CHAPTER - I

SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

Christianity is a religious movement launched around 30 A.D. in Palestine, on the western seaboard of Asia by a Jewish spiritual master called Jesus. He proclaimed that he was the Messiah or Christ, the Son of God. During his short lived public life, he gathered followers among the masses, from whom an important group of disciples emerged under the name of apostles. They were active messengers entrusted by Jesus, their master, to carry his teachings to all peoples. The small band of apostles and disciples soon became organized into a dynamic community and, quite early, its members received the name ‘Christians’. In the course of time Christianity spread far and wide.

The origin of Christianity in India has been the subject of controversy among historians owing to the absence of documentary evidence for the first few centuries.¹ The Christian message is claimed to have been brought to India by St.Thomas and St.Bartholomew, two Apostles of Jesus Christ. But the evidence for this claim is just a tradition, not described directly or in detail but alluded to in passing, in some ancient literary works while writing about other things.² The so-called details available are mostly the fruit of fertile imaginations, generously employed to fill gaps and provide facile interpretations. The earliest of these records of tradition do not go beyond the beginning of the third century. More or less, the same is the case with the history of the Christians till the close of the fifteenth century.
There are two views among scholars about the origin of Christianity in India. According to one, the foundations of Christianity in India were laid by St. Thomas, the apostle, or even by two apostles, St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew. The other view would ascribe the arrival of Christianity in India to the enterprise of merchants and missionaries of the East Syrian or Persian Church. Such a position is held by all those who deny the apostolate of St. Thomas and of St. Bartholomew in any part of India and attribute absolutely no value to the Acts of Judas Thomas or to the references in other works of early centuries to India. The earliest record about the apostolate of St. Thomas is the apocryphal: Acts of Judas Thomas, written in Syriac in the Edessan circle about the turn of the third century A.D. There are a few records, both in the West and the East, which refer to the existence of Christians in India in the ancient and medieval times, but they are few and far between and lack details.

I. Christianity in South India

The origin of Christianity in South India is connected with three seaports, which at one time carried on flourishing trade with Western Asia and beyond. Of these, Cranganore and Goa lie on the west coast, and Tranquebar on the east. It is from these three spots that Christianity spread in various directions. Christianity, in South India, can be described as a river formed by the confluence of three streams, the Syrian, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant, each with a distinct character of its own.
a) **The Syrian Church and its Role in South India**

The controversy about the origin of Syrian Christianity in India is closely connected with the evangelization of India by the apostle Saint Thomas. His apostolate finds a mention in ancient tradition, both literary and local. The mission of St. Thomas to the court of Gondopharnes is described in the *Acts of Judas Thomas*. It is an apocryphal work attributed to Bardesana, which was probably written in the beginning of the third century either at Edessa in Syria or some other place in upper Mesopotamia. This work mentions that the apostle St. Thomas preached the gospel in the land of Gondaferes or Gundaphares, the Parthian King, Gunduphara, who was ruler of Afghanistan and the Panjab during the second quarter of the first century A.D. Most of the critics of the nineteenth century have refused to concede any historical value to the *Acts of Judas Thomas*, and nobody can deny that they are full of fabulous details. The highly documented study of A.E. Medlycott in 1905 and the articles of J.N. Farquhar in 1926 have effectively contributed towards lessening the suspicions of the critics. J.N. Farquhar, Adolf Medlycott, Eugune Card, and Tisserent, whose principal sources are the *Acts* and some patristic and medieval references, strongly defended both the North Indian and the South Indian apostolate of St. Thomas. An important group of scholars and writers, though not opposed to the North Indian apostolate, consider the South Indian tradition as being more reliable than the *Acts*. Most of these historians are products of South India, the others had intimate contact with the community of St. Thomas Christians and its traditions. They assign greater importance to a South Indian apostolate in view of the living
tradition of the community of St. Thomas Christians (or Syrian Christians) of Kerala, and the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore.

The Christians of South India, known as Syrian Christians, claim an apostolic foundation for their Church. Tradition traces that St. Thomas (Mar Thoma), one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, after being in Parthia and in other parts of the kingdom of Gondophares in north-western India for some time, landed in 52 near Cranganore, (ancient name Muziris), an important sea-port on the Malabar coast. In true apostolic tradition, he preached first to the Jewish settlers in and around Cochin, and then worked among the Hindus. It is believed that he founded seven Churches on the Malabar coast for the use of Christian converts and ordained presbyters from four leading families. The seven Churches are Malankara (Cranganore), Palur (Chavakad), Parur, Gokamangalom, Niranam, Chayal (Chayil) and Kalyan (Quilon).  

The greatest success of the apostle was amongst the Brahmans of Palur (modern Chowghat) in the Ponnani Taluk of the Malabar district. They later provided the sacerdotal classes of Malabar Christians till the advent of the Portuguese. Palur was an important stronghold of Brahmanism and most of the blue-blooded Nambudiris of the Perumels Kingdom lived here, and was a busy centre of inland trade at that time. Practically, the whole Brahman community of Palur was converted by the apostle St. Thomas.  

From Malabar the apostle is said to have gone to the east coast. The Brahmans became jealous of his success and he was speared to death on St. Thomas Mount, a place eight miles south-west of Madras (since known as
San Thome, probably identical with the harbour Batumah (Beit Tumah, the house of Thomas), mentioned by the Arab merchant Suleiman in 851.8

Little is known about the history of the Malabar Church in the first few centuries. The historical evidences are fitful and inconclusive and once again we derive from tradition what we cannot get in history. In the year 345 there landed in Malabar, according to the traditions of Thomas Christians of South India, under the convey of a Jerusalem merchant, Thomas, a Bishop from Edessa, accompanied by presbyters and deacons and by a company of men and women, youths and maidens from Jerusalem, Bagdad, and Nineveh, who had attached themselves to him. They were welcomed with great rejoicings by the Christian of the country, and endowed with important privileges by the ruler of the land (Hindu king who held sway in the coastal region).9 Their arrival was the beginning of a flourishing epoch in the history of the Malabar Church. A large immigration from Syria and Mesopotamia to Malabar is quite possible. This is the simplest explanation of the ecclesiastical dependence of the Syrian Church upon the patriarchate at Antioch, of the Syrian ecclesiastical language and literature, and generally speaking of the Syro-Nestorian type of the whole ecclesiastical life of the Syrian Christians during the Middle Ages.10 That such an immigration may have taken place about the year 345 is rendered more plausible by the fact that in the year 343 there broke out in the Persian Empire under Sepor II, a severe persecution of the Christians, lasting for a period of nearly forty years. The Thomas of Jerusalem who is referred to or known as Thomas Cananaus, the Khan or Knaye Thomas (Knae Thomman), that is Thomas the Merchant, played a large part in the traditions of the Syrian Christians. He is supposed to have
founded the city, or at least the Christian quarter, of Mahadevapatnam ("City of the Great God", or "of the Great Gods"), later Cranganore. This was the earliest establishment of Christians on the Malabar coast known to historians today.  

Whether Thomas of Jerusalem was a historical personage, whether the fact that the Syrian Christians have from early times called themselves "Thomas" Christians, has anything to do with his name, whether this Thomas has been confused by an ever more luxuriant tradition with the equally mythical exploits of the Apostle Thomas, are questions that cannot be settled with any certainty.

The earliest historical evidence, however, regarding the existence of a Church in South India dates from the sixth century A.D. It is to be found in a book written by an Alexandrian merchant, Cosmas Indicopleustes (Cosmas the voyager to India), who visited India in the second quarter of the sixth century A.D. (about the year 530). He says in his Christian Topography, as follows: "On the island of Taprobane (i.e. Ceylon) in Inner India, where the Indian Ocean is, there is to be found a community of Christians consisting of both clergy and the faithful. Similarly in Male (Malabar, perhaps more particularly Quilon, which was later known by the Arabs as Kullam-male), where pepper grows, and in the place called Caliana (Kalyan, near Bombay), there is also a Bishop, who received imposition of hands from Persia.

From the sixth to the sixteenth century, little is known of the Syrian Church beyond what is contained in inscriptions or accounts of visitors from the West. Archaeological evidence points to the fact that there were different waves of migration from Western Asia to the Malabar Coast and that the emigrants received a cordial reception from the ruling princes of Kerala.  

Certain copper-
plates, probably belonging to the ninth century, and containing Charters of privileges granted by these princes, testify to the high position enjoyed by Christians among the people of the land.

