CHAPTER ONE

Early Protestant Missionaries in Tirunelveli District (1785-1908)

The district of Tirunelveli in the Madras Presidency is located in the extreme south-eastern part of Indian Peninsula on the Coromandel Coast. The principal towns in this district were Palayamkottai and Tuticorin. Palayamkottai was the headquarters of Tirunelveli district, while Tuticorin was a large town and sea port. Tirunelveli district had almost every class and caste of Hindus of South India.¹ The history of Christianity in Tirunelveli is traced back to the arrival of the Portuguese on the Coromandel Coast to augment their trading prospects at the dawn of the 15th century. The Portuguese Roman Catholic Missionaries who accompanied the traders to the Tirunelveli Coast were the first to spread Christianity in the district. The earliest reference to Protestant Christians in Tirunelveli occurs in an entry in the ‘Journals of Schwartz’ in the year 1771. Schwartz (1771), one of the greatest among the Tranquebar Missionaries was known as the founder of the Tirunelveli Church. In February 1778, seven years after his initial entry, Schwartz paid his first visit to Palayamkottai. There Schwartz baptized several men, women and children. The work begun by Schwartz soon had fruits in the form of mass movements among the Shanars.² The first Shanar convert and the first Shanar Catechist of the Tirunelveli district, David Sundaranandam, along with Sathiyanatham, started the first mass movement among Shanars in and around his native village. David led a migration in 1799 to establish ‘Mudalur’, the First

¹ R.Caldwell, Progress of Christianity in India No-11. The Tinnevelly Missions, The colonial church chronicle and missionary Journal, 1857, p-131
² R.Caldwell, Records of the Early History of Tinnevelly Mission of the SPCK and the SPG in Foreign parts, Madras: Higginbotham and co., 1881, p-61
Town. This is said to be the first of a series of Christian colonies that served as ‘Towns of Refuge’ for the converts. Mudalur, the first Christian colony in Tirunelveli which owed its existence solely to Christians was a trendsetter. Its very name ‘intended to express the converts’ hope of many other Christian towns which are yet to come. Following the Mudalur pattern, a number of Christian villages such as Jerusalem, Samaria, Bathany, Bathlehem, Christianagaram, Sawyerpuram, and Nazareth came into existence.

**Earlier Missionaries**

Christianity began in Tirunelveli shortly before the middle of the 10th century, among the Paravas of the seacoast. The Protestant Mission worked in Tirunelveli is the extension of Tranquebar Mission. In 1771, in the Mission report of Tranquebar, there is a mentioning about one Savarimuthu who preached the gospel to Roman Catholic Converts and to the Hindus in Tirunelveli. The founder of the Protestant Mission was Schwartz (1771), a Lutheran Missionary of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) who appeared to have come into the district in 1771 and created the nucleus of the congregation with 40 members. In 1778 Schwartz visited Tirunelveli, because a European warrior wanted to get married and also because there was a congregation of about 50 soldiers with their families and others and hence baptism was needed for them. Schwartz himself visited Palyamkottai in August 1785 for the second time. Clorinda had been urging Schwartz since January 1785, to come and consecrate the

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5. Robert Caldwell, *Records of the Early History of Tinnevelly Mission of the SPCK and SPG, Madras 1881*, pp-6-8
church. Schwartz consecrated the church on 23rd August 1785. Bishop Dharmaraj writes, “This church has great historic importance in the sense that it was the first Protestant Church to be built in this part of our country by Indians with Indian money”.  


7. Ibid, p-29  


Kohila was a Brahmin woman belonging to the Maratha Brahmin family. Her husband was a Maratha Brahmin and held a position in the Tanjore court. When he died, Kohila became a widow, but she played a new role. When Schwartz arrived in Palyamkottai, she went to him for teaching and baptism. She was then baptized by Schwartz on 3rd March 1778 and she was named Clorinda.

Clorinda (1778) served as the Pioneer in the Tirunelveli area. Clorinda began to use her new wealth to support the Protestant Congregation. She constructed a church with the aid of several English soldiers. The church inside the fort wall was known as the ‘Temple of the Brahmin Women’. The Palyamkottai Congregation began to take shape after Clorinda’s baptism. Clorinda took the initiative and spent her own money to establish the first church in Tirunelveli. The practice of sending missionaries, pastors, and catechists began with Clorinda.  

