in which their church-service is still performed. They admit no images within their churches, but a figure of the Virgin Mary, with the child Jesus in her arms; which is considered merely as an ornament, and not a subject of idolatrous worship.

"It has been believed that these Christians held the tenets of the Nestorian heresy, and that they were obliged to leave their own country in consequence of persecution. However, it appears that the creed they now hold denies that heresy, and seems to coincide in several points with the creed of Athanansius, but without its damnatory clauses. The service in their Church is performed very nearly after the manner of the Church of England; and when the Metropolitan was told, that it was hoped that one day an union might take place between the two churches, he seemed pleased at the suggestion—In some of their churches, divine service is



performed in the Syrian and Latin ritual, alternately, by the priests of the Christians of St. Thomas, who have adhered to their ancient rites, and those who have been united to the Church of Rome. When the latter have celebrated mass, they carry away the images from the Church, before the others enter. The character of these people is marked by a striking superiority over the heathens in every 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. The direct protection of the British Government has been already extended to them; but as they do not reside within the British territories, I am doubtful how far it may be of use to them. To write them to the Church of England would, in my opinion, be a most noble work; and it is most devoutly to be wished, that those who have been driven into the Roman pale, might be recalled to their ancient Church; a measure which it would not be difficult to accomplish, as the country governments would be likely to second any efforts to that purpose. Their occupations are various as those of other Christians; but they are chiefly cultivators and artizans: and some of them possess a comfortable, if not a splendid independence. Their clergy marry in the same manner as Protestants. Their residence is entirely inland.

2. The Syrian Roman-Catholics are those who were constrained, after a long struggle, to join the Latin Church, and who still continue in her pale, though distinguished from

her in this, that they are allowed, by a dispensation from the Pope, to perform all the services of the Church of Rome in the Syro-Chaldaic language.

"They live under the authority of Metropolitan of Cranganore, and the Bishop of Verapoli. The Roman-Catholic Syrians, it is thought, are much more numerous than the members of the original church. Their clergy, four hundred in number,\* are spread through the ancient churches; and, by retaining their language, and acting under the direction of the Church of Rome, they leave no means unessayed to draw over their primitive brethren to the Latin communion. There are said to be eighty-six parishes of Roman-Catholic Syrians subject to the dioceses of Cranganore and Verapoli. Their congregations are reported at ninety thousand—The Hindoos have a much greater respect for the Christians of the original church than for the converts of the Latin communion.

3. "The Latin Roman Catholics are subject to the Primate of Goa, under whom is an archbishop and two bishops.

"The churches are numerous: but as they are in general poor, and are obliged to be supplied with priests from Goa, one vicar holds upon an average five or six churches. The number of Christians composing these churches must be great, as all the fishermen are Roman Catholics."\*\*

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\*These four hundred Syrian Romish priests here mentioned, as well as the clergy of the primitive church, will require four hundred copies of the Syriac Bible. The Malayalim Bibles for the priests and people are printing at Bombay. The three classes of Christians mentioned by Dr. Kerr, in this Report, speak all the Malay-alim.

\*\*Thirty thousand of these Christian fishermen assembled at the palace of Travancore in 1804, and defended their Hindoo prince against the rebellion of the Nairs, and conquered that military body. The language of these fishermen is also Malay-alim; but they have not, it is said, one Bible among them in any language.

Dr. Kerr closes his interesting Report with some general observations. "It appears," he remarks, "from the foregoing statement, that pure Christianity is far from being a religion for which the highest cast of the Hindoos have any disrespect; and that it is the abuse of the Christian name, under the form of the Romish religion to which they are averse." – See Dr. Kerr's Report to Governor of Madras, p.15

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# Four Historic Documents

## Part II

### The Ancient Syrian Church in Mesopotamia

O.H. Parry

## Editor's Note

H.H. Ignatius Peter III, visited British Queen and the archbishop of Canterbury in 1874. This historic visit bridged a very big gap between the ancient oriental Christianity and the Anglicans all over the world. This visit created a great enthusiasm among the missionaries in England to work in the East. Mor Gregorios Abdulla, (who later became H.H. Ignatius Abdulla II) who followed H.H. Peter III mastered the skill of printing technology and he started printing of Syriac books for the Church. *The Malankara Edavaka Patrika* of those times records the receipt of the copies of those books. Another great impact of the contact with the Anglicans was the establishment of schools and promotion of education.

O.H. Parry reports on all what he has seen in the Syrian Church of that time. Incidentally the readers could also get hints on the general background of the Church there. The unhappy incidents at the Patriarchate in the 1st decade of the 1900s and the schisms in Malankara during the first 2 decades shadowed very much the colourful leadership of His Holiness Mor Abdulla II. The biased propaganda of that times marred the glory of the Syrian Church of that period.

O.H. Parry's letters are a few among the fragmentary contemporary notes which will help the students of history to assess the real situation of the Syrian Church.

I am happy that this almost extinct work is now made available for the readers. I photocopied this book from Selly Oak Colleges, U.K., while I had a brief course of study under W.C.C. scholarship. This publication is an indirect influence of that study programme. I dedicate this work for the glory of the Church.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil

Note: The footnotes in this session are prepared by the present Editor.

# The Ancient Syrian Church

IN MESOPOTAMIA.

AND

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS AND REPORTS

OF

MR. O. M. PARRY,

*Of Magdalen College, Oxford,*

WHO VISITED THE PATRIARCH AND HIS PEOPLE

OF CHARGE OF THE

SYRIAN PATRIARCHATE EDUCATION SOCIETY

IN 1892.





## THE ANCIENT SYRIAN CHURCH IN MESOPOTAMIA

THE Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Peter III<sup>1</sup>, visited England<sup>2</sup> in 1874-5, by invitation of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. He was accompanied by Bishop Abdallah Gregorius<sup>3</sup>, who was Bishop of the ancient Syrian Church at Jerusalem before his translation to the see of Homs (Emessa), which includes Damascus, Baalbek, Hamath, and other places in the far north of Syria, between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean. He is a native of Sudud—the ancient Zedad, which is mentioned in Numbers xxxiv.8, and Ezekiel xlvii.15, as on the north border of the Land of Promise. Bishop Abdallah Gregorius visited England again in 1887-8.

The Patriarch still lives—a very aged man—at D'air Za'aferan<sup>4</sup> (near Mardin, in Mesopotamia), which has been for many centuries the seat of the Patriarchate. He is the first and only head of any Eastern Church who has ever visited this country. His stately and venerable appearance took many by surprise, and caused them to ask, "Who are these Oriental Christians—not Armenians? nor Greeks? nor Roman Catholics? What then *can* they be?" And it came as a still greater surprise to learn that we had in these visitors the chief Bishops of that most venerable of all the Gentile Churches, namely, that which was founded by Barnabas and Peter and Paul at Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians (Acts xi, 26-30; xiii. 1-3; xiv 26-28)—the first Gentile

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1 In some books he is referred as Peter IV, including St. Peter in the succession on the See of Antioch.

2 Enroute the visit to India for the convening of the Mulanthuruthy Synod (1876)

3 Later became Moran Mor Ignatius Abdallah II, Patriarch of Antioch.

4 Commonly known in Kerala as 'Kurkuma Dayara'.

Church, that is –which was founded after the Martyrdom of St. Stephen, and to which were addressed the letters and rules of conduct issued by the Hebrew Christian Church in the council of the Apostles, held under the presidency of St. James, as we read in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts. It was intensely interesting to hear from the lips of the Patriarch that the Syrian Church regards St. Peter as its first Patriarch; that St. Ignatius the martyr was his next successor but one; and to see at the end of his M.S. Prayer Book the list of the Patriarchs in a long and unbroken line of 141<sup>5</sup> names, headed by the name of St. Peter and closed in his own name Ignatius Peter III,; and to listen to the explanation that Ignatius is the Patriarchal name always assumed—in memory of St. Ignatius—on election to the office; and that Peter is the baptismal name of the Patriarch, who is the third of that name, there having been, besides St. Peter, one other<sup>6</sup> Patriarch Peter (Gnaphaeus) many centuries ago. No less interesting was it to hear him and the Bishop quoting from and referring to the teachings of their Syrian Saints, Eusebius, Chrysostom (whom they called by his original Eastern form of the name, "Golden Mouth"). John Damascus, Gregorius, and Ephrem Syrus, whose hymns the Patriarch would at times recite. These Christians have lived so far away from the beaten tracks of travel in their remote home, so out of reach of modern life and incident, that they seem to live in thought in the primitive ages of Christianity; and not only so, but Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Nahor, who lived in that same district of Mesopotamia, are ever present in their memory. Their conversation is full of allusion to the Old Testament Scriptures, which their Church had received from the Mother Church

5 The number varies in different list as some list exclude deposed heretics or schismatics.

6 There were two other Patriarchs with the baptismal name Peter other than saint Peter and the Patriarch mentioned here is Peter II (468-71, 476, 485-86). He was deposed two times and reinstated. The other Peter reigned between 581-591.



of Hebrew Christians at Jerusalem, and from whom also they had received the Liturgies of St. James and St. Mark<sup>7</sup>, still used in their churches.

It was strangely touching to hear as a living language spoken by these Christian Bishops that Syriac (Aramaic) tongue which even our Lord Himself had used as a vernacular tongue, and in which the most precious versions of Holy Scripture and of the early Liturgies are still extant. It was thus brought home for the first time to the minds of many in England by personal intercourse and ocular demonstration that the most primitive Gentile Church still exists in its native land, and still holds fast its faith in the great truths of Christian doctrine, in spite of long cruel persecution from heathens and Moslems and even from fellow Christians, who have oppressed them. There is not space left in which to speak of the surprise and delight which these Syrian Bishops experienced on finding that we have, in common with them, the ancient Liturgies, Episcopal orders, and primitive Creeds, and that we are acquainted not only with the Holy Scriptures but with the names and teachings of their Saints and Fathers. They had indeed heard that the English nation was Christian. But they were amazed to find that our Church, too, was ancient and apostolic. They noted with instant recognition the points wherein our Church agrees with theirs rather than with the (Western) Church of Rome. And they saw with wonder whole congregations able to read, having Bibles and Prayer Books in abundance; the multitude of schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions; the wealth, comfort, and peace of this favoured land. The Syrian Christians are deprived of these blessings, but they hope to receive some of them from English Christians. A Committee was

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<sup>7</sup> The liturgy according to St. Mark is not commonly used now. This liturgy is included in the 'Divine liturgies' published by Samuel Mor Athanasius (Syriac and English, 1991)

formed (under the auspices of the late Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Jackson of London), by whom some money was collected and remitted from time to time the Patriarch, who opened Elementary Schools in various parts of Mesopotamia for his people.

A second visit of Bishop Mar Gregorius to England in 1887-1888 greatly increased the interest felt for the ancient Syrian Church. An Auxiliary Committee was then formed in Edinburgh under the presidency of the Most Rev. the Primus; Vice-Presidents the Bishops of St. Andrew's Moray and Ross, and Argyle and the Isles.

A fine printing-press and other needful machinery were given by the kindness of a friend at Manchester, and Messrs Miller & Richard of Edinburgh. An Edinburgh friend gave £ 100 towards the expense of sending out Mr. R. Bowie, the manager at the great Edinburgh type founding manufactory, kindly lent by Messrs Miller & Richard for four months to go to Mesopotamia and set up the presses, which he did most satisfactorily. The University of Oxford gave £100 of Syriac type. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge gave some English type, and the Bible Society granted a supply of paper and binding materials for an edition in Syriac of the Holy Bible.

The Patriarch at once set the presses to work, and sent a copy of the first book printed in Syriac to the Queen, which Her Majesty graciously accepted. He also had printed psalters for use in his Schools. The liberal assistance of private friends permitted us, in 1892, to send out Mr. O.H. Parry of Magdalen College, Oxford, in response to the request of the Patriarch for English assistants in his educational work. Mr. Parry has visited the headquarters of the Syrian Church at Mardin and Dair Za'aferan near the Tigris, where the Patriarch resides. He has inspected the Schools founded by the



Patriarch, and examined into the condition generally of the Syrian Church with a view to promoting the education and welfare of the people by enabling them to carry out the measures proposed by their Patriarch. In the following pages will be found Extracts from Mr. Parry's Reports and Letters to the Committee. Funds are necessary for this work, and we earnestly trust that we will be supplied by the liberality of the British and American Churches for this the most ancient Gentile Church, to whom Christendom has owed so much in the earliest centuries of the Christian era. It is to be hoped that we may be enabled to keep up the assistance to the Syrian Patriarch of Antioch for his Schools in Mesopotamia, and also to extend this good work to the Diocese of Mar Gregorius, west of the Euphrates, where as yet there are no Schools at all.

The Turkish Government willingly allow the Syrian and all other Eastern Churches under their rule to establish Schools for their people—if they can afford to do so. But Schools established by foreigners are regarded with jealousy, for political and other reasons. It is therefore with great pleasure that we have learned that the heads of the Syrian Church are anxious to promote the education of their highly-intelligent people. Be it ours to help them in this good work.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at the meeting of Bishops, at the Bible House, July 13th, 1888, said:

"We have among us, by God's providence, one whom I should like to join with us in acknowledging the society's courtesy, Mor Gregorius, a Bishop of the Syrian Church. If there is one thing to emphasize what has been said about the common unity an agreement of the Christian Churches, in one thing at least it is shown by the presence of Mar Gregorius. It is surely a thing which ought to stir us to have here a Prelate who is heart and soul with us from the Patriarchate of



Antioch, where the disciples were first called *Christians*—a Prelate who in his daily prayers uses the language of Abraham, "the father of the faithful." We rejoice to think that there is a voice on earth answering to the voice of heaven—the one sound which has gone out into all lands—a sound which is going out day by day from this House and from other centres—a voice which is going out unceasingly into all lands. And it seems to me that to-day in the Bishops that come thence, we have as it were the echo of that sound returning whence it came forth."

Contributions to the Syrian Patriarchate Education Fund will be gladly received by E.A Finn, Hon. Secretary, The Elms, Brook Green, W., and by Messrs. Coutts, Bankers, Strand.

March 1893.

## EXTRACTS FROM MR. O.H. PARRY'S LETTERS

Mardin, *April 25th*, 1892.

The Committee will be glad to hear that I have started work here now.

1. There have been printed already three books. A Catechism, 1000 copies; a Grammar of old Syrian, 150 copies; a book of Church Hymns, 600 copies—all in Syriac—800 copies of the hymns remain unfinished.

As to the Schools there is a great deal that is favourable to report. The Americans tell me that they are quite the best of the Native Schools, and have been improving much lately. Of course I exclude the French Catholic Schools. The teaching is naturally not very advanced, nor are there sufficient teachers, nor are the teachers properly educated.

The Patriarch's Schools (in and near Mardin) are as follows:

<p>A. In the Church of the 40 Apostles, in which is Mardin</p>	<p>Two Schools (1) 120 boys, 10-12 years (2) 40 ,, 12-16 ,,</p>	<p>Arabic, Syriac Catechism and Gospels, Singing hymns, Turkish Geography, Arithmetic, Arabic, Syriac, Turkish, Arithmetic, Catechism Gospels in Arabic</p>	<p>Two good schoolrooms which would hold a few more boys</p>
<p>B. Church of Mar Shimoon</p>	<p>One School. 60 boys, 8-12 years</p>	<p>The master looks intelligent—the boys very eager to learn well-behaved, as in all the schools.</p>	<p>Priest visits every day</p>
<p>C. Mar Michael, about three-quarters of a mile out of Mardin</p>	<p>One School 70 to 75 boys, 8-14 years</p>	<p>Arabic, Turkish, Syriac Catechism and Gospels</p>	<p>Arabic, Turkish, Syriac, Catechism and Gospels.</p>
<p>D. No regular Church, worship in a house</p>	<p>50-55 boys</p>	<p>50-55 boys</p>	<p>(There are also Schools in other towns and villages)</p>
<p>E. No regular Church, worship in a house</p>	<p>50-55 boys</p>	<p>50-55 boys</p>	<p></p>

There are about 350 boys altogether in these Schools. In the villages there are some Schools, but I am waiting for information.

They work eight hours a day, with two hours in Church.

There is a most excellent foundation for making efficient Schools.

There will be no need for buildings, but only for payment of teachers and educating the same.

At Dair Za'aferan, the Patriarch has for long desired a higher School for the education of the teachers.

He would wish to have at Dair Za'aferan a large central establishment, where the most important work would be done, and the printing work be superintended. This establishment would contain a School for the training of Clergy and of men anxious also for more advanced teaching, such as masters and higher clerks. It would thus be a sort of College, and would need one or two Englishmen for its management. The training of the Clergy seems the most important matter of all. At present they are for the most part very ignorant, but anxious to reform. Possessing reading, and being very much attached to the Bible, as they certainly are, there seems no reason why real reform and good missionary work should not be done; not only by men sent from England, but also by the native priests. In this case it may be imagined what a vast economy both of English labour and money will be effected and also how infinitely more permanent the good is likely to be.

For this reason I consider that the Patriarch is absolutely right in considering that the religious College at Dair Za'aferân, consisting of probably the best boys who had passed through the Schools, is far the most valuable part of



the work in prospect. It is singularly fortunate that there is a splendid place like Dair Za'aferan for the purpose. At present, the Clergy as a rule do practically nothing except go through the services. Under good guidance they might well become the Light which Abdunnoor prays for so earnestly in his Church. On the whole, then, the prospect for the Schools is most promising.

As to the Churches,... some are very fine, especially that at Diarbekir. The service here is conducted partly in Syriac, of which most people understand a little—partly in Arabic. Hymns, prayers and reading of the Gospels take up most of the Service.

The Patriarch had been very unwell, but was better by the 1st May. He sends salutations to the Committee and all his friends in England, and is very glad to receive me. He hopes this is really the beginning of a great work and that he will live to see it actually on foot...

I have been to Dair Za'aferân [the residence of the Patriarch] an hour east from Mardin. The printing-press is in good order, and ready to work. The Bishop in charge of it is anxious for certain implements.

There had been some difficulty raised by the Turkish Governor which caused a temporary suspension of the printing, but those difficulties have now been removed. Both presses are in fine condition, and the printing was about to be continued.

*June 6th, 1892.*

The Patriarch has yesterday gone on horseback to Dair al Za'aferan. I took a photograph of him. He would not allow me to photograph him in his Divan [as an invalid]. He rode the whole distance of four miles on his own mare. A man of

93 on horseback is not seen every day, and his mare is a real beauty.

Gooleyeh I visited May 10th. It is in the plain about 1½ hours from Mardin. Things there are far more hopeful. There are about 300 Syrian houses and 1,800 to 2,400 people. Ten or twelve houses are Protestant; two or three are Catholic. There is a fairly good school and an excellent room, containing about 60 boys in winter and 10 to 20 in summer—when the rest work in the fields. There would be about 200 in the schools, they say, if the teaching were better. There is one teacher, not very bright to look at, paid about 500 piastres a year, not very regularly. The people look well-to-do, and need only waking up; they are very proud of the sharpness of their boys—the Mardin boys being "a long way behind them." There is no teaching for the girls, although there are quite 200 to teach. There are now two churches, a third having fallen down. One is very old and little used, just outside the village; the other is a fine building built about 150 years, but as usual very dark. The Protestants have a school and chapel combined; a school of about 30 boys in winter, and 10 to 12 in summer, with an excellent man who is both pastor and teacher. The Syrians have lastly a most admirable priest, to all appearances anxious for education and regeneration of his Church, especially among the Clergy. "We are now a priesthood in name alone, for we are ignorant and have no spiritual power." He discussed the question of reform; he is eager for it, and would be zealous for a language which the people could understand for use in the service. He preaches in Arabic.



## MARDIN, MESOPOTAMIA

*May and June, 1892.*

THERE is no lack of good air in such an eyrie as Mardin, unless it be tainted by the streets; and on my balcony there is always a lovely breeze from the plain, day and night coming from miles away. For except for the hills of Djebel Sinjar to the south-east, and some small ranges to the south-west, there is level plain as far as the eyes can see.

Mardin is an important town, and the seat of a Mutesaraf, or under-governor, a grade lower than a Wali, or governor of a district. It lies in the Walayet or Province of Diarbekir, where the Wali lives, to which town it is second in importance and size.

We passed a few streets, and soon found our way to the church of the "Arba'een" or Forty Saints, having climbed up a slippery, ill-paved alley, through the great gateway with its railed and iron-bound doors.

There is a large court, with an aged mulberry tree spreading in the middle, surrounded by gravestones. Highest among these is one very finely carved, which tells how two brothers, Syrians, in the famine fifteen years ago, sold wheat which they had hoarded, at a fair price; but Moslems, jealous that others should sell corn for less than themselves, seized them, and killed them for the store; and the Syrian People gave them a public funeral, and set up a stone to tell how they came by their death. Just to the right of the entrance is a handsome stone building, raised about five years since for a boy's school. It has a fine open portico with an arched roof, the entrance being richly carved with the familiar arabesque designs. There are some forty boys who come here to school all day and every day the whole year round, except when



there is a saint's day, or a picnic to a neighbouring garden is on hand. They learn Syrian, Arabic, Turkish, Persian, geography, arithmetic, and algebra.

Across the court to the right is another larger but less handsome building, where smaller boys from 8 to 12 are taught. The curriculum seems to be entirely made up of singing, or saying the old Syrian hymns of Mar Ephrem. The noise these children make at certain hours of the day with their singing is quite appalling. There is one teacher for each school, paid from fifteen to twenty Turkish pounds a year. Each child is supposed to pay twenty piastres, or three shillings a year, and the Committee of the Syrians makes up any deficiency. The Committee, as may be supposed, is generally out of pocket. To the left of the court are the rooms occupied in the winter by the Patriarch and his personal attendants, with a kitchen and rooms for guests below.

We climbed the steps under cross-crowned arches of iron leading up to the balcony. There we were met by an important-looking old priest in a long fur-lined cloak, who took us to see the Patriarch, and wait until the room opposite was quite prepared for us. There is a rather monotonous profusion of carving about the doors and windows; and the whole building is of exceedingly solid and good construction. It was built in 1886 as a winter residence for the Patriarch (it being also convenient for administrative purposes) to spend part of the year, especially winter, in the town rather than at the monastery, three miles from Mardin. A lofty loggia reaches to the back of the building from the balcony, giving entrance to all the rooms. One of these doors opens into the Patriarch's divan, and is covered outside with a heavy leather curtain, such as is so familiar outside Italian churches.

The divan itself is a fine room, about thirty feet by twelve, with two vaults and an arch between, and carved wherever

there is opportunity. The woodwork is, as usual, all painted red and green. At the back a door leads into a small room that serves as pantry, store and lumber room. In the simplicity of Eastern life this one room satisfies all the requirements of the Patriarch, whether asleep or awake.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the whole room is the almost entire absence of writing materials, or any of the ordinary surroundings of a person of state. A few letters lie scattered on the cushions at the head of the room; others being bundled together with documents of all kinds into a large cloth bag. Some fifty books in old red leather binding, church services, liturgies, and Syrian histories are neatly arranged in an arched recess in the wall. A dozen such recesses of various sizes are placed as cupboards round the room for books, papers, cigarettes, sleeping materials, or anything else necessary. They are as a rule open, and common to every house in the East, adding a very picturesque appearance to a room.

The whole room, with the beautiful Saracenic recess at the head, with a glass cabinet in it containing certain valuable books and property, is far more Oriental than anything I had hitherto seen; especially so, as at the head of the room are spread to one side upon the floor three silk covered mattresses, covered with pillows, on which the Patriarch sits and smokes a chibouk some five feet long.

He had been suffering a good deal for a month or two from the results of influenza, and was just beginning to throw them off. He was sitting erect upon his cushion ready to receive company. A more imposing sight than this aged prince it would be hard to find. The Queen, when he visited her in England, likened him to Abraham his father. He looked to me more like the Moses of Michael Angelo, stepped down



from his pedestal; "his eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated." There he sat as keen to catch every word that was said and to transact business as many a man younger by thirty years. Only his brow showed the troubles he has gone through; and something too of the impatience as well as the dignity and power of the lion showed there too. He stroked his long white beard, and raised himself with the aid of a monk to shake hands, and welcome the long-promised help from England. He stood over six foot high, and stooped a little and as he spoke his courtly greeting he would have impressed the least sensitive. I long to be a painter and set down the whole scene, master and all, the rich carpets, the old grey-bearded priest, all so strange and so like a picture of the East five hundred years ago, that I felt rewarded for the long and tedious journey to see that picture alone. The Patriarch knows that he represents a line of princess in the Church, going back earlier even than the great roll of Rome, and in order, less broken and stained by dark blots in its history. He is as proud of it as of his name, that unites the two greatest heads of this Church in early days, Mar Peter Ignatius III., Patriarch of the most Holy See of Antioch, and head of all the Syrian churches of the East.

It is no empty title either; for besides his people in Turkey, he counts half a million of the Queen's subjects on the Malabar coast under his rule. There is little enough, no doubt, that he or his people know of one-tenth of those under him; for the times are evil, and communication slow and dangerous, apart from other reasons. But there is enough left of the germ of a pure and living apostolic church to justify the highest hopes for the future of this people, if the way be but shown to them.

As if to unite the two ends of his horizon, a case arrived



from Malabar just as I was in the room containing a gold cross set with gems, of Indian workmanship, with £45 as an offering from his people there. Coffee, the best I had hitherto tasted, was served with citron preserve, followed by cigarettes in the orthodox order.

Mardin has a population of about thirty thousand souls, roughly counted. Of these, about thirteen thousand, according to their own calculation, acknowledge the Pope of Rome in greater or lesser degree. Eight hundred families are Syrian Jacobites, one hundred houses are Protestant, and the rest are Moslems. By this it will be seen that the Pope is very strong here, and that the Moslems and Christians are about equally balanced. Of the Roman Catholics there are about seven hundred houses, who seceded from the Syrian Church, Chaldeans formerly Nestorians, Catholic Armenians, and a small Church of Latins making up the balance. Of old Nestorians and Armenians there are none left here; the only native church retaining anything of its old strength being the Syrian Jacobite; for here are the head-quarters of the Patriarch, and the actual centre of Syrian territory. A first-rate Patriarch might do much towards restoring the primitive Eastern churches of Syria and Mesopotamia to their ancient position; for the Jacobites are, in the main, neither a poor nor an uncivilized people, at least in towns. They have much thrift, with far more of honesty and the other qualities of citizens than the majority of Eastern Christians. There is more quiet dignity and consciousness of a noble heritage, combined with a good deal of practical loyalty to the government, which stand them in very good stead. The majority of them have stood firm against Papal encroachment.

