

M.M. THOMAS
P.T. THOMAS

Towards an
INDIAN CHRISTIAN
THEOLOGY

Life and Thought of some pioneers



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Towards an
INDIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY
Life and Thought of Some Pioneers

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M. M. THOMAS

and

P. T. THOMAS



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Life and Thought of Some Pioneers.

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Publisher's Note

(First Edition)

Books that give precise information on any subject is preferred in these days of information-explosion. But only the authorities in the field can provide precise and accurate information. In this volume we have a reliable guide to the plethora information related to Indian Christian theological thought.

An attempt is made in this book to appreciate and reassess the effort made by the Indian leaders and Western missionaries to produce Indian Christian Theology. Living theologians have been left out for obvious reasons. The central element in the thought of each person is presented in this brief survey. Since the emergence of Dalit, Tribal and Feminist Theologies in India it has been noted that the path followed by the pioneers of Indian Theology has only touched upon the dominant Brahminical or secular humanist tradition. This volume is also not an exception. This fact is recognised in the introduction.

Both the authors are well known to the students of Indian Theology. Their material got substantial editorial transformation in the hands of Prof. T.K. Thomas. We are grateful to them and to the Ashram Press which printed the book and to the CLS Bookshop, Tiruvalla which has taken up the distribution of the book.

Tiruvalla,
25-11-1992.

Publishers

Publisher's Note

(Second Edition)

Students of Indian Christian Theology found this book very useful as it enlightened them on crucial issues related to the meeting of Christian faith with Indian people and their world-views, cultures and beliefs. The first edition of the book was published by the New Day Publications of India in 1992. The Christava Sahitya Samithy (CSS) which then served as the CLS Malayalam branch undertook the marketing. The CSS which began to function as an independent organisation under the churches in Kerala in 1994 started to undertake publications in English, along with continuing its publications in Malayalam. Of special note is the publication of Indian reprints of WCC books under the joint auspices of CSS, Tiruvalla and ISPCK, Delhi.

Now it is the privilege of the CSS to bring out on its own a second edition of this most useful reference volume on Indian Christian Theology. We publish the second edition as a tribute to the authors Dr. M.M Thomas and Rev. P.T Thomas, who took keen interest in the formation of the present CSS and served on its Board till their death. Hope this book will continue to serve as a handbook, providing precise information on Indian Christian Theology.

Tiruvalla,
1-5-1998.

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LIFE AND THOUGHT OF SOME CONTRIBUTORS TO INDIAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

*I*ndian Christian Theology is understood here as reflections in an articulated form, on God, Christ and the Church at the point of the meeting of the Christian faith with the Indian People and their world-views, cultures and beliefs.

The earliest Christian theological response to the predominantly Hindu Indian society was the way the traditional South Indian “St. Thomas Christians” in the early centuries adapted their community’s life-pattern to the socio-cultural life of their non-Christian neighbours. The Church, as an organised religious congregation, had periodic celebrations of the Eucharist which expressed the Christian acknowledgement of the deity of Christ and set them apart as Christians from their Hindu neighbours and their worship patterns. It is important to note that the St. Thomas Christians did attempt an integration between the Christian faith with its Semitic roots and the religious ethos of Hinduism. Thus, while they demarcated themselves from the rest of the society by professing and practising their Christian religion, they, along with their Hindu neighbours, believed that every religion was effective as a means of salvation for its adherents and also, adapted themselves socially within the caste-hierarchy prevalent in India. This attitude of St. Thomas Christians to other religions might not have been worked out at any deep theological level. Nevertheless, its historical significance for any contemporary discussion on the role and relevance of the Christian faith in a pluralistic context should not be minimised.

However, with the arrival of the Catholic and the Protestant missionaries in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, the socio-theological position of the Indian Church

underwent a sea change. The Western missionaries pronounced as heretical many of the traditional doctrines of Indian Christians. Under the pressure of the Portuguese Catholic Mission in the sixteenth century, the Udayamperoor (Diampar) synod of the St. Thomas Church met and repudiated the view of the self-sufficiency of every religion for human salvation. The attempt here was to assert the Catholic position that there is 'no salvation outside the Church.' Mathias Mundaden, CMI, the well-known Indian Church historian, in his monograph: *Emergence of Catholic Theological Consciousness in India* (Alwaye, St. Thomas Academy for Research-Document 7;1985) points out that Act III Decree 4 of the Synod of Diampar (1599) condemned the traditional attitude that "each one can be saved in his own dharma (religion): all dharmas (religions) are right"-in the following words:

'This is fully erroneous and a most shameful heresy. There is no dharma in which we may be saved except the dharma of Christ our saviour.'

A footnote to it added that the idea of the saving efficiency of all dharmas is "a perverse dogma" instilling tolerance and indifference which will make Christians "wander very far from the truth."

Similarly, the Protestant missions which started their work in India in the nineteenth century also repudiated the belief that every religion is an effective means of salvation for its adherents. While the Catholic missions underscored the indispensability of the Church for salvation, Protestants affirmed the uniqueness of the Person of Christ and the need for a personal belief in him in order to be saved. In short, both the Missions introduced into traditional Indian Christianity, an exclusive missiological theology which asserted that the *only* means for human salvation is the Christian faith.

On the whole, this attitude and the proselytism it led to set off a chain of reactions on various sides. For Hinduism with its holistic and inclusive world view, this systematised interpretation

of Christianity by the western missions seemed arbitrarily self-righteous, exclusive and anthropocentric. A gulf naturally developed between Christianity and Hinduism in India. This was undoubtedly one of the negative fall-outs of the impact of the western missions in India. But there were positive results as well. One was the spiritual reform in the traditional Indian Church. During the course of many centuries, the St. Thomas Christians had become lethargic in spiritual life; it conformed to a decadent feudal society in its social life. The western missions did succeed to a certain extent in producing a spiritual reform among St. Thomas Christians leading them to evangelistic activity among the depressed sections of Hindu society. The Missions also brought them into the movement of modernisation which the western colonial powers and missions to which they were allied represented.

While discussing the theological response of the traditional Indian Christians and the reformist and evangelical corrective inspired by the western missions, mention should also be made of the missiological approaches and attitudes towards the depressed classes and castes of Hinduism. As said earlier, the St. Thomas Christians had accepted unquestioningly the caste hierarchy prevalent in India and adapted themselves to it. Most of the Catholic and Protestant missions and Churches in India too had to make more or less similar compromises with the caste system, though they considered it a part of the Hindu religion they repudiated.

The fact that the missionaries related themselves both to the largely urban-based educated upper caste Hindus and to the predominantly illiterate lower caste Hindus and untouchables in the villages is important. Many of the Western missionaries, especially those involved in educational enterprises, were working in the urban centres of the land and were interacting with the English-educated and largely upper-caste Hindus, who were taking to Western culture and wished to assimilate its rationalism, spirituality and human values into Hinduism. The human values involved included the idea of a human community transcending

easte and here the Christian idea of fellowship (Koinonia) expressed in the congregational life of the Church made an appeal.

This made 19th Century a crucial period in India's cultural history, with the emergence of Neo-Hindu movements in dialogue with western culture and Christianity. Thus, nascent Hinduism and Hindu leaders of the Indian renaissance began grappling with Christ, Christianity and western culture, all of which have been sources of the self-awakening of Hinduism as well as of the Indian people. Here we are thinking specially of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Keshub Chunder Sen and P. C. Mozoomdar of the Brahma Samaj, Bengal, Govinda Ranade of Prarthana Samaj, Maharashtra, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Vivekananda of the Ramakrishna Movement, Mahatma Gandhi, the non-violent leader of the nationalist struggle, Rabindranath Tagore of Viswa Bharati, S. Radhakrishnan and others. They highlighted the Christ of the Sermon on the Mount (Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Mahatma Gandhi), the Oriental Christ (P. C. Mozoomdar), Christ the Jeevanmukta (Ramakrishna and Vivekananda), Christ the Son of Man identified with suffering humanity (Tagore) and so on, acknowledging the ultimacy of the Christ-principle rather than of Person of Jesus Christ (See M. M. Thomas: *The Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*, 1969). Their contributions to Indian Christian theology are quite substantial. They not only challenged Christian thinking both western and Indian, to make Christian theology indigenous; but they also produced some of the seminal Indian categories in which such theologisation could be pursued.

In this context, articulate Indian Christian theologies emerged within the Indian Church. They were in the beginning mainly the reflections of converts or children of the converts from Brahminism to Christianity who carried the dialogue between Christianity and Brahminism within themselves and sought to express their faith in God, Christ and the Church in relation to their own past Hindu tradition in the setting of the Indian national self-awakening.

Both Neo-Hindu and Indian Christian theologies were stimulated by the presence, attitude and impact of western missions among the depressed classes and castes of Hinduism. The number of missionaries who went into the interior and remote parts of the country and became involved in educational, medical and social uplift programmes, mainly among the depressed sections of the society, was in no way insignificant compared to those who lived in the urban centres interacting with the Hindu elite. Such missionaries learned the languages of the place, became scholars in them, provided the necessary scripts, wrote dictionaries and translated books. Many of them made original contributions in the fields of anthropology and sociology. But few among them indulged in abstract philosophical speculations; they were concerned with the practical task of building up Christian congregations. As this was based on the revolutionary idea of *Koinonia* (fellowship), they were also doing theology, along with the depressed groups they served. Both were parts of one mission of Christ and one theological community. It is obvious that these missionaries working among the downtrodden people in the villages and building up the village congregations on the faith basis of the gospel provided the visible challenge of a casteless human community and produced the stimulus for the theological articulation of Neo-Hindus and upper-caste Hindu converts to the Church. Such articulation did not obtain among the lower caste converts in the early days. Today, emerging from these depressed sections of dalits, tribals and women, is a younger generation of theologically trained and articulate people who are determined to recapture the theological significance of the early mission work among their ancestors and create an Indian theology in relation to their own traditional cultural self-hood. This, no doubt, is important and promising.

However, for now, we need to settle for the study of the life and thought of those who contributed to Indian Christian theology more or less from within the academic parameters of theological thinking. It was pointed out earlier that in response to neo-Hindu efforts to Indianise Christ, Christianity and western

culture, and in a movement parallel with it, western missionaries and Indian Christian thinkers entered the field of indigenous Christian theology. Of course, no theological systems have emerged. But some valuable insights and creative directions can be discussed.

A number of western missionaries took Hindu religion and culture seriously. Among the Catholics, the names of Robert De Nobili (1577-1656) and Pierre Johanns (1882-1955), Jules Monchanin (1895-1957) and Swami Abhishiktananda (1910-1973) are well known. De Nobili acknowledged valuable elements in Hindu sacred writings but considered the caste system the non religious part of Hinduism to which the Church might adapt itself. Johanns sought to build an Indian Thomist Philosophical system based on the Vedanta. Monchanin and Abhishiktananda took advaitie mystic experience as the main meeting point between Hinduism and Christianity.

Among the Protestant western missionaries the names William Miller and A. G. Hogg of the Madras Christian College, Bernard Lucas and T. E. Slater of the L. M. S. in South India, J. N. Farquhar of the Indian YMCA, and C. F. Andrews of St. Stephen's College, Delhi are noteworthy. William Miller acknowledged the thesis that God used all religions and nations in the education of mankind and that Jesus Christ stood at the apex of the religious history of all humanity (*Christian Conception of God's Dealings with Mankind*, 1890. *The Place of Hinduism in the Story of the World*, 1895). Bernard Lucas discerned the work of Christ and His Spirit in Hinduism and defined evangelisation as the Christianisation of Hinduism (*Our Task in India-Shall We Proselytise or Evangelise India?*). Slater and Farquhar believed in the evolution of all religions towards Christianity (*Crown of Hinduism*, 1919). C.F. Andrews responded positively to the national awakening of India and became closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent struggles for national freedom and with poet Rabindranath Tagore's involvement in the cultural aspects of the Indian renaissance; he built his theology of Indian nationalism and inter-religious relation within those contexts

(*Renaissance of India, 1912; What I owe to Christ, 1932*). A. G. Hogg's *Karma and Redemption and Christian Message to the Hindu* were solid attempts to build a Christian theology in dialogue with Hindu religion and philosophy.

Among the Indian Christian leaders, K. M. Banerji and Lal Behari Day among Protestants and Brahmobandhav Upadhyay among Catholics came out of the same Bengal renaissance which produced Brahmoism, and became theological defenders of Christian faith against Brahmo theism on the one hand, and pioneers of indigenous theology on the other. Banerji spoke of Christ in terms of Prajapathi who, in the Vedas, creates the world and preserves it through self sacrifice. Day urged the formation of a National Church in India, uniting all the churches including the Catholics, on the basis of common belief in the Apostles Creed. And Brahmobandhav interpreted the Trinity in terms of the Hindu idea of the Ultimate as Sat-Chit-Anand and sought to build an order of Indian Sannyasins; he joined the nationalist struggle and died in prison.

Nehemiah Goreh, Pandita Ramabhai, Narayana Vamana Tilak and Manilal Parekh were Hindu pandits converted to Christianity in Maharashtra. Goreh was a defender of the Christian doctrine of incarnation and atonement and was involved in the refutation of both traditional Hindu and Brahmo theist religious philosophies. Pandita Ramabhai was a staunch advocate and worker for women's liberation in society and a spiritual revivalist in her faith. Poet Tilak wrote poems on Christ and produced lyrics for the Maharashtra Church; he formed God's Durbar of the baptised and the unbaptised believers in Christ as a new form of church life. Manilal Parekh came to Christ through Brahmoism and, though baptised, he refused to join the Church because it was too western; he sought to strengthen the Christward spiritual movement within Hinduism without disturbing the Hindu caste-structure, embodying the Hindu Samaj dharma. This of course divorced spirituality from social ethics far too totally.

K. T. Paul and S. K. Datta of the Indian YMCA, a member of St. Stephen's College, Delhi, and Bishop Azariah of Dornakal were Indian theologians of the Gandhian era of nationalism. They developed the theology of Christian nationalism as a basis for Christian participation in the national movement and advocated a thesis of western and Indian cultural and social values, taking Jesus Christ as the standard. They organised the National Missionary Society for evangelistic mission and urged the church to become self-governing, rooted in Indian culture and non-communal in politics.

The group of Christian thinkers in South India, who were called the Rethinking group after they brought out the book, *Rethinking Christianity in India* at the time of the Tambaram meeting of the International Missionary Council in 1938, also followed the same line. Among its members were Justice P. Chenchiah, Vengal Chakkarai, a Trade Union leader, Dr. Jesudason, a medical doctor, and Eddy Asirvadam, a political scientist. Chenchiah used Aurobindo's Integral Vedanta and Bergson's Creative Evolution to interpret Jesus Christ as the new leap in human history. Chakkarai interpreted Jesus Christ as the supreme and permanent avatara. Eddy Asirvatham emphasised the Church's task of building a new social order without becoming a self-regarding communal entity in India's body-politic. Dr. Jesudas along with Dr. Paton founded the Tirupattur Ashram for service to the villagers in the wake of the Gandhian movement for village uplift; he thus became the pioneer of the Christian Ashram Movement in India.

A. S. Appasamy was experimenting with the Saiva Sidhanta techniques of meditation to deepen his Christian spirituality. His son A. J. Appasamy, a C. S. I. bishop, was the first systematically trained theologian to develop an Indian Christian theology within the framework of Ramanuja's personalist philosophy of Vishishtadvaita. He interpreted Christianity as Bhaktimarga. Mark Sunder Rao developed his theology of the Christian realisation of the unitive spiritual experience (Ananyatva) using the general Vedanta philosophy of self

realisation. D. G. Moses and P. D. Devanandan were theologians who went beyond William Hoeking, Henrick Kraemer and S. Radhakrishnan in working out a Christ-centred theology of inter-faith relations and inter-faith co-operation in nation-building. Devanandan interpreted the gospel as God's gift of a New Creation in Jesus Christ, making Christ relevant both to renaissance Hinduism and to secular ideologies of social transformation. He launched the programme of inter-faith dialogue in the context of common participation in nation-building. Amalorpavadas, as Director of the Bangalore Pastoral and Liturgical Centre of the Roman Catholic Church, led in the development of indigenous liturgies and liturgical theology, justifying the use of Hindu scriptures in Christian worship.

Coming to the present times, among the Catholics, Joseph Neuner, R. De Smet, James Dupuis, Gispert Saueh, Hans Staffner, Klaus Klostermaier and other western scholars are continuing to make their contribution to Indology and Indian Christian theology. Bede Griffiths at the Spiritual Ashram by the sacred river Cauvery pursues the Christian-Hindu dialogue at the level of mystic experience, along the line established by Monchanin and Abhishiktananda.

Raymond Panikkar, the Spanish-Indian thinker, has made his impact world-wide on the theology of inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue on the basis of the idea of a universalist Christology. Among the Catholic Indians who are exploring indigenous theology, John Chittamattam, Albert Nambiaparampil, Ignatius Hridayam, George Soares-Prabhu, Mathew Vakathanam, Ignatius Jesudason, and many others are following the stimulus of Vatican II to build Indian theological approaches to India's traditional religions and cultures and to the questions of ecclesiology. Samuel Rayan and Sebastian Kappen have entered the field of liberation theology indigenous to India. Sara Grant and Sister Vandana have been continuing the line of advaitic Christology under the inspiration of Abhishiktananda's thought. Murray Rogers too has made an important contribution in this area. Jyoti Sahi's theology of art has great potential.

Among the contemporary Protestant missionaries Bishop Lesslie Newbigin has systematised from fundamentals the ecclesiology behind the Church of South India (CSI) in his *Reunion of the Church* and the *Household of God*. Robin Boyd, through his *Introduction to Indian Christian Theology*, has helped incorporate the study of indigenous theology into the syllabus of theological seminaries affiliated to the Serampore University. Leonar Schiff, while in the Cawnpore Brotherhood, experimented with a theology of society within which a dialogue between Barthianism, Marxism and Anglican Catholicism was present. Bastian Wielenga and Gabriele Dietrich of the Department of Social Analysis of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary, Madurai, are making their impact in the field of Indian social theology. Besides, Gabriele Dietrich is recognised also as a theorist of the women's liberation movement as well as an exponent of indigenous feminist theology in India. (Bastian Wielenga: *It's a Long Road to Freedom*, 1981; *Introduction to Marxism*, 1984; Gabriele Dietrich: *Religion and People's Organisation in East Thanjavor*, 1977; *Women's Movement in India*, 1989). Jyotsna Chatterji is also related to women's movement and promotes theological reflection on it.

There are many Protestant and Orthodox Indian theologians of note among the teachers in theological seminaries. Russell Chandran, a noted theological ethicist, was principal of United Theological College and has recently been associated with the work of the group of Third World Theologians developing theology of religion and liberation. Stanley Samartha, after his retirement from the WCC Dialogue programme-unit, continues to develop his theology of religious pluralism in new directions. V.C. Samuel, Gcevarughese Mar Osthathios and Paulos Mar Gregorios are exploring the Orthodox approach to religion and society in India. (Mar Osthathios: *Theology of a Classless Society; The Sin of Being Rich in a Poor World; Mar Gregorios: Freedom and Authority*, 1974; V.C. Samuel: *The Council of Chalcedon Re-examined*, 1977). Surjit Singh and Herbert Jai Singh have already made contributions to Indian Christian theology; and they continue to be active. (Surjt Singh: *Preface to Personality*; Jai Singh (ed)

Inter-religious Dialogue). Dhyanchand Carr, Gnana Robinson, Samuel Amirtham, Christopher Doraisingh, Somen Das, K.C. Abraham, Mathai Zachariah, T.K. Thomas, T.M. Philip, Ashish Chrispal, Vinay Samuel, K.M. George, Jacob Kurian, V. Devasahayam and many others may be mentioned among those continuing to explore crucial issues of Indian Christian theology.

Among those who are engaged in developing a theology of tribal self awakening, Nirmal Minz of Ranchi has been foremost. From the North East, V. K. Nuh and Wati Aier of Nagaland, Renthly Keitzer of Jorhat and K. Thanzauva of Mizoram are developing theologies relevant to their tribal situations.

The number of women in the area of Indian Christian theology has been very small. But certainly, some voices have been heard, Annamma (Mrs K.K.) George has pioneered in the theological reflections on the status and role of women in the Indian Church. Aruna Gnanadason has emerged as the leader of those who are engaged in pursuing a feminist theology. Mrs. K.L. Hruni's writings on women in the context of North East Indian tribals may also be specially mentioned. It is encouraging to see that many young articulate and theologically trained women are emerging today in India.

More recently, numerous Christian Social Action groups have emerged working among the fisherfolk, the tribals, the dalits and the rural women as well as among the landless in villages and among urban slum dwellers. Many of them are deeply suspicious of earlier Indian Christian theologies because they were produced largely in intercourse with Neo-Brahminism or upper class-caste ideologies. Though they build on the tradition of the past in indigenous theology, the new trend is to explore spiritual resources in the popular religion of the people and to develop theologies relevant to the struggles for justice of the weaker sections of the people. The names of Saral Chatterji, Paulose Mar Paulose, Thomas Kocheri, M.J. Joseph, A.P. Nirmal, and Abraham Ayrookuzhiel may be mentioned. Mar Paulose synthesises Bonhoeffer and Marx in his liberation theology. Tom Kocheri as leader of the fisherfolk struggles and Joseph as the

leader of a network of social action groups are engaged constantly in searching for faith and ideological dimensions of the struggle. J. John of the Delhi Forum and K. M. Thomas of PSA are working along the same lines. A. P. Nirmal has emerged as the chief advocate of Dalit theology in India and Gurukul theological college in Madras has appointed him as head of the Dalit Theology Department. Abraham Ayrookuzhiel and M.E. Prabhakar are also involved in the development of Dalit theology. Abraham is promoting as well the study of theology in relation to popular religions. Siddhartha concentrates on promoting an inter-religious spirituality for liberative movements. (M. E. Prabhakar (Ed) *Towards a Dalit Theology*; Ayrookuzhiel: *The Sacred in Popular Hinduism*; (Ed) A.P. Nirmal: *Towards a Common Dalit Theology*). In this context there is emerging inter-faith dialogue among Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Secular social activists regarding spirituality, theology and ideology for people's struggles. The situation has great potentiality for the future of Indian Christian theology.

The above list is certainly incomplete. The names of contemporary or emerging theologians listed, do not include a sufficient number of names from the Catholic church and from the North and the North East Indian regions. Our purpose however is only to introduce certain types of emerging Indian Christian theology to complete the total picture.

This total picture must be kept in mind while perusing the life and thought of contributors to Indian Christian theology during earlier times. The thinkers dealt with in this book are no more with us. Nor do we consider the list as in any sense exhaustive. Nor, for that matter, the treatment of the life and thought of those selected.

M.M.T.



ROBERT DE NOBILI

(1577–1656)

LIFE

Robert de Nobili was born in Rome in September 1577. His family claimed descent from Otto III and his forefathers held very high positions in the state such as governors and consuls. His parents were Pier Francisco and Clarice. His first eight years coincided with the last years of Gregory XIII's pontificate and it was a period of revival in the Church. As Vincent Cronin points out it was a time when saints, scholars and artists vied with one another to restore the spiritual beauty which was tarnished during the Renaissance. It was the age of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Philip Neri, Francis de Sales and others like them.

At the age of seventeen, de Nobili was convinced that he had a vocation to become a Jesuit missionary. In 1596, at the age of 19, he entered the noviciate in Naples. He had a strong desire to go to India as a missionary. In 1599 he started his philosophy course; he studied logic, science, astronomy, metaphysics and ethics. In 1600 he was invited to begin the final part of his education i.e. theology. At the end of 1603 he went to see his family and to say goodbye to his mother, brothers and sisters. Then he went to Portugal for the study of the language of Camoens, awaiting the ship that would carry him to India.

In 1604 de Nobili and others left Lisbon and after a difficult voyage reached Goa on 20 May 1605. For the first five months de Nobili lived at St. Paul's College in the midst of Jesuit missionaries. After his studies at St. Paul's College and passing the examination in theology, he was free to start his work.

De Nobili was transferred to Cochin to work with superior Laerzio. He started learning Tamil as he was supposed to work among the pearl fishers of the fishery coast. After working with the pearl fishers for seven months, he could speak and write Tamil. The training for nine years started at Naples was also completed.

Many people joined the church because of the protection the Portuguese guns guaranteed. Most of them were from the low castes living in the coastal regions and the islands. Laerzio wanted to make some experiments in the heart of South India and to make them Christians. The man chosen for these experiments was none other than Robert de Nobili.

Madurai at that time was the cultural centre of South India. It was a flourishing city even before the time of Christ, and the capital of Pandyan kingdom with its own academy and university.

A Jesuit priest, Goncalo Fernandez by name, was working in Madurai for eleven years. He was serving mainly the paravas from the fishery coast. He had occasions to visit or live in the capital of their overlord, the Nayak. Laerzio directed Goncalo Fernandez to meet de Nobili on 10 November 1606 and the little group consisting of Laerzio, Goncalo Fernandez, de Nobili and some others started from Tuticorin to Madurai. Madurai was about 85 miles north of Tuticorin. On the fifth day, they saw the high towers of Madurai temple. For de Nobili, Madurai became the centre of activity for the rest of his life. Goncalo Fernandez was on good terms with the Nayak, although his request to expound the principles of Christianity in the court was denied and nobody was converted to Christianity. Laerzio was anxious to find out the reason for their lack of interest in Christianity.

De Nobili's Experiments

1. *Satyavedam not Parangi Markkam*

De Nobili did not want to confine his activities among the fisher folk who occasionally visited Madurai and among the Portuguese horse traders. He wanted to open the door of

Christianity which was closed till then. Nobili's first attempt was to find out the reasons for the failure of Goncalo Fernandez in Madurai. With this end in view, he made friends with the schoolmaster who was employed by Goncalo. The schoolmaster was well-versed in Hindu theology. He held the title of a guru (spiritual teacher) in his own sect. He was a strict vegetarian and a sincere seeker after truth. But he had a very poor opinion about Goncalo and his religion. De Nobili sought the help of the schoolmaster in his study of Tamil. Though the teacher was reluctant to share his knowledge with a foreigner, gradually they became friends. From their long conversation, de Nobili understood the attitude of Hindus to Christianity. The first thing de Nobili learnt from the schoolmaster was the intense caste feeling among the Hindus. He soon realised that there were four castes among them namely, Brahmin (priest), kshatriya (warrior), vaisya (traders) and sudra (slaves). In addition to these four castes and the subcastes, there were a large number of people who were outside the caste system. They were considered as untouchables and outcastes. When the Indians watched the Christians, they found out that they did not observe caste rules and they ate beef which only the outcastes did. Naturally the Indians included the missionaries and their converts among the untouchable outcastes. They called the missionaries, Parangis, a nick name given to them and they called Christianity, Parangi Markkam. As the Indians thought that the presence of missionaries was polluting, they tried to keep away from them. Changing national customs and losing caste were thought of as tokens of sincerity in conversion. This de Nobili thought was a crying injustice. So the first thing de Nobili did was to give up referring to his religion as parangi markkam and to call Christianity *Satya Vedam* (true religion).

2. *Indian name*

De Nobili soon realised that repudiation of caste alone would not be sufficient to win the goodwill of the people. He realised that some positive action would be necessary. He spoke Tamil and learned the customs and manners of the local people. In spite of all these, when he tried to associate with the educated

Hindus, he was rejected everywhere. Nobody except the schoolmaster, who belonged to the upper strata of the Sudra caste, was willing to receive him in their homes for fear of defilement. De Nobili, by his religious vows, was dedicated to a life of penance and chastity. He wanted to find out an Indian name for such a person. He realised that the word sanyasin (one who renounced everything) would suit his vocation. Such a person had to live on one meal of rice and herbs a day and to live entirely on alms. In order to get permission for this innovation, he wrote to the Provincial, Laerzio. He referred the matter to the Bishop in Cranganore of whose diocese Madurai was a part. When Laerzio got a reply from the bishop approving the innovation, he informed de Nobili about it. From that time onwards de Nobili gave up beef eating.

People began to talk with de Nobili about religion. His dialogue with the schoolmaster went on for some weeks and finally the schoolmaster became convinced of the truth of Christianity and decided to become a Christian. He was followed by some others. With these conversions he accepted the title of Guru. The conversions, especially that of the schoolmaster, alarmed their spiritual leader a 'Pandaram Sannidhi' who was related to the teacher. Paṅdaram Sannidhi decided to meet de Nobili personally. His arguments with de Nobili went on and gradually their friendship grew. He urged de Nobili to change his black cassock and wear saffron dress. De Nobili again wrote to Laerzio for approval to wear the saffron cloth of a Sannyasi. As already there was the example of Matteo Ricci in China, de Nobili got the approval. He shaved his hair close to the skull, made a rectangular mark on his forehead, discarded his black cassock and leather shoes and clad himself in saffron cloth and took to wooden sandals. He also obtained a water-gourd to carry in his left hand when he went out and a bamboo stick with seven knots, to carry in his right hand. When de Nobili secured a plot of land on one of the main streets with a dilapidated cabin he got it repaired and used it as his hermitage, saying good-bye to Goncalo Fernandez in November 1607.

3. *Adoption of Caste*

When people talked to him on intimate personal terms, they came to know of his noble origin as well as his noble manners. They came to the conclusion that de Nobili might belong to the Kshatriya caste. They shared their views with him. De Nobili considered their opinion very carefully and came to the conclusion that if he should have a caste it should be the caste of a Raja (Kshatriya), because he had royal ancestry. In 1607 he declared to the people of Madurai that they were mistaken in taking him as a Parangi and as a matter of fact he belonged to the Raja caste. He also employed a Brahmin cook and a Brahmin boy to serve him meals on plantain leaves. He sat on the ground while eating. In the meantime Laerzio transferred Goncalo to the coastal region with the result that de Nobili was no longer associated in Indian minds with a polluting Parangi.

4. *Fifth Veda*

In China Matteo Ricci extracted from their old texts of Confucius, doctrines which are compatible with Christianity, such as the worship of the Supreme Divinity. He also interpreted the ambiguous texts in such a way as to show them to be compatible with Christianity. Knowing what Ricci had done, de Nobili made an attempt to compile a book. He thought that in India, if Christianity could be shown as the religion which crowned the Vedas, it should have a claim on every orthodox Hindu. With some such idea in mind, de Nobili began to extract from approved commentaries of the Vedas, a collection of texts and allusions best suited to serve as a basis for demonstrating the truth of Christianity. De Nobili called it the Fifth Veda. As far as Nobili was concerned this was the Law which had been lost. What he meant was, the primitive religion revealed to mankind but lost because of sin, embodied again and perfected in Christian revelation.

5. *The Problem of Kudumi and the Sacred thread*

De Nobili wanted to baptise Sivadarma his teacher. But two problems delayed his baptism. One was the Kudumi or hair tuft. The front and back of Sivadarma's skull were shaved, and the

remaining part gathered into a pony-tail which hung flat over the back of his head. De Nobili believed that the Kudumi was not a symbol of religion but of the twice born. It was worn among the *Paravas*, and Francis Xavier had allowed the custom to continue. De Nobili obtained permission for this innovation from Archbishop Ros.

The other was the sacred thread—a triple strand of white cotton hanging from the left shoulder across the breast and back and tied near the right thigh. The problem was whether Sivadarma should be allowed to wear this cotton thread after baptism. To deprive him of it would be, in Indian eyes, to remove him from caste. But it was forbidden for Indian converts by four provincial Synods of Goa. De Nobili found some support in the principles laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas. He interpreted Aquinas' principles in such a way as to include the thread in the permitted category. According to Manu, for sacred threads, different materials were used for different castes. De Nobili found out that this was not a mark of religion but of rank in the caste structure. After consulting the Archbishop of Goa and the Inquisitors, Archbishop Ros granted permission to de Nobili to allow the use of sacred thread even after baptism.

As a result of these and similar experiments, de Nobili could open the door of India to Christ and many caste Hindus including Brahmins accepted Christianity. But side by side with success in his work, opposition against him also grew. He was censored and prohibited from work. Finally, issues connected with his innovations were referred to Pope's commission. After careful study and investigations the commission decided in favour of de Nobili's innovations. But by that time he had become old and could not carry on his work. His opponents spread all sort of false rumours. As a result of these, many people who joined Christianity went back to their old religion. But his innovations have proved to be a lasting contribution in the area of indigenisation.

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ABRAHAM MALPAN

(1796-1843)

LIFE:

Abraham Malpan was born in 1796 in the Palakkunnathu family of Travancore (now part of Kerala). The family belonged to the ancient Church of St. Thomas and traced its connection to one of the families converted to Christianity by the Apostle Thomas. The family had given to the Church several leading clergymen and bishops in its long history.

At the age of three, Abraham became an orphan and he was brought up by his paternal uncle, a clergyman of repute and piety. He got the best education available at the time and when he finished his course in the native language (Malayalam), he was called to the diaconate. As deacon he got his training under the Rev. Kora Malpan (Malpan-teacher) of Puthupally who gave him thorough instruction in Syriac liturgy and the Bible. He learned the Bible in the Syrian language as it had not been translated into Malayalam at that time. He was ordained priest in 1815 by the then reigning Metropolitan of the Malabar Church, Mar Thoma VIII.

Abraham was of staunch orthodox Jacobite belief. Since he had doubts about the validity of the apostolic succession of Mar Thoma VIII, he had doubts about the validity of his own ordination. Consequently he received reordination from a Syrian bishop who visited Malabar. For thus flouting the authority of the Metropolitan who was the acknowledged head of the Church by Royal proclamation, Abraham had to undergo a jail sentence. He gladly went to jail for his conviction.

This was the period when the Protestant missions had started working in the area—the Basel Mission in British Malabar, London Mission in South Travancore and the Church Missionary Society Mission of Help to the Malabar Church in Central Travancore. They emphasised English education. As in other parts of India, evangelistic and educational mission was to bring new ideas in religion and society which would produce a movement against crude forms of idolatry and caste oppression in religion and religious culture. Since Abraham was called as Malpan to teach Syriac in the theological seminary started jointly by the Church and the C.M.S., he had come under the influence of such new ideas earlier than the Hindu leaders of cultural and religious reform.

In the light of the new evangelical Christian teaching he received, he found his Church was steeped in corrupt and idolatrous practices and was lacking in an understanding of the gospel of personal salvation through faith in the grace of God in the Crucified and Risen Christ and its implications for personal responsibility for righteous living. So he sought to reform the Church.

His two symbolic but significant acts were the following. First, he put an end to a festival of the Church centred in his parish, Maramon, a festival which he considered idolatrous. There was a wooden image of a saintly ancestor which was consecrated by the people; and there was an annual festival in honour of this ancestor, when the image would be taken in procession with prayers and offerings. It was a source of considerable income for the parish. Abraham Malpan found this festival idolatrous, spiritually degrading and superstitious. So the day before the festival he threw the image into a deep dry well and destroyed it. The enraged pilgrims spread wild rumours about his destructive tendencies. But he was teaching them a spiritual lesson.

Secondly, the Malpan, with eleven other clergymen, produced a manifesto (in the form of a memorandum submitted to the British Resident) indicating twenty-three corrupt practices in faith and morals in the Church. It was a call for spiritual and

moral reformation. Since the liturgy of the Eucharist (Quarbana) was the central act of worship in the congregation's life and the recognised means of confessing the faith and educating the people in faith and morals, they also made certain changes in the liturgy to make it more biblical as they understood it. Whenever Malpan officiated—at the seminary and in the congregations, especially in his own parish—he used the revised liturgy for the communion service. He also put an end to auricular confession, invocation of the Virgin and the saints and the celebration of the Eucharist when no one was there to communicate along with the priest. He gave the bread and wine separately as in Protestant churches.

The ruling bishop Mar Dionysius did not approve of these reforms and he excommunicated the Malpan and his entire congregation; and he refused to ordain to priesthood any deacons trained under the Malpan. This was a terrible blow to the Malpan who attached much importance to episcopacy. So, eager to get a Metran sympathetic to the reform movement, he sent his nephew, Mathew, a young man of remarkable ability and education, already a deacon, to Mardin in Syria to seek consecration as bishop. Patriarch ordained him, and later consecrated him as bishop under the name Mathews Mar Athanasius.

Mar Athanasius returned to India in 1843. But anxious to be acknowledged Head of the whole Church, he celebrated communion in some parishes with the unrevised liturgy. This disappointed Abraham Malpan, and he died in 1846 and did not see Mathews Mar Athanasius declared by royal proclamation as Head of the whole Church, thus leading the reform movement.

THOUGHT

As in the case of many early Indian theologians, Abraham Malpan's theology has to be derived from his life and acts, because he did not write any book. But the reformation in faith and morals, which he led, indicates his theological line.

The Malpan had a high conception of the Church and was eager to preserve the Eastern character of the Church of the St. Thomas tradition. Otherwise he could have joined the Anglican Church which the CMS mission formed when their relation with the Orthodox Church in Malabar was terminated. But the Malpan was equally anxious that the Church should be reformed from within in the light of the Bible which had now been translated into Malayalam, and the Church made Eastern and Evangelical. What he had in mind was a sort of Reformed Orthodoxy as Anglican Church was Reformed Catholic. But his main emphasis was the gospel of personal salvation through faith in Christ and the renewal of personal life and relations, which justification by faith would make possible. This of course was the new emphasis he had learned from the western mission. It was with this end in view that he made the revision in the liturgy of Holy Communion. Besides emphasising justification by faith rather than by religious works, the Malpan gave expression to the priesthood of the whole people of Christ over against the priesthood of the clergy.

The crucial result of the reform was the revival of personal religion and the awakening of the Church to spread the gospel among people of other faiths, especially the outcastes. The Church in Malabar had accepted the hierarchy of the traditional caste-structure, since it gave them a middle status; and the members practised untouchability to keep that status. Malpan's reform brought home to a group in the Church (and eventually to the whole Church) the urgency of the Church's evangelistic mission. Further, the Malpan's emphasis on personal salvation and personal decision brought a new sense of moral responsibility and spiritual renewal to the traditional culture of Kerala. This became clear in the later history of Kerala and the Kerala Churches. In one sense Abraham Malpan's reformation of the Christian community was a foretaste of the reformation of Sree Narayana Guru and Chattambi Swami in the Hindu Society based on the discovery of personal freedom and equality among persons.