She set a model by admitting people of all castes into the church. She was the primary link between the Tranquebar and the Tirunelveli Mission. She started the first school in Palyamkottai and
Terivillai. She initiated the dialogues between the Roman Catholics and the Protestants and was able to solve the misunderstandings between them. Satthianadan came to Palyamkottai as a catechist in January 1785. He belonged to the Vellalar community. Satthianadan used to accompany Schwartz in his missionary visits as a helper. Schwartz appointed Satthianadan as the catechist of Tirunelveli and placed him permanently at Palyamkottai in charge of the work there. This appointment proved to be a great success. Satthianadan was a man of deep devotion and earnestness and force of character. Schwartz was thoroughly satisfied with his work and in 1790, Schwartz ordained him as priest according to the Lutheran form and placed him in charge of the mission work in the villages. Satthianadan looked after several churches established among the different castes of people. By 1797, there were three congregations outside Palyamkottai named Ottarapatti, Puvani, and Padmanabapuram. There was also a church at Manapad on the seacoast. Satthianadan worked among these people namely Jaenicke, Jerike, and David Sundaranandam. Satthianadan also corresponded constantly with Schwartz. The most important event that took place during the time of Satthianadan was the movement of the Shanars under the leadership of David Sundaranandam.

David Sundaranadam was the first catechist from the Shanar community. He was responsible for introducing God among his community. His Hindu name was Sundaranadam. He belonged to a small village called kalangudi midway between Mudallur and Satankulam while most of his relatives lived in Vijayramapuram. He was intelligent and learned to read and write early in his life. He devoted most of his time to study magic, astrology and medicine. Having

been punished for his vagrant habit, he ran away from home and found his way to Tanjore where he was influenced by Schwartz and his Catechist and was baptized by Kolhoff.  

In 1796, Satthianadan the native priest applied for an assistant catechist and Schwartz sent David down. In 1797, David and Satthianadan went to Vijayramapuram and were gladly received by the relatives of the former. David’s uncle was one of the early converts and as he was the leader in the village both in Sakthi worship and caste affairs, his baptism had the effect of drawing many other members of the caste to the Christian fold. “The conversion of David’s uncle drew many other members of the Nadar caste to the Christian fold. It was from the village Christianity had spread among the Shanars of Tirunelveli. The foundations must have been laid well because now there are 1000 Christians at Kadachapuram just out of the old Vijayramapuram and 1200 in Mudalur not far off.  

Joseph Daniel Jaenicke had arrived in Tanjore as a missionary of the Society of Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK) in October 1788. Jaenicke reached Palyamkottai in 1791. At the arrival of Jaenicke, the membership of the Palyamkottai increased to 183 as per the church register. Jaenicke wrote to Schwartz that there was every reason to hope that in future Christianity would prevail in Tirunelveli. This observation seems to have stuck Schwartz as being prophesy and passed it to the S.P.C.K who accordingly embodied it in their report for  

12. Western, *Early History of the Tinnevelly Missions*, p-93
the year 1793. Jaenicke used to visit the Congregations and encourage the new Christians there. In Tuticorin and Manapar with help of his friend he met the physical needs of the Congregations. Jaenicke was affected by ‘jungle fever’. As fever continued to affect his health he returned back to Tanjore in August 1792. Jaenicke returned back to Palayamkottai only on 7th July 1795. Because of his frequent illness he was unable to take tour trips. He visited Parpanadapuram six times and went to Puvani thrice. Again he came back to Palyamkottai in September 1796 and stayed there till February 1797.  

Jaenicke passed away in the year 1800. The responsibility of the Tirunelveli S.P.C.K was devolved successively upon Gericke and young Kolhoff, the assistants of Schwartz. Gericke was most loved and respected after Schwartz. In 1802 he undertook a second tour on his own account and his dairy reads somewhat like the journal of Francis Xavier. The Christians of Mudalur area underwent severe persecution from February to May 1801. After hearing their sufferings during the persecution Gericke comforted and encouraged them to remain in faith. 

The burden of Tirunelveli Mission fell on Kolhoff. He visited Tirunelveli at the end of 1803. In 1803, 279 persons were baptized and in 1804, 278 making up the total membership of Tirunelveli Church to 6514 persons. The noticeable fall was due to the persecution, which had then already begun. Kolhoff did his best to bring down the oppression to which Christians were subjected and also to the notice of the authorities. But it was some years before; redress came from board of directors of the East India Company. 