It is now absolutely clear that two things are wanted for this Church: good men with religious and missionary spirit,

and also able to enforce the habit of business-like dealing in common matters. Such men are absolutely needed to direct the work; not that there is any reason to deny confidence to the authorities here, but only that there is no conception of the art of management, or of any kind of efficient education. Secondly, there is a need, to some far most absolute if not so widely acknowledged, of true religious reform and teaching, for which the people are earnestly anxious. There is much to fill up in the rather empty house of the Lord here. There is no need of romantic propagandism, but of quietly teaching the people to know their own Church and her teaching.

*June* 10th, 1892. Mardin—

The first day at Mardin I spent in visiting the schools attached to the five churches of the town. They contain about 350 boys, but no girls, and have six teachers, the latter receiving as pay from £8 to £18 a year. Towards this every boy is supposed to pay 20 piastres or 3s. 4d. year; not a very large sum, but more than many can afford, the balance being made good by the parish committees here as in other towns. The Patriarch interferes scarcely at all, being too old to take even much interest in them beyond supplying a little money now and then. Inside the school walls is a sight familiar to all who have visited the East; a chair and desk at the head with a broad bench all round the walls, on which the boys place their small mats and book boxes. They sit curled up behind the boxes, and use them to write on.

The whole effect of colours is quite brilliant. The white plaster walls, the teacher in his bright yellow tunic, with long grey coat and fez, surrounded by small boys in tunics of all colours of the rainbow, while a richer boy here and there blazes out in a paste ring, a silver mounted girdle, and a pale



blue broad cloth jacket or frock coat. In front upon the floor are neat rows of red slippers, into which the boys shuffle as they dismount to write out a sum or say a lesson. In the middle, perhaps, a carpet spread on which the small boys sit. The books in use at the schools are, of course, a curious assortment. English boys would scarcely relish Blackstone as a standard reading book, yet the only book these boys have for Turkish reading is the digest of Suleiman. Some are in print, others in manuscript, while a few boys proudly display gaily-coloured bindings from the American press of Beyrout, which they or their fathers saved their piastres to buy. This speaks for the need of books printed in their only alphabet; for the usual fashion among the Syrians is to print Arabic, Turkish, Syrian, all in the Syrian characters, except such books as are distinctly Arabic or Turkish in matter as well as language.

The learning of the schools was briefly displayed by the recitation of Turkish law and Syrian hymns, and a few questions and answers on history (of what romantic description I was, of course, not aware), and some arithmetical gymnastics on the black board. It is, as may be expected, chiefly by the rote that these children learn. It is all very like an English Board school, only infinitely less so. The best school in the town is at the church of Mar Shimoon, whose children, as it is told in the Maccabees, were so cruelly murdered in the reign of Antiochus for refusing to deny the faith of their fathers. The illustration thereof in the same church in fresco is quite remarkable and unmistakable in its realism, a good specimen of the ultra-serious Christian art of this people. When we reached the school, built with a fine divan for a bishop some years ago, and at considerable expense, we found a small party of the chief men of the parish waiting outside the door of the court. These took us in, and pointed me to a



well-cushioned divan at the top to hear what the boys could do.

The latter were well trained, and all got up and gave a sweeping salaam to us, and then sat down again at a sign from the master. He is a man of considerable originality, and well educated; applying methods which he learnt during five years teaching in one of the Catholic schools. His pay is £ 16 a year. The boys began by singing an ode of this man's composition, which he also set to English. The Arabic I now see is very elegant.

The good order of the boys, their general quickness and hard work, especially considering that there is no competitive stimulus, were quite astonishing, and showed the master to be a man of some ability and the boys worth teaching.

But the excellence of this school is only one of the exceptions that prove the rule of general mediocrity, such as we find in the three remaining schools in the town, and in those of the villages. The usual course of teaching consists of Arabic, Turkish, Syrian, and sometimes Persian, geography, arithmetic, and a species of history. For religious teaching they have the Gospel, taught in a very perfunctory manner, and a catechism printed two years since at Dair Za'aferân, of which the same teacher gave me a copy.

The boys spend all day in or about the school, chiefly to save their parents the trouble of looking after them. For, like certain people nearer home, holidays are looked forward to more with dread than pleasure: hence they have none. The Christians, indeed, generally bring up larger families than the Moslems, for the simple reason that there are less burdens laid on human life among them than among the latter... On the whole it is a brighter picture—afforded by the Christian communities of Eastern cities—when they are in force enough to hold their own.

Aleppo, Urfah, Diarbekr, Mosul are centres of land far less rich, which no neglect can turn into fever haunts, nor make other than corn-growing, briskly trading depots, which only require good railways to become what they were under the magnificent administration of the Romans and the early Turks. These towns are away from the oppressive shadows of Constantinople; and the Christians are of a far superior kind to the detestable Levantine that plagues the more western towns.

Christians, too, are freer to trade, free from conscription, more thrifty and progressive than their masters, and seem in many ways to justify the prophecy of the American missionaries that the time will come when they shall possess the land.

There are three churches which deserve notice belonging to the Syrians in Mardin. Of the remainder, the Chaldeans or Papal Nestorians own the finest, a grand old Roman building, square, with a brick dome. Another belongs to the Papal Armenians, larger and of a later date.

The church of the Arba'een, or forty Saints, is the largest of the Syrian churches, and has been mentioned as the residence of the Patriarch. Nothing in the outside shows it to be a church, except a pretty little campanile, its massive doors, and a monument or two let into the walls. Inside it consists of four aisles, divided by massive square pillars about eight feet high, from which the vaulting of the roof springs immediately. The immense massiveness of the pillars is due partly to the fact that the roof is flat, the space between it and the vaulting being filled up with rubble, thus forming an immense mass to carry. It is also due to ignorance of constructive art, and the proper use of the keystone in the vault. This architectural extravagance has, however, one good result, the

delicious coolness of the churches. This north aisle is, as usual, set apart for the women, and separated by a wooden screen. But it is a remarkable fact that, except in the Protestant community, the number of men who attend church far exceeds that of the women.

There are three altars, only one of which seems ever to be used; and before that one hangs a lovely curtain of Mardin silk, except when service is being performed. These churches differ from the Greek in having no altar screen the altar and the altar service being just as much a part of the people's service as in our own Church.

The following is information as to Harpoot, from a man I met in Diarkekir, and the teacher in the Syrian school of Midhyat from one of the priests. Harpoot—about 150 Syrian houses (*i.e.*, families) and nearly 1,000 persons. There is a school of about 50 children, which, with the requisite means, would be increased to 300 boys and girls. For girls there is at present no education to speak of, except in the American schools. The teacher has also a Sunday-school, to which also Catholics and Protestants come, and lastly a monthly class for young men. The church is a very old one, to which are attached a priest and a Rahab (monk), the latter of whom preaches occasionally.

There are two Committees of the Syrians: 1. Eight men, householders, who joined together seventeen years since... for the affairs of Church and School. These are very School shall be always opened for the education of little boys; and this is seen in their own works also. They come together continually to pray for their work. At the beginning of each year each of them makes a gift of money (ten to fifty piastres) for their work, and afterwards one to four piastres a week. There are, besides, thirty to forty-five families who give three to



twelve piastres a year. Any deficiency in the teacher's pay is made up by the Committee. This is a fair sample of how the schools are managed out here... The committee deserves help... the whole sum raised seems to be about £15 to £20 a year, which is not sufficient, nor very regularly paid to the teacher.

There is, besides, a Committee of twelve young men, anxious to begin a girl's school, for which they need an initial £40; for this they have collected already £15 in two and a half years... The spirit shown by these men is excellent, and they seem to deserve help... The teacher at H—is quite above the average. He has been making great efforts to raise the standard of school work among the Syrians, and also to improve their religious life... Young men, especially, feel their want of guidance. Everything seems to point to the Patriarch's Dair Za'aferân Clergy School as the great part of the work. The priests, as he says, are ill-educated... He also suggests printing in Arabic, Syrian, and Turkish, with Syrian characters, and printing books of the Bible separately, so that the purchase may be easier...

At Midyat there are two churches and four monasteries, in and about Midyat, all that remain from the 300 said once to have been there. One church in the town still stands in ruins. There are six priests in the town, three of whom preach. There is preaching every Sunday. The monasteries contain eight monks between them... The town contains 700 families... the government census contains 420 names of whom are the names of many dead people, as usual (whose taxes the living have to pay). Of taxes they pay 15,000 piastres, or about thirty-seven and a half on each house, ten piastres having been added by the present Governor; 11 to 12,000 piastres property tax, and in money value a seventh, in lieu of

the old tithe of corn in kind. Besides this the Governor returns the house value as double. These figures speak for themselves as to the state of things in country places. One may guess, too, where the money goes (not to the Sultan). And in the village and mountain districts there must be added the continual and enormous exactions of the Kurdish feudal chiefs.

There are five houses Moslems; fifteen or twenty Protestant; no Catholic or Armenian...

I discussed the question of language again with Mutran Elias, the head of Dair Za'aferân... there is a strong feeling in favour of Syrian for use in the Sunday and daily services, especially in the altar or Communion Service, which, as is well known, forms the larger part of Eastern worship. The old Syrian hymns of Mar Ephrem and Mar Jacob enter so largely into all services, the tunes to which they are sung being also of the same date, that there would be the inherent difficulty in translating them so as to go still with the tunes, for to the latter the people are very devoted. The principle of these hymns is admirable; they come in regular order in the services through the year, and are elucidations of and sung after the Scripture appointed to be read each day. The loss of a national language, even when so few understand it (in that Arabic-speaking district) is a very sad thing, and demands very tender dealing. Mutran Elias and many others base their hopes upon a restoration of the Syrian language by means of the schools. But, even supposing this possible, the desirability of basing religious reform on an artificially supported language seems very questionable. It seems wiser, as the Syrians live in the middle of Arabic, Armenian and Turkish, to accept the inevitable, and retain Syrian for study as a second language. Of course, this does not, as far as I know, apply to



Jebel Tor; but, from all I hear, the Syrians there understand old Syriac no better than they do here. One or two teachers from whom I have heard insist on the use of Arabic, Armenian, and Turkish, with Syrian alphabet as the basis for work. Syrian is now, and certainly should continue to be taught in the schools.

There are a few men such as Mutran Abdallah (Mar Gregorius) and Rahab Abd en Noor, at Urfa, who really understand what reform means, and are extremely anxious for it. There are many more desirous for education, and some, like Mutran\* Behnam, of Mosul, anxious for both; but still more for the revival of the great Syrian nation. But when I ask for details, most get suspicious that with change of one thing change of all will come. The younger men are, of course, eager for change; there is no scope for them, and the spirit is crushed by the shell-like formalities, and there is some dissatisfaction with a priest-hood that fails to do justice to their loftier aims. One of the priests has said much on the same subject. He is very anxious for the people to understand, but is very loth to lose Syrian... He was a very reverent man, showing considerable knowledge of the Bible... What the Syrians really need now are efficient elementary Church Schools and good training for Clergy.

To find the true Turkish or Kurdish Moslem gentleman, we must go to some village where a broken-down old Bey still keeps up a little of his persecuted state, a noble Kurdish Sheikh, living to the letter up to the nobler precepts of the Book, and making no difference between Moslem and Christian subsists on the shred of an ancient authority, which a cruel spirit of reform has left to him. Such men are rare, but Layard and many others bear witness that they were oftener to be seen once than they are now.

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\* This is the Abrabiced form of the word *Metran* or Metropolitan



*June 25th, 1892.*

The Patriarch has received a telegram from Constantinople, giving leave for the two presses to work as hitherto at Dair Za'aferân under the laws which govern all educational work, and subject to approval. This is splendid news... and we hope before two weeks to start work under Mar Gregorius or Mutrân Elias, printing the Psalms and then the Bible in Garshunî (*i.e.*, in Syrian characters, but Arabic language).

*Visit to Febel Tor (Mount Masius) and Bisheriyieh. September 7th, 1892.*

After a week's bustle, buying horses and other necessities for a mountain expedition, and obtaining the letters of introduction required among the villages, we managed, late in the afternoon, to get under way for Midhyat, a village about fourteen hours ride from Mardin, and the largest in Jebel Tor. This latter is the mountain district formerly known as Mons Masius, lying in the north-east corner of the great Mesopotamian Plain, between Mardin, Nisibis on the southwest, and the curve of the Tigris.

We found the Midhyat people a very handsome set of men, and fairly well off. Leaving Midhyat we wasted little time getting our load on, and starting for Hassan Kaf, for we had only just enough time to reach it before dark. We found an excellent guide to take us to the village of Salah, were the Bishop would give us another as far as we wished. The country all round Midhyat to north Salah, south and west, consists of downs, slightly rocky, and desolate of trees as only Turkey can be.

Salah turned out to be far more interesting than I expected, although the decreipt old Bishop whom we found

in the monastery did not impart much dignity to the scene. The church was especially fine, of quite a different type from what I had already seen; much larger, with a high waggon-arched roof of brick, and high lancet-shaped windows on the two sides. It formed a great contrast to the small low churches I had already seen. The tiles of the roof inside have gained by age the most lovely soft colour, and in design are worthy to compare with the Lombard churches of northern Italy. Above the sanctuary door, which is finely though coarsely carved, something in the same manner as the Church of St. James at Nisibis, there is an inscription stating that the church was built in 1159. Other inscriptions are built into the walls inside and out, many of them old; but I had no time to stay and make squeezes. Of all the books one old one alone remained, a copy of the Gospels of the same date as the church. All this was shown to us by the old Bishop, who was lamentably ignorant of them all, even of his own Syrian language.

After a rest and a good feast of grapes we started over downs, always rising slightly, nothing to see but a few Moslem cottages and ruined churches, we came suddenly to a height commanding a most glorious view towards the north. Running due east and west about seven miles, and about half that distance straight before us, to a pass through the mountains on the other side, stretched a noble valley, and through the very centre ran a stream belted thick with willows and fields of cotton. North, the mountains shutting in the Tigris...

Across the plain we entered a narrower space, richly watered, and planted with rice, cotton, and trees, and the rich vegetation made us quite forget how time was flying. Darkness came on... At last we reached Hassan Kaf—a bird's

nest of a town—on the top of the cliffs. We went across the river to visit the monastery of Mar Kuriakos.

### *September 10th Bishan*

When we reached the plain we found plenty of villages, and a great bustle of villagers winnowing the corn, or treading it out with oxen as in the old days. All the threshing-floors were well filled with busy crowds at work, men and women; the village priest working too with girt-up tunic and long white beard. Standing by might be the Kurdish Agha, interested to see how much his spoils would be here and there, and compounding with the owners for a heavy tithe.

In one corner of the floor, where the threshing was well forwards, and the chaff was flying from the last row of wheat in the wind, were sitting two pairs of women grinding the wheat between great round stones for immediate use. How monotonous that noise grows during these months, when the women sit grinding morning, noon, and night in the villages and dair.

Two hours before sunset we had passed the last of these villages, disturbing a fine flock of wild turkeys as we rode the long grass, and saw the grim old dair before us. In a few minutes more we were upstairs, settled in a comfortable divan, and sipping excellent coffee. It was Saturday evening, and families were flocking in from the villages to spend the night and attend the early service in the convent. We spent Sunday quietly there.

### *September 11th*

In the afternoon I went a short ride to visit a village called Kefërzo, just across the plain. The chief man of the village had spent the night at the dair, and pressed me very



much to go with him and see a fine new church they had lately built. It is one of the many churches built or restored during the last thirty years, which have seen more work of this kind than several hundred years previous. It certainly bears witness to an improved state of things, and the greater toleration of the government towards the Christians, bad though the actual administration undoubtedly is. Complaints against Turk and Kurd are continuous, and occasionally augmented by an outcry against some rich Christian member of a tar-farming syndicate. But all this seems but a tithe of what must once have been the case.

Kurdish raids are rarer, and appeal is less often in vain; while the flourishing Christian villages, a great contrast to the thriftless appearance of most Arab or Kurdish settlements, and above all the numerous new churches and bell-towers, generally clean and carefully tended, bear witness to a changed state of affairs and to good promise for the future.

The church of Kefërzo was one of the best specimens I have seen of a country church, quite equal, taking the standard of house building, if not superior, to the average village church of England. It is too, like most of the new churches, greatly improved in the matter of light, the need of precaution being less urgent now that Christians have less open violence to fear from the Moslems. Unfortunately it is usual, clinging to what this need has rendered customary, for the sanctuary windows to be generally wretchedly small, fostering with other conventions the idea of mystery that Easterns love to attach to religion. This church, however, is an exception. At the west end we saw some loaves and grain stored there as usual for safety. The whole was divided according to the Western plan into a nave and two aisles by two rows of marble pillars. The sanctuary with its three altars is, contrary

to ordinary rule, one large open space, a dome covering the centre altar, decorated in tolerable taste with black and white Arabesque designs.

The people had determined to do their best with this church, and with remarkable energy had quarried some rough whitish marble, that is to be found two miles away, for the purpose, so that the whole effect of the church is one unusual solidity. Its cost was £120 (Turkish), but the larger part of the work was free of cost. Numerous coloured prints of inferior French and Russian manufacture adorned the walls, much to the offence of the straighter of the Jacobites, to whom pictures in the church savour of idolatry. A beautiful piece of syenite built into the chancel walls, which, the priest told me, sweats every Sunday morning as a witness to the holy day, completes the ornaments of the church. Two priests live in the church to perform the daily services, supplementing their meagre stipends by weaving and farming. When I asked one of them why he had no school here for the children, he only replied indignantly, "Am I a deacon that I should teach boys?" I spoke something of a greater Teacher, until he thought perhaps he might try and do something for the children too.

We spent a few minutes on the mound where the church stands, and looked at the ancient tombs of Syrians before we turned down to the house of our host. There we found a party of village magnates sitting as they sit in English hamlets of a Sunday afternoon, with cigarettes to inspire the discussion of harvest prospects. They all rose at the approach of a stranger, and made room in the gateway where they sat. There was a constraint upon them, however, for just opposite me sat an official sent from Sort to inspect the gathering of the harvest, and see to the interest of a paternal government.



Although a miserable specimen even of a government clerk, none dared utter a single unweighed word while he was by; and I had to put a straight guard upon myself, from whom an unwise word might have seriously damaged my hosts.

Coffee and grapes were soon served, and then we rose to go. I was much struck by the thrifty, well-cared-for look of the village, a great contrast to those of Kurd or Arab; nor could I restrain the ever-recurring hope that the day might be hastened when these Christians may be free to develop themselves with the energy that they possess to a degree so palpably superior to the Moslems. It was, as usual, a sad thing to say good-bye to these villagers, and feel how pitiably little one could do to help them. The grapes I had eaten had come from the only garden within miles, for the fear of the Kurds prevent the people from planting, except where they are in good force, as here, to protect them.

### *September 16th*

We arrived at Hakh. Here the church is small and exceedingly beautiful, both in proportion and ornament. In the form of a great cross lacking its western arm, where the vestibule comes; the eastern most is semi-circular; the north and south square in the ground plan, but vaulted like the other, so that the roof is symmetrical. From the appearance of the masonry the two side sanctuaries seemed original, the doors leading from them to the centre one being evidently part of the original plan; but it was interesting to notice that the eikonastasis, or screen before the altar, was, as at Nisibis and another fine church at Arnas, evidently a later addition. Behind the altar in the sanctuary were ranged five stalls, doubtless for Bishop and Clergy. These were carved with plain leaf designs, and canopied with the favourite Roman shell



design. Over the doors leading into the side sanctuaries were two more canopies of the same style, and over all ran a lovely moulding of a four-fold plait design. On the capitals were also carved rich garlands of the same type that I had already seen at Dara.

The space of the large vault above was filled by a great Greek cross, spreading its arms over the whole altar, and above the highest arm a dove was carved. Such symbolism is the most extreme that the true Syrian ornament admits of. All round the church the cornice is continued, with rich carving of the capitals, and mouldings round the now-blocked windows. To the west are three doors; the centre one large and finely carved, flanked with Roman columns, and surmounted by an elaborate cornice.

The portico is waggon-roofed, with tiles like the church at Salah already described, having also a gallery at each end, of which I could not discover the purpose. Out of this another large square porch leads; but that is a later addition. The roof is by no means the least beautiful part of the building. From the arc of the vaults is formed an octagon, from which springs a splendid octagon dome, all of tiles. Such was the most beautiful church I saw, for the church of St. James at Nisibis, although containing fine carving, was in a much less perfect condition, and can never, to my mind, have been of such fine proportions.

[The above brief extracts from Mr. O.H. Parry's notes give an idea of the beauty of this mountain refuge of the Syrian Christians, and of their strength and numbers in ancient days, when the beautiful churches now mostly in ruins, stood as witnesses to the piety and liberality of this noble people in the palmy days of their history].

Mardin, the seat of the successors of St. Peter and St. Ignatius in the Chair of Antioch, lies about forty miles north of the ancient Roman city of Nisibis, and from near the top

of a steep mountain looks out a hundred and fifty miles southward over the plain that stretches between Nineveh and the Chebar. Five miles eastward, and nearer the plain, stands the monastery of Za'aferân, so called from the saffron-coloured or yellow rocks behind it. Here are the headquarters of the Syrian people, although the Patriarch prefers usually to live near the seat of the Turkish government at Mardin or Diarbekir. The Patriarch is recognised by the government as the head of all his people. The Porte finds it convenient to treat all the affairs of native Christians through their respective heads; nor is it long since a Patriarch was considered to be answerable in his own person for the individual actions of his people.

But the Syrians have received, through the exertions of the present Patriarch, direct representation at Constantinople (instead of mere rights of appeal through the Gregorian Armenians), as well as the right of audience with the Sultan.

Over his clergy, especially the bishops and monks, the Patriarch exercises absolute control. He has neither council of bishops nor any coadjutors, but with the whole authority in his own hands, seeks advice only from the lay committee of the church where he resides. This, no doubt, has the disadvantages inherent in pure autocracy; but the position has been one of great value to his people in times of peculiar difficulty, and its unfavourable features are softened considerably by the perfect freedom of speech that the Patriarch allows in his divan, even from the meanest deacon.

Next to the office of Patriarch comes that of Mafriân, held officially by the Bishop of Mosul, but now vacant owing to certain difficulties between the present bishop and the Turkish authorities. The Mafriân, who, since the Nestorian schism has adopted the title of Catholicos of the

East, undertakes, as a rule, when in office, the more exclusively spiritual duties of the Patriarchate.

### *The Bishops*

They are forbidden to marry, and from among them the Patriarch is chosen by the vote of the whole Syrian people. Parallel to them is a second class of bishops, formed by priests who, on the death of their wives, have been consecrated to the office of Eskoffs. They differ from the bishops in that they are not eligible to be either Patriarch or Mafriân. The whole order corresponds to our order of Bishops, and has much the same duties, each having a regular diocese or a large monastery to control, or sometimes both. One lives at Constantinople as representative with the government, another in Jerusalem.

A peculiarity of the Bishops and Eskoffs is that each assumes on being appointed to the rule of a diocese a titular name which is connected with the See; for instance, the Bishop of Jerusalem always bears the name Mar Gregorius, and the Bishop of Mosul that of Mar Dionysius. This name is retained even when a bishop is translated, so that it sometimes occurs that there are two bishops with the same title.

### *The Priests*

The second order has three divisions—choriepiscopi, priests, and rahabs or monks. Of these the first two classes are obliged to marry, and in accordance with a literal interpretation of the words of St. James, common to the Eastern churches, are forbidden to marry a second time. The duties of the priests as well as of the choriepiscopi are purely parochial, and for this reason it is an evident advantage that they should be married. In fact, there is a service, now rarely used



specially drawn up for the ordination of their wives. Hence it is not infrequent for a priest when his wife dies, to leave his cure, and retire to a monastery, thinking it unseemly for an unmarried man to carry on parochial work.

The choriepiscopi are merely priests of higher standing, and correspond in the main to our rural deans, with the duties of lesser bishops, in addition to their parochial cure. The priests are as a rule selected by the congregation of a church needing a new pastor from among the better educated deacons; his name is then given to the Patriarch, who, if he approves of the choice, commissions the bishop of the diocese to ordain him. In places where there are no priests, the church is usually on Sundays and holidays served by a monk from the nearest monastery.

### *The Monks*

The monks as to numbers form a class separate from and superior in hierarchical order to the priests; although they are in practice treated with less respect on account of their poverty, unless they are distinguished for piety and learning, two qualities very highly esteemed among the Syrians. For instance, a priest will nearly always take his seat unbidden in the Patriarchal divan, and a monk will stand, or if bidden to sit will take the lowest place. To this there are of course exceptions. Their lives are spent for the most part in the monasteries, where they give themselves up to the study of God's Word, and the observance of a rather strict asceticism. There are five fasts in the year strictly kept by all clergy and many of the laity; but beyond that and the daily attendance of morning and evening prayer, the monk's life is not over-burdened with religious observances. A good deal of their time in the autumn is taken up with collecting the

ecclesiastical tithes from towns and villages, in superintending the monastic farms, and in the study of the Syriac classics. As a class they are intelligent, if rather ignorant, and extremely anxious to learn. Their self-sacrifice, if at times fanatical, is most real, and seldom a mere display; while their untiring kindness and hospitality in every place where the traveller has occasion to require it, is beyond all praise. There is no order of celibate nuns, their place being taken by the ordained wives of the priests.

### *The Deacons*

The last order consists of the Shamas or Deacons, and forms a larger class than the others. Of them there are two kinds, a fact that has led some travellers into rather misleading statements with regard to them. It is usual for all boys who study in a monastery, and attain any proficiency in the ancient Syriac language, to be ordained deacon at about the age of sixteen, of these some remain to be ordained either priest or monk, or to serve in the monastery or church. These are from the nature of the case generally poor. Others again leave the monastery, and though entering into business, and in time becoming rich merchants, remain always pillars of their parish church. They are well educated, and staunch supporters and advisers of the bishop or priest, in fact, holding the position of churchwardens. Most of the teaching in the schools and monasteries is done by deacons of the former class, for the priests as a rule think it beneath their dignity to undertake the teaching of small boys. With the departure of this extensive order of men, one of the most characteristic features of Syrian life would disappear.



### *Church Committees*

The Church committees have already been referred to. They exist in almost every church of every town or village, and act as vestries. Besides this they manage all the schools that exist, and are responsible for the payment of the teacher, and in some cases for the entertainment of strangers. They consist generally of the priests and most influential men in the parish. The committee of the church where the Patriarch lives acts as a sort of council to him, and is entrusted with the management of the school, which it is hoped will be extended at the monastery of Dair Za'aferân.