The Malabar Church suffered practical isolation with the rise of Islam and the dominance of the Indian seas by Muslims. The Syrians, however, clung tenaciously to their traditions and made desperate attempts to get Bishops from Western Asia. Of the geography of Western Asia they knew little, of the theological niceties that rocked that ancient centre of Christianity perhaps less. What they apparently wanted was a Bishop of Western Asian appearance who did not understand their language Malayalam, and as long as a person of this description came to them by sea they were not interested in his doctrines or his *bona fides*.15

There has been a well-authenticated immigration of Persian Christians in the ninth century. This was the period of Cheraman Perumal who ruled over the whole of Malabar. The tradition about him is that after a period of beneficent rule, he left his kingdom and went to Arabia where he became a Muhammadan and never returned. There are those who say that he became a Christian.16 The Malabar Era begins with the traditional date of his leaving the Kingdom, 15 August 825. According to another account the Malabar Era begins with the landing of Marwan Sabriso. The land ruled over by Cheraman Perumal broke up into small Chiefdoms which were later grouped into three kingdoms, that of the Zamorin of Calicut, and those of the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin. Marwan Sabriso and party settled in and around Quilon, and he built a Church there. A local ruler, the king of Venad, gave to him and his community certain rights and
privileges. These were inscribed in two sets of copper-plates.\textsuperscript{17} Five plates still exist, three in the old seminary, Kottayam, and two in Tiruvalla with the Mar Thoma Metropolitan. There is also mention of another Charter of privileges granted at Cranganore to one Iravi Kortan, a Christian merchant of that City.

Two of the oldest Christian monuments in Malabar, the Persian Crosses (or the so-called Thomas Crosses), with inscriptions in Pahlavi, one found in St. Thomas Mount, Madras in 1547, and two in a Church in Kottayam in Travancore, are evidence of the connection of the Malabar Church with the Church in Persia, which eventually came to be known as the East Syrian or Nestorian Church or the Church of the East. In Syrian Church history the period from the fourth to the sixteenth century is known as the Persian or Babylonian period.\textsuperscript{18}

In the meantime, according to local tradition, two more groups of Persian immigrants had landed in Kerala, one arrived with Bishop Thomas about 774 or 795, another, some forty years later. This immigration can possibly be compared with the arrival in India, about fifty years earlier, of Parsis escaping from Muslim persecution. Most western scholars, like Burnell, attribute to that period the two documents or copper-plates, the Sathanan, granting privileges to the Christians.\textsuperscript{19} It seems almost certain that second and third immigrations had but one effect, that of strengthening the bonds with the Selucian patriarchate. Throughout Syriac remained the liturgical language of the Indian Syrians, but the new colonists were shortly to be absorbed into the bulk of the already existing Dravidian Christians.\textsuperscript{20}
Among the visitors to the Malabar Church in the middle ages mention may made of Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller (1293), John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan Friar (1292-93), Friar Jordan of Toulouse, a Dominican (1302), and John de Marignolli (1348). From the available evidence we may infer that, during this period, the Christians on the Malabar Coast established themselves as good traders as well as patriotic soldiers and administrators.

In order to complement the scanty data available in eastern documents, it seems useful to gather here the western testimonies about the Christians of India. The first evidence comes from the Frankish monk, Theodore, who was the witness referred to by St. Gregory of Tours (A.D. 593 or 594). This monk visited Mylapore, and saw there a large and richly ornamented Church where monks were officiating. Later on, we find in various English texts brief allusions to the embassy sent by King Alfred the Great to the tomb of St. Thomas in 883.21

The famous traveller, Marco Polo, who travelled in the East from 1270 to 1295, was to bring a moderately trustworthy account of India to Europe. He had been twice to the East Indies, once as Commander of a Chinese fleet escorting a Mongolian princess to Persia. Concerning, the Syrian Church in Malabar by far the most important Christian Church of the East he seemed to have heard practically nothing. He merely says, "In the Kingdom of Quilon (Travancore), dwell many Christians and Jews who still retain their own language".22 Four Franciscan missionaries reached Tauris during the autumn of 1320. They were due to go to the Far East, but their journey was to end with the establishment of a new diocese in India. Among the Dominicans of Tauris there was a staunch man from Rouergue (France), called Jordan Catalani, born at Severac. He had
come to Persia and in a short time became an expert in the Persian language. Tired of an atmosphere that was too quiet for him, Jordan joined the Franciscans and landed with them at the port of Thana on the island Salsette near the present site of Bombay, at the beginning of 1321. Jordan Catalani was eager that his superiors, and the Pope himself, should take a personal interest in this land. He was called back to the West, where he composed his *Mirabilia Descripta*. He returned in 1330 as the consecrated Bishop of Quilon. He was the first western Bishop of India, and precisely in that part of India where there were Christians already.

Oderic of Pordenone (1324-25) visited the Nestorians of Thana. Somewhere in the peninsula he was received in a house of Friars Minor, and from there he proceeded to Malabar where he heard of quarrels between Christians and Jews. The Franciscan, John Marignoli of Florence spent fourteen months at Quilon (April 1348-August, 1349). He then returned to Europe, via Mylapore, Ceylon and the Persian Gulf. He maintained, "the St. Thomas Christians (this is apparently the first mention of the name in western sources) are much more numerous than the Mohammedans. At Quilon there was a Latin Church, dedicated to St. George, (Ecclesia Georgii Latinorum), built by Jordan Catalani".

As far as Malabar was concerned, there were now two Christian communities living side by side, the Latin Catholics, converts from Hinduism, and the local Christians, supposed to be 'Nestorians'. Nicolas de Conti visited India several times between 1415 and 1438. He saw the Nestorians living close to the sanctuary of St. Thomas and also in other places. Nicolas de Conti was the last
traveller to leave any account of Christianity in India before the arrival of the Portuguese.

b) Influence of the Roman Catholic and the Other Churches

With the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Calicut on 14 May 1498 the history of the Syrian Church enters a new phase. The arrival of Vasco da Gama is taken as a landmark not only in the history of the Church, but also in the cultural contacts of India with the West. From this time European nations were attracted towards India, and several of them attempted to establish themselves in this land of pepper and spices, of silk and peacocks. As regards the beginnings of the Church in South India, it is true that the missionary followed the trader, and that for a time, they were on friendly terms with each other. The Portuguese colonial empire in India was at the height of its power in the sixteenth century, and the same century saw also the prosperity for the Roman Catholic missions in the South. The Portuguese kings, Manual I (1495-1521), and his successor Joao III (1521-1557) deemed it their most sacred duty, together with colonial conquest and exploitation, to plant Christianity, of course of the Romish type—in the newly discovered and inestimably vast regions of the East and the West. Two missionary Orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were sent for this purpose. They were accompanied by an imposing army of combatants, and many secular clergy. Even on board the second Portuguese fleet for India, which sailed under Cabral in 1500, hosts of monks destined for missionary service were dispatched, and by nearly every ship bound thither after that their numbers were augmented.
Early in 1507 the Mameluk Sultan of Egypt sent a strong fleet to drive the Portuguese from Indian seas. The fleet reached Diu, an island off the coast of Kathiawar to the North-West of India, and joined by Malik Ayaz, the captain of this island in September 1507. It inflicted a severe defeat on a Portuguese squadron at Chaul, twenty five miles to the south of Bombay, on its way from Cochin to meet the enemy. It now looked as though the naval supremacy would pass from Portuguese hands. But the Viceroy, Francisco de Almeida, was soon on the track of the Egyptians. He found that the Moorish vessels anchored at Diu, had gained a victory on 3 February 1509. Albuquerque, who started for India in 1506 saw the danger involved in the policy of Almeida to trust in the strength of the fleet alone, which was immobilized and put out of action during the rainy season, owing to the storms which made navigation impossible. Albuquerque, felt that if the Portuguese did not make themselves masters of the strategic points, their supremacy would soon slip from their grasp. For eliminating Turkish competition from eastern trade it was essential that the Indian Ocean be turned into a Portuguese lake. Moreover, if the forts were strongly built and adequately manned they could be successfully defended against any indigenous power.

Albuquerque proceeded to put these principles into practice, when he succeeded Francisco de Almeida as Governor in 1509. Cochin was then the Portuguese headquarters in India, clearly unsuited for the purpose of their metropolis in the East, as it was the capital of a friendly prince who had offered them hospitality. On the other hand, the city of Goa, to the north, answered to all the requirements of a Portuguese capital. Goa was therefore, a precious
acquisition, and Albuquerque proceeded to possess himself of it on hearing of its weak defences. With Goa, Cochin, and Tuticorin as their bases, Portuguese missionaries preached the gospel to the fisher folk in the coastal regions, in the first instance and later penetrated into the interior. orthodox.  