13. Western, *Early History of the Tinnevelly Church*, pp-71-72
William Tobias Ringeltaube came to Tranquebar early in December 1804. In 1803 he was accepted as a missionary of London Missionary Society (LMS) and came to India. From 1806 - 1809, Ringeltaube was asked by Kolhoff to act as paymaster to the thirty catechists in the district and supervise the work. He had come in connection with SPCK and was originally stationed at Palyamkottai. After his arrival at Palyamkottai, he made a tour in South Tirunelveli. He reckoned the Christians to the South at about five thousand, which were under the care of thirty native teachers. In 1811, he also baptized about four hundred people. He employed five or six schoolmasters for the instruction of youth. Likewise, he had likewise several boys in training who assisted him in reading, writing and singing.16

Ringeltaube had worked for two years in Tirunelveli. He made frequent visits to the churches of the Tirunelveli Mission. In his letter dated June 8, 1805 he wrote about the Congregations of Tirunelveli “They meet on a Sunday for instruction and worship and conclude their meeting with the contribution to the poor among them. They are desirous to renounce their idols and receive Christianity”.17 He visited Kulasekaranpattinam and found that the Catechist and his wife were doing a good work among the congregation of 800 people, and there was a good school in the village. From March onwards he visited the villages in the mass movement area. He visited Uvari, Kundal, Mara Kundal, and Navaladi and found that the spiritual condition of the people were good. Ringeltaube visited and encouraged the people through his visit.

James Hough was born in 1789 and ordained in 1814. He had wished to go as a missionary. In 1815 he met great evangelical leader Charles Simon, who was seeking keen young evangelical clergymen to go out to India as chaplains. Through Charles Simon, Hough received his appointment as a chaplain under East India Company and he arrived to India in August 1816. He was appointed in Palyamkottai as Military Chaplin, and reached Palyamkottai on November 2, 1816.\textsuperscript{18} After 1813, Charter Missionaries inflow increased in India. By this time Church Missionary Society (CMS) established their work in Madras. Already they were helping the Tranquebar Mission by granting aids to the schools of the Tranquebar Missions since 1812. In 1814 the C.M.S increased their help and in 1814 they began their work by sending Rhenius and Share to Tranquebar. In November 1814, they formed a corresponding committee of the society in Madras.\textsuperscript{19}

Rev. Charles Theophilus Ewald Rhenius arrived in Tirunelveli on 7\textsuperscript{th} July 1820. The first CMS congregation in Palyamkottai came into existence on 10\textsuperscript{th} March 1822 and adjacent to the CMS Church, Murugankuruchi, Rhenius started the Palamcottah Preparandi Institution. In 1824 he purchased valuable property to the North of the high road in Palyamkottai from his Hindu friend and philanthropist, Vengu Mudaliar, for a confessional price of just Rs.750 and shifted the Preparandi school to the newly acquired campus. Operating from Palyamkottai, Rhenius covered a number of villages all over the Tirunelveli District, which include the current Thoothukudi district and a part of Ramnathapuram district and planted small congregations. Solaikudiyiruppu

\textsuperscript{18} Western, \textit{Early History of the Tinnevelly Church}, p-142
\textsuperscript{19} M.E.Gibbs, \textit{The Anglican Church in India (1600-1970)}, Delhi, 1972, p-60
is one of the oasis villages in the sandy dunes of kudiramozhi. When Rhenius visited Solaikudiyiruppu, the Mukandar of Solaikudiyiruppu village was Velu Muthu Nadar. Rhenius converted Velu Muthu and baptized him as “Vedha Muthu”. Vedha Muthu was the first Protestant Christian in the Megnanapuram circle.

Rev. Rhenius, the Apostle of Tirunelveli was a German born missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). He was the first CMS Missionary to arrive to India. For his missionary work in the Tirunelveli district he came to be known as the “Apostle of Tirunelveli”. He was involved in the attempt of revising the Fabricius Version of the Tamil Bible and also published a Tamil grammar book. Rhenius split from the Anglican Church in 1830 and started his own congregation. Rhenius’ work was recognized in 1978 by the Reverend Daniel Abraham, the Church of South India’s (CSI) Bishop of Tirunelveli diocese. Rhenius’ work was given official recognition by the Anglican Communion during the Tirunelveli diocese bicentenary celebration in 1978, in which, all the bishops, including Anglican Bishop Stephen Neill and all the presbyters took an oath in front of the tomb of Rev. Rhenius to follow the path of the resting soul, regarding to evangelism.

Tirunelveli is one of the earliest scenes of missionary enterprise in India. The Christian Church in Tirunelveli has a continuous record of more than 450 years. There were many missionaries who had come to Tirunelveli, to preach Christianity, but I would like to highlight the services of two missionaries namely Robert Caldwell and G.U.Pope.