M.M.T.

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KRISHNA MOHAN BANERJEE

(1813-1885)

LIFE :

Krishna Mohan Banerjee was born in May 1813 in Calcutta, Bengal. His parents were orthodox Brahmins of the Kulin Class. Initiated into the life of a student at the age of five by means of traditional rites and invested with the Brahminical thread, the sign of the twice-born at eleven, Krishna Mohan started his study of Sanskrit, along with English, in 1824 at the Hindu College.

It was the period of the beginnings of the Bengal cultural renaissance under the impact of western education and Christian missions. Traditional Hinduism was in the process of liberal reforms, led by the Bengal youth. There were three paths open to the reformers—to become agnostics and atheists and revolt against all religion, or to join the theist Brahmo Samaj which sought renewal of Hinduism from within, or to become Christians. Krishna Mohan came under the influence of the rationalist professor of Hindu College, Derozio, and joined the reform party of agnostics and athiests. He became the editor of their Weekly journal *Enquirer*. They attacked the supernatural metaphysical speculations, the idolatrous polytheism, and irrational traditions of Hindu Orthodoxy; and there were threats of ex-communication of all rebels from the orthodox. In 1831 after a dinner party in Krishna Mohan's family house, when the reform group tasted meat, they threw what remained of it into the neighbouring house which belonged to a Brahmin. This led to a riot and to the ex-communication of the young liberals. As he refused to recant his errors and declare his faith in Hinduism, Krishna Mohan had

to leave his house with his companions. The mob was after them but they escaped to the house of an acquaintance. Krishna Mohan continued to edit the *Enquirer* with unabated enthusiasm.

It was at this time that Krishna Mohan and friends became acquainted with the young educationalist of Calcutta, Alexander Duff. Duff sympathised with their longing to reform Hinduism but urged them to enquire into the truth of Christianity. They became diligent students of Duff's weekly classes. It led to the conversion and baptism of Krishna Mohan and some of his friends in 1832.

Krishna Mohan was baptised by Duff as a member of the Presbyterian denomination, but later he joined the Anglican communion. He was ordained and became pastor of a new Church in Cornwallis Square. He preached and taught there and led many educated high caste Hindus to Christianity. He served that Church from 1839 to 1851. His first publication as pastor was a collection of his Bengali sermons. In 1851 Krishna Mohan was appointed professor at the Bishop's College, the Anglican theological Seminary at Calcutta. It was there that he developed his theological scholarship and produced his works on Hindu philosophy. He served the College as professor till 1868.

Krishna Mohan as a Christian pastor and professor came to occupy a prominent place in the life of Calcutta and contributed to the continuing cultural renaissance of Bengal. Many of his friends had joined the Christian Church. Others had joined the Brahmo Samaj the theistic reform movement for Hindu Renaissance. Still others remained rationalists in revolt against all religion. But they all together gave shape to the Bengal renaissance which was the vanguard of the Indian renaissance. He was a member of the Bethune Society formed in 1852 as a common forum for educated Indians and English friends and as a centre for promotion of arts and sciences and liberal social change including women's rights in Hindu society. Prof. Banerjee took his share in organising the Calcutta University in 1857 as a member of its Senate. His services were recognised by the University by conferring a Doctorate degree on him in 1876.

Banerjee was the acknowledged leader of the Indian Christian community in Bengal and became the first president of the Bengal Christian Association organised in the seventies to develop autonomy of the Church from Western missions. It was also in the seventies that he turned his attention from the refutation of Hindu society, philosophy and religion to the question whether there is a real possibility of building Indian Christianity in continuity with Hindu tradition. He died in May 1885 at the age of 72.

K. M. Banerjee, according to one of his biographers, indicates "the beginnings of indigenous self propagation" of Indian Christianity.

THOUGHT

Writing on his conversion Krishna Mohan discusses why he chose to join the Christian Church with its Trinitarian understanding of God's relation to the world through Christ's atoning death, rather than the Brahma Samaj with its unitarian theism. He says he was naturally attracted to Brahmaism because he could not understand or accept the doctrine of atonement on the basis of natural reason; and since the Bible unequivocally pointed to it, he was reluctant to believe in the truth of the Bible. But Brahma theism seemed so insignificant and as little better than atheism. "So I remained in a state of doubt and perplexity for a long time." But when God's Holy Spirit opened his soul to "discern its sinfulness and guilt and the suitableness of the great salvation which centred in the atoning death of a Divine Redeemer," both the Trinitarian faith and the authority of the Bible became clear to him and the perplexity disappeared.

Krishna Mohan was baptised in the Scottish Church by Alexander Duff, but after a few months joined the Church of England. He was rather unhappy with the tension which he observed as existing between the Anglican and Presbyterian missionaries, but the fact of his friendship with Duff was decisive for his baptism. His mind had "no leaning at that time for or against Episcopacy or Presbyterianism" and he was actually

attending “both Churches alternatively.” But later he says: “In an ordination held in the Cathedral shortly before, I had noticed that the Church of England had something of Congregationalism and Presbyterianism as well as Episcopacy in its services. I had observed the congregation asked upon to testify, if they knew anything about the ministers elect after which a presbytery laid their hands on them with the Bishop. From this I concluded that while English Church would be right even upon the Presbyterian theory, the Scottish establishment could not be so upon the episcopal hypothesis.” Therefore, he considered it safest to adhere to the English Church and he also became convinced that “Episcopacy was the form of Church government established by the Apostles.”

Krishna Mohan brought his earlier concern for the transformation of Hindu society into his theology of the relation between the Church and the Bengal cultural renaissance. In his *The Persecuted* (play), “Nature of Female Education” (1841), “Kulin Brahminism of Bengal” (1844), “Transition States of Hindu Mind” (1845), “Essays on Hindu caste” (1851), “Bhavabhuti in English Garb” (1822), he was passionate in his attack on the inequality and injustice perpetrated by caste and joint family under Brahminism. Ultimately for him, “not only the corrupt fabric of Kulinism, but all systems of iniquity shall crumble to the dust under the divine ascendancy of Christianity The Brahmin and the Chandala, Kulins and the Sudras and women shall then worship at the same altar, eat the same bread, and drink the same cup—with one mind and soul, and in one holy communion as the members of one household, and the servants and followers of one God and Father.” True, this would take time, meanwhile both Church and voluntary agencies and the Government should spread rational knowledge and social values through education.

The 19th century Bengal saw a lot of controversy among Christians, rationalists, Brahmo theists and orthodox Hindus about the validity of the Christian religion. Krishna Mohan’s important earlier apologies of Christian religion were:

Truth Defended and Error Exposed (1841), *The Transition States of Hindu Mind* (1845), *The Claims of Christianity in British India* (1864) and his major work *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy* (1857) follow the line usual among Christian apologists of the time, namely that reason, miracles, prophecy, revelation, are against the validity of Hindu philosophy and shastras and religion and are proof of the divine authority of Christian doctrines and the Bible. In the *Dialogues* Krishna Mohan's main criticism of the doctrine of God and Creation in Hindu philosophy was that "they failed to argue for the existence of a supreme intelligence as the author and governor of the universe." He found its teaching on salvation (*mukti*) and morality also defective.

After 1865, Krishna Mohan's approach to Hinduism changes. *The Arian Witness* (1875), *Two Essays as Supplements to the Arian Witness* (1880) and *The Relation between Christianity and Hinduism* (1881) are concerned with establishing a positive relationship between Vedic religion and Christianity, and showing that Christianity does not merely displace Vedic religion but in some essential elements fulfils it. Krishna Mohan undertakes a comparative study of the stories of creation and fall in the Bible and the Vedas and shows their parallel. Especially the element of sacrifice is common to both. And the Vedic figure of *Prajapati*, the Lord and Creator sacrificing himself is the key to understand Jesus Christ as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world who redeemed the world through his atoning sacrifice on Calvary. He says: "Christ is the true Prajapati—the true Purusha begotten in the beginning before all worlds, and Himself both God and Man." Therefore, no person can be a true Hindu without being a true historian. "If it were possible for those hoary Rishis to reappear in the world, they themselves would exhort you not to neglect so great a salvation, not to waver in your duty to acknowledge and embrace the true Prajapati the true Purusha begotten before the worlds, who died that you might live, who by death has vanquished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

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4

LAL BEHARI DAY

(1824-1894)

LIFE

Along with K. M. Banerjee, Lal Behari Day was the recognised leader of the Bengal Christians in the 19th Century.

Kala Gopal De (his name till baptism) was born on 18 December 1824 in the small rural hamlet of Talpur in West Bengal. His parents were of the middle non-Brahmin *Suvarna Vanik* (banker) caste. He was brought up in the village among peasants, in touch with the soil and agriculture. At the Scot Mission school in Calcutta he came under the influence of Alexander Duff and was converted to Christ and was baptised with the name Lal Behari Day.

Day's public life begins in 1846 as a full-time Christian worker of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. He married the daughter of Rev. Dhanzibhai Naoroji of the Presbyterian Church of Western India. He served the Church in many capacities as pastor, evangelist, promoter of schemes of rural uplift and author. He was a nationalist in politics and was the first person in India to formulate scheme for the foundation of a national church of India, on the basis of the Apostles' Creed, inclusive of the Roman Catholics, and free from foreign control. He proposed this before a conference of European Missionaries in Calcutta who appointed a committee to examine the proposal.

Day opposed racial discrimination between European and Indian ministers practised by the Mission Council. There was inequality not only in salary but also in the way they were excluded

from membership in the Council and effective responsibility in the conduct of work. Day stood on the principle of equality among all ministers and offered resignation of his orders if the principle was not accepted. His stand was vindicated and the way was opened for Indians to have independent charge of Mission stations and otherwise being put on a footing of equality with Europeans in all matters except salary.

Day was a devoted Christian worker. He identified himself with the peasantry of West Bengal and worked for their development in various ways. Some of his writings were concerned with the development of the West Bengal peasantry. He travelled widely and planted Mission schools, churches and orphanages and advised the peasants. As pastor in Cornwallis Square Church, he gave a series of lectures to the educated Hindus. These lectures, while appreciative of the Brahmo Samaj and its leader Keshub Chandra Sen, provided a Christian critique of that movement. Day's theological insights were developed in this critique.

Day was a prolific writer in English and Bengali. He edited the Bengali journal *Arunodaya* for the village Christian congregations and contributed articles to English journals. His book *Govinda Suman* (with its companion volume in English: *Peasant Life in Bengal*) was the first one on the conditions of rural and agricultural Bengal. He also published a collection of Folk-tales of Bengal. He gave lectures at the forum of the prestigious Bethune Society of European and Indian intellectuals.

THOUGHT

Day's theological thought is closely related to his concern for and his part in the Bengal Renaissance in the second half of the 19th century. K.M. Banerjee and Lal Behari Day were both seeking the ultimate truth and an understanding of ultimate human destiny which would provide lasting foundation for the new vision of humanity which they shared with the educated Indians of their time. There were three alternatives in debate—scientific rationalism, Renascent Hinduism (especially Brahmo

Theism) and Christianity. Banerjee and Day found the foundation truth in Christ and became Christians. But they continued to be in dialogue and debate with those who made other choices. Day's theological thoughts are contained in the four lectures he gave in Calcutta disputing the adequacy of Brahma theism to provide the spiritual basis for the historical and the ultimate destiny of India and also in his proposal for a national Church.

In 1850 the Brahmans publicly declared that their theistic belief and religion was not based on any revelation other than that of nature which is open to all and which contains the great truths of religion and morality. In the search for discovering these great truths from nature, they depended either on human reason and conscience or common sense and interaction. Day argues against it for the utter necessity of a Divine Revelation, because human reason, being itself not only finite but also corrupted by sin, cannot know God unaided. The world in its wisdom did not know God till God himself was pleased to reveal himself in his Son. Though many truths concerning God and our duty can be known from the light of nature through reason and conscience, the saving knowledge of God imparting life and immortality can be known only through the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Once the revelation is acknowledged, it can be seen as being in accordance with reason and conscience. Day goes further to say, along with Goreh, that whatever truths of God Brahmans held were derived from biblical revelation and not from Hinduism or rational enquiry. The question is also that of having divine authority behind our saving knowledge of God; otherwise salvation would not have certainty. This is possible where the words "Thus saith the Lord" or God's "I am" are uttered.

Day also contradicts the Brahma doctrine of repentance as in itself the expiation of sin and the pathway to divine forgiveness, that no divine atonement of sin was needed. God being Love does not punish sin; man punishes himself by sin. And what God requires is only that human beings should turn to him through repentance. This, according to Day, is "one mass of

misconceptions.” It is a denial of God’s nature as holy love and of the nature of God’s government of the world; and it contains serious misunderstanding of human nature as well as sin; the sinner on his own cannot turn to God. Day argues that the wrath of God is a fact of history as seen by the pagan religions of expiation and sacrifices and in the voice of conscience. It is the working of Divine Holiness. The evil of sin being infinite, demands infinite punishment, infinite either in nature or in duration. Therefore man can be saved from this judgement only if there is an objective atonement by an infinite person. Hence the Cross.

For Day, “the saving doctrines” constituted the essence of the Church. But what is the “one form” of the Church which is scriptural, and which can communicate the gospel of salvation relevantly to the Indian people? Day was one of the first persons in India to see denominational divisions of the Church as a denial of that form. In their place he proposed to the Missions through a memorandum on “The Desirableness and Practicability of organising a National Church of Bengal,” his Scheme of a National Church. As he saw it, the Apostles’ Creed could be its basis. It is broad enough to include even the Roman Catholics and has the authority of Church tradition and scripture. “By founding the united Church of Bengal on so broad and catholic a basis, we should be in communion with every Church in Christendom, the Greek and Latin Churches not exempted.” He added that the Roman Catholics could come into it if they abjured the dogma of infallibility of the Pope and acknowledged the sufficiency of the Scriptures a rule of faith. This proposal for a national Church by Day was in a real sense a response to the Brahmo, who had established a new Church which they claimed to be truly Indian and broadly based. Day’s vision did not take any practical shape at that time, but it was to play its part continually in the Indian theology of the Church.

M. M. T.

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5

NEHEMIAH NILAKANTH SASTRI GOREH

(1825-1895)

LIFE

Nilakanth Goreh was born on 8 February 1825 as the eldest son of Sivaram Goreh. He belonged to a rich and well-connected family of Mahratta Chitpvan Brahmins who had moved from Western India to Banares to take up employment under the Rajah of Banares. Sivaram had become a widower and, though still living with his two sons in the house, he had renounced the world and spent his whole time in study, meditation and worship. Nilakanth had learned Sanskrit under his father and the ancient Hindu scriptures under distinguished pundits. He himself earned the title *Sastri* (pundit). His first wife having died, at nineteen he married Laksmi Bhai, daughter of a Konkanasth Brahmin of Banares. Nilakanth shifted his allegiance from the family's tradition of Saivism to Vaishnavism, thus showing his capacity for bold action in search of religious truth.

It was the street preaching of the missionary William Smith that drew Nilakanth's attention to Christianity. He listened to the preaching with a view to refuting it, because he thought Christianity was philosophically crude and fit only for ignorant people. He went on to argue with Smith, but Smith introduced him to the New Testament. On reading it, the Sermon on the Mount gripped him. "And the New Testament once despised became the absorbing study of my life."

Nilakanth lost faith in Hinduism, and for a time he refused to accept any alternative religion. But in 1847 he attended the

CMS church for the first time. And, frightened by this, his family and friends and Hindu pundits intervened. His uncle was even violent. His father fell at his feet entreating him to have consideration for his old age. The fear of losing caste, the picture of his father falling at his feet, withholding of contact with his wife and the lingering feeling that he might be wrong, all made him uneasy. He postponed his final decision. But when he finally decided to take the plunge he left Banares for Jausepur where on 14 March 1849 he received baptism as Nehemiah and was admitted into the Church. As he said later "it was the force of conviction and the voice of conscience" that compelled him. He was excommunicated from his caste, which meant he was virtually considered as dead. But his contacts with his father continued on a new basis; and his father was later advising him not to forsake religion for atheism. Nilakanth had to go to the court to get his wife from her family, and she, in due course, shared his faith and was baptised.

After helping with the educational work of the Mission, in 1853 he went to England as companion to Maharaj Duleep Singh who had become a Christian. There, besides having an opportunity to have an audience with the Queen, and conversations with Max Muller, Nehemiah also attended some theological lectures and studied Paley's *Evidences* and Butler's *Analogy* which helped him to see the possibility of utilising reason in the service of revealed truth. On his return to India, he worked for ten years as lay missionary to educated Hindus first in Poona, and then in Banares and Cawnpore. His main Christian apologetic writings belong to this period, especially the Christian critique of the Hindu philosophical systems. He was also instrumental in the conversion of Maulavi Safdar Ali from Islam to Christ.

In 1870 he was ordained priest of the Church of England. He lived in Chanda as an ascetic and worked both among the untouchables, the Mahars and the Europeans. His asceticism drew him to High-Church doctrines and to the Cowley fathers. In 1876 he became novice of the Anglican religious community of the society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE) and went to

Cowley, England, to fulfil his novitiate. But he found the Western form of spiritual exercises uncongenial to his Indian spirit. On returning to India, he continued his work among educated Hindus in many parts of India with SSJE in Poona as his base. It was from here that he had a continual correspondence with Pandita Ramabhai who had moved from traditional Hinduism to the theism of the Reformed Hindu group in Western India which pursued the same religious line as Brahma Samaj in Bengal. This led to her baptism.

Though ill, his last years saw Goreh travelling and writing constantly. He worked with the committee producing Hindi and Marathi version of the Common Prayer Book. He published *Proofs of our Lord's Divinity* (which he wrote as a letter to Pandita Ramabhai), *Christianity not of Man but of God* (his lectures to Arya Samaj of Allahabad) and *Tenets of Tukaram*. He died on 27 October 1895.

THOUGHT

Nehemiah Goreh's major writing is *A Rational Refutation of Hindu Philosophical Systems*. It is, as its name implies, an exposition and critical evaluation of the six traditional systems of Hindu philosophy regarding the relation between God, the human soul and the world. He finds *Nyaya and Vaisheshika* systems more reasonable since, unlike *Sankhya and Mimamsa*, they posit the reality of a God and, unlike the Vedanta, do not identify God with the soul or make the world illusory; but even they are inadequate to meet the problems of human existence or to lead human beings to the Real. This book has remained the best Christian critique of Hindu Philosophy and apologetic for the Christian doctrine of the Triune God over against monism and pantheism and of sin and redemption over against ignorance and liberation through illumination. In fact Goreh's emphasis in all his arguments is on Christian dogmas, especially of the Athanasian Creed.

As a Hindu pundit, Goreh had moved from Saivism to Vaishnavism with its Shakti (devotional) spirituality as the path

to God and many incarnations (avatars) of God to restore the world to dharma (the eternal law). But as a Christian he found the bhakti cult of Krishna, both in its traditional form and in the form received by Tukaram and Chaitanya, quite inadequate of providing a path to God, and the basis for moral regeneration of human persons and society. In this and other matters Goreh was fighting against the tendency of the Brahma Samaj under Keshub Chandra Sen to revive the bhakti cult of Vaishnavism within its religion of Hindu theism.

In fact in his tracts *Theism and Christianity*, *The Brahmors: Their Idea of Sin*, and *Atonement and Salvation* and the letter he wrote to Pandita Ramabhai who was settling down into Brahma theism as her spiritual home, Goreh enters into disputation with the Brahma religion as a system to show its inadequacy. His thesis, like that of Lal Behari Day of Bengal, is that the Brahma faith in one Creator God with a personal moral purpose for the world is not present in Hinduism, nor is it the result of rational thought but is derived from biblical revelation; that therefore the Brahmors have to choose between accepting in full the revelation in Christ as well as the ethics of Christianity and reverting to the monism, polytheism and moral corruption of traditional Hinduism. For him, though reason could serve revelation, revelation is ultimately the only authoritative source of the knowledge of God and true religion and morality. For Goreh, the Brahma understanding that the Divine punishment of sin is always remedial and salutary and that human nature is redeemed from sin by human repentance and does not require any incarnation or atoning sacrifice from Divine side, indicate a shallow view of evil. It is relevant here to point out that the doctrine of eternal punishment of the sinner played a crucial role in Goreh's conversion to Christianity. Also important for him, was the moral need of atoning sacrifice of God-made-man satisfying divine justice before human redemption could be achieved. In his letter to Pandita Ramabhai he says that Reformed Hinduism of the Brahma or any other variety is untenable and that only in the divine revelation in Christ could she find a certainty transcending reason. *Proofs of the Divinity of our Lord*,

stated in a letter to a Friend (published in 1887) was another personal letter to Ramabhai; in this, Goreh gives the rational and scriptural basis for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation contained in the classical creeds.

Just as in his early Hindu period he moved from Saivism to Vaishnavism, as a Christian believer he shifted from low-church doctrines of the CMS to the high-church doctrines of the Anglican Catholicism. He was critical of both extreme Protestantism and Catholicism. It was the call to ascetic life of religious communities that captivated his mind. But he found the western trappings and the spiritual forms of Cowley not suitable to his Indian temperament. Nevertheless, he was sure that Hinduism, not its teachings but its spirituality, was a genuine preparation for the Hindu's reception of Christianity. He took an almost totally negative approach to the teachings of *Bhagavad Gita*, *Bhagavada*, etc. but he says: "Yet they have taught us something of *ananyabhakti* (undivided devotion to God) of *vairagya* (giving up the world), *namrata* (humility), of *kshama* (forbearance) etc. which enables us to appreciate the precepts of Christianity.

M.M.T.

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6

KESHUB CHANDRA SEN

(1838-1884)

LIFE

Keshub Chandra Sen was born on 19 November 1838 at Colutolah in Calcutta. He had his early education under a private tutor. He completed his college studies at the age of 20. His liberal English education shattered his belief in idolatry and raised many challenges to his religious beliefs. He turned to Christianity and began to study the Bible and to read philosophy and theology with missionaries.

He was a born leader and organizer. In 1856 he started the Colutolah Evening School with P. C. Mozoomdar and Narendranath. In 1857 he founded the British India Society to discuss issues of culture, literature and science and in the same year he organized a religious and devotional organization with the name Good Will Fraternity which was absorbed into Brahma Samaj after two years. Keshub joined the Brahma Samaj in 1857. Debendranath Tagore, who was then the leader of Brahma Samaj, saw in Keshub a possible successor and Keshub saw in Debendranath a spiritual guide.

Soon after leaving the college, following his family tradition, he accepted a job in the Bank of Bengal, as a clerk in 1859. But the routine work of a bank clerk did not suit his temperament and ambitions. In 1861 he resigned his post in the bank to become Brahma missionary. Before his resignation from the bank he published a series of tracts in which one could see his apologetic tone which was in line with the Christian understanding of social work. Following the publication of these

tracts in 1861 he started *Indian Mirror* as a weekly to give expression to his opinions. His public lectures on Brahmoism attracted large crowds. While his popularity grew, controversy with Christian missionaries such as Lal Behari Day also grew. Christian missionaries thought that his efforts would prove to be a threat to their enterprise.

Debendranath had high regard for Keshub as was clear from his installing him as Acharya (minister) of the Brahmo Samaj. Some of his colleagues in the Samaj were envious of his popularity and while Keshub was on a preaching tour they managed to convince Debendranath of their fears of the radical changes which Keshub had in mind. Thus two distinct parties emerged in the Samaj which finally led to a division into two groups in 1866, one under the leadership of Debendranath under the name Adi Brahmo Samaj and the other under the leadership of Keshub under the name Brahmo Samaj of India.

When Keshub became the sole leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India he gradually began to assert his opinions. His respect for Christ also grew. He even considered himself as a slave of Jesus (Jesudas). But his understanding of Christ was different from that of Christian Missionaries and they became alarmed when he said in one of his public lectures that India was not yet ripe for Christ's teachings. His mission tours in 1865, 66 and 68 helped the Samaj to grow and he could establish many new branches in India and consolidate the division which he headed.

In 1870 he undertook a preaching tour in Britain, to preach non-Christian faith. His visit was a success. He went to England in the hope of finding a great Christian nation. But he came back with the awareness of the Church's limitations. He also became conscious of India's claims of greatness. His visit shattered his idealized views about Christianity. He began to think that the movement which he led was a special dispensation of providence. He developed a doctrine which he called '*ades*', by which he meant 'divine command.' His followers in the Brahmo Samaj of India could not understand all his positions. They could not understand the stand taken by him in connection with the

marriage of his daughter and his use of *ades* in that connection which finally led to a second schism. The majority of its members left Keshub and founded the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and Keshub organized a new movement with the name Navavidhan (New Dispensation). In the New Dispensation, Keshub could manage to synthesize Hindu and Christian elements and transformed it into something new. He was a dynamic person and as such he could carry on the work of the New Dispensation with the small group of his followers. He died on 8 January 1884.

THOUGHT

Keshub wrote and lectured on a wide range of subjects. But here an attempt is made only to point out his understanding of Christology, Trinity and the Church in the Indian context.

Christology: The main expression of his Christology is the series of lectures he delivered in Calcutta. In his lecture on 'Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia', he dealt with the moral excellence of Jesus. According to Keshub, the two fundamental doctrines of gospel ethics, which stand out prominently above all others and give it its peculiar grandeur and its preeminent excellence were the doctrines of forgiveness and self-sacrifice. Keshub thought that it was in those doctrines that one could find the moral greatness of Christ. He was sure that nothing short of self-sacrifice, of which Christ had furnished so high an example, would regenerate India.

In his lecture, "India asks, who is Christ?" delivered in 1879 Keshub dealt with the stumbling blocks of the Hindus. He pointed out that if Indians refused to accept Christ it was not because of his ethics, nor because of his humanity, but because of his divinity. Keshub had no doubt that Jesus considered himself and his father as one. He understood Christ as the gradual manifestation of his Father. It was in this context that he developed his concept of Divine Humanity. He affirmed the pre-existent Christ as Son and his incarnation in Jesus.

In his lecture on 'God-Vision in the Nineteenth Century' Keshub dealt with his idea of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his ascension to the right hand of God. In this lecture he affirmed the resurrection of the spirit of Jesus. He said, 'Do I speak with the authority of an eye-witness? Yes, I do. If you think Christ is in the grave, you are certainly dreaming. For where is he to be found on earth? Nowhere. Christ dead and decayed is a deception. Christ risen is Christ indeed. The spirit of Christ has risen and returned to the Father. As M. M. Thomas had pointed out, in a later lecture he saw meaning in the bodily resurrection of Jesus (ACIR P. 64).

Trinity: As Manilal C. Parekh and others have pointed out, there might be inconsistencies in his treatment of the concept of Trinity. Keshub was not a systematic theologian, and such inconsistencies are only to be expected.

In his lecture on 'That Marvellous Mystery-the Trinity' which he delivered on 21 January 1882 he dealt with this concept in detail. Keshub stood between the rationalistic Unitarians on the one side and the Orthodox Trinitarians on the other side. He said: 'I set my face completely against the popular doctrine of Christianity. Yet I recognize "divinity" in some form in Christ in the sense in which the Son partakes of the Father's divine nature. In his lecture on the Trinity he dealt with Christ as Divine Humanity, emerging as the end of the process of creation. According to Keshub the problem of creation was not how to produce one Christ but how to make every man Christ. Keshub used the Hindu term *sat-chit-ananda* for Trinity. This idea was further developed by people like Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya and Swami Abhishiktananda.

The Church: Keshub made a distinction between Christ and Christianity. He adored Christ but rejected the popular idea of the church. Christ for him was universal in whom Europe and Asia should find harmony. As M. M. Thomas had pointed out, there were at least three strands in his thought about the church. One, a belief in the supremacy of Christ as the God-man centred in whom he saw the harmony of all the established religions.

Two, Keshub's thought that all established religions were true. Three, Keshub considered himself as the divinely appointed leader of the New Dispensation and his doctrine of *ades* should be seen in this context. He always looked for a harmony of all established religions with Christ as the centre. But he thought that he was living in a new Dispensation of the Holy Spirit and he himself as the God-appointed leader of this New Dispensation.

He had contacts with Swami Dayanand Saraswathi, founder of the Arya Samaj and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Keshub respected Dayanand, but could not maintain a warm relationship with him. But he was very much attached to Ramakrishna and it was generally acknowledged that it was Keshub who introduced Ramakrishna to Bengal.

P.T.T.

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WILLIAM MILLER

(1838-1923)

LIFE

William Miller was the second son of William Miller Sr. a merchant and ship owner. His mother was Elizabeth Gunn. William was born at Thurso in the county of Canthness in Scotland on 13 January 1838. He attended the Parish School and afterwards went to Bellevue Academy in Aberdeen. In 1852 he joined the Marischal College, Aberdeen, and distinguishing himself in Philosophy and Composition in 1856 he took his M.A. degree with a gold medal. He continued his studies in Philosophy and English literature for a year at the Edinburgh University. From there he went to New College for his theological education. He belonged to the Free Church of Scotland.

Miller was asked to go and assist Rev. John Anderson who had started an educational institution in Madras. Miller arrived in Madras in 1864. Madras Christian College was then known as the Central Institution. He tried to improve the institution and to adjust it to the educational needs, created by the establishment of the Madras University in 1857. College classes were opened in 1865 and the school was raised to the status of a First Grade College in 1867. After five years, he went to Scotland on furlough and returned in 1869. Church Missionary Society, Wesleyan Missionary Society and some other Societies agreed to join the Free Church of Scotland in helping to maintain a United Christian College and from January 1, 1877 the Free Church Institution came to be known as Madras Christian College.

Miller had a prominent place in the Madras University and he was Fellow in 1867 and in 1871. In 1882 he became a member of the Education Commission under the presidentship of Sir William Hunter. Miller's contributions began to be recognised. He was given an honorary L. L. D. degree by the Aberdeen University, D.D. by Edinburgh University and an L. L. D. by Madras University. He was Vice Chancellor of the Madras University from 1901 to 1904 and a member of the local Legislative Council in 1893 and again in 1895, 1899 and 1902. In 1895 Miller was invited to occupy the Moderator's chair at the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland; but due to an illness he had to decline that honour. He was re-elected to the Moderator's chair in 1896. Before he left India the Government conferred upon him the Gold Kaiser-i-Hind medal.

On his return from Scotland towards the close of 1896 he had an attack of a severe illness, which made it necessary for him to withdraw from college work. But he was persuaded to participate in the work of the College until 1907 when his failing eyesight compelled him to leave India. In 1909 he formally resigned the principalship. Recognising the great services he had rendered to the cause of missionary education during the long period of fortyfive years, he was induced to accept the title of Hon. Principal of the College.

After leaving Madras Dr. Miller lived in Burgo Park, his home in Bridge of Allan and in Edinburgh. He died in 1923.

THOUGHT

1. Education as preparation for the Gospel:

William Miller was one of the great educational missionaries, the Free Church of Scotland sent to India. First among such missionaries was Alexander Duff. They were sent to India to start institutions of higher education on the western lines, with the conviction that their work would prove to be a preparation for the Gospel. Miller was of the view that once western thought and English literature were introduced in the Indian schools and colleges, whether they were run by the missionaries or by

Government, the Christian element could not be excluded completely. According to Miller, European thought was Christian thought, and the love revealed in Jesus Christ was the key to human history and the germ of all true progress. According to Miller "the Scriptures were to be the spearhead for all other knowledge the well fitted handle."

2. History of salvation an education of mankind:

In a lecture delivered in Madras in 1890 on the Christian understanding of God's dealing with mankind, Miller dealt with the salvation of mankind as a historical process in which God makes use of all nations and religions. This is a rejection of the assumption that Christianity has the monopoly for truth. In a series of lectures delivered in 1895 with the title 'The Place of Hinduism in the Story of the World', Miller spelt out the contributions of Hinduism to the education of mankind. He pointed out its strong sense of the all pervading nature of God and its emphasis on social solidarity. According to Miller, if those ideas were developed in the right way the ideals of Hinduism would be fulfilled, and Miller thought that that would happen within Hinduism through the work of Christ. In this connection Miller made a distinction between Christ and Christianity. He thought that the living God was near to every man and that from Him every man might learn for himself what his special call was and what his special duty was. According to Miller, those who hear God's call or to whom their duty is revealed, need not conform to the customs and thoughts that prevail among the so-called Christian nations, churches or Christian missionaries. Miller thinks that it is Christ who calls and invites response. Christ, according to Miller, stands apart, seeking to found no sect and upset none, but only to make people know that each of them has a place in the Father's heart. What a seeker has to do is only with Christ and not with Christianity.

Miller has attempted to explain his conception of a Christian nation. He does not think that it is a society in which every member regulates his life by Christ's ideal; nor a society in which evil holds no sway and of which the thoughts and

tendencies and arrangements are to be regarded in all respects as models. According to Miller it is infinitely far from this, and the well tilled soil encourages the growth of tares as well as wheat. It is with many drawbacks and much corruption that ideals become actuals in any measure. He explains his conception of a Christian nation as follows. "In it some few have heartily accepted Christ's ideal and in varying degrees are putting it in practice. In it the lower and yet noble ideals find a fitting home and work for good. These ideals, which sometimes do and sometimes do not put on a specially Christian form, are working for moral good on a large part of the community. But all the time there is a large part on which neither Christ's ideal nor any other has taken any effective hold." (*Pioneers of the Indigenous Christianity* pp 192-193)

3. India's contribution to the moral story of the world:

Miller believes that like Greece, Rome and other nations, India also has a contribution to make to the moral story of the world. He goes on to trace India's contribution as an answer to his own question: Has India, like Greece, like Rome, like Israel, anything good which has grown up specially in it, anything which bears its lesson with it for every race on earth, anything which belongs of right to the moral story of the world? "My answer is, India has something, has much, which though developed in her isolation, is meant to be available, and ought now to be made available, for mankind. India has her ideal, and whatever be the weeds which hinder its bringing forth fruit unto perfection, it is an ideal of which the world has need. The chief characteristics of this ideal may be hurriedly defined. There is the thought of the irresistible power that dwells somehow in the universe, a power which man can never change, to which it is his only wisdom to submit. There is the thought that God, that the Divine, is not merely over all but in all, that the whole being of the world and those who dwell in it is the expression of divinity." (*Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* p.186).

While appreciating what is good in Hinduism, Miller does not hesitate to point out the unhealthy trends which prevailed in

Hinduism at that time. According to Miller, the education of women, the remarriage of widows, fixing proper age for marriage, relaxation of the rules of caste and such other issues must be tackled not in the traditional way but with a difference. According to him, it is not always those who seem best prepared that are honoured, to do the greatest things for man. By way of example he points out that it was not the men of real Greece, but Alexander and his Macedonians, a half barbaric tribe, who spread the influence of Greece abroad and it was not one of the carefully trained apostles, but Paul of Tarsus, an outsider that did most to make, Christ's ideal powerful throughout the western world. "There is the thought that all men or all men within the Hindu pale, are inseparably linked, are responsible for one another, must in no circumstances part from one another." (quoted in *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* P. 186)

4. Jesus Christ the new Ideal:

While admitting that Hinduism has great ideals to offer to the moral story of mankind, Miller presents a new ideal which is Jesus of Nazareth. With regard to this ideal Miller writes: "Nearly nineteen centuries ago one appeared who set forth a new ideal. Supported by signs of many kinds that God was with him and by such a life of purity and love as no one else has lived before or since, Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus called the Christ, set before men a scheme of life which as a matter of simple fact has wrought towards the union of many of the races, has wrought towards the union and interaction of their ideals and has given new life to whatever noble thoughts had been previously at work in any of them" (Ibid P.189f). According to Miller, not only for a nation or a people but for each individual God has concern; God guides his life and makes it serviceable for noble ends.

5. The Question of Baptism:

When Miller's theological position caused a sensation in Madras and demanded his resignation, Miller had to defend his position. In that context he also discussed the question of baptism. According to Miller, Christians of his time were asking those who felt their way to the living God and to Christ, to go to

them. If they did not, they would perish. He writes, "I hope that not even the strongest of my opponents hold altogether these sentiments, but their clamour for baptism, their pressing men on to baptism in advance of convictions, their taking nothing except baptism into account, makes this appear to be their teaching, and thus leads those who regard them as representatives of the Christian spirit into a complete misconception of what that spirit is. It is because I daily see the terrible harm which this state of matters is working throughout India that I have put, and while life last shall put, openness of heart to God and Truth, and willingness to learn of Christ, emphatically in the first place and baptism emphatically in the second" (quoted in *Pioneers of Indigenous Christianity* P. 77). Miller would not deny that some Hindus are called by God to be baptised; but some are not.

P.T.T.

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P. C. MOZOOMDAR

(1840-1905)

LIFE

Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar was born in 1840 at Basberia, 24 miles north of Calcutta. He belonged to the Vaidya Caste and was distantly related to Keshub Chandra Sen. After completing his school education, he joined the Presidency College and studied there for two years. As he was weak in Mathematics he had to leave the college without taking a degree. He came into contact with leaders of the Brahmo Samaj, especially Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and Keshub Chandra Sen. He signed the Samaj covenant in 1859.

Mozoomdar married Soudamini when he was eighteen years old. In 1862 he took his wife to Maharshi Debendranath Tagore. This was opposed by Orthodox Hindus as Tagore had lost his caste because of his association with the Muslims. Mozoomdar decided to stand firm and they were excommunicated from their caste.

Mozoomdar served for a short time at the Bank of Bengal. Very soon he realised that work in the Bank was not what he wanted to do. He was far more interested in the work of preaching religion. With his patrimony of Rs. 10,000.00 he bought his Peace Cottage which was near Keshub Chandra Sen's Lily Cottage. His chief occupation became reading and he wrote articles for the *Indian Mirror* which was started by Keshub and his friends as a fortnightly, then made a weekly and finally a daily.

In 1865 Mozoomdar with many others left the Adi Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of Keshub and founded the Brahmo

Samaj of India. Mozoomdar was appointed Assistant Secretary. He also became a Minister of the Samaj and began to preach in Bengali and Hindi. When he was thirty years old he started delivering public lectures in English.