### *Character of the Clergy*

Of the personal character of the clergy there is not space to say much. The priests are a hardworking set of men, making up the deficiencies of their narrow stipends by toiling in the fields, or pursuing some humble trade. Some, a very few, engage in mercantile transactions. The bishops are generally well occupied with the affairs of their dioceses, being informal judges in all minor disputes, and refuges for all those in distress. They are, moreover, the recognised mediators through whom all dealings between the people and government are transacted. At least three among their numbers are able and good men, while all of them are highly honoured by the people, who find in them their best friends and protectors. Considering the very large influence exercised by the clergy among the people, who believe very devoutly in their divine mission, the absence of anything like servility on either side is very noticeable. The utmost respect is always shown towards the clergy, and a whole room will rise as one of their number enters, and give him a high place as to a distinguished stranger; yet, on the other hand, the people are not at all



priest-ridden, a fact, no doubt, largely due to the number of deacons of good social position, and often much better educated than the priests themselves, whose advisers they frequently are in matters of church discipline or procedure. The clergy depend entirely on the voluntary support of their flocks, and on the small fees due for baptisms, marriages, and burials.

### *Numbers and Distribution of the Syrian People*

It has been already said that the "nation" that acknowledges the supremacy of the Patriarch of the ancient Syrian Church dwells chiefly in the tract of land called Mesopotamia. But there are also Syrians west of the Euphrates in Syria proper, and in other parts of Turkey.

In Syria proper, in the neighbourhood of Damascus, which contains about nine villages, formerly the diocese of Mar Gregorius, there are some ten thousand members of this church, three thousand of whom live in Saddûd (Zedad), a well-known Biblical town. In Homs, one of these villages, it may be mentioned that the bishop owns some property, which he is anxious to utilize with English help for a school, devoting the proceeds of some shops to the maintenance of a teacher. In Aleppo almost all the old Syrians, following the example of the Greeks orthodox and the Armenians, have gone over to the Roman Catholics. A few have joined the American converts, and one, an honourable and wealthy merchant remains loyal to his faith and nation, acting as agent to the Patriarch in that important town.

Passing eastward to Mesopotamia, Urfa, better known by its classical name of Edessa, is the first town where many old Syrians are to be found. It contains about 3,500 inhabitants, and is the seat of a Bishop. As the home of St. Efrem

and St. James of Nisibis it is pleasant to find that Urfa (seat of the great ancient University of Edessa) still contains a fair number belonging to the old church, besides as many as 4,000 houses of Armenians. There are two outlying districts—Sewerek, two days journey north of Urfa, and Kharfoot, three days north of Diarbekir, in the middle of Armenia. The former contains about 800; the latter, 10,000 old Syrian inhabitants.

Again, to the south-east, Mosul on the Tigris contains, with its five or six adjacent villages, another ten thousand. But the main body of the nation inhabits the mountain country that lies in the north-east corner of Mesopotamia, between Mardin and Nisibis, and the Tigris. In this district, known in classical times as Mons Masius, containing the populous town of Mardin, and the rapidly growing village of Midhyat, are to be found at least 30,000 members of the Church, probably many more. It contains, also, many monasteries and churches, and therefore a large number of priests and monks. 150,000 would be rather a low estimate of the old Syrians in Turkey in Asia<sup>1</sup>.

The inaccuracy of the census, due in a large measure to the tendency of the Christians to hide their numbers in the face of a poll-tax levied on all males in lieu of military service, renders it extremely difficult for a foreigner to obtain correct statistics. The present figures were obtained in many cases with the greatest difficulty, and only after repeated assurances that they would not be made known to the Turkish government. Consequently the figures contained in the table at the end of this report cannot be positively vouched for, but are given only as being approximately correct; while

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Parry is not consistent in his mentioning about the strength of the community. See Page 136.

it may be taken as a general rule that they are considerably below the reality.

*Present State of the Old Syrian Church.*

The Syrian Church not only did in the person of its chief representatives to approve the creed and doctrines of the Church of England, but many of its members possess and study with the greatest interest Arabic copies of the English prayer-book. The only question in their minds is whether members of the Church of England really hold and act in accordance with the doctrines it contains. There is a certain number of practices not accepted by the English Church. Of these the most prominent are auricular confession, which exists to a small extent; invocation of the Virgin and Saints; and manual acts, which form a part of most services. It is a wonderful thing that so few excesses or corruptions are to be found among them; for not only does the Eastern nature seem to demand far more external accompaniment to devotion than the Western, and especially the North-western, but it is clear that Roman influence has been busy at work changing the old Syrian practice. A very clear instance of this is the use of pictures in some churches, an innovation much disliked by strict Syrians, and even now not allowed at Mosul, although the Papal missionaries have caused their introduction in many places...

Poverty as well as superstition<sup>2</sup> may impose their excessive fasts; there are five annual Lents, during which the clergy and laity abstain not only from flesh or eggs, but even from the taste of wine or oil and of fish. Their present numbers are estimated from 50 to 80,000 souls, the remnant of a populous Church, which has gradually decreased under the

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2 Fasting and Prayers are the spiritual traits of the Eastern Church. Western mission prejudice is very explicit in this statement.



oppression of twelve centuries. Yet in that long period some strangers of merit have been converted to the Monophysite faith, and a Jew was the father of Abulfaragius<sup>3</sup>, Primate of the East, so truly eminent both in his life and death. In his life he was an elegant writer of the Syrian and Arabic tongues; a poet, a physician, and a historian, a subtle philosopher, and a moderate divine. At his death his funeral was attended by rival the Nestorian patriarch, with a train of Greeks and Armenians, who forgot their disputes and mingled their tears over the grave of an enemy. The sect which was honoured by the virtues of Abulfaragius appears, however, to sink below the level of their Nestorian brethren<sup>4</sup>.

### *Languages in Use*

A difficulty in dealing with this people lies in the use of the now nearly obsolete Syriac language in churches, and of various modern languages in everyday life. The distribution of the latter is as follows: All through Syria as far as Aleppo, from Mardin to Mosul, in Sert, and in the northern part of Jebel Tor, Arabic is the language in general use. The inhabitants of central Jebel Tor<sup>5</sup> speak a corrupted form of the classical Syriac, called Torân<sup>6</sup>; while in the neighbourhood of Urfa, Diarbekr, and Kharpoot, Armenian and Turkish contend for supremacy.

In Diarbekr these lingual streams meet, in which Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, and Kurdish exist. In all these places the more educated members of the Church use the Syriac

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3 Abulfragius is the Arabic pet name of the famous Scholar Maphrian Bar Ebraya, 1226-1286. His father Aaron was never a Jew, although many western scholars hold this view.

4 This statement of Mr. Parry is not very clear.

5 'Jebel' means forest and 'Tor' is mountain. This refers to the place called Tor Abdin.

6 Now known as 'Tooroyo', the dialect of the Syrians from Tor Abden, Turkey.

character for writing the local language, a combination known as Garshuni; while by only a few of the clergy and people is the classical language properly understood, although most of them can read it by rote.

In the churches Syriac is used for nearly all the Liturgical part of the services, which are therefore to some extent unintelligible; while certain prayers, the lessons, and sermon are in the local language.

This last is, however, chiefly due to the present Patriarch, who has done not a little in the way of restoration and reform. The cure for the present state of affairs seems to lie not so much in a vigorous study of the classical language, which would nevertheless be a most necessary part of school work, as in a more extended use of Garshuni. The people consider any attempt to tamper with the national language as an attack on the nationality itself, of which they are so proud, and the former expedient is naturally the one to which they look, adducing as reasons against the further translation of the psalms and hymns the fact that new words would not agree with old music, and that one of the chief binding forces of the Syrian Church and nation would thus be weakened. They are both reasons which should be respected, being based on national instinct; nevertheless, it will immediately occur to many that a language where used chiefly for church books and services, could not be of much practical use except as a subject for careful study in the schools. Hebrew and Greek might in time again become regular subjects of study with the higher pupils and clergy, as in the old days. But at present in the East as the lay mind recurs ever more readily to the externals of religion, so the clerical finds its bent in the theological rather than practical or devotional religion.



### *Local Quarrels*

The native jealousies between church and church, or man and man, within the Syrian community form, perhaps, the first obstacle that presents itself to a stranger. There is scarcely a village or town that is not divided into two or more parties, a quarrel over a government appointment, as at Midhyat, has estranged two leading men, and the whole town takes sides; or there is a patriarchal and an episcopal party, as at Mosul, where you may be assured that the Roman Catholics do their best to keep things in the existing chaos. One place alone seemed altogether free from these conditions, Diarbekr, the present charge of Bishop Mar Gregorius (Mutran Abdallah). During a stay of more than three weeks no signs appeared of any jealousies existing there among the Syrian community. They live and work in harmony, and although poor, struggle hard to maintain schools for boys and girls. They are fortunate, too, in having an excellent bishop<sup>7</sup> and clergy.

### *Condition of the people*

Of the condition of the people with regard to the government, and of the manifold persecutions from which they suffer, especially in the country districts, as well as of their religious and mental state, mention has been made elsewhere.

As to their means of sustenance, they are in general very small. There are of course some rich men and a few liberal ones. But apart from the tendency to hoard and hide money in order to escape the exactions of the government, the Syrians are not an open-handed people. Moreover, the very large majority of them are exceedingly poor, and although in the

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<sup>7</sup> This bishop later became the Patriarch Ignatius Abdullah II, who consecrated Vattaseril Mor Dionasius and Poulouse Mor Coorelose as Metropolitans in 1908 at Jerusalem. He was in India from 1909-1911.



open-air life of a warm country poverty does not pinch as it does in this country, yet the means for supporting education are wanting. As it is, the few rich men have to pay large sums beyond their own taxes on behalf of their poorer brothers. For instance, in Diarbekr there are about six men of means, and two hundred wretchedly poor, for whom the former have to pay no inconsiderable tax. In the country villages matters are far worse, and taxes have often to be exacted literally at the point of the sword. Taxes are levied on the community, not on the individual.

### *Scheme of Work*

School at Dair Za'aferân—One of the first ideas that took definite form in connection with the scheme for aiding the Patriarch in his educational endeavours was that of forming a school or college at Dair Za'aferân, the monastery about five miles from Mardin, the main object of which would be the training of a capable body of native clergy. That this is what the Patriarch and people chiefly want was evident from the numberless requests made in the various villages of Mesopotamia, and from the formal appeal drawn up by the Syrian people under the Patriarch's seal.

The most important thing of all is to emphasize the pressing need of purity, religious and moral teaching, all experience agreeing that it is necessary to repeat again and again the command to "Seek first the kingdom of God." On this account it is advisable to find a member of the Church of England (from no other would one be accepted) to devote his time to the superintending of such a school. It has been supposed that the Anglican Church has visions of wide acquisitions on Syrian ground: this idea can only be removed by experience, and any Englishmen who go to Mardin would

do well to show themselves helpers first and teachers afterwards. At the same time they would be in no way debarred either by the Patriarch or the native committee from teaching, provided only that all was in harmony with the Syrian *creed*. To this condition no objection could be made, especially considering the marked agreement between the Syrian and English forms of belief. Several good, that is relatively good native teachers, could be found without difficulty for the languages, Syriac, Arabic, and Turkish, simple mathematics, geography, and gospel history. At first the teaching would be elementary.

The Syrians are most anxious for schools, and are in a more independent state than the Nestorians, whose oppressed condition constitutes a serious difficulty with those who have settled dealings with them. There is abundant accommodation in the Monastery of Dair Za'aferân. It is impossible to say how many students could live in the monastery, for the number is practically unlimited, considering that it is a large building, and that the Eastern manner of living requires much less room than the Western.

### *The Monastery*

The monastery, which it is intended to utilize for this school, is a fine building, dating back, in parts, to the ninth century. There are three churches within the walls, one only of which is in regular use, one is quite dark, and its nave is at present used as a store room, the third is the throne room, in which the Patriarch is consecrated. There are some forty rooms of various sizes for the uses of the monks and students, besides several larger rooms, which, with a little renovation, would form admirable school rooms. There is also ample space over the rooms lately built for the printing-presses in which to add any accommodation for the superintendent.

*Expenses*

With regard to the expense of such a school, the main items would be (1) the maintenance of the English helpers (2) teachers who would be paid between £15 and £30 a year (3) the students, the cost of whose board would be about £3 to £4 a year at the lowest; (4) books and general "stock," an incalculable quantity. It is desirable that each boy should contribute either in his own person or in that of his village towards the expense of his education. *Arabic* books for immediate use could easily be obtained from the American Press at Beyrout, whose selection of Arabic books and Arabic types are alike admirable. Some Syriac books have already been printed on the spot.

It is highly desirable that this central School should be supported by others in town and village. In all the towns and many of the villages, there are now schools of some sort, often very rudimentary. There is in general a Church and School Committee, while the prominent part of the education is religious. It is clearly necessary to strengthen the existing means, and carry out the present system, that in itself is an excellent one on which to commence work. There are some good priests and teachers, and many more eager for improvement, many excellent buildings, and numberless bright teachable boys; it is therefore clear that there is material both good and ample; while all that is needed is the means and guidance for using it, for the state of destitution in which most of the villages at present exist is most deplorable. However, it must not be imagined that without the villages schools it would be no use to do anything at Dair Za'aferân; it would be most desirable to begin with this school, and extend operations as means increased.

Thus, to sum up, it is very desirable to back up the printing-press with a college, the college with schools, and all with



money and able men. In everything it must be borne in mind, that the people to be dealt with are patriotic to the core; superstitious, perhaps, in their clinging to old ways; above all, that they are Syrian members of the Catholic<sup>8</sup> Patriarchate of Antioch. They have been fought over by Rome and others, and suspect all that would interfere with them. To one church only do they look, whose duty it is to see that they be not again disappointed or deceived.

### *The Printing Press*

The printing-press that was sent out to the Patriarch, four years ago, was stopped after one year's work by the order of the Government. Editions of three books only were completely printed; while a third, a small copy of the Psalms, remains in an unfinished state. The monks are greatly interested in the press, and have done, especially in the printing of the last book, very good work.

As a proof of the extent to which they understand the complicated mechanism, the Bishop at Dair Za'aferân was able to take it to pieces with the exception of the framework, for the purpose of cleaning, and put it together again without a mistake. It is probable, therefore, that with a little training they would be able to do really good work. They have, however, little notion of what books to choose for printing. Grammatical and theological treatises are all very well, but for immediate use the important thing is to find "soul-winning"<sup>9</sup> books, something practical for elementary teaching in church and school. An English gentleman would be needed to superintend the press, with a competent practical printer to work under him, and the whole work of the edu-

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8 This refers to the universality of the Church.

9 This may refer to the attitude of the later missionaries to the eastern churches, which changed from 'mission of help' to 'proselytization'.

cation and printing is far too large for less than three men to carry on. Even though three men might not be sufficient to carry out the work, they would form a nucleus, and set on foot an undertaking which, it may be hoped, would develop largely in due time.

[Mr. O.H. Parry, in his report to the Committee, gives interesting information with regard to two foreign religious agencies existing in Syria—the Roman Catholic and the Missions of Americans to the Eastern Churches, and points out, that in Turkey the word Protestant is much used as an equivalent to Nonconformist]. It is very necessary in the East to explain the meaning of words, and I hope that I did something towards setting the words "Catholic," and "Protestant" in their right places. A member of the Church of England, which claims that she is at the same time Catholic and Protestant, would be quite misunderstood if he applied either of these terms to himself, without first explaining that "Protestant" means protestation against Roman errors and pretensions, and that "Catholic" is applied to the Roman Church by the English only when qualified by the word "Roman." But both Roman and American have done their best by laying absolute [sole] claim to one of the two words, to set them in sharp contrast, making Catholic identical with "Roman," and "Protestant" with "American."

The first beginnings of Papal encroachment seem to have followed the Crusades, between 1095 and 1240, since which time they had been consistently followed up. In 1540 the Jesuits came to Mosul; and in 1681, during the pontificate of Pius XI, the Chaldean—or Papal Nestorian—sect was definitely formed. Until 1850 the Roman power grew steadily; but at that date the French and Italian revolutions seem to have made themselves felt in the diminished support given to the missions...

Mosul is naturally the first place to which to turn in considering the Christians of Eastern Turkey, for Aleppo,



although containing many more Papal Christians, is peopled chiefly by Greeks and Armenians. But Mosul is the strategic point for Papal missions among the older churches. It is a quiet corner of the world where Rome has had it pretty well her own way for over three centuries. A Qasseed or Papal Legate resides there, the Patriarch of the Chaldeans, and a Bishop, who since the death of their Patriarch has been acting as head of the Papal Syrians, until the Pope is pleased to appoint a new one.

The Latin missionaries are worthy in themselves of all praise, for they are noble self-sacrificing men, who have done and are doing an immense amount of good, whatever others may think of the final end they have in view, or of the means they sometimes adopt to attain it. Their policy has been, in the main, to find good strategic points to work from, massing all their strength at places like Mosul and Mardin. One seldom hears of the "Padres" travelling from place to place; they are content to stay at headquarters, quietly directing the government of their churches, keeping a firm hand and a watchful eye upon the higher clergy, and controlling the town schools. Of these, they are very wary of letting a stranger see the inside, unless he is a Roman Catholic. It will be seen that they do not thrust themselves to the front, but prefer to act in everything through the native clergy, an extremely diplomatic policy in a country where foreigners are disliked.

To carry out this plan they make a great point of sending as many native clergy as they can to be educated at the Jesuit College at Beyrout, or if possible, and if they show sufficient promise, to Rome. When they find a man of whom they think it worth while to make something, they spare no trouble nor expense to make him a grateful and a perfect tool. So too, if they see a prize like a certain man at Mardin,



the nephew of the late Syrian Patriarch, he is treated according to his worth, and every effort is made as soon as he is gained over, to make him (already an intelligent man) all that Rome can make him. Further, in this particular case, the father is maintained at Mardin in comfortable ease at the church's expense; and doubtless the result has justified the outlay.

Again, they know the value of display, and in consequence do all that is possible to make churches and ecclesiastics imposing, the result is indubitable... The finest house in Mosul is that of the Papal Legate, the second that of the Chaldean Patriarch, while the most delightful garden near Mosul is the home of the Papal Syrian Bishop. After these follow the houses of the Moslems. Their churches, too, are built on the same magnificent scale, and the most imposing and conspicuous building in the city is the great church of the Dominicans. Often do the people of a town say to the Americans, "Build us a finer church than the Latins, and we will all become Protestants."

Moreover, the higher clergy are drawn almost exclusively from the more patrician or wealthy houses, and are thus able to draw men round them. For their families generally own houses in the town or villages, and command a large following; and who can tell the power of a rich house in Turkey? These ecclesiastics have fine houses built for them, and plenty of money supplied in order to keep up an imposing establishment. A good Catholic in Mosul stated positively this last year that the Chaldean Patriarch is so far a tool of Rome, that he is agreeing to and even superintending wholesale alterations in the canons and liturgies of the Church, and that in consideration of this he is enabled to live like a prince.

It is also asserted as a well-known fact that the chief means of sustenance for the ordinary clergy is derived from money

paid to them for saying the masses for the faithful departed in France and Austria. When to these facts are added the very easy conditions required of converts, for the missionaries demand only the acceptance of two main Papal dogmas and readiness to learn, the certainty of political protection through the wealth of the chief Roman Catholics and the French Consuls, and above all the enormous influence exercised at Constantinople by the Papal Legate, the Austrian and French Ambassadors, the only wonder is that the Papal missions have not swept all before them. No greater proof of their power can be cited than their influence with the government, in spite of their utter abhorrence with which any good Moslem must regard their seemingly idolatrous worship and their free introduction of not only pictorial, but even sculptural representation of the human and divine form. But in Turkey gates are seldom closed to the golden key. Nevertheless, there remains a large body of people who resist to the last breath the Pope and all his works, and for this there are several reasons. Many years of persecution have strengthened patriotic feelings; and while the spirit of religion has gradually faded, it has served to foster an almost pathetic clinging to the shadow and shell. Many a Chaldean would gladly embrace any opportunity to return to the old Church, and numbers of Papal Syrians only await good schools and the reform of their Church to throw off the Papal yoke.

Papal supremacy suffered a severe shock when infallibility was broached. Rome was at best an unwelcome refuge for proud Syrians, and the tight-drawn cords that bound the yoke nearly snapped under the fresh strain. The immaculate conception, purgatory, transubstantiation, have never been so attractive to the primitive Eastern mind that they could

win their way by reasonableness alone, but need to support them considerable guarantees of temporal protection and material comfort. But for all that it is certain that the Roman Church is very strong in Turkey, and prepared to maintain her power by all means. She does noble work in Turkey; nor is it possible to assert definitely that she is responsible for many of the unscrupulous deeds done in her name, although it must be admitted that certain circumstances give colour to the charges of complicity with at least some things connected with her propaganda. Two things all are glad to admit, the noble character of her missionaries and the excellence of her schools.

[Mr. Parry gives some account in his Report as to the American missionaries sent out (not specially to the Syrian Church, but generally to the Eastern Christians of all the churches) and maintained by the Congregational and Presbyterian churches of America, which though entirely unconnected, work in harmony and with definite fields of action. These two bodies are helped by the Turkish Missions Aid Society of London. The missionaries are men of the highest characters and attainments, devoted to their work, and read to show kindness and hospitality to strangers. Nothing could exceed their friendly cordiality to Mr. Parry, and they manifested real interest in the efforts made by us in response to the invitation of the Syrian Patriarch and Church. Mr. Parry reminds us that the earliest American missionaries had disclaimed all intention of proselytizing from the Eastern churches, although having no belief in episcopacy as a Divine institution].

### *The Missionary work of the American Churches in Turkey*

From the Roman Catholics it is natural to turn to the Americans, who are their rivals in the field, and avowedly so. Of them is far more difficult to speak on account of the continued kindness personally received from them. Of their generous welcome to Mardin, and the cordial way in which they spoke of the proposed work, enough has been said elsewhere.

It will be best, therefore, briefly to consider certain general aspects of their work in Turkey. Missionaries are sent out under much the same conditions and with the same objects



in view, by two main bodies or boards in America—the Congregational and Presbyterian. That the difference in matters of faith does not involve much difference in their method of dealing with the natives is clear from the fact the missionary field of Mosul has lately been handed over to the former by the latter.

The Americans came with a Gospel true in itself, in fact the very essence of that soul-winning message, but so rudely shorn of the garb in which the Eastern Christian has been from time immemorial accustomed to see it clothed, that his religious sensibilities were shocked and his national instincts aroused by what he deemed a sacrilege. They ask, "Who gave you Western men the Gospels?" and more to the same effect,—while acknowledging the personal character and excellent works of the Americans, as even the Moslems do; but he complains that little trouble is taken to understand his people's church and history, or to make allowance for a conquered race. The democracy of America stands in bold opposition to all that the Oriental is accustomed to... It is a question whether a people accustomed for centuries to Oriental despotic forms of government are fit suddenly to have the reins free... That unity which is the bond of peace is not the most striking feature of independent communities.

All this is the more to be regretted because the Syrians, like the Assyrians on the east of the Tigris, of all existing Churches allow to the Bible all that the extreme Protestants claim for it, and would, for that reason, have welcomed an Evangelical mission, that had not too violently shocked their prejudices as an offset to the hated policy of Rome. Some of the Americans have reluctantly admitted that the field is not well-suited to them, and that perhaps it would have been better had some sympathetic Episcopal church undertaken

the work from the beginning. Yet their work has certainly been much prospered in certain places, especially among the Armenians. It is a pity that they do not discriminate more between ignorance and deliberate wrong-thinking. For they have done and are doing noble work, and have opened a side light upon the Gospel which perhaps no other Church could have afforded to the Syrians so well.... They are at least entitled to the consideration due from those who hold a different opinion from themselves. Their whole attitude is, as a rule, one of extreme courtesy, and the spirit of Christian charity which they show towards their opponents is very unlike the treatment which they have received at the hands of certain critics. No one who has visited Turkey during the last fifty years can deny the extreme excellence of their schools, the single-minded and devoted character of their lives, and the unbounded hospitality they extend to every traveller.

More has perhaps been said about the American missionaries than many would deem necessary; for though entire disagreement has been expressed with their fundamental principles in dealing with the native Churches, certain very wrong ideas are current about them in England. At the same time their own contention that they do not proselytize, but merely teach the faith in their schools, is a mere begging of the question, as results prove clearly proselytizing to be the inevitable result of their method of work. Yet it must be granted that if a non-conforming (non-episcopalian) Church has a mission among a Catholic (episcopalian) people no one has a right to behave to its agents as if they were outside the pale of reason. They must be met on common grounds before the question can be discussed. My own feeling is that the Americans are mistaken, and I regret that the field was not first occupied by an Episcopal church. But just as on



their own principles they have no right to resent the advent of other agencies, so we are not justified in condemning them for having undertaken work which the English Church left untouched after fifty years of piteous appeal.

*Aims and need of proposed work*

It will not be out of place to conclude this portion of the Report with a short consideration of the proposed work in connection with universal missionary economy. The best introduction to this is contained in a paper issued by the Lord Bishop of the English at Jerusalem. He says, "As the Archbishop truly said, the churches of the East must one day become missionaries to the East, the Jews and the Moslem." They are aware of it, and acquiesce in our occupation, for the time, of the duty they hope one day to take up... These churches are at present under the most numbing oppression that has ever weighed upon Christianity. They are not allowed to do Christian work, yet the very life of a church depends on its being missionary. They are not aided or encouraged in education; consequently ignorance degrades them, and much of the vice that follows upon ignorance. The spread of education will mean the revival (already stirring) of spiritual life in the churches. It is renovation rather than reformation that they need. Some are separated by a false, others by a nominal rather than a real charge of heresy. They need but a sister Church, who, as a common friend may bring together those whom pride mainly severs from those whose orthodoxy is unquestioned.

It is clear on English, American, and Roman evidence that work among the Moslems is at present impracticable. The extreme efforts required to combat the privileges of the Faithful, the infinitesimal results, and the fearful persecution,



consequent on conversion have persuaded even the most sanguine that the time for such work has not arrived. What then can be wiser than the words of the Archbishop and the Bishop when they advise so strongly to turn the attention to those Churches, who, if in the future they do not co-operate in the work of Mohammedan conversion, will be the greatest hindrance to it! They will remain for ever a proof to the Moslem that Christianity can outlive its vitality, and he will justly say, "Physician, heal thyself!"

Who, again, can doubt that, as the Bishop says, the Syrian would be able to deliver the Gospel, which he once delivered to us, to the sons of the apostates of his own land better than a London missionary!

The difference between Western and Oriental character has often been insisted on; but there is another urgent reason. Few deny that the Christian Church must one day undertake to reclaim the Moslem world. Is it not better, therefore, to send out now a few men to strengthen the feeble knees of Churches that have been so marvellously preserved all through these centuries, rather than to send out year after year, at great expense, and in comparatively small numbers, valuable and well-trained Englishmen (for ordinary men would be useless), that can be so ill spared at home and the Colonies, to do a work they are totally unfitted for?

