CHAPTER III

THE MISSIONARIES AND THE BRITISH RESIDENTS
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The policy of the English East India Company towards Travancore State, before the nineteenth century was guided mainly by the commercial interests, for Travancore has a long coast and it produced some of the favourable items of trade. But later, the colonial designs of the company made it strategically important to have Travancore under their control. The British Policy in India allowed the existence of individual Kingdoms as long as they were able and willing to continue under the British, accepting the dominance of the latter. Thus, for its individual existence, Travancore had no other option but to accept the political supremacy of the British. Inspite of the bitter feelings against the British, it had to obey in every respect the dictates of the Madras Government. The same relationship continued throughout the British period. ¹

The Rajas of Travancore were ready to please the British Residents and as a result, on many occasions the Christian Missionaries received considerable help from them. Thus, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the political situation became favourable for the work

Emblem of Travancore
of the Protestant Missionaries in South Travancore and later, they played an important and influential role in the society.

The British Residents, viz., Col. Macaulay, Col. John Munro and their successors, were not merely the representatives of the great British Nation, the conservators of the British influence, the guardians of the British honour, but were also the types of a pious and God-fearing Nation, blessed like the Children of Israel. 2

Col. Macaulay

In accordance with the Treaty of 1795, concluded between Travancore and the English East India Company, Col. Macaulay, became the first British Resident, and Dr. Buchanan as "the illustrious high priest". They were favourable to Christianity and to Protestantism in particular, which did not mean that they were in any way apathetic towards other religionists. 3

It was a well known fact that the early British Residents, in many ways, lent their power and influence as far as it was compatible with the interest of their Government, and the morality and general advancement of society to aid the Pioneer Missionaries, especially of Protestantism in this country in the execution of their errand - the planting of their Missions. 4

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2 Agur, C.M., op.cit., p.37.
3 Gladstone, J.W., op.cit., p.52.
4 Agur C.M., op.cit., p.38.
Col. Macaulay who granted passport for the first Protestant Missionary, Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube in 1806 and sent money from Cochin to defray the travelling expenses of that Missionary from Tirunelveli through Travancore to Cochin; and it was through his influence, and the efforts of his nephew, Dr. Kenneth Macaulay of Quilon, that Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube was introduced to the Diwan and the application was made, though permission was not readily granted, to build the first Protestant Church at Mylaudy. And it was perhaps through the instrumentality of the same officer that a great civil officer of Tirunelveli was induced to send rupees one thousand to Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube to build the first six small churches of Travancore at that officer's cost. Rev. W.T. Ringeltaube writes; For this important service our Society is indebted alone to Col. Macaulay, without whose determined and fearless interposition, none of their Missionaries would have been able to set a foot in Travancore.  

Velu Thampi, the Diwan of Travancore since 1800, was a good friend of the British Resident Col. Macaulay. He forced Travancore to reinstate Velu Thampi to Diwanship during the rebellion of 1804. But

after 1805, the relationship between the Diwan and the Resident became bitter. The Resident demanded the immediate payment of the increased subsidy but Travancore could not comply with. The Resident went so far as to ridicule the Diwan for the delay in paying the arrears. ⁶ The anti-Christian feelings of Velu Thampi too added to their differences. ⁷

The Resident demanded the immediate retirement of the Diwan; but he made secret preparations for a war against the Resident in collaboration with the Diwan of Cochin. Velu Thampi attacked the Residency on 28th December 1808, but the Resident managed to escape. The British authorities in Madras took immediate steps to bring the situation under their control. The British army entered Travancore and defeated the Travancore army, captured the main fortifications in the South. The Raja "tendered his submission" and put the entire blame on to Velu Thampi and apologized to the Madras Government. Troops were sent in search of Velu Thampi who hid himself. Finally, however, as the searchers neared, he committed suicide and his body was paraded through the capital and exhibited on a Gibbet. Travancore lost

⁷ Gladstone, J.W., op.cit, p.53.
all its resistance against the growing foreign power and had to surrender to the British. It is significant, that the permission to establish Protestant churches in South Travancore and the presence of a permanent Missionary in Travancore followed very close to the failure of the Travancore war.  