From about 1872 Mozoomdar began to edit and publish a yearly record of religious thought and missionary activities under the name *Theistic Annual*. This was followed by the *Theistic Quarterly Review* and much later by the *Interpreter*. He also wrote articles for *Dharmatattwa* the Bengali Organ of the Brahma Samaj of India. When the *Interpreter* came under the control of the Church of the New Dispensation he wrote articles for it also. In 1874 he visited England.

In 1878 the second schism took place following the marriage of Keshub's daughter with the young *Maharaj* of Kuch Behar and the Sadharana Brahma Samaj was formed. After this schism he remained entirely cut off from his friends and admirers who were in the Sadharana Brahma Samaj. In 1883 he revisited England and from there he went to America. Along with Keshub Chandra Sen and Swami Vivekananda, Mozoomdar attended the Parliament of Religions. Soon after his second visit; he published the *Oriental Christ*. It was essentially a new contribution to Christology.

Keshub Chandra Sen passed away before Mozoomdar returned from America. After his death serious differences about doctrinal and organisational matters broke out among his disciples and the Samaj was divided into several opposing parties. Mozoomdar found himself most unwillingly at the head of one of these groups.

Soon after the death of Keshub Chandra Sen, Mozoomdar wrote an excellent biography of Keshub. He also wrote aids to moral character for young people and *Stri-Charita Sangathan* in Bengali for women. While in America in 1884 Mozoomdar published his most important work the *Spirit of God*. He passed away on 27 May 1905.

In his twenties Mozoomdar had a spiritual experience which was a turning point in his life. About this experience, Mozoomdar

writes in his book *Oriental Christ*. His personal circumstances forced him to a personal relationship to Christ. He felt a deep sense of sin which grew in him, and with it developed a deep restlessness. Mozoomdar says that he was mysteriously led to feel a personal affinity to the Spirit of Christ. One day he was sitting on the bank of the large lake in the Hindu College compound, praying and shedding tears. Then he had a vision which he describes as follows: "Jesus lay discovered in my heart as a strange, human, kindred love, as a repose, a sympathetic consolation, an unpurchased treasure to which I was freely invited. The response of my nature was unhesitating and immediate. Jesus, from that day, to me became a reality whereon I might lean. It was an impulse then a flood of light, love, and consolation. It is no longer an impulse now. A character, a spirit, a holy, sacrificed, exalted self, whom I recognise as the true Son of God (quoted in *The significance of Jesus Christ in Asia* by Hans Staffner S. J., P. 74). This vision had a lasting influence in the life of Pratap Chandra Mozoomdar.

THOUGHT

1. Pantheism:

Mozoomdar has a soft corner for Pantheism which was rejected by Brahma Samaj. Though Pantheism which identifies the universe with its maker is rejected, it recognises the spirit of a presiding Providence in all things. According to Mozoomdar the Divine Spirit permeates the very core of matter and of humanity. At the same time it is absolutely different from both matter and humanity. He thinks that 'there is no flight of fowls to their evening home that is not directed by the unerring hand of Divine Love. There is no lily in the field and no rose in the valley whose blossom and fragrance do not come from the breath of Infinite Beauty. There is no beauty, no wisdom, no faithfulness, no purity, no piety and self-sacrifice that is not inspired by Him, (*The Oriental Christ*, 1887 P. 41). According to Mozoomdar it is eminently the spiritual instinct of India.

Mozoomdar attempts to synthesise the Hindu and Christian conceptions of the Spirit which provides a framework for his Christology. He does not think that everything reveals the Spirit equally. According to Mozoomdar there is an evolutionary movement of the Spirit. With regards to this movement Mozoomdar writes: "In continually higher, clearer, nearer revelations through all things does the Spirit approaches our nature, till he makes his glorious abode in ourselves. We find our home in all objects, they find their home in us when God incarnates himself in what he has made with all that is now knowable of him, he is here, all things show him, they are his forms, his thoughts, the features of his countenance deeply veiled. He lives in the outward nature as the soul in an august body" (*The Spirit of God*, 1894 P. 10). According to Mozoomdar the Spirit lives in man as the presiding spirit of his mind, heart, and soul; and the same Spirit of God as the evolutionary principle is a fundamental doctrine of Hinduism. Mozoomdar thinks that the same idea can be seen in Christianity that the Spirit illumines the Triune nature of God.

2. Christology:

Like most other Brahmos of his time, he felt that his understanding of Christ was different from that of the missionaries. It is in an attempt to describe this difference that he uses the terms 'Western Christ' and 'Eastern Christ.' According to Mozoomdar Western Christ is a learned man well versed in all the principles of theology. His doctrine is historical, exclusive, arbitrary and opposed to the ordinary instincts and natural commonsense of mankind. But the Eastern Christ according to Mozoomdar is simple, natural, a stranger to the learning of books. He speaks from the profound, untaught impulses of his divine soul and when he speaks nations bow their heads.

According to Mozoomdar, Christ is unique for various reasons. He completes all other partial and local incarnations and makes for a truly spiritual and universal incarnation of the Spirit. He thinks that in the Spirit, Jesus was in Socrates, Abraham and

such other men. He is the Divine Man. He perfectly embodies the true and universal relation between God and man. Mozoomdar understands Christ as the most perfect manifestation possible of eternal Reason. He has attempted to explain the life, death, resurrection and second coming of Jesus Christ in terms of the spiritual mission of the Divine Humanity.

3. Spirit:

According to Mozoomdar the Christian scriptures testify abundantly to the personality of the Holy Spirit. He thinks that it was the Spirit which led him to Christ. He also sees the working of the Spirit in the expansion of Christianity. But he complains that the Christian Church has delegated the Holy Spirit to the margin with the result that the theology of the church has become perverted. According to Mozoomdar, the claims of the church with regard to the Holy Spirit are defective as they do not conceive the primacy of the Holy Spirit in creation, in the spiritual development of humankind, in the manifestation of Divine Humanity and in the building up of the Church.

Mozoomdar explains the meaning of the person and work of Christ against the background of the Holy Spirit. Following Keshub's idea of Divine Humanity and connecting it with his own experience of the moral character of Jesus, he discusses the relation between Christ and God.

4. The Universal Religion:

According to Mozoomdar Jesus Christ completes and reconciles all revelations of the Spirit in the religious history of humankind. He repudiates the idea of equality of all religions on the one hand and the idea of any one religion as having a monopoly of inspiration of the Spirit on the other. Mozoomdar thinks that each religion is the offspring of the Spirit, according to the need and nature of the people. But he expected the emergence of a Universal Religion in the future. In his view, the harmony has already been realised in the Brahma Samaj.

5. *Moral Law and the Spirit:*

Mozoomdar makes a clear distinction between a man obeying moral laws and his having a spirit which acts morally by its nature. He also speaks about his alienation from the spirit and the law of righteousness. Explaining the difference between these two positions, he gives the example of two teachers. One of them teaches many things, every rule of life and every detail of conduct. But the other teacher teaches in such a way that his disciples do what is right and good instinctively. What is important, according to Mozoomdar, is to kindle the Spirit in man, and then leave the rest to the man himself.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Thomas Ebenezer Slater was born on 10 April 1840 at Chesham in Buckinghamshire. As a boy, he lived in Somerset and Devon with his father, Rev. William Slater, who worked in those places as a Congregational minister. After his school and college education, Slater joined the Spring Hill College, Birmingham, for his theological studies.

In 1866, he went to Calcutta as an L. M. S. missionary to teach in the Bhayanipur Institute in Calcutta and to be pastor of a small English congregation at the Hastings Chapel in the City. His apprenticeship to missionary work was interrupted after three years by illness and he had to go back to England. When he returned to India he was sent to take charge of the English Institution of the London Mission in Armenian Street, Madras.

Slater was interested in the study of Hinduism in relation to Christianity. In 1875 he was set free from his normal duties to give all his time and energy to this special field of evangelism. Through his books and lectures, the letters he wrote, and the constant visits he made, he won the respect, friendship and the love of many thoughtful Hindus throughout South India. From 1888 he had his headquarters in Bangalore, and for 22 years he worked from there.

Slater wrote his first book, *God Revealed* in 1872. In 1882 he wrote *The Philosophy of Mission*. Two years later he published *Keshub Chandra Sen and Brahma Samaj* which showed keen

insight into the aspirations and wide sympathy for the perplexities of those Hindus who were striving to follow one of India's greatest moral teachers. *Reasonable Faith, Missions and Sociology, Child Marriage and Enforced Widowhood* and some other books and booklets were also published, which were of great value. The two books in which he showed his profound acquaintance with Hindu philosophy and his ability to evaluate it were his *Studies in the Upanishads and The Higher Hinduism in its Relation to Christianity*. Slater had the rare privilege to participate in the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893 and to present a paper on *Concessions to Native Ideas Having Special Reference to Hinduism*. Such work had little immediate result.

Slater persevered in spite of failing health and advancing years till his retirement in 1904, when he and his wife left India. They lived for four years in England. In September 1908, they went to Sydney. Slater engaged himself in Christian activities in the city. Two series of lectures, that he gave on Indian life and thought were particularly appreciated. He prepared a very informative paper for the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. With recovery of his health in Australia the closing three years were among the most productive. He threw himself with great vigour into the work of the mission study circles, one of which he conducted for a number of Anglican clergymen at Moore College, Sydney. Slater revisited India in 1908 and gave some lectures in Bangalore and Bellary.

His last sermon was preached at Hunters Hill, Sydney, in September 1911. He died on 31 January 1912. Sir William Mackworth Young KCSI who had been the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, did not hesitate to declare publicly at the London Missionary Society's annual meeting in 1912 that Slater had been the first man rightly to interpret the unrest of India and the first to discern in it the aspirations of the enlightened and the educated towards something higher.

THOUGHT

The influence of liberal theology prevalent in the West at that time was noticeable in the thinking of Slater. The major

contribution of liberalism in the field of religions was the fulfilment theory, according to which the seeking of God in all religions finds fulfilment in Christ. This idea informs the whole thinking of Slater.

1. Theology of religions:

According to Slater, every religion is in some measure the revelation of the Divine Spirit in spite of its imperfections. Even superstitious religious beliefs are distorted expressions of genuine truths.

With regard to the relationship of Christianity with the Religions in Greece and Rome, Slater thought that those religions were absorbed into Christianity not by destroying them, but by assimilating all the good elements in them, such as Greek philosophy and literature, into Christianity. Slater thought that the religious aspirations of lower religions could be fulfilled in higher religions as they stand higher in the evolution of religions.

According to Slater, all religions are in a process of evolution and Christianity by virtue of its position on a higher evolutionary level is destined to fulfil the religious aspirations of lower religions. Christ, according Slater, is the fulfiller and reconciler of other faiths.

2. Consummation of Religions:

Slater thought that Christianity cannot be fully appreciated unless viewed in relation to other historic faiths. Therefore the comparative study of religions is important. In the comparative study of religions, according to Slater, we would realise that man has made religions and also the purpose for which man has made them.

Fragmentary truths are found in all religions. But fragmentary truths lose their power over the mind and life because they lack the support of their kindred verities and cannot be welded together in one definite body of beliefs. He writes: "It is not the same thing to see precious stones scattered in different quarries and to see them combined in a beautiful mosaic." Slater thought

that precious stones in all religions could be combined in a beautiful mosaic, which according to Slater, is Christ.

3. Hindu Scriptures:

Slater thought that the Hindu Scriptures such as the Vedas and the Vedanta would ever stand out among the monumental achievements of humankind and they would always be deeply interesting studies of a phase of thought through which a nation has passed. But in the various religious scriptures of the world, there is a survival of the fittest, and what will survive is that which speaks most closely, not so much to the intellect as to the conscience and the heart of men and women, learned and unlearned, in the West and in the East. There is nothing derogatory in this to 'the Sacred Books of the East.' They have a place to fill and some noble thoughts to contribute to the religious systems of the world.

4. A New Outlook in Theology:

According to Slater, since God is in the world, it is the scene of theology and the oriental context has a legitimate bearing on the formulation and development of Christian theology. Slater was of the opinion that the theology of mission should be reformulated in the context of intense patriotism and nationalism. Slater thought that Christian missions began to function in the East, when the missionaries and the leaders of the Church did not know much about other religions.

In his book *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity*, Slater observes that in providential guidance, those religious communities that have advanced through centuries of growth, and written the pathetic story of their human interests and miseries in their temples, laws and homes are destined for a greater destiny than to be swept away as vestiges of evil with no message for the modern world. But in the process of consummation some religions may disappear after the good elements in them have been assimilated by some higher religion.

According to Slater, the scientific study of religions made it clear that all religions stand in need of correction and

completion. God's revelation of Himself is not static; it is a living and ongoing revelation. Slater points out that we have to move from an individualistic conception of salvation to a wider understanding of God's redemption embracing the whole society.

P.T.T.

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10

A. S. APPASAMY

(1848-1926)

LIFE

Arumugam S. Appasamy was born in 1848 in an old family village near Palamcottah (Tamilnadu). His father was a government revenue officer of the village, which was a hereditary post. The family was of the Vellala caste and adhered to the orthodox Saivite religious tradition of South India. His mother used to attend the shrines of Siva and Vishnu and worshipped also lower deities. The traditional deity of the family was Veeramanohari Amman (literally: goddess of bold mind) whose legends spoke of fury and terror. The atmosphere of Appasamy's home was deeply religious, and he followed the religious convictions and practices of his parents and elders up to the thirteenth year.

At the village mission school established by the Church Missionary Society, as well as in the Christian congregation in the nearby villages, young Appasamy came into contact with Christianity. He also heard missionary street-preaching. But he was not interested in Christian teachings. He continued to be attracted by the stories and devotional songs of the Saivite devotees of the Tamil country, the Nayanmars. He also read the Tamil ethical works like *Tirukkural* and *Naladiyar*.

From 1844 there was a Mission Boys' School for English education in Palamcottah, about 50 miles away from his village; and under its influence several young people, as in Bengal, lost their faith in traditional Hinduism. Some of them had accepted Christ. One of them was Pandit H. A. Krishna Pillai the Tamil

poet who became famous later through his metrical version of *Pilgrim's Progress* on the model of the Tamil *Ramayana*. Appasamy went to study in that school and stayed at Krishna Pillai's house. As there was no Saiva home where he could take food without losing caste, arrangements were made for him to do his own cooking. According to Appasamy's autobiography, "the contact with H. A. Krishna Pillai was indeed the first cause of my ultimate conversion to Christianity." In religious conversation he continued to be a militant defender of Saivism. But Krishna Pillai's saintliness, he found irresistible.

In Madras, where the Hindu youth of Tamilnadu had to go for higher education, there was a growing search for new religious paths as alternative to secular rationalism and Christianity. Brahma Samaj and Theosophy were alternatives for those who wished to remain Hindu. In 1867, when Appasamy went to Madras for higher education, he also began to examine these alternatives. But his father, sensing danger, took him home and found a job for him in Palamcottah. The son made a promise to the father that he would not become a Christian without informing him. At Palamcottah, Appasamy made a deeper study of the Bible, along with Vedanta and Saiva Siddhanta systems. In the end he became convinced about the truth of the mystery of the Incarnation and the Passion of Christ in relation to the problem of reconciling justice and mercy in God's dealings with humanity. After facing hostilities and suffering, and the heart-rending break with family and caste traditions, Appasamy received baptism on 15 July 1871 at Madras at the age of twenty-three.

The spiritual break with his past was not accompanied in his case with a total break with the religious culture of his community. At baptism he refused to remove the *kudumi* (tuft of hair on the head) or to adopt a different name or to take to the freedom of meat-eating as was the custom. He also continued his study of Hinduism, Brahma theism and Theosophy. In due course he took the initiative to be reconciled with his family. In fact his father arranged his marriage with the daughter of a Christian government servant with whose family he had become friendly.

By 1895 Appasamy studied law and took up the legal profession. He became a successful lawyer. He kept good social relations with people of all castes and religions both at Tuticorin and Palamcottah. Later he became interested in the politics of nationalism, attending the Indian National Congress sessions in Madras (1886) and Bombay (1888). In 1900 he retired from his profession and gave himself to evangelistic work among the villagers and the educated. *Why I became a Christian?* and other pamphlets in Tamil were written during this period. In co-operation with Azariah (later Bishop of Dornakal) he organised the Tinnevely Missionary Society and became its first president. He was also associated with the organisation of the National Missionary Society and served on its council. In 1921 the government recognised his public services and conferred on him titles of honour.

In his attitude to Hindu religion, a radical change was noticeable in the years of retirement. Through his continued study of Hindu scriptures he began to see in them a preparation for the gospel. He became more contemplative, spending more and more time in meditation and prayer. His nephew, the son of his Hindu sister, was a Saiva mystic and scholar in Saiva Siddhanta. Appasamy accepted him as his spiritual *guru* in his practice of *dhyana* (contemplation) and *yoga* (spiritual discipline). He found that it deepened his understanding of the Christian truth and the experience of the mystery of Christ. With this he entered more vitally into the truth expounded in the prologue to the gospel of St. John, relating Christ to the Saivite religion. It is thus that he became the pioneer in South India (as K.M. Banerjee was in Bengal) of an *Indian Interpretation of Christianity*, under which title, his son A. J. Appasamy (later Bishop) explained the line his father's Indian theology was taking during his last days. Just before his death he wrote the book of Yogasadhana entitled *Use of Yoga in Prayer*.

THOUGHT

Appasamy's concept of the Church of Christ was not of a religious community totally separated from the Hindu religious community; at the level of religious forms and cultural life it was in some sense conceived as part of the Hindu community. As has been already observed, at baptism his refusal to remove his kudumi or take a new name or afterwards to take to meat-eating at a time, when there was a regular crusade against Christians retaining any Hindu elements in their lives points to a new concept of the Church. He wrote later: "Looking back to these incidents from this distance of time, it seems to us that it was unwise to insist on these non-essentials which made converts ridiculous, and degrade them in the eyes of their Hindu neighbours and served to make the gulf between the converts and them wider and more annoying." It was his understanding of Jesus Christ as transcending and therefore saving cultures and religions from their idolatries, that made him see the possibility of a Christianity differentiated from Hinduism only in the essentials of the faith.

Appasamy's Indian interpretation of Christian theology lay at the following points:

Firstly, God is Light. Appasamy points to the scriptural basis for that statement. St. John speaks of God as Light. In the first account of creation in Genesis light is created first. Being Light himself, God creates light first. In the burning bush, Moses saw God as a mass of enveloping light. Elijah rode on a chariot of fire. Isaiah's lips were sanctified by a live coal from the altar. The testimony of Hinduism reinforces this. *Deva* (God) is from the root *Div* i.e. to shine. The Hindu god Subramonia means holy light of God. Skanda Purana says that from God who is light, the sun proceeds also as light to create, protect and save the world. The Gayatri Mantra contemplates God as sun. The common people see it as worship of the sun, but it is actually addressed to God as Light. The light of the sun entering us and giving us life is the light of God who therefore is Light as well as Life.

This stage in which God is a mass of light, corresponds to the Hindu conception of undifferentiated God, Brahman. "Christians might speak of God in this stage as the undifferentiated God, for the Son and the Holy Spirit were yet in Him and had not come forth." From here, combining Genesis I and John I, Appasamy comes to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity in such a way that creation takes place by and through Christ. Gen 1:2 speaks of the Spirit of God moving over the waters. It means that the worlds and all creatures came into being as the result of the co-working of God and the Holy Spirit. But taking Ps. 2:7 (The Lord begetting the Son) as a *mahavakya* of the generation of the Son and Jn 1:3 (that all things were made by the divine logos), it is clear that Ps. 2:7 should be placed between the Spirit moving on the face of the waters and the following account of creation; for after that it is Christ who creates, and wherever God occurs we should read Christ. This would make sense of God creating humanity in the divine image which is Christ.

This leads Appasamy to affirm that before assuming the physical body in Jesus, Christ has an invisible spiritual body (*sukshma sarira*). It is in this spiritual body that Christ visits Abraham (Gen. 18:2) and Moses (Ex. 33:18-23) and guides Israel (I Cor.10:4), appears as the fourth with the three young men in the fire (Dan. 3:25). Transfiguration is the revelation by Jesus of his spiritual body to the disciples. It is the oft repeated "glory" of St. John's gospel. This means that Christ in his spiritual body gives vision (*darsan*) of himself to all people who long for it.

Based on this idea of the relation of Brahman to the Triune God, the generation of Christ with his spiritual body creating and guiding and illumining the world and humanity, and the incarnation of Christ in the physical body, Appasamy makes his case for *dhyana* (spiritual contemplation) and *yoga* (spiritual discipline of integration) as means of visualising not only God as primeval light but also Christ in the glory of his spiritual body. He says, that in dhyana and yogic sadhana, Hindus and Christians alike may see God as pure light, and realise the glory of Christ in his spiritual body. "So the external technical apparatus of

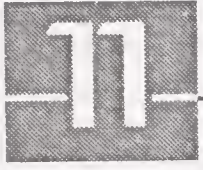
yoga may be Hindu, but its inner spiritual experience will serve as a pathway to the feet of our Lord." The conclusion is that a Christian may learn to pray and meditate from Hinduism. In India, Christians may well learn to appropriate Christ both in the glory of his spiritual body in the inwardness of the soul as in St. John, in his physical incarnate body in historical events as in the Synoptics. The one subordinates history to metaphysics, the other metaphysics to history.

A.J. Appasamy concludes by saying that this may well be regarded as a type of interpretation of Christianity in the India of the future. And it gives a broader and a more sympathetic appreciation of the evolution of religious thought in India as it assimilates in theory and life the best that Hindu scriptures as well as Hindu teachers have to offer.

M.M.T.

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PANDITA RAMABAI

(1858-1922)

LIFE

Ramabai was born in the South Kanara district of Karnataka on 23 April 1858. She had a brother and a sister older to her. Her father Anant Sastri Dongra, a Maratha Chitpavan Konkanastha Brahmin, was a scholar in Hindu scriptures. Though orthodox, he went against the tradition in teaching Sanskrit to his wife and later his daughters. In that sense he was quite reformist. Ever since Ramabai could remember, the Dongra family was on spiritual pilgrimage to holy places, staying in each place for a period, bathing in the sacred river or tank, visiting temples, worshipping gods and making a living by reciting puranas.

Both of her parents and her sister died during the pilgrimage. Ramabai then travelled with her brother and came to Calcutta in 1888. She was then thirty years old and had become well-known as a Sanskrit scholar and lecturer. So the Senate of Calcutta University honoured her with the titles, *Pandita* and *Saraswathi*.

Her brother died of cholera. She married a Bengali lawyer Babu Behari Das Medhavi of the Sudra caste. He was a Brahmo Samajist. They had a civil marriage. The husband died of cholera after nineteen months leaving her and a baby daughter Manorama.

Pandita Ramabai moved to Poona where she joined the Brahmo group there—the Prarthana Samaj. She established the Arya Mahila Samaj in Bombay and other townships of Maharashtra

for the education and emancipation of Hindu women. She wrote in Marathi the book *Stree Dharma Neeti* dealing with questions of morality and justice for women in Hindu society.

Through Brahmos and through some Mission contacts in Calcutta, Ramabai had come to know of Jesus Christ and Christianity. At Poona she also came to know Nehemiah Gorch at the Cowley Fathers' Mission and had conversations with him on Brahmoism and Christianity. But she remained a Brahmo theist:

Ramabai left for England with her daughter with a view to improving her education and if possible to become a medical doctor so that she might serve the women of India better. It was during her stay at the Community of Anglican Sisters at Wantage that she corresponded with Sastri Goreh further about Christianity. She accepted baptism on 29 September 1883.

From England Ramabai travelled to America to canvass support for a House for Brahmin child-widows that she wanted to establish. She returned to Poona and started the Sharada Sadan as a secular rather than a Christian institution. The Christian community of Poona did not like this. But her Christian influence led to some conversions of Hindu widows. This led to the resignation of the Hindu members from the Sadan's governing board. A famine in Maharashtra led her to start the Mukti mission at Kedgaon conceived as a Christian settlement.

In later years Ramabai and her institutions were caught up in a wave of spiritual revivalism and she found her experience of the Holy Spirit giving her a spiritual security in Jesus Christ unknown to her before. Her daughter died in Miraj Hospital in 1921. Her own death came on 5 April 1922 at Kedgaon at the age of 64.

Pandita Ramabai is primarily known for her pioneering leadership in the movement for the liberation of Indian women. She effectively led the nation in a rethinking of the tradition of Hindu dharma on womanhood. Her conversion from traditional Hinduism to Brahmo theism was accepted as part of the Hindu reform movement, but her conversion from Brahmoism to

Christianity produced a great controversy among Hindu reformers. Ramabai's emphasis on considering herself a non-denominational Christian participating in the Hindu women's liberation movement, and continuing her recitals and lectures on the Puranas led to Christians questioning her Christian conversion. Thus she was isolated from Christians and Hindus, striking her lonely path with rational freedom and spiritual courage. She found in her Pentecostal experience of the indwelling Christ in the end, the authority and the anchor she needed to stick to her own path of faith and prophetic action in society.

THOUGHT

Pandita Ramabai's significance for Indian theology lies in the fact that the ethos of her Hindu upbringing and her love of spiritual freedom revolted against and questioned the relevance of the established dogmatic Christianity of the West imported to India and that she was searching for a spiritual authority for an Indian experiment in defining the Christian faith in simple nonmetaphysical terms and in relating it to service to society. Nehemiah Goreh was able to help her see that Christ transcended Brahmo theism, but in argument with the Anglicans she asserted that Christ transcended the Anglicanism of Goreh and the Community of the Sisters of Wantage. She saw in the direct experience of the Holy Spirit the possibility of a form of Christianity which corresponded to the ethos of liberation from all established traditions and dogmatic formulations and of individual liberty.

Several points emerged in her arguments with the advocates of Anglican Catholicism in England. The Sisters were tolerant of her vegetarianism up to a point, but considered it pure caste prejudice. Ramabai's answer was, "I like to be called a Hindu for I am one and also keep all the customs of my forefathers as far as I can." In contrast to the teaching contained in the Bible, Ramabai was confused by the daily ceremonial rites and rituals practised by Wantage Sisters; and she resisted the demand that

she as a Christian was obliged to follow them. More especially Ramabai in her letter to Sister Geraldine said she could not see why becoming a member of the Church of Christ meant accepting as authoritative, "every word that falls down from the lips of priests and bishops." To the charge that assertion of liberty was lawless, she retorts that "obedience to law and the word of God" is different from perfect obedience to priests. "I have just with great effort freed myself from the yoke of the Indian priestly tribe, so I am not at present willing to place myself under another yoke." In her opinion, "people should not think that they are masters of others' conscience."

The Sisters and priests of Wantage did not like her raising doubts and seeking clarification or enlightenment about Anglican doctrines. It was her contention that faith was not just blind acceptance, but involved for her an attempt at understanding, in the light of reason, Hindu tradition and Christian scriptures. She did not see her confession of Christ as meaning the acceptance of all the Anglican doctrines. She wrote: "You have never gone through the same experience of choosing another religion for yourself, which was totally foreign to you as I have." In any case, she could not accept that the Holy Catholic Church was confined within the walls of the Anglican Church and its dogmas. The denominational division within the Church confused her. In her letter to the wife of Justice Ranade, she complains that to an already caste-divided Hinduism, Christianity adds denominational divisions; she says that the only answer to it is for missionaries, preachers of all denominations, to decide the essential doctrines of Christianity and establish "one united Christian Church—an indigenous National Church," for then alone they will "be worthy" to preach Christ to Indians. Till then, the convert has to struggle for the truth of Christ. She says: "It is to be imagined how hard I have to struggle sometimes between the Prayer Book, the Bible and Hindu religion and my own different understandings about them.... The simple faith in which I am baptised is sufficient for me."

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LIFE

Bernard Lucas was born on 2 November 1860 in Birmingham. He studied at Cheshunt College and was ordained on Sept.15, 1889 at the Congregational Church, Soho Hills, Birmingham. He was a member of the Soho Hill Congregational Church. He set sail on 14-10-1886 to take charge of his work at Gooty in South India as an L.M.S. missionary. He settled down in Gooty and carried on evangelistic work in the district. In 1889 he was asked to start a new station at Penocoonda. But as the site was not suitable the scheme was dropped. In 1890 he took charge of Wardlaw High School at Bellary, while he continued as superintendent of Penocoonda district with Anantapur as a new centre. In 1891 he was relieved of most of his responsibilities at Wardlaw High School by the appointment of a well qualified Indian Christian as Headmaster. On 14 December 1891 he married Mary Jane.

In 1915 Lucas was transferred to Bangalore. For his services to India during the Great War, he was made a "Member of the Order of the British Empire." He was one of the founder members of the United Theological College, Bangalore, and of the South India United Church. Bernard Lucas died at Bournemouth on 20 Feb. 1921 in his 61st year.

Of his six published works, *The Faith of a Christian* went through three editions and was translated into Chinese. *Conversation with Christ* went through two editions, and was translated into German. All the six books were published by

Macmillan Publishing Company. At the time of his death Lucas had two more books in hand viz. "The Faith of a Child" and "The Church's Mandate." He had also begun a "Life of Christ" in Telugu. He composed a number of Hymns both in Telugu and Canarese. He contributed articles to journals such as the *Harvest Field* on a wide variety of subjects ranging from Church Union and Indian leadership to a common script for the Indian languages.

THOUGHT

The chief concern of Bernard Lucas was the evangelisation of India. Naturally all his books except *Conversation with Christ* deal with different aspects of his main theme. He came to India at a time when missionaries and missionary societies were experiencing a certain frustration. He realised that the missionary enterprise had much less appeal than fifty years back. Lucas wanted to find out the reason for this decline. There was need for changes in the goal and methods of missionary work. He noticed the changes that had already taken place in the attitude of the missionaries to non-Christian religions. Lucas said, "We no longer call the Hindu a heathen, and we no longer ignore his religion and philosophy." According to him, the reason for the failure was that the Churches had failed to realise the nature of the task which awaited her. Lucas had a clear understanding of the standpoints of Indians and he understood the changed religious climate of India. In this changed context, he thought that Christianity had a message of life, of life more abundant. India has been waiting for this message.

1. His criticism of the Indian Church:

According to Lucas, the great defect of the Indian Church is not its lack of Indianness, but its pronounced foreignness. It is foreign in its name and organisation. In its thought and spirit it is western through and through. Church members preferred to call themselves Indian Wesleyan or Indian Lutherans. In the matter of organisation also, they were western. Western ecclesiastical conceptions prevailed in missions. The great obstacles to union

among Indian Churches were the pastors who were unwilling to lose their standing in the ecclesiastical organisations of England. The Indian Church had not yet succeeded in getting a suitable name for its ordained minister, but had adopted and tenaciously clung to the English title 'Reverend.' Cassocks, collars and stoles were all paraded before the Hindus to emphasise the foreignness of Christian religion. In the matter of theological formulas and rituals the same trend was at work. Creeds and confessions of faith, liturgies and order of services were all translations of western formulas rather than original contributions. If the Indian Church was to be representative of an India regenerated by the power and influence of Christ in which the religious Hindu might feel at home, it must, in its creeds and liturgies stand for Indian and not western modes of thought and feeling.

2. Proselytise Hindus or Evangelise India ?

Lucas thought it essential to be aware of the difference between Proselytism and Evangelism in order to do the evangelistic work in India effectively. The Church's first great missionary was brought up in Jerusalem, while it should be remembered that he was born in Tarsus and at it was the influences of Tarsus rather than of Jerusalem, which made him pre-eminently the missionary to the Gentiles.... Paul's life-long conflict with the Judaisers was basically a conflict between proselytising methods in the mission field and true evangelism. Lucas believed that our task in India was not to proselytise Hindus but to evangelise India. To many people there will be very little difference between proselytism and evangelism in our missionary enterprise. However, the dominant theme of the gospel is not the Church, but the Kingdom of God.

In this context, Lucas discussed the educational work carried out by Christian missions. There was a strong feeling among many Christians that the work should be confined to the education of the children of Christians. For Lucas, this can never be the standpoint of Evangelism. Indian Christians and the Churches to which they belong are often perfectly satisfied with ministering themselves, forgetting their Hindu neighbours. The

Indian Church must replace this proselytising zeal with the true evangelistic understanding of the Master's Great Commission. To do this work effectively, it needs not only a deepening of its spiritual life, but an intensifying of its national spirit. It must not only be more Christian, but also more Indian.

3. Christ for India :

According to Lucas, the watchword of the Church's missionary activity was "India for Christ." In the changed circumstances of India, he thought that the watchword should be "Christ for India." It is impossible for any westerner to stand in the Hindu's place, as his eyes turn towards that wondrous figure of the Christ; but it is possible to stand by his side and turn to direct his gaze in the right direction. One must face as he faces, if one's directing is to be of any help to him. In this context, Lucas made an attempt to explain the Hindu's understanding of God, and particularly the Vedantic conception of God. He also, discussed, man and the universe and man in relation to God and the universe. He dealt with the personality of Jesus, his Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection. Lucas thought that a Hindu could be a true follower of Jesus Christ without accepting baptism or even breaking his caste. From the Christian standpoint both baptism and the breaking of caste are matters of quite secondary importance. On the other hand, the sanctities of family life are of paramount importance, to be guarded at all cost. As long as the Hindu community is prepared to allow a Hindu who accepts Christianity to remain as a free man in its fold, there is no necessity for him to leave it. If baptism would involve an excommunication from the Hindu community, then such a man should not be baptised.

Commenting on the criticism that this position on caste is opposed to the spirit of Christ, Lucas says that caste distinctions are one thing, and the caste spirit another. There are caste distinctions which are without doubt prejudicial and harmful to the spirit of brotherhood which should be diffused throughout the whole community. The same, however, is equally true of the class distinctions to be found in the West. We do not however

refuse the name Christian to the Westerner who observes them, and there is still less reason for refusing it to the Hindu.

4. Vedantic conception of God and Jesus:

According to Lucas, of all the schools of philosophical religious thought in India, the Vedanta is the one which is most characteristic of Hindu religion. It represents the goal beyond which Hindu thought cannot go, so long as it proceeds along the road which has been characteristic of every true Hindu thought-movement. One could not but have a profound admiration for its absolute fidelity to the path it had chosen, and one should acknowledge that it has rendered the greatest service by demonstrating with strict accuracy, the logical goal of Hindu religious thought. One of the essential features in Vedantism is the distinction it draws between reality and unreality; therefore it is important to discover what is the criterion which it uses to distinguish the one from the other.

Lucas has attempted to compare Vedantic thought with the religious consciousness of Jesus. He comes to the conclusion that Jesus never distinguished between a self which was not divine and one that was. The self in Jesus was a single self in perfect harmony with the self of God. This consciousness was not something to which he had attained, it was the only consciousness he possessed. In the consciousness of Jesus, humanity finds the true knowledge both of the self and of God, for which it has sought through the ages; and through the Son realises that religious aspiration of the soul after union with God for which it has never ceased to crave.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

*B*havani Charan Banerjee, later known as Brahmabandhav Upadhyay was born on 2 February 1861 in a Brahmin family in Khanyan, a small village about 30 miles north of Calcutta. Before Brahmabandhav completed his first year, his mother died and he was brought up by his grandmother who was a devout Hindu. Kali Charan Banerjee, the founder of Christ Samaj in Calcutta, was his uncle, and naturally Brahmabandhav had occasions to come into contact with Christianity. He had his school education in the Scottish Mission School and college education in Hoogly College and later in the Metropolitan College.

While he was in the High School he became an ardent nationalist with very radical views. He made an attempt to enlist in the Gwallior army with a view to drive out the British with the help of the Gwallior army, but without success. Instead, he became a teacher. In 1887 Brahmabandhav joined the Church of the New Dispensation formed by Keshub Chandra Sen. He met Vivekananda who was of the same age and they became close friends. Vivekananda also joined the Brahmo Samaj. In 1888, when he was 27 years old, Brahmabandhav went to Hyderabad in Sindh to teach Sanskrit at the Union Academy.

The interest awakened in him in the life and teachings of Jesus grew as a result of his friendship with the two Anglican missionaries in Hyderabad. He attended regularly the Bible classes which they led and gradually became convinced of the truth of Jesus' resurrection and of his co-eternal sonship. He gave his first lecture on Christ, in Karachi, in 1889. In his talk he tried to show how Christ in his sinlessness was unique among the prophets. On Feb. 26, 1891 he accepted baptism. He did not

join the church. But before the end of the year he joined the Catholic Church choosing the name Theophilus which he translated as Brahmabandhav.

After his baptism, his main concern was to develop some indigenous method to preach the gospel of Christ. The ideal of de Nobili influenced him and in 1894 he donned the ochre robe of a sannyasi. In the same year he started a monthly journal, *Sophia* which provided the main platform to express his views. When for the first time he went to the Catholic church in his new dress, the priest asked him to leave the church. Brahmabandhav appealed to the Bishop, in vain. When he reminded the Bishop that Robert de Nobili had worn the saffron robe in the 17th century, the bishop gave him permission. From that time onwards till the end of his life he lived as a sannyasin. By 1898 he made a master plan to establish a mutt at Jabalpur near the marble rocks. But after two years, because of the opposition of Church authorities he had to abandon the project. It was a turning point in his life.

In 1900 he moved from Jabalpur to Calcutta and engaged more and more in journalistic activities. He was drawn to the Advaitic doctrine of Sankara as a means to express Christian doctrine. For a time he worked with Rabindranath Tagore in founding the Ashram at Santiniketan. In January 1901 Upadhyay brought out the *Twentieth Century* as a monthly review under the combined editorship of N. Gupta and himself. Towards the end of 1904, appeared *Sandhya* as an evening paper which had an impact on the political life of Bengal and the whole of India till 1907. In the same year he started *The Swaraj*, his Bengali Weekly. He was arrested by the British government for sedition. Shortly afterwards he was admitted in the Campbel hospital for a chronic hernia operation. Though the operation was successful he passed away on 27 Oct. 1907. His last words were 'O Thakur' which was how he addressed Jesus.

THOUGHT

Soon after his conversion, Brahmabandhav attempted to find a natural foundation for Christianity in the religion of the Vedas. During this period he vehemently opposed Vedanta. Later on, especially after 1898, he attempted to build an Indian theology on Vedanta philosophy. However, his contribution towards a Vedic Christian theology is not insignificant. There are two stages in his theological thinking.