As the merest matter of economy of men and money it is surely wiser to concentrate all the power procurable in raising up a capable body of men with a pure and ancient Church who will be able in the end to do the work far better. There is splendid material in the Syrian Church; but the notion of missionary effort, except as the mere extension of the Church's authority, now, scarcely appeals to what was once the greatest missionary Church of the world. There could be no better way of repaying the debt that England owes to the Church

of Antioch than by helping to renew the spirit she has lost, and teaching her children to understand the meaning of those truths that long darkness has obscured.

Another no less urgent claim is the comparative purity of the Church. Her heresy has been absolutely denied on good evidence by first-rate English authorities, and it may be said positively that any doubtful statements, which her Liturgies are said to contain, are retained more as matters of tradition than positive faith. It is maintained that no Jacobite holds the monophysite doctrine<sup>10</sup> as necessary to salvation. A curious proof of this is that every Jacobite who read the Athanasian Creed accepted it unequivocally, although it condemns, absolutely, that very heresy...

As to the Bible it has been mentioned above that the Syrians consider any appeal to it as final, a most valuable fact to be borne in mind by any one contemplating the renovation of an ancient Church. This characteristic, as well as the dislike both of Roman pretension, and nonconformist sacrilege (as they think it), incline them to turn with confidence to a Church that not only has clear Catholic credentials, but also reverences a free Bible...

In only one direction do they discern any chance of holding up against the inroads of Rome, which it is surely not the duty of the Church of England to tacitly encourage by neglecting perhaps the best opportunity that ever occurred out of our own Island for furthering the cause of the pure Catholic Church. Nearly seventy years has this ancient Church been crying out for some one to come over and help her. As yet she cannot stand alone; and it is time that something was

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<sup>10</sup>The Syrian Church never holds the Monophysite doctrine of the union of the two natures. It holds 'the union is real, perfect, without blending or mingling, without confusion, without alteration, without division, without the least separation.'

done to redeem the long period of callousness and neglect, during which her cry has been unanswered. Something has been done through the untiring exertions of a few devoted friends. It would be a thousand pities if our Church does not follow them up, and show that all our boasts of a primitive faith and true Catholic spirit are not empty words, that our real claim to represent a branch of the Catholic Church lies not in lavish indulgence of sentimental taste at home, but in the extension of a hand of sympathetic charity to a distressed sister in the East.

That the Syrians *do* need help scarcely needs saying; not that in the towns they are so poor, for there they would be able to help themselves if only they knew the right way; and the chief work of any one connected with them in the towns, would be to teach them to give, to teach them the right value of schools, to teach them the real spirit of religion.

There are in the great towns plenty of well-to-do men, who, if they saw the value of schools, and the necessity of a religious revival, would be ready enough to help. Some, indeed, have already offered; but at present do not know how to assist, and want leaders and teachers. There is, at the same time, in every town a large body of extremely poor families, for whom little or nothing is done... for these help is urgently required.

In the villages it is another matter altogether; grinding oppression and exaction keep the Christians down to a level of destitution, if such a phrase can be used in a country where the necessities of life are so few.

Things are certainly in a terrible state in these places, and the heart of the poor people is crushed... It is an opened field, and a rich one, which would amply and rapidly repay the attention that we hope will be given to it.



# Four Historic Documents

## Part III

*Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians*

by

The Rev. P.T. Geevarghese M.A.

who

later became

H.G. Geevarghese Mor Ivanios  
the first Archbishop of Trivandrum

and

the founder of

The Malankara Catholic Church

## Editor's Note

The history of the Malankara Church, before the coming of the *Nestorian* (Church of the East, as it is called now) bishops in 1490 is enshrouded in mystery. Three theories are forwarded by historians.

1. The Church in Malankara was affiliated to the Church of Rome, through its representatives of Babylon or elsewhere. The Roman Catholic historians are the propagandists of this view.
2. The Church in Malankara was autonomous under the arch-deacon of India and the episcopal succession was through the Nestorian Catholicosate of Persia. They think that the theological position here was the Nestorian. Many European non-catholic scholars hold this view. Recently the Malankara Orthodox historians also support this view to negate all the past relationships with the Patriarchate of Antioch.
3. Malankara Church was in existence from the apostolic times. The Church had contacts with the Alexandrian Church through Pantenus and with Antioch through Edessa. The Syrian Colonisation was the result of this relationship. This continued to the visit of Mor Sabor and Porth. The Antiochean connection is vividly established in this treatise.

The author of this thesis is the first Syrian Cleric to secure M.A. degree from a university. He was enthusiastically welcomed by the church with great expectation. He was instrumental in the establishment of *Bethany* order. He blended Syriac spirituality with the Indian asceticism. In the unhappy split in the Syrian Church he sided with Mor Dionasius Metropolitan and acted as the leader behind the establishment of the Catholicate in 1912. He was consecrated bishop of Bethany in the Catholicose group. In 1930 he joined the Catholic Church and established the Malankara Catholic Church. This thesis was prepared while the church was undivided.

This thesis depicts the unprejudiced perspective of the Syrian Church before the split. The document is very important for the Church history students.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil



WERE THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS NESTORIANS?

BY

The Rev: P. T. Geevergese M. A.





## ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS

It is generally held by historians that the Syrian Church of Malabar was Nestorian until the sixteenth century.

This paper is an attempt to show that the Syrian Church was Jacobite until the fifteenth century when she became Nestorian.

A.D. 450. The Syrian Church was under the Catholicus of Seleucia. The Catholicus was not Nestorian at this time. He was under the Patriarch of Antioch who, again, was not a Nestorian.

A.D. 488. The Catholicus adopted Nestorianism. In the list of the Catholicici that ruled at Seleucia in the early decades of the sixth century, the names of Nestorian and non-Nestorian prelates are intermingled.

A.D. 522. Cosmas says 'In Male where pepper grows there exists a Christian Church.' He is silent as to whether it was Nestorian or not, at this time.

A.D. 559. A Jacobite Catholicate is permanently established at Seleucia, under the Patriarch of Antioch.

Thus in Persia there were two rival churches, the Nestorian and the Jacobite, each governed by its own Catholicus. The Persian Emperors favoured both of these churches and persecuted the Melkites.

A.D. 696. In answer to a deputation sent by the Syrian Church to the Jacobite Patriarch of Alexandria, (A.D. 695), a Jacobite Bishop arrived in Malabar. If the Church of Malabar had been Nestorian, it would not have sent such a deputation to the Jacobite Patriarch of Alexandria, nor would have accepted a Jacobite Bishop.

*Circa* A.D. 750. The testimony of the inscription on the larger stone at Kottayam. This inscription ascribes Divinity to Christ in the crucified position. The Nestorians condemn this doctrine; the Jacobites uphold it.

*Circa* 10th Century. The testimony of the inscription on the smaller Cross at Kottayam. The above doctrine is set forth.

These two inscriptions are peculiarly anti-Nestorian and Jacobite.

A.D. 822. Bishops Mar Sapor and Mar Peroz arrived in Quilon. Their names are not found in the list of Nestorian Bishops sent out to foreign lands by the then Nestorian Patriarch Timotheus.

*Circa* A.D. 1200. A Syrian Bible of about this date was in the possession of the Church of Malabar before the 15th century. This Bible contains Jacobite rubrics only. This Bible was given to Dr. Buchanan in 1806, and is now preserved in the Cambridge University Library.

1490. The Syrian Church sent a deputation to the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad.

A.D. 1490, 1503

1544, 1555 } Arrival of Nestorian Bishops in Malabar.

1558, 1578

1545-1599. The Portuguese Roman Catholics attempt the subjugation of the Syrian Church to the Papacy.

1599. At the Synod of Diamper the Syrian Church is formally Romanised.

The Nestorian Bishops that came to Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries established Nestorianism. When in the sixteenth century the Portuguese came to Malabar, they found that the Church of Malabar was Nestorian.

In spite of the Nestorianism which the Syrian Christians then professed, they had certain Jacobite rituals and practices. If, for a moment, we suppose that the Syrian Church was



Nestorian throughout its career in Malabar, then it becomes impossible to explain the existence of these Jacobite practices.

The peculiar Jacobite practices referred to are the following:

I. The ceremony of mixing bread and wine in the Eucharistic Service.

The Malabar practice was identical with the Jacobite.

The Nestorian practice is equally different from both.

II. The Nestorians allow their clergy to exercise ministerial duties even if they have married more than once. The Jacobites do not permit the twice married clergy to officiate. The Jacobite practice was prevalent in Malabar.

III. In the list of Saints venerated by the Church of Malabar, we find names which are not found in the Nestorian Calendar, but are found in the Jacobite Calendar.

IV. The Nestorians forbid the use of the juice of raisins for the Eucharist; the Jacobites permit it. The Malabar Church was using it for a long time.

V. The Nestorian Tersanctus is quite different from the Jacobite. The Malabar Tersanctus was probably Jacobite. In any case, it was not the Nestorian Tersanctus.

VI. Even after the Christians of Malabar had become Nestorians, we find the Patriarch of Antioch mentioned as the supreme head on Earth of their Church. The Nestorians owe no allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch.

i. Joseph the Indian, a Syrian Christian that travelled in Europe in A.D. 1501, is reported to have told the Pope that the Church of Malabar was under the Patriarch of Antioch.

ii. In the first conversation between the Portuguese and the Syrian Christians in 1502, the latter is reported to have said that they had "Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch."

Some letters written at the time of the struggle with the Roman Catholics attest the Antiochian supremacy.

I. A.D. 1563. Itty Thommen Cattanar's letter has the following sentence:

“The honoured Patriarch of Antioch being the Lord of Malankarai (Malabar), and our sacraments having been from early times conducted by prelates coming therefrom.....”

II. A.D. 1668. Mar Gregorius, a Jacobite Archbishop from Syria says in a “General Epistle” that the Malabar Christians should recognise him as their Archbishop because they “were originally Syrians of the true faith.” This thought pervades through the whole letter.

In addition to the above internal and external evidences, there are the following circumstantial evidences:

I. The island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean was Jacobite in the Middle Ages, and received Bishops from Malabar, according to Gouvea. If the Church of Malabar was not Jacobite, it is difficult to see how a Malabar Bishop would have been acceptable to the Christians of Socotra.

II. Soon after the decline of the Nestorian Church in Persia, the Jacobite communion spread through Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, and the islands of the Indian Ocean.

The Jacobite Church existed on the shores of the Red Sea and the islands of the Indian Ocean, until the 16th century. From Persia or from the islands of the Indian Ocean, it might have spread to Malabar.

## “WERE THE SYRIAN CHRISTIANS NESTORIANS?”

### I

1. The Syrian Church on the coast of Malabar had been in existence at least for the last fifteen centuries. It is generally held by historians that this Church attached itself to the Nestorian form of Christianity until the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese Roman Catholic Missionaries brought it under subjection to the Papacy. This paper is an attempt to show that historians have come to hold this view, because sufficient attention has not been paid by them to the various internal and other evidences. The following pages will, it is hoped, clearly prove that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite and not Nestorian until the fifteenth century. Looked at from this standpoint, the history of this Church may be divided into the four following periods:-

From the earliest times until A.D. 1490 the Church was Jacobite.

From A.D. 1490-1599 the church was Nestorian

From A.D. 1599-1653 „ Roman Catholic.

From 1653 to the present time „ Jacobite

2. Since the question to be discussed in the following pages is whether the Syrian Church of Malabar was Jacobite or Nestorian before the fifteenth century, it may be desirable to trace the origin of these two forms of Christianity and point out the fundamental difference between them, In A.D. 428, Nestorius, a monk of Antioch, was appointed Patriarch of Constantinople. Anastasius, a presbyter brought by him to Constantinople, was annoyed at the frequent use, in the



Church services, of the term Theotokos (Mother of God) concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus, and preached that she had no right to that title. In the controversy that ensued Nestorius supported Anastasius and became the chief advocate of the new doctrine, which after his name, was known as Nestorianism. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria upheld the opposite view; and to settle the question, Emperor Theodosius II convened the so-called Third Œcumenical Council at Ephesus in A.D. 431. In this Council Nestorianism was condemned, and Nestorius excommunicated<sup>1</sup>. <sup>2</sup>The two distinguishing tenets of Nestorianism are:

1. "That in Christ there were not only two natures but two persons; of which one was divine, even the eternal Word, the other human, even the man Jesus."

2. "That Mary was to be called the Mother of Christ and not the Mother of God."

3. After the Council of Ephesus, many controversies concerning the nature and person of Jesus Christ, arose in the Christian Church. Eutychus, an archimandrite in Constantinople and his followers held that in Christ there was only one nature and that the body of Christ was not consubstantial with ours. Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria and the Syrian Monophysites (afterwards known as Jacobites) believed that in Christ there was only one person and one united nature. Leo, Bishop of Rome and his followers taught that in Christ there were two natures and one person. In the so-called Fourth (Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) all kinds of Monophysitism were condemned at the instigation of Leo, supported by the Imperial family. Thus there came to be three main sects in Christendom. *viz:*

1 Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church: Alexandria" Vol. 1. pp. 233-272

2 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. 1.p.83

The Nestorians,  
The Syrian Monophysites (Jacobite),  
The Imperialists (Melkites), *ie.*, the followers of Leo.

4. When the Byzantine Emperors persecuted the Nestorians and the Jacobites, they took refuge in the Persian Empire. While the Nestorians believed that in Christ there were two natures and two persons, of which the human person suffered upon the Cross in the human nature only, the Jacobites held that in Christ there was only one person and one united nature and that the one person suffered in that united nature. Such, in short, is a brief outline of the history of the separation of the Nestorian and the Jacobite Churches from the Church of the Roman Emperors, and the difference in their articles of faith, a knowledge of which is necessary to understand the discussions carried on in the following pages.

## II

*Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?*

5. The earliest unquestioned historical notice of the Christian Church on the coast of Malabar is found in the *Universal Christian Topography of Cosmas Indecopleustus*, who visited South India about the year 522 of the Christian era. He says: "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 pepper grows. And in the place Kalliana there is a Bishop generally ordained in Persia.*"<sup>1</sup> It is quite plain from the words of Cosmas that he found an organised Church in Malabar. What was the creed of this Church then? Which of the two great Persian Christian Communion, the Nestorian or the Jacobite, supplied Bishops to the See of Malabar? Was this Church brought under the jurisdiction of Persian Bishops after they had become Nestorians, or before? These are questions that present themselves to a person who investigates the nature and history of the creed of the Church of Malabar.

6. Cosmas's words imply that when he visited South India (A.D. 522) the Church of Malabar was organised in a parochial form, with Bishops and subordinate orders of Clergy. The Persian Church which supplied Bishops to the Church of Malabar had not become Nestorian in the fifth century<sup>2</sup>. The Christians of Malabar as well as their co-religionists in Persia were not, therefore, Nestorians in that century. They were under the jurisdiction of the orthodox Catholicus of Seleucia.

7. Now, what was the relation of this Catholicus to the Patriarchs<sup>3</sup> of Antioch, who claimed primacy over all the Eastern Churches, and who have never been Nestorians? If it can be shown that the Catholicus was under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch at this period, it will be a further proof that the Church of Malabar was not then Nestorian. In the canons of the General Council of Constantinople, as given in the Syriac manuscript No. 14528 in the British Museum - a manuscript of A.D. 500 - we find an injunction

1 Sir Henry Yule's edition of 'Cathay and the Way Thither' Vol.1.Introduction p. elxxi. The italics are mine.

2 Kurtz, 'Church History' Vol. I.p. 334. Lond. 1888.

3 'Patriarch' is the proper title of the Bishop of Antioch, See Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church'. Introduction. Vol.1.pp.113, 126.Lond.1850



in the following words : "The Bishop of Alexandria shall govern those (churches) that are in Mizraim (Egypt.), and the Bishop of the East (Seleucia) those of the East only, *the seniority* which is given by the canons of Nikia (Nicea) to the Church of *Antioch* being preserved."<sup>4</sup> Again the 33rd of the canons of Nicea, according to the Apocryphal Arabian version, assumes that the Catholicus of Seleucia, with all the Eastern Churches, acknowledged the spiritual suzerainty of the Patriarch of Antioch. The term 'Apocryphal,' as applied to these canons denotes that all of them, except the first twenty, are not the genuine canons passed at Nicea in A.D. 325. On the other hand, they are later additions made before the middle of the fifth century. Gibbon observes :- "This code contains many curious relics of ecclesiastical discipline; and since it is equally revered by all the eastern communions, it was probably finished before the schism of the Nestorians and Jacobites."<sup>5</sup> (A.D. 451). Dean Stanley also remarks that these Apocryphal Canons of Nicea "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."<sup>6</sup> The 33rd of these canons, which alone concerns us at present, runs thus: "Let the See of Seleucia which is one of the Eastern Cities, be honoured likewise, and have the title of Catholicon and let the Prelate thereof ordain Archbishops as the other Patriarchs do, that so the Eastern Christians who live under the Heathens, may not be wronged by waiting the Patriarch

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4 "Canons of the Primitive Church" translated by Howard p.56

5 Gibbon, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" Ch. XLVII Vol. III. p. 172 footnote, Gibbing, Lond. 1890

6 Dean Stanley, "Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church" p.162 Lond. 1862.

of Antioch's leisure, or by going to him, but may have a way opened to them to supply their own necessities. Neither will any injury be done to the Patriarch (of Antioch) thereby seeing he has consented to its being thus, upon the Synod having desired it of him.<sup>7</sup> Mosheim remarks that the Patriarch of Antioch "voluntarily ceded a part of his jurisdiction to Seleucia."<sup>8</sup> Gibbon also says that "*the filial dependence of the Catholici of Seleucia on the Patriarchs of Antioch is attested by the canons of the Oriental Church.*"<sup>9</sup>

8. These evidences enable us to describe the polity of the Eastern Church in Asia as follows: The Patriarch of Antioch had become the supreme head of all the Churches in Asia with Archbishops and Bishops under him. He delegated part of his authority to the Metropolitan, now Catholicus, of Seleucia, that the latter may rule the more Eastern part of his Arch-diocese. As Dr. Neale says, "in the earlier ages the Catholicate of Chaldea<sup>10</sup> was, as it were, *vicarial* jurisdiction of the See of Antioch, in the same manner that the Metran of Ethiopia was *dependent* on that of Alexandria. But when the Catholicus embraced Nestorianism (A.D. 488) that link was broken."<sup>11</sup> In the fifth century the Church of Malabar, along with the sister Churches of the more Eastern parts of Asia, was indirectly under the supreme jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch, the direct and immediate authority being the Catholicus of Seleucia. In the fifth century, neither the Patriarch of Antioch nor the

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7 Geddes, "A short history of the Church of Malabar" p. 16

8 Mosheim, "Institutes of Ecclesiastical History," Murdock's Translation Vol. I. p.324. New York 1852.

9 Gibbon, "Decline and Fall" Ch. XLII Vol. III. p. 354, Gibbing, Lond. 1890

10 Chaldea was the official designation of the See of the Catholicus, Seleucia being his headquarters at this time.

11 Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church" Introduction Vol. I. p.125



Catholicus of Seleucia was Nestorian. We may, therefore conclude that the Syrian Church in Malabar, which was ruled by these ecclesiastics, was not Nestorian at that time.

9. The Catholicus of Seleucia adopted Nestorianism in A.D. 488. Of the many Churches under him, some clung fast to the old and primitive faith, while others became converts to Nestorianism. Thus the See of Seleucia was hopelessly divided into two sections. And the Catholicus, as usual, claimed authority not only over the churches that followed his example and adopted Nestorianism, but also over those Christians who remained steadfast in the primitive faith. With which of these two sections, the Church of Malabar east in its lot, with the Nestorian or the primitive, we do not know for certain. And Cosmas throws no light upon the nature of its creed. What he says about the Persian origin of its Bishops, he might have heard from the Christians of Ceylon or from the pepper merchants that frequented the ports of Malabar.

### III

10. We shall here digress a little and follow the fortunes of Christianity in Persia for some time. "The Christian Church," says Professor Kurtz.,<sup>1</sup> "had taken root in Persia as early as the 3rd century. With the 4th century, there came a sore time of bloody persecution which was constantly fed partly by the fanatical Magians, partly by the almost incessant wars with the Christian Roman Empire, which aroused suspicion of foreign sympathies hostile to the country. The first great and extensive persecution of the Christians broke out in A.D. 343 under Shapur or Sapoires II." The Christians were again persecuted in the fifth century. One persecution lasted for thirty years (A.D. 418-448). "The Nestorians driven

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<sup>1</sup> Professor Kurtz, "Church History", Vol. I. p. 398



from the Roman Empire found among the Persians protection and toleration." Feroot, King of Persia, persecuted the Roman Catholics again in A.D. 465. In A.D. 488, Barsumas, Metropolitan of Nisibis, managed with the help of Feroot to convert the Catholicate of Seleucia to Nestorianism<sup>2</sup>. On the death of Feroot (A.D. 488), Kobad, his son, ascended the throne. Gibbon describes his reign as follows: His reign "was distracted by civil and religious troubles. A prisoner in the hands of his subjects, an exile among the enemies of Persia, he recovered his liberty by prostituting the honour of his wife, and gained his kingdom by the dangerous and mercenary aid of the Barbarians, who had slain his father."<sup>3</sup> Being expelled from the throne by his brother, he sought the help of the Huns, and with the aid of a mercenary army, he reinstated himself on the Sassanian throne. The fact that he tolerated Nestorian as well as non-Nestorian Christians in his dominions, explains how in the list of the Catholici of Seleucia, the names of Nestorian and non-Nestorian prelates are intermingled. Kobad died in 531.

11. Thus we see that at the time Cosmas visited South India, Persia was ruled by a king who tolerated Nestorian as well as non-Nestorian Christians. We cannot, therefore, be certain whether the Bishop that Cosmas met in India was Nestorian or not. We do not know when he took charge of the diocese; we do not know whether he was sent out to India before the Persian Church adopted Nestorianism or after it; whether he was himself aware of the changes, confusions and dissensions at home; and whether the Catholicus that ordained him was the Nestorian occupant of the Metropolitana chair or not.

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<sup>2</sup> Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church." Introduction Vol. I. p.142

<sup>3</sup> Gibbon, "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" Ch. XLII.p. 143

12. To follow up the Persian history, King Kobad was succeeded by his third son Nushirvan or, as he was called by the Greeks, Chosroes I. He reigned from A.D. 531 to 579. His reign is rendered remarkable in the annals of the Persian Empire both by his administrative reforms and extensive conquests. His hatred of the Roman Emperors manifested itself in the utter intolerance shown to those Christians in his dominions who adhered to the Byzantine (Roman) form of Christianity. These Christians were called Melkites,<sup>4</sup> Imperialists or Synodites, from their adherence to the Council of Chalcedon which was supported by the Roman Emperors. Just as the Mahomedans in India are loyal to the Sultan of Turkey, the Melkites in Persia were even more loyal to the Roman Emperors than to the Persian Kings. Chosroes hated the Melkites, refused to tolerate them in his dominions and persecuted them with renewed cruelty. He persecuted the Melkites so ruthlessly that Emperor Justinian, when arranging a treaty with him, insisted that an article, stipulating for the toleration and burial of the Melkites in the Persian Empire, should be specially inserted in the treaty.<sup>5</sup> Chosroes favoured the Christians of other denominations, the Jacobites and the Nestorians, who were the theological opponents of the religion of Constantinople.

13. "The Persian Kings," says Dr. Neale<sup>6</sup> "were favourably disposed towards both Jacobites and Nestorians, on the principle of fomenting dissensions among their Christian subjects, and because they were naturally inclined to any religion which was hostile to that of Constantinople." An

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4 Stanley, "Lecture on the History of the Eastern Church," Lecture VII.p. 231.

5 Gibbon, "Decline and Fall" Ch XLII. p. 146, footnote

6 Neale, History of the Holy Eastern Church" Introduction Vol. I. p. 152.

instance of the Persian Kings favouring the Jacobites is given by Gibbon:<sup>7</sup> “A colony of 300,000 Jacobites, the captives of Apama and Antioch was permitted to erect an hostile altar in the face of the Catholicus (who was a Nestorian) and in the sunshine of the court.” On the other hand, both these sects, the Nestorians and the Jacobites, not being Melkites were persecuted by the Byzantine Emperors and had to take refuge from Christian Constantinople under the Heathen Persians. And Chosroes I granted them religious liberty and toleration. Under his protection, the Nestorian and the Jacobite churches struck deep root in Persia.

14. At this time there were Christians of three denominations in Eastern Christendom. Until the time of the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451, the Christians in the East belonged to either of two denominations, the Nestorian and the Orthodox. But in that year the latter section was again divided into two main parties, the Melkite and the Jacobite. Thus the three main divisions in Eastern Christendom after that year were:

1. The Melkites, who were favoured by the Byzantine Emperors and persecuted by the Persian Kings. They were mostly to be found only in the Roman Empire.

2. The Nestorians  
 3. The Jacobites } who were persecuted by the Roman Emperors and tolerated and sometimes favoured by the Persian Kings. Both these sects were largely to be found only in the Persian Empire.

15. Of the two prominent Christian communions in Persia, the Nestorian was already strong, and the Jacobite was gaining ground every day. To the Jacobites this was a

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7 Gibbon "Decline and Fall" Ch. XLVII (p.355 of Vol.III)



period of great revival. Under the wise and able guidance of Severus.<sup>8</sup> Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 512-542) this communion was very much strengthened and it soon outnumbered the Melkites and the Nestorians. In Syria and Persia, the labours of Severus were followed by those of one of his disciples Jacob Baraddaeus.<sup>9</sup> (Zanzalus) Bishop of Edessa who, with indefatigable energy travelled from place to place, preached the Jacobite doctrine in spite of threats and persecutions, and consecrated Bishops for those sees whose Jacobite Bishops had been imprisoned by the intolerant Byzantine Emperor. "Finding that the whole of Asia was more than the Patriarch of Antioch could possibly superintend, the indefatigable Zanzalus (Jacob Baraddaeus) ordained Achudemes (A.D. 559) Maphrian (*ie.* Catholicus) of the East beyond the Tigris..... and the new dignity<sup>10</sup> bore the same relation to the Jacobite See of Antioch that the Catholicus of Seleucia originally did to the orthodox possessors of that Throne."<sup>11</sup> From this time forward, there were two persons with the title of Catholicus, the one Jacobite and the other Nestorian each claiming to be the proper successor of the old orthodox Catholicus of Seleucia, and each arrogating to himself the See of Seleucia and all its dependencies. These two lines of succession have since then been kept up without interruption.<sup>12</sup>

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8 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' Introduction Vol. II. p.946  
See also Neale, "Patriarch of Antioch" pp.163-164.