20. Jeyakumar, Dalit consciousness and Christian conversion, p-91
Robert Caldwell Early Life (1814-1891)

Robert Caldwell, born on 7th May 1814, lived in the small village of Clady in Antrim, North Ireland. His father was William Caldwell. In 1824 - 1825, William and his large family moved back from Ireland to Scotland and settled near the part of Glasgow in an apartment on the Southern bank of the River Clyde. Robert Caldwell then hardly ten years old, spent the next six years in the city of Glasgow profitably using all his spare time for reading. Largely self taught with no formal literary training, he made the best use of the excellent library facilities available in Glasgow.\textsuperscript{21} At the age of sixteen one of his older brothers took Caldwell to live with him in Dublin with the intention of training him to pursue a career as an artist. Caldwell was enrolled in an excellent school of art and remained in Dublin between 1830 and 1833 studying the subject. He applied himself earnestly to the course and was able to make a promising start by winning several prizes.\textsuperscript{22} In 1833 he joined a church at Glasgow and the next year he was accepted by London Mission Society (LMS) as a missionary. He was asked to take a degree of Bachelor of Arts at Glasgow University. There he was a first rank holder and won Sir Robert Peel’s Prize, even though when he joined the course, he had not known a word either Latin or in Greek. There he came under the influence of Sir Daniel Sandford, Professor of Greek and a keen student of Comparative Philology, who gave him interest in the subject which he put to such good use in India. It only led him to write his monumental work “A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Family of languages”. After the completion of his graduation he was sent to South India by LMS

\textsuperscript{21} J.L.Wyatt, Reminiscences of Bishop Caldwell, Madras, 1894, p-3

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, p-4
for doing religious work. He started his voyage on 30\textsuperscript{th} August 1837 and he reached Madras on 8\textsuperscript{th} January 1838. Robert Caldwell was married in March 2, 1844 to Eliza Mault, eldest daughter of Rev.Charles Mault of the LMS in South Travancore.\textsuperscript{23} He had two sons namely R.C.Caldwell and Addington and two daughters namely Louisa and Isabella. R.C.Caldwell, the eldest, worked as a missionary for a short period at Trichinopoly and Thanjavur.

Eliza proved to be a marvelous missionary wife and a great source of strength and motivation and lent her support to almost everyone in her husband’s missionary enterprises. Immediately after their marriage, Eliza started a boarding school for girls, the first of its kind in the SPG Mission in South India.

Caldwell’s daughter Isabella and Louisa, were of great help to their mother in running the girls’ school. Isabella married J.L.Wyatt a missionary who was ordained as a deacon to work under Caldwell. He had M.A. Degree from the Cambridge University. Their marriage on 19\textsuperscript{th} February 1868 was a memorable event. The entire Idaiyangudi Congregation joined in organizing it. Louisa was married to a military lieutenant R.E.Shepherd on 9\textsuperscript{th} February 1870 and his eldest son R.C.Caldwell had come from England to participate in the wedding. Caldwell as a student of Philology had developed great interest in the study of Dravidian language. He had great admiration for the Dravidian literature (Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada and Tulu) and he loved to learn these languages.

\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, p-180
Caldwell in Madras

Caldwell was not even twenty-four years old when he arrived in Madras on January 8, 1838. He lived there for three and a half years. The first year of his life in Madras was mainly spent in learning Tamil. In Madras he made contacts with many people of diverse views and his circle of friends widened. He met several prominent missionaries, Tamil Scholars, educationalists and government officials, among them were John Anderson, John Tucker, Bishop Spencer, Alfred Radford Symonds, Dr. Winslow, Dr. Scudder, Archdeacon Harper, Cotterill General C.A. Browne and Henry Bower. Except for Smith and Drew, most of his missionary friends belonged to other denominations. Caldwell’s interest in Tamil was further enhanced by his contact with Henry Bower, a Eurasian missionary of the LMS who later joined the S.P.G.

Bower was a Tamil Scholar and he taught Caldwell literary and colloquial Tamil. Their relationship continued after Caldwell left Madras in July 1841. Bower’s expertise in Tamil was so respected that he was entrusted with the laborious task of the Tamil translation of the Bible. Caldwell was one of the key members associated with the committee that discussed the progress and the final version of the translation. Caldwell along with Bower was also involved in the revision of the Tamil version of the Prayer Book (1872). Significantly it was in Madras that Caldwell was given the opportunity to apply his mind to the basics of evangelism.