Col. Macaulay effectively used his power and influence in getting permission to launch proselytizing activities and to erect Mission churches within the state and granted money from his own pocket for the construction of Chapels and other buildings. He was a great supporter of the early churches, a great benefactor of Christians, who retired from his work March 4, 1810. Many gentlemen at Madras at that time entertained the opinion, that Col. Macaulay’s tenure of office was the time best suited for the planting of Christian churches in Travancore.

Col. John Munro

Col. Macaulay was replaced by Col. John Munro, as the Resident in 1810 and he also served as the Diwan of the state. He was more zealous in the cause of Christianity. His great attention and desire for

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8 Ibid., p.54.
its propagation are plainly seen in his carefully written addresses to the Government and the CMS, on the state of Christianity in South Travancore. Col. John Munro's unremitting exertions to improve the condition of the Protestant Christians, their Clergy and Churches, his invitation to the CMS to labour among them, and his numerous helps to the London Mission, need only a passing mention in this place. 10

At request of Col. John Munro, 'the Madras Corresponding Committee' of CMS decided to send Missionaries to South Travancore. The first CMS Missionary was Thomas Norton, who landed at Cochin on 8th May 1816. Col. John Munro suggested that Thomas Norton might be stationed at Alleppey and there he secured free gifts of land from the South Travancore Government for the Mission. Col. John Munro had an elaborate plan to 'revive' the Christians in which he wanted the participation of the CMS Missionaries. His plans included the Seminary Education as a compulsory requirement for ordination and translation of the Bible into the language of the people. 11

Col. John Munro again appealed to CMS for more Missionaries and in consequence, Benjamin Bailey was sent to South Travancore in

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In the early days of CMS in South Travancore, Col. John Munro was its moving spirit. He had mixed motives in helping the Christians. On the one hand he was a Christian Philanthropist, but on the other he found that this help would do much for the stability of the British Supremacy in South Travancore. He hoped to secure for the British Raj "the support of a respectable body of Christian Subjects, connected with the mass of the people by a community of language, occupations and pursuits, and united to the British Government by the stronger ties of religion and mutual safety". 12

Col. John Munro influenced Her Highness Parvathi Bai Ranee, to issue the Memorable Proclamation in 1815, fixing the law of inheritance for Christian converts in South Travancore and also the Proclamation of 1816, fully exempting all the followers of Christ’s religion in South Travancore, from all duties connected with the temples, public victualling houses, as well as from requisitions of whatever nature on account of Hinduism, such as contributions of all descriptions to Pagodas and

12 Ibid., p.64.
Shrines, and furnishing provisions to them; and from rendering Ooliyam (service to God) duties or gratis services to the Sirkar. 13

Col. John Munro’s administration regularly organized Protestant Missions, which had perfect toleration and its labours received open encouragement from the South Travancore Government.

Col. John Munro rendered much help to Christians and included many of them in the Government service for the first time and went so far as to even appoint a Missionary as a Judge. 14 Col. John Munro took keen interest in abolishing several taxes and as a result, the unprivileged classes embraced Christianity. 15 C.M. Agur says that over 5,00,000 people of the depressed classes including fishing people were liberated from tax and Ooliyam services. Col. John Munro also curtailed the absolute power of the Government officials and put down the tyranny in the State. He abolished several oppressive monopolies and gave a fresh impetus to the trade and industries of South Travancore. He minimised the expenses of the army and instituted courts throughout the country and protected Christian Missionaries from the attack of the local Hindus. 16

Col. John Munro also acquired a grant from Her Highness Queen of South Travancore to Rev. Charles Mead in 1819 by which, the latter acquired about thirty four cottahs of additional fields for the Mission. Col. John Munro did away with the old pernicious system of Government and remodelled it on the principles of justice and humanity and this was no easy task at that time.