9 Gibbon, Decline and Fall," Ch XLVII (p.359 of Vol. III)

10 The Jacobite Canon (Chapter II) expressly states that this Suffragan is to be addressed Catholicus or Maphrian.

11 Neale, "History of the Holy Eastern Church" Introduction Vol. I. p.152.

12 The Syriac Chronicle of Gregory Bar Hebraeus (Assemani Bibliotheca Orientalis II.321-463) pursues the double series of the Nestorian and the Jacobite Catholicus.

16. The above survey of the history of Christianity in Persia enables us to see how a general statement that the Church of Malabar received Bishops from Persia, does not at all help us to decide whether it was to the Jacobite or to the Nestorian Church in Persia that the Church of Malabar was affiliated. We do not know whether the Bishop that Cosmas met in India had many successors in the See of Malabar, or if he had any successors, whether these were ordained by the Nestorian or the Jacobite Catholic.

#### IV

17. The next gleam of historical light reveals to us that in A.D. 696 "a Bishop of the Church of the Jacobites" came to Malabar from Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, in response to a deputation sent from Malabar to the Jacobite Patriarch of Alexandria. In A.D. 695 the Syrian Church of Malabar sent a native priest to Alexandria requesting the Jacobite Patriarch in that city to ordain a Bishop for Malabar.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Neale, the ecclesiastical historian, naturally finds a difficulty here. He observes<sup>3</sup> "It is true that at this time as far as the obscurity of history permits us to discover, this people (the Syrian Christians in Malabar) were Nestorians." If they were Nestorians, how could they, argues Dr. Neale, apply to the Jacobite Patriarch for a Bishop? And he tries to solve the difficulty thus:<sup>4</sup> "It is also true that the Nestorians and the Jacobites have always been more ready to sympathise with each other than with the Catholic (Melkite) Church." But will sympathy instigate a Church to send an official deputation to a Patriarch holding the very opposite creed, requesting a Bishop from him

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

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

3 *Ibid*

4 *Ibid*



Seeing that the Jacobites and the Nestorians are, in their Christological doctrines, sworn enemies of each other,<sup>5</sup> and that the one anathematizes<sup>6</sup> the other in the bitterest terms possible, it is quite improbable that the Syrian Church of Malabar, if it had been Nestorian at this time, would have sent such a deputation to a Jacobite Patriarch. Even supposing, *per impossible*, that the Nestorian Church of Malabar sent a deputation to the Jacobite Church of Alexandria, it is still less probable that a Bishop acceptable to the Christians of Malabar, should have been sent to them; for the Jacobite Canon forbids Patriarchs to ordain any person a Bishop unless he subscribes to the Jacobite doctrines and anathematizes the Nestorians and other theological opponents of Jacobitism.<sup>7</sup> But history tells us that in response to the deputation to Alexandria, a Jacobite Bishop arrived in Malabar. Hence we are constrained to suppose that at the time the deputation was sent and the Bishop received, the Church of Malabar was not Nestorian, but Jacobite. When we remember that communication with Egypt (which had ever been a

5 Kurtz, "Church History" Vol. I. pp. 330-338, edited by Robertson Nicoll. Lond. 1888

6 The following is a form, used by the Nestorians for anathematizing the Jacobites:

"Woe and woe again, to all who say that Mary is the Mother of God.

"Woe and woe again, to all who do not confess in christ, *two Natures, two Persons* and one *Parsopa* of Filiation.

"Woe and woe again, to the wicked Cyril and Severus.

"Woe and woe again, to the cursed Jacob (Baraddaeus) Baradessenens."

See Badger, "The Nestorians and their Rituals", Vol. II. p.80.

The following is a form, used by the Jacobites for anathematizing the Nestorians.: "I do condemn al heretics that introduced ruinous heresies and consequently cut themselves off from membership in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, such as.....*Nestorius*.....and those that have joined their false and ruinous teachings and doctrines against the Holy Spirit."

See section 13 of "The Jacobite Profession of Faith," edited by Bishop Mar Alvaves Julius.

7 See Bar Hebraeus' Jacobite Canon Chapter II (Syriac) ed. Paris. 1905,



stronghold of the Jacobites) was at this period constantly maintained for the purpose of merchandize, the supposition that Jacobite influence was working in the Church of Malabar becomes all the more probable. Subsequent history will bear out the truth of this statement further.

18. Before proceeding to discuss other evidences, we shall quote the testimony of two authors who, though holding that the Church of Malabar was on the whole Nestorian, are yet compelled to recognise that at this period it was Jacobite. The Rev. Richard Collins, M.A. says<sup>8</sup> "Nor can there be really much doubt that *from* the time when Jacob Albarad (Baraddeus) in *the sixth century*, espoused the cause of the Eutychians (Jacobites), and enabled them to secure the Sees of Antioch and Alexandria, the *Syrian Church in Malabar* owned the *Eutychian (Jacobite) Patriarch*, who was the most powerful Bishop in the East, and were therefore Eutychians or as they are also called from Jacob Albaradi, *Jacobites*. This is confirmed by the early mention of Edessa in the Syrian narratives; for Jacob Albaradi himself died Bishop of Edessa,' Hough, the Indian Church Historian says:<sup>9</sup> Without, however, questioning their Nestorianism in his (Cosmas's) own time, it is now well known, that their creed has, for many ages past, been more in accordance with that of the Jacobites and there can be little doubt that it was changed at the time when their Patriarch (Catholicus) at Seleucia, adopted the Jacobite tenets."

19. Historical records that give us an insight into the creed of the Syrian Church in Malabar during the next five centuries are, indeed, very meagre. Fortunately we have certain monumental inscriptions to enlighten us. In the Syrian Periapally Church at Kottayam, in Travancore, there are two

8 Collins, "Missionary Enterprise in the East" p. 76. The italics are mine.

9 Hough, "Christianity in India" Vol. 1. p. 87. The italics are mine.

stone slabs, on each of which is engraved a Cross with inscriptions in the Pahlavi language. These slabs were, as the tradition says, brought to this Church from a still older Church at Cranganore when the Syrian Christians emigrated to Kottayam. The larger of these two stone slabs has the earlier inscription; and it belongs to about the same date as a similar stone, discovered by the Portuguese at St. Thomas' Mount in A.D. 1547, which is now placed in the Roman Catholic Chapel there. Pahlavi, the language of the inscriptions on these stones, was the official language of the Persian Empire during the Sassanian dynasty. In an article published in the *Indian Antiquary*,<sup>10</sup> Dr. Burnell, on paleographical grounds, assigns the inscription on the larger stone slab at Kottayam to the seventh or eighth century. The inscription on the smaller stone slab has, in addition to the line in Pahlavi, a line in Estrangelo Syrica, and is not, according to Dr. Burnell, older than the tenth century.<sup>11</sup>

20. An examination of these inscriptions throws some light upon the creed of the Syrian Church during this period. Dr. Burnell translates the inscription on the larger stone as follows:<sup>12</sup>

*"In punishment by the Cross (was) the suffering of this One;  
He Who is the true Christ, and God above and Guide ever pure."*

Dr. Rae accepts this as the best of the different renderings given, and says, "The meaning of this inscription it is difficult to make out with precision; but, in spite of the imperfect translations available, it would seem that a definite conclusion may be arrived at with regard to its general import.

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10 Vide Dr. Burnell's article on "Some Pahlavi Inscriptions in south India" *Indian Antiquary* Vol. III.308-316.

11 *Ibid*

12 *Ibid*

The inscription on a Cross, set up as a 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.*"<sup>13</sup> Now, what was the belief of the Syrian Church in Malabar concerning the crucified One, as set forth in the above inscription? It is that "the One" who is "the true Christ, God above and Guide ever pure" suffered "in punishment by the Cross."<sup>14</sup> In other words, this inscription attributes Divinity to Christ in the crucified position. A Nestorian never does this. He always objects to the use of such language as 'God suffered,' 'God died', in reference to the Passion and Death of Christ.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, he anathematizes those Christians who would use such language.<sup>16</sup> He conceives of Jesus Christ as having two persons, the one human and the other divine. He believes that only the Man-Jesus (the Human Person in Christ according to the Nestorian Theology) suffered on the Cross; and he condemns the opposite (Jacobite) doctrine that the God-Messiah (the Divine Person in Christ according to the Nestorian Theology) suffered or was crucified. Hence the doctrine set forth in the above inscription is unquestionably anti-Nestorian.

13 Dr. Milne Rae, "The Syrian Church in India" p. 121. the italics are mine

14 The terms 'True Christ,' 'God above,' and 'Guide ever pure' denote the same person, and not three different persons. They refer only to the Second Person, and not to each or all of the Three Persons of the Trinity. To-day there are prayers, used by the Syrian Christians in Malabar in which the Second Person of the Trinity is addressed as "the One who was crucified for us. "the true Christ,' 'God above' and 'Guide ever pure'". The Church of Malabar never believed that the Three Persons of the Trinity were crucified on Calvary.

15 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church, Alexandria' Vol.1.p.236

16 The following is a form of anathema used by the Nestorians to condemn those who attribute Divinity to Christ in the crucified position.

"Woe and woe again, to all who say that God Died."

See the Service for the festival of the Greek Doctors. Badger, 'The Nestorians and their Rituals.' Vol.II.p.80



21. This inscription is written in the Pahlavi language. Pahlavi was never the language of the people of Malabar; nor was it ever the ecclesiastical language of the Syrian Christians there. But it was the official language of the Persian Empire when it was ruled by the Sassanian dynasty. Hence this inscription must have had a Persian origin. Either it was engraved by a Persian Christian that visited Malabar during that period; or the engraved stone slab was imported into Malabar from Persia. Since the doctrine set forth in the inscription is particularly anti-Nestorian, its author could not have belonged to the Nestorian Church. At that time the Nestorians and the Jacobites were the two predominant Christian communities in Persia. The Christological difference between the two Churches was often made the subject of hot controversy between theologians of the two schools. Under these circumstances, if a monument was set up by one of the parties, it is quite natural that the inscription on that monument would be the peculiar doctrine held by that party. And the doctrine set forth in this inscription is most truly Jacobite.<sup>17</sup> These considerations show not only that the inscription is decidedly anti-Nestorian, but also that it is Jacobite. The stone slab which bears this inscription was favourably received by the Syrian Christians in Malabar and was given a revered place upon the altar in one of their churches. If the Syrian Christians were Nestorians, they would never have done this. Thus we see that the Syrian Christians of Malabar were not Nestorians, but Jacobites at this time.

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<sup>17</sup> Another form in which the same doctrine is set forth is the famous Jacobite addition to the Tersanctus. Peter Gnaphus, Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 465-490), added to the Tersanctus a fourth line which runs thus:- "God that was crucified for us, have mercy upon us". Gibbon 'Decline and Fall,' Ch. XLVIII. See Neale, 'Patriarchate of Antioch' p.162.

22. Another piece of monumental evidence that deserves notice is the smaller stone slab at Kottayam. Like the larger stone already described, it has a Cross engraved at its centre in the Greek form, with inscriptions around it. The two lines of this inscription are in two different languages, one line being in Pahlavi, and the other in Estrangelo Syriac. According to Dr. Burnell this inscription is not older than the tenth century.<sup>18</sup> Since Estrangelo ceased to be the alphabet of the liturgical language of the Persian Christians, both the Nestorians and the Jacobites, about the twelfth century,<sup>19</sup> this inscription cannot be later than that date. Hence it is to be assigned to a period between the tenth and twelfth centuries.

23. Of the two lines of the inscription, the one that is engraved in Pahlavi is written "in a sort of running hand," and the other line, that in Estrangelo Syriac, is a quotation from the fourteenth verse of the sixth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. "Thus if my reading be allowed," says Dr. Burnell, "the whole would run thus:-

*(Estrangelo Syriac)* Let me not glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; *(Pahlavi)* Who is the true Messiah and God above and Holy Ghost."

The line in Estrangelo may be found written on the first page of many an old Jacobite Syriac manuscript; and it is the motto adopted by the modern Jacobite Church in Malabar, and printed on the first page of the Arch-diocesan magazine. The line in Pahlavi is the same as the second line of the inscription on the earlier stone slab at Kottayam, as may be seen from a careful comparison of the two inscriptions. The one corresponds, word for word, letter for letter, with the

15 Dr. Burnell's article on "some Pahlavi Inscriptions in South India" in the *Indian Antiquary* Vol.III. (1874) pp.308-316

16 Badger, "The Nestorians and their Rituals' Vol.II.p.14



other. The words that are rendered 'Guide ever pure' in the earlier stone are the same as those rendered 'Holy Ghost' in the later. Hence a translation of this inscription would run thus: "Let me not glory except in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; Who is the true Messiah and God above and Guide ever pure."<sup>20</sup> Here again we find the same anti-Nestorian doctrine as in the earlier inscription, set forth. Even if we accept the rendering 'Holy Ghost' we may assert that this inscription is unquestionably non-Nestorian; for no consistent Nestorian can 'glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ' "*Who* is the true Christ and God above and Holy Ghost". The belief that the Trinity was crucified on Calvary seems to underlie this sentiment. Hence if we accept Dr. Burnell's translation without any modification, we see that the inscription is not Nestorian in its origin. If we accept the slight modification proposed above, the inscription appears to be not only non-Nestorian, but decidedly anti-Nestorian and Jacobite in the doctrine set forth therein. In any case, the doctrine set forth in the inscription is *not* Nestorian. This shows that the creed of the Syrian Church in Malabar at that date was not, at any rate, Nestorian.

## V

24. Leaving the Church of Malabar, we shall once again cast our eyes on the state of Christianity in the East in the

<sup>20</sup> If we substitute 'Holy Ghost' for 'Guide ever pure' in the earlier inscription, its translation would run thus:

In punishment by the Cross was the suffering of this One;  
He who is the true Christ and God above and Holy Ghost.

This rendering implies that the Trinity suffered on the Cross. Neither of the two Persian Churches nor the Church of Malabar ever believed such a doctrine. Hence this translation would be inadmissible. That is, to translate the portion of the second line, so as to make it mean last 'Holy Ghost' would not suit the actual historical circumstances of the origin of the inscription. Hence it seems to me that 'Guide ever pure' is the better rendering of the last portion of the second line on both stones.



ninth and tenth centuries. During these two centuries the Jacobite Church in the East was more prosperous than ever. The Patriarchs that ruled this communion both in Asia and in Africa were able and far-sighted administrators. The Jacobites in Asia enjoyed a regular succession of eminent divines to the Patriarchal throne at Antioch. Under the able guidance and fostering care of these Patriarchs, the Jacobite Church in Asia became so strong, numerous and extensive that “as many as a hundred and three Episcopal and twenty Metropolitan Sees are reckoned as having belonged to them.”<sup>1</sup> The authority of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch at this time extended to Persia, Arabia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia and even to Malabar.<sup>2</sup> Badger institutes the following comparison between the conditions of this Church at that period and in the nineteenth century:<sup>3</sup> “When we call to mind their early history, the 150 Archbishops and Bishops<sup>4</sup> under the Patriarch and Maphrian (Catholicus) of which their hierarchy once consisted, their numbers, the extent of country over which they spread, and the zeal and learning of some of their eminent doctors; and then look upon their present spiritual destitution, as also upon that of their co-religionists, the Copts of Egypt and the Monophysites of Abyssinia, we cannot withhold the confession that the hand of the Lord has fallen heavily upon them.” Thus we see that the Jacobite Church in Asia under the Patriarchs of Antioch extended over a number of countries in the ninth and tenth centuries, and that these were the palmy days of the communion in Asia.

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1 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church', General Introduction Vol. I. p. 153.

2 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. I. p. 84 (ed. 1847).

3 Badger, 'The Nestorians and their Rituals' Vol. I. p. 60.

4 Gibbon also gives these numbers. See 'Decline and Fall', Ch. XLVII.

25. The Jacobite Church in Egypt was not less prosperous. The Coptic Church in Egypt under their Patriarch who now resided at Alexandria, spread over Nubia, Ethiopia and other parts of Africa. Mar Yacub<sup>5</sup> who occupied the Patriarchal throne from A.D. 837 to A.D. 852 did his utmost to extend the Church not only to many parts of Egypt and Abyssinia, but also to the coast of the Red Sea and to the islands of the Indian Ocean. About A.D. 842 the Jacobite creed penetrated into Socotra and the islands in the Red sea. "When the Portuguese penetrated into the Indian Ocean" in the sixteenth century, "they found that in the parts towards the Red Sea, the faith of the inhabitants was Jacobite."<sup>6</sup>

26. Thus we see that both under Antioch and under Alexandria, in Asia and in Africa, the jacobite Church was extensive, strong and progressive. But, on the other hand, the Nestorian Church in Asia was neither so strong, nor so progressive as her Monophysite rival. The zeal for the evangelization of the surrounding heathens which characterised the Nestorian Missionaries in the two preceding centuries, had already declined. The Nestorians in Persia were no longer "encouraged by the smile and armed with the sword." of Persian despotism. The relaxation of the law of celibacy for the higher Clergy (Bishops and Catholic) tempted them to indulge in the crime of nepotism which often undermines the very foundations of society and administration. Moreover, the Nestorians in Persia were "involved in the common evils of Oriental despotism." To add to these causes of decline and fall, their rival communions were supported by the heathen rulers. As Hough points out, "All historians are agreed, that during the seventh century these sects were propagated

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5 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church', 'Alexandria' Vol.II. pp.147-151

6 *Ibid.* p.151

throughout the Eastern world. Under the reign of the Caliphs first the Nestorian, (and), afterwards, the Jacobites Church was diffused from China as far as Jerusalem and Cyprus.”<sup>7</sup> “In the second and third centuries of Muhammadanism, that is the ninth and tenth of the Christian era, the Melchites and the Jacobites obtained great privileges from the Caliphs and Sultans; in consequence of which they soon became the dominant sects in the Eastern churches; and 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.”<sup>8</sup> In a word, the Nestorian Church was on the decline, while the Jacobite Church was advancing and conquering new lands.

## VI

27. Turning our attention again to the Church in Malabar, we find that in A.D. 822, a colony of Christians from Persia under two Bishops, Mar Sapor and Mar Peroz emigrated to Quilon, then an important sea-port on the Coast of Malabar. These Bishops having come with a large following, “made a deep impression on the powers that were then in Malabar, and this circumstance helped to pave the way for the recognised and honourable place that they obtained in the society of that coast by the charter granted so soon afterwards”.<sup>1</sup> In A.D. 824 Marwan Sapir Iso, (probably the Bishop Mar Sapor), executed a legal document transferring to Tarassa

7 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. 1. p. 116. See also Gibbon, Decline and Fall' Ch.XLVII

8 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol.1.p.87.

1 Rae, 'The Syrian Church in India' p. 164.

2 Tarassa or Tarisa is the name ordinarily used by the Jacobite Clergy to denote their Church. The word means 'straight' or 'right'.



Church and community the right of ownership of a piece of land which he had received from the King. This colony of Persians intermarried with the native Christians, and in course of time, disappeared as a distinct race. To-day the Syrian Christians in the neighbourhood of Quilon claim to be their descendants and in legal documents style themselves as 'Kurakeni Kollam Nazrane Mapillay' (Nazarene Christian of the Colony of Quilon.)

28. We do not know for certain to which of the two great Persian Christian Churches these emigrants belonged. Timotheus was the Nestorian Catholicus at this time. In the list of Bishops sent out to other countries by Timotheus, we do not find the names of Mar Sapor and Mar Peroz. "According to Assemani Tom. III. part II. pp. 442 to 444, Thomas Marg. Historia Monast. Lib. V. Cap. 7, Cod.Syr. Vat. No. 165 and other authors, the only Bishops sent out by Timotheus to India<sup>3</sup> and China were Thomas, Zache, Seno, Ephraem, Simeon, Ananias and David."<sup>4</sup> Again, looking at the Jacobite Church in Persia, we find, that the Jacobite Catholicus of Seleucia claimed Malabar as part of his diocese. And Hough informs us that his authority extended to Malabar at this time.<sup>5</sup> The Jacobite Church in Persia was at this time more prosperous than ever. The Jacobite Catholicus of Seleucia was contesting the supremacy of the East with his Nestorian rival.<sup>6</sup> It is, therefore, quite natural that the Jacobite

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3 The name India in early records may refer to Ethiopia, Arabia Felix or Modern India. See Yule's 'Marco Polo' Vol. II p. 359 footnote: Hakluyt Society.

4 George Cattamar, 'The Catholicity of S. Thomas Christians' p. 29.

5 See section 24 of this paper. Also Hough "Christianity in India", Vol. I. p. 84 (ed. 1847).

6 Gibbon says, "The secondary though honourable place (the first being that of the Jacobite Patriarch) is filled by the Maphrian (Jacobite *Catholicus*) who in his station at Mosul itself, defies the Nestorian Catholicus with whom he contests the supremacy of the East. *Vide* 'Decline and Fall' Ch. XLVII.

Catholicus would not at this time hesitate to strengthen his hold on the See of Malabar by sending out Bishops to that distant community. Hence we presume that Mar Sapor and Mar Peroz and the colony of Christians that settled in the neighbourhood of Quilon in A.D. 822, were Jacobites.

29. The next historical record we have to examine is a Manuscript Bible found in a Church among the mountains in Travancore, and given by the Bishop of Malabar to Dr. Buchanan, a British Missionary, in A.D. 1806. This Bible is now preserved in the University Library at Cambridge. It is written in Syriac with Estrangelo characters<sup>7</sup>. Since Estrangelo ceased to be the liturgical alphabet of the Christians of Syria, Persia and Malabar about the twelfth century,<sup>8</sup> this manuscript could not have been written later than that date. Since it commemorates in a rubric<sup>9</sup> Mar Severus, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch (A.D. 512–542), it could not have been written before the middle of the sixth century. Hence, we may assign this manuscript to a period between the sixth and twelfth centuries.

30. How long was this Bible in the possession of the Syrian Christians of Malabar? It had been deposited in one of the remotest Mountain Churches and was presented to Dr. Buchanan by the Bishop. "The remark with which this precious gift was accompanied shows how greatly the volume had been esteemed, and how carefully it must have been

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7 There are four different sets of characters for the Syriac alphabet.

a. *The Estrangelo*, the oldest, used by the Christians of the East till the twelfth century.

b. *The Chaldean*, used by the Nestorians after the Estranle fell out of use.

c. *The Peshito*, used by the Jacobites after the twelfth century.

d. *The Aphia*, double characters used in ornamental writing.

8. Badger, 'The Nestorians, and their Rituals' Vol. II. p. 14.

9. See the rubric heading the lesson beginning with the 10th verse of the 3rd Chapter of the 2nd Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy.



preserved from generation to generation. "It will be safer perhaps with you," said the Bishop, "than with us: yet we have kept it, as some think, for near a thousand years."<sup>10</sup> If this Bible were brought to Malabar after the 14th century, the earliest possible date for it would be A.D. 1665, when a Jacobite Bishop came to Malabar to re-introduce Jacobitism and to re-establish the authority of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch on that coast.<sup>11</sup> In that case, this Bible was in the possession of the Church of Malabar only for the last one hundred and forty-one years (A.D. 1665–1806). And the Syrian Bishop, who was then 78 years old<sup>12</sup> must have heard from the people of the previous generation at least when and how this esteemed volume came into their possession. But he does not seem to have heard anything of the kind. On the other hand, he says that the Syrian Church was in possession of this Bible for 'nearly a thousand years.' Again, there was a general impression prevalent among the Christians of Malabar that this Bible survived the burning of Syriac manuscripts<sup>13</sup> by Menezes in A.D. 1599. The Christians of Mavelikaray, Parish in the Diocese of Malabar, said to Dr. Buchanan<sup>14</sup>:—"The true Bible of Antioch we have had in the mountains of Malabar for 1,400 years. Some of our copies are from ancient times, so old and decayed that they can scarcely be preserved." Dr. Buchanan, on his way to Malabar, wrote to

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10 Howard, 'The Christians of S. Thomas and their Liturgies' p. 60.

Buchanan, 'Christian Researches in Asia' pp. 137–138.

11 Rae, 'The Syrian Church in India' p. 269.

During the interval (from about A.D. 1400 to 1665) no Jacobite Bishop came to Malabar; but Nestorian and afterwards Roman Catholic Bishops are recorded to have been in Malabar.

12 Whitehouse, 'Lingering of Light in a Dark Land'.

13 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. II. pp. 158, 177–178.

14 Buchanan, 'Christian Researches in Asia.'



the Governor-General in Council as follows<sup>15</sup>:— "A further object of literary investigation offers itself among the Malabar Churches in the interior, or as they are called the Christians of the Mountains. These insulated and primitive Churches (which came originally from Chaldea), are said to be in possession of some very ancient manuscripts, and, particularly, of a copy of the New Testament in the Chaldean (Syriac) character (Estrangelo). This seems probable from their liturgy (which I have seen) which is composed entirely in the Chaldaic language." Further, the same Missionary, in a letter from Cochin dated 24th December 1806, writes about this Bible thus:—<sup>16</sup> "It has been supposed that the Roman Catholics (Menezes and Fr. Roz in particular) had destroyed in 1599, all the Syrian books. But it appears that they did not destroy *one* copy of the Bible." These evidence indicate that this manuscript Bible was in the possession of the Church of Malabar before A.D. 1599. Since it is a Jacobite Bible<sup>17</sup> it could not have been brought to Malabar by the Nestorian Bishops, who come to that coast in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. No Jacobite from Western Asia visited the Syrian Church during these two centuries. This Bible must, therefore, have been in Malabar before the close of the fourteenth century.

31. That the Church of Malabar was not Nestorian, but was Jacobite before the close of the fourteenth century is testified to by the numerous unmistakable evidences in this Bible. We shall cite here a few of these. An examination of the New Testament portion of this manuscript shows that the narratives are not divided, as in the Bible of Western

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15 *The Madras Mail*, November 7, 1905.

16 *Vide* Buchanan's letter to Mr. Henry Thoruton.

17 See § 31 – 36 of this paper.

Christendom, into chapters and verses; but they are divided into paragraphs to be read during divine service on Sundays and other days of religious festival. There are special rubrics heading each lesson indicating the occasion on which is to be read. These rubrics, without exception, conform not to the Nestorian, but to the Jacobite practices.

32. One or two examples would be sufficient for our purpose. There are more than a dozen rubrics for divine services on days specially set apart for the commemoration of St. Mary. These rubrics make mention of her not as St. Mary or Mother of Christ as a Nestorian would do, but as "Mother of God" – a title never given to her by the Nestorians. The rubrics heading the lessons beginning with 'St. Matthew' Chap. XII. verse 38, 'St. Mark' Chap. III. verse 31, 'St. Luke' Chap. VIII. verse 16, are instances in point.