24. R. Caldwell, ‘Fifty years in India’, The mission field, May 1, 1888. P-171
25. J.L. Wyatt, Reminiscences, p-144

21
The first evangelizing assignment in Caldwell’s missionary career began among the lower castes in Madras with domestic servants mostly drawn from the untouchable Parayars. Though he admired John Anderson and John Tucker for their efforts to reach the upper castes and educated class through English education, Caldwell became committed to the subaltern Tamil speakers. Caldwell preached in English in the English Mission Chapel for about five months from June 1838. As he took his early steps in the Missionary Endeavour, Caldwell carefully observed and reflected on the different types of missionary methods prevalent in Madras. Caldwell’s calling at this time was clearly to reach the masses through the vernaculars and vernacular education. Since they could only be reached through the vernaculars and the educated classes through English he advocated both kinds of work. During the later part of his career, he himself turned to English education as a means of drawing the upper castes towards Christianity.

Caldwell’s request to work at Tirunelveli was granted and was allowed to be stationed at Idaiyangudi. He was a good walker. He walked from Madras in 1841, visited Pondicherry, Cumbaconum, Tranqubar, Thanjavur, Trichinopoly, and the Nilgris. At the Nilgris he purchased a horse intending to ride to Tirunelveli but the horse fell ill at Coimbatore.

He stayed at Tranqubar for some days and understood the religious work and services of the Danish Missionaries. At Thanjavur he got Schwartz’s Tamil Latin dictionary containing 9000

28. Ibid, p-57

29. R.Caldwell, *Fifty Years*, p-171
At Madurai he saw Meenakshi Temple and admired its architecture. The American Missionaries were well versed in Tamil and started an educational institution in 1842 which grew in course of time into the present famous American college. He met Rev. Tracy a Tamil Scholar at Tirumangalam. He had with him many old coins of the Pandyas and Sathupathis. He walked again to Nazareth where he preached on the Advent Sunday on 27th November 1841. After spending a few days at Mudalur with Rev. Heyne he reached Idaiyangudi.

The first Sunday service which Caldwell conducted at Idaiyangudi was on 11th December 1841. Caldwell was told that the place had been so named because it had been once a settlement of shepherds, though it was then almost entirely a Nadar colony. Caldwell was attracted towards the village mission in Tirunelveli which promised scope for individual initiative and resourcefulness. To work among the simple villagers of Tirunelveli rather than the sophisticated elites of urban Madras was his unvarying ideal.

The Journey to Idaiyangudi

At the beginning of July 1841, Caldwell set off to walk to the Nilgiris to visit the Bishop of Madras, accompanied by a native servant and one or two coolies. Putting up at night in native rest houses and walking in the morning and evening, they reached the Nilgiris in August 1841. It was with such a vision and purpose that Caldwell journeyed to Tinnevelly on foot. He passed

through Pondicherry, a French settlement Tranquebar, the first protestant mission station in South India, the sacred temple towns of Chidambaram, Kumbakonam and Tanjore. He came across a number of missionaries at these places and began to get some idea of the nature of their work.

The next phase of his journey was towards Tirunelveli. It commenced on horseback but was met with a setback as the horse slipped and fell, without any regrets; however, Caldwell reverted to walking. Referring to his enthusiasm to make the journey on foot, it was noted: His apprenticeship to the great work of his life was finished by another walk in the rainy season from the Nilgiris through the districts of Coimbatore, Madurai and Tinnevelly.  

Interestingly it was in Madurai that he came into district contact for the first time with Shanar Christians. As we shall see, shanars were to constitute the majority of his congregations in Tinnevelly.

Caldwell continued the final phase of his journey on foot and reached the boundaries of Tirunelveli in November 1841. Crossing the Tamaraparani River he entered Palayamkottai in the Tirunelveli district, and despite the long journey, he felt ‘as fresh as a lark’. Passing through Palayamkottai, Nazareth and Mudalur, he had his first glimpse of the ear list exclusively Christian villages functioning under ‘Christian rules’ located in the Tirunelveli district, was recognized as the garden of Indian Missionaries. He finally reached Idaiyangudi at the end of 1841 leaving Madras in July.