In 1814, Col. John Munro issued an order permitting the Christian women to cover their bosoms with any type of clothes they liked. He found the village leaders of South Travancore exercising more authority over low caste people. He abolished village assemblies and caste assemblies which punished low caste people who did not observe the customs. Col. John Munro was the first Resident who pleaded for the introduction of English Education and established schools at public expenses in all the districts to improve the character of the people.

He finally resigned from office in 1819, after dominating the affairs of Travancore for many years. As a Diwan he ruled like a king, commanding respect from all sections of the people. As a social reformer, his name will ever be remembered in South Travancore.

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17 Yesudas, R.N., *op. cit.*, p.3.
won the confidence of the unprivileged people and became their spokesman. To them, he was the New Moses with the tablets of the new law, a figure, new moral force. 19

His untiring efforts to promote Missionary enterprises in South Travancore are very well known. He did so much good to the South Travancore Church that he richly deserves to be called the "Father of the Christian Missions in South Travancore". 20

Col. Mc Douall

Col. Mc Douall, the next Resident, did not have much opportunities of showing his sympathy towards Christians, as he was only for a short time in Travancore. He died at Madras of Cholera morbus on the 7th November 1820, after a few hours of illness. 21

Col. Newall

Col. Mc Douall’s successor, Col. Newall who held the office for a longer term, justly appreciated the claims, which the Christians had, on the support and kindness of his country. The Corresponding Committee of the CMS in 1821, recorded that "the Missionaries in Travancore make grateful acknowledgement of the countenance and protection

19 Ibid., p.52.
20 Agur C.M., op.cit.,p.561.
21 Ibid., pp .44-45.
afforded to them, by the British Resident in that country by Col. Newall."

The protection and favour of the Resident was so important to the welfare of Christians that the early Missionaries felt gratified in reporting thus, "In those days, such favours from the Resident were greatly needed as they tended to increase the respectability of the Christian Religion in the sight of the heathen and formed a spur to the Missionaries in their labours".  

**Col. Morrison**

Col. Morrison was the next English Resident at the Court of South Travancore. He bears a high character as a man and as a soldier, a character which is still more exalted by its being associated with the principles of Christianity.

In those turbulent days of the persecution of the Southern Churches in 1828 and 1829, when Mission Chapels and Schools were imprisoned, the infuriated heathen rebels advanced to the Missionary's house at Mundakadoo and Col. Morrison's life was in great peril. Captain Sibbald, with the portion of the 15th Regiment, marched expeditiously in one night for the rescue and protection of the Missionary and his family and the

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Mission property and Col. Morrison ordered the detachment to stay a fortnight longer until such time as they were out of danger. It must also be thankfully recorded here that, but for the express sympathy of Col. Morrison and of the military officers of the Subsidiary Force in Travancore at the time, Rev. Charles Mead and his Christians would have got into untold reverses. In December 1829, Col. Morrison retired from Travancore and was promoted as Commissioner of Mysore and afterwards as Member of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General in India.

Col. Cadogan and Mr. Casamajor

The successors of Col. Morrison, Col. Cadogan and Mr. Casamajor were officers of different types but equally interested in Christian Missions. It was during their administration that the imprisoned Christians of the South obtained their release.

Col. J. S. Fraser

Col. J. S. Fraser had also decidedly Christian leanings and his period is important in the history of both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Missions in Travancore. During his time, that Rev. Charles

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24 Agur C.M., *op. cit.*, p.46
25 Ibid.
Mead returned to England and successfully pleaded the cause of the Travancore Mission and brought with him a group of Missionaries and Missionary ladies, such as Travancore never before or after welcomed to her shores at any one time. This fresh batch of earnest Christian labourers zealously widened the South Travancore Mission and one of them was Rev. John Cox who was helped by Col. J. S. Fraser, to settle in Trivandrum and start a Mission there; for, till then the attempts of the Missionaries to establish themselves in the Capital of the Maha Rajah, were not successful as no permission was granted them.  