33. Again, according to the Nestorian practice, the celebration of the Eucharist is forbidden on Saturdays in Lent. But the Jacobites along with the rest of the Eastern Christendom celebrate the Eucharist on Saturdays in Lent.<sup>18</sup> In this Manuscript Bible we find rubrics for the Eucharist on Saturdays in Lent. These rubrics run thus:– "For the Eucharist of the first (second or third as the case may be) Saturday in Lent." The lessons beginning with 'St. Matthew' Chap. VIII. verse 14, Chap. VII. verse 1 Chap. XX. verse 29, 'St. Mark' Chap. II. verse 1, 'St. John' Chap. II. verse 12, Chap. XI. verse 1, are illustrations.

34. Among the Nestorians Friday is a sacred day. They view it in the light of a second Sunday. Friday "throughout the year, has as regularly its own name and office as the Sunday; and the festivals of greatest saints are fixed in regular

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<sup>18</sup>Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church', Introduction Vol. II. p. 713.

course..... on Fridays."<sup>19</sup> They prefer Friday to any other day (excepting Sunday) for the celebration of the Eucharist. In their Calendar Fridays have an important place. Many of the movable festivals are so adjusted that they fall on Fridays. Hence it is natural that the Nestorian Bible should have special rubrics for Fridays. But the Bible given to Dr. Buchanan contains no rubric whatever for the Nestorian Friday festivals.

35. Some differences in the reading of certain verses are again worthy of notice. The 28th verse of the 20th Chapter of the 'Acts of the Apostles' is a well-known instance. In the Nestorian Bible this verse reads:— "To feed the Church of *Christ* which He has purchased with His (Christ's) own blood" where-as the Bible given to Dr. Buchanan along with other Jacobite and Western Bibles read "To feed the Church of *God* which He has purchased with His (God's) own blood."

36. We shall close our examination of this Manuscript Bible by giving one more unequivocal evidence of its Jacobite character. The rubric heading the lesson beginning with the 10th verse of the 3rd Chapter of the 2nd Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy runs thus:— "For the Eucharist on the day of the commemoration of Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch." This Severus, has already been referred to as the energetic Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch from A.D. 512–542.

37. These evidences conclusively prove that the manuscript is Jacobite, and not Nestorian. If it is Jacobite, then we may very well infer from it that the Church of Malabar

19 For example, on the Friday in the 'Week of the Prayer of the Ninevites' (the 'days' fast) are commemorated the Syrian Doctors. On the Friday following the fourth Sunday after Epiphany is the commemoration of the Catholicos Mar Abas. The next Friday is the 'Day of the Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.' On the Friday of the Week of Weeks (the Passion Week) is the commemoration of all Confessors. The Friday after Pentecost, called the Golden Friday, is again a high festival. All the Friday of the weeks following Epiphany are sacred days.

Vide Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' General Introduction Vol. II. pp. 731, 750, 751.



which was using it in its divine services, could not have been anything but Jacobite in its creed.

## VII

38. We shall here briefly sketch the circumstances that brought about the final establishment of Nestorianism in Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The prosperous days of the Jacobite Church in the East ended with the thirteenth century. Their subsequent Patriarchs were weak and powerless. A new generation of selfish and worldly-minded Bishops succeeded the old divines. The monasteries began to decay. Luxury crept equally into the 'Palace' of the Bishop and into the 'Cave' of the Monk. Many of the Monks remained as such only to seek an election to the Episcopate. The secular Clergy, and, consequently, the laity, became spiritually degenerate. As a result of all these, there was no life in the Jacobite Church, but only spiritual decay and destitution. These circumstances prevented the Jacobite Catholicus of Seleucia from supplying Bishops to the Church of Malabar. For a long time the Church of Malabar had been without Bishops; and confusion and ignorance increased to a deplorable extent.

39. The Nestorian Catholicate of Chaldea, which had, after the destruction of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, been removed to Bagdad, also experienced a similar revolution in its career. The prosperity which it attained in the fifth and sixth centuries lasted until the twelfth, when the Caliphs deprived them of the protection and toleration, which they had hitherto afforded them. In that century the Nestorians were subjected to a series of troubles and persecutions; and the Nestorian Church rapidly declined. "After sustaining a severe persecution from Kassan Khan," says Dr. Neale,<sup>1</sup> "they were

<sup>1</sup> Neale 'History of the Holy Eastern Church: General Introduction. Vol. I. p. 143.

nearly extirpated by the monster Tamerlane. The Patriarch (Catholicus) removed his seat to the valley of Julamerick, in Kurdistan, and there surrounded by his little flock, maintained a kind of independence, paying a tribute to the Porte, and occasionally harassed by the predatory warfare of the Kurds and Yezidees". Towards the middle of the fifteenth century the Catholicus Mar Shimoon enacted a new law restricting the succession to the Catholicate to members of his own family. His successors tried to regain the power and prestige they had lost through the spiritual and temporal decay of their Church. Ever ready to extend their authority, they were seeking for opportunities to send out Bishops to foreign Churches to establish their jurisdiction over them.

40. At this time the Church of Malabar, deprived of Bishops from Persia for a long time, weary of internal dissensions, and confusions, deputed in the year 1490 three faithful members of the Church to the Catholicus of Seleucia, to request him to send a Bishop to the Christians of Malabar that they might receive fresh life and light from a successor of the Apostles. One of the deputies died on the way, and the remaining two appeared before the Catholicus of Bagdad and stated their errand. The Catholicus exceedingly leased at this unexpected opportunity of extending his jurisdiction, at once elected two monks from the neighbouring monastery of S. Eugene, consecrated them Bishops and sent them to Malabar. One of them Mar Thomas soon afterwards returned to Mesopotamia and never visited Malabar again. The other, Mar John remained in Malabar and ordained priests and deacons and taught the Christians his Nestorian creed. In 1502 Elias, the then Nestorian Catholicus sent three Bishops to Malabar to assist Mar John in the work of proselytising the Malabar Christians to Nestorianism. Mar Jacob one of these three, translated (revised)<sup>2</sup> the Syriac New Testament

2 'Cathay and the Way Thither' 75, note.



in 1510. These Bishops succeeded in annexing the Church of Malabar to the Nestorian See of Bagdad. They could not, nevertheless, blot out all traces of Jacobitism the former creed of the Church. We shall notice some of these as we proceed.

## VIII

41. The Portuguese established their political supremacy in Malabar towards the middle of the sixteenth century, and their Clergy backed by their Government, made strenuous efforts to convert the Church of Malabar to Roman Catholicism. The Pope deputed Menezes, Portuguese Archbishop of Goa, to effect this conversion. The efforts of Menezes to fulfil his mission culminated in the convening of an assembly in A.D. 1599, of the Syrian Clergy and the representatives of the laity at Diamper, a little village near Cochin. Menezes himself presided over this assembly. At this 'Synod,' by promises and bribery, persuasion and intimidation, Menezes and his followers succeeded annexing the Syrian Church to the Church of Rome. By a strange coincidence this was the very year of the rise of that august body, the British East India Company which was destined to grant them, at a later period, religious liberty and toleration. At Diamper nine sessions of the 'Synod' were held and 267 decrees passed<sup>1</sup>. In these decrees we find references, direct and indirect, to certain non-Nestorian practices of the Christians of Malabar, which are peculiar to the Jacobites. These Jacobite practices could not have crept into Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, for we know that during these two centuries only Nestorian Bishops visited Malabar. Hence it is plain these time-honored practices must have crept into Malabar before the introduction of Nestorianism in the fifteenth century.

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<sup>1</sup> A translation of the decrees of this Synod is given by Hough. *vide* his 'Christianity in India' Vol II, Appendix.



## IX

42. We shall here notice a few of these practices. In decree III of the fifth session of the 'Synod,' Menezes condemns a particular ceremony observed by the Clergy of Malabar in the celebration of the Eucharist. He describes it as follows: "In the Masses of this Bishopric. there is an impious sac-<sup>1</sup>religious ceremony, which is, – 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 is upon the patin "opening this latter part that was upon the patin with the nail of his right "thumb to the end, according to their opinion that the blood (wine) may "penetrate the body (bread) that so the blood and body may be joined together..." Menezes through ignorance describes this ceremony as Nestorian; but, in fact, it is far from being such. None of the Nestorian liturgies give directions for it. The corresponding Nestorian ceremony is described in their liturgy as follows:–<sup>2</sup> "Whilst naming the "Trinity, he (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 (wine) 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." Comparing the two practices we may notice the following differences:–

i) The Nestorians *cross the blood* (wine) with the broken part held in the right hand, whereas the Syrians of Malabar

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1 Hough 'Christianity in India' Vol. II. p. 501.

2 *Vide* Badger's Translation of the Nestorian Liturgy in his "Nestorian and Their Rituals" Vol. II p. 235.

*cross the other half of the bread* in the patin with the piece in the right hand.

ii) The Nestorians *first cross* the wine and *then dip* the bread into it; whereas the Syrians of Malabar *first dip* a piece of the bread into the wine and *then cross* the other half of the bread.

iii) The Nestorians dip a *third* piece of the bread into the wine whereas the Syrians of Malabar dip the *second* piece with which the other half of the bread was crossed.

These differences between the practices of the two Churches are easily noticed. They indicate that the practice of the Church of Malabar was not in accordance with the Nestorian liturgy. What liturgy, then, did the Church of Malabar follow? Comparing the practice of the Church of Malabar with the corresponding practice described in all the Syro-Jacobite liturgies, we find that the former is identical with the latter.<sup>3</sup> This peculiarly Jacobite practice was introduced into all the Jacobite liturgies by Mar Jacob, Professor of Theology in the Jacobite Academy at Edessa and afterwards Bishop of that City (A.D. 684–708)<sup>4</sup>. The fact that this was the practice of the Church of Malabar before the sixteenth century shows that the liturgy used by them must have been one of the Syro-Jacobite liturgies. This proves that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite and not Nestorian.

43. In Decree II of the same session (the fifth) of the Synod of Diamper, it is stated that a liturgy bearing the name of Diodorus, was in use among the Christians of Malabar.<sup>5</sup> The Nestorians have no liturgy bearing this name. Their only

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3 *Vide Howards* translation of the Syro-Jacobite liturgies in his "Christians of St. Thomas and their Liturgies", pp. 238–240.

4 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' General Introduction Vol. II. p. 946.

5 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. II. Appendix.

Howard 'The Christians of S. Thomas and their Liturgies' p. 39.

liturgies are those of Nestorians. Theodore the Interpreter, the Apostles (Adaens and Mares), Narses the Leper and Barsumas. The first three of these are very common<sup>6</sup> while the other two are rare<sup>7</sup>. The fact that this non-Nestorian liturgy was used in Malabar proves that, before the establishment of Nestorianism and the consequent introduction of Nestorian liturgies into Malabar in the fifteenth century, the Syrian Church was not Nestorian.

44. Again, in decree XVI of the seventh session of the Synod of Diamper it is stated that the clergy of Malabar in the sixteenth century used to remarry after the death of their first wives and that the remarried priests habitually performed priestly functions; while "*some few... after they had been twice married gave over celebrating and performing all exercises and ministries of priests.*"<sup>8</sup> The Romanist writer Osorius, in his 'History of the Reign of Emmanuel, King of Portugal,' says that among the St. Thomas (Syrian) Christians, "the priests marry; yet the first wife being dead they cannot marry again."<sup>9</sup> The Nestorian Canon regarding the marriage of their Clergy, is thus given by Badger:—<sup>10</sup> "It is lawful for all priest and deacons, among the Nestorians to marry after having been admitted to holy orders as well as before. They may also marry a second or a third time, being widowers, as they shall judge the same to serve better to godlines." The Nestorian Clergy were permitted to remarry in A.D. 499, when Baboeus, Nestorian Catholicus of Seleucia held a Synod authorising

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6 Badger 'The Nestorians and their Rituals' Vol. II. p. 24.

Palmer 'Origenes Liturgies Vol. Appendix p. 195

7 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' General Introduction Vol. I. p. 335.

8 Hough, "Christianity in India "Vol. II p. 264. Appendix.

9 Whitehouse, "Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land", p. 85.

10 Badger, "The Nestorians and their Rituals', Vol. II p. 178.



remarriage among the Clergy, and condemning celibacy<sup>11</sup>. Whereas the Jacobite Church forbids her Clergy, either to marry after having been admitted to full priesthood, or to marry widows, or again, to marry a second or a third time<sup>12</sup>. The Nestorian Church allowed these kinds of marriages to her priests without depriving them of their right to perform ministerial duties. Consequently, the few Clergymen in the Church of Malabar, who, after having been twice married, abstained from performing priestly functions in the sixteenth century, could not have done so according to the then prevailing Nestorian canon and practice. They must have followed the older practice according to the Jacobite canon, to which Osorius bears witness.

45. Another remnant of Jacobitism may be found in the Malabar Bibles of that period. Menezes in Decree I of the third session of the Synod of Diamper, refers to the absence of the Books of Esther and of Wisdom in the Malabar Bible.<sup>13</sup> These books are canonical for the Nestorians<sup>14</sup> and are generally found in all the copies of their Bible; on the other hand, they are only duetero-canonical for the Jacobites<sup>15</sup> and are not generally found in their Bibles. The fact that these books were not generally found in the Malabar Bible is explained by the fact that the Christians of Malabar had with them copies of the Jacobite Bible only, which they had received from the Jacobite Bishops of Persia and Antioch. The absence in the Malabar Bible of the second and third Epistles of S. John and the second Epistle of S. Peter is also noticed by Menezes. These Epistles although accepted both by the

11 Assemani, 'Bibleothica Orientalis Tom. IV. pp. 80, 83, Medlycott, 'India and the Apostle St. Thomas' p. 188.

12 Rampan Geeverghese, O.S.A., 'Jacobite Articles of Religion' pp. 41, 42.

13 Hough 'History of Christianity in India' Vol. II Appendix.

14 Badger, 'The Nestorians and their Rituals' Vol. II pp. 82, 83.

15 Rampan Geeverghese O.S.A. 'Jacobite Article of Religion' p. 54.

Nestorians and by the Jacobites, are not found in the early manuscripts of the Peshito version of the Bible.

46. Menezes enumerates the Saints and Fathers venerated by the Church of Malabar in Decrees IX and XIV of the third session of the Synod of Diamper, and condemns all of them as heretics and schismatics. We find in this list the names of some persons who are not venerated by the Nestorians, but are commemorated by the Jacobites as Saints. The following are instances in point. The Jacobites commemorate Zaca known also as Bishop Nicholas, on the 6th of December;<sup>16</sup> Raban Sapor, or Mar Abbai on the 1st of October;<sup>17</sup> Assaya, on the 15th of October;<sup>18</sup> Abda on the 3rd of June;<sup>19</sup> Aaron Buchatixo (Aaron the Holy) on the first Monday after Pentecost;<sup>20</sup> and Jacob (of Edessa), on the 29th of November.<sup>21</sup> Rabban Theodorus, Abraham, Daniel, Abbot Zinai, and Bishop Isaha are commemorated by the Jacobites in every Eucharistic service.<sup>22</sup> Saurixo, sometimes known as John Sarighto (A.D. 964–985) who suffered much persecution for adhering to the Jacobite tenets<sup>23</sup>, is also mentioned among the Fathers venerated in Malabar. None of these Fathers are commemorated by the Nestorians; the Nestorian calendar does not mention their names. If the Church of Malabar had always been Nestorian, it is impossible to explain how it had come to venerate non-Nestorian Saints. This can be explained by the fact that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite until the fifteenth century, when she became Nestorian.

16 *Vide* the Jacobite Calendar published by Rampan Punnoose in his 'Syrian Private Prayers' p. 192.

17 *Ibid.* p. 191.

18 *Ibid.* p. 191.

19 *Ibid.* p. 190

20 *Ibid.* p. 190

21 *Ibid.* p. 191.

22 *Vide* Howards's Translation of the Jacobite Liturgies in his 'Christians of S. Thomas and their Liturgies' pp. 253, 254.

23 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' General Introduction Vol. I, p. 329.



47. Another non-Nestorian practice of the Church of Malabar before the sixteenth century was the use of the non-Nestorian hymn of the Trisagion. Dr. Neale says that in the place of the Nestorian Tersanctus, the Malabar Liturgy had the simple Trisagion<sup>24</sup> The Nestorian Trisagion is as follows<sup>25</sup>:—"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 simple Trisagion that Dr. Neale refers to, runs thus<sup>26</sup>:—"Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us." The Jacobites have this simple Trisagion with the additional clause 'Thou That wast crucified for us, have mercy on us.'<sup>27</sup> It is impossible to ascertain whether the Christians of Malabar were using the additional clause or not. It is, at any rate, clear that they were *not* using the Nestorian Trisagion.

48. Dr. Neale says<sup>28</sup> that "it appears from the records of the Church of Angamala,<sup>29</sup> on the Malabar Coast, as quoted in Gouvea, that it formerly used to send a suffragan to the Island of Socotra." Sir H. Yule points out that the Christian Church of Socotra was Jacobite, rather than Nestorian. "Some indications point rather to a connexion of the island's Christianity with the Jacobite or Abyssinian Church. Thus they practised circumcision, as mentioned by Maffei in noticing the proceedings of Albuquerque at Socotra. Both he (Maffei) and Faria Y Souza call them Jacobites."<sup>30</sup> De Barros calls them

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24 Neale 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' General Introduction Vol. I, p. 368.

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Ibid.* p. 366.

27 *Ibid.* p.367

28 Neale, 'Patriarchate of Antioch', p. 6

29 Angamali was the seat of the Bishops of Malabar until the 15th century.

30 Yules edition of 'Marco Polo' Vol. II, p. 343, 401, 402.



Jacobite Christians of the Abyssinian stock.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Neale informs us<sup>32</sup> that "the Island of Zocotra (Socotra) and others in the Red Sea, became imbued with Monophysitism (Jacobitism)" in the ninth century. A Jacobite Church will not allow itself to be ruled by Nestorian Bishops. If the Church of Socotra was Jacobite and if the Church of Malabar used to send a suffragan to govern that church, it follows that the Church of Malabar was Jacobite, rather than Nestorian.

49. Whenever the Jacobites were pressed by want of wine for the Eucharist, they used "the sweet wine squeezed from moistened raisins." The Jacobite Church of Alexandria, for example, substituted the juice of raisins for wine, during the seventh persecution of that Church by Mutewakel, the then Mohammedan Emirat Cairo. (A.D. 852). He forbade that "funeral "obsequies should be performed; that bells (*i.e.* Church bells) should be rung; that prayers should be offered in the churches except in a low voice; and, finally, that the Holy Eucharist should be celebrated at all. To carry the latter prohibition into the more complete effect, he also forbade, under pretext of extraordinary veneration for the Mohammedan law, the buying or selling of wine throughout Egypt, but more especially in Cairo; and so vigilant was the care exercised in the carrying out of the edict, that wine was by no means to be procured. In this extremity, the Christians bruised raisins in water, and used the expressed juice to celebrate the Holy Eucharist".<sup>33</sup> The Church of Malabar, like her Egyptian sister Church, finding that wine could not be procured in the market, substituted the juice of raisins for it

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31 Cosmas, 'Christian Topography' p. 119 footnote.

32 Neale, Alexandria Vol. II, p. 151.

33 Neale, 'History of the Holy Eastern Church' Alexandria Vol. II p. 156.

in the Eucharist. Duarte Barbosa, an accurate Portuguese observer (A.D. 1514) describes the method of making this juice as follows:—<sup>34</sup> "The wine is made in this manner, because there is no wine in India; they (the Syrian Christians in Malabar) take raisins which come from Mekkah and Ormuz, and put them for a night in water; and on the next day when they have to say mass, they squeeze (the raisins) and with the juice they say their mass." Even to-day, although wine is easily procurable all over the country, some clergymen of the Jacobite Church of Malabar, following the old practice, insist upon the use of the juice of raisins in the Eucharist. The Nestorians do not permit this practice; and one of the reforms introduced into Malabar by Mar Joseph, a Nestorian Bishop in A.D. 1558 was the abolition of this practice.<sup>35</sup>

50. These evidences show that the Nestorian Bishops who came to Malabar in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries did not succeed in their attempts to blot out all traces of Jacobitism, the former creed of the Syrian Church of Malabar. If, for a moment, we suppose that the Church of Malabar was Nestorian from the earliest times to the sixteenth century, it then becomes impossible to explain how these peculiarly Jacobite practices crept into Malabar.

## X

51. It may be asked how the Nestorian Bishops in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, so easily converted the Church of Malabar from Jacobitism to Nestorianism. For a clear understanding of the answer to this question, it is necessary to remember the circumstances in which the Church

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<sup>34</sup> *The Coasts of East Africa and Malabar* p. 163. Hakluyt Society.

<sup>35</sup> This Mar Joseph translated the Old Testament (A.D. 1558) for use in Malabar  
*Asseman Bibliotheca Orientalis* IV. 446

of Malabar was then placed. For a long time this Church was not ruled by any Bishop; and, in consequence, misgovernment and confusion prevailed everywhere. Many churches were in a state of destruction. The clergy as well as the laity were ignorant of the subtle doctrinal differences that separated the Nestorians from the Jacobites. "Few of them knew the particular points of faith on which they differed from other Christians" and even perhaps from the surrounding Hindus; "and fewer still could be found, who could give a reason for the faith which they professed." Friar Jordanus, a French Dominican Friar that visited Malabar between A.D. 1321 and 1323, describes the Christians of Malabar in the following terms:— "In this India, there is a scattered people, one here, another there, who call themselves Christians, but are not so, nor have they Baptism, *nor do they know anything about the faith.*"<sup>1</sup> Again, Gaspar Corea who visited India in A.D. 1512, observes:—<sup>2</sup> There are even now Christians there (in Malabar), but through lapse of time and for want of instruction, to-day they are *almost pagans*. They are only distinguished by their genealogy." Further, Francis Xavier, the famous Jesuit Missionary, (A.D. 1542), states that the Malabar Christians were "infidels in reality, though bearing the Christian name."<sup>3</sup> In addition to these general observations of eye-witnesses and contemporary writers, particular instances of the destitute condition of some of the churches may also be given. To take a typical case, it is recorded that the Christians of Todomala (a Parish in Malabar) "formerly had Cattanars (Priests) and books of their own; but (that) their books being lost and Cattanars dead, they were gradually reduced to the state of destitution in which they were

1 Jordanus, 'Mirabilia' p. 23. Hakluyt Society 1863.

2 'Lenda la India' Vol. III. p. 423

3 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol.I. p.177.



then (A.D. 1599) found."<sup>4</sup> Hough observes that "*several churches* were discovered (by the Portuguese Roman Catholic Missionaries even so late as A.D. 1599) which owing to their great distance, had been so long neglected that they had forgotten their creed, and discontinued the use of the Sacraments."<sup>5</sup> Dense ignorance prevailed among the Christians of Malabar regarding matters of faith and doctrine; and they "owed their existence as a community professing Christianity, though centuries of ever increasing ignorance, not to the force of conviction arising out of a well-grounded knowledge of the faith, as handed down to them by tradition; but under God, to the power of human prejudice and to the influence of those ceremonial and ritual observances, whereby they continued to celebrate the most glorious mysteries and to practise the outward at least, of the most exalted virtues of the Christian religion."<sup>6</sup>

52. Moreover many of the Jacobite rituals and practices are similar to those of the Nestorians . Both communions have the same liturgical language (Syriac)<sup>7</sup>; the use of images are repugnant to both although holding the Cross in veneration"<sup>8</sup> both have the same orders of priesthood<sup>9</sup>; both disbelieve in the Roman doctrine of Purgatory, although teaching the efficacy of prayers for the dead;<sup>10</sup> both stand of prayer, turning towards the East<sup>11</sup>; both abstain from flesh on Wednesdays and Fridays<sup>12</sup>; divine services of both sects are

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4 Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. II. p. 206.

5 *Ibid* p. 205

6 Badger's description of the condition of the Turkish Christians applies with greater force to the Christians of Malabar.

7 Badger, 'The Nestorians and Their Rituals' Vol. II. p. 147

8 *Ibid.* p. 92

9 *Ibid.* pp. 132, 135

10 *Ibid* p. 140

11 *Ibid.* p. 130

12 *Ibid.* pp. 134, 416.

similar. Hence the advent of Nestorian Bishops from Persia must have caused no great change in the outward form of the rituals and discipline of the Church; and this advent of theirs must have supplied a deeply felt want; for the dearth of priests and deacons consequent on the absence of Bishops to ordain them, must have been felt very keenly. Since the Christians knew nothing of those subtle doctrinal differences that separated the metaphysical and speculative theologians of the East from one another, and since the clergy were over-anxious to validate their "orders" by receiving consecration from an accredited successor of Apostle, the Church of Malabar was not unwilling to be ruled by Nestorian Bishops.

53. This is further explained if we remember how indiscriminately the Christians of Malabar accepted all Eastern Bishops. Let us take an example from later history. On the death of Simeon V, Nestorian patriarch of Babylon in A.D. 1551, a warm dispute arose about the succession to the Patriarchate.<sup>13</sup> One party supported Simeon Barmamas who was, according to the prevailing Nestorian Canon, the rightful claimant to the Patriarchate. Another party supported a usurper Sulaka. Each of these claimants styled himself Patriarch, and claimed authority over all the Nestorian Churches. Simeon Barmamas and his successors, known as the Shimoons, resided at Kochanes, in central Kurdistan; while Sulaka and his successors, the Elias, made Mosul their headquarters. These rival Patriarchs and their successors claimed Malabar as part of their diocese, and occasionally sent Bishops to that country. And the Christians of Malabar accepted all these Bishops, without caring to know whether they were the representatives of the rightful occupant of the Patriarchal

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<sup>13</sup> Badger, 'The Nestorians and Their Rituals' Vol. I. pp. 145-147.



throne, or the deputies of the usurping Anti-patriarch. In the same manner, the Church of Malabar sent a deputation (A.D. 1490) to the Nestorian patriarch of Bagdad and received Bishops from him, without examining the nature of their creed, the genuineness of their representations, or the lawfulness of their authority. Instances of such indiscriminate action are not uncommon in the history of the Syrian Church of Malabar<sup>14</sup>.

## XI

54. Even after the Church of Malabar had become Nestorian, and had accepted the authority of the Nestorian Patriarch of Chaldea, the Christians of Malabar clung to the traditional view of holding the Patriarch of Antioch to be the supreme head on earth of their Church. All the Jacobite Churches in Asia acknowledged the Patriarch of Antioch as their Primate, the Jacobite Catholicus of Seleucia being reckoned as a subordinate dignitary appointed to supervise the more Eastern Episcopate. The Nestorians had no Patriarch at Antioch; the Christians of Malabar could not, therefore, refer to any Nestorian patriarch of Antioch. A few instances have been recorded in which the Patriarch of Antioch is mentioned as the supreme head on earth of the Church of Malabar. The first may be found in the words of Joseph, one of the deputies sent by the Church of Malabar to the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad in 1490.<sup>1</sup> On his return to Malabar from Bagdad he went to Portugal and hence visited Rome in 1501 where he had an interview with Pope

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<sup>14</sup> Another notable instance is that in 1656, after their revolt from the Church of Rome, Syrian Christians simultaneously applied for Bishops, to the Nestorian Patriarch of Mosul, to the Jacobite Patriarch of the Copts in Egypt and to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch.