1. His theology before 1898:

Brahmabandhav believed that ancient Hinduism had been a pure theistic faith, and that polytheism, idolatry and pantheistic ideas of the Vedanta were later corruptions. He was convinced that the understanding of God, found in the Vedas, was in fact, the highest possible on a philosophical level. According to Brahmabandhav, the religion of India had fallen from such height and abandoned the true God. At this point, Brahmabandhav was one with the Arya Samaj, but their anthropomorphic conception of God and teaching on transmigration repelled him. He was critical of the Vedanta philosophy of Ramakrishna movement also. He could not accept their idea that 'God is all and all is God.' His attack of Annie Basant was even more vehement. In attacking all these movements he had one aim, i.e. to lead Hinduism back to its original form and thereby to prepare the ground for Christian faith. Brahmabandhav understood Christianity not as destroyer of Hinduism but as its fulfilment.

2. His theology after 1898:

The year 1898 marks decisive changes in his life and thinking. Brahmabandhav moved from Jabalpur to Calcutta. Bengal at that time was the centre of radical nationalism. Many Christian leaders of the time thought that the Hindu-nationalist in him was undermining his Christian commitment. But as a matter of fact, Brahmabandhav was one of the very few who had the courage to justify the nationalist movement as a Christian. He also felt the need to acknowledge India's cultural and religious heritage. He wanted to be a Hindu by culture and Christian by faith.

Another important change took place in his thinking. He moved from Vedas to Vedanta. He thought that Vedanta philosophy could form the basis for a Christian theology. He also thought that the Hindu race has been preserved by Providence, in order that its philosophy might mould the theology of future world Christianity. Brahmabandhav had also overcome his difficulty about maya which had forced him to oppose the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. Brahmabandhav gradually came to know that his interpretation of Sankara, following European scholars, was a misleading one. He came to the conclusion that created beings did not exist by necessity like God. They are neither real in the sense God is real nor unreal in the sense that they are mere illusion.

Once he got over this difficulty, he set out to formulate a Vedantic interpretation of Christianity. How can the conception of God as Nirguna Brahman, about whom we can say only *neti neti* be the God of the Christian religion? Another problem that baffled him was how the Absolute Being could be explained in terms of the mystery of the Trinity. He found the solution to these problems in the concept of Sat-Chit-Ananda. The Father is Sat—pure existence, the Son is Christ—the Logos, and Anand represents the Bliss of the Holy Spirit. Brahmabandhav believed that in this way he preserved a higher Conception of God than is possible on a personalist interpretation. He also thought that the greatest bliss for man is by contemplation to become united with God, with Brahma, who could be described only as Sat-Chit-Anand.

Brahmabandhav struggled with the one point where Christian religion seems to differ from the Advaita philosophy of Sankara. According to Advaita the goal of man is the realisation of Brahman and to become part and parcel of the Divine Ocean, without individuality. Brahmabandhav concludes that Christianity also admits this position; individuals do not exist by necessity or by right, but by the blessing of God. According to Brahmabandhav, the end of man is to know God as He is, to see

Him face to face, to be like Him and to be united with Him. Brahmabandhav finds support for this position in John 17:11.

According to Brahmabandhav, the final end of man's life has to be revealed to him and it was for this purpose that the Logos becomes incarnate. As the revelation of God, Christ is first of all 'Universal Teacher,' his teaching is for all nations, all ages and all climes. Jesus Christ claims to embrace all without any reserve and bring them to the Universal Light which enlightens every man that comes into the world. Another claim of Jesus is to unfold the mystery of God's inner life. The third claim is that Christ is God who suffers for our salvation. By this revelation of God, man receives not only illumination, but also grace. By God's grace alone man is capable of reaching illumination, seeing God as He is and being one with Him.

Unlike many of the Renaissance leaders, Brahmabandhav holds the view that caste should be accepted. He is inclined to accept the orthodox view of caste as he thinks that it is more scientific. He has advocated the integration of the caste-system into the Christian Church, a position that was not acceptable to most Christian leaders, including the missionaries of his time. Criticising Mahadeva Govind Ranade for crusading against caste, Brahmabandhav wrote in an article entitled "Varna Asram or the Aryan Social divisions" published in the *Twentieth Century*, 1 January 1901: 'The late lamented Smt. Ranade, in spite of his wonderful balance of judgement, favoured the reformed view more than the orthodox. When we survey the two positions, the orthodox and the heterodox, we feel more inclined to side with the former than with the latter. The reformer's contention seems to us to be unscientific' (quoted in the *Acknowledged Christ of the Indian Renaissance*).

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Susil Kumar Rudra was the eldest son of Pyari Mohan Rudra, a high caste Bengalee convert from Calcutta who was pastor of Trinity Church at Amherst Street and missionary of the CMS at Burdwan for many years. The date of Susil's birth is not mentioned in any of his biographies.

From his friend C.F. Andrews' writings, we know that during adolescence and student days in Calcutta, Rudra passed through a period of intellectual difficulties in personal Christian faith, that the years he spent with the Oxford Mission in Cornwallis Street, Calcutta, where he was exposed to the life-style and devotion of the fathers and sisters, helped him regain it.

In 1886 Rudra joined the Staff of St. Stephen's College, run by the SPG Cambridge Brotherhood in Delhi. After a few years he became Vice principal and warden of the Hostel. By 1902 he had become very popular both among students and colleagues.

He was a young man when he lost his wife. She died of a terrible illness after giving birth to their last child, and Rudra left quite disconsolate. He had now the responsibility to be father and mother to his three young children besides carrying on work at College. His deep faith in Christ sustained him, and deepened through the experience.

The sympathy of Basil Westcott in his sorrow was also a great help. They had become close friends. Westcott and C.F. Andrews were very good friends in Cambridge, and when Andrews joined

St. Stephen's staff in 1904, it was only natural for him to take the place of the late Basil Westcott in the life of Rudra and his family. The friendship between Rudra and Andrews was a blessing to both of them, to the college and to the nation.

In 1905 Rudra was appointed Acting Principal, and in 1907, Principal with the active support of the Mission and colleagues. It was the first instance of an Indian being made Principal of Mission college. As Principal he built up the College as a community, transcending as far as possible, caste, class, race and creed, and oriented to influence the national awakening among the Indian intelligentsia and the masses through human values centred in Christ. Rudra's circle of friends outside the College included people of many faiths, and he valued the Indian religious and cultural heritage deeply.

Rudra himself shared the spirit of Indian nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi was a frequent visitor at his home in Delhi; and Gandhi's open letter to the Viceroy giving concrete shape to the Khilafat claim was conceived and drafted under Principal Rudra's roof, with Andrews and Rudra helping in the revision. Gandhi says that non-cooperation was also conceived and hatched under Rudra's hospitable roof, and that Rudra was often a silent participant in private conferences of Gandhi in his house. It was Rudra's conviction, which he demonstrated through his life, that devoted Christian could be a committed nationalist.

In 1920 Rudra formulated certain principles for the efficient carrying out of Christian higher education in India. In 1930 Lindsay Commission endorsed them in its report.

In 1923 Rudra resigned from Principalship because of ill health and on 29 June 1925 he died at Solon in Simla.

THOUGHT

In an address to a Convention of Religions held in Allahabad in 1911, Rudra raised the central question of religion, namely 'man's relation to the Invisible God.' In his view, the relation of

man to his fellowmen is, "included in that question and is dependent on its answer."

Rudra affirmed both the Hindu quest for the "Real, the Eternal and the Unchanging" and the Hindu idea that it is impossible for the conditioned being of man to know with certainty in and through his conditioned existence, the essential character of the unconditioned God, the Nirguna Brahman, so that without the self-disclosure of God, positivism and agnosticism are the only alternatives. But in the concept of Brahman Saguna, Rudra finds a parallel to the concept of *Logos* which the Greek fathers used to explain the divine self-disclosure and incarnation of God in Jesus Christ. The conceptual birth becomes concrete and historical in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus "the incarnation expresses the eternal unchanging reality whom we call the Father in ways that we who are human can understand, the philosopher as well as the peasant." And the human being's destiny is realised only in union with the Incarnate God, Christ, through participation in his life.

In the divine self-revelation in Jesus Christ the Son, according to Rudra, humanity and human history find their true eschatological Centre, and only through response to that Centre, "a fully organised human society embracing all the world in one common brotherhood will be both possible and practicable." Without response to Christ the ultimate Centre, the unity of humankind can never be realised.

In another context Rudra goes on to discuss the problems of the historicity of Jesus the Incarnate God. After many myths are eliminated, Rudra says, the historical figure of Christ is affirmed more strongly; so that it is possible to say that the Cross is the exhibition of "the mystery and majesty of the Eternal God" in history, not in terms of power or as the unknowable, but in terms of deathless love, for God is love. Also, we can believe in the resurrection of Christ, "not in the revivification of the mortal body but in the real and true resurrection" overcoming death and renewing life continually. Rudra adds: "Through communion with this Personal Christ, we have today the sure means of access

to the Father, the unchanging eternal Being, the quest of our thinkers of old." Can the better mind and higher spirit of India refuse this gift which fulfils India's age-long quest?

From this standpoint Rudra speaks of an Indian Church including not only the Christian but also the Hindu, the Muslim and other positive spiritual responses to Jesus Christ, the ultimate Centre, as the spiritual foundation of an Indian nation. Rudra believe that without a religious foundation, no new nation could be built. More especially in India. Therefore, Indian nationalism should have as its spiritual basis, the Indian Church defined as the community of the religions of India responding to Jesus Christ. But the formation of this Indian Church involves the radical transformation of Hinduism and Islam, as well as Christianity in Christ. "That Living Person in the plenitude of His spiritual power embodies in Himself all the moral forces which go to create a vital and progressive organism—an organism which may find its goal in a united and independent nation." Only a common affirmation of the personal values and spirit of Christ will bring about "a great Indian Church," making possible "a great Indian Nation."

Rudra does not seem to have spelt out the mission of the Indian Christian Church in the building up of the larger Indian Church of his conception. But he certainly saw the significance of it and more especially the relevance of Christian educational institutions for that mission. He forecasts that the educational activity in India is going to increase tenfold and acquire a tremendous momentum, with Neo-Hindu and Neo-Muslim and non-religious State institutions trying to create men and women with ideals according to their respective philosophies of life; and in the struggle between these and what he calls "Christ-life", the Christian colleges have a large part to play. All this points to the mission of the Christian Church as creating the ferment of Christ-life among the religious and secular movements of India.

M. M. T.

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LIFE

John Nicol Farquhar was born in Aberdeen on 6th April 1861. After his early education in the local schools, he studied at the Aberdeen University and later at the Oxford University.

In 1891 Farquhar joined the London Missionary Society. His first assignment was in educational work at Bhawanipur. He worked as a teacher for 11 years. Then he worked for the Indian YMCA in its Literature department from 1902 to 1923. In 1923 he became Professor of Comparative Religion in the University of Manchester.

He lived and worked in India at a time when the Hindus themselves held Christ in high esteem, but had serious questions about Christianity. As early as 1820 Raja Ram Mohan Roy had written *Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness*. Later Keshub Chandra Sen said, "I found Christ spoke one language and Christianity another."

Farquhar took such criticism seriously and urged his readers to turn to Jesus and not to the Church.

THOUGHT

The main concern of Farquhar was to develop a theology of religions in the context of the questions raised by Hindu leaders on Christianity on the one hand and the reserved interest in the West on the Jesus of History on the other. Farquhar expounded this idea fully in his book, *The Crown of Hinduism* published in 1913.

The burden of its message as Eric J. Sharpe explains in *Faith Meets Faith*, is that Christianity, or rather Christ himself, is the 'Crown' of Hinduism, since only Christ crowns, fulfils and brings

to completion the various desires and quests revealed in Hindu history. This we should say, "not in arrogance, not in partisanship, but with wide open eyes and with full consciousness of the stupendous character of the claim we make."

Farquhar, in an article entitled, *'The Relation of Christianity to Hinduism'* published in an issue of the *International Review of Missions* in 1914, explained the changes that had taken place in missionary context and in the thinking on comparative religion and attempted to express a new approach. Reviewing the past pronouncements made on Indian religions by the missions, Farquhar came to the conclusion that the rejection of Hinduism as evil could not be taken as scientific judgement based on serious study, but the result of hasty inferences from pre-conceived notions and superficial observations. He thought that the time had come for the Church to devote the finest scholarship it can command to the solution of the problem of the relation in which Christianity stands to Hinduism in the new situation created by (1) the rise of the science of religion; (2) sympathetic study of Hinduism; (3) experience of the Indian Church in the Hindu environment; (4) the rise of Indian national consciousness; (5) the growing influence of numerous forms of Hindu apologetics and (6) the gathering awareness of Christ's mystical relation to every member of the human family. Fresh materials which the Science of Religion has yielded to people in the West had revolutionised their attitude to other religions. The critics of Christianity were of the opinion that unveiling of the rich philosophy, literature, art and theology which mark the religions of the East had stripped Christianity of its long asserted primacy. Many people in the West saw that great Eastern religions were producing radical changes even in the minds of missionaries. They were also impressed by the moral and spiritual character of cultured Hindus. The opposition of educated Hindus to Christian missions was growing and they demanded that missionaries desist from making converts. The revival within Hinduism and the swift rise of nationalism led the Hindu leaders to air their views forcefully and openly. The work of the Orientalists, the publication of Sacred Books of the East in

European languages, the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago and the visits of religious leaders from India to Europe and America to proclaim the message of Hinduism, all helped to develop an appreciative attitude among the westerners towards eastern religions. In such a situation Christians were compelled to think and restate the theology of inter-religious relations. It is against this background that we should see the fulfilment theory of Farquhar.

In Christ's words ("I came not to destroy, but to fulfil") Farquhar found a basis for the new relationship between Christianity and other religions. According to Farquhar, the parallel passages in the Scriptures of different religions also support the idea of fulfilment. In his interpretation of fulfilment, Farquhar makes a distinction between Christianity as it is practised in any nation and Christianity as it springs from Christ Himself. He writes: 'When we say that Christianity is the Crown of Hinduism, we do not mean Christianity as it is lived in any nation, nor Christianity as it is defined and elaborated in detail in the creed, preaching, ritual, liturgy and discipline of any single Church, but Christianity, as it springs living and creative from Christ Himself' (*The Crown of Hinduism* P. 58).

According to Farquhar, every religion has some truth in it and has been instrumental in leading men and women to God. Every religion is valid for a person so long as it is the highest he/she knows. But when a higher religion is presented, sincerity requires of every person to leave the old religion behind and face the new. Hinduism has gleams of light in it and a Hindu is right in following Hinduism, till the greater light reaches him/her. In Hinduism there is an aspiration which could be considered as preparation for Christ, and every important Christian truth is foreshadowed in Hinduism. Farquhar does not think that every aspect of Hinduism finds its fulfilment in Christ. He uses the fulfilment idea in an evolutionary sense. He sees in this process of fulfilment, a radical displacement of Hinduism by Christianity.

In the 4th Chapter of the *Crown of Hinduism*, the author deals with the Divine Social Order. Farquhar traces the origin of

caste back to the tribal organisation of primitive people. He points out how Greek and Roman Civilisations transcended such social rigidities and suggests that a comparable development had failed to take place in India because of the growth of theological systems which provided religious sanction to the caste system. According to Farquhar, many Hindus believe that a person's caste is an infallible indication of the spiritual state of his/her soul and that caste system has played a positive role in preserving 'the Hindu race and its Civilisation', in much the same way as the medieval trade guilds did in European Civilisation.

Farquhar thinks that the rigidities of the caste-system are being rejected particularly among the educated classes, and that the Hindu reformers have been making every effort to abolish caste in India. Further, the low-caste people are demanding freedom, equality and justice, none of which can be realised within the caste structure. According to Farquhar: 'it is a remarkable fact that these three social principles (i.e. equality, freedom and justice) spring directly from the central doctrine of Christianity. The more seriously Christianity is held, the more fully must it incarnate these ideals. In this way, the fundamental quests revealed in and through both the successes and failures of caste find their fulfilment in Jesus' teaching of the "Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man."

In dealing with Hinduism, Farquhar maintains that three things should be borne in mind; (a) Christians should be able to demonstrate genuine sympathy with the phenomenon of Hinduism. This does not mean an uncritical admiration for everything Hindu. (b) Christians should be able to maintain scholarly accuracy. Farquhar was sure that they should not be content with any level of scholarship lower than that of the Orientalists of the day and (c) Christians should continue to be directed by their own faith in Christ.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Narayan V. Tilak was born at Karazgaon in Bombay district in 1862. He belonged to a family of Chitpavan Brahmins. His father Vamana Rao was from another village, and was a government registrar always on tour in villages; he had also a dislike of family life. So Narayan spent his early years with his mother at her father's house. His mother Janakibai, a pious woman of poetic temperament, and her father who lived as a *Sadhu* in the evening of his life were the early influences on Narayan.

Later, Vamana Rao set up a house for his family near Bombay and Janakibai gave birth to seventeen children before she died of fever. By this time Narayan had to find work for himself, and also look after four of his brothers put under his care by his father. This meant he could not pursue his education, though he studied Sanskrit under a Vedic scholar and English and Marathi (which he had begun at school) largely by his own effort at home. When he left school he married, but leaving his wife at her home he had a few years of wandering life living by his speeches and songs in different places and working as teacher in different schools. He was deeply interested in popular education. Tilak began a settled home-life with his wife and children after he became editor of the Vedic literature gathered by a wealthy citizen Appa Saheb Butt. Entering the religious controversy then raging in Maharashtra, he showed his knowledge of the Hindu sastras and earned the name Sastri (Pandit). Thereafter he began to study the Hindu Sastras more deeply and he began to be critical of Hindu orthodoxy. This was also the time when he became actively interested in the political awakening in Maharashtra and began to think of the future of India as a nation.

Meanwhile, his spiritual search continued. He tried yoga and later abandoned it. He came into contact with a European who urged him to study the Bible and gave him a copy of the New Testament. On reading it, the Sermon on the Mount gripped him, as providing all the “answers of the most abstruse problems of Hindu Philosophy.” He read more and was intellectually drawn to Christianity. He had conversations with some Hindu converts to Christ. He concluded that Jesus Christ was the *Guru* India needed because he richly satisfied the soul’s hunger.

Conviction slowly led to conversion, and he received baptism in Bombay on 10 February 1895. His wife deserted him but she later returned to live in a house close by, but separate from him. Eventually she too received baptism.

Tilak worked within the framework of the American Marathi Mission. He taught (Hinduism, and Indian languages) in its theological seminary. He was ordained in 1904. He was also involved in social work in the city and later in the villages.

In 1900 he began editing a Marathi monthly, and in 1904 an Anglo-Marathi monthly, and helped the Mission in producing Christian literature. He also contributed to *Dnayanodaya* the English-Marathi Christian weekly and became its editor. Above all, Tilak’s contribution to the nation was his poems. He left large collection of them. The Marathi Hindu religious poets and their tradition appealed to him. But he also became a pioneer in new innovative movements in Marathi poetry. He also gave the Church in Western India many devotional lyrics to express its devotion to Christ. He developed *kirtan* with its combination of music, poetry, story-telling and humour as an effective means of spreading the gospel among the people. Thus he also became a pioneer in the indigenisation of Christian worship and Christian evangelisation. He also began writing the Life of Christ in Marathi verse.

In his later years, N. V. Tilak left the Mission employment to build up a fellowship of “the baptised and unbaptised disciples of Christ.” He wanted Christ to be presented and accepted by

people living within the Hindu fold, thus visualising a larger Church of Christ.

Tilak, the Christian poet of Maharashtra, died on 9 May 1919.

THOUGHT

N. V. Tilak's theological ideas are enshrined in his poems and lyrics.

Marathi poetry has a rich tradition created by many saint-poets of the past, such as Jnanesvari, Namadev, Eknath and Tukaram. Tilak followed that tradition in his poems on Christian themes. In that process he also deepened his appreciation of the rich Marathi religious tradition. It was his belief that he appropriated Christ "over the bridge of Tukaram's verse." The Marathi saint-poets, he considered as a preparation for the gospel. He conceived himself and his mission in Maharashtra in terms of "a Tukaram and a St. Paul blended together." He said that "the Hindu saints form our first Old Testament."

In his poems and lyrics, Tilak sings praises to God, the One Creator of heaven and earth which reveal His glory. He also speaks of God "the Home of all our Trust," as Father-Mother, source of Life and Love, and as the foundation and pervader of all existence. He also speaks of God inspiring poets and prophets in history. He reconciles the transcendence of God, and God's relation to the temporal process in terms of God's presence and dynamic involvement in nature and human history.

For Tilak, Jesus Christ is God's avatar, as Love Incarnate, historically a once-for-all event, but existentially a daily occurrence in the Christian's and the Church's life. Christ is *Yogeswara*, the Lord of Yoga, through whom the divine-human harmony is established. Christ is described as Life, Soul's Rest, Gracious Tenant, Brother and Friend, King, as Transforming Presence and as Charioteer within. Above all, for Tilak, Jesus Christ is the Mother-Guru or Guru of the Seeker of God, and of the Indian nation seeking new *dharma*. It was the Cross of Jesus Christ that made the deepest impression on Tilak. He found

divine love most manifested in the suffering of Christ on the Cross and he experienced a certain ecstasy in his vision of the Crucified Christ. "Hast Thou seen the Lord, Christ Crucified?/ Hast Thou seen those wounded hands?/ Hast Thou seen His side?/ Hast Thou ever, ever seen Love that was like this?/ Hast Thou given up thy life wholly so be His?," sings Tilak.

Sin and Salvation by Grace have a prominent place in his poems. He freely uses Hindu terms like *Adhi*, *vyadhi*, *bhranbi*, and *avidya* to characterise sin, and *bhakti salokata*, *samipata*, *sarupata* and *sayujata* for salvation in Christ. Divine Grace is likened to the sweet honey of the Lotus which man, like the bee, sucks. Through Grace God gives revelation of Himself and the salvation of communion.

Tilak was passionately committed to the indigenisation of the Indian Church's worship and patterns of life and mission. And his lyrics and poems made the greatest contribution towards it. But his conception of the Church of Christ was larger than the institutional Church of the baptised believers. The *Darbar* of God and the Christ of his conception was "a brotherhood of the baptised and unbaptised disciples of Christ." It included adherents of other religions who acknowledged the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, as their Guru, and imitated His path of service to men and women in uttermost love as manifested on the Cross. And Tilak wanted to give some historical expression to this larger Church, as "a universal family to be known as real friends of men and real patriots through whom the world would gain once more a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ so that the Christ who was originally oriental may become oriental again" and "Christianity may gradually lose its foreign aspect and become entirely Indian".

M.M.T.

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LIFE

Charles Freer Andrews was the second son of John Edwin Andrews and Mary Charlotte Andrews. He was born on 12, February 1871 in New Castle in England. When he was six years old, the family moved to Birmingham. His parents belonged to the "Catholic Apostolic Church" and his boyhood was spent in an atmosphere of close prayer, fellowship and mystical aspiration.

Andrews had his early education in Miss Hopkins Dame School and Mr. Deakins Preparatory School. He had a serious attack of rheumatic fever when he was a child. As a result, for several years he was too delicate for any strenuous physical exercise. Naturally his attention was turned to books. He had his High School education at King Edward VI High School and then joined Pembroke College, Cambridge.

His father wanted him to become a minister of his church. While attending a church service he had an experience which changed him completely. Close to his church there was the slum of Camden Street. In the faces of the needy slum dwellers, Andrews saw Christ. From then on he was consumed by a passion of love and pity.

Although he questioned the literal verbal inspiration of the Bible in which the Catholic Apostolic Church believed, religion became the centre of his life. After completing his college education, he decided to study theology. Before joining the theological college, he became a member of the Church of England. In June 1897 Andrews was ordained a priest and worked for a time among the poor people in South-East London.

He became interested in the Cambridge Mission to Delhi and he corresponded with the Principal of St. Stephen's College in Delhi. From 1904 to 1912 he was on the staff of St. Stephen's

College. The Principal of St. Stephen's at that time was his Cambridge contemporary Hibbert Ware. But he was drawn closer to Vice-principal Susil Kumar Rudra.

In 1912, when Andrews was in England, Rabindranath Tagore visited England. He was drawn to Tagore and wanted to work with him. But his missionary vocation prevented him from taking the plunge at that time.

It was during this time that the struggle of Indians in South Africa began to gather momentum. Gokhale visited South Africa in 1912. When Andrews met Gokhale in Delhi, Gokhale told him that it was the time for him to visit South Africa. Andrews was planning to go to England, but he postponed his trip, and instead went to South Africa. He was received by Gandhi and his friends. The friendship between Gandhi and Andrews which developed in South Africa proved to be life-long.

When Andrews came back from South Africa, he decided to join Rabindranath Tagore at Shantiniketan. When Gandhi visited Shantiniketan, Andrews had occasion to renew his friendship. When Andrews heard about the disturbing reports about the Indians in Fiji, he went to Fiji, and when he came back, he joined Gandhi to fight against the policy of recruiting Indian coolies to work in Fiji. Andrews visited Fiji several times.

In the struggle for Indian independence, Andrews completely identified himself with the Indian nationalists insisting all the time that one should act without ill will toward the adversaries. There were Christians who could not understand his position. When Metropolitan Foss Westcott introduced Andrews at a garden party in Calcutta to a prominent Anglican layman, that man turned away saying that he would not soil his hands by touching him!

Andrews' health was failing and he suffered from gallstones. He was admitted to the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta. Every day Foss Westcott visited him and sat beside his bed. After a major operation, Andrews seemed to get better. But he died on 5th April 1940, just four days after the operation.

THOUGHT

One can see at least three stages in the development of Andrews' thought.

The first stage is the period (1904-1914) he spent in Delhi. During this period the Church was his main concern. He came to India as a missionary and his dream was that India would one day become a Christian country. During this stage, it was the Epistle to the Ephesians which most influenced his thinking. He thought that the Christian ideal in its universal aspects is worked out in this epistle. The middle walls of partition between peoples, according to its author, had been broken down once for all in Christ. While emphasising the universal character of the faith, Andrews recognises the need to present Christianity in indigenous ways, the need to adapt it to the Indian situation and the need for Indian leadership. Though he was very much concerned about the Church, his idea of the Church was not that of a traditionalist.

The second stage (1914-1925) may be described as a period of theological uncertainty. He left St. Stephen's College in 1914 for Shantiniketan. His decision to give up his priesthood and the missionary's salary, his estrangement from many of his former Christian colleagues and the cultivation of new friendship with Indian leaders, his positive response to the challenge of Hinduism, all account for this confusion in his thinking. Andrews recognises the influence of Neo-Hindu leaders, such as Swami Vivekananda, who said that the world would be conquered by the higher spirituality of India, Gandhi who pursued the path of non-violence in the Indian struggle for independence, and Tagore who adhered to the religion of Humanity.

During the third stage (1926-1940) he wrote a lot and travelled intensively in the interests of the Indians in Fiji and South Africa. He recovered his confidence in the Christian mission, and restated it in an inclusive universal manner. In his book *What I Owe to Christ*, he wrote: "Contact with such great spirits as Susil Kumar Rudra, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma

Gandhi has not made devotion to Christ less definite, rather it has increased its range." C.F. Andrews was not a systematic theologian in the ordinary sense of the term. In him there was a rare combination of inner experience and action. He was not articulating theology but doing it.

His Christology:

Andrews' theology is Christo-centric, with a strong emphasis on the Incarnational dimension. That did not mean that he ignored the Cross and the Resurrection. 'The Human Christ' and 'The Eternal Word' were his standard for judging specific actions. The concept of the Son of Man was used frequently in his writings. He thinks that as Christ is 'Son of Man', Christianity must be all-comprehensive and larger than the Church of the baptised. According to Andrews, the Christian experience must be one of an all-embracing sacrament in which Christ is seen and revered in all men. Jesus combines within himself the qualities of every race.

Other Religions:

Andrews was influenced very much by Neo-Hinduism and as such he had a high regard for Hinduism. He had seen Hinduism in the religion of his two friends, Tagore and Gandhi. He believes that Islam has a contribution to make to the Church. He has no doubt that the Eternal Word was the light of the Buddha and Tulasidas. His view of conversion to Christianity is related to this understanding of Hinduism. In his famous letter to Gandhi on conversion, Andrews has expressed his position that he never ceased to believe in conversion of individuals from one religion to another.

Social Concern:

C. F. Andrews believes that the missionary work has played an important role in the cultural renaissance of India. He recognises the importance of the awakening of Indian womanhood and the part played by women's education in this awakening. He sees the need to end the practice of indenture of Indian labourers whether in South Africa or in Fiji or in India.

He was deeply concerned over issues such as wealth and poverty and capital and labour.

Andrews had a very practical interest in Spirituality, not as a subject for academic study, but as life-experiences. In his book *Christ in the Silence* reveals his interest in the inner life of man. This book is based on the last discourses of Jesus recorded in chapters 13-17 of St. John's Gospel.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

*P*akenham Walsh was born on 22 March 1871 in Ireland. His father was William Pakenham Walsh who had been Dean of Cashel, a Cathedral town in the South East of Ireland. He later became bishop of the Angliean Diocese of Ossory in Ireland. His mother was Clara Ridley who had worked as a missionary in Brussels for a time, and then worked in Nottingham in Britain, before she made her home in Ireland.

Walsh had his early education at Chard in the South of England and then at Birkenhead School. On leaving school he joined Trinity College, Dublin. He studied English literature and German language, and later Sanskrit. During his college days he was troubled by religious doubts, especially about the doctrine of Aseension. It was with these doubts that Walsh decided to go for his theological studies.

At that time, Bishop Westcott of Durham was taking into his own home, six to eight men for a year's teaching and training before their ordination. When Herbert was told of this possibility, his response was that he had problems with certain Christian doctrines and that he was not sure whether he would receive ordination. When this was reported to Bishop Westcott, his reply was that Walsh was just the kind of person he would like to have. Herbert's stay with Bishop Westcott had a lasting influence on his future life.

He was ordained deacon by his father in September 1896. His first assignment was in Hazaribagh with Dr. Kennedy who later became bishop in Chota Nagpur. Kennedy also had very strong influence on his life. Walsh was ordained to the priesthood by

Bishop Whitby at Ranchi in 1901. Walsh was happy with the Brotherhood at Hazaribagh and therefore it was with some reluctance that he decided to take charge of the Diocesan High school at Ranchi when the post was offered to him.

At the end of 1903, Walsh was appointed Principal of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel College in Trichinopoly. This college later came to be known as Bishop Heber College and till later it was merged with the Madras Christian College. Sivananda who founded the famous Ashram at Rishikesh, was a student of Walsh and had great respect for him. At that time anti-British feeling was rising. In "A Memoir" compiled by Fr. K.C. Varghese we read: "The idea of following Christ in taking the form of a servant and identifying oneself with those one came to serve, was already finding expression in C. F. Andrews, Marjorie Sykes and others." They were all close friends of Mahatma Gandhi. When the anti-British feeling was growing, Herbert was one with India. While he was in Trichinopoly, he formed a Brotherhood with two others, his cousin the Revd.. Charles Burnett and the Revd. C. H. Lamb.

When the Arbuthnot Bank broke in 1906, the S.P.G. College at Trichinopoly lost a large amount of money. There was no alternative to closing the college. At that time Bishop Whitehead of Madras asked Walsh whether "he could take over the principalship of the Bishop Cotton Boys' and Girls' High School in Bangalore, together with his Brotherhood, and redeem the schools from the very low state of affairs into which they had fallen." The new principal and his Brotherhood took charge of the Bishop Cotton schools in 1907. The number of boys on the roll was 49, of whom 15 were boarders. The Girls' School was also in a state of decline. With the help of the Brotherhood he could establish the schools on a sound footing. It was while he was in Bangalore that he felt the call to the healing ministry for which he became noted, later.

In 1913 he was appointed Diocesan missionary and Travelling Secretary for CEMS (Church of England Men's Society.) He worked in that capacity for about two years. Then he was called to the episcopate.

When Bishop Lefroy was transferred from Lahore to Calcutta, he recommended a separate diocese for Assam. Herbert Pakenham Walsh was chosen for this new post. Walsh was consecrated in the Cathedral at Calcutta in January 1915. The new diocese was in a bad shape at that time. There was no cathedral, no bishop's house and no diocesan office. The bishop lived in a small house in Shillong and Shillong eventually became the headquarters of the diocese.

There were very few clergy, British or Indian. Deprived of the fellowship of the Brotherhood, the new bishop was a lonely man. He decided to marry Clara whom he knew from college days; they had never spoken of marriage before. Their marriage took place on first January 1917.

After the first World War there was much unrest even in the distant Assam. The way in which the Government dealt with the problem only helped to increase the bitterness of people.

In 1922 Bishop Walsh got an opportunity to visit Santiniketan. It was for him an unforgettable experience. He was delighted to see boys studying or meditating under trees in small groups with their teachers, or left to their own devices. The school was run along the most modern ideas, methods and principles involving the latest experiments from democratic government by the boys to scientific agriculture; social service was undertaken in the neighbouring villages. The Bishop had occasion to talk with Rabindranath Tagore who was the source of inspiration for the work of Santiniketan.

In 1923, the principal of the Bishop's College, Calcutta, was made Bishop of Tirunelveli and Bishop Walsh was asked to take charge of the principalship which he gladly did. He knew quite well that he was not the kind of bishop the tea planters in Assam wanted. From 1923 to 1935 he worked as Principal of the Bishop's College. He was like a father to the students.

While he was principal of Bishop's College, he made friends with a group of Syrian Christians who were thinking of starting a Fellowship. In 1936 he resigned from the principalship of

Bishop's College and went to Coimbatore with the Syrian students to start an Ashram. These Syrian Christian students were students of Mr. K.C. Chacko and his colleagues at the Union Christian College, Alwaye, an innovative ecumenical institution founded and run by the Orthodox, Mar Thoma and Anglican Churches on a Fellowship basis.

The Bishop's desire was to admit young people from both sections of the Orthodox Church. But when the final decision was made, only one section of the Orthodox Church was represented in the Ashram. The group agreed that the proposed Ashram would belong to the Orthodox Church and the position of the bishop would be that of a Guru (Spiritual Guide) and not Acharya (Superior of the Ashram).

Soon after his retirement from Bishop's College, Bishop and Mrs. Walsh went to Britain on furlough and came back in November 1935 to the Alwaye College. K.C. Varghese who could complete his course in Bishop's College could now join the Bishop and Mrs. Walsh. They went to Coimbatore in search of a place for the Ashram. Bishop and Mrs. Walsh and K.C. Varghese occupied the open rest house which is called a *Sathram* at the turn of the road to Tadagam. The sides of the *Sathram* were open and they stayed in that *Sathram* for two months. When the first cottage was completed they moved into it and made it their home. From 1936 to 1959 Bishop Walsh was the Guru of the Tadagam Ashram. He died in 1959.

THOUGHT

1. On the Ashram:

Bishop Pakenham Walsh was the source of inspiration for starting a new type of Ashram near Coimbatore in 1936. The Bishop and his colleagues believed that the *Christu Sishya Ashram* should be an Ashram of families. Bishop Walsh shared the views of the far-sighted Bishop Brook Foss Westcott of Durham who considered it as "the great experiment of the Christian Church, which in response to the needs of different ages had tried hermits, monks, nuns, mendicants, but had not yet tried

families living in disciplined community life.” Bishop Walsh believed that the true unit of Society is the family and not the single person and that the Rule which he and his colleagues were trying to formulate must be geared to the family as the unit. He believed that celibate forms of life could not be offered for general acceptance. Such an organisation according to the Bishop must be social; it must embrace within its sphere of action, every object of human interest in its proper order; it must connect devotion with labour. Bishop Walsh believed that the early Church was a collection of Ashram communities; and their pattern of life was described in the early chapters of the Book of Acts.

“They devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the Apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts praising God and having favour with all the people.

“Now the company of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32).

It is a joyous life of simplicity and sharing and according to the Bishop, this is the sort of life to which the Ashramites are called.

2. On Healing:

It was while he was in Bangalore that Pakenham Walsh felt the call to undertake the ministry of healing. With regard to this call he wrote: “As I cycled down to the hospital that Sunday and reached the patient’s bedside, he said almost the same words to me before even greeting me, ‘Mr. Walsh, I want you to fast and pray for me.’ We arranged for the service in a quiet ward, the following Wednesday’ The patient was in

dreadful pain, but when the service was over he said, 'the pain has gone': and it never came back."

Bishop Walsh thought that the laying on of hands and anointing of the sick have to be preceded by sound, systematic teaching and unceasing intercession. According to the Bishop this teaching has to be what the invitation in the Holy Communion Service requires of those who draw nigh with faith to receive the Holy Sacrament for their comfort:

- (a) Ye that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins, and
- (b) are in love with your neighbours, and
- (c) intend to lead a new life following the commandments of God.

But the Bishop thought that to lead the people to a true understanding of these three demands of the Bible is a difficult task for any priest who desires to exercise the ministry of healing. He believed that God works through His servants the doctors as much as through those who pray with faith.

The Bishop believed that the attitude to the patient is very important in spiritual healing. When he was principal of the Bishop's College, he insisted that every student should undertake some pastoral work as a part of his training. One of them had to work among leprosy patients. But that student was not willing to take up the work. The Bishop went with him to the leprosy settlement. He shook hands with the first leper he met. The student who went with him also had to shake hands with that leper. That student later wrote: "That was my first introduction to the sick and to the ministry of healing."

3. On Education:

Bishop Walsh spent a considerable time in education work in Ranchi, as principal of Bishop Cotton schools for boys and girls in Bangalore, and as principal of the S.P.G. college at Trichinopoly. He believed that the right type of higher-grade school for the village children in India was an "education for life;" that is teaching of school subjects through practical work on an actual farm. He had read about the experiments made at

Tuskegee and other places in America. Dr. Sutherland who was a Scottish missionary was also making some experiments in a teachers' training school at Medak. The Bishop imbibed their ideas also and made an attempt to translate those ideas into action. He encouraged two teachers to start a school in Jaipur when he was Bishop in Assam. With regard to the experiments in Jaipur, it was written in *Herbert Pakenham Walsh-A Memoir*. "It was an inspiration to see boys and teachers working together in high spirits on their farm and coming in with fresh minds to learn the reasons of things. Arithmetic, Geography and Science were all taught in terms of what they were themselves doing." This experiment of Bishop Walsh could not continue for two reasons. First, many of the planters in Assam were opposed to any education for their coolies and second, parents thought manual work degrading and preferred book education to qualify their children for clerical jobs.