Other bases of the Portuguese naval supremacy, such as Ormuz, Mozambique, etc. were also provided with Churches and monasteries, secular clergy and monks. In this direction the Franciscans were particularly energetic in building monasteries at Goa, Cochin, Diu, Bassein, Shaul, Salsette, and other places. The Portuguese encouraged intermarriages between their soldiers and sailors and native women, and baptized their frequently illegitimate offspring without enquiry, and furthermore, they encouraged and rewarded in every possible way the embracing of Christianity by the natives. In the beginning, missionary activity in India developed in localities where the Portuguese built their factories and forts. Given the economic objective of the discovery of the sea-route, viz, pepper, these factories and forts could be established only in the Malabar coast. Thus, Goa, on the west coast became at once the centre of ecclesiastical hierarchy and of a great colonial empire. In 1534 it was raised to the dignity of a Bishopric and placed under the charge of Bishop Joaode Albuquerque (1533-1553). After his death, Goa was made an archbishopric in 1557. Albuquerque realized that a small nation like Portugal could maintain its hold over India only by winning the sympathy of the indigenous population.  

The influence of the Roman Catholic Church was brought to bear upon this ancient Church, and though the relations between the two (Syrian and Roman Catholic Church) were at first friendly, they became gradually strained to the
breaking point. A crisis was reached during the visit of Alexis de Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, in the summer of 1599. At the Synod of Dimapur (Udayamperoor), mostly through circumstances beyond its control, the Syrian Church was obliged to promise obedience to the Pope and merge itself in the Roman Catholic Church.

In accordance with the papal orders, the new Archbishop of Goa, Alexis de Menezes, was then (February 1597) visiting the Latin communities of Malabar. During the course of his visitation of the Latin parishes, he appointed Francis Roz as Vicar Apostolic of Angamale. Since the latter had been associated with Mar Abraham (the Archbishop of Goa, who died in February 1597), for twelve years, he knew the affairs of the archdiocese better than anybody else. The Archbishop of Goa resolved to visit the Syrian communities of Malabar himself. This he did from 27 December 1598, onwards despite the general State of high tension then prevalent. His visit lasted several months, we know its details through the account of the Augustinian friar, Antonio de Gouvea, who later on became Titular Bishop of Cyrene. Gouvea reckoned that there were about 70,000 Syro-Malabar Christians. With genuine skill he described the attitude of the Portuguese missionaries towards the Syrians.

Notwithstanding the exhausting climate of South India, Menezes wanted to visit personally the smallest communities before and after the future diocesan synod. With undaunted courage he faced all sorts of dangers from obstinate Christians and petty princes who had been induced to believe that the Archbishop of Goa had the intention of fully subjecting all Christians to the Portuguese, and thus removing them from the authority of their traditional
leaders under the pretext of submitting them to the Pope. The Archbishop left Cochin at the beginning of February 1599. His first halt was at Vaipicotta (Chengamangalam), where with the Jesuit fathers he was on safe ground. Probably Menezes was not unaware of the fact that steps had been taken to obtain bishop from Selecia in the traditional way. The Archbishop's instruction was completed with a summary of the Catholic doctrine on Purgatory, then Menezes administered the Sacrament of Confirmation. In point of fact, the question of confirmation was a delicate one in Malabar. Here, as elsewhere, priests were accustomed to anointing during Baptism, and a few of these functions probably belonged to the essential rite of confirmation. But since, in the Eastern Churches, the priests administered confirmation during the Baptismal rites, Hence, the Portuguese priests might be excused if they insisted on giving confirmation according to the Latin rite. After Vaipicotta, Archbishop de Menezes proceeded to Parur, Mangate (Alangad), Chegeree (Cheroarra) and Canhur (Kanjur). The Archdeacon, George de Cruce, should have accompanied the Archbishop, but he retired to his residence at Angamale. In the same year (1599) he summoned the future priests to Dimapur (Udayamperur) for Saturday in Holy Week.

The Archdeacon, an administrator of the diocese, was also invited, but the later, relying on Clement VIII, strongly objected to this act of jurisdiction which Menezes intended to perform. He maintained that the Pope had not given the Archbishop any sort of power over the Syrians, but only over the Latins. Gouvea, writing in 1606 pointed out that "the old Chruches of the St. Thomas Christians were built after the fashion of heathen pagodas".
None of the old surviving Churches—Thiruvancode, Mailakonu, Kundara, Kallupara, Chengannur and Kothamangalam however, is true to this description, except perhaps the one at Thiruvancode. However, because of the conquests of the Malabar coast by the Dutch, who were friendly to the Syrians and hostile to the Roman Catholics, the tide soon turned in favour of the Syrians, and in 1653, a large number of them renounced the authority of the Pope and asserted the independence of the Malabar Church. This is known as the Coonen Cross Declaration. The Syrian Church organised itself under a bishop, sent out by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, and thus forged a new link with another of the historic Churches of the East.

In the nineteenth century, the Syrian Church came into contract with some of the most virile sections of the Church from abroad, represented by the London Missionary Society in Travancore, the Church Missionary Society in Central Travancore, and the Basel Mission in Malabar. As a result of this, new life was infused into this ancient Church, in its worship, organisation, missionary outlook, education, and philanthropic activities. The Syrian Christians of Travancore, Cochin and Malabar, about two million in number, are divided into the following main sections:

i) Those who owed allegiance to the Pope of Rome and follow the Syrian rite (Romo-Syrians).

ii) Those who owed allegiance to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, including those who stood for local autonomy under a Catholic bishop virtually independent of the Patriarch (Jacobite Orthodox Syrians).
iii) Those who had organized themselves into a Church entirely independent of foreign control (Mar Thoma Syrians).

iv) Those who were under the jurisdiction of 'Nestorian' catholics of the East, now residing in the U.S.A. (Chaldean Syrians), and

v) Those who were members of the Church of South India closely connected with western Churches.

Don Francisco de Jassuy Xavier, better known as Francis Xavier, was born on 7 April 1506, in the Castle of Xavier, Navarre. He was the first Jesuit missionary to arrive in Goa on 6 May 1542. After this year, Roman Catholic activities started on a large-scale. With the help of Ignacio Loyola, he funded the Order of the Jesuits on 27 September 1540.

The Society of Jesus was different from any other religious order, but not as different as is sometimes supposed. Notable among these new orders were the Theatines, who arrived in India, at a later date than the Jesuits (1646). The Theatines were neither monks nor friars nor canons. They were a body of pastoral priests living together, having taken the monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, in order to live the apostolic priestly life in as perfect a manner as possible. Loyola, however, did not approve of the migration of his whole Order to India, he chose only two men for the purpose, and those two, Simon Rodriguez and Nicolas Bobadilla the weakest of its members. It was only when obstacles arose in the way of their departure that he allowed Francis Xavier to replace them and to sail for India. Of all the missionaries Europe has sent out to India, Xavier was undoubtedly the greatest. He was that rare phenomenon, the ecstatic and man of action combined, which appears in the
world once in several centuries. With a mystic bent of mind he combined an overwhelming compassion for suffering humanity and a flair for affairs which made his personality irresistible.

He never learnt the language of any of the lands he visited, least of all one of the Indian tongues. He carried on his work by means of interpreters, and helped himself out of his difficulties by largely inadequate methods. On the matter he stated "It is a difficult situation to find oneself in the midst of a people of strange language without an interpreter. Rodriguez tries, it is true, to act in that capacity, but he understands very little Portuguese. So you can imagine the life I lead here, and what my sermons are like, when neither the people can understand the interpreter, nor the interpreter the preacher, to wit, myself. I ought to be a postmaster in the language of dumb show. Nevertheless, I am not altogether idle, for I need no translator's help in the baptism of newly born children."

Goa was the focus and the central point of the entire Portuguese enterprise in the East. Both Ignatius and Xavier tried to establish a strong base there for their work in India. Soon after his arrival in India, Xavier turned his attention to the far South of India and visited the Fishery coast in Goa. He devoted his attention towards the newly converted Paravas who lived in a number of villages, perhaps about twenty in all, over a narrow strip of land about a hundred miles in length from Cape Comorin to Vembar.