Hough, 'Christianity in India' Vol. II. p. 299.

<sup>1</sup> See Section 40 of this paper.



Alexander VI, and from there to Venice, Jerusalem, Lisbon and other places. The information regarding the Church of Malabar that he conveyed to the Europeans that interviewed him, was published in a booklet in Latin. An Italian version of this booklet entitled. '*Novus Orbis*', or 'The Travels of Joseph the Indian' was published at Vicenza in A.D. 1507. In a passage describing the Primate of the Church of Malabar he refers evidently to the patriarch of Antioch in the following 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*".<sup>2</sup> In another passage he describes the hierarchy of the Church. The supreme head of the Church in by him styled 'Summus Antistes' (Jesus Christ). Under him there were twelve Cardinals (the twelve Apostles), two Patriarchs, many Archbishops, Bishops and a large number of priests, deacons and sub-deacons. The two Patriarchs could only be the newly acknowledged Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad and the former Primate, the Patriarch of Antioch. These statements were made by Joseph at a time when the Church of Malabar was actually under the Nestorian Patriarch.

55. The second occasion on which the Christians of Malabar are recorded to have claimed the Patriarch of Antioch as the supreme head of their Church, was in their first conversation with the Portuguese in A.D. 1502, when the latter landed on the coast of Malabar. The dialogue as given by Dr. Buchanan, runs as follows<sup>3</sup>: "These churches, said the Portuguese belong to the Pope."

<sup>2</sup> Whitehouse, 'Lingerings of Lights in Dark Land' pp. 81-82.

"Who is the Pope?" said the natives, "we never heard of him."

"The European priests were yet more alarmed when they found that these Hindu Christians maintained the order and discipline of a regular Church under episcopal jurisdiction; and that for 1,300 years had *enjoyed a succession of Bishops appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch.*" "We", said they (the Syrian Christians) "are of the true faith, whatever from the West may be ; for we come *from the place where the followers Christ were first called Christians* (Antioch)." It is clear from this dialogue that the Christians of Malabar intimated to the Portuguese that for a long time their Bishops were appointed by the Patriarch of Antioch. These evidences show that even while the Syrian Church was actually under the Nestorian Patriarch of Chaldea, the Patriarch of Antioch was, in accordance with their traditions, mentioned as the supreme head of their Church.

56. A third instance of the Syrian Christians referring to the Patriarch of Antioch as the traditional head of their Church, is to be found in a letter written by a priest of that Church to an apostate brother of his, who had joined the Roman Catholic Church. When in 1653 the Portuguese Roman Catholics put to death Ignatius Ahatalla who was sent to India by the Jacobite *Patriarch of Alexandria* at the request of the Syrian Church of Malabar<sup>4</sup>, the Syrian Christians rose to a man and swore at the *Coonen Cross at Mattanchery* near Cochin, that they would not longer submit to the authority of the Pope<sup>5</sup>. Having thus renounced

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3 Chaldius Buchanan, 'Christian Researches in Asia' p. 105.

4 Howard, 'The Christians of St. Thomas and Their Liturgies' p. 145.

See also the Church Missionary Register for 1822 pp. 431, 432.

5 Rae, 'The Syrian Church in India' pp. 256-261

the Papal jurisdiction, they chose Archdeacon Thomas for their Bishop, on an alleged authority from Athalia and appointed four priests to advise him on all matters of importance. Kadavil Chandy Cattanar, one of these priests, after some time, renounced the oath he had taken at the Coonen Cross and joined the Roman Church. It was on this occasion, that Itty Thommen Cattanar, the ablest and most steadfast of the councillor-priests, wrote to him the pathetic letter referred to. A copy of this letter is preserved in an old Manuscript Chronicle in the possession of the Rev. Edavalikal Philipose Cattanar, Vicar of the Old Church at Kottayam. The following is a true translation of the letters:

"To my dear brother Kadavil Chandy Cattanar,  
*The honoured Patriarch of Antioch being the lord of Malankarai (the See of Malabar), and our Sacraments having been from early times conducted by prelates coming therefrom,* the Padres of Sampalur<sup>6</sup> (the Jesuit Missionaries) resolved that we should no longer have them. As soon as we took the oath at Mattanchery (the Coonen Cross), some laymen said that differences and dissensions might arise among us. Then I broke a (walking) stick (into two) and said that the Portuguese and ourselves would never unite, unless and until the two piece of the broken stick be united. You, my brother, then remarked 'What Itty Thommen Achen (Cattanar) has uttered is a prophecy that cannot fail.' My little finger now desire to touch that tongue of my brother which uttered these words. Remember that the agreement all of us made to the

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6 The Jesuit Missionaries were in South India known as Padres of Sampalur (Fathers of St. Paul's Village or Fathers of St. Paul) For the different explanations of the origin of this name, see Whitehouse 'Lingerings of Light in Dark Land' p. 109.

Mackenize 'Christianity in Travancore' p. 79

Hough 'Christianity in India' Vol. I p. 175.



Metran (Bishop) is not yet cancelled. To the effect, written by Itty Thommen Cattanar. From the Church at Chungam (Signed)".

Here we have the testimony of Itty Thommen Cattanar, writing to a former colleague, that the Patriarch of Antioch, and *not* the Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad, was formerly the supreme head of the Syrian Church. In this letter he is only voicing the widespread and traditional belief concerning the Patriarch of the Church.

57. The last of the evidences we shall adduce is the 'General Epistle'<sup>7</sup> dated February 5, 1668 and sent by Mar Gregorius, Jacobite Bishop of Jerusalem, in the churches of Parur, Mulanthuruthy, and Kandanad, three of the chief churches in Malabar. Throughout this 'Epistle', he speaks of the Church of Malabar as having been Jacobite formerly. A few quotation from this Epistle, which is too long to be copied here, would suffice for our present purpose. "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 (those Syrian Christians who adopted Roman Catholicism) *were originally Syrians, following our true faith*, but have afterwards turned heretic... We request you to be zealous in the Canons of the Syrian Church.. St. Ephrem Syrus writes:— 'Accept death for the truth of your fathers' ... The false Christians of India forsook the laws of the Syrians and accepted new laws sixteen hundred years after the arrival of St. Thomas... They forsook the true faith and the famous rituals of the Syrian Church..." In short, Mar Gregorius exhorts the

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7 A copy of this "Epistle" is in the possession of the Rev. Edavelikal Philipose Cattanar, Vicar, Old Church Kottayam, Travancore.

Christians of Malabar to accept the Jacobite faith on the plea that their forefathers were Jacobites.

## XII

58. We may now summarise what has been stated in the preceding pages.

From *circumstantial* evidences we have seen that the prosperity and diffusion of the Jacobite Church in Syria, Arabia, Armenia and Persia make it very probable that at the period of its greatest Missionary enterprise, it might have sent Missionary Bishops to Malabar—a country with which constant commercial connection had been maintained (Sec. 24-26); that the spread of Jacobitism from Egypt into Nubia, Abyssinia and the shores and islands of the Red Sea and on the Indian Ocean and its persistent existence in these places until the sixteenth century when it was noticed by Portuguese sailors, again make it very probable that the Jacobite form of Christianity penetrated into Malabar and had its adherents there until it was replaced by the Nestorian Church in the fifteenth century; (Sec. 25); and that if we are to rely on Gouvea's testimony that Malabar supplied Bishops to the Church of Socotra which was, according to Sir H. Yule, Jacobite, it follows that the Church of Malabar also was Jacobite; for the Jacobites (of Socotra) would not have permitted a Nestorian Bishop to rule them. (Sec. 48).

Again, from *external* evidences, we have seen that the Patriarch of Antioch was the supreme head of the Christians of Malabar, in the earliest times (Sec. 7,8); that the Catholicus of seleucia, the Patriarch's Vicar, and the Bishops sent by him to Malabar were the intermediate authorities (Sec. 6-8); that after the Catholicus of Seleucia adopted Nestorianism and asserted his independence of the Patriarch, a Jacobite



Catholicate was created to supersede him (Sec. 9, 10, 15); that the few Bishops whose coming to Malabar in the period under review is recorded, were probably Jacobites (Sec. 27-28); and that the Jacobite Bishops who visited Malabar after the sixteenth century claimed the obedience of the Syrian Christians to their authority and exhorted them to become Jacobites on the plea that their forefathers were, for centuries, Jacobites. (Sec. 57).

Lastly, from the various *internal* evidences, we have seen that the Church of Malabar applied for and received a Bishop from the Jacobite Patriarch of Alexandria in the seventh century (Sec. 17); that, as the inscription on the larger stone slab at Kottayam testifies, this Church could not have been Nestorian about the eighth century (Sec. 19-21); that, as may be inferred from the inscription on the smaller stone slab in the same place, the Syrian Church had not changed its creed in the tenth (or eleventh) century (Sec. 22, 23); that the copies of the Bible used in Malabar before the fifteenth century were in the renderings and rubrics undoubtedly Jacobite (Sec. 29-36); that the Liturgy and other service books, used in the churches in Malabar, were particularly Jacobite (Sec. 42-43); that the version of the hymn of the Tersanctus (Very day to the Jacobite Church) as used in Malabar, was not Nestorian (Sec. 47); that the Saints and Fathers commemorated in the Syrian Church were those of the Jacobites (Sec. 46); that the rites and rituals practised by them were unquestionably Jacobite (Sec. 42); that the Bishops and Patriarchs acknowledged and revered by them were Jacobites (Sec. 8, 54-56); that the Canon law as regards marriage, that was served by the clergy was not Nestorian (Sec. 44); and that the Patriarch of Antioch was acknowledged by the Christians of Malabar to have been the supreme head on earth of their Church. (Sec. 54-56).



Thus from the various evidences, internal, external and circumstantial, that the Syrian Church of Malabar could not have been anything but Jacobite, before the fifteenth century.

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# Four Historic Documents

## Part IV

### Christians in Malabar

by

**Mr. K.K. Lukose**

(Former Judge of the High Court, Travancore)

## Editor's Note

Justice K.K. Lukose, Kunnukuzhy is remembered as one of the eminent members of the Syrian Church. His career as a busy practitioner of law and later the Judge of the High Court of Travancore prevented him from taking explicit active role in Church affairs. But he was an enthusiastic supporter and a well wisher of the Syrian Church.

His article on the brief history of the Syrian Church is not very well known or quoted by later writers. This treatise has a unique importance. Even though he is a supporter of the catholicose side, he is unprejudiced in his narration of the early history of the church, unlike a few modern writers who struggles had to 'establish' the Nestorian affiliation of the Syrian Church.

I am sure this thesis will be of immense use to the students of Church History. I am happy that this document is now available for the readers.

I have added a few footnotes for some clarifications.

In the service of our Lord.

Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil



The History of the Development of the  
Kaaleidoscopic Variety of  
**Christians in Malabar**  
(Travancore Cochin and British Malabar):  
a Conspectus from A.D. 52 to A.D. 1943

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Numerically, the Christians form a third of the population, and rank second among the communities, in the State of Travancore. Christianity appears to have existed in Travancore from very ancient times, *i.e.*, from about the middle of the first century (A.D. 52). It does not fall within the scope of this synoptic essay to discuss or establish the exact origin of Christianity in Malabar. Suffice it to say that, according to the traditions persistently current among the several denominations of Syrian Christians in Malabar, it was St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ, who was the pioneer of Christianity in Malabar,— indeed, in all India. One fact appears also most probable, *viz.*, that the earliest conversions must have been effected by a person of great spiritual influence and magnetic personality; for, among the converts to the new Faith, there appear to have been several who occupied positions of authority and influence in Hindu society. The spirit of toleration of the sovereigns of Malabar that made it possible for the Buddhist, the Jain, and the different schools of Hinduism to have unrestricted influence among the masses, must be taken to have continued to operate when Christian missionaries attempted to evangelise Malabar.

Christianity in Malabar (Travancore, Cochin, and the British Indian District named Malabar) is older, than any which existed in parts of Europe itself. It was Eastern in character, to be more specific it was Syrian, and this, not so much because the members of the Church in Malabar were from time to time reinforced by immigrations from Syria or "Babylon" (especially in the fourth and the ninth centuries), as on account of the fact that they followed a *Syrian* Liturgy, or used prayers and Scriptures written in the *Syrian* language. "They have always, or at least for 1300 years, been under the Patriarch of Babylon, who as their *Meterane* or Archbishop died, took care to send them another"<sup>1</sup> (Michael Geddes, in 1694). According to the Jesuit historian Gouvea (1606), the earliest protest of the *St. Thomas* Christians at *Vaipicotta* (near Cranganore) against the attempts of Archbishop Menezes at "Romanising" them (January 1599) ran thus: "That the Archbishop of Goa, with his Portuguese, was come to destroy *their religion*, and had governed *for above 1200 years*" (M. Geddes, *A short History of Malabar*, p. 62). The conclusion of the aforesaid English chaplain living in Lisbon (Portugal) attributes the origin of the Church, at the latest, to A.D. 394, which is a period inferior to the origin of Nestorianism itself (A.D. 431); A.D. 394 is one of the dates ascribed for the translation of St. Thomas from India to Edessa.

Today we find in Travancore as many as seventy denominations in the Christian community. To get the meaning and importance of the main divisions among Christians, it is not only desirable, but also highly interesting, to trace the history of the Church in Travancore and Cochin through

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<sup>1</sup> The Babylon Patriarch or the Nestorian Catholicose has never exercised any authority over this church.



the long and eventful years subsequent to the conversions of the first three centuries following the mission of St. Thomas (A.D. 52-68), who is said to have started (hailing from Antioch of Jerusalem) with *Maliankara*, near Cranganore (Kodungalloor) on the Malabar coast, as his earliest mission-field in India, there are prominent historical landmarks in the fourth century, provided, firstly, by the representation of the Malabar Church under *the Church of Persia*) at the first General Council of A.D. 325 (the Council, of Nice in which the dominant part was played by the Patriarch of Antioch), and secondly by the earliest colonisation of Syrians in A.D. 345, headed, according to tradition, by Thomas of *Cana* and the Bishop of *Edessa*. It was in the latter year that Thomas of Cana, often referred to as a rich *Armenian* (Syrian) merchant, is said to have landed at Cranganore, with several priests, and a few other Christians from Bagdad, Nineveh (Mosul) and Jerusalem, along with a bishop named Joseph, of Edessa, and to have secured *a charter of privileges* from Cheraman Perumal, the Emperor of *All-Malabar*, the emigration being also associated with the Catholicos of the East (the Catholic of Seleucia or Babylon). The Jesuit Professor Ferroli, of St. Joseph's College, Bangalore, observes. "Joseph of Edessa (A.D. 345) was sent to India by the Catholicos of the East"; St. Barbasimen was the occupant of the See of Seleucia and Ctesiphon at the time. Thus far, the Age of *Nestorianisms* in Christianity had not yet come into being, for it arose only after the General Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431); and so far as the Malabar Church is concerned, she could not possibly have been affected by the new Faith until *after* A.D. 498-500, the period at which the Orthodox Catholicos of the East (the Patriarch of Seleucia or Babylon) *became converted* to the Nestorian Faith. Note also the significant protest of



the bishops of the province of Fars (the part of ancient Persia that bordered on India proper) against the proselytising attempts of the *Nestorian* Patriarch (Timothy I, A.D. 779-823): "We have been evangelised by the *Apostle Thomas*, and we have no share with the *See of Mari*"; see p. 35 *Early Spread of Christianity* by Dr. Mingana, (1926).

Cosmas Indicopleustus, who visited South India and Ceylon in A.D. 522, wrote in his *Universal Christian Topography*: "In the island of Taprobane (Ceylon), in the further India where the Indian Ocean reaches, there exists a Christian Church *with clergy and laity*; whether also further beyond, I do not know. So also in the Male (Malabar) as it is called where the pepper grows. And in the place Kalliana (Quilon?) there is a bishop, *usually ordained in Persia*." At least as early as the second half of the fourth century, Ctesiphon-Seleucia and Mosul (both on the Tigris) were two of the radiating centres of *the Church of Persia*; these were in the territorial limits of Persia. According to Eusebius Pantaenus of Alexandria found a Church in India in the second century (A.D. 190). Prof. Collins says: "And there is the highest probability that the Church Pantaenus found was the same as Cosmas found in Malabar" (*Missionary Enterprise in the East*).

The pro-Nestorian writer Dr. Stewart observes: "It is scarcely likely that any report of the Nestorian controversy, which began 86 years later than A.D. 345, (*i.e.* after 431), (had even reached them when Cosmas arrived" (*Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, p. 114). Whether or not the *Antiochian* Christians of distant Malabar and of Ceylon could possibly have become converted, within that short space of about twenty years to the later-born *Nestorian* Faith, on account of the *recent* apostasy of the Catholicose of Seleucia (*circa* A.D.

498), it is undoubted that there were no novel or heretical declarations *at this period* (c. 498) in regard to Christological controversies on the part of the Patriarch of Antioch (the Supreme Head of the Syrian Church, of whom the Catholic of Seleucia was a local representative. It seems also reasonably clear that from the middle of the sixth century onwards, the Jacobites under the Patriarch of Antioch gained widespread influence and popularity throughout the East, under the leadership of a monk named Yakub Boordana (Jacob Baradaeus); he had received the powers of the *Bishop of Edessa* and Apostle of the East from the holy confessors of the Church of Antioch in their person at Constantinople. Rev. R. Collins, Principal of the C.M.S. College at Kottayam from 1855 to 1866, observes in regard to the history of the Church during the sixth century: "Nor can there be really much doubt that from the time when Jacob *Albardai* in the sixth century (A.D. 540-578) espoused the cause of the Eutychians, and enabled them to secure the sees of Antioch and Alexandria, the churches in Malabar owned the Eutychian Patriarch, who was the most powerful bishop in the East, and were therefore Eutychians<sup>2</sup>(?), or, as they are called from Jacob Albaradai, Jacobites" (*op. cit.*). In regard to the seventh century, Renaudot mentions the existence of Jacobitism in Malabar in A.D. 696.

The two *Persian* stone-slabs preserved in the Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite *Valiapally*) church at Kottayam, Travancore said to have been brought from Cranganore, assigned by Dr. Burnell on palaeographic grounds to the 7th to 10th centuries and having bas-relief crosses engraved on them and inscriptions in *Pahlavi*, appear to support the aforesaid theory of Principal Collins in favour of the continuance of a non-Nestorian Church in Malabar in these early centuries.

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2 Eutychus is the heretic who promoted Monophysitism. See page



The subsequent history of the Church in Malabar is illuminated by events of great importance both to the Church and to Malabar Christian. They are the second colonisation of Syrians, and the grant of *another charter of privileges* in favour of the orthodox "*Tarissa*" church at Quilon, apart from the epoch-making missionary enterprise of *Syrian* bishops, Sapor and Aproth, throughout Malabar. This grant is associated with a *Persian* merchant, Sapor Isoa Mutalaly, and with the aforesaid Syrian bishops even the prejudiced Jesuits of the Diamper Synod (1599) were not bold enough to class them among Nestorian bishops. It was granted by the King of Venad (Aiyan Atikal Thiruvatikal), the Maharaja who ruled Travancore in the first century of the Malabar Era *circa* A.D. 825). Indeed this is an important landmark of religious toleration so characteristic of the early Rulers of Travancore. J.A. Lobley observes (Maitland Prize Essay for 1870): "Early in the tenth century, the Indian Church was by the visit of two Syrian priests from Babylon, Mar Saporess and Mar Pheroz, sent thither by the *Metropolitan of Persia* on some ecclesiastical errand. They were warmly welcomed by the Christians, preached with success to the heathen, under the protection of the Raja of Travancore, and left so good a name that they are to this day counted among the *protecting saints* of the Church of Malabar." Even today, these two bishops are revered, in connection with Jacobite churches or festivals, such as those at Quilon, Kayenkulam and Ankamali-Akaparampu, apart from Parur *Valiapally*, which is now in Syro-Roman hands. This charter, engraved on copper plates, is preserved in the Old Seminary, Kottayam, the headquarters of the Syrian Church in Malabar. Compare also the wording of the Synod held under the Patriarch of Antioch, Theodosius (A.D. 852-860), which shows that this Patri-



arch was exercising jurisdiction as far as China, India and Persia: "But other Metropolitans, that is to say, of the Chinas, of India, of Persia, and of Samarcand, situated in very distant countries, hindered by mountain ranges, infested with robbers and by seas fatal with shipwrecks and tempests, so that they cannot come to us as often as they otherwise might wish, shall take care to send, every sixth year, letters of consent and union, and in the same letters to set forth any business of their countries which requires an opportune remedy" (G.T. Mackenzie, 1907, pp. 5-6).

It seems to be generally accepted that Malabar was under the Patriarch of Antioch in the 11th century (A.D. 1043). The Roman Catholic writer Paoli observes (*Indian Orientalis Christiana*) that Renaudor quotes Allatius as saying that the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch claimed jurisdiction in India and that Nilas Dox patrius affirmed (cf. the *Nolitia*) in 1043 that the authority of Antioch extended over Asia, the East, and the Indies. If the history, so far told, be correct, the probability is that Jacobitism continued to prevail in Malabar, at least from the 12th to the 15th and 16th centuries; for in 1142 took place that *epoch-making compromise* between the Nestorian and the Jacobite Churches, which till then were fighting against each other for ascendancy in other parts of the world. Dr. Stewart (*op. cit.*, p. 250) says: In the year A.D. 1142, a reconciliation took place between Ebedjesu II, Patriarch of the Nestorians, and Dionysius, Primate of the Jacobites. From that time the two bodies granted mutual recognition to each other at every opportunity." It is not impossible, however, that in the inefficient state of Church administration in early times, the credulous St. Thomas Christians of distant India sometimes received Nestorian bishops, though mistakenly, "as they were too ignorant of the

doctrinal differences to be in a position of distinguish between Nestorian and Jacobite forms of Christianity" (E.M. Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*).

It was *long after* this period that the Roman Church either made the discovery of India as a possible mission-field or conceived the idea of attempting bring within its spiritual influence the Christians of Malabar John of Monte Corvino (1291-1306) and the Dominican Friar Jordan (1302-1321) informed the Roman Catholic world of the existence of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar. It was Pope John (XXII) who sent the same Bishop Jordanus (Friar Jordan) in 1328 to the *Nazarene* Christians at Quilon, asking them "*to abjure their schism and to enter the unity of the Catholic Church*". In 1439, Pope Eugene IV sent envoys to the "*Emperor of the Christians of St. Thomas in India*", in an attempt to fraternise with the Malabar Christians. These Roman emissaries, however, did not meet with any response. "The first news of this ancient but remote Church was brought to Europe by Pedro Vares Cabral, who, putting into Cranganore in the year 1501 and meeting therewith several of those Christians, persuaded two of them who were brothers to come along with him, to Portugal, where the eldest... died at Lisbon, and the other... went first to Rome and from thence to Venice" (Michael Geddes, 1694).

The Franciscan friars of the earlier half of the 16th century were more successful; they were able to convert a large number of fishing folk along the coasts; this was the nucleus of the "Latin" Catholics (having the pure Latin Liturgy). Even in the interior, the Syrians seem to have welcomed their Roman Catholic brethren from the West, coming as they did with the patronage of "the most mighty king of Europe" (the King of Portugal); they even permitted the Portuguese



to offer their own form of worship in the Syrian churches of Malabar. Dr. Richards (author of *The Indian Christians of St. Thomas*, and a C.M.S. missionary in Travancore) observes: "The astonishing meeting of Christian brethren in a heathen land so unexpectedly must have been equally pleasing to the Portuguese and to the St. Thomas Christians"; just as Gibbon, in regard to a similar condition of affairs in Ethiopia about the same period, remarks in the first moments of their interview (with the Portuguese), the subjects of Rome and Alexandria *observed the resemblances rather than the differences* of their faith, and each nation expected the most important benefits from an alliance with their Christian brethren".

With the advent of Jesuits into Malabar, and the phenomenal success of the mission of St. Francis Xavier (1542-1553), the Roman missionaries gave up the earlier gesture of friendship and brotherhood as regards the St. Thomas Christians, and assumed a militant attitude, taking advantage of the strong political backing of the Portuguese Power, in reinforcement of their marvellous organising capacity and missionary zeal. By 1558, the Latin Catholics had attained such proportions that they deserved to be placed under the newly formed Diocese of Cochin. But the ambition of the missionaries (after 1545-1558) was not merely to evangelise the heathen, but also to "Latinise" the Syrians of Malabar. They now directed their attention towards enlisting, in the service of the Roman Church, the influence of "those whom St. Thomas made Christians".

A word about the *St. Thomas* Christians of this period becomes necessary. According to Portuguese records, the St. Thomas Christians were governed, at least from the end of the 15th century (1490), by bishops from *Armenia* (medieval



Armenia, comprising the Greater and the Lesser Armenians) to the east of the river Euphrates (the Phrath) which rises in modern Armenia, —as distinct from "the kingdom of Mosul", "Babylonia", and the regions to the east of the Tigris, where the Nestorians resided; see *Travels of Marco Polo* (1293-1298). According to Barbosa (a Portuguese Roman Catholic, 1512-1516), the Quilon St. Thomas Christians were spiritually governed by the *Armenians*, and the Church at Cape Comorin was founded by the *Armenians*. According to the Venetian traveller Varthema (1503-1509), the Syrians of the Church at Kayenkulam "said Mass like the Greeks" in 1505. "Almost alone in Christendom the Jacobites use the great parent-rite of the East" (A. Fortescue). "Connected with this use is the *Liturgy of St. James*, the original rite from which all the other Syrian ones were derived... Then came the great monophysite schism after Chalcedon (A.D. 451), and each language became a distinctive mark of one of the two sides. The Melkites used *Greek*, the Jacobites *Syriac* (A. Fortescue, *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, pp. 115-116). "This Syriac Liturgy of St. James closely agrees with the Greek Liturgy of St. James used by the Greek Church" (Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, p. 74). It was an *Armenian* bishop (1504-1549) who was actually exercising jurisdiction over the Malabar Syrians during the first half of the 16th century, who was recognised by the King of Portugal and was recommended to the latter for favours by St. Francis Xavier. These Armenians *could not be Nestorians* by Faith, but could only be Jacobites, under their ultimate or immediate Superior, the Patriarch of Antioch or the Catholicos. It may be noted that the first *Nestorian* (pro-Roman) bishop to arrive in Malabar and to exercise any kind of jurisdiction was Mar Joseph (1558-1569); he landed in Cochin in April 1558. Rev. Samuel Mateer (L.M.S.

missionary, writing in 1871 in *Land of Charity*, says: "The Syrian Christians are sometimes *though erroneously*, called Nestorians... His (the Patriarch of Antioch's) spiritual dominion is very extensive. He has *and associate* in the government, to whose care, *under the general direction of the Patriarch*, are entrusted the more distant Eastern churches, and who resides in a monastery at Mosul in Mesopotamia, near the ruins of Nineveh. All the patriarchs of this sect assume the name of *Ignatius*, and their associates (whose title is Catholicos or Maphrian) that of *Basil*."