4. *On Christians and War:*

Bishop Walsh believed that although in the O.T. War, with Jehovah as leader, against the heathens was right, that was not the position of Christ. Even in the O.T. the Bishop saw an exception in Second Isaiah which speaks of "sovereignty through suffering." The New Testament position, according to the Bishop, is that we must follow the Master's example of non-violence, love of our enemies, and look for victory over evil by patient suffering. According to the Bishop, the Church in the early centuries considered the following questions: Can a Christian Prince rightly embark on any war? Is a Christian subject bound to render military service? To both these questions the answer of the early Christians was 'No.'

The early Fathers, according to the Bishop, spoke decisively against War, especially Tertullian, who before and after his conversion, urged the abolition of war by all governments. Commenting on the justification of defensive war by Tertullian, the Bishop wrote in *Arunodayam*: "If he could have foreseen the very near future, he might have replied that all Rome's mercenary armies would not prevent the barbarians capturing Rome, but

that these barbarians would be converted by the Christian monks, and their empire would become Christian.”

The Bishop quotes Origen who said: ‘We no longer fight against nations nor do we learn war any more, being the children of peace for the sake of Jesus who is our leader.’ The early Christians believed that Jesus in forbidding Peter from using his sword was forbidding all his followers from engaging in war. It was when the Emperor Constantine became a nominal Christian that the Christian Church succumbed to his view of war. According to the Bishop, William Penn demonstrated in his colony of Pennsylvania, how a country animated by love needs no army to protect it from foes while countries all around it, relying on force, suffered terribly from the attacks of native Americans. The Bishop took a very clear pacifist stand with regard to war.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Vedanayagam S. Azariah was born in Vellalanavilai in Tinnevelly on 17 August 1874. His father was a pastor in the Tinnelvelly field of the evangelical Anglican Church Missionary Society—a convert from the Nadar (Shanar) caste of tree (toddy) tappers. Azariah was the only son of his second marriage. He was educated at Tinnevelly Mission school and college and went to Madras Christian College for higher studies under William Miller. In 1898 he married Anbu Mariammal.

After his education, Azariah joined the YMCA in 1896 working as travelling secretary for student work in South India. Here he came into contact with Missionary statesmen like Sherwood Eddy, John R. Mott and J.H. Oldham. From 1908 to 1909 he was an Associate General Secretary of the YMCA.

Urged by the imperative of evangelisation of the large masses of India by Indian Christians, Azariah helped to organise the India Missionary Society of Tinnevelly at Palamcotta in 1903 and sent missionary to Dornakal. He also joined K.T. Paul, Kalicharan Bannerjee and other Christian nationalists in founding the National Missionary Society of “Indian men,” with “Indian money and under Indian direction” in 1905; and Azariah worked as its first General Secretary. Azariah was first and foremost an evangelist. So he felt called to be a missionary of the Indian Missionary Society among the outcasts of Dornakal and Hyderabad. He turned over the NMS General Secretaryship to K.T. Paul and left for Dornakal. There he built up a growing Church amidst its poor outcasts giving them the vision and spirit of a transformed life. Azariah was ordained presbyter of the Anglican Church in 1909 and was consecrated as the first Indian

Anglican Bishop with responsibility for the Dornakal diocese. He served the diocese till the end of his life.

Azariah attended the Edinburgh World Missionary conference in 1910 and later both Jerusalem 1928 and Tambaram 1938. At Tambaram he made a strong plea for recognising the centrality of the Church in evangelism. He took an active part in the conference at Tranquebar in 1919 which launched the South India Church Union movement. He was a veteran leader of the National Christian Council of India for many decades.

Along with K.T. Paul and many others, he was influenced in all his thinking and action by the national movement of India under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership. In 1932 he raised his voice against the Communal Award. He did not want the Church turned into a static community protected in its minority status by legal communal safeguards, but he wished the Church to be without rigid boundaries and open to grow through evangelism.

Bishop Azariah wrote many books on the Church, its life and structure in the light of its evangelistic and transforming mission, and many Biblical commentaries. He wrote in English, Tamil and Telegu. He died on 1 January 1945.

THOUGHT

As has been said already, Azariah was primarily an evangelist and his theological contribution has been in the field of the theology of evangelism within the context of an emerging Indian nationhood and of the existence of millions of people in the Indian villages who had never heard the gospel or whose miserable life had not been enlivened by the hope of renewal by the gospel. The basic elements of his theology of evangelism is contained in the booklet *India and the Christian Movement* (1936) which is a revision of his earlier work *India and Missions* (1909).

The changes in the years between 1909 and 1936, which he notes, are the growing national awakening, the development of co-operative organisations and efforts for evangelisation among the Churches and missions and more specially the emergence of

the movement of group (mass) conversions to Christianity among the outcaste (and tribal) peoples of India and the influence of their transformed lives on the upper caste people.

In such a situation, Azariah calls first for the theological recognition that evangelistic mission and the Church's corporate life are integral to each other. A Church which devotes its major energies to "permanent ministrations to hereditary bodies of Christians" must be considered to have lost its rationale to be the Church of Christ. On the one hand, there cannot be a gospel without witness-bearing being an essential part of a Christian life which does not have the concern for saving others. On the other side, the Church is integral to the Gospel and therefore must have central emphasis on mission. Not only that the corporate witness is important for mission, but that the local Church must have the ultimate responsibility for the evangelistic agencies and missionary efforts which go on in the neighbourhood. This is a point which Azariah emphasised in the forums of the National Christian Council and the International Missionary Council. This meant the foreign missions and missionaries must become helpers and not directors of the indigenous Church, not masters but friends of the indigenous workers. This was a point he made with passion at the Edinburgh conference in 1910.

Secondly, a missionary Church must move towards an organic unity, overcoming the existing confessional divisions, and also become increasingly indigenous to the peoples of India among whom it witnesses to Christ. He quotes the Tranquabar statement of 1919 with approval at this point. It relates the Indian Church's titanic task of winning India for Christ integrally to the movement of Church Union. Indigenisation is a call to the Indian Church not only to take Indian cultural traditions seriously in its expression of the gospel, but also to contribute its share in the creation of a new India. The Christian's duty to the country involves not merely the preaching of the gospel to all, but also to be at the forefront of all movements for the betterment of society and for the amelioration of conditions that make life

miserable for fellow countrymen, especially in rural areas where 89% of the Indian people live. And it also means that a Christian should "refuse to be labelled politically as Christian and to be confined to a pigeon hole in which he can only seek the communal interests of Christians."

M.M.T.

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LIFE

Alfred George Hogg was born in Assiut, Egypt on 23 July 1875. His father John Hogg was a Scottish educational missionary working in Egypt and his mother was the niece of a pioneer Scottish missionary in Jamaica and West Africa. Hogg joined George Watson's College, Edinburgh, where his father had once been a temporary classics master. He joined the University of Edinburgh at the age of nineteen with philosophy as his main subject. He graduated in the summer of 1897 and then joined the Theological Hall of the United Presbyterian Church.

Hogg arrived in India in 1903 as a lay educational missionary. He was ordained in 1915. His place of work was the Madras Christian College. Under the influence of the School of Ritschl, he got the insight that the basis of Christian conviction is the Person of Jesus Christ and not doctrinal formulations which had largely been the foundation of the Protestant Christian missionary enterprise. When Hogg came to India, he was dismayed by the theological attitude of some of his senior missionary colleagues in relation to Hinduism. He wrote to D.S. Cairns in 1904: 'I have a vague dream that some day I might head a doctrinal new departure.'

In August 1903 he contributed his first article, *Agnosticism and Faith* to the *Madras Christian College Magazine*. In 1904 and 1905 Hogg turned his attention to a more systematic consideration of one aspect of the Christian-Hindu encounter in a series of articles in the same magazine, subsequently published in book form under the title *Karma and Redemption* in 1909. Following *Karma and Redemption*, he published two articles in the July and August 1909 issues of the *Madras*

Christian College Magazine under the title *Christianity as Emancipation from this World* which formed the core of a comprehensive book, *Redemption from this World* in 1922.

In 1910 Hogg attended the Edinburgh conference as one of its Correspondents. The first decade of the twentieth century was noteworthy in the Christian mission in India because it was during this period that the concept of Fulfilment emerged. Hogg had the opportunity to review Farquhar's book *The Crown of Hinduism* in the *Madras Christian College Magazine* and in *The International Review of Missions*. In the IRM review he made some critical comments which revealed his attitude to non-Christian religions. He began by dismissing the attitude that all who are not Christians are damned and that Christianity is the only rational religion.

In an article written for the Edinburgh Conference he wrote: "Science has taught us how the nature of the world and of man works when we do not approach the Father with Christ's assurance of trust and surrender. It remains for Christian experience to discover what new potencies, this nature will display under that alchemy of God which faith can set free." In 1911, Hogg worked out the implications of this view of faith in a book entitled *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*.

In 1928 Hogg became the principal of Madras Christian College. He occupied that post till his retirement in 1939. In 1921, while on furlough, Hogg delivered the Cunningham Lectures in New College, Edinburgh and published them in book form in the following year with the title *Redemption From This World or the Supernatural in Christianity*. He continued to read and to present occasional papers; but the book which was fermenting within him was published in 1947, long after his retirement. It was *The Christian Message to the Hindu*.

Hogg retired in 1938, but he stayed on for a few months more in Tambaram to take part in the Tambaram Conference which took place from 12 to 29 December 1938. Kraemer was the dominant personality in that conference. Hogg got an

opportunity to present a paper outlining the reasons for his objection to Kraemer's position. After the conference Hogg returned to Scotland. During the War he served in several parishes. Soon after the war he lived in the village of Elie in Scotland where he died on 31 December 1954.

THOUGHT

1. Doctrine of Karma:

In an article published in the *MCC Magazine* in 1904, Hogg confessed explicitly his debt to the Ritschlians. He was also indebted to the philosophy prevalent at Edinburgh University when he was a student. Hogg also admitted the influence of D.S. Cairns in his life. A mixture of these three streams forms the background of his thought.

In an article published in the *MCC Magazine* in 1904 on Hindu philosophy, S. Subrahmanya Sastri pointed out two concerns, one was the centrality of the doctrine of Karma and Transmigration within the historical edifice of Hindu philosophy and the other was the sense of just recompense for one's deeds, whether good or evil, as the highest conceivable principle of morality, since it abolishes any necessity for explaining away the mystery of unmerited suffering. Responding to the points made in this article, Hogg wrote in the *MCC Magazine* that the Hindu assumption that the world, partaking as it does of maya, must be denied and transcended, and the doctrine of Karma, which, if pursued to its logical conclusion, laid the consequences of all human misdeeds fairly and squarely at the door of the transgressor, both inhibited all efforts to ameliorate observed suffering. He asked whether it was true and defensible that the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration provided a more satisfactory explanation for and justification of the idea of undeserved suffering than any corresponding doctrine in Christianity. By claiming that a rigid pattern of moral causation was the governing principle of an ethical universe, the Hindu was suggesting that there was no such thing as undeserved suffering; all suffering is deserved because of previous existences.

Hogg admits that the doctrine of Karma provides a logical theory of punishment and offers to explain the inequalities in the human situation. He recognises that an analysis of the ideas of Karma and the way of release and a comparison with the Christian concept of Redemption will lead to the discovery of elements of resemblance and difference between Hinduism and Christianity which all must acknowledge to be vital. Hogg presents a Christian criticism of the Karma concept from various points of view. (1) It is incapable of being demonstrated scientifically (2) It has no analogy in nature (3) It is contradicted by the theory of evolution (4) It robs history of its meaning (5) It frustrates the will to serve. (6) It interrupts the natural law.

Hogg thinks that the crux of the problem is to be found in our view of the universe, i.e., Whether it is juridical (Hindu view) or moral (Christian view). He adds that the question therefore is not whether God is just or unjust, but whether the purpose of the present order is juridical or moral. Christians criticise the Hindu concept of Karma on the ground of their moral doctrine of the Universe. Hogg raises a possible question from the Hindu standpoint, whether the Christian doctrine of Redemption will stand the same test. Hogg's answer is that there is only one moral purpose running through the whole phenomenal system.

Hogg then attempts a Christian interpretation of Karma. It is granted that evil actions bear evil fruits, and good actions good fruits. It is also possible that these fruits should fall on others rather than on those who originate these fruits. This, Hogg characterises as a law of ethical causation. We are all called upon to share in the fruits of sins not our own. But God too may share in them, and by virtue of this sharing, bring redemption to sinful man.

2. Redemption :

The discussion of Karma naturally leads to the question of Redemption. Hogg maintains that Christianity cannot remain the gospel for this age unless it finds in its own special way the message of release from this world. In his two articles published in the *MCC Magazine* in 1909 entitled "Christianity as

Emanicipation from this world”, he attempts to restate the Christian doctrine of redemption. Hogg points out that the Synoptic Gospels record the conviction that in Jesus, the Messiah has come and that his message was centred on the establishment of what he called the Kingdom of God and that in Christ the Kingdom has come. To the Christian, faith implies absolute trust in God whose will is that men and women should be redeemed from bondage into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

3. *Faith and Beliefs :*

Hogg thinks that a distinction between faith and beliefs is central. Faith is immediate and existential, basically trust in God in a living relationship with God, a desire for intelligent fellowship with God. Beliefs are those intellectual expressions to which men resort, in order to express the implications and consequences of their faith, to protect their faith and to attempt to communicate their faith. As such they are liable to change. Hogg wrote in the Preface to *Karma and Redemption* (1909) :

The old beliefs have now become obstacles to faith, darkening with new shadows and creating new perplexities. New theories may, therefore, be elaborated which, while admitting the old beliefs to be true seems to light upon the shadows and to explain the perplexities. In this way religion is saved from the degradation of its beliefs into mere superstitions which can nourish no living trust in God, but at the same time it is prevented from rising to a higher level of more intelligent fellowship with the Being on whom its faith still reposes”.

4. *Christian attitude to Hinduism:*

Hogg came to India at a time when the Fulfilment theory was emerging. According to Hogg, in the middle years of the 19th Century, archaeology and philosophy had provided materials from the past, ethnology and anthropology provided materials from the present, and the theory of evolution provided a framework which caused a scientific explosion in religion. It becomes axiomatic that religion had its own evolution and that the great religions of the world have their place on the evolutionary ladder. The developing science of biblical criticism was shaking the very

foundation of Western Churches. Parallel to this, Hinduism was passing through a period of profound transformation, partly in reaction to the insensitive Christian missionary work in the past. This change in Hinduism gave rise to the development of Hindu missions to the West beginning with Swami Vivekananda. A view developed among the Hindus that to be a good Indian, one must be a good Hindu. This did not prevent them from holding the Person of Jesus and the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount in high reverence. It was in such a complex situation that the theory of Fulfilment was formulated by liberal theologians. Farquhar is considered as the proponent of this theory, that Christ came to fulfil Hinduism as He once fulfilled Judaism. Farquhar's Fulfilment theory was accepted at the Edinburgh conference and continued to dominate missionary debate until the Tambaram conference in 1938. As part of his criticism of the Fulfilment theory, Hogg rearmend the position advanced in *Karma and Redemption*, in calling for clarity on the basic difference between Christianity and Hinduism. Hogg's first criticism of Kraemer centred on the question: is there not a life 'hid in God' among those who do not recognise Christ? Hogg also criticises Kraemer's tendency to treat all non-Christian religions in a humanistic way as products of human 'religious consciousness'. To Hogg, it was evident that in Hinduism there was a finding as well as seeking, a core of faith as well as a body of intellectual beliefs. But the same might be said about Christianity. Hogg states in *The Christian Message to the Hindu* as follows:

“Let us make the offer of our gift, the vision and the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and let us leave it, as far as may be, to the Hindu himself to assess the worth of the life which that vision inspires as compared with what may be otherwise attained. In any case he will accept no assessment but his own; and rightly so, for only he to whom God has drawn near through Hinduism can tell how far within 'the secret of His tabernacle' God may set one whose thoughts and forms of worship are still Hindu.”

P.T.T.

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Hogg has also published a large number of articles in *Madras Christian College Magazine*, *International Review of Missions* and other journals.

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LIFE

K.T. Paul was born on 24 March 1876 in a Tamil Christian family at Salem, in South India. His father was a government official in Salem. After graduating from the Madras Christian College, Paul studied law and entered government employment, but he became the headmaster of the Arcot Mission School in Pungannur, and later history tutor at the Madras Christian College.

Paul grew up to adulthood at a time when the Indian National Congress was actively voicing the growing demand of educated Indians for representative government. Paul was committed to political nationalism, seeing in it also a self-awakening of India which would transform the totality of India's traditional life. He saw the mission of an Indian indigenous Church in this context.

With his friends of his age drawn from many parts of India, he founded in 1905 the National Missionary Society at Serampore (West Bengal) for the propagation of the Gospel and the indigenisation of the Church. V.S. Azariah and K.T. Paul between them gave strong leadership to the Society. With Azariah taking responsibility for the Mission in Dornakal in 1909, Paul became the General Secretary of the N.M.S. and made it a nation-wide evangelistic agency, and many newly formed Christian Ashrams and several Indian Missionary societies joined it.

Paul accompanied John R. Mott throughout India in 1912, and in 1913 he was appointed one of the National Secretaries of the YMCA, and later in 1914 he was called to General Secretaryship. It was during this period that Paul developed a programme for rural reconstruction, the promotion of co-operation and adult education. The Y.M.C.A under K.T. Paul had a team of dynamic thinkers including L.P. Larsen, J.N. Farquhar

and S. K. Datta who gave intellectual Christian leadership to the educated classes. Their literary output was also considerable.

Paul was also active in the South India United Church (SIUC) and took part in the Tranquebar Conference which started the negotiations for Church union in South India; and he remained a member of the committee for union till his death. In 1925-27 he was Moderator of the SIUC and in 1926-28 he was Vice-President of the World's Student Christian Federation. Paul was an active participant in the 1928 Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council.

From 1919 Paul journeyed to the West several times, advocating the cause of national self-government and an indigenous Indian Church. He wrote his book *British Connection with India* and pamphlets supporting Indian nationalism, for Christian people in the West as well as in India. C. Rajagopalachari, Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders were his friends. They appreciated the way in which his Christian faith deepened his nationalism.

After serving the N.M.S. for seven years and the National YMCA for eighteen years, Paul gave up his job to give himself more fully to public service. He opposed separate communal electorate for Christians in the legislature. He argued his case against it not only because of his commitment to national unity in a religiously pluralistic society but also out of his conviction that the mission of the Church is to be a servant-community among all communities of India. He represented the Indian Christian community at the Round Table Conference in London in 1930 called to resolve the deadlock in British-India relations.

K.T. Paul died on 11 April 1931 at the age of 55. He was the first Christian statesman of India and produced a theology of the Church and the Church's mission in the context of the developing Nationalism of a religiously pluralistic society.

THOUGHT

K.T. Paul's contribution to theology lies in his theological interpretation of the Indian national movement understood as the self-awakening of the Indian people, and the consequent response of the Indian Church to it. It is in this setting that Paul works out his ideas of Divine Providence in history, the meaning of Christ and Christian fellowship, and the mission of the Church.

In his speech at the all-India Christian Conference in Cuttack in 1919, he discusses God and Christ in relation to human history. God's purpose being worked out in human history makes it possible for us to speak of Divine Providence in the life of nations. It was in the design of God that "nations should emerge in the course of human evolution, should at a later stage also freely intermingle as to teach and help one another and advance the race towards its goal of perfection." In this complicated process, covering many generations, it is inevitable there will be failures, conflicts and even total tragedy. But God is involved in this costly adventure. Therefore, British-Indian connection and the national self-awakening covering not only the political but the whole of life can be seen as falling within the framework of Divine Providence. K.T. Paul at this point is affirming with many liberal nationalists of India, secular and Hindu, that the British connection with India was under the Providence of God for the good of India, and that Indian nationalism and its search for self-hood must therefore be seen as the fulfilment and not the denial of the underlying providential purpose. He saw that through the British, God had launched a creative movement of renewal in India and that Indian nationalism was a continuation of it. The Indian connection is also providential for Britain because "there are forces embedded in Indian personality and treasures enshrined in Indian culture," which are valuable for Britain and to the world at large.

K.T. Paul also spoke of Christ's presence in this whole historical process, as the agent of creativity and of redemption from evil and destructive forces. The substance of Indian nationalism is that the Christ of western culture has awakened

the Christ of the Indian culture, preparing India for the new life and for the Gospel. Already Paul sees the leaders of Indian national movement giving recognition to the values that are in the mind of Christ as “the supreme criterion for all human conduct public and private”. He saw the meaning of the Cross being lifted up and Jesus Christ (not Christianity) being accepted as a direct expression of what is truly human. This recognition, according to Paul, is because the Indian heritage of spiritual experiences and religious discipline had been a preparation for the discernment of Christ, and was itself evidence of the presence of Christ in Indian spiritual history.

K.T. Paul saw in this, the significance of both the evangelistic and the lay secular mission of the Church of Christ in India. The Christian task is to discern what is of God and what is not of God in both Indian and Western cultures in the light of Christ who is the norm, to denounce with courage evil in both traditions and help build up the corporate conscience.

In this light, Paul spoke and worked for the “reconstruction” of Indian society, synthesising what is good and true in Indian and Western cultural heritages. The caste-system is full of evil, but the Hindu idea of dharma with its emphasis on the discipline of social responsibility is a valuable inheritance; and India should develop “a new dharma of citizenship” synthesising the values of Hindu dharma and those of democratic individualism and equality from the West.

Paul deplored the isolation of the Christian community from public affairs and called Christians to get out of narrow ideas of communal self-protectionism and involve themselves in the creative changes, plunging into the mainstream where Christ Himself “suffers and labours and wants the assistance of those who know Him more.” This, he said, was the responsibility of Christian citizenship. He opposed the “communal” attitude of safeguarding the interests of the Christian community through communal electorate and other means, not only because it threatened national unity by increasing communal tensions, but also because it was a denial of the mission of the Church to be

the corporate conscience of the nation. The Church is called to be the servant of the national community through its struggle for the realisation of the humanity of all people and of human rights and justice for all. The Church also called upon to evangelise and grow rather than be a static minority community, seeking its own narrow interests. K.T. Paul led Christians of India to an adventure of service, evangelism and trust, in the name of the divine mission in India.

It was in relation to the Church's mission that K. T. Paul advocated the indigenisation of the Church. An indigenous Church rooted in Indian reality and drawing membership from different communities of India and realising fellowship in Christ and oriented to evangelism and lay witness in secular areas of life, was to Paul the most effective witness of the Church in modern India. The Indian Church should transcend not only the denominational but also caste, ethnic and racial dimensions to be the true fellowship in Christ. He spoke of the unity of "white and black, caste and panchama, Muslim and Hindu in the household of Christ" as providing the spiritual basis and pattern of values for the national community.

It was under K.T. Paul's leadership that the committee for indigenous worship was appointed in the SIUC and the NMS became an evangelistic fellowship of Christian Ashrams and Indian missionary societies seeking indigenous patterns of Christian witness in nationally awakened India.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

*D*r. Surend Kumar Datta was born in 1878. His native place was Lahore. He was educated in Lahore and also at Edinburgh University. After his studies in Edinburgh, he joined the Foreman Christian College in Lahore as a lecturer in Biology. He was a member of the Senate of the Punjab University from 1908 to 1914. When the First World War broke out in 1914, he was appointed as Welfare Officer of the YMCA to work with the Indian Army in France. He served the India-Burma-Ceylon YMCA as its national secretary from 1919 to 1927. He was appointed as a member of the Lytton Committee on the education of Indian students in U.K. for 1921-1922. He was the President of the All India Conferences of Indian Christians in 1923, 1933 and 1934. He was a member of the Central Legislative Assembly from 1924 to 1926. He went to Kyoto, Japan, in 1929 as a member of the British delegation at the Institute of Pacific Relations there. He attended the Round Table Conference as an Indian Christian delegate in 1931. He was one of the Vice-Presidents of the World's Committee of YMCAs. In 1934 he was appointed Principal of the Foreman Christian College, Lahore. He also served on the staff of the Student Christian Movement in Britain for some time.

He was well known as a Scholar, Writer and Administrator. He spent much of his time in the work of YMCAs both in India and abroad. Datta was a nationalist like K. T. Paul, and was against giving communal franchise to the Indian Christians. He pleaded for joint electorate and to give primary importance to the integration of the nation and not the development of communal consciousness. Once he said in a meeting of the National Christian Council: "I am not a member of the Indian Christian Community. I am an Indian who is a member of the Christian

Church.” His interest in the nationalist movement, Datta considered as a Christian response.

He spent the last years of his life in the administrative responsibilities of the Foreman Christian College. When he died on 16 June 1948, he was its President.

✧ He wrote two books with the titles: *The Desire of India* (1908) and *Asiatic Asia* (1932).

THOUGHT

S. K. Datta had great appreciation for the missionary work in India. He was conscious of the positive influences of Christianity on the Indian Society.

1. Datta's attitude to Hinduism:

Datta believes that there is a search for truth in India. But Hinduism cannot give an answer to this search. According to Datta, Hinduism is not a sufficiently strong moral force and all sorts of immoralities are tolerated in the name of religion. Like most Christians of his time, Datta also thinks that the present age in India is a Dark Age. He questions many of the social evils, superstitions and even some of the important doctrines of Hinduism such as Karma and Transmigration. He thinks that, to a Hindu, the external world is unreal and that he is always oppressed by the idea that the consciousness behind what is seen and sensed is the unseen world continually exerting its influence upon the life of mankind. In the ever-shifting world of impermanence, the soul wanders and finds temporary abode in human form.

Datta thinks that side by side with this conviction of the unreality of the world of the senses, there is deeply ingrained in the Hindu mind the idea of retribution. The deeds of a past existence, whether done intentionally or inadvertently, haunt a man through the present life with a retributory force. That means a man is continually reaping a harvest sown in the unknown and unremembered past. Every endeavour to extricate himself entangles him even more deeply and hopelessly. Datta thinks

that, such beliefs are ultimately responsible for the deadening influences of Hinduism.

2. India needs Christ:

Datta honestly believes that the Hinduism of his time cannot meet the moral and religious needs of India; they can be met only by Christ. In his book *'Desire of India'* (pp.108-109) Datta writes: "Hinduism is frankly agnostic regarding those great truths which alone can save and give hope to a nation, the righteousness of God and the moral order of the Universe, the Fatherhood of God and His redeeming love for mankind, the eternal value of the human soul and hence of this life in which man is afforded his opportunity to develop character. The great seekers of India have striven after them, but have never attained any definite assurance regarding them. To mankind, they are revealed in their fullness through the life and death of Christ. He alone has the power to make men and nations believe that these truths are eternal verities and to render it possible to build upon them in individual and corporate life."

Datta sees a twofold influence of Christianity upon India, one, that of a small but growing community of Christians, 'growing in numbers, outlook, moral purpose and influence' and two, that of a whole series of new moral and religious ideas, the influence of which is felt far beyond the limits of the visible Church. Datta also evaluates the contribution of educational institutions and social reform movements.

3. Datta's criticism of the church:

Datta sees the following points as weaknesses of the Indian Church.

(i) Lack of a spiritual awakening; (ii) Lack of a missionary spirit; (iii) Absence of distinctive theology; (iv) It is not governed by the Indian Christians.

Datta thinks that only when the Church in India becomes truly Indian, with a distinctive theology and self support, it would be able to fulfil its mission effectively.

4. *Caste in the Indian Churches:*

Datta believes that caste distinctions within the Church cannot be tolerated. From Bishop Heber's report, Datta points out the following points to support his view that Indian Christians maintain caste distinction within the Church. (a) in desiring separate seats in churches, (b) in going up at different times to receive the holy communion, (c) in insisting on their children sitting in different sides of the school, (d) in refusing to eat, drink or associate with those of a different caste.

Datta supports the stand taken by Bishop Wilson who was one of the successors of Bishop Heber. Datta writes: "Wilson, in a letter to the missionaries ordered that no one was to be baptised unless he renounced caste and its practices." This led to a serious crisis in the Church in South India. Datta says: "The danger of Christianity in India, as the present Bishop of Madras has pointed out, is not simply that it may perpetuate the division of Western Christendom but that it may add to them a hundred fold by splitting up into an infinite number of caste Churches." Datta adds that in Hindu Society we have Brahmin Vaishnavite and Sudra Vaishnavite and thus throughout the innumerable castes. It will be fatal to the influence and power of Indian Christianity to have every Christian sect broken up into Brahmin, Sudra and Pariah.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Chakkravarthy was born on 17 January 1880 as the son of Kesava Chetty and Andal Ammal, who belonged to the Chettiar caste in Tamilnadu. Kesava was a banker. He died when Chakkarai was only six years old.

Chakkarai was brought up under the Hindu religious influences of his home. But when he was a high school student, the anti-religious rationalism of Bradlough and Ingersoll was part of the growing mental climate of the new intelligentsia and he became an agnostic. With Swami Vivekananda's return to Madras after the Chicago Parliament of Religions, this attitude of the intelligentsia changed and Chakkarai also began to see Hinduism as an integral part of the national awakening of India.

At the Madras Christian College, Chakkarai studied the Bible carefully. He came under the influence of Principal William Miller who believed that Hinduism would find its fulfilment in Christ. The personality of Jesus began to take a supreme place in Chakkarai's mind and spirit, without producing in him any alienation from Hinduism. As he said later, he felt like a young man in the spring-time of life turning from the love of his mother to his first love, the mother still remaining the mother along with the new passion. It was the mystery of Jesus' Cross that led him to accept Jesus as Lord and Redeemer. He was baptised at the Madras Christian College chapel in 1903 and was admitted to the Free Church of Scotland.

After graduating in Philosophy, Chakkarai taught in high schools in Madras for five years; during this period he also took his law degree. He practised law from 1908 to 1913. Then Chakkarai left law and joined the staff of the Danish Mission in Madras and was associated with the Mission's Broadway Reading

Room and its work among educated Hindus. It was during this period that Mahatma Gandhi made an impact on him. In 1917 he joined the Home Rule movement and in 1920 Gandhi's Non-cooperation Campaign.

Chakkarai's nationalist politics coupled with his concern for social justice led him into the Trade Union movement, of which he was one of the pioneers in the South. He became Chairman of the All-India Trade Union Congress in 1951. He also served the Madras City Corporation from 1926 as Councillor and was elected Mayor of Madras for a term in 1941. He became a member of the Legislative Council in 1954.

Chakkarai was a socialist and, after Indian independence, co-operated with the Communist Party of Tamilnadu in building a political opposition.

With Justice Chenchiah, S. J. Appasamy and others, Chakkarai belonged to the Rethinking Christianity in India group of theologians in South India. Earlier he was one of the founders of the Christo Samaj, whose members were nationalist-minded Christian intellectuals. His nationalism led him to oppose the imitation of Western Christianity in India and to advocate Indianisation, not only in the external life of the Church but also in its spirituality and theology. Chakkarai owned and edited the weekly paper *Christian Patriot* from 1917 to 1926. Afterwards he contributed regularly to *The Guardian*, a Christian weekly journal on public affairs, edited from Madras. He took K.T. Paul's line that instead of becoming a communal political entity, the Christian community should be like the salt which dissolves itself to serve. Chakkarai died in 1958.

THOUGHT

Besides many articles in the *Harvest Field*, *Missionary Intelligenser*, *Christian Patriot* and *The Guardian*, Chakkarai's theology is articulated in two books: *Jesus the Avatar* (1927) and *Cross and Indian Thought* (1932). He was also one of the chief contributors to the volume: *Rethinking Christianity in India*

(1928) published in connection with the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram in 1938.

Chakkarai made extensive use of the Hindu terminology in stating his faith and formulating his theology, without committing himself to any one school of Hindu philosophy.

Chakkarai's theology was primarily Christological. He maintained that instead of interpreting Jesus' life, death and resurrection in the light of a prior conception of God or Ultimate Reality, one should interpret God in terms of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. So he speaks first of the Christhood of God rather than the Deity of Jesus. We know God the Unmanifest, only through the revelation in the face of Jesus the Immanuel, God with us. So also, the Holy Spirit for him is the risen Jesus universalised, and indwelling in the devotee as well as working in all history to establish the Kingdom of God. The former conviction finds expression in his advocacy of the spiritual bhakti union, not without a relation to the external social-political realm; and the latter conviction finds expression in his political commitment to the service of the workers and outcastes, but not without an emphasis on the inward spirituality sustaining him in it. "The humiliation and exaltation, the death and resurrection, the historical Jesus and the spiritual Jesus constitute two sides of the one reality."

According to Chakkarai, though metaphysics cannot be avoided, the divinity of Jesus is not to be interpreted primarily in metaphysical terms, but spiritually and morally as the incarnation of the True Man (*Sat Purusha*) living in complete communion with the Father in whose image God created and continues to create all humanity. Jesus is sinless in the sense that he is free from the taint of *maya* because his self is ever burnt up in the sacrificial fire at the heart of God and true humanity. Of this sacrificial fire, the Cross is the historical revelation. And unlike the temporary and repeated *avatars* of Hinduism, Jesus' avatarship is permanent and dynamic because once incarnated Jesus remains forever the God-Man in human history as Mediator of true spiritual communion between God

and humanity. Thus, the life of Jesus culminating on the Cross and Resurrection is the clue to the metaphysics of God-world relations and not the other way round.

Since the Holy Spirit is the indwelling Christ in the devotee and in human history, the Indian Church should primarily explore the meaning of Pentecost for today. In this context Chakkarai speaks of Christian mysticism. But unlike other unmediated mystic unions, which know no sin or redemption, Christian mysticism is linked firmly to the Cross where sin is burned up in Christ and opens the channel for the power of the Spirit to flow.

Chakkarai was eager to make his public confession of Jesus as Lord by accepting the sacrament of baptism. In this he differed from Kandasamy Chettiar who, though he acknowledged Jesus' Lordship, would not accept baptism because he did not want himself cut off from Hindu society and culture. Nevertheless Chakkarai was critical of the Church for establishing itself as an ecclesiastical organisation and considering its tradition as the standard of faith. He considered the Christian preoccupation with the Church as the result of lack of emphasis on the spiritual union with the Person of Jesus Christ and on the gospel of the Kingdom of God which he preached. For Chakkarai the two sources of authority were the Scriptures and the direct experience of Jesus Christ. The Church traditions in dogma, cults and polity were secondary. He believed the Church as an organism constituted "not by mere cults but by communion with the living Lord for social action". For this reason he opposed the CSI scheme of Church Union as a Western imposition on India, and irrelevant to the building up of an authentic Church in India. The Indian Church will consist of decentralised spiritual fellowship centres like the Ashrams permeating and regenerating society and religion.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

K.K. Kuruvilla was born on 13th April 1882 at Niranam, near Tiruvalla. His father was Kurichiyathu K. Kuruvilla. His mother was Mariamma who was the granddaughter of Abraham Malpan. They belonged to the Mar Thoma Church.

After his primary education at Niranam English School and the Government English Middle School at Tiruvalla, he studied at the C.M.S. College High School and the Mar Thoma Seminary High School for his matriculation. After completing his matriculation, he joined the C.M.S. College for his F.A. course and then the Madras Christian College for his B.A.

Kuruvilla wanted to become a lawyer and with this intention he joined the Law College for his F.L. Course. But after a year he discontinued his studies in Law and joined the staff of the Mar Thoma Seminary High School where he worked for two years.

K.K. Kuruvilla went to Karwar as a missionary of the National Missionary Society with Rev. P.T. Varughese, P.S. Mathai and P.O. Philip. Then for a few years he worked as Travelling Secretary of the S.C.M. which was then known as the Student Christian Association. As the Mar Thoma Church wanted his services as an ordained minister, the Church sent him to the United States for higher education. He joined the Harvard University and completed his M.A. and B.D. courses. As the first World War had broken out, on his way back he had to spend a year in England. There he was involved in YMCA. work. He had also undergone a course of training in the area of co-operation. While he was in England he studied the beggar problem also.

After his return from the United States, he joined the United Theological College in Bangalore as a teacher. He worked at the

U.T.C. for two years. As the Church wanted him to take charge of the Mar Thoma Seminary High School, he resigned his teaching post at the U.T.C. and took charge of the Mar Thoma Seminary High School as its Headmaster in 1922. When he was Headmaster of the M.T.S. High School, the Mar Thoma Church decided to start a Theological Seminary at Kottayam. It was started in 1926 with Kuruvilla as its first principal.

In 1924 Kuruvilla married Elizabeth, daughter of Rao Bahadur George Zachariah. They had a happy married life. In 1927 a daughter was born to them.

Kuruvilla did not want to confine his entire attention to the School and Seminary campus. As he succeeded in securing the services of people like C.M. John (later Metropolitan Juhanan Mar Thoma), T.T. Tharu, K.N. Oommen and others for the work of the Seminary and School, Kuruvilla could give more time for outside work, although he continued as Headmaster of the High School till 1940. For some time more he served as Principal of the Seminary.

Kuruvilla used to take Bible Classes for young people in and around Kottayam. P.C. George and some of his friends regularly attended this class. Kuruvilla took classes for them twice a week for about three years. He believed that unless the study and reflection led to some action, such studies would not be of much use. It was with the inspiration of K.K. Kuruvilla that the present Mundakapadam Mandiram was started, and Kuruvilla was a member of its Advisory Committee for about 20 years. In all such activities C.M. John who was his student and colleague was a great help.

Kuruvilla was instrumental in founding the Kottayam Beggar Relief Centre which is now known as Shanti Bhavan. The study he undertook in England, helped him to inspire some young people to make a survey of beggars in Kottayam town and to start a night school for them. On March 22, 1940 the foundation stone for the Beggar Relief Centre was laid. In the Shanti Bhavan many poor people find refuge even now.