Col. J. S. Fraser also patronized Mr. Christian David to form a small Tamil congregation in connection with the Government. Col. J. S. Fraser and his brother - in - law, Stephenson greatly involved themselves in the affairs of the congregation. The disputes between the Syrian Metropolitan and the CMS Missionaries and their formal separation also took place at this time in spite of Col. J. S. Fraser's earnest efforts to restore peace.

27 Agur, C.M., *op.cit.*, p.47.
 Lt.Gen. William Cullen

Gen. William Cullen, a former Military Officer of the English East India Company was appointed as the Resident of South Travancore on 8th September 1840. The first seven years of his Residentship witnessed a gigantic struggle for power and supremacy between himself and the Raja Sri Swati Tirunal (1829-1847). During this struggle, the Resident was able to establish and run a parallel government in the state. The struggle between the two powers came to an end with the accession of Utram Tiru Marthanda Varma as the ruler of Travancore in 1847, with whom the Resident had maintained friendly relationship.

The Protestant Missionaries in the state had already started to voice their concern against certain socio-economic disabilities of some particular sections of the population.

The first important social issue which was projected by the Missionaries during the Residentship of Gen. William Cullen was slavery, an evil institution which existed in the state from time immemorial. The agitation was started by the Protestant Missionaries with the

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submission of a petition to the Raja on 19th March 1847, demanding the emancipation of all the slaves of the state. The Resident considered the demand of the Missionaries as judicious and humane and wholeheartedly supported them and it was only with pressure exerted by him, on the State Sirkar, the Raja issued a Proclamation abolishing slavery on 25th June 1855.  

Tussle between Gen. William Cullen and Rev. Baylis

The next important issue was the injustice meted out to the Native Christians by a section Muslims, which in 1850's led to discordiality between the Resident and the Protestant Missionaries whose relationship began to strain for various reasons. As in earlier days, the Missionaries were very vigilant on any kind of injustice or even minor assaults and exactions made by their co-religionists. On 5th November 1854, Arumanayagam, a native Catechist serving under Rev. Baylis was attacked and robbed by a few Lubbays at Colachel, on his way home after performing his divine service. Mr. Frederick Baylis, who was in charge of the Neyyoor Mission, represented the case to the Resident.
and requested him to adopt strong measures to suppress the highway robbery. 31

But as an ordinary case of robbery, the Resident referred it to the Diwan with instructions of proper enquiry and on latter's orders, the police conducted investigations. Rev. Baylis was not satisfied with the proceedings and submitted two more petitions to the Resident by describing the inefficiency of the police system and the injustice meted out to the native Christians. Finally, the Resident personally investigated the case and on the basis of his findings, he stressed that the fierce religious propaganda of the Christians without considering the religious sentiments of the Muslims was the fundamental cause to the conflict. 32

Rev. Baylis brought the issues to the notice of the Resident with hope of special treatment from him, as was done by his predecessors, but the repercussions boomeranged. With this, there started a cold war between the British Representative in the Royal Court and the British Missionaries of the state. In reply, Rev. Baylis severely criticised and systematically disproved all the observations and the views of the Resident in the problem. As usual, the Missionary turned towards the higher authorities and on 17th February 1855, sent a petition to the

31 John A. Jacob., op.cit., p.103.
Governor-in-Council of Madras. When the authorities at Madras enquired about the problem, the Resident replied that “the complaint was a misrepresentation of the writer of the petition and his relatives”. 33