To resume: In pursuance of their new policy of Latinising the Syrians, theological seminaries were started (1587; one had been started in 1546) where Syrians were attracted for their education and training for priesthood. The Syrian clergy thus trained exerted their influence in turning a number of Syrians from their allegiance to the Church of Antioch.

The creation by Rome of the new *Romanised* "Chaldean Patriarchate" at Mosul (1552-1555)—as distinct from that of the Nestorians of Kurdistan and Oroomiah—also contributed to the success of the ambitious programme of the Jesuits. The sentiments of attachment of the Syrians to an oriental Patriarch or spiritual potentate seemed to be temporarily satisfied when the newly Latinised Syrians decided upon transferring their allegiance from their wanted Patriarch to the Chaldean Patriarch *in union with Rome*; it would, at the same time please the Jesuit propagandists of Rome. The more on the part of the "Chaldean" bishops to subvert Malabar was probably inspired also by the fact that about the beginning of the 16th century some bishops, said to be Nestorian but chosen from the Monastery of St. Eugenius (Ferroli, *Jesuits in Malabar*, pp. 106-107), which is still in Jacobite hands (near Nisibin), appear to have been visiting Malabar 1490-



1503), apparently in disregard of the *longstanding compromised* of 1142 (already referred to) between the Jacobite and the Nestorian Churches. G.T. Mackenzie, a former British Resident in Travancore and Cochin, and a European Roman Catholic, observes (*Christianity in Travancore*): "In order to understand the leaning of the Syrian Christians towards the Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon it is necessary to go back to the Portuguese period... At this period (*i.e.*, about 1552-1555) there was a movement among the Nestorians towards reconciliation with Rome and a large body did make their submission under the leadership of monk named Sulacca, who went to Rome and in 1553 was proclaimed by Pope Julius III as John, *Patriarch of the Chaldeans*. From that date, the word *Chaldean* has been applied to those Nestorians who have abjured the Nestorian heresy and are in communion with Rome, and their Patriarch is called the *Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon*, in distinction from the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon." To the same effect is the concluding of the *Catholic Encyclopaedia*, Vol. XIV, pp. 682-683.

But the Syrians, as a whole looked down upon the Latinised Syrians. They maintained that they were of the true faith", whatever these "from the West may be", and that "they came from the place (Antioch) where the followers of Christ were first called Christians". Between 1558 and the year 1597 in which the last "Chaldean" bishop (Mar Abraham) died at Ankamali, and incessant warfare ensued, partly between the Jesuits and the Syrians partly between the Jesuits and the three "Chaldean" bishops: Joseph (1558-1569), Abraham (1565-1597), and Simeon(?) (c. 1578). The Portuguese attempted to impose the Roman Faith upon the Syrians; the "Chaldean" bishops, while pretending to be loyal to Rome and taking advantage of the support of Rome, were really



introducing Nestorianism and resisting the establishment of Roman Catholicism in Malabar. In regard to the Syrians themselves, the "Chaldean" bishops were professing to be of the *same* Faith as the Syrians (Jacobites); as a matter of fact, there are several points of similarity between the two Faiths, apart from the *commonness of the regions* (Mesopotamia in general) of their respective Patriarchs.

At last, in a desperate effort of the Romans to subdue the Syrians, and on the death of the last "Chaldean" bishop in 1597, they appointed Alexis de Menezes as the Archbishop of Goa. This strong ecclesiastic, with the political backing of the Portuguese Power, went to Malabar, and, with the support extracted from the Raja of Cochin, put down all opposition with a high hand, and formally obtained the submission of the Syrians at a Synod convened for the purpose at *Diamper* (*Udayamperoor*, in Cochin State) in 1599. This was in pursuance of the Bull of Pope Clement VIII, "to reduce them to the obedience of the Holy Roman Church, and purge out the heresies and false doctrines sown among them and introduced by the schismatical prelates and Nestorian heretics that governed them under the obedience of the patriarch of Babylon." The Syrians were thereafter placed, similarly to the Latin Catholics, under the Bishop of Cochin and the Archbishop of Cranganore. As a matter of *concession to the "Chaldeans"* the rite (liturgy) was *altered*; Mackenzie says, "Bishop Francis Roz (1600-1624) translated into Syriac for the use of his flock the offices in the Roman Missal for Ash Wednesday and Holy Week, and this translation was *added* to the Syriac Mass *altered* at the Synod of Diamper, and forms the service book used by the Rome-Syrians to this day" (*op. cit.*) The Diamper Synod thus forms one of the greatest landmarks in the history of the Malabar Church.

But the Diamper Synod had only outwardly united the Syrian Church with Rome. The Syrians were fretting under the government of the Jesuits from 1599 till 1653; there were frequent disputes between the Syrian Archdeacon and the Latin bishops; the Syrians were bitter against Rome. The Jesuits had come to be hated by them, while the imprisonment and the reported drowning of the Syrian bishop or patriarch (Ahatalla) in the Cochin harbour in 1652 at the instance of the Portuguese furnished the occasion to rebel against them; these atrocities infuriated the Syrians. They met in solemn conclave at the "Coonen Cross" in front of the Syrian church at Mattancheri (near Cochin town) in 1653, and renounced by means of a solemn oath, their enforced obedience to Rome and the Portuguese Catholics. The Syrian churches at Mavelikara (not far from Kayenkulam), the seat of a collateral branch of the Travancore Royal House and the birthplace of the Maharanis of a present-day Travancore, and at Tumpamon (near Pandalam, another seat of royal families), as well as the one at Mulakulam, near Piravom church venerate, even today, the memory of Bishop Ahatalla at the respective festivals of those churches. The Syrians accepted, in place of the Roman superiors, their time-honoured Archdeacon (Thomas) of the historic Syrian family of *Pakalomattom*, as their spiritual leader. They invested him with the status of a bishop temporarily, in order that he might guide and govern them for the future. The installation was, however effected through the mediation of twelve Syrian *kattanars* (priests), of whom a Council of Four was appointed to advise the "archdeacon-bishop". The oath at Coonen Cross and the submission to the Syrian Archdeacon (1653) form important landmarks in the history of Church in Malabar.



This revolt in favour of the Syrian Archdeacon, in an attitude of rebellion against Rome continued uninterrupted for a period of *full ten years*, namely, from 1653 till 1663—a whole-hearted submission to a native spiritual superior, as contrasted with the enforced subjection to the foreign Roman superiors from 1599 to 1653.

Rome became alarmed at the events culminating in the secession of the Romanised Syrians in 1653-1663; as a strategic move on the part of Rome, the hated Jesuits were replaced by the barefooted Carmelites, who were sent by the Pope with instructions to win back the Syrians to the Roman fold. To make the story short: with the subjugation of the Portuguese by the Dutch in 1663, the hostility of the Dutch towards the Portuguese and the Jesuits, their friendly attitude towards the Roman Catholics led by the European Carmelites and their unsympathetic attitude as regards the native Syrians, Archdeacon Thomas found it extremely difficult, not inereely to maintain his influence over his Syrian flock, but even to keep himself safe; he had to flee for his life to the mountains of the interior. The Carmelites after an unsuccessful attempt to entice the Archdeacon himself, won over two of the aforesaid Syrian (Jacobite) Counsellors of Archdeacon Thomas to their side, by tactics of various kinds, such as by getting one of the Counsellors—*Parampil Chandy Kattanar*, of the same historic family as that of the Archdeacon, and his near kinsman—consecrated as Roman Catholic) bishop (*Alexander de Campo*), he being thus the first from among the Syrian race to attain this dignity in Malabar. This ordination, induced also by the political prohibitions of the Dutch against any European in sympathy with Jesuits gave a kind of moral advantage to the Romans over the Archdeacon, in as much as the latter had been installed only by priests



and not with the association of any bishop as had Bishop Alexander. The result was that a large majority of the Syrians formerly under the Archdeacon resiled to the Romans, being led by Bishop Alexander the pro-Roman Syrians thus violating the oath they had sworn at Coonen Cross. It is stated that, out of a total of a hundred thirty-two remained loyal to the Solemn Covenant and to the Archdeacon. Thus, the success of the Carmelite Mission culminating in the ordination of Bishop Alexander and the retrocession of the Syrians led by him (1663), are turning points in the religious history of the Malabar Syrians.

Thus far, we have traced the history of the earliest (Roman Catholic) converts—the Latin Catholics of Malabar (of the pure Latin rite and prior to 1558—and of the larger of the fragments into which the Syrian Church was broken up by means of the Diamper Synod and as a result of the work of the Carmelite Mission, viz., of the Syro-Chaldeans (1599-1653) of the Romo-Chaldean rite, as well as of the remnant of the Syrian Church (Jacobites) under the Patriarch of Antioch. After 1663, there is no change in the attitude of the Syro-Chaldeans towards the Roman Church; indeed, at the present day there does not appear to be any live bond or even sentimental connection between the “Chaldean Patriarch of Mosul” (1553-1555) and the Syro-Chaldeans, except what may be said to be involved in the use of the Syriac language or in the Nestorian or Chaldean element of the *new* Liturgy introduced at the Diamper Synod (though it would appear that they threatened, in 1787 and in 1856, to transfer their allegiance to him as a protest against Rome). Their history subsequent to 1663 chronicles, in effect, mere changes of jurisdiction or creation of new bishoprics in Malabar by Rome. In regard to the history is checkered; they branch off

further into divisions of fresh faiths or denominations, leaving still the truncal remnant; the Syrian Church survives, in spite of the several offshoots that, directly or indirectly, have sprouted from her between 1772 and 1930. There remain some more sections of Christians, i.e.. apart from the Christians so far dealt with; they are non-Syrian groups of Christians, formed or established by foreign Missionary Societies.

“The Romo-Syrian section of the Malabar Church is the largest of the fragments into which it has broken up, but the Church as a whole remains in the main *Jacobite* in character and outlook” (Dr. N. Macnicol, *Living Religions of the Indian People*, 1932-1934, p. 273). About a century back (c. 1852), the then admittedly Syrian churches situated at the two extreme ends of “Christian Malabar”, one in the northernmost corner at *Pazhanji* in Cochin state, and the other in the southernmost corner at Trivancode, the ancient capital of ancient Travancore (not far from Cape Comorin) were in the hands of Jacobites (cf. Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*). The spread of the ancient Church of Malabar beyond the original “Seven Churches of St. Thomas” appears to be due to the slow, silent and natural expansion of the Malabar Syrian population, rather than to any missionary zeal on the part of the Malabar Church (just as in the Mother-Church country of Jacobite Syria and Mesopotamia); at any rate, during the long period between the 9th century bishops and the end of the 19th century, history does not testify that the Jacobite sect, as a Church, had any missionary fervor, or any aggressive outlook, or evidence that she was organized or powerful enough to propagate her own orthodox faith among her immediate neighbours, or in distant India beyond the Malabar country; in fact, she has all along taken the line of least resistance or stood on the defensive, against the “invasions” of others, mostly belonging to

*Christian* organizations themselves, forming, as it were, more or less, a non-propagandist “caste-community” body; it reminds one of the 12th century Waldenses of the valleys of Piedmont in Europe. According to a great (Roman Catholic Syrian) student of history, “Among Catholic Syrians and to some extent among the Jacobite Syrians, many old Hindu practices still prevail” (Dr. P.J. Thomas, in *Prabuddha Bharata*, January 1943).

### III

To resume the history of the Syro-Chaldeans or Syro-Romans” About the end of the reign of Bishop Alexander de Campo (1663-1687-1692), the Carmelite missionaries (who had obtained a footing in 1673 at Verapoly from the Raja of Cochin) reassumed authority and jurisdiction over the archbishops of Cranganore with which they had been entrusted in 1659, Verapoly being made their headquarters. This assumption of power, among other reasons was a perpetual source of friction, not only between the Syro-Roman (from whom Bishop Alexander de Campo had been recently chosen) and the Carmelities, but between the Portuguese bishops of Cochin and the Carmelite missionaries. All the same, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly were able to maintain their jurisdiction over the archbishopric of Cranganore from 1659 to 1709; while, partly on account of the hostility of the Dutch towards the Portuguese the entire Roman Catholic portion of Malabar was practically under the influence of the Carmelite Vicar-Apostolic of Verapoly from 1709 to 1886.

At last, in 1886, the dispute about the exclusive patronage of Indian Missions claimed by the King of Portugal was settled by a Concordat between Pope Leo XIII and the King, under which, with the consent of the latter, Rome abolished



the missionary Vicar- Apostolic and in their place established bishops of dioceses. In this arrangement, the Portuguese Bishop of Cochin had a diocese composed mainly of strips of the Travancore sea coast, and was a suffrages of the Archbishop of Goa; while the remainder of the Travancore State was placed under the Archbishop of Verapoly, with the Bishop of Quilon (created in 1853) under him. The historic Archdiocese of Cranganore thus disappears from this period, so far as the Roman Catholic of Malabar are concerned.

During the time when Archbishop Leonard became the Vicar-Apostolic of Verapoly (1868); a co-adjutor has been appointed to take separate charge of the Syro-Chaldeans (Syro-Romans). In May 1887 the care of these Syro-Romans was, however, given over to two European Vicar-Apostolic, stationed at Trichur and at Kottayam. This arrangement lasted till 1896, when the oft-repeated request of the Romo-Syrians to have *bishops of their own race* was at last granted by Rome; the European Vicar-Apostolic were consecrated as Vicar- Apostolic of Trichur, Ernakulam, and Changanacherry. In 1911, the *Canaanite* section of the Syro-Romans was placed under another native bishop (Vicar-Apostolic of Kottayam). In 1924 the Holy See established a Metropolitanship (archbishopric) at Ernakulam<sup>3</sup>; Kottar and Vijayapuram (1930) and Trivandrum (1937) were added as suffrage dioceses under Verapoly.

Trichur, Ernakulam, Kottayam and Changanacherry form thus the four modern Syro-Chaldean dioceses of Malabar, of whom the Vicar-Apostolic of Ernakulam is the

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3 Presently the Ernakulam Archbishopric has the honour of the Major Archbishopric and Trisoor diocese also has an Archbishop. Numerous dioceses were established in out of Kerala in both Syrian and Latin rites. In the Malankara rite Trivandrum diocese has the Archbishop and under him there are several dioceses.

Archbishop. The Latin Catholics of the Travancore sea-coast are under the Archbishop of Goa, with the Portuguese Bishop of Cochin as suffrage. Latin Catholics, other than those under Goa, are under the Archbishop of Verapoly, with Quilon, Vijayapuram, Trivandrum and Kottar as suffragans.

To resume, in turn, the subsequent history of the Jacobite (Orthodox Syrian) section and of the origin of the offshoots sprouting therefrom: There was, comparatively, a peaceful and continuous existence for them after 1663, in spite of the unfriendly attitude of the Dutch and the Romans which continued until the advent of the British Indian Power at the end of the 18th century; and in spite of incursions of the pro-Roman Nestorian bishop Gabriel (1708-1731). They were able to maintain their connection with the Church of Antioch, more or less, through the Patriarch of Antioch, the Catholicos of the East (Seleucia or Babylon) the Bishop of Jerusalem and native as well as foreign, bishops. The installation of Archdeacon Thomas (1653) as bishop was confirmed in 1665 by Mar Gregorious, the Antiochian Bishop of Jerusalem at a religious ceremony. He was surnamed Mar Thoma (the First) and reigned till 1670. Thereafter, the archdiocese of Malankara was governed by a succession of metropolitans, mostly natives, in communion with the Church of Antioch; chief among them being Mar Thoma II to Mar Thoma VI (alias Mar Dionysius the Great), Mar Dionysius II to Mar Dionysius VI, and Mar Mathew Athanasius who it was that founded the new Mar Thomas Syrian Church in 1868, after having been the Jacobite Metropolitan for twenty-five years (1843-1868). The present heads of the Syrian of Malabar are two rival claimants to the See of Malankara: one the Catholicos of the East) residing at the Syrian College (the Old Seminary), Kottayam; the other (the Metropolitan)



at Alwaye, near historic Angamali, representing the unrestricted powers of the Patriarch of Antioch. A Judgement has been recently pronounced (Jan 1943) by the District Judge, Kottayam, Travancore (in O.S. 111 of 1113) recognising the Catholicos as the rightful claimant to the See of Malankara (Malabar) the Patriarch of Antioch having a spiritual supremacy or oversight. During the period between 1663 and 1941, the Syrian Church has been visited, intermittently, by four Patriarchs of Antioch (after 1875) and by at least two Maphrians (Catholicos of the East) in 1685 and 1751, apart from other bishops of the Church of Antioch. At present, the ancient Syrian Archdiocese of Malankara (Cranganore and Angamali) is divided among eight native bishops.\* “The Jacobites use the Liturgy of St. James the Apostle” (G.T. Mackenzie).

It may be remarked here that the site of the Old Seminary, Kottayam, was given to the Orthodox Syrian by Rani Gouri Lakshmi Bhai, of revered memory, in A.D. 1814, and the tax on it has, under the grant of 990 M.E. been permanently remitted in order to meet the expenses of a lamp to be lighted for all time; while in regard to her immediate successor, Rani Gouri Parvati Bhai, P. Shangoony Menon says: “This worthy Rani, of happy memory, was the founder and supporter of English Missions in Travancore and a generous promoter of the cause of education and of Christian knowledge in this fortunate kingdom” (A History of Travancore 1878,

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\*Presently the Malankara Church is under two hierarchy - one headed by the Catholic designate H.G. Thomas Mor Dionasius Metropolitan under the supermacy of the Patriarch of Antioch, H.H. Ignatius Zakka I Iwas. Nine bishops with him govern the affairs of the church. The other faction is headed by H.H. Marthoma Mathews II. With him there are 22 bishops including the four bishops who deserted the Patriarch group recently. The effect of the judgement of the Supreme Court of India, calling for the unification, has yet not been very clear.



p. 399) A sidelight is thrown on the spirit of generous appreciation of the Syrians (the Jacobite Church) on the part of the Travancore Royal House and on their antiquity, by the speech of H.H. the late Maharaja (Sree Visakhom Tirunal) in reply to the address presented by the late Mar Joseph Dionysius (Malankara Metropolitan 1865-1909) at Kottayam in August 1880: "Even if Sree Parasurama were to revisit this land of Kerala, he would not find a more loyal and well-conducted people.. We declare solemnly and firmly that we always wish sincerely whatever is good for the community of Syrians - a community that is renowned in Travancore for its antiquity." And it was in conformity with facts of malabar Church history that Sachivothama Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Dewan of Travancore) observed, as recently as 1939 and in reply to an address given by the Catholicos of the East (Orthodox Syrian) "You have rightly pointed out, Sir, that.... it was the meritorious privilege of the Maharaja of Travancore to give you shelter and certain honours conferred on the members of your community, certain grants made in your favour; your Clergy were honoured by the Maharaja of Travancore very early in history" (Souvenir of the Sashtiabdapurti, p 125).

But during this period (1663-1963), the Syrian Church (Orthodox Syrian) was assailed both from without and from within the latter resulting in offshoots, either Protestant, or pro-Roman, or even Jacobite, in Faith. We may just detail these.

The attack from without was attempted by one Mar Gabriel a Nestorian Bishop, but with The pro-Roman Nestorian Bishop Gabriel (1708-1731) a *definitely Roman* bias in respect of Faith "for he was a man without any definite creed and professed himself a Nestorian, Jacobite, or

Romanist according as the one or the other best suited his purpose." He succeeded in getting a following. The Syrian bishops Mar Thoma IV and Mar Thoma V resisted him, in spite of the Dutch and the Romans. After his death in 1731, the *Romanised* Nestorians (*not* pure Nestorians, of mountainous Kurdistan or of the plains of Oroomiah, all being to the east of river Tigris) are never more heard of as interfering with the Jacobites. There is, however, a small body of these "*pukka*" independent Nestorians, found only in and around Trichur (in Cochin State); but their origin or even that of any one of their churches cannot possibly be traced to any date earlier than the period 1865-1908; the foundation (1815) of even the nucleal church at Trichur (the Church of Our Lady of Seven Dolours) is admittedly in the name of a Syro-Chaldean (Roman Catholic) priest hailing from Palai, a strong centre of Syro-Chaldeans in Travancore. It is worthy of remark that all the Nestorian bishops who visited or connected with that section of Nestorians who belonged to the area of the "Chaldean Patriarchate" around Mosul; they did not belong to the pure stock of the Nestorians of Kurdistan or of Oroomiah under the *Nestorian* Patriarch of Babylon who follow the pure Liturgy of *Adai and Mari*. In respect of the offshoots from within the Syrian Church, the earliest defection took place in 1772. In that year a Jacobite bishop Mar Kurillos, of the Mulanthuruthi parish church (in Cochin State) left the Malankara diocese for Anjoor in the adjoining territory of British Malabar. He later established a new Church styled the Independent Church of the Tozhyoor Diocese, but without giving up his original (Jacobite) Faith: he is independent of the Church of Antioch. A dozen churches have sprung up under his jurisdiction in British India, and survive today as a relic of Antiochian antecedents; they



follow the manuscript Jacobite Liturgy of *St. James* formerly used by the Bishop of Mosul.

The next Church of spring up out of the Syrian Church was the Anglican Church of Travancore and Cochin. In consequence of the historic visits of Dr. Claudius Buchanan of Calcutta in 1806 and 1807, made at the instance of the Viceroy of India (the Marquis of Wellesley), the Church Missionary Society, after entering into an alliance with the Jacobite Metropolitan of Malankara (Mar Dionysius the Great) in order to help the Syrian Church in her declining state, worked in her headquarters at Kottayam in co-operation with her from 1816 to 1836. But in 1837 a rupture took place; as a result, the C.M.S. started their own Church, independently of the Syrians. The Anglican diocese was formed in 1879, and is now under the Anglican Bishop in Travancore and Cochin, with headquarters at Kottayam. It is perhaps of interest of mention here that it was from Mar Dionysius the Great that Dr. Buchanan took, in 1807, the ancient manuscript copy of the Syriac Bible, written in *Estrangelo Syriac* characters ascribed to the fifth or sixth century, and formerly used in the Syrian Church at Angamali, purporting to be copied during the lifetime of the Antiochian patriarch Michael the Great (1166-1199). It is a document of the greatest historical interest and is preserved in the archives of the University of Cambridge.

In 1868, the Reformation party (tending towards Protestantism) of the ex-Jacobite Bishop Mar Mathew Athanasius (1843-1868), referred to already arose under the influence of the C.M.S. during their, "co-operation" period (1816-1836), as an independent Church. Since 1868 the Mar Thoma Church has been ordaining her own bishops, *often with the association of the bishop* (Jacobite in Faith) of the



Tozhyoor diocese. There are now four bishops in this Church, with Tiruvalla as headquarters<sup>4</sup>. Mackenzie says: "They still use a Syrian Liturgy, but *from that Liturgy they have expunged* all passages that involve invocation of saints, prayer, for the dead, or transubstantiation<sup>5</sup>(?)"

About September 1930, a *pro-Roman* party (tending towards Romanism) led by the ex-Jacobite bishops Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, sprang up out of Syrian Church, this being the latest offshoot. In consequence, a few churches have sprouted under the influence of these bishops, but under the authority of the Pope, "who established the ecclesiastical province of Trivandrum (composing Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar) for the Catholics of the Syro-Malankara Antiochian rite consisting of the archiepiscopal see of Trivandrum and the suffragan see of Tiruvalla."<sup>6</sup> The exact nature of the rite (on the Uniat basis) is not clear; it is believed to be a mixture of the Latin and Jacobite liturgies; it goes without saying that a member of the Church of Rome has to accept all the dogma and doctrines taught or emphasised by that Church and to denounce those peculiar to the Jacobite Church. Mar Ivanios is the first archbishop of this new hierarchy.

We have now exhausted the Latin, and judging by race, the Syrian, sections of Malabar Christians. There remain the comparatively recent denominations of Christians "recruited" out of people of other religions, by the various foreign missionary societies of the West.

The first Protestant missionary society to work in Travancore was the London Missionary Society, which started

4 Now the Marthoma Syrian Church has 8 bishops under the Metropolitan.

5 This is no theory of transubstantiation in the liturgy of Mar Yacoob.

6 Two bishoprics were added to the Malankara Catholic Church recently at Marthandom and Sultan Bathery.

work in 1806 near Cape Comorin under Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube. Its activities are mostly in the south of Travancore. The L.M.S. churches at present form part of the South India United Church.

The next missionary society was the C.M.S. already referred to as having started its direct activities in 1837. The C.M.S. churches now form part of the (Anglican) Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. The Salvation Army began to work in Travancore about 1889. The "Brethren" Mission started work in 1898. Among other Missions working in Travancore are the Missouri Evangelical Lutheran India Mission (1911) and the Malayalam Mission of the Seventh-Day Adventists (1918), which are of recent origin. For detailed statistics of the Christians in Travancore, the reader is referred to the *Census of India, 1941, Vol. XXV (Travancore)*, a section of which (*cultural*), as well as an attempt, somewhat similar to the present one of a former Agent to the Governor General (Madras States) in *The Christian East* (Oxford), has stirred me to prepare this monograph.

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*Prepared by Mr. Lukose, Advocate, Madras,  
and sometime Judge, High Court, Travancore.*

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# Four Historic Documents

**Edited by Dr. Kuriakose Corepiscopa Moolayil**

Four very important documents on the Syrian Church are presented in this volume. Dr. Claudius Buchanan of revered memory has recorded his experience with the Syrian Church of Malabar in his *Christian Researches in Asia*. The Chapter on the Syrian Christians in India forms the first part. The second part is the travelogue and report of Mr. O. H. Parry to the Patriarch of Antioch and the Syrian people in Mesopotomea under the title *The Ancient Syrian Church*. The third part comprises of the famous thesis of Rev. Dn. P. T. Gevarghese M A, who later become the Archbishop Mor Ivanios of Trivandrum, titled *Were the Syrian Christians Nestorians?* The fourth part *The Christians in Malabar* is a treatise prepared by Hon. Justice K. K. Lukose. These documents are unavoidable for all those who are interested in the history of the Syrian Church.

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