Kuruvilla was engaged in famine relief activities in the thirties. It was a period of economic depression in Kerala. Shertallai which is in the coastal area near Alapuzha was the worst affected place. People began to flee from Shertallai in search of food. Kuruvilla formed a Relief Committee and under its auspices young people collected food and distributed it in the famine stricken areas. In order to increase job opportunities, he encouraged people to make coir and the committee made arrangements for the purchase of coir thus produced. He also collected large quantities of tapioca stem, hired seven or eight country boats and transported them to Shertallai and encouraged people in Shertallai to start tapioca cultivation. This attempt had a lasting effect in dealing with famine problem in Shertallai.

Kuruvilla who had some training in the Co-operative movement made an attempt to strengthen the Co-operative movement in the Kottayam area. He was instrumental in starting the Kottayam Co-operative Banking Union and the Manganam Co-operative Society. He served as president of the Central Travancore Rural Banking Union. His encouragement in starting the Karshaka Samajam (Agricultural Society) is worth mentioning.

Another area in which Kuruvilla took an interest was journalism. Malayala Manorama which always stood against the C.P. regime (Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer was the Dewan of that time) was closed. It was at that time that the late Mr. A.V. George decided to start a daily with K.K. Kuruvilla as its printer, publisher and Chief Editor. It was started on 4th September 1944 with the name *Kerala Bhushanam*. For a time this Daily proved to be a means for Kuruvilla to express his ideas on matters of public interest. But as he had already moved to Tiruvalla, he found it difficult to carry on the work of the daily.

From 1937 to 1944 he was a member of the Legislative Assembly. He served in Sri Moolam Assembly and Sri Chitira Council. He raised his voice continuously for the betterment of Private School teachers. Private School teachers were getting only Rs. 8/- per month at that time. He even organised a teachers'

association for Private Primary School teachers in 1940. Kuruvilla was the president of this Association and in 1948 he launched a satyagraha. When the Congress government was formed, it gave assurance to Kuruvilla and the teachers and they withdrew their struggle against the government.

His participation in politics was controversial. Political struggle at that time in Travancore was for a government responsible to the people. It was mainly focused against the then Dewan Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer. Kuruvilla stood in between the State Congress leaders and the Dewan and attempted to bring together both parties in the interest of the people. But at a critical juncture he stood with the State Congress leaders.

C.F. Andrews was a close friend of Kuruvilla. He also had close contacts with Mahatma Gandhi. When Gandhiji visited Kottayam in 1937, he accepted the hospitality of Kuruvilla. Another national figure with whom he had close contacts was Rabindranath Tagore. He co-operated with the Sarvodaya movement and presided over the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Kottayam on January 30, 1959. He actively co-operated in the founding of the Mar Thoma College in Tiruvalla and he was its first principal. K.K. Kuruvilla died on 12 June 1962.

THOUGHT

1. Need for the restatement of Christian faith in the Indian context:

K.K. Kuruvilla has recognised the great upheavals which had taken up in the life and thought of India since 1857. Shantiniketan (1863), Arya Samaj (1875), Theosophical Society (1879), Indian National Congress (1885), Ramakrishna Mission (1879), Servants of India Society (1905) were behind them, according to Kuruvilla. In his book "A History of the Mar Thoma Church and its Doctrines" published by USCL, in 1951 (p. 42) Kuruvilla wrote: "The Church lived its life practically apart from these surging movements all around her, but events within the last twenty years have made it impossible for the Malabar Church to be indifferent to things that happen in their own country.

The sympathetic response of Christian young people to the call of Mahatma Gandhi to work for the freedom of India has brought them into contact with their Hindu brethren and with the message of the Mahatma. The impact of the renewed study of Hinduism and the demand of the young for more cordial relations with non-Christians make the Christian denominations face the problem of a restatement of the faith of the Church." Kuruvilla hoped that at least in future some young clergymen will come forward with necessary equipment for this very important but difficult task.

Kuruvilla did not think that this was a new departure. According to him several customs were adopted from Hinduism. For example the tying of *Tali* at marriage, the dowry system which according to Kuruvilla was prevalent among the *Brahmin* caste, certain ceremonies connected with the death of a person have all been baptised into the Church.

2. Revival in the Church:

He thought that not only individuals but the whole Church was in need of revival. He recognised the contributions made by the Old Testament prophets in leading people to repentance and new beginning. According to Kuruvilla, corruption in the Church began after the conversion of Emperor Constantine. With his conversion, Christianity became state religion with the same hankering after power as in imperial circles. It was against this corruption in the Church that Christian prophets such as St. Benedict, St. Francis, Martin Luther, the Wesley Brothers and many others came forward. In his book "Studies of Revival in Kerala Churches," Kuruvilla has traced the revival tradition in the Universal Church as well as in the Churches in Kerala.

While recognising the importance of the ministry of revivalist preachers in the Church, he would not confine its impact to the area of individual piety. Kuruvilla believed that changes at the individual as well as at corporate levels should finally lead to change in the wider society. The transformation of the whole society should be the ultimate goal. Kuruvilla was a man who stood between the evangelical tradition of the Mar Thoma Church

on the one side and the Nationalist Movement of India on the other.

Kuruvilla found a model in the revival initiated by the Wesley Brothers. They appeared on the scene when industrialisation began to raise its ugly head in England. Wesleyan revival reacted against the social situation in England. At that time in England, compulsory free education was not known. Child labour was rampant, the condition of labourers in general was oppressive, slave trade was common, the care of destitutes was not known and condition of prisoners was inhuman beyond description. Wesley's preaching challenged the lives of many people who later worked for a change in the society. People like Robert Rakes, William Wilberforce, John Howard and many others who were touched by the Wesleyan Reformation came forward to tackle many of these problems from a Christian perspective. The Christian Labour Party according to Kuruvilla was a result of the efforts of those reformers in England.

3. His Social Concern:

A marriage party arranged at Kottayam after their wedding expressed his attitude to the untouchables. After the marriage ceremony that took place at Thiruvalla, he arranged the reception at Kottayam which is about 25 kilometres north of Tiruvalla. To this reception, he invited low caste people such as *Pariahs* and *Pulayas*, an unimaginable move at that time. Kuruvilla with his bride spent time happily with those people. The inspiration given by him towards the founding of Mundakapadam Mandiram, his concern for beggars and the starting of a home for them at Shanti Bhavan, his encouragement for the Co-operative movement etc. show his concern in social problems.

In a series of seven articles in Malayalam published in Arunodayam, entitled *World trends and Human Life* Kuruvilla made an attempt to trace the story of man from his life in caves to the modern period. He believed that the teachings of Jesus helped to break the foundations of the corrupt society of his day and his disciples tried to put into practice the ideals taught by Jesus. He believed that this life-style was followed till the

conversion of Constantine. According to Kuruvilla, during the Constantine era, instead of the state becoming Christian, all the corruption in the State entered the Church. He believed that with the emergence of the modern period, free thinking developed, followed by discoveries in science and technology. The spread of industrialisation meant the exploitation of the working class. Several movements came into being to bring about change in society and chief among them was the Fabian Society which thought of making changes in society gradually and by legal methods. But there were people who did not believe in such slow process. The Communist movement represented the next stage. He thought that there was a close connection between Judaism and Communism; Marx was the son of a Jew who had accepted Christianity. But Christians, according to Kuruvilla, have difficulties in accepting Communism because of its atheism and open support of violence. In the matter of violence, according to Kuruvilla, there is no difference between Judaism, Marxism and Western Christianity. But Jesus' teaching was to love the enemies. Kuruvilla did not accept a pacifist position. According to him, there is no Church or country which has not used violence. As far as atheism is concerned, Kuruvilla thought that there are many people who confess God with their mouth, but the vast majority of them do not put that faith into practice. In social matters, Kuruvilla thought that Churches should accept the ideals of Communism. But that does not mean that we should follow the Communist path.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Johanns was born in Luxembourg in 1882. After his priestly formation as a Jesuit he studied Sanskrit for four years in Brussels and then spent two years at Oxford to study the philosophical system of Sankaracharya. From Oxford he took his B.Litt. degree. He came to India in 1921 and joined the staff of St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. While he was teaching philosophy in the College, he developed his major theological line— 'To Christ through the Vedanta.' Owing to ill health he had to return to Belgium in 1939. He died in 1955.

Father Johanns loved India and delved deep into the different systems of philosophy and religious traditions of India. He was a great scholar. He attempted to speak to Hindus from within their own culture and religion. His knowledge of Hinduism was recognised even by Hindu scholars. Father Johann's major work was his series of articles in the *Light of the East*— "To Christ through the Vedanta." He was following the thought pattern of Brahmabandava Upadhyaya that 'Vedanta must do the same service in India, as Greek philosophy did in Europe.' Upadhyaya's writings had inspired a group of young missionaries of Calcutta and Johanns was one of them.

THOUGHT

The concept of Christ through Vedanta was his main contribution to Indian Christian Theology. In this attempt Johanns found inspiration in the writings of the early fathers. According to Johanns, the early fathers accepted anything valuable which they found in Greek philosophy and synthesised them with Christian thought. He recognised the contributions made by Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Gregory

of Nyssa and others in this process of assimilation. With this background he dealt with different systems of Vedanta.

In Johanns' opinion, Vedanta is the best among the natural religions and as such it would be the soundest foundation for the supernatural structure of Christianity. After a careful study of Hinduism for a number of years he came to the conclusion that Hinduism could be an authentic preparation for the gospel.

Johanns believed that most of the important aspects of the system of Thomas Aquinas could be found in one or other of the systems of Vedanta, although they were not systematised. Johanns wrote, 'If the Vedanta Philosophers will only bring their several positive statements into harmony, they will turn disconnected doctrines into a system and that system will be Thomism or something akin to Thomism.'

In his attempt to study the different systems of Vedanta, Johanns confined his attention chiefly to the relation between God and the material world in Sankara and Ramanuja, although he touched on Madhva, Vallabha, Chaitanya and some others in his system.

1. The idea of God and the material world in Sankara:

According to Johanns, we can have an idea of God only from the Scriptures and particularly from the Upanishads. In the thinking of Sankara, Brahman is the absolute subject and as Brahman is unchangeable there cannot be any evolution in Him, but only a vivarta (the illusion of an evolution).

According to Sankara, God is Being. As Being by himself and for himself, He is perfect "Selfness" and interiority of being, perfect self-sufficiency or bliss (ananda). So far Sankara's God is identically Saccidananda; i.e., Being absolutely pure, intelligence unmixed, self-sufficiency absolutely complete. Thus, the definition of God as Sac-cid-ananda puts forth the objective aspect of God, whereas the *tatvam-asi* exposes the subjective aspect of God: in reality the two definitions are *equivalent*.

2. Ramanuja's idea of God and the material world:

According to Johanns, Ramanuja wanted to justify the bhakti tradition of a personalistic religion. Ramanuja affirmed the existence of a personal God which Sankara relegated to the position of a relative reality. For Ramanuja, Reality is one and the world composed of animate and inanimate beings is nothing but Brahman. So, souls and nature are also real. According to Johanns the positive doctrine of Ramanuja is that God is real and independent. Souls, distinct from God, and the world are also real, but their reality utterly depends on that of God. Johanns thinks that God, who is an infinite substance possessing an infinity of qualities is the ultimate foundation of everything. This God possesses a personal body besides his cosmic body. According to Ramanuja, Brahman is a person who can know, feel and love, and the 'many' will be different transformations of the primal cause. They are modes or qualities of this one Reality. The "Absolute" is one unchanging substratum of many different qualities.

3. Synthesis of Sankara and Ramanuja:

With the above principles in mind, Johanns looks at Hinduism and deals with all systems of Vedanta. But an attempt is made only to point out how the philosophy of Sankara and Ramanuja integrate God and the material world in a theistic system.

According to Johanns, the theory of creatio-ex-nihilo will enable us to synthesise the Advaita of Sankara and Visishtadvaita of Ramanuja. Ramanuja recognises a *parinamavada* which is the real transformation of the cause into the effect while Sankara upholds *Vivartavada*, which means illusory transformation of the cause, since the modification of the cause into the effect is an illusion. Yet, since he accepts a certain superiority of the cause over the effect and says that the imperishable is the *unevolved as form of germinal virtuality* of names and forms we may attribute the notion of Satkarya to him too. According to Johanns, if Sankara had continued his line of reflection he would have reached the idea of creatio-ex-nihilo because there was no other way open to him. But as Scriptures do not affirm the idea

of creation out of nothing, he could not draw more than a negative conclusion. Ramanuja's idea of the world as a body of God has a positive value. It expresses clearly the dependence of the world on the Absolute.

Johanns compares Sankara's understanding of the unity of God to a white ray, while that of Ramanuja is like the same ray broken up by a prism into its consistent colours. In the *Light of the East* (Dec. 1924) commenting on the above idea, Johanns points out. "To know God, we have to learn with Ramanuja all his infinite qualities but also to remember with Sankara that all these infinite qualities are not inherent in God, but identically pure infinite Light of Spirituality."

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Savarirayan Jesudason was born on 31 August 1882 in Palameottah, South India. His forefathers belonged to a Saiva priestly family converted to the Roman Catholic church. Later his grandmother joined the Protestant communion.

Jesudason had his education at the Church Missionary Society's school and college at Tinnevely. Until thirteen years of age, he was clear he would not like to be a Christian, but in the early teens he had a spiritual experience of conversion. During his college days, Indian nationalism began to evoke a response in him. After his graduation in 1903, he had his medical training at Madras and Edinburgh and he qualified as medical doctor in 1911. He served the medical service department of the Ceylon (Sri Lanka) government for a period and in 1914 went to England where he served the London Medical Mission among poor people.

It was there that Jesudason came into contact with a Student Christian Movement group and through it, with the young doctor, Ernest Forrester Paton. In March 1915 Jesudason and Paton decided that they would work together in medical missionary service in India. Paton lived and worked at the London Mission with Jesudason for some time in preparation for their collaboration later.

Ernest Paton was the son of a rich Scottish wool spinning mill owner and belonged to a missionary minded family. Jesudason and Paton were both pacifists. Desiring to begin work together in India, they went to the Wadia Hospital of the United Free Church Mission in Poona, and together took charge of it in 1916. With Poona as base, they extended their service to the villages. They were in active service during the bubonic plague

epidemic which killed a large number of people in the city and neighbouring villages.

It was at Poona that they developed the idea of starting a community medical service based on Christian brotherhood different from the Mission Hospital pattern with its hierarchy and discriminatory practices based on race, caste and class. They corresponded with K.T. Paul and P.O. Philip regarding the possibility of working within the framework of the National Missionary Society. They also discussed the idea with C. F. Andrews and others.

On 7 March 1921, Jesudason and Paton founded the Christukula Ashram at Tiruppattur, Tamilnadu. Ashram is a Hindu pattern of community living under a Guru, especially at the stage of *Vānaprastha* (forest-dwelling), the third stage of a man's or woman's life after the *Brahmacharya* (student) and *grihastha* (house holder) stages, but which may also be chosen as a life-long vocation by a group without going through the *grihastha* stage, for spiritual research and disinterested service of community. Jesudason and Paton adopted the idea for their Christian Ashram, and named it *Christukula* (Family of Christ) to denote that Christ was their *guru*, and to indicate their objective of uniting in one fellowship, people whether black or white, rich or poor, high-caste or low. It was from the beginning, a fellowship of unmarried Christians who gave their private possessions to the group and chose to live a simple life of sharing, serving the villages around. It was a place of constructive international and inter-racial fellowship. It also responded to the national awakening under Gandhi's leadership and became known as a centre of Christian nationalism, that is, Nationalism interpreted in the light of Christ and a Christianity related to the indigenous culture of the Indian nation. The title of Jesudason's book, *Unique Christ and Indigenous Christianity*, indicates this approach. In fact, the most striking step the Ashram took was to build a *jepalaya* (a temple of worship) on the Hindu pattern.

Jesudason was a pioneer of the Christian Ashram movement. After 1921, several Christian Ashrams were founded by creative Christian groups committed to simple living, indigenisation of Christian life, and service to the villages, without being controlled by the bureaucracy of institutionalised Churches and missions. Jesudason wrote several books and essays in English and Tamil to propagate the idea of indigenous Christianity. He collected Tamil lyrics for use in the Ashram and in the Churches. He belonged to the Rethinking Christianity group. He was a participant at the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, 1938.

Jesudason died on 19 April 1969 at the age of eighty seven.

THOUGHT

The religion of Jesudason was centred on his faith in the uniqueness of the living person of Jesus Christ. It was around it that he wove his theological ideas.

Jesus Christ was to him “the most adorable of all and also the perfect revelation of the unseen God” and the source of ultimate spiritual rest and peace for the soul; he is also the unique Person who can save the modern world moving towards disaster through inner corruption and war. Jesudason was not, however, concerned with any comparison and contrast between the founders or sages of religions, because Jesus Christ was to him the incarnation of the universal *logos* at work universally in the world where men and women search for God. Jesus Christ appeared in his incarnate body in world history about 2000 years ago, but “in reality (as St. John says) He is the eternal *logos* (or to use an Indian term, the eternal *OM*) who was from the very beginning with the eternal God, the Father, as His self-revealing Son.” He came to restore to human beings, through his life, death and resurrection, the glory of the divine image lost by sin. The Kingdom of God is this restoration.

Jesudason spells out the uniqueness of Jesus in various ways. He is unique in his revelation of God as eternal love “for me”, unique in his identification with the despised people in society,

unique in the way in which he trusts undeserving human beings, unique in forgiving the sins of people renewing them for the adventure of the Kingdom, and unique in the message of his resurrection and his second coming. Hinduism knows of men and women who, through continuous meditation and yogic aspirations or good works have attained union with the Divine, attaining the status of *amsa avatars* (partial incarnations); in Jesus Christ, God moves towards humanity and becomes the full avatar, meeting human beings and lifting them to union with God through himself. The incarnation of God in the life, death and resurrection is unique in that it is “an historical event” testified by the undeniable witness of the first disciples. This centrality of the historical person of Jesus means also that Christianity can never be reduced to a mere creed or philosophy or even theology or morals. It rules out comparisons and contrasts at these levels. “Christianity is Christ.” The Cross is evidence that the Household of God is built on this earth only by the dynamic power of love and the powerlessness of renunciation. “The Cross of Christ explains in a unique way the true nature of vicarious suffering and its redemptive action.”

Indian Christianity, says Jesudason, should mean Faith in the unique person of Jesus Christ in an Indian manner. He prefers the word Indianisation to indigenisation. He points to poets like Krishna Pillai, N.V. Tilak and Vedanayagam Sastry who have contributed to this Indianisation process naturally because they were not spoilt by an overdose of foreign culture. Converts and sons of converts can Indianise Christianity without any special effort. In any case Indianisation, he says, is necessary in Church music, in the architecture of the sanctuary, in the form of the Christian Church and its ministry, worship and witness.

Jesudason points to the Tiruppattur Ashram *Jebalaya* (House of Worship) built on an adaptation of Dravidian temple architecture and the Ashram *Jebamala* (garland of prayer) with Hindu acts of devotion like corporate silence (*mounam*), repetition of scripture verses (*barayanam*), worship with flowers (*archana*), prostration for adoration (*shashtanga namaskaram*)

integrated into it as illustrations of Indianisation. Theological seminaries may be modelled as far as possible on that *Gurukula* family of the Ashram type. More especially, Jesudason emphasises Christians frankly and joyfully accepting the fact of the indwelling light in other faiths and rejoicing with them and following the path of dialogue and mutual sharing of spiritual experiences as the Indian pattern of Christian witness.

Jesudason was committed to a Christian nationalism which sought national independence and along with it took the Last Judgement "based on service to the poor and the needy" seriously and translated it into practical politics of transforming village society. Like K.T. Paul and other Protestant Indian Christian leaders, Jesudason deplored the introduction of "communal franchise" in Indian politics. This attempt to safeguard the Christian Church, he thought, was an offence to Christ who taught us not to assert our rights but sacrifice them for the good of others, even our "enemies", and to gain life by losing it.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

Manilal C. Parekh was born in 1885 in a middle-class family belonging to the Bania community in Rajkot, a city in Western India. Banias are well-known for their commercial enterprenership in India and outside. They belong to the Jaina religious tradition of Hinduism. Parekh's father had personally adopted Vaisnava belief in Krishna as Divine incarnation. His mother's family tradition was also Vaisnavite.

At the age of eighteen, Parekh entered university. His first illness brought him belief in God over against the atheism of Jainism. He was attracted by the personality of Jesus Christ through his reading of the *Imitation of Christ*. And his acquaintance with the writings of the leader of Hindu renaissance, Keshub Chandra Sen, made him a disciple of Keshub and a devotee of Keshub's Christo-centric Brahmoism. After his graduation, Parekh worked for some time as a Brahmo missionary both in Calcutta and Bombay.

Parekh fell ill again, this time it was tuberculosis. During his period of illness he read the Bible, and the Gujarati book on the Vaisnava teachings of Swami Narayana. They made him believe the necessity of Divine incarnation for the redemption of humanity, and in Jesus Christ as the supreme incarnation.

Parekh accepted baptism on 6 February 1918 from an Anglican priest in Bombay in the presence of several of his Brahmo friends. But as the westernised and meat-eating Christian community was not to the liking of his Jaina tradition, he kept only a loose tie with the Church. Nor did he feel the spiritual antagonism between Christianity and Hinduism which most Christians felt. On the contrary, he experienced Hinduism and Christianity as integrated in Jesus Christ. So he decided to stay in his Jain family

who were very tolerant, and sought to build a fellowship of the disciples of Christ within Hinduism, a Hindu Church of Christ. He was invited to be the leader of the Christ Seva Sangh's Ashram in Poona, but declined it since the Sangh had to be Anglican.

It was during this period that Parekh travelled throughout India, working for Christian evangelism as Dr. Stanley Jones did and with his blessings and support. He also toured the USA. He made some Hindu disciples of Christ, two of whom he baptised. But the mass movement of conversion of the Hindu outcaste groups to Christianity and Bishop Pickett's justification of it in his book *The Christian Mass Movement* were too much for his spiritual sensibilities and he came out opposing Christian proselytism in India as a threat to the integrity of the Indian nation as well as of true Christian spirituality. He opposed "conversion" from the Hindu religious community to the Christian community as contributing to Christian "communalism" and as unnecessary for the Hindu's "discipleship" of Jesus Christ. He also felt that Christian discipleship should not necessitate the cutting of one's ties with one's family and caste-community. He considered the existing Christian practice as a consequence of confusing the spiritual salvation with the institutions of communal living.

Parekh retired to personal writing and publishing. Besides the life of Mahatma Gandhi which he had already published, he wrote the lives of Keshub Chandra Sen, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Zoroaster, Vallabhacharya, Swami Narayana and Jesus Christ. By now, he had lost all connection with the Churches. He developed his idea of Bhagavad Dharma—a combination of Christian and Vaishnava bhakti—with Jesus and Swami Narayana as Divine incarnations. Parekh died in 1967.

THOUGHT

Parekh's theological significance for Indian Christian theology lies in the radical questions he raised regarding the traditional concept of the Church as a separate religious community and the possibility of the Church as a fellowship of the disciples of

Christ within the broad-based Hindu religious, cultural, social framework.

In 1924 Parekh wrote on “the spiritual significance and value of Baptism.” His main points were that baptism should be an expression of the spiritual discipleship of Jesus Christ and the public testimony to the salvation given in Jesus Christ and appropriated through faith; and that it should not be associated with severance from one’s own family and caste and the Hindu community to enter a new distinct social and legal communal entity, the Christian community, which is often denationalising politically and opposed to indigenous cultural traditions like vegetarianism. He was against giving up baptism because it was integral to Christian discipleship, and was instituted by Christ. Further, in his own experience, baptism gave him a new enhanced authority and mandate to preach the gospel of Christ and made real the call of disciple, teacher and prophet. But evangelism, he says, is opposed to proselytism. It is the Hindu Church of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God that need to be made the goals of evangelism. In his opinion, proselytism has made it impossible for cultured Hindus to accept baptism and made the Church primarily a body of outside converts, with mixed spiritual and unspiritual motives. The most important evangelistic need in India, according to Parekh, is to save baptism from being a mere ecclesiastical rite or ceremony or an instrument of proselytising, and thus to affirm its true meaning as integral to the *moksha-dharma* (the destiny of spiritual salvation) rather than to the *samaj-dharma* (the discipline of communal life).

Parekh saw the Hindu Christian movement i.e., Christ-centred Hindu renaissance movements within Hinduism, and the Christian Hindu movement i.e., the theological movement towards Indianisation of Christianity in the Churches as both seeking a Hindu Christian Church, “the only possible Church of Christ in Hinduism.” This goal was most clearly symbolised for him by Keshub Chandra Sen’s Church of the New Dispensation. Of course, the Hindu Church of Christ will not be the “hyper-organisation” now existing as Church. It will be more like the

Satsangh (the informal gathering of truth-seekers for sharing and fellowship) as in the Hindu tradition.

The basic theological assumption of Parekh is that the Hindu or Jain doctrine of *ahimsa* (non-killing or non-violence) is a preparation for the spiritual acknowledgement of the spirituality of the Cross of Jesus. The Jains can see that at the Cross, Jesus won his greatest and final victory over himself and the world and became a veritable *Jina* (i.e., the conqueror, from which the term Jainism arose). Parekh speaks of the Cross as the manifestation of *swahimsa* (the immolation of the self for the good of others) which goes beyond *ahimsa*. But there is continuity between them.

The *Swahimsa* in the Cross of Jesus is related to Jesus' self-identification with sinful humanity, through which he "became sin" in the words of Paul. It is thus that the Cross becomes redemptive grace giving the sinner free access to God through Divine forgiveness. At this point he compares the grace of Jesus Christ with the religion of bhakti-mysticism in general and Vallabhacharya's *Pusti-marga* (path of grace) in particular. This spiritual communion of the human being with God through grace is the experience of the Kingdom. Parekh thinks that the emphasis on the material, social and political aspects of the Kingdom of God is a misunderstanding of Jesus' thought.

The Risen Jesus Christ is the source of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ thus became the bond of spiritual unity between the human and the divine.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

K. I. Mathai was born on 22 January 1885 in Olesha, near Kottayam. His father, Itty Kochitty, was an evangelist. His mother was a very kind-hearted woman, always ready to help those in need. Mathai had his early education at the Olesha Malayalam School and the Mission School at Olesha. For his High School studies he joined the C.M.S. College High School, Kottayam. After completing his matriculation he joined the C.M.S. College for his Fellow of Arts course. He wanted to continue his studies at the Madras Christian College taking philosophy as his main subject. As Mathai's health suffered during his college studies, his father did not permit him to go to Madras. But he was willing to send Mathai to Trivandrum for his degree course. While he was in his first year at the Maharaja's College in Trivandrum, his father died (1909). As his mother was alone in Olesha, Mathai decided to discontinue his college studies to take up the responsibility of his home.

In his heart of heart Mathai wanted to become an evangelist. But because of his responsibility to his home and of his ill health, he did not pursue it. When C.K. Jacob left for Madras to write his examination, Mathai was appointed as a teacher in November 1910 to teach in the C.M.S. College High School. As Mathai had completed only his F.A. he had to obtain special permission to teach in High School classes. When the acting term was over, he left the School in April 1911. Afterwards he taught at the C.M.S. Schools at Olesha and Kannetti. Then he joined Government service as a teacher and worked in Government Schools at Haripad, Ettumanoor and Bharananganam. Though Mathai was a good teacher, his growing concern for evangelistic work made him resign the Government job in 1915.

At that time, pastors and evangelists were trained at Cambridge Nicholson Institution. Mathai joined the C.N.I. with a view to learn Greek from Archdeacon Palmer. When he found that Palmer was too busy (as an Archdeacon) to teach Greek, Mathai left the C.N.I. Rev. L.S. Hunt, who knew him well as he was at the C.M.S. College when Mathai was teaching there, recommended him to Bishop Gill for appointment as an evangelist at Alleppey. Mathai accepted Hunt's recommendation on two conditions—one that he will not preach at open air meetings and two, that he will not attend cottage prayers. Hunt's reply was that Mathai need do them only when he feels an urge to do them.

Even though the C.M.S. mission to Travancore was started as an aid mission to the Syrian Christians, they could not work together for long. When the missionaries severed their connection with the Syrian Church, they turned their attention to the backward classes. But there were people like C.F. Andrews, Principal Rudra in North India and Chenchiah, Chakkarai and others in the South who thought that an attempt should be made to establish contact with educated Caste Hindus. Mathai who heard about these movements wanted to make some experiments along their lines. It was with this view that he started a Reading Room at Alleppey on September 14, 1916. It was inaugurated by Rev. L.G. Scot Prince, who was Principal of the C.M.S High School at Palayameottai, at a meeting presided over by Magistrate P.P. Kurian and attended by eminent educationists, lawyers and people from various walks of life, including some non-Christians.

Till the death of his mother in 1919, Mathai visited his home frequently and stayed with his mother.

Mathai collected journals, both Western and Indian, from different sources for his Reading Room at Alleppey. This was an attraction for people of other faiths as well, and they started using the Reading Room and spending time there. Mathai was also able to complete the construction of the Christian Institute in 1919 with the financial support of Miss I.A. Baker. Till Mathai and his colleagues moved to Manganam in 1938, the Christian

Institute at Alleppey was the centre of their activity. Eminent Christian leaders such as Toyohiko Kagawa, Stanley Jones, C.F. Andrews and many others visited the Christian Institute.

It being the commercial centre of Travancore, a great many people from Central Travancore used to visit Alleppey. They also wanted to use the services of Mathai for commercial purposes. It was partly to escape from such people that he decided to wear saffron dress, though there were more long-term reasons for taking Kavi. Sadhu Sunder Singh had already made Kavi acceptable to Christians in India. Tiruppathoor Ashram was started in the early twenties and Dr. Jesudasan who was the founder-leader of the Ashram group used to wear Kavi. Mathai was in touch with them. From the time he took Kavi, he came to be known as Sadhu Mathai.

In 1921, a group of people in Kalavameode near Shertallai who belonged to the Ezhava Community (one of the depressed class groups) published an article in *Desabhimani* requesting the Christian Church to make some arrangement to teach about Christ in the area. They expressed their desire to learn the essentials of Christianity and to join the Church. Sadhu Mathai cut out the piece and kept it in his pocket and prayed over it. Sadhu Mathai with a group of people visited Shertalai and the surrounding places and met the people at Kalavameode who wrote the article in the *Desabhimani*. With the blessing of the Bishop of the Travancore-Cochin Diocese, but not directly under the Diocese, the work was started which later came to be known as Karappuram Mission. The first Committee was formed in 1922. Many people co-operated with Sadhu Mathai in the mission work at Kalavameode. When M.P. Job (later Rev. J. P. Moothedathu) joined Sadhu Mathai in 1931, he took Karappuram mission as his special responsibility. As a result of their efforts, a group of people accepted baptism and joined the Church. When the Christavashram group started famine relief work at Shertallai during severe famine, Mathai was the source of inspiration for Karappuram mission, during the time the work was at its best. It had a well-run hospital, an Upper Primary School and a coin

factory. After the sad demise of Rev. Job, Karappuram mission was handed over to the Diocese. After that, the Mission declined, and some people returned to the Hindu fold, when they found that the Syrian Christians were not willing to integrate them with the Church and especially to meet their social needs. But some continued to remain loyal members of the Church.

Sadhu Mathai had for a long time cherished the dream of starting an Ashram. In 1931, M.P. Job and in 1934, K.K. Chandy joined Sadhu Mathai and thus the Christavashram group was formed by 1934. Mathai's preference was for a celibate Ashram. But even in the first Constitution, there was provision for three orders: order for celibate men, order for celibate women and order for married people. The group shifted its centre of activities to Manganam in 1938 and the Ashram was formally started in 1940 under the name Christavashram, popularly known as Manganam Ashram. Many people very closely associated with the group from its very inception. Dr. M.M. Thomas, Rev. Dr. Mathew P. John, Mr. C.I. Itty and Dr. A.K. Tharian are some of them. His influence on such people was lasting.

His sense of humour was well-known. He could deal with complicated issues very calmly because of this sense of humour. The Ashram developed activities such as Kerala Balagram which is a home for destitute and delinquent children, a Retreat Centre which offers facilities for retreats, camps and conferences and the Gurukulam which is a course for those who have completed their general education.

Sadhu Mathai died on August 30, 1971 at the age of 86.

THOUGHT

1. The key to understand Sadhu Mathai's thinking is Ephesians 1:10. "As a plan for the fulness of time, to gather together all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth." Mathai agrees with those scholars who think that this epistle represents Paul's mature thought. According to Mathai, God's concern is not just limited to some individuals or, in other words, the salvation of a few individuals although he was very serious about

this aspect of personal salvation. According to him, God's concern is not even limited to the human race. He thinks that God's concern is extended to the whole order of creation in Christ Jesus. His concept of Salvation was three-dimensional i.e., Personal, Social and Cosmic.

Even though this is an impossible task from the human point of view, Mathai was convinced that God's vast resources are available. The Holy Spirit, as Paul says, is only like an earnest payment or the first instalment of the vast resources promised by God.

According to Mathai, the process of the integration of all things in Christ and the working out of God's Kingdom on earth are one and the same thing. The Kingdom was inaugurated with the coming of Jesus. The destruction of the middle walls of partition, according to Mathai is an essential part of this integration. The middle walls of race (between Jews and Gentiles), sex (between man and woman) and class (between slave and master), according to Mathai, even the middle wall between the heaven and the earth will ultimately be destroyed. What is promised is the ultimate reconciliation of all things in Christ. Mathai used to refer often to the idea of "anakephalaisosis", an Order with Christ as the head and the whole universe as his body. We find this idea in both Ephesians and Colossians.

2. Sadhu Mathai had a strong mystical temperament. But his mysticism was not of a world and life-negating type. He was very much impressed by the Pauline and Johannine types of mysticism. Mathai used to quote the phrase "eneristo" which is used in Ephesians more than 150 times—Christ in us, outside us, above us, below us and at the same time covering us. When he deals with the idea of "anakephalaisosis", according to which Christ is the head and the universe his body, Mathai does not take the head-body relationship in an ontological sense. He took it as a symbol. He takes the Johannine symbol of vine and the branches also in the same way. Mathai had no doubt that as branches abide in a vine, the believers are expected to abide in Christ in

order to bear fruits in this world. Fruits here means the good works one does as a result of one's abiding in Christ. This explains his strong sense of union with Christ on the one side and his active involvement in the world, on the other. His work as an evangelist among the educated as well as the uneducated people, his work among street boys, his work in the leper colony at Alleppey and his work through the Reading Room all explain his active involvement in the day-to-day world.

3. When Mathai started work at Alleppey in 1915, missionary work was mainly confined to the low caste people. But he believed that the people who dealt with religion on an intellectual plane were the upper caste people in general and Brahmins in particular. He thought that unless the Gospel had its influence on these people, the impact of Christianity in the Indian culture would remain insignificant. He also knew quite well that the evangelistic methods adopted among the low caste people would not be applicable among the caste Hindus.

Mathai believed that the communication of the Gospel among the caste Hindus could take place only in an atmosphere of dialogue, although he did not use the term dialogue. The term came into use much later. Mathai also believed that a proper atmosphere could be necessary for the dialogue to take place. People of other faiths should feel at home for the conversation to take place. It was to attract educated non-Christians that he established the Reading Room.

Mathai also believed that educated and believing men of other faiths should be invited to speak about their religion and religious experiences, just as committed Christian scholars are asked to speak about Christianity. Mathai was keen that the sharing of their understanding and experience should not be disguised monologue but genuine dialogue in an atmosphere of real respect to the faith of other people.

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Pandippedi Chenchiah was born on 8 December 1886 in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. His father, Adinarayaniah, who was a prominent Brahmin lawyer, worked in the legal department of the Government, and was appointed Munsiff at Madras in 1901. That was the year he and his family became Christians. Chenchiah was in his teens at that time.

Chenchiah studied at the Madras Christian College. After graduating in philosophy with honours, he studied law, and served his apprenticeship in legal practice under T. Prakasam, an independent lawyer who became Chief Minister of Madras. Chenchiah also lectured at the Madras Law College for a few years. He visited England, the first time to give evidence before the Joint-Parliamentary Committee, and twice later to appear before the Privy Council to argue a case for the ruler of a small native state. He served as judge of another native State, Pudukkottai, for a few years. Hence, he is known as Justice P. Chenchiah.

At Madras Christian College, Chenchiah came under the influence of Principal Miller's Christ-centred liberalism. He was a regular member of the College church. He married Pastor Raghaviah's daughter. He also occasionally preached there. But the Danish Mission reading room was the place where he met Christian and Hindu intellectuals and had invigorating dialogue and debate on religion, culture and politics. He served as editor of their periodical *The Pilgrim* for some years, but resigned in order to remain independent in his own thinking. He read widely on all subjects. And his theological writings, though heavily criticised, attracted attention.

Chenchiah, Chakkari, Sudarisanam, A.A. Paul and other Christians shared the spirit of national awakening. They created forums for expressing it and for promoting the discussion of issues of religion and culture connected with it. The International Fellowship and the Young Liberals' Club were such forums. The latter became Christo Samaj which produced the Bangalore Continuation Conference for corporate Christian thinking. They produced tracts for the time and produced reports and articles for creating a ferment of thought. The group supported the National Missionary Society, the Christian Ashram Movement and other new forms of Church life in India. Chenchiah was a creative thinker. Though criticised by established Missions and Churches, he was included as a member of the Indian delegation to the 1928 Jerusalem meeting of the International Missionary Council, and later also in the 1938 Tambaram meeting. The publication, *Rethinking Christianity in India*, published in connection with Tambaram 1938, gave the Rethinking group an important place in the developing history of Indian theology. The Verandha Club which met on the verandha of Chenchiah's house in Madras and Chenchiah's regular writing under the pseudonym *Priyasishya* and his series of articles on Christology in the *Guardian Weekly* continued the ferment.

Chenchiah was critical of the Church. Its dogmatism and its order seemed to him to stifle creative thought. But he regularly attended the Sunday church services. However, his idea of spiritual fellowship transcended church boundaries and he organised "small groups consisting of Christians and Hindus for praying for the sick."

Chenchiah died in 1959.