Francis Xavier obtained permission from the Raja of Travancore to do missionary work in his Kingdom. For several reasons he confined his missionary activities to the coastal region, mainly among the fisher folk. For one thing
Xavier believed that the downtrodden, poor inhabitants of the coast stood in greater need of him than the well-to-do classes of the interior who lived in lofty seclusion, for another, he realized that it was easier for the Portuguese to interfere and afford protection to the neophytes if any trouble similar to that experienced by the Paravas arose.\textsuperscript{48} Xavier, no doubt, came in contact with the Syrian Christians. After spending four and a half years in India, the eagle eye of the missionary turned eastward. Xavier was now fired with a zeal to preach Christ in Japan, the farther most corner of the known world. Xavier's own plans, however, had by this time undergone considerable alteration. Some fishermen living in Manar sent a deputation to Francis Xavier to visit them when they came to know of the advantages which the Paravas enjoyed under the Portuguese patronage. Xavier was then busy in Travancore and could not visit them himself but sent a priest who baptized a large number of fishermen. These men were at that time under the King of Jaffna who found in the conversion of the fishermen a potential danger to himself.\textsuperscript{49} So he sent an army to Manar (Ceylon) and ordered the fishermen to return to their old faiths, which they refused, and about 700 of them were butchered by the soldiery. As news of the massacre of the fishermen reached Xavier, he immediately proceeded to Goa to impress upon the Viceroy the need for doing something effective in the matter. In the meantime the lure of the East became irresistible and he left India in the beginning of the year 1545.\textsuperscript{50}

Xavier returned to India in January 1548 and remained for another fifteen months there, until April 1549. This time, however, it was not to resume his simple mission work, but to govern with unlimited authority the vast company of
Jesuit missionaries who had been sent out after him. The call of Japan came again, and in February 1549 he sailed from India to the strange land of the Rising Sun. He worked in Japan for two years, returned to India and landed in Cochin in January 1552.\(^{51}\) While he was in Japan, Xavier had occasion to notice that the Japanese looked to China as the mother of all civilizations and had the greatest respect for the culture and traditions of this great and ancient land. Now the tireless missionary decided to preach the Gospel to the people of this part of the globe. He tried to interest the civil authorities of Goa, in his mission. The proposed enterprise appeared too dangerous to the people of Goa because of the well-known hostility of the Chinese to all Europeans especially the Portuguese, that far from encouraging him they dissuaded the missionary from undertaking the hazardous mission. After overcoming considerable opposition from several quarters, Xavier set sail from Goa in April 1552 to China and never returned to India he loved so much. After encountering many difficulties on the way, he reached the island of Sanzian (Sancian) near Canton, where he died on 2 December 1552.\(^{52}\) His body was brought to Goa and to this day it remains intact, a lasting symbol of the immortality of his work.

The missionary activity of the Roman Catholics during the second half of the sixteenth century was almost entirely along the lines which Xavier had laid down. Missionary work in this period "is merely one amongst a number of efforts put forth by the State for the government of the Indian colonies, and in return the State is ready and willing to place its strong arm at the disposal of the missionaries to assist them in the discharge of their religious task."\(^{53}\) In order to decide the question whether the natives in the Portuguese colonies in India were
to be allowed liberty in religious observance the Viceroy of India at the instance of the Portuguese Sovereign convened the assembly of missionary party in Goa in 1579. Its answer was "No", and thus it was admitted that the carrying on of the Christianising process in the Portuguese possessions was the common duty of the State and of the Church. After 1554 the Jesuits made it their especial task to Christianise Goa and its immediate neighbourhood. In 1557 they obtained from the Viceroy an ordinance whereby all the lower official positions in the Portuguese service were reserved for native Christians, who were also to be favoured in many other ways, especially in all ceremonies connected with baptism to be observed in the future with great pomp, and in the presence of the highest officials in State and Church.54

Another famous man who did yeoman service for spreading Christianity was Robert de Nobili (1577 – 1656), an Italian nobleman, who arrived in India on 20 May 1605.55 The missionary work of Nobili in India can be divided into four periods of unequal length. The first period was glad and adventurous pioneering, crowned with rapid and unexpected success (1606-10). Then followed the sad years of controversy, in which the work of the mission was carried on, but with endless interruptions, through journeys and the writing of documents related to accusations and defamation (1610-23). The third period was that of the extension of the mission, accompanied by grave difficulties through persecution, the dearth of workers, and the declining health of Nobili, whose sight was causing grave anxiety as early as 1626 (1623-1645). The final period lasted eleven years, and was spent in relegation and increasing blindness. Nobili was sent away from his beloved Mathurai (Madurai) by the higher authorities of his
order. During these years Nobili was occupied in the extension of the mission through almost ceaseless literary work.\textsuperscript{56} It is well known that Nobili wrote works both in Sanskrit and in Telugu, but none of these have been found, and it must be regarded as likely that none of them has survived. But his Tamil works were copied and widely distributed. A considerable number of these works has survived, and several have been reprinted.\textsuperscript{57} We know today a great deal more about Nobili than was known fifty-sixty years ago, largely through the tireless works of the late Fr.A.Sauliere S J, and of Fr.S.Rajamanickam S J. Fr.Rajamanickam's book \textit{The First Oriental Scholar} (1972), is an excellent summary of the state of research up to date. Fr.Rajamanickam gives on p.114 a list of no less than thirty-eight Tamil works which have been attributed to Nobili, and on p.116 a shorter list of twenty-one, which can be with considerable confidence ascribed to him. By far the most important of these works are:

\begin{itemize}
    \item \textit{Gnanopadisa Kandam} (Spiritual Instruction)
    \item \textit{Gnanopadesam} in simpler form, twenty six sermons,
    \item \textit{Attuma Nirnayam} (Disquisition on the Soul),
    \item \textit{Dusana Dikkaram} (Refutation of blasphemies),
    \item \textit{Punar Jenma Aksepam} (Refutation of Transmigration)
    \item \textit{Nittyja Jivana Callapam} (Discourse on Eternal life),
    \item \textit{Kadaval Niranayam} (Disquisition of God's Nature).
\end{itemize}

In nutshell, the Society of Jesus, to which both Xavier and Nobili belonged, was the vanguard of missionary work in South India in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Although, in its work in the South there was little that was as spectacular as its mission to the Great Mughal Empire in North India.
The seminaries established by the Jesuits at Goa, Vaipicotah (Cochin), and Cranganore, though primarily meant for purposes of Christian propaganda, encouraged liberal education within certain limits. The first printing press was brought to India by the Jesuits about 1550. Jesuit mission declined in prestige and influence, when the Portuguese retreated from the political horizon of India. Soon other missions followed, sponsored by monastic orders, such as Franciscans (1517), the Dominicans (1548), the Augustinians (1572), and the Carmelites (1656). The Franciscans were the first to come to India (1517), and the first bishop of Goa Dom John de Albuquerque (1537-53), was chosen from this order. In 1557 Goa was raised to the status of an Archdiocese.

The contribution of Catholic missions in the field of education is notable. In a number of districts in the South, primary education as well as higher education was in the hands of Jesuit missionaries for several generations. This is still the case to a lesser extent. Roman Catholics are to be found in most of the important towns in South India, especially in Goa, Mangalore, Ernakulam, Changanacherry, Quilon, Negapatam (Nagapattinam), Pondicherry, Trichinopoly, (Tiruchirapalli), and Bangalore. The Roman Catholic missions showed signs of a vigorous growth in the nineteenth century. The Roman Church has a genius for organization as well as administration, as is evident from the diocesan and missionary organization of the Church. To the credit of the Roman Church, it must be said that long before the Protestants thought of the idea, the Catholic Church attempted to develop an indigenous leadership, for the Church in India.
c) **The Protestant Missions in South India**

The Roman Catholic enterprise suffered a setback with the rise of Protestant states of Europe as Colonial powers in the eighteenth century. As a result, the work of Roman Catholic missions became moribund. The Protestant states of Europe began to take interest in spreading the Christian faith according to their beliefs. In the Protestant countries of Europe, there came into existence a large number of societies, sects and denominations which showed much zeal in evangelical work. The wave of religious revival in Protestant Europe induced King Frederick IV of Denmark, to send two Protestant missionaries (German Lutherans), to India on 9 July 1706. These two missionaries were Bartholomew (Bartholomaus) Ziegenbalg and Henry Plutschau, who arrived in Tranquebar on the Coromandal coast about 150 miles south of Madras. Ziegenbalg established at Tranquebar near Trichinopoly the Danish Tamil mission. Since then Tranquebar became the center of Protestant Chritianity in South India, as Serampore in Bengal was of the North. For carrying out the missionary works in India, Ziegenbalg had to face endless difficulties. He learnt the Tamil language, imported a press for printing Tamil books and published a translation of the Bible in 1714. In addition to literary work, Ziegenbalg was diligent in preaching the word to the natives.

After the Ziegenbalg, missionary activities were carried on by Frederick (Friedrich) Schwartz. He, alongwith his two comrades, David Poltzenhagen and Huttemann, reached Tranquebar on 16, 1750, and never left India till his death in 1798. The biggest achievements of Schwartz was that he set up many mission stations in Tranquebar, Trichinopoly and Tanjore. He also acted
as the trusted friend and counsellor of the Raja of Tanjore and played the role of mediator between Haider Ali and the British East India Company in 1772. After Schwartz, no great missionary work was done by the Tranquebar Mission. The main cause of the slow down of Tranquebar mission was that Kiernander, one of the Tranquebar missionaries, went to Bengal at the invitation of Robert Clive, but he was not as industrious as Ziegenbalg and Schwartz. Moreover, help from home became scant and missionaries with the necessary zeal and skill for organizing their activities were few.