Again on 2nd June 1855, Rev. Baylis complained to the Resident that more Lubbays of Colachel were indulged in atrocities against the Christians, by threatening to kill them and had burnt down a Chapel. The Resident doubting the descriptions of the Missionary, sent his assistant Nanoo Pillai to Colachel to ascertain the facts, but when the British Representative turned a deafen to the petition, Mr. Baylis directly wrote to the Governor-in-Council of Madras on 25th June 1885, with the changes of oppression, injustice and persecution of the Christians and appealed to appoint a Commission to enquire into the affairs of the State. 34 The Governor accepted the memorial and advised the Resident to direct the Raja to arrange an impartial enquiry on the allegations and to submit a report on the developments. It provoked the Resident who wrote to Rev. Baylis that if the Christians had any complaint, they should comply with the regulations of the country and apply directly to the proper authorities for redress. Here, the Resident tried to give a picture that

the foreign Missionaries and their followers were violating the regulation of the state and were involving in illegal activities.\textsuperscript{35}

Rev. Baylis again despatched a memorial to the Governor-in-Council on 16th July, 1855, in which, he described the administrative system of the state as inefficient, corrupt and oppressive and accused that the Resident was also responsible for this mal-administration. He also charged that neither the Raja nor the Diwan nor the Resident had taken any measure to apprehend the Lubbays and these men were well-known as smugglers, house-breakers and murderers, were allowed by the Sirkar to be at large. He further charged that "Such men are led to believe that they will get rather protection than punishment from the authorities and are encouraged to continue their unlawful course".\textsuperscript{36}

The Government of Madras forwarded the petition to the Resident for serious attention and early report, who conducted an investigation directly on the whole problem and reported that "the outrage complaint of by Rev. Baylis had arisen in a great measure from the imprudent proceedings of that gentleman himself and his Catechists among the Lubbays, a class proverbially jealous of interference with their religion".\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 3975-3976.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
Rev. Balyis continually sent petitions to the Resident by explaining the assaults and oppressions, injustice and confinements of native Christians. These petitions provoked the British Representative, who severely attacked the Missionary for exhorting the converts to challenge the rules and regulations as well as the authority of the State. This angered the Missionary who in his reply accused that all the officials of the State, including the Diwan and the Resident, were corrupt and unjust towards the Europeans and the converts.

**Friction between Gen. William Cullen and Rev. John Cox**

Another prominent foreign Missionary who had grievances against the Resident Gen. William Cullen was Rev. John Cox, a member of the LMS. On 12th February, 1855, he prepared a petition detailing specific acts of oppression and violence committed by the State officials on the Christian converts and sent it to the Governor-in-Council-of Madras. Due to his instigation, a few of the local Christians also prepared certain petitions which was forwarded by Rev. John Cox on 9th March, 1855, to the Madras Government. These petitions generally showed that all the

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Sirkar Officials, with the Diwan as their head, together with the support of the Resident, were in league to oppress and insult the Christians. The petitioner pledged his veracity, as a Christian Minister, that the grossest oppression existed and that torture was so severe as to cause death.

As usual, the Governor-in-Council ordered the Resident to institute an enquiry on the charges and to submit a report. The Resident conducted an investigation and sent a report on 3rd June 1855, in which he stressed that, "in all of them the circumstances were misrepresented and exaggerated". The report charged that Rev. John Cox and his Catechists interfered into purely secular concerns of their converts, contrary to the rules and added that, "the converts, were encouraged to take no step in any matter without a previous personal reference to Rev. John Cox's motives or other Missionaries, their unnecessary interference in such matters is productive of the greatest inconvenience by weakening the just influence of the Sirkar Officers". The Governor-in-Council accepted the report with the remarks that Rev. John Cox's charges against the State officials and the Resident were

39 Agur, C.M., op.cit., p.49.
unjustifiable and warned him against exciting discontent among the people and interfering with their civil duties. The remarks of the Governor-in-Council was a severe blow to the Missionary who understood that the report of the Resident misled the higher authorities, and the developments tightened the rift between the two parties. 40

Gen. William Cullen and Rev. J. O. White House

Rev. J. O. White House, another Protestant Missionary, submitted a complaint to the Governor-in-Council on 2nd April 1855, with the charges of ill-treatment of the Christian converts. The petitioner stated that one Arumainayagam, a slave, was beaten up and tortured by his master for visiting a Christian place of worship. Though he was horribly injured from the torture, the Tahsildar before whom the complaint came, fined the offender rupees five only. 41 Rev. J. O. White House stated that the application to the Resident was useless, for he paid no attention to the cause of the Christians and the judicial system was corrupt and partial. For the removal of these evils, he urged the Governor for a rigid enquiry into the judicial proceedings of the State. As on other occasions, the report of the Resident on the issue was not favourable to the Missionary.