THOUGHT

Chenchiah was the most original thinker in the Rethinking group. But he produced no book in theology. Chenchiah's theological thought is to be found in his critical comments on Indian Church's life and mission and his series of essays on "Who is Jesus?" published in the *Guardian*. A selection of his

theological writings in *The Theology of Chenchiah* edited with an introduction by D.A. Thangasamy brings out the salient features of Chenchiah's contribution to Indian theology.

Chenchiah wanted Indian Christianity to relativise all Scriptures and Church traditions in creed, cultus and order and seek the direct experience of what he called "the raw fact of Christ" which is the only absolute for the Christian. No doubt, the New Testament is the earliest interpretation of the Divine revelation in Jesus, but as revelation, Jesus Christ is not just word or idea or past history, but a new creation which is the living stream of the Risen Christ and the Spirit. Therefore the finality of Jesus cannot ever have a final interpretation. Indian Christians must have direct contact with Jesus, commune with God through Jesus and receive rebirth as the sons of God in the image of Jesus—and then formulate their understanding in the context of the spiritual urges of contemporary history regarding the future of humanity. Chenchiah's theology has Christ, in this sense, as its starting point and goal.

Chenchiah speaks of the necessity to discover and recover the Pauline theology of Incarnation as New Adam. Salvation is not a return to an original paradise and to Adam before the Fall, but a creative evolutionary movement towards a new human being, society and cosmos. This was the framework of Chenchiah's thought. Master C.V.V. of Kumbhakonam, who was seeking a new creative force for the renewal of the human being, Aurobindo's Integral Vedanta setting forth the community of spiritual jnanies as the goal of Brahma's descent, and Bergson's philosophy of creative evolution seemed to Chenchiah to articulate the spiritual urge of contemporary history; and within their framework, Chenchiah saw the fact of Christ as "the birth of a new order of Creation", as the emergence of a new life, not bound by karma, not tainted by sin and not humbled by death, and as the manifestation of the first fruits of a new race of the sons of God in the creative process.

Cosmic evolution has always been the creative act of God, an outburst or inrush of His creative power. That was how matter,

vegetable, animal and human, have come into being, each representing a leap to a new stage. So Jesus represents the leap from the man enslaved to sin, karma and death towards the new manhood, triumphant, glorious and partaking of the immortal nature of God.

Along this line, Chenchiah conceives incarnation as God assuming manhood to be in the world permanently with a view to create the new humanity and the new cosmos in His image. Thus Jesus is God Emanuel in history releasing the cosmic energy of the Holy Spirit to build the new life-order, the Kingdom of God. The incarnation process ends only with the revelation of the Son of God; the recapitulation of all things in Christ and of Christ into God as St. Paul says. And along the same line, Chenchiah conceives the Trinity thus:

God the Father represents what has not passed into Creation. God the Son represents what of Him has passed into Creation. He is *adipurusha* (the first man) of the new Creation while the Holy Spirit is *visvakarma* (the universal builder) of a new world. Jesus is He that descends and having descended abides with us. He is *avatar* (he that descends), and *thathagatha*, he that is to come to save the world process.

Since Jesus is God's radical new entry into history, all religions belong to the old creation to be abrogated by Christ; and there is no continuity from any religion to Christ. But a bridge can be built from Christ to any religion by selecting those elements in it which point towards Christ. "Neither Judaism nor Hinduism leads to Christ. Christ abrogates Judaism and Hinduism more than He fulfils them." What happened in the early Church was that the Christians walked backwards from the New Testament to the Old, selecting prophecies that pointed to Jesus. Christians in India may pursue a similar path in relation to Hinduism. Chenchiah was of the opinion that the Indian Church may well pick up material for an Old Testament from Hinduism in the light of Jesus, and in so doing, the spiritual questions and techniques raised by Hinduism will bring out new facets of the Person of Christ in India.

Chenchiah had a deep suspicion of the established Church. He saw the Church as replacing the creative movement of the Kingdom inaugurated by Christ. To him, all history was proof that any movement of the Spirit loses its potential when it gets institutionalised into "a community, a sect, a caste". But Chenchiah did not discard the Church. He saw the possibility of its renewal in its constant dialectic with Christ and the Kingdom.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

R. C. Das was born in 1887 in a village near Subhar, sixteen miles from Dacca. His father was an agricultural farmer, who followed the Vaisnava tradition. So the family was devoted worshippers of Sri Krishna, Sri Rama and Sri Chaitanya. From his youth, R.C. Das was well versed in the epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata and other traditional Vaisnava literature.

After passing the Middle Vernacular Examination, R.C. Das secured a government scholarship and went to Dacca for his secondary education at the age of thirteen. There he became acquainted with a local young man who had contact with the Baptist missionaries as well as the leaders of the Brahma Samaj of Dacca. As students, they went together to the meetings of the Baptist missionary J.D. Morris and also to the Brahma Samaj Students Association meetings and the worship services led by the Brahma minister Chandra Ray. They had also some acquaintance with Arya Samaj literature. The young R.C. Das heard of Jesus first from Brahma minister Ray. Later he joined a Bible study led by Morris. And he read the Gospels. Gradually he began to see that Jesus was appealing to his heart as his personal Saviour, Friend and Guide. For a long period he remained undecided between Brahmaism and Christianity. He began to study both seriously. His companion by this time lost interest in any serious religious quest; his was only intellectual curiosity. But Das persisted in his study of Brahmaism and Christianity as spiritual quest for religious truth. And what made him decide for Christianity was the discovery that Brahmaism was Christianity divorced from the personality of Jesus. In the story of his Spiritual Pilgrimage (NCC Review March 1911) he says: "I found that Brahmaism was a mental abstraction and only a philosophical speculation with little reality behind all its

teachings, and no organic unity among its principles. I discovered the unsoundness of its eclecticism. I found that it was Christianity divorced from the living personality of Christ and my surprise knew no bounds." He also found Christianity satisfying both his intellect and the deepest needs of his soul, especially his need of divine forgiveness.

Das announced his decision for Christ to his parents. His father wept, but did not oppose his decision. His mother in a meeting with Morris agreed that there would not be any objection to his baptism. So, as he puts it, "at last through the weeping and sorrowing of my parents and friends I was led nearest to my Saviour and was baptised in 1908 by the Rev. Noble of the Baptist Mission, Dacca."

From that day onwards he began to preach Christ in the villages of Dacca, Barisal, Faridpur, Jessore, Khulna, Nadia, 24 Paraganas and Pabna districts of undivided Bengal—in co-operation with the missionary and Indian evangelists. He came under the influence of John R. Mott and Sherwood Eddy. He edited a monthly *Prochari Abhijan* for evangelistic propagation. Under the leadership of Bharket Ahmed Khan he worked for the independent voluntary and indigenous evangelistic movement which stirred Assam, Bengal and Orissa. Finally he settled down in the city of Benares, where he established the Kristpanthi Ashram, Varanasi, for personal evangelism among the religious Hindus of that city. He spent the rest of his life in meeting the Sanatana Hindus in ones and twos, sharing with them Jesus Christ and his experience of him as the Way, the Truth and the Life. In co-operation with A.J. Appasamy and other Christian students of Hinduism, he conducted in Varanasi, Schools of Hinduism for Christian evangelists working among Hindus.

THOUGHT

R. C. Das' theology is oriented largely to the Christian evangelistic mission among the religious Hindus who visit the sacred city of Benaras to worship the deities of the temples, to bathe in the sacred river Ganges or to die on its banks, to perform

sacrifices, indeed people who are adherents of popular Hinduism. It is Das' conviction that Jesus Christ transforms and fulfils the ritual aspirations of the human soul which are expressed in the various beliefs and cultic practices of traditional sanatana Hinduism. Indeed, Das finds Jesus Christ unique, not because he is the "unconnected or only one," but because "he is the positive conservative spiritual and moral force integrating all that is true, beautiful, good and just." According to him, "Christ does not deny the past. He fulfils it. Nor does he deny the other. He perfects it." In that sense, Christ's uniqueness is one of supremacy and finality; it provides the norm and standard; it is also "inclusive, comprehensive and synthetic, the Real."

Spelling out this truth of Jesus Christ in relation to Hinduism, especially the religion practised by the large majority of the Hindus in a religious city like Benares, he says that "Jesus of Nazareth, Crucified and Risen alone can fit the qualifications of *satguru* which are given in Hinduism."

The Vedic sacrificial system which is the soul's search for atonement through the shedding of blood can be regarded as a precursor of "the true and historical self-immolation of God in Jesus on the Cross." The Cross has a unique appeal to the Hindu heart which longs for atonement and forgiveness through sacrifice. Das is of the opinion that the Brahmo theists by their theory of forgiveness through repentance alone, without any atoning sacrifice, is less able to understand the significance of the Cross than the Vedic Hindu with his sacrifices.

Hindu idolatry, according to Das, is the expression of the soul's hunger for a visible image of God. Human beings cannot forever remain satisfied with a distant, invisible, inexpressible, unapproachable God. Christianity presents Jesus Christ as the "Supreme Idol", the Word made Flesh (Jn. 1:14), "the express image of the Divine Person" (Heb.1:3).

Jesus Christ also answers the aspiration of the Hindu bhakti tradition which is rooted in the *Avatars* (Incarnation). Whether Incarnation and Avatar are the same or not, the central and

important fact is that the Hindu accepts the need of Incarnation and does not care for metaphysical difficulties or scientific objection raised against it. In its emotional aspects, the motive of avatar is analogous to that of the Christian incarnation, which is that of God's concern for the creatures. Das says that the final choice between Krishna and Christ is made by a sincere seeker after truth and goodness, on the level of moral excellence of the incarnate one. It was so in his own life.

There is a certain sacramental mystery in the Hindus bathing in the sacred river to wash their sins away. This, says Das, helps the Hindu to understand the stream of the blood of Christ that cleanses. He quotes a Hindu medical practitioner telling him that he understood Das's message about the blood flowing from the Cross cleansing humans from moral and spiritual filth, in its parallelism to the Mother Ganga carrying away all dirt and filth.

Thus Das says that the Christian should formulate his message to the Hindu, his Christian philosophy and life, "with and from" the Hindu life and beliefs and practices. Not with them as the basis or content, that basis and content is "Christ Himself together with the Word of God in the Scriptures." He adds: "What I mean is that in the light of these great Hindu ideas and practices, Christian thinking and Christian living ought to be so moulded and developed that it may constructively and successfully meet the moral and spiritual needs of Hinduism..... In Christian apologetic literature, these vital Hindu terms should be analysed and their meanings brought out for use by the Christian evangelist to lead the Hindu on the pilgrim way." Das says he found this method of evangelism effective and blessed by God, in his long years of moving up and down the tortuous lanes of Varanasi, around its temples and bathing places..

M.M.T.

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LIFE

Sadhu Sundar Singh was born in Patiala (Punjab) in 1889 in a Sikh family. But his devout mother trained him in a tradition combining the Sikh and Hindu bhakti devotions and hoped he would become a *sadhu*, who serves God by renouncing the world. At the Mission school, he rejected the Christianity they taught and once even burned a Bible. He studied the Gita, the Upanishads, and even the Koran, and practised yoga. But he did not attain peace of soul.

His mother died when he was a youngster. When he was just fifteen (18 Dec. 1904), he resolved one night, that if spiritual peace did not come to him during the night, he would commit suicide in the morning by placing himself on the railway lines. But that night, just before dawn, Sundar became conscious of a bright cloud filling the room, and in the cloud he saw the radiant figure of the face of Christ. As he looked upon the vision, it seemed to him that Christ spoke, saying: "Why do you oppose Me? I am your Saviour. I died on the Cross for you." At that moment a spirit of peace, *shanti*, filled his soul. He decided to become a Christian. But for nine months when he lived in his father's house, he had to undergo much suffering. His father's tears and the bitter persecution from his brother, the temptations of wealth and honour put before him by his uncle—he had to resist all these. He was called to appear in the court of law, made outcaste by the family, and there were attempts even to poison him. But he stuck to his decision. He went to Ludhiana and from there he was sent to the American Medical Mission at Sabathu, a small place twenty-three miles from Simla. There he received baptism in September 1905. And as though in fulfilment of his mother's prayer, he became a Christian *sadhu* at sixteen, and like other Indian sadhus he donned the yellow robe.

Early in his career he met a young American by name Stokes who was following the Franciscan path and joined him. In 1909 he entered Divinity College at Lahore, but he had no taste for academic theology. So he left with an Anglican preacher's license, but surrendered it because he wanted to preach in all churches without regard for denominational differences. It was at this time that Sadhu Sundar Singh began his wanderings which took him all over India, including Tibet. He carried with him only the New Testament. He was basically a mystic with frequent experiences of ecstatic spiritual communion with Christ. The supernatural world of spirits was very real to him and he has related experiences of supernatural deliverances from many kinds of dangers, including being thrown into a well in Tibet. He also speaks of conversations he had with the Christian *rishis* of the Himalayas.

Sadhu Sundar Singh visited Britain, America and Australia in 1920 and the European countries in 1922. Everywhere this Christian in the Indian sadhu's garb and his utter devotion to Christ made a deep impression and both learned and unlearned people came to hear him and see him. And he related his experiences of communion with Jesus Christ and of deliverance through the indwelling Christ and explained the truth of Christ and Christian living in simple but telling parables from common life, as Jesus himself did.

Back in India he resumed his travels, including also to Tibet. It was during this period that he wrote eight short books, the first of which, *At the Feet of Christ*, was published in 1922. His books were meditations on Christ and the realisation of Christ. He wrote them in Urdu and the Indian theologian A.J. Appasamy (who later wrote his life) and some English friends translated them for the English-reading public. They have continued to be reprinted and sold in India ever since.

Like many Hindu mystics, Sadhu Sundar Singh had ecstatic supernatural visions and experiences. But they were centred in the vision of Jesus Christ and the experiences of communion with him. His book *Vision of the Supernatural world* relates some of these ecstatic moments in his life. The Sadhu sought

identification with Jesus in his suffering on the Cross. Since he was deeply immersed in the study of the Bible, which was for him the primary standard of faith, he never made his spiritual experiences the norm of Christianity.

He took many risks, often travelling alone, with no possessions whatever. As C.F. Andrews says, his faith and courage, inspired by a childlike confidence in God's guidance, "enabled him to face dangers and endure hardships from which the bravest would have recoiled." The consciousness of the indwelling Christ was his spiritual strength. Though he was not a technical theologian, his Christ-centred faith along with the indigenous form of his spirituality made an impact on theologians as well as on lay Christian people. His influence on the Indian Christian community has been great.

In his last years he lived in a house which he bought in Sabathu in the far North of India, sharing it with two catechists from the Leper Asylum. Tibet always beckoned his spirit and he was eager to witness to Christ in that land and was prepared even to die in doing so. He had gone to Tibet many times and returned safely. But in 1929, he set out for Tibet with some Tibetan traders but he never returned. All searches failed to find out what happened. Did he meet death in an accident or illness or did he die the death of a martyr, preaching the gospel in a closed country?

THOUGHT

Sadhu Sundar Singh was not a theologian in the usual sense of that word. He had no logically worked out system of theology. And he never thought in abstract categories. He always taught in parables and analogies, taken from his personal experiences or from the common life of the people. And as Godablom felt, they were not just accidental; in his mind they had the "stability of articles of faith." Stories and analogies could be very telling vehicles of spiritual and theological truths. It is possible therefore to cull from Sadhu's writings, the fundamental elements of his theology.

First and foremost, Sadhu Sundar Singh was Christo-centric in his thought as he was in his life. Everything for him began and ended with his experience and vision of Jesus Christ as the pathway to God understood as the ultimately *Real*. The word *Real* appears often in the titles of his writings. In the story of a vision of Heaven, he explains his understanding of the Trinity. He says : “The first time I entered Heaven, I looked round about and asked: But where is God ? And they told me God is not to be seen here any more than on earth, for God is Infinite. But there is Christ. He is God. He is the Image of the Invisible God and it is only in Him that we can see God, in heaven as on earth. And streaming from Christ I saw, as it were, waves shining and peace-giving and going through and among the saints and angels, and everywhere bringing refreshment just as in hot weather water refreshes trees. And this I understood to be the Holy Spirit.”

Jesus as God’s *avatar* (incarnation) is like the King moving incognito among the people. His purpose is to carry those who want to cross the river of this world to heaven. Like the milk in red bottle is not recognised as milk by the peasant, Jesus’ divinity is hidden by his humanity until people have direct experience of him.

God’s relation to the world is like the relation of the warmth of body to one’s clothes. “There is no heat in the clothes; that comes from the body within. Just so, life in all living creatures is derived from the one source of life behind. All life is from the river of Life.” Sadhu Sundar Singh speaks of Christ as the true name of God in which God created human beings; except in Jesus it is “only imperfectly stamped,” so that it is a “battered image.” But when converted to Christ, human beings recognise their true original connection with Christ and worship the Divine Creator through him. Sin is not something that has been created; sin has no power of creation either. Just as darkness is the absence of light, sin is only the absence of God. Sin, like *karma* (law of retribution,) brings its own judgement. “God has not sent anyone to hell.... it is sin which drives souls to hell.” There is suffering as penalty for sin. But unlike the *karma* theory, the

love of God as revealed on the Cross of Jesus identifies itself with the sufferers of karmic effects, takes on the judgement and atones for and transforms the suffering into a new life. As in the pearl-oyster it is the irritation that produces the pearl, suffering produces the real pearl of new life.

Sundar Singh dwelt constantly on the death of Christ as the revelation of the love of God. According to him, Christ knew that souls can be saved not by gold or silver but only by the surrender of life to Life. "That is why He gave his life for the redemption of the world." Many of his parables describe Jesus' Cross as God's act of self-giving in love to save humanity. God's initiative in Jesus to save humanity is like the rope being thrown from above to a man fallen in a well. Cross releases the human being from the power of sin. Sundar Singh goes on to speak of the risen Christ's indwelling in us making us Christ-like. Like the salt that dissolves and disappears makes the water salty, even so the indwelling Christ, even though remaining unseen, will become a reality to others through the love of Christ mediated through us.

Sundar Singh was baptised an Anglican but he gave up the preacher's license because he wanted to preach Christ wherever people invited him. He partook of the Eucharist in all congregations that welcomed him to it. He said he belonged to the Body of Christ, the true Church which, to him was no material building, intellectual dogma, established institution or written scripture but the people of Christ throughout the world. In fact Sundar Singh in his books speaks of many non-Christians as with Christ, many of them secret Christians. He also speaks of Christians without Christ. This points to a definition of the Church of Christ as transcending the Christian Churches. His Sadhu-ideal, as the Sadhu-ideal within Hinduism itself, transcended the disciplines of concrete historical corporate structures. He used to say that India greatly needed the water of life in the Indian vessel. In one sense, Sadhu Sundar Singh represented the renewal of the Sadhu-ideal of Hinduism and Sikhism in Christ.

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LIFE

Aiyadurai Jesudasan Appasamy was born and brought up in the Christian home of Dewan Bahadur A.S. Appasamy Pillai of Tinnevely, whose life and thought we have already out-lined.

Jesudasan was born on 3 September 1891. He had his English education in Tinnevely and Madras. From 1915 he spent seven years abroad to study Christian theology, first in Hartford and Harvard (USA), later in Oxford (U.K.) where he took his doctoral degree; and finally in Marburg (Germany) doing post-doctoral studies. Appasamy's doctoral dissertation was on "The Mysticism of the Fourth Gospel in its relation to Hindu Bhakti Literature." During his study abroad, he had valuable contacts with great Western theologians and students of Indian religions, such as B.H. Streeter and Von Hugel in the United Kingdom and Rudolf Otto and Heiler in Germany. He also met Sadhu Sundar Singh at Oxford in 1920 and valued his friendship throughout his life. Appasamy became Sundar Singh's biographer, along with B.H. Streeter.

After his return to India, Appasamy served the Christian Literature Society in Madras as its editor for English publications. Appasamy was ordained pastor of the Church of India (Anglican) by Bishop Walter at St. George's Cathedral, Madras, in 1930. He taught theology at Bishop's College, Calcutta from 1932 to 1936 and conducted schools of Hinduism in Varanasi, in co-operation with R.C. Das. In 1946 he was appointed Archdeacon of Palamacotta. He served on the Joint Committee on Church Union for eighteen years and after the Church of South India came into being in 1947, Appasamy was chosen as Bishop of the CSI Diocese of Coimbatore. On 27 September 1950 he was consecrated bishop and he served the Diocese for over eight

years, promoting the spiritual revival of the congregations under his care. He retired in 1959. He died on 2 May 1975.

Bishop Appasamy was perhaps the first systematically trained Indian theologian to have made a pioneering contribution to indigenous theology with professional competence. After he returned to India he continued his research digging into both the Fourth Gospel and India's Bhakti Literature. His books: *Christianity as Bhakti Marg* (1928); *What is Moksha?* (1931) were a professional theologian's effort to build an indigenous theology. He belonged to a group in South India keen on rethinking Christianity in the Indian context. P. Chenchiah, V. Chakkarai, G.V. Job, Eddy Asirvatham and others belonged to the group. In 1950, Appasamy participated in the NCCI Conference on Indian Theology at Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur. From that time the Churches and theological Seminaries were involved in the search for an Indian theology.

THOUGHT

Appasamy gives the reason which led him in his doctoral studies to concentrate on the relation between the Gospel of St. John and Hindu Bhakti Literature. He says :

From my experience in India and my studies while in America, I had become convinced that Hindu Bhakti Literature with its emphasis on a personal relationship with a God of Love has much significance for Christianity. When the Gospel of St. John is studied in close relation to Hindu Bhakti Literature, we may expect many new insights.

The title of his book *Christianity as Bhakti Marg* (path of devotion) gives the clue to Appasamy's theology.

V. Chakkarai was inclined to put great deal of emphasis on Karma Marg (path of Action) involving political and social action, following Gandhi, with devotion to Christ as its inwardness. The dominant Neo-Hindu movements in religion and philosophy in the wake of nationalism were advaitic (Vivekananda and Radhakrishnan) following the *jnana* marg (the path of

knowledge of Brahman-atman identity). They were interpreting the words of Jesus in St. John's gospel, "I and my Father are one" as denoting the same identity and pointing to it as a pattern of mystic experience which is the destiny of all human beings, as realised by Jesus. Appasamy follows Ramanuja's visishtadwaita which emphasises the interpersonal character of the devotees' mystic experience of union with God as more akin to Jesus' realisation of his oneness with God the father. He finds in the words, "Abide in Me and I in You", the mahavakya of Christian experience, the union of interpersonal indwelling as the ultimate spiritual unity of God and Jesus as well as of Christ and his devotees. Along with the metaphysical character of this unity, Appasamy emphasises also the moral unity of wills and the obedience to God's will in life as integral aspects of spiritual communion.

Appasamy interprets the relation between God, the Universal Logos and the Incarnate Logos in St. John's gospel as follows: God's Being has both personal and impersonal dimensions. While God's Being transcends the world, the Divine Logos is immanent (*antaryamin*) in all creation enlightening all and directing all, as soul in the body. So there is a sense in which the World is the body of God. In the Person of Jesus, the immanent Logos has become incarnate so that through the indwelling of the incarnate logos Christ, every human person may realise communion with God in its fullness. And since the Church is the community of persons in communion with Christ, Appasamy speaks of Christ indwelling in the Church as his Body. The relation between the immanent logos and logos incarnate in Christ defines the mission of the Church in the world, namely to work for the fulfilment of the universal salvific purpose of God expressed in the immanent logos, a fulfilment realised through acknowledgement of Jesus Christ.

Appasamy links sin with *karma* (restated as the law of moral judgement) and defines salvation as liberation from both, through the redemptive suffering and death of Jesus on the Cross. Appasamy's definition of Salvation is predominantly in positive

terms as “eternal life” (as in St. John’s gospel). He sees it as “a continuous contact with Reality personal, conscious and radiant with joy.” Like the life of Jesus with God, it is an experience of “a moral harmony with the holy and righteous Father, but in its higher spiritual reaches transcending the moral and the personal. It is also experience of a corporate fellowship rooted in Divine Love, beginning in this life and continuing for ever.

For Appasamy the standard of Christian faith is four-fold—the Scriptures (*Srutī*), the Church (*Sabha*), Reason (*Yukti*) and experience (*Anubhava*). By Scriptures he means primarily the four gospels where Christ’s own life and teachings are given. He values both St. Paul’s epistles and the Old Testament for interpreting the Gospels. He also asks Indian Christians to listen to what points to Christ in the Hindu Scriptures. Thus Appasamy’s is a Christological interpretation of all Scriptures with the Gospels having the central authority. He would give second place to the Church’s tradition, because the essence of Christian religion, according to him, is that revelation is given “not merely to individuals but to His Church.”

M.M.T.

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LIFE

*F*ather Jules Monchanin who later adopted the name Swami Parama Arupi Anandam, was born on 14 April 1895 in Beaujolais near Lyons. He completed his theological education in 1922, and was ordained priest on 29 June, the same year. He belonged to the Archdiocese of Lyons in France and worked as a curate for ten years. Though he was an intellectual, he found it a pleasure to live and work among labourers in the mines. He was also interested in art, music, painting, literature and the sciences including mathematics. He was specially interested in philosophy which he taught for some time. Though he lived in the world of ideas he developed a passion for souls and a love for individuals. He was a remarkable conversationalist. Many people, young and old, especially those who were troubled in spirit were attracted to him and benefited from friendship with him.

Fr. Monchanin had a vast knowledge of ancient eastern religions and culture and particularly about the religions and cultures of India. He was by nature a contemplative and he knew quite well that the contemplative life was always held in esteem in India. He knew that the simple proclamation of the gospel, and works of charity would not penetrate beyond the surface of the Indian conscience. He believed that “only the manifestation of the paraclete in the ‘repose’ of contemplation within the Church would stir the depths of the Indian soul and effectively transmit the loving approach of the Risen Lord” (Swami Parama Arupi Anandam P.18). The idea of coming to India as a sannyasi and not as a regular missionary developed in his mind.

In 1932 he suffered very much by a serious illness and during that time, he promised that if he got well, he would consecrate his life for the service in India. His miraculous recovery seemed

to him as a providential sign. He began to study Sanskrit, Hindu Scriptures and systems of Indian Philosophy. With the permission of his Archbishop he wrote to the bishop in the diocese of Tiruchirapally who gladly welcomed his proposals and Fr. Monchanin arrived in Thiruchirapally in June 1939. At that time he was 44 years old. Before he came to India he wrote to the bishop that he would be content with the 'most modest post' among the low-caste people in India. After coming to India he served in places like Panneipatti, Panjampatti, Kulittalai and Melakattalai among very poor people. He was as much at home among such people as he was among the intellectuals. Finally he decided to stay at Pulittalai. According to his wish, people at Kulittalai made a modest presbytery which was called *Bhakti Ashram*. His dream was to clad himself in the saffron robe of a sannyasi and live in complete poverty, leading a vocation of study and contemplation.

One day his bishop handed over a letter to Fr. Monchanin to get it translated. To his surprise he found out that it was a request from a Benedictine monk seeking permission to settle somewhere in the Tiruchi area to lead a contemplative life in some hermitage, in conformity with the tradition of Indian Sannyasa. To Monchanin this was providential and in course of time the Benedictine monk, Fr. Le Saux, joined Fr. Monchanin. In 1950 they installed themselves as members of an Ashram, both of them adopting Indian names. Fr. Monchanin had already adopted the name Swami Parama Arupi Anandam and Fr. Le Saux adopted the name Swami Abhishiktananda. They called their dwelling place Shantivanam and the formal name of the Ashram was Satchitananda Ashram. Fr. Monchanin was very much absorbed in the world of ideas. Since his childhood he had suffered from asthma. By 1957 his condition deteriorated and his friends took him to Kodaikanal in the hope that a change might improve his condition. It did not help, and they took him to Pondicherry to be examined by French doctors. They found out a swelling that could develop into cancer and the French doctors advised them

to send him to France. On 10 September 1957 he left India and on 10th October 1957 he died.

THOUGHT

1. The Ashram Ideal:

While theologians in general tried to articulate their ideas in words, Monchanin and Le Saux attempted to put their ideas into practice. Fr. Monchanin's ideal of an Ashram was that of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya who wrote in *Sophia* (August 1898): "The supernatural virtue of poverty, practised by our religious priests makes very little impression on the Hindus. They cannot understand how poverty can be compatible with boots, trousers and hats, with spoon and fork, meat and wine. To a European they may be the bare necessities of life; to a Hindu, they are objects of luxury. If India is ever to be conquered, it will be conquered by the power of poverty synonymous with abstinence from meat and drink, living as mendicants in humble dwellings."

In their Ashram there were two cottages made of bamboo fibres and coconut leaves. One of the huts had a room which was used for the celebration of mass. They did not have any furniture except a few bricks on the floor. When the rains started, frogs, ants, and other insects would invade in large numbers. Scorpions got into the crevices between the bricks. It became necessary to replace the huts made of bamboo and coconut leaves by small buildings with stone walls and tiled roofs. They were unhappy over such "improvements".

2. Contemplative Vocation:

According to Monchanin God has created the universe for his glory and out of love 'in order to diffuse his intrinsic goodness and to make intelligent creatures, sharers in his eternal bliss.' Every creature according to him is a manifestation of God, a theophany and everything reflects in some measure, the divine essence. Intelligent creatures such as angels and men are created in God's image to know God and to love him. This is essentially contemplative vocation. Many men are unable to fulfil this vocation as they are distracted by earthly cares, joys and sorrows.

Therefore some at least have to be deputed in the name of the rest to a life entirely dedicated to this vocation.

Monchanin believes that the spiritual society set apart essentially for this purpose is the Church, the Bride and the real mystical body of the Risen Christ. Her vocation is to adore God. Contemplative souls within the Church meditate on God in her name borrowing their prayers from the liturgies of the Church and their thoughts from the faith of the Church. From the first Pentecost day according to Monchanin, the Church has never ceased to inspire and foster this vocation.

The aim of missionary work is to plant churches in unreached areas. But all churches, even the newly planted churches, ought to be faithful images of the universal Church. Therefore each church has to be equipped not only to save men, but above all to praise God as a particular member of the mystical body.

According to Monchanin, the Church expects from every land and people an outburst of praise and love which they alone can offer. But they have to be assimilated into the Church. Monchanin thinks that India cannot be alien to this process of assimilation by Christianity. She has been for three millenniums, if not more, the seat of one of the main civilisations of humankind and hundreds and thousands of men and women both inside Hinduism and outside in Jainism and Buddhism have consecrated themselves to that end. To be assimilated into the Church, as in Greece, the Church in India has to learn from the Indian context, i.e., sound and basic principles of contemplation.

3. Assumption of Sannyasa:

The assumption of Sannyasa into Christian monastic tradition was an ideal which they cherished. According to Monchanin, a monk is a man who lives in the solitude of God, occupied with him alone. His primary duty is not to engage in social, intellectual or apostolic work. According to him, the greatness of Indian culture rests in having made a place for Sannyasa and if Sannyasa is on the decline it is the urgent duty of the Church to bring it to its final consummation in Christ. The aim of Satchitananda

Ashram, according to its founders, is the assumption of Sannyasa into the Church. Monchanin thinks at 'to recover this pearl is surely worth the difficulties involved in plunging body and soul, as completely as we may into the ways of life both external and internal of Hindu Sannyasa.'

4. *His conception of Pleroma:*

Fr. Monchanin was captured by the concept of *anakephaliosis* (Reeapitulation). This Greek word occurs in Ephesians 1:10 and the same idea appears again in the first chapter of Colossians. "Reeapitulation, in the etymological sense of the word is the restoration in unity, the gathering together in one all things in Christ, all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, under and into him who is the Head." As St. Irenius says in *Adv. Haereses* 1:10 Reeapitulation is identical with Pleroma. Monchanin believed that people everywhere are prepared by the Holy Spirit for the pleroma of the Risen Christ. This Spirit according to Monchanin, is at work not only among individuals, but also among nations. Monchanin thinks that the Holy Spirit leads the world to the Risen Christ through his mystical body. According to his plan he calls people to realise 'His work of Christian integration of nations into His Church.'

5. *Satchitananda Ideal:*

With regard to the word *Satchitananda* Fr. Monchanin writes: "And, more fervently and with greater appreciation than any of his fellow sannyasins, can the Christian monk utter SAT, when thinking of the Father, the principleless principle, the very sound and end of the expansion and 'recollection' of the divine life; CIT, when remembering the eternal Son, the Logos, the intellectual consubstantial image of the existent; ANANDA when meditating on the Paraelete, unifying together the Father and the Son. And just as AUM is one sound from three elements (A.U.M.) so also the mystery of the One identical essence in three hypostases may be expressed by that pregnant sacred utterance". (Swami Parama Arupi Anandam P.18).

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LIFE

Eddy Asirvatham was for many years a teacher of political science. He had a deep concern for the life and mission of the Indian Church. He was a Christian nationalist who wanted the Indian Christian community to eschew all communal approach and pull its full weight for the freedom of the nation and for building a social order which would provide welfare and justice for all men and women.

Eddy Asirvatham's father was a Hindu convert to Christianity and his mother a second generation Christian brought up in a Christian boarding school. In his early days Western missionaries played a vital part in shaping his thinking. From the age of 13 he stayed and studied in a boarding school where manual labour was compulsory. During his college days he became an active member of the Student Christian Movement. Participation in its camps and conferences and involvement in study and discussion on Christian faith, church life and the social implications of the gospel made him aware of the deeper meaning of being a Christian. G.S. Eddy, John R. Mott, Sundar Singh and C.F. Andrews made a deep impression on educated Christians in India, and he too came under their influence. Asirvatham wrote:

When Andrews came to preach in the College where I was studying he selected for his text, 'Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God and believe also in me.' It was one of the finest Christian testimonies that I have ever heard. Looking at those early years I find that more than formal preaching the winsome lives lived by Christians like Sundar Singh and Andrews were the greatest tributes to the power and influence of our Lord and Master.

After his graduation Asirvatham taught in a high school. Then he went abroad for higher studies. He spent three years in Hartford theological Seminary, studying theology. There he was influenced by his teacher W.E. Hocking, and by John Spargo an early Labour leader as well as by Rauschenbusch's social gospel. He did his doctorate in political science at the University of Edinburgh and returned to India in 1926. In India, Gandhi and his politics of non-violence attracted him and he became a Gandhian pacifist. He started his teaching career in Lucknow Christian College, and served as professor in Lucknow University. It was at this time he came into contact with Stanley Jones and his Ashram. Later he moved to the University of Madras where he was closely associated with the Rethinking Christianity group. For a period he taught at Boston University School of Theology, offering courses on the Indian Church and also on International Relations and the problem of peace. In America he was also associated with the Society of Friends and their work for world peace. Returning, he worked as Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Nagpur.

Asirvatham toured India and the United States, giving speeches on Christianity and its evangelistic and social mission. Besides books, he wrote a number of articles for Christian journals such as *Harvest Field*, *The Guardian* and the *NCC Review*. He died on 7 May 1969 at the age of 72.

THOUGHT

Asirvatham was perhaps the foremost among Indian Christian theologians who were influenced by the liberal school of theology represented by Hocking and Rauschenbusch. It was his firm conviction that the Christian emphasis on individual salvation in Christ should go along with an equal emphasis on social salvation. The vision of the Kingdom of God which Christ taught inspired him and he saw in it the call to all Christians and Churches to work for a new social order based on reverence for human personality and bringing justice and freedom to all men

and women. In his introduction to the book: *A New Social Order*, he says:

“The ideal social order contemplated by the Christian is embodied in the conception of the Kingdom of God as taught by Jesus Christ in St. Luke 4: 17-19. This ideal, the Christian realises, involves a continual process and is, therefore not something which can be attained fully within any reasonable length of time. It is a dynamic and not a static ideal. It places before man a moving goal. It is not an ideal suitable for ‘the perfect man in a perfect society’ contemplated by Herbert Spener, but an ideal which will help us to realise a better social order than the one which we have at present, an order in which the glaring evils of our present-day society will be removed and which will give ample scope for the development of the personality of every individual. The keywords of such an order are Bread, Brotherhood, Freedom and Justice (p. 6).”

In India, this meant that the Church should work for national independence and for a casteless society and democratic political structure to give substance to independence. Asirvatham was strong in his advocacy of a noncommunal approach to politics on the part of the Church because the Church stands not for itself but for the humanity of all people in the land.

Asirvatham was critical of the Barthian-Kraemerian thinking which the younger generation had adopted. About it he remained critical till the very end. In 1969, writing on the evolution of his social thought, he said about the Neo-orthodox generation of theologians in India:

For the most part they used a jargon which did not understand and did not seem related to the pressing problems around them. The Christian gospel was interpreted as God seeking man, whereas non-Christian religions were interpreted as man seeking God. It was forgotten that all religions seek after and find certain values, and that they may seek and find different things. Christianity is not the

only revealed religion, although it may be a fuller revelation than what we have in non-Christian religions.

All this meant that the social gospel tended to be under emphasised... What man can do with the help of God is as important as what God can do Himself. Therefore it is a mistake to assume that man is merely to receive the Kingdom of God and not have any direct, though small, part in the inauguration of it.

Eddy Asirvatham has an important place among Indian Christian social thinkers who combined theology with the insights of social sciences in the construction of social ethics.

M.M.T

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LIFE

Frampical Kuruvilla George was born on 10 March 1900 at Kottayam. His family belonged to the Anglican Church. He had his High School and early College education in the C.M.S. College, Kottayam. From Madras Christian College he took his Hons. degree in English Language and Literature. He joined the staff of a government school at Quilon, but resigned after two months as he wanted to take up full-time Christian service. He then worked as a catechist (lay preacher) of the Ernakulam Church. While he was there he married Mary. In 1924, George was sent to the Bishop's College, Calcutta, for his theological education. He took his B.D. degree from Serampore University. But just before his ordination he confessed he had serious theological doubts. He could not, for example, accept the exclusive divinity of Christ.

As he had to give up the idea of joining Christian ministry, he took up a teacher's post in Noble College at Masulipatam. He was not satisfied with the job and resigned at the end of the year. He was invited by the large-hearted Bishop Pakenham Walsh, who was at that time principal of the Bishop's College, Calcutta, to teach Philosophy of Religion and History of Religion at the college.