The Danish Tranquebar Mission flourished in the eighteenth century, and was succeeded in the nineteenth century by a number of other missions established in various parts of South India. This was made possible by the adoption of a more liberal attitude to missionary work by the Directors of the East India Company. Until 1812 no Christian missionary had been granted a license by the Company to reside in its settlements. But pressure was brought to bear by the British Parliament and people upon the Company at the time of revision of its Charter in 1813. The Charter of 1833 paved the way for non-British missions to enter India. Some of the earliest missionaries were American Baptists and Lutherans who worked respectively at Nellore (1840) and Rajahmundry (1848). By 1850 there were not only missionary societies from Great Britain in South India, but also from various parts of the continent of Europe and the United States of America. The half century from about 1900 saw the growth of the Church in various parts of South India, especially among the unprivileged and the under-privileged in Madras and Andhra States. In this development the older
Churches in South India have played a notable part, especially the Church in Tinnevelly. An interesting fact in connection with the work of the Christian missions in South India is that with the passage of years they interpreted the missionary task in accordance with the varied needs of the country. The early missionaries were content to preach the gospel of salvation to all and sundry, their modern counterparts believe that the gospel is a message of life and fuller life for all human beings. So we find the doctor, the specialist in agriculture, the teacher, the sanitary engineer, and other technical experts in the ranks of missionaries today. The missions also played a noble part in improving the rural economy of South India. The Young Men’s Christian Association rural reconstruction centres at Martandam in South Travancore and Ramanathapuram in Coimbatore District, the American Arcot Mission agriculture farm at Katpadi, the medical college at Vellore, the mission hospital of the London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) at Neyyoor, as well as other institutions scattered in different parts of the country, bear testimony to the beneficent work of the Church of South India. One of the chief contributions of Christian missionaries has been the service they have rendered for over two centuries to the language and literature of the South India. Though the beginnings of the Tamil language go further back than the Christian era, there was much to be done to vivify the language and enable it to take its place amongst the well-developed modern languages of India. This is equally true of the younger members of the Dravidian family of languages — Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. The translations of the Bible as well as the creation of a Christian literature in these languages gave an impetus to their development
in various directions. The work, in Tamil, of Father Beschi (1680-1747), and of Dr. Caldwell was of outstanding significance. Missionaries have also led the way in the careful study of the language and literature. *The English-Carnataca and Carnataca-English* dictionaries were prepared by Rev. W. Reeve of Bellary. A scholarly *Kannada-English* dictionary, a historical *Kannada Grammar* by Rev. F. Kittel, and scholars editions of the Chandombudhi and Sabdamanidarpana were prepared.

Another aspect of the literary efforts of missionaries was the work they did as interpreters of Indian thought and culture to the West through translations of works from Sanskrit and other Indian languages. In addition to their work of the development of language and literature, mention may be made of their activity in the care of orphans and lepers. The Blind School at Palamcottah, the Leper Home in Chingleput, the numerous homes for orphans and, the work of rescue and rehabilitation of girls and women who had fallen victims to inhuman customs and conventions are some notable examples of such a service.

Missionaries have been pioneers in the field of English education, especially after the creation of the western educational system in 1835. Roman Catholics and Protestants alike found in English education not only a valuable ally to missionary propaganda, but also a solution to some of the problems with which India was confronted in the nineteenth century. In course of time, educational institutions came to be regarded in a more liberal context. They became an expression of Christian service, in combating ignorance on the one hand, and in setting up ideals of training in character and citizenship on the other. This accounts for the popularity of institutions such as Madras Christian

II. Christianity in North-India

Before delving into the enunciation of Christianity in North India, it may be useful to turn our attention to India's neighbours in Western Asia with whom it was in contact in the early centuries of the Christian era. From our knowledge of Church history in general, it is clear that it was from countries in the Euphrates – Tigris Valley, Persia, and southern Arabia that Christian influence travelled eastwards to India, Central Asia and beyond. Armenia, lying between the upper waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris, was the first country where Christianity became an established religion, and this was the result of missionary labours of Gregory the Illuminator (257-331). Edessa, a small principedom lying between Armenia and Persia, became quite early a stronghold of Syriac Christianity and was responsible for introducing the new faith into many parts of Persia. As we are well aware of the fact that India had trade and commercial contact with Armenia and Persia since ancient times, it was not very difficult for the missionaries to profess their faith in India through existing contacts.

For the sake of convenience the history of Christianity and Christian missionary activities in North-India can be divided into two broad periods, (i) Prior to 1813 A.D., the year when the Charter Renewal Act made provision for
an ecclesiastical establishment, the license restriction was withdrawn and the right of free entry granted to missionaries, and (ii) from 1813 to 1947 A.D.

Period I: Prior to 1813 A.D.

The tradition that St. Thomas the Apostle visited North India is brought to the fore in recent years, by the archaeological discoveries about the historicity of a king named Gondophares, mentioned in the Acts of Judas Thomas, a book written in the second century A.D., at or near Edessa and dealing with the martyrdom of St. Thomas.\(^6\)

Considering the facilities in communication by sea and land between India and the eastern Mediterranean region, including Persia and Mesopotamia, there is great strength in the view that St. Thomas preached the gospel in North-West India, now a part of North-West Pakistan as early as second century A.D.\(^6\) Similar views are expressed by Mingana when he stated that, “there are solid grounds for believing that a fairly large Christian community existed in India from the very early times, and that there is every possibility that a stream of Christian missionaries and merchants had in the long past penetrated through the passes that connect India by land with its northern and north-western neighbours.”\(^6\) Latourette however, believed that “it is not impossible that before the end of the third century Christianity had arrived in India itself.”\(^7\)

On the Church history of the Punjab and North India, there are three important articles dealing directly with this history. These are, *History of Christianity in the Panjab* by C.H. Loehlin, *Christianity in the Panjab: A Bibliographical Survey* by Ganda Singh, a noted Sikh scholar and historian, and
Christianity in North India by James Massey. The Church in the Panjab Some aspects of its life and growth by E.Y. Campbell and The Christian Community and Change in Nineteenth Century North India by John C.B. Webster are also notable works providing a serious study of Christianity in the Panjab. All these works are written mainly from the sociological perspective. The spread of Christianity in North India during the earlier phase was constrained because of the fact that most of the early missionaries failed to identify themselves with the local people and their culture. This is the point which all mission work and later on Church work (even today) in North India have ignored considerably.\textsuperscript{71}

Secondly, Christianity in North India also received a set-back under Muhammad Bin Tughlak, Timur and other Muslim rulers. The blow was so shattering that the Churches became extinct, all traces of their existence were obliterated by the end of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{72}

Missionaries to North India From Goa

The next phase of the growth of the Church in North India followed the fortunes of the Portuguese power in India. This led to the advent of Franciscans and Dominicans and, later, Jesuits as missionaries of the gospel in India. The best known of the latter group, as discussed in the preceding pages, was Francis Xavier, a companion of Ignatius Loyola who founded the Jesuit Order, who like a flaming torch moved from place to place starting from Goa and passing through the islands of the Malay Archipelago and Japan, till he died on the coast of China in 1552. The story of the Jesuit Mission to the Mughal Court in the sixteenth century is a heroic chapter in the history of missionary work in
India. At the invitation of Akbar (1556-1605), the first Jesuit mission started from Goa in November 1579 and reached his court at Fatehpur Sikri in February 1580 after traveling through Surat, Mandu, Ujjain, Sarangpur, Suroj, Marwar, Gwalior, and Dholpur. The missionaries explained the tenets of the Christian faith to the King and pointed out the evils of polygamy. The king was cordial in his relations with the missionaries and encouraged round table conferences between them and the Mullahas. They had been granted full liberty to preach Christianity and to make converts. Yet they soon realized that Akbar had no intention of becoming a Christian. The mission returned to Goa in 1583.

Regarding Akbar's attitude towards these Missions, M.L. Roy Choudhury commented "Akbar treated the Christians, more or less consistently, courteously and generously. He liked their intellect. He not only granted them permission to build Churches and make conversions, he went so far as to adopt the son of a Christian, Yaqub of Aleppo, also known as Mirza Sikander."