In the report submitted on 28th June 1855, the Resident charged the irregular proceedings and interference of the Missionary, caused much problems in the day today life of the inhabitants. He also reported that the Missionaries like E.Lewis, F.Mault and Rev.J.O. White House forcibly intercepted a religious procession in Suchindrum which led to chaos and confusion in the state. The report was a heavy blow to the stand of the Missionary which widened the gulf between the two and the former looked upon the latter as an enemy of Christianity.

When the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie visited Nilgris, five Protestant Missionaries together submitted a memorandum on 26th July 1855. The joint-petition contained a detailed account of the extortions of the Police, injustice of the Courts, suppression of the civil rights, excessive impositions and exactions, the immoral influence of bribery and nepotism and the inhuman tortures on the Christians. The petitioners stated that when the aggrieved parties tried to obtain redress from the British Resident, the suffering of the complaints would be doubted. He treated the most serious cases as unimportant and attempted to cast odium on appealing parties. The Resident was cognizant of all these.

42 Official papers (Ordered by the House of Commons to be on August 6), 1859, p.33.
atrocities but he was in league with the criminals and protected them from punishments. So the petitioners requested for the appointment of a Commission of enquiry to find out the illegal practices of the State officials including the British Resident, through this petition, the Missionaries were able to bring the anti-Christian spirit of the Resident to the notice of the Supreme authority of the British India and the conflict between the two parties took a new turn. On the orders of the Governor General, the Governor of Madras wanted the Resident to submit a report on all the issues raised by the Missionaries. In his report, the Resident contradicted all the allegations of the Missionaries, posed against him and other officials of the state. He stated that an enquiry commission had already been constituted by the Raja and rejected the demand of the Missionaries for an enquiry into the general management of the Sirkar, by describing it as, "wholly unwarrantable".

Sir Charles Trevelyan, the Governor of Madras, who was a man with determination and will, was convinced with the unfitness of Gen. William Cullen and decided to remove him from the office.

44 Official Papers (Ordered by the House of Commons to be on August 6), 1859, p.33.
The Resident Gen. William Cullen resigned from the office on 31st December 1859. But he decided to spend the rest of his life in South Travancore and died at Alleppey in 1862. 45

The resignation of Gen. William Cullen was a moral success to the Protestant Missionaries and proved to be a warning to all the British Officials of the State that no other Resident or officials in future, would think to harm the Missionaries. 46

Mr. Maltby

Gen. William Cullen's successor, Mr. Maltby has left a good name in South Travancore and is much respected by Christians of all denominations in the country. He is particularly remembered for his Memorandum giving liberty to conscience to Christians and for giving the right to the Sirkar in ecclesiastical affairs. He was friendly and courteous and hospitable to all Christian Missionaries and attended to all their reasonable requests on behalf of Native Christians and on many an occasion he visited Christian Churches and exhorted them. Mr. Maltby was a wise, influential, Christian and a kind hearted benevolent person.

45 Nagam Aiya, V., op. cit., p.532.
46 Agur, C.M., op. cit., p.50.
The Palpable help and influence of the British Residents of the South Travancore, contributed more to the success and to the planting of Christian Missions in this land, than the sympathy and protection of the Government, though, no doubt, there is much for gratitude and consideration for the various helps, it has rendered to the Christian Missions in South Travancore.  

The foregone sketches show that except during the regime of Gen. William Cullen, almost all the British Resident rendered active sympathy and patronage to the Protestant Missionaries.

47 Ibid., p.98.