George taught there from 1928-1931. He challenged Bishop Foss Westcott, Metropolitan of India, on his stand on the Indian national struggle. After some correspondence with him, George left Bishop's College and joined the struggle for Indian independence. He stayed in Sabarmati Ashram while Mary, with their two children, stayed in Miss Peterson's Ashram at Porto Novo. Miss Peterson was an ardent admirer of Gandhi. However, George had to cut short his stay at Sabarmati because Mary and one of the children were very ill. Eventually they returned to

Alleppey, a coastal town in Kerala. While they were there, their daughter died suddenly. It was a great shock to George and Mary.

In 1937, George helped organise the Inter-religious Students Fellowship which tried to bring together students belonging to different religions for mutual understanding and co-operation. Assisted by the General Assembly of Unitarians, he could spend a year (1938-39) in Manchester College, Oxford. It was at that time, that he wrote his book, *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*, published by Allen and Unwin, London. In 1942, with the help of the General Assembly of Unitarians, the Georges could have a home of their own at Koorkencherry near Trichur. In 1946 George had an invitation from Shantiniketan to assume charge of the 'C.F. Andrews Memorial Institute.' He was there till 1950. From 1950 to 56 he served as a lecturer in English in the Wardha Commerce College. The Madhya Pradesh Government appointed George as one of the members of the 'Christian Missionary Activities Commission,' over which there was much misunderstanding in Christian circles.

In 1957 George resigned from the Commerce College and returned to Koorkencherry. He was tired and ill. But he was pressed to take up the editorship of *Gandhi Marg*, which meant the Georges had to go to Bombay. As he had been suffering from Parkinson's disease, George could not continue in Bombay for more than a year. So they returned to Kerala. Mary nursed him cheerfully till her death in 1959. On May 4, 1960 George died while he was on a visit in Gandhigram.

THOUGHT

S.K. George came under the influence of Gandhi at an impressionable age, when he was a student in Madras Christian College. Naturally one can see Gandhi's influence reflected in the thought of George. He never claimed to be an orthodox Christian even though he acknowledged the decisive influence of Jesus and the Bible on his life. His views are clearly expressed in his writings. In addition to his three books viz. *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*, *The Story of the Bible* and *Gandhi's*

Challenge to Christianity, he wrote many articles which were published in journals like, *The Guardian*, *Young Man of India* and *F.F.T. Quarterly*.

1. *The Man Jesus:*

S.K. George was of the view that the Jesus of history has been obscured by the deified Christ of Christian churches. In the process of deification, the man Jesus was conveniently forgotten, with the result that his noble character and heroism no longer challenged people. Jesus was turned into a god to be worshipped and not a leader to be followed. George thought that the man Jesus was as relevant today as he was two thousand years ago. It is in order to bring out this relevance that he wrote his book on *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ*. In it he led his readers from Bethlehem to Jesus' last journey to Jerusalem and, through the events in the last week of his life, right up to his crucifixion. George has no doubt that Christ died for others as he lived for others. And he takes his readers through to an understanding of the resurrection as a spiritual experience of victory through death.

George understood Christianity primarily as a Way of Life to be lived. For him Jesus has to be seen as a leader of people liberating them from every bondage, religious and secular, that would stifle human life. Theologies and Christologies which have been built around his person have obscured this heroic Son of Man. According to George 'The man Jesus of Nazareth should be set forth, in the simplicity as well as the grandeur of his heroic manhood. We must try and see him as he came to those disciples of old by the sea side, and hear him calling to us "Follow me" as he sets us to the tasks he had to fulfil for our generation.'

George thinks that this would mean a more complete identification of the Christian movement in India with the life and struggle of the motherland. According to George, 'Jesus might demand of the churches that claim to worship him to sell all that they have, even their cherished Christologies, and find him afresh in the toils, the struggles and the privations of real

life.' A Christian community that follows Jesus in that sense, according to George, will be the salt of the earth.

2. Larger Bible of Mankind:

In his Preface to the *Story of the Bible*, George says that the Bible contains the thrilling story of one of the most remarkable races of the world, and traces the evolution of religion that has been one of the most dominant influences in world history. Describing his purpose in writing the book he wrote: 'Essentially my testimony is to the spiritual significance of a book that has moulded my life; it is also my humble contribution to the building up of the Larger Bible of the world, to the growing recognition of the elements of worth in all the Scriptures of mankind.'

Referring to the Higher and Lower criticisms of the Bible, George says that such a work has to be undertaken with all the Scriptures of the world and only then can one attempt a compilation of the Larger Bible of Mankind.

According to George "Every sacred book of every religion is in a sense unique. It is the result of a double process of human search and divine self giving. The latter is rightly regarded by every religious soul as the more primal activity. The initiative is God's, though human response thereto is indispensable.' The starting point in every revelation according to George is *Sruti*, that which is heard. But the communication is in every case conditioned by the receptivity of the listeners. Hence the distinctiveness, the uniqueness, as well as the limitations, of the different revelations in the various Scriptures of each race.

3. Missionary work in Free India:

George gratefully acknowledges the contributions of western missionaries in the past. But he does not think that the methods adopted by them in the past would meet the needs of the present. According to George, self-governing India will devote its attention and its resources primarily to the betterment of the life of its semi-starved people. He thinks that the Christian Church, if it vibrates to the pulse of the new Indian nation, will lend its men and money to the building up of the national muscle and morale.

Of course it will have a message higher and nobler than mere material advancement but that message must be built on the basis of the general well-being of the citizen.

4. Indian Christian theology:

George thinks that Christian theology should be reformulated in the Indian context. He describes the attempts made in the past to formulate theologies in particular contexts. George wrote in *Gandhi's Challenge to Christianity*:

The great creative periods in Western Christian history are those when the Platonic and Aristotelian systems of thought were wedded to the original Semitic strand in the Christian heritage. If to Clement of Alexandria and Origen, the Greek philosophers were school masters leading them to Christ, if St. Augustine could interpret Christianity in Neo-Platonist terms, if the synthesis between Christian and Aristotelian thought worked out by St. Thomas Aquinas could become the basis of Roman Christian orthodoxy, if in modern days a leading Christian scholar like Dean Inge can describe himself as both a Platonist and a Christian, why should not the attempt be made to incorporate Hindu thought which is far more pronouncedly religious than Greek thought ever was, with the Christian? It is to such an interaction between Christian and Hindu thought that discerning minds in the west are looking for a new flowering of human culture.

George thinks that if Europe is to have another Renaissance comparable to that which came from the wedding of Christianity with Greek and Latin culture, it must, "come from a second wedding of Christianity with the culture of the East." According to George the world yet awaits the real assimilation of the Christian Gospel into the religious heritage of India.

5. Attitude to other religions:

George's attitude to religions was on the basis of equality. His dream of religion was that of a fellowship of faiths which would ultimately lead to a world faith. George thinks that the coming together of faiths should not be on a basis of indifference

to what is distinctive in the different faiths. Nor is it to be in the interest of an artificial mixture of all religions, working out of the lower common measure of all faiths which may not offend any one but will satisfy no one but the speculative theorist.

With regard to the Fellowship of Faiths, George thinks that it should contain the germ of a genuine fellowship of religions which is needed in India and in all the world and will organise the forces of good fostered by all the religions of the world for the overthrow of entrenched evil both in the individual heart and in the society. He wrote: "To me as an Indian Christian this seems to be the beginning of Christianity's answer to the challenge of Gandhi. It may be that in meeting it Christianity will have to allow itself to be swallowed by the religion of India, to die in order to find a larger and fuller life in Indian Dharma."

6. Religion and Politics:

During the freedom struggle the general attitude of Indian Christians was that Christians did not have any thing to do with politics. S.K. George was totally opposed to this view. He wanted Indian Christians to extend their full support to Gandhi. He pointed out that politics was not a taboo to the Old Testament prophets. George saw Jesus Christ as continuing this prophetic tradition. He wrote: "I believe that our Lord stands in the line of these prophets, endorsing and fulfilling their demand and making the same relentless demand of his followers. Is not that the meaning of his marvellous Parable of the Final Judgement when men are judged not by what they professed but what they had done to their fellowmen."

P.T.T.

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LIFE

Paul David was born in 1901. His parents were Rev. Devadawson David and Mercy David. Devadawson was Principal of the Thiruvallur High School and Mercy, originally from Tanjur, was fluent in Urdu, Telugu and English.

Paul completed his undergraduate education in Tiruchirapalli and graduated from the Nizam College in Hyderabad. He taught in Jaffna College for a period. David then got his M.A. from the Presidency College, Madras. Through his father, who was one of the first active members of the National Missionary Society, Paul became acquainted with K.T. Paul, the nationalist Christian Leader, who engaged him as his private secretary on his visit to the United States in 1924-25. Paul stayed back for theological studies, with K.T. Paul's approval. He got his B.D. from Berkeley and took his doctorate in Comparative Religion from Yale. His doctoral dissertation was a historical study of the Concept of Maya. It was at Yale that he changed his name from Paul David to Paul D. Devanandan signifying his self-awakening as a nationalist Indian Christian.

On his return to India in 1932 Devanandan was appointed to the staff of the United Theological College, Bangalore, to teach religions. The same year he married Hannah, the eldest daughter of K.T. Paul. He joined the Bangalore Continuation Conference led by Chenchiah, Chakkarai and others and expressed his concern for the Indianisation of Christianity, not only in the sense of autonomy of the Churches from Missions but also in the sense of giving indigenous expression to the life and theology of the Church.

Devanandan attended the Tambaram 1938 meeting of the International Missionary Council, and Kraemer's book, *Christian*

Message in a Non-Christian World, made an impact on him. It helped his theology to absorb significantly the insights of Barthian Neo-orthodoxy. Tambaram 1938 also enabled him to gain a greater understanding of the ecumenical movement and its rediscovery of the Church as the bearer of mission and prophecy. Nevertheless, Devanandan was one with the Rethinking group in emphasising the need for Indian Christians to take Hinduism seriously as their cultural background for expressing the Christian faith. And Devanandan began to seek a post-Kraemer theology of Indianisation of Christianity.

In 1949 he left the Theological College to serve the Indian YMCA, first as Secretary in Delhi and later as National Literature secretary. He received ordination as a presbyter of the Church of South India in 1954. From its inception, Devanandan was associated with the Christian Institute for the Study of Society, the Committee for Literature on Social Concerns, and the ecumenical study of Rapid Social Change in India. In 1956 the National Christian Council appointed him Director of the proposed Centre for the Study of Hinduism and this led to his founding the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society with himself as Director and M.M. Thomas as Associate. He experimented in dialogue with Neo-Hindus and Secularists in the context of common participation in nation-building. He was a member of the theological group which produced the report on "Christ the Hope of the World" for the Evanston Assembly of the WCC in 1954. In 1961 his speech on Christian Witness at the New Delhi Assembly initiated in the WCC the idea of dialogue with other religions and secular ideologies.

Devanandan died of a heart attack at the Dehra Dun railway station on his way to Rajpur for a conference.

THOUGHT

Devanandan's is primarily a theology of Christian participation in nation-building and of dialogue with religious and secular faiths.

From the time he was doing his dissertation on the Concept of Maya, the question he raised was whether traditional or renascent Hinduism was able to provide an adequate cultural and spiritual foundation for national self-awakening and nation-building. He saw that the “new anthropology” with its concepts of personality, equal justice in community, and history was being assimilated by the people of India through the impact of Christian and Secular West; it was producing a transformation of the “classical theology” of Hinduism, and finding expression in the movements of Renascent Hinduism. And it was his ‘conviction’ that the Christian mission in this context was to be defined in a relation of dialogue with this spiritual quest of modern India.

Devanandan defined the Gospel as the gift of a New Humanity, New Creation in Jesus Christ, and the Church’s role as that of bearing witness to it through active participation in the struggle for a new society and through a life of spiritual dialogue with the religious and secular faiths on the meaning and basis of being human.

The Crucified and Risen Christ points to the emergence of a new creation which has personal, social and cosmic dimensions. Christians believe, Devanandan told a Gandhian group in South India, that “with the coming of Christ, God Almighty identified himself for a while with man in all man’s struggles for perfection and the realisation of his true nature. Such identification initiates a new era in Creation. It marks the beginning of a redemptive movement which takes humanity in its entirety, that is the whole community of mankind, inclusive of all peoples whatever their belief, language or race.” It is a redemptive movement universalised in the Holy Spirit and its consummation in the Kingdom of God is assured in the Resurrection. Therefore, in the Church or outside, wherever people respond to the reality of the Cross and what it symbolises, however partially, they participate in the Divine movement of breaking down walls of partition to build human community. Just as the Cross and the Divine Forgiveness mediated by it destroyed the Jew-Gentile religious hostility, so also today the Cross is able to destroy the

hostility between Christianity, Hinduism and Secularism and build a spiritual basis for a community of persons transcending religion and ideology. Not only that this can happen but that this is the direction in which things do happen in the present renaissance of Christianity, other religions and secular ideologies. "The Word of the Cross needs to be preached today, in the conviction that because Christ rose again what man calls religion—the reign of law—is of the earth, earthy, of the old things to pass away."

The new anthropology of world community and the spiritual quest raised by it have brought all religions and ideologies into the orbit of a common ecumenical history in which the Gospel of New Humanity in Jesus Christ, both in its orthodox religious and in its heretical and secularist versions, has played its part. It is in this situation of dialogic existence that the Church should project itself as a peoples' movement with its mission of presenting Christ in terms of dialogic participation, in the common struggle for the renewal of personal and corporate life in a pluralistic society. For Devanandan, the Church is an integral ingredient in God's design for the world's redemption, neither as the exclusive community of the saved, nor identified as the Kingdom to come, but as an open fellowship signifying the universal activity of Christ and welcoming into it those who acknowledge Jesus as Lord. In this sense it is the "sign" of the New Creation in Christ, a special sign among other signs.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

David G. Moses was born in 1902 in Tamil Nadu. He studied philosophy under A.G. Hogg at the Madras Christian College, from 1921 to 1924. He joined the Staff of Hislop College, Nagpur, as Lecturer in Philosophy. In the thirties he became the leader of a group of Hislop Staff members who dedicated themselves to the service of the College in 1937. In 1941, Moses became Principal of Hislop, succeeding T.W. Gardiner, and served in that capacity till he retired in 1967. The development of the College through the years took place under his able guidance and leadership. He established his unique place in the realm of secular university education through his active participation in the University of Nagpur. He pursued his academic vocation along the path of the Scottish educational missionaries who founded the Christian Colleges and made them serve not only the general cause of higher education but also of intellectual preparation for the gospel.

From 1926, till his death in 1974 by heart-failure, Moses made Nagpur his home. There he took his membership of the local Church seriously and from there developed his ecumenical concern. He was involved from the very beginning in inter-church activity and he participated in the inter-church negotiations which resulted in the union of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Congregational Churches in the Church of North India in 1970. In 1961, Moses was ordained a minister by his Church. After Vatican II he initiated the Nagpur Christian Council in which Roman Catholics also participated.

Moses was President of the National Christian Council of India for many years. His relation with the International Missionary Council started with the World Missionary Conference in

Tambaram 1938, where he also started his career as an ecumenical theologian of mission with his critique of Hendrik Kraemer's *Christian Message in a Non Christian World*. Later he made significant contributions to the IMC Meetings in Whitby (1947) and Willingen (1952). He was elected a vice-chairman of the IMC and as such, was one of the architects of the integration of the IMC with the World Council of Churches. This integration took place in the 1961 New Delhi Assembly of the WCC, which also elected Moses as one of the WCC Presidents. In 1957, he became the first president of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore; and in 1959 he was elected Vice-chairman of the East Asia Christian Conference (EACC) formed at Kuala Lumpur.

Moses' abilities as a thinker, speaker, and statesman were appreciated by all the ecumenical organisations he served.

Despite his strong academic interest, Moses wrote only one substantial book, namely *Religious Truth and the Relation between Religions* (Madras 1950). This was in a sense a follow-up of his paper "The Problem of Truth in Religion" which he presented at the 1938 Tambaram Conference as a critique of Kraemer. However, he wrote many articles in the *International Review of Missions* on the theology of the Church's mission in general and the theology of religion in particular. The reports of the meetings of the various ecumenical organisations also contain his views on various aspects of the Christian Mission in Asia.

THOUGHT

Moses developed his theology of mission and inter-religious relation from his philosophy of religious truth. It was based on three concepts :

"(1) religious truth must be distinguished from other types of truth, (2) the beliefs which divide religions contain truth values, (3) the content of Christian faith is qualitatively more true than the contents of other religions."

- (James Cox)

Unlike scientific truth which is objective, religious truth involves also a person's subjectivity and is comprehended not only by the intellect of a person but also by his/her feelings and value sense, that is, integrally. Therefore the truth of religion is personal. But this does not invalidate the attempt to establish "an objective criterion" for evaluating the relative value and truth of religions as articulated by religious believers. He thought the Hindu idea of the equality of religions (a la Dr. Radhakrishnan) "a pernicious and false doctrine," but he considered Kraemer's approach of denying revelatory truth and experience of God in non-Christian religions as also false.

Divine revelation is the divine self-manifestation; and therefore of objective truth. Here he follows Hogg in making a distinction between historical "occurrence" of revelation and the "content" of revelation. If occurrence alone is emphasised, Christian revelation becomes discontinuous with other religions, but the content of the revelation is continuous with them. Moses wanted both occurrence and content to be taken seriously in the Christian attitudes to other religions. It is here that he disagrees with Kraemer's sole pre-occupation with revelation as occurrence which reduces other religions to "human efforts to understand the totality of existence." Moses saw valid revelation and the religious experience of God in other religions which make dialogue about contents and apologetics meaningful, and maintained the uniqueness of the Christian revelation as defensible rationally and philosophically, preparing people for the proclamation that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

From this standpoint he affirmed the universal mission of the Church and personally practised apologetics and proclamation. It was thus that he argued before the Niyogi Commission appointed by the Government to investigate Christian missions, for the uniqueness of the truth of the gospel and its relevance for India. The 1938 Tambaram recognition of the centrality of the Church and the Whitby principle "Partners in obedience" were to remain crucial for his ecumenical theology of mission.

Without making absolute the distinction between Asia and the West, he affirmed that Asia could be truly won for Christ only by those whose lives "have been ordained" in the Asian world and bound up with non-Christian Asia "by many centuries of history and culture." Since he maintained that there was no direct answer in the gospel to the questions non-Christian religions raised, he urged that the Churches in Asia should help raise "those questions in the non-Christian mind for which the Christian message is the answer." At an EACC Working Committee address he said:

The Gospel is indeed a great answer, a final and determining answer, an answer which not only solves the problem but removes the problem as well. Our Lord is indeed the only true and living way. But before men can accept and walk in that way, they need to long for that destination which is the goal of that way.

More especially, he said, the Churches must overcome "both the dangers," of a frightened self interest in their own inner life and an equally frightened acceptance of the false doctrines of the equality of religions. For this, it is necessary to emphasise with the Fourth Evangelist that the *life* that was in Jesus Christ is the light that lighteth every human being.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

Mark Sunder Rao was born in Kasargod, Kerala, on 16 November 1909. It was under the example and inspiration of his uncle D.S. Ramachandra Rao that he became a Christian at the age of twenty-one. He spent a few years at the United Theological College, Bangalore, and at the Syracuse University for his theological and journalism studies.

For over three decades Sunder Rao had been associated with many Christian movements and organisations. In the early forties he began his connection with the "Rethinking Christianity in India" group headed by P. Chenchiah and V. Chakkarai and was the youngest secretary of the Bangalore Conference Continuation, an offshoot of the group. Later he served as General Secretary of the National Missionary Society of India, as Member of the National Christian Council executive, as Secretary of the Kerala Christian Council, as Research Adviser to the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and society, Bangalore, and as Consultant to the National Council of the YMCAs of India. While with the CISRS, he served for a period as Executive Editor of the *Guardian*, Madras.

Apart from his journalistic writings, Sunder Rao contributed articles and papers to numerous periodicals and symposiums in India and abroad on spiritual and theological topics. He was a scholar in Hindu philosophy and Christian patristic thought and a keen student of contemporary movements of religion in India and the world. He also experimented with a Hindu-Christian spirituality, of which his search for an Indian theology was a counterpart. He wrote three booklets: *Ananyatva: Realisation of Christian Non-duality*; *The Image of the YMCA*, and *Concerning Indian Christianity*.

Mark Sunder Rao died on 6 May 1980 at Bangalore.

THOUGHT

The basic structure of Sunder Rao's spiritual experience and theological thought is contained in his *Ananyatva: Realisation of Non-duality*, the result of long years of spiritual experimentation and theological reflection. For him, "doctrinal knowledge without an appropriate discipline, not issuing in inward experience is futile." Thus he was searching for the proper relation between doctrine and spiritual discipline leading to spiritual realisation here and now. It is his contention that both Hinduism and Christianity, though taking somewhat different paths, are concerned with the ultimate spiritual vision and realisation of the unity of all things. According to Mark Sunder Rao, though the *siddhantas* of different schools of Hindu thought (*Advaita, Visishtadvaita, Dvaita, Saiva siddhanta* etc.) are varied, they are all seeking to interpret the one ultimate vision (*darsana*) and the human realisation of the ultimate unity of the world's plurality in relation to that ultimate. Hinduism in large measure conceives of divine-human, God-world union at the ontological level as hypostatic, but opens the possibility of the mystic experience of that union in the empirical world of plurality.

Christianity also has the same goal of realising a unitive vision. Rao says: "I could not get over the fact that *all life* was held together in Jesus Christ, and that in no wise could we think of others as *other*. Otherness abolished, at-oneness, Ananyatva took its place. Thus arose my creed of Ananyatva or non-alterity." Of course, starting with the solity of God and the separateness and fallenness of the empirical world, Christianity does not assume hypostatic union of God and the world, but the early fathers of the Church posited the principle of spiritual mutuality and co-inherence (*Perichoresis*) as the basis of the union of the Persons in the Trinity and of divinity and humanity in the incarnation of Jesus Christ and spoke of the Holy Spirit as making possible the working of co-inherence between God and human beings in the created world atoned and renewed in Jesus Christ. That is,

through the hypostatic union of divinity and humanity in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit opens up mystic divine-human union for humanity. That union is therefore pneumatic, not ontological.

In Rao's theology, the societal character of the human being also makes the Christian idea of divine-human union different. As the ultimate purpose of God is "the creation of a community at one with Him," Christianity speaks of the realisation of the Pneumatic divine-human union as the realisation of "the Mystical Body of Christ," a corporate spiritual entity.

Perichoresis emphasises "mutual indwelling, interpenetration, union, oneness." That is, the relationship is neither I-It or I-Thou but I-in-thou-in-Me. He expands the working of this principle beyond the life and relations in the life of the Church, because "no part of the existing world falls outside the scope of the divine salvation." From this angle, in his books on the YMCA and Indian Christianity, Rao speaks of the Christian Mission as enabling a mutual penetration and co-inherence to take place among Christianity, Hinduism and Secular Humanism and making possible the renewal of all three in the Spirit.

M.M.T.

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LIFE

E.V. Mathew was born at Tiruvalla, Kerala, on 14 February 1917. His father was a government inspector of schools in Travancore State, now part of Kerala. He began his Collegiate studies in Trivandrum in 1933. It was soon after this period that E.V. joined an informal Christian fellowship of young people. The Fellowship as well as the Youth Union of the Mar Thoma congregation and the Student Christian Movement were formative influences of his life.

After graduating in Mathematics in 1937, E.V. taught in the Ashram High School, Perumpavoor, for two years. Then he went back to Trivandrum and studied law. It was when he was student of law that the agitation for responsible government became intense in Travancore. The student body was involved in the political awakening. The formation of the Kerala Youth Christian Council of Action at an SCM camp gave the awakening a direction for Christian young people. Mathew was actively involved in the study courses on Christianity and political ideologies conducted under the Council's auspices. He was Secretary of the YCCA during his final year at the Law College and from 1940-43 he worked full-time for the movement, staying at the Christavashram, Manganam, working for the Shertallay Famine Relief, for the education in nationalism of Christian youth and involved in the study of India's land-reform, the ideology of revolution and the secular mission of the Church. His Malayalam book *The Land Problem of India* was published soon after this period.

In 1943 E.V. moved to Bangalore to practise law and joined a firm, with a Hindu and a Muslim as his lawyer-colleagues. He married Sally in 1945 and established his home in Bangalore.

In Bangalore Mathew was closely associated with the work of the Christian Institute for the Study of Society and later with the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society. He contributed to the pre-election political surveys of the Institute. He was also concerned with questions of lay witness in law and Christian participation in secular politics. He spent a year in Princeton Theological Seminary exploring the theology of law and politics under the direction of Professor Charles West. From it came his study on *The Role of Law in a Revolutionary Age*.

Returning to India, Mathew helped in the formation of the CISRS Delhi Project for Research on national legislation and politics. He also helped in the founding of the Christian Union of India, with J.R. Chandran as chairman and himself as secretary. From 1964 he was associated with the CISRS in editing the *Guardian*, i.e., weekly Christian journal of public affairs, published from Madras, and later he served as its Executive Editor for several years.

In 1961 he was a speaker at the New Delhi Assembly of the World Council of Churches on "Laity—the Church in the World." In 1966 he participated in the World Conference on Church and Society in Geneva and made a significant contribution to the Conference thinking on Law and Revolutionary Politics.

From 1965 he was associated with the Prague-based Christian Peace Conference of which A.K. Thampy was for a long time vice-president. Always a Socialist by deep conviction, Mathew found in CPC a relevant style of Christian witness.

E.V. died on 11 February 1971.

THOUGHT

E.V. Mathew was the advocate of a theology of secular witness in India. His motive was to proclaim the redemptive message of Jesus Christ as a challenge to the misery and enslavement of the mass of people in India. The question he raised for himself and others was: "In a country where every year thousands of children go blind and become mentally retarded due to lack of

proper food, where farmers grow bigger and owners fewer, where young people have stomach-tearing lust for jobs but do not get them, and where religion-based culture divides men and alienates them from history; how is the gospel of human liberation relevantly preached?" To him, the exciting reality of the gospel is that it upholds the dignity of human persons and human communities. Here evangelism becomes a secular concern, of being with God who is continually working through His Spirit in the realm of politics, law and economics and in their structures and institutions.

For Mathew, the Christ-event by which God became our partner in human existence has to be retold again and again with immediate relation to the contemporary historical process. The Bible and Christian faith do not reveal God in his pure being. The majesty and mystery of the transcendent God is only seen and understood, in the biblical view, in historical events. Any realisation of God in mysticism or any search for him outside the story of our world of secular human relations is vain and bound to be self-defeating, because the Incarnation means that the Transcendent has become secular, that the Eternal has broken into the temporal, that the Word has become flesh.

This led E.V. to consider law and politics as God's instruments for the realisation of love and justice in our world. For him, "Christ means Socialism" because it is the ideology which articulates the deepest aspirations of the masses of India for liberation and provides the ad-hoc goal in which the ultimate promise of Christ finds embodiment in the context of India. It is thus that Christ becomes contemporary. Through the politics of social revolution and the struggle for law embodying more equal justice, God vindicates in history those who cannot vindicate themselves: Law and its institutions have to become more political so that politics may become increasingly lawful.

Of course, politics and law often serve as instruments of oppression of the poor and the outcastes, in India. Christ's crucifixion brought about by law exposes law's pretensions, and the lawyer and the politician have to confess they are caught up

along with all others in these and in the tragedy and dilemma of sin that demands forgiveness at every stage, which forgiveness is freely offered in Christ Jesus. The Christian lay people in professions cannot therefore seek their salvation through moralism and good works, they are justified only by grace through faith.

It was the conviction of E.V. that God in Christ always takes sides with the oppressed. The gospel is for the poor, it is good news to the poor. "Our theological position" he says, "is that where there is pain and human suffering, particularly amongst those who are most helpless against the social forces of our day, the landless labourers and the unemployed workers, there is the deepest agony of God and thus the deepest reality." That is why politics has become the language of evangelism, faith and theology today. We see God in the struggles for justice. Preaching must be earth-bound. The agonising love of God towards the world represented in the Lord's Supper becomes meaningful in depth only when it is related to the real agonies of men and women around us. Israel saw God in the act of civil disobedience in the Exodus.

No doubt, revolution has inherent in it demonic possibilities capable of betraying its own goals by absolutising itself. The Church has to stand against any sacralising tendency in politics in general and in revolutionary politics in particular. Revolution is always in need of redemption; it can never be equated with salvation. In fact, here lies the significance of the secularisation of politics. Christ has demolished the very basis on which all religions function, namely the distinction between the sacred and the secular. He has relativised all religions and ideologies. In India, inter-faith dialogue should enable all religions to fight the emerging forces of religious communalism and to identify the secular forces of justice that deserve their support. "Nothing more is to be known of the mystery of the God-head than Christ Crucified and Christus Victor in the secular world today."

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LIFE

The original name of Swami Abhishiktananda was Henri Le Saux. He was born in Brittany, France in the year 1910. In 1929, at the age of 19, Le Saux joined the monastery of St. Anne de Kergonan and became a professional monk in 1931. In 1935 he was ordained a priest. After spending 18 years as a Benedictine monk, he felt call to go to India, to live the life of an Indian Sannyasi. His life in the Benedictine monastery at Kergonan was an excellent preparation for leading the life of a sannyasi and to make experiments in Indian Sannyasa. As Emmanuel Vattakuzhy writes in *Indian Christian Sannyasa and Swami Abhishiktananda*: “Before leaving France, he had prepared the fertile soil of his heart for the seeds of the Indian Sannyasa. He had begun to study Sanskrit and Tamil already in France. His Benedictine background provided him ample facility for adaptation of Indian Sannyasa because of its complimentarity” (P. 60).

A few days before India became independent, Le Saux wrote to Fr. J. Monchanin expressing his desire “of settling down in a hermitage somewhere in Tiruchirappally to lead a contemplative life in the pristine tradition of Christian monasticism and in the closest possible conformity to the traditions of Indian Sannyasa” (Ibid P. 62).

After obtaining permission from Bp. Mendonca of Thiruchirappally, Fr. Monchanin and Fr. Le Saux founded the Satchitananda Ashram at Shantivanam on the banks of the sacred river Kaveri near Kulitallai on 21 March 1950. It was a bold venture in the history of Indian Christian sannyasa. Both of them considered it as a fulfilment of Hinduism. According to Monchanin and Le Saux, Vedanta was the highest form of Hinduism. Following the example of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, they accepted the term Satchitananda to explain the mystery of

the Trinity. Sat-Chit-Ananda means Being, Intelligence and Bliss. One year after founding the Ashram they built a small chapel in Indian style. In conformity with the Indian life-style they adopted Indian names. Fr. J. Monchanin had already adopted the name Swami Parama Arupi Anandam and Le saux adopted the name Abhishiktananda. Abhishiktananda lived at Shantivanam with Fr. Monchanin from 1947 till Monchanin's death in 1957. Monchanin had a profound influence on Swami Abhishiktananda. He had also recognised the influence of Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya and Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvannamalai. Monchanin's death was a great blow, and he gradually moved to the North and built a hermitage at Gyansu in the Himalayas and lived there till his death.

Though he loved the life of a contemplative, he did not confine himself completely to his hermitage. He travelled all over India for meetings, conferences, seminars and retreats. He also wrote a number of books. His major works were written during the last phase of his life in the Himalayas. The Swami found time to visit sacred places and major Ashrams in India. He walked on the banks of sacred rivers. Emmanuel Vattakuzhy refers to the booklet *Mountain of the Lord* and says "More than once he made the difficult pilgrimage to the source of the Ganges. He climbed the hills of Arunachala and the Kedarnath, Guptakashi, Badrinath and Prayaga. He lived in holy sanctuaries, contemplated in Rishikesh, the town of ascetics, and stayed in Varanasi, the sacred city of India. He enjoyed living in caves, going deeper within himself reaching the source of being and passing into the infinite Presence, of the Absolute" (P. 88).

Abhishiktananda had his first heart attack in July 1973 at Rishikesh from which he never recovered completely. He attained samadhi on 7 December, 1973. He was a true sannyasi, a contemplative to the core, a champion of inculturation. He represented an authentic meeting point between the Hindu and the Christian.

THOUGHT

1. Approach to Hinduism

The idea of Christianity as the fulfilment of Hinduism has attracted the attention of many Christian thinkers. Prominent among them was J.N. Farquhar. This way of thinking continued till the Tambaram conference in 1938. Henrik Kraemer whose influence was decisive at Tambaram was not in favour of this view. After about 20 years, the idea of fulfilment again became prominent, with the emergence of people like Swami Abhishiktananda. Though the idea was revived, it was a revival with a difference. Farquhar took the word Hinduism to mean the whole system. But Abhishiktananda entered into its details with a view to find the fulfilment of each detail in Christian experience. After a period of living together and dialogue with people of other faiths, he came to two conclusions. "The first was that the Lord is already in India, and we need not imagine, poor feeble creatures that we are, that it was we who make him present. Our role is to help the holy seed which has been sown by the Spirit in the hearts and traditions of India to germinate. The second conclusion was that India has received from her Creator a very special gift of interiority, a unique inward orientation of the Spirit, and that no presentation of the message of the Resurrection has any hope of awakening an echo in the least of India unless its own essential interiority shines forth in such a way as to penetrate to those secret depths in which the Lord has willed to hide his chosen children of India" (*Hindu Christian Meeting Point Within the Cave of the Heart*, Pp 27-28). For Abhishiktananda, this fulfilment was not a theological exercise, but a matter of deep spiritual experience which took place in a real meeting and dialogue of Hindu and Christian "in the cave of the heart." By the expression cave of the heart, Abhishiktananda meant a place where the spirit of man becomes one with the Spirit of God.

2. Advaitic Experience

According to Abhishiktananda, the integration of Advaitic experience into Christianity is a necessary task for Christians in

the context of its claim that Christianity presents itself to the world as the Supreme message from God to mankind. It is a Christian imperative that whatever one finds as true, beautiful and good should be integrated into the Christian heritage. Though the Christian experience is unique, Abhishiktananda does not think that an integration of Advaitic experience into Christian experience is beyond the reach of the Spirit. Abhishiktananda thinks that if such an integration or assimilation of Hindu spiritual experience from within proves to be impossible, the Church loses its right to claim that it is the 'Universal Way of Salvation.' He points out that if Christianity is unable to integrate it in the light of a higher truth, the inference must follow that Advaita includes and surpasses the truth of Christianity and that it operates on a higher level than Christianity. Abhishiktananda recognises the necessity to reformulate the Vedantic experience before it is integrated with the Christian experience.

For Abhishiktananda, the unity of the atman with Brahman is the deepest spiritual experience. Following Brahmabandhav and Monchanin, Abhishiktananda also believed that the fullest meaning of Brahman is realised as Satchitananda and for him, this is not different from the experience of the Trinity.

Robin Boyd in his book *Introduction to Indian Christian Theology* has summarised Abhishiktananda's understanding of the Trinity as follows. "He writes of the silence from which the Word is uttered in the bosom of the Father, the very Word in which all things originate, the Vedic OM, the primordial utterance.... the Word, the Logos. In this 'Procession' of the Son, God makes himself known, the Father speaks to the Son as 'Thou', and the Son replies with 'Abba, Father'. But then there is the second 'Procession', that of the Spirit, which brings into unity (*ekatvam*) i.e., communion of 'the One' with 'the Other,' of Father with Son; in this procession it is the un-knowableness of God which is revealed. 'The first procession is the existential foundation of everything that appears manifold here below. The second reveals in all things the mystery of *Ekatvam*, unity, non-duality."

Abhishiktananda's understanding of Trinity in terms of Satchitananda may be summarised as follows. "In *Sat* the Christian will adore especially the mystery of the first person, the Father, unoriginated Being, the unmanifested Source from which his self-manifestation proceeds. It is from the *Sat* that *Cit* comes. *Cit* is the presence to itself, the consciousness of itself, the opening to itself, of *Sat*... *Cit* is the self awakening of Being, its coming manifestation within itself. It is not merely an aspect or mode of Brahman, the Absolute. In Christian terms it is a real procession, a real birth, first in eternity and subsequently in time. The Spirit is the *Ananda* which reveals to us the Word from whom all joy proceeds and which draws us into the fullness of that joy.... Bliss begins to possess us as a result of the inward manifestation of *Sat* and *Cit* and at the same time it prepares the way for their final and perfect manifestation. While it is true that *Ananda* issues from *Cit* and *Sat*, it is no less true that it is only by way of *Ananda* that any one can attain to *Sat* and *Cit* (*Satchithananda* Pages 178, 179, 185).

Abhishiktananda thinks that when the Hindu and the Christian meet in the cave of the heart in deep sincerity, an immediate experience of the ultimate non-duality of existence will take place. Secondly, as the true meaning of Satchitananda is revealed there comes 'the experience of divine sonship in the unity of the Spirit.' As Monchanin held, this must be a Trinitarian experience. Abhishiktananda thinks that it would be essential for union to pass over into communion, i.e., the *ekatvam* of *Advaita* to *Koinonia*. It is on the basis of this communion that he affirms the reality of creation, although he does not accept an ontological identification of God and creature.

3. *Sannyasa*

The concept and experience of Sannyasa are central to the thinking of Abhishiktananda. Fr. Monchanin and Abhishiktananda founded the Satchitananda Ashram with the primary objective of adapting Indian sannyasa into Christian monasticism.

For Abhishiktananda, the heart of Hindu sannyasa is renunciation. The meaning of the word sannyasa according to its Sanskrit root, is sam-ni-as which means total renunciation. In its positive sense it means the handing over of everything

into the hands of God. As a true seeker after God a sannyasi renounces everything in the world. This renunciation will not consist in abandoning material objects, but in denying the self or ego. It means freedom from all that may be called "his". According to Abhishiktananda, it should lead to renouncing the renouncer.

If renunciation is the heart of sannyasa, there will not be any sannyasa without contemplation. In *Further Shore* S. Arulsamy writes that "meditation helps towards concentration and the quieting of the mind and leads to the inner silence, without which nothing can be achieved" (P. 102). Interiority is an important aspect of Indian Sannyasa. The intense desire of a sannyasi will be to realise God. As he has nothing to achieve in this world, he will not have any frustration in life with the result that there will be peace in his heart and he will be a pilgrim carrying God in his heart.

P.T.T.

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