Another mission on the request of Akbar was sent by the Father Provincial. He accordingly dispatched to the king the Fathers Edouard Leioton, and Christophe de Vega, with another, who was not a priest. These three set out together and arrived at Lahore in the year 1591. They were received by the king cordially who lodged them in his palace, and treated them with much respect and attention. The missionaries opened a school which was attended by the sons of nobles and by members of the royal family. But, in the end, seeing how little hope there was of the King's conversion, and also because the Fathers, were recalled they returned to Goa, having accomplished nothing of what they had intended.
Third mission on the request of the King was sent again from Goa in 1595 which met with a slightly better reception. The leader of this Mission was Father Hierosme Xavier Nauarrois, nephew of the Father Xavier, who was at that time the Superior of the house of the Profes at Goa, and who willingly quitted that office to undertake the enterprise now entrusted to him.

Finally on 5 May 1595 they entered the town of Lahore. A Church was built in Lahore and opened in 1597 by the governor of the city. The heir apparent, Prince Salim (later known as Jahangir), became a firm friend and protector of the mission. Christmas and Easter were celebrated with great pomp and ceremony in Lahore, and Churches were built in Agra and other places. Jahangir, even after succeeding his father in 1605 remained friendly to the missionaries. The feature of the Jesuit activity in the later years of Jahangir's reign was the adventurous journey of Father Antony de Andrade's mission to Tibet. Four hundred years ago the minds of the Christians were constantly being excited by tales of bodies of Christians in unknown and unexplored parts of the world. Father Monserrate was convinced that there were Christians beyond the high ranges, he gave them the name Bottans. But when the Christians of that era encounter Buddhists were impressed by certain similarities to the Christian faith as they themselves understood it- monasteries, a celibate priesthood, the solemn chanting of liturgies, the ideal of poverty and so on. On the basis of these and similar rumours, it was decided to send out a mission to Tibet.

The pioneer was Father Antony de Andrade, whose courage was well matched with the difficulties of the enterprise. The party set off from Agra on 30
March 1624. The jump-off place for the penetration of the high interior was to be Srinagar. He reached the town of Tsaparang in the upper Satluj valley, saw the king and queen of that region, and preached to them through a Hindu interpreter. A mission was maintained there for some years, a Church was built, and some converts were made. Though the mission to the Mughal court was maintained during the reigns of Shah Jahan (1628-58), and Aurangzeb (1658-1707), it became weaker as the prestige of the Portuguese declined in the country.

From the above discussions it is quite evident that Akbar invited missionaries from Goa time and again not with the intention of embracing Christianity but to understand their faith and other religions by means of discourses and debates, which eventually resulted in his eclecticism and in the promulgation of the Din-i-Illahi.

During the early years of the East India Company's rule, missionary activity was very feeble, though not non-existent. A number of missionaries of this period may be named, but the primary impetus for Evangelical movement came from a long-time Company servant, Charles Grant. Ainslee Embree has detailed the circumstances of Grants personal spiritual revolution in India in 1776 and the consequent aversion which he came to feel for religious customs and practices of India's native religions.

The Danish Mission, with the one exception of the little Danish settlement of Tranquebar, had substantially identified itself with the English colonies in South India. It was intimately connected with the beginnings of that Empire, and has extended along with it from one end of the country to the other. This fact
must be borne in mind when seeking to rightly estimate the importance of English colonisation for Indian missions. The English East India Company, the founder of the magnificent empire, gave no helping hand to missionary work, it performed the services of herald and forerunner to which providence had called it in an unwilling and reluctant manner, and every foot of broad land which the cause of missions gained had to be wrung from it by force.\textsuperscript{84}

For one and a half centuries, from its founding in 1600 upto the battle of Plassey in 1757, the East India Company had been simply a commercial undertaking, and had contented itself with concentrating in small areas all round the coast, trading ports and factories, which were hardly as important as other European settlements. Upto this time, the Company had not taken the slightest interest in the spiritual aspect of the Hindus. It is true that in the Charter of 1698, there was a clause, "The chaplains in the factories are to study the vernacular language, the better to enable them to instruct the Gentoos, that shall be the servants or slaves of the same Company, or of their agents, in the Protestant religion", but in the general scramble for riches the clause had remained a dead letter. However, in 1758, the very next year after Plassey, Protestant missions were commenced in Bengal.\textsuperscript{85}

A Swede, Rev. John Kiernander, who had been sent out to South India by the Danish Missionary Board, found himself homeless in consequence of the pillaging of the town and mission station of Cuddalore by the French in 1757 and as the entire south was re-echoing with strife and the shock of battle, he turned his steps towards Bengal. Kiernander, however, was not a pioneer of Indian missions, and it should be remembered that the Government placed no
obstacles in his way. Contemporaneous with Kiernander, Moravian Brethren worked for a space of fifteen years (1777-1792), in Serampore (then belonging to Denmark and called Frederiksnagar), they also endeavoured to obtain a foothold in Calcutta and Patna.\textsuperscript{86}

Modern missionary work in India dates from 11 November 1793, when William Carey\textsuperscript{87} and his two colleagues – John Marshman and William Ward - landed in Calcutta. With him begins, a new era in Protestant missions not only in India, but also the entire world.\textsuperscript{88} The Company which on many occasions had supported missionary labour in the south of India and had always maintained a friendly attitude towards them, which had moreover allowed Kiernander to work undisturbed in Calcutta for a quarter of a century, had in the meantime changed its religious policy, and now adopted, definitely and resolutely, an inimical attitude towards missionary work. Though there were missionaries in India before his times, like those of the Danish-Halle Mission in Tranquebar and John Kiernander of Sweden (1758-86) who built the Old Mission Church in Calcutta with the help of Lord Clive. William Carey was the first missionary to be sent out by a Missionary Society from the West. For Carey, there were lot of hindrances. He and his friends were boycotted in Calcutta because of their presumably apostolic ideal that missionaries should support themselves, as soon as possible, and earn their bread by the labour of their own hands.

To sum up, it may be said that modern Indian missions begin with a heroic attempt to give the Bible to all the peoples of the Southern Asia in their mother-tongue, and this idea found its practical expression at Serampore. Carey has a secure place in history as, "the father of the modern missionary
enterprise”. His pioneering work in the field of Bible translation, primary education, and journalism, apart from his work as a preacher of the gospel, gives him a unique place in the history of modern Bengal as well as in that of the Christian Church in North India. Serampore College, which he founded in 1818 for the promotion of piety and learning, has one of the oldest University Charters in Asia.

Carey and his colleagues had to fight hard against heavy odds, for the East India Company, which held the reins of power at the time, was not friendly towards mission work, as the Directors feared it might affect their dividends.

Thus, in several ways, the first batch of Serampore missionaries made a considerable effort to introduce India to the thought of the West. Their successors were John Clark and Marshman the author of a book on Indian History, and translator of a treatise on astronomy and geography. Many other missionaries contributed to the growing corpus of western knowledge of Bengal by translating English literature and works on scientific subjects. Whatever the standard of their literary achievements, the fact remains that they provided stimulus to Indian thinking and helped the Indian mind to break the shackles of medievalism.

Period II: 1813 to 1947 A.D.

After 1813, Protestant missionaries carried out operations on as large a scale as possible. As a matter of fact, missionary works were undertaken by various societies. In Calcutta there emerged a small but active and influential circle of Anglicans, whose members stood shoulder to shoulder and won for
themselves great renown for laying the real foundations of the missionary activity of the English Church. A distinguished official of the Company, Charles Grant, who had served the Company in India in important positions and was for some years the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East India Company prepared an indictment of the people and civilization of India in 1792 which was published in 1797 and circulated widely when the Charter was under consideration. Thereafter, supported by Sir John Shore and other influential members of the Elapham sect and promoted by the powerful advocacy of Wilberforce, of the anti-slavery fame, the Church Missionary Society secured permission to pursue their activities all over the British territories without hindrance by the Charter of 1813.

One of the most noteworthy things gained by the Charter of 1813 was that the Episcopal system of the Church of England was transferred to India. The establishment of a Bishopric of the Church of England in Calcutta, with chaplaincies in Bombay and Madras, was an important result of the revision of the Company's Charter. Bishop Middleton (1814-1822), the first Bishop of Calcutta, who was otherwise no great friend of missions, conceived the excellent design of founding a Missionary College (founded the Bishops College) in Calcutta, with a view to train young Indian Christians as preachers, catechists, and school teachers, and to impart a knowledge of the English language to Indians. It was also the headquarters for the translation of the Bible into the vernacular language, and served as a home and a quiet place of residence for young missionaries on their first arrival in India. For a long time the Bishops College served the cause of general education too. It was in this institution that
the illustrious son of Bengal, Krishan Mohan Banerji, served as a professor from 1851 to 1868, £ 60,000 were collected in England for these schemes. The Church Missionary Society gave £ 5,000 out of its income, and similar amount was contributed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the British and Foreign Bible Society. Immediately, many missionaries were sent out to India and they established Mission stations in large number of places in North and South India. Societies from Europe and America joined the British Missions in the work of expanding education.

The Church Missionary Society (founded in 1799), stepped into the field immediately after the revision of the Charter. Although at first sight it appears to have fallen into the same mistake as the London Missionary Society, and to have taken over too many places at once, thereby dissipating its energies. But, the important difference between the two was that the Church Missionary Society entered a well-prepared field, and set itself to accomplish clearly defined tasks. In the United Provinces the missionary work was carried out by Abdul Masih and Henry Martyns. Both Abdul Masih and Henry Martyns were made the representatives of the Society at Agra in 1813. After Agra the Society concentrated on the great military depot Meerut (1815), Benares (1817), Chunar near Benares (1815), Gorakhpur (1823), Azamgarh and Jaunpur (1831) and were occupied in quick succession.

Christianity in North India owes much to the work of chaplains like David Brown, Henry Martyn, and Claudius Buchanan. A Corresponding Committee, had likewise been formed at Bombay in 1818 in consequence of which the
Church Missionary Society began work there in 1820. As Western India proved to be a specially hard field, it was not until 1832 that a second station at Nasik was founded. Among the Bishops who succeeded Middleton are such well-known leaders as Reginald Heber (1823-26), Daniel Wilson (1832-58), the first Metropolitan of India and a great administrator and Foss Westcott (1919-45), a friend of C.F.Andrews and Mahatma Gandhi. The Church of England in India became a self-governing Indian Church in 1930, known as the Church of India, Burma, and Ceylon, and had ten diocesan bishops, with headquarters in various cities in northern and western India, and an Indian metropolitan with headquarters in Calcutta. The door was thrown wide open for the entry of missions by the Charter Acts of the British Parliament passed in 1813 and 1833.91

The second period of missionary work in India began with Dr.Alexander Duff, who made a deeper mark upon it than was made by any other missionary. He was only twenty-one years old when he landed in Calcutta in 1830. He gave a new lease of life to missionary work by making education an evangelistic agency. With the help of Raja Rammohan Roy, he started a school which later developed into the present Scottish Church College. Following the success of the experiment, the Church of Scotland laid special emphasis on the formation of schools and colleges in its work in other provinces too. The educational programme of missions received an impetus from the policy adopted by the government, under Lord William Bentinck, of imparting English education in schools and colleges in accordance with Lord Macaulay’s Minute of 1835.92 The colleges funded by various missions, Roman Catholic as well as others, such as
the Madras Christian College, Wilson College (Bombay), St. Xavier's College (Calcutta), St. John's College (Agra), Ewing Christian College (Allahabad), and American College (Madura), St. Stephen's College (Delhi), Baring Christian School (later College, Batala), Reids Christian College (Lucknow), Gordon College, Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan), and Christian Medical College (Ludhiana), have borne a noble share in educating India's youth over several generations.93

Missionaries from America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and from the continent of Europe, followed in the wake of those who hailed from Great Britain. Some of the pioneer missionaries were, William Taylor (1821-1902), J.M.Thoburn (1836-1902), and Dr.Clara Swain, the first woman medical missionary who came out to India in 1857. The Rev.John Newton (Neutor) or John C.Lowie, of the American Presbyterian Mission arrived in Ludhiana (Panjab) in 1835 and established a network of mission stations in North-India.94 The services rendered to the country through organisations auxiliary to the Church, too, cannot be forgotten, and among these may be mentioned the Bible Society, the Christian Literature Society, the Sunday School Union, the Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association.

In India, western education was introduced by the Government, by Indian reformers, and by Protestant missions at about the same time. Parliament in 1813, directed the East India Company to devote a sum of money to the revival and improvement of literature, the encouragement of the learned people in India, and the introduction and promotion of the knowledge of the sciences. The 1813 Charter Act opened the way for State–Church cooperation and association.
However, aid to missionary education brought the Government much more openly into conflict with Indian religions. Ellenborougb's successor at the India office, Lord Stanely, agreed that, "while professing religious neutrality we have departed widely from it in fact". He admitted that grants to missionary schools were indirectly subsidies to religious bodies which enable them more effectively to carry on their proselytizing work. One incident indicative of the new attitude of caution is the treatment of the Church Missionary Society's application for a grant to educate the backward Santhal tribe of Bihar. Although sanctioned by the Government of India in 1856 under the grant-in-aid rules, the application was turned down by the Court of Directors in July, 1857. But the Bengal authorities soon discovered that no other agency could compare with the Church Missionary Society for zeal and efficiency in this kind of work among isolated tribal people, and so the grant was finally sanctioned in 1861, with the provision that the Church Missionary Society, contribute half the cost out of its own funds. Thus, the Government did not abandon the policy of aiding mission schools, despite occasional misgivings.

The close association of the Christian missionaries with the East India Company led to misunderstanding in the Indian mind. This was particularly due to the denunciation of Indian religions and culture by many missionaries and servants of the Company. Conversions to Christianity were thus seen by Indians as a danger to their religion. This anti-Church and anti-Company feeling was a factor in the 1857 rebellion, which shocked both the Company and the missionaries. In the aftermath of 1857, missionary activity declined, particularly, when the Queen declared religious neutrality as a principle of British policy in
India. Thus, during the 1860s popular enthusiasm for missionary work declined steadily. However, various mission societies managed, quickly, to make good the very substantial losses they had suffered during the uprisings of 1857. The stations which had been destroyed were rebuilt, new missionaries were required to replace those slain, and special funds were raised in England. The Church Missionary Society collected £50,000 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel £19,000 for the restoration of property and the extension of mission activities in the North-Western Provinces, Oudh and Panjab. Nevertheless even in Panjab, where they received encouragement from the local officials the new missions were not adequately manned and their effectiveness was extremely limited.95

The Church Missionary Society, as the largest Anglican body in India, felt the pinch most sharply. During the post-Mutiny decade it obtained almost no new recruits for the Indian mission. While the number of missionaries on the rolls in India rose from 54 to 107 during the 1850s it stood at only 109 in 1871.96 Henry Venn admitted in 1865 that while the extent and influence of Evangelical Truth, the Church had very largely increased, missionary zeal had distinctly retrograded. 'Missionary meetings', he said, 'were less well attended, and the warm sympathy of earlier years had almost completely evaporated'.97 Other societies experienced the same setback. The London Missionary Society, for instance, with an average of 150 missionaries in the field over the period, 1847-1856, could muster only 140 in the subsequent decade.98 The total number of missionaries in India from the five leading British Societies declined from 262 to
This is not to suggest that missionary influence over the government had declined. To the contrary, the missionary groups constituted a powerful lobby. The continuing power of the missionary party, and the extent of their popular appeal, can be seen most clearly in their ardent campaign for a Christian policy in India in the year immediately after 1857. As the great Scottish missionary Alexander Duff put it, "God has, in a strange way, given us India in trust for the accomplishment of His grand evangelising designs concerning it. In the discharge of this solemn trust, we, as a people and a nation, have been shamefully, critically negligent. Hence it is ... that the Lord has admonished us in the way of sore judgements. But having in some measure humbled ourselves before the Lord, He has delivered us, provided we realize the great object of our covenant, the subversion of Satan's empire." Not all Churchmen supported this campaign for a Christian Policy in India, John Wilson, Alexander Duff's counterpart in Bombay, urged his fellow missionaries to work quietly for specific reforms rather than arouse antagonism by boldly challenging the Government. Bishop Cotton in Calcutta took up the issue with the missionary demand for Bible teaching in government schools. He did admit that the Bible might have been introduced into the government schools before the Mutiny, but he hastened to add that "an order for its introduction at the present time of suspicious and bad feelings would do more harm than good."

The struggle waged in 1857 by the Indians for political emancipation proved to be a failure but on the religious front it ended into a tame draw. The missionary activities were subjected to heavy criticism both in India and in
England. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 has often been described as a Charter of religious neutrality of the government in India based on the principle of religious equality of its subjects. With reference to the missions, however, a closer study reveals that:

a) the provision "... that all shall alike enjoy - the equal and impartial protections of law..." was more to help the converts to Christianity than for any other segment of the populace.

b) likewise, it were only those who were 'in authority' who were to abstain from all interferences with the religious beliefs or worship... The organised missionary societies remained outside the perview of the law.\textsuperscript{102} The religious neutrality as envisaged in the proclamation and as followed by the government of India greatly helped the missions in re-mustering their efforts after the Revolt of 1857.\textsuperscript{103}

The methods of work employed by the missions were as varied as the needs of the people. The Christian missionary agencies carried on a relentless war against illiteracy, disease, and poverty, and other social evils which were prevailing in India since centuries. What the missions had done, and are still doing for the handicapped, such as the blind and the deaf, and for lepers and the 'criminal' tribes, is something that puts India under an eternal debt of gratitude to the Churches in the West. In the treatment of leprosy and tuberculosis, Christian missions have rendered outstanding service. In the profession of nursing as well as in medical and health education, the work of Christian agencies is acknowledged to be a great boon to the country. The gradual expansion in the
scope of missionary service is indicated by the way in which rural reconstruction and agricultural education have been taken care of by missions. The Allahabad Agricultural Institute and the Village Service units in Uttar Pradesh organized by the American Presbyterian Mission are two outstanding examples in this direction.

Among the most successful works undertaken by the missions is that among the tribal peoples, Harijans, and downtroddens. In several tribal areas missionaries transcribed the spoken language to writing, introduced schools, hospitals, leper asylums, and social welfare schemes, and have thus effected a change for the better in the life of these peoples. This is true of the people like the Garos, the Khasis, the Mizos, the Nagas and the Lushais in the North East, the Oraons and the Mundas in Chotta Nagpur, the Santhals in Bihar, and the Khonds in Orissa. Their works among the Harijans has been most marked in the Bhil community in Western India, in certain parts of the Panjab, Uttar Pradesh, and East Bengal.¹⁰⁴

It may however be pertinent to ask as to what extent Churches in India from the West engaged in the manifold forms of service described above, for the sake of luring the unwary into the Christian fold. The Indian public generally appreciate Christian service in the social, economic, educational and medical fields, but cannot understand why this should be linked with a desire to preach the gospel or proselytise. For the missionaries, however, the evangelistic purpose and the call to service in every form are inseparable parts of an obligation of every faithful disciple of Jesus Christ.
Census Reports of the Census of 17 February 1881, was the first synchronous enumeration which has been attempted for all India. The Census of 1881 took in, with the exception of Kashmir, the entire continent of British India, including under term the feudatory States in political connection with the Government of India. It did not, however, include the French and Portuguese colonial possessions. The entire population enumerated on 17 February 1881 is 253,891,821. The Christians, who rank in the numbers next to the Buddhists, were found in all the Provinces and States of India. The distribution of the Christian population is given below.

**Christian Population (1881 A.D.)**

1. Madras 711,080
2. Travancore 428,542
3. Bombay, British Territory 138,317
4. Cochin 136,361
5. Bengal 128,135
6. Burmah 84,219
7. North-West Province, British Territory 47,664
8. Panjab, British Territory 33,420
9. Mysore 21,249
10. Hyderabad 13,614
11. Central Provinces, British Territory 11,949
12. Assam 7,093
13. Central India 7,065
The Churches in North India, until about 1914 hardly had a life and character of their own, apart from that of the missionary societies from the West, with which they were associated. In worship, rituals, music, architecture, no less than in its theology, it faithfully followed the lines laid down by the missionaries, who first preached the gospel in a particular area. The result was the Churches planted in India tended to reproduce the pattern of Churches in the West. But due to the influence of the national movement and the leadership of a few forward-looking Indian Christians and missionaries, this state of affairs became a thing of the past.

Before we close this review of Christianity in India, we may ask, what influence has Christianity in North India exerted on the life and culture of the people as a whole? It must be borne in mind that Christianity entered North India effectively only about a century and a half ago, and that even now it remains the religion of a minority unevenly distributed over large areas stretching
from Kashmir to Assam. Further, it suffered from the handicap of being considered the religion of the conqueror, and an agent in the cultural conquest of India by the West. Dr. J. N. Farquhar claims that ‘Christianity has exerted both a direct and indirect influence on the development of the movements amongst Hindus, Muslims, and Parsis’.  

He further says that, ‘almost without exception the methods of the work used in the movements have been borrowed from the missions’.

In promoting literacy, in raising the status of women, and in encouraging cottage industries, western missions such as the Carmelites, the London Missionary Society, and the Basel Mission, have rendered magnificent service to the people of Malabar without distinction of caste or creed. Members of the Church in Malabar have contributed much to the development of Malayalam literature, the promotion of primary, secondary, and collegiate education, and in the adaptation of Christianity to Indian conditions. The Syrian Church has the distinction of being a Church accustomed to oriental ways of worship and of being manned and supported entirely by the Christians of the soil. Being thus truly indigenous, it was able to extend its hand of fellowship to Christians all over the world. One more fact that may be noted in this connection is that Christian women enjoyed a large measure of freedom in Kerala, on account of their education and culture.

How Christianity spread and the establishment of missions in various parts of Simla and Panjab Hill States, is discussed in the third chapter.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A.Mathias Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India, From the Beginning up to the Middle of the Sixteenth Century (upto 1542)*, Vol.1, (Bangalore, 1984), p.3.


5. J.N.Farquhar, 'The Apostle Thomas in North India', in the Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, (Manchester, 1926); pp.80-111 and also see another article *The Apostle Thomas in South India*, (Manchester, 1927), pp.20-50.


11. "The King of the country around Cranganore (Cheraman Perumal), is said to have conferred certain honours and privileges on the Christians, which included riding on elephants—a privilege granted only to the heirs of Kings—use of carpets, and wearing a golden flower on the hair at the time of marriage". H.D. Bhattacharya, *op.cit.* , p.548.


27. Julius Richter, *op. cit.*, p.44.


42. Julius Richter, op. cit., p. 45.

43. Ibid.

44. P. Thomas, op. cit., p. 54.

45. Julius Richter, op. cit., p. 47.


47. Ibid., p. 141.


49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., p. 58.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 59.


54. The question in the Catechism, "Dost thou desire to become a Christian?" was worded, Wilt thou enter the caste of the Prangui?" "To live the Christian life" was termed, "to live according to the manner of the Prangui". Ibid., p. 56.

55. P.N. Chopra, Religions and Communities of India, (Delhi, 1982), p. 254.

56. We know today a great deal more about Nobili than was known fifty-sixty years ago, largely through the tireless work of the late Fr. A. Sauliere S.J., and of Fr. S. Rajamanickam S.J. see Stephen Neil, op. cit., p. 293.
57. Ibid., pp.293, 416.


60. Later, when Frederick Schwartz was in the service of the 'English' mission, he simplified the spelling of his name to Swartz, and this is the form in which the name is found in later records.


64. Ibid.


69. Ibid.


74. Antoine Cabral, was already known to Akbar, to whose court he had been sent as ambassador in 1573. Akbar was at that time engaged in the siege of Surat, then held by his rebellious Kinsmen, the Mirzas, and having heard that the Portuguese were taking steps to assist the defenders, he made friendly overtures to Don Antonio de Noronha, the Viceroy of Goa, who thereupon despatched an embassy under Antoine Cabral to meet the Emperor at Surat. Monserrate (Fr. Anthony, S.J.) says in his, *Relacam do Equebar* that Akbar was first drawn to our religion by the courteous behaviour and fearlessness of the Portuguese who accompanied Cabral on his mission to Surat. The circumstances which led to Cabral's second embassage in 1578 are somewhat obscure. According to V.A. Smith, *Akbar The Great Mogul*, (London, 1900), p.137, Akbar's relations with the Portuguese had again become strained, and an embassy was sent to Goa to arrange matters. In 1578 the Viceroy, Dom Diogo de Menezes, responded by accrediting to Akbar's court as his ambassador the same Antoine Cabral who had conducted the satisfactory negotiation in 1573. He spent some time in Fatehpur Sikri, and was able to give the Emperor a considerable amount of information concerning Christian manners and customs, but, being a layman, he was not in a position to expound with authority the deeper matters of the faith.


78. A Profe is a professed monk, often definitely enrolled as a member of a monastic order. *Ibid.*, pp.52, 232.

79. In the notable enterprise *11 Nuove Ramusio* (*Rome, Libraria dello State*, 1952), Part I, "Missionari Italiani nel Tibet enel Nepal", ed. L. Petch, pp.i-xxii, there is a good short account of western knowledge of Tibet in early days, and of the Jesuit approaches in the seventeenth century. In this the Tibetan names are given in modern scientific orthography which presents problems to those who are not Tibetan scholars.


81. This is a Srinagar in Garhwal, not Srinagar in Kashmir, endless confusion has been caused by failure to distinguish between these two places.


87. William Carey was born on 17 August 1761, in the village of Paulerspury, in Northampton. He was the son of a poor country school master, and in his youth was a Cobbler. In 1783, he joined the Baptists, and after overcoming unspeakable difficulties, he became the founder of the Baptist Missionary Society (B.M.S.), in October 1792 at Kettering. His manifold activities in arousing a missionary spirit in England, and Scotland, before his departure for India do not come with in the scope of this work. See Julius Richter, *op.cit.*, p.131.


103. *Ibid*.


108. *Ibid*.