33. George Smith, *Twelve pioneer*, p-13
34. J.L.Wyatt, *Reminiscence*, p-82
The Land and the People

Caldwell offered himself to work as a missionary at Idaiyangudi. This was hamlet of the revenue village of the Taluk of Tisayanvillai. It is situated 35 miles from Palayamkottai. Idaiyangudi was so called because some shepherds had taken up their abode in it at first. In Tamil ‘Edayan’ means ‘Shepherd’, ‘Kudi’ means ‘Residence’. Previously it was known as Idaiyangudiyuruppu - the place which the Shepherds founded and lived. Then it came to be named ‘Edeyengoody’ as the place is referred to in earlier literature. In this study however the modern spelling Idaiyangudi is used throughout.

The area is geographically situated in the southern extremity of South India and lies between the Ghats and sea. It is a dry land. The Teris or extensive red colour sand fields are a special feature of this district. Palmyra trees were the wealth of this land and the people were called Panaieries (Palmyra Climbers). Most of the people belonged to a single tribe called Shanars or Nadars - a portion of the Tartar race which first overran India. There were other tribes such as Vellalas, Reddies, Gentus, Maravas, Pariahs and Pallars. The Nadars were industrious and hard working. They were simple minded, rude and somewhat coarse in their persons and habits. They were first to get converted to Christianity in large numbers inspite of their Hindu background bound by the laws of caste. Such was the tribe among whom Christianity spread in these days.

35. Ibid, p-79
36. H.A.Pate, Gazatteer of the Tirunelveli District, p-395
Caldwell in the Idaiyangudi Mission

Soon after reaching Nazareth, Caldwell walked across ten miles of deep sand to Idaiyangudi, to take up his appointment as the first resident missionary in the village. Idaiyangudi became his home for the rest of his life. The village earned its name from the founders and the early settlers, who were from the shepherd community though no trace of them remained when Caldwell arrived.37

Caldwell took over a new Idaiyangudi Missionary district, comprising of outlying portion of Mudalur district, the entire district lay along the south-eastern shores of Tirunelveli extending about twenty miles in length and on an average, five miles in breadth. The area contained the largest of the village congregations in Tirunelveli and Idaiyangudi was made its headquarters and nucleus.38 The Idaiyangudi Mission district shared the characteristic features of the south-eastern part of Tirunelveli district. The dominant feature of this part lays in the Southern side of the Tamaraparani river was the red sand belt, covered the entire region and was admirably suited to the growth of the Palmyra palm.39 The Shanars were highly concentrated in the Palmyra forests in this region.

Caldwell took residence in Idaiyangudi, which was predominantly occupied by the Shanars with a mix of a few families of goldsmiths, dyers, oilmen and washermen. Caldwell

38. J.L.Wyatt, Reminiscences, p-79
39. R.Caldwell, Lectures on the Tinnevelly Missions Descriptive of the Field, the Work,and the Result;With the Introductory Lecture on the Progress of Christianity in India. London: Bell@Daldy, 1857, p-30
found that the only Christians in the place were the Shanars, of whom there were about 300 people. About 200 of the same class were heathens still, and this heathen minority included some belonging to the higher division of the caste, who had been Christians originally and had relapsed before the arrival of the European Missionaries.\footnote{J.L.Wyatt, Ibid, p-80} In December 1841, the Mission station of Idaiyangudi was at a low ebb. A number of lapsed Christians were at great hindrance as the heathens also remained in the small church.

In Caldwell’s estimate, apart from the church and a centrally located small structure with a single room intended to be the mission bungalow for the new missionary, the entire village was an irregular mess. The houses were built haphazardly. A school was nominally in existence, though there was no scope for women even to dream of education. The people of Idaiyangudi were also difficult to manage, and the village itself did not belong to the mission.

Between 1841 and 1843, Caldwell also spent his time in visiting and exploring all the Christian stations and important places in Tirunelveli. This gave him the opportunity to collect details and learn about the ideas and characteristics of each class of converts as well as of non converts, directly from them. He also learned of the current working practices of missions and their organization at first hand. Besides assessing the characteristics and impact of the missionary movement, he tried to think the measures needed to spread Christianity, and how best to organize missions for the improvement of the native community.\footnote{Ibid, p-79}
Idaiyangudi, a Model Mission Village

Caldwell worked hard to make Idaiyangudi as a model mission village in terms of its material prosperity too. Thus he planted rows of palmyras and other kinds of trees, expecting that the yields from these would in the long run help to create local endowments for the benefit of the converts, who would have something to fall back upon during drought or in any other emergency.\(^{42}\) Another major plan of his was to dig a water tank in the village which will enable the people to be cleaner than they are now since they are without expense. At present every drop of water is drawn from deep wells and has to be paid for, and the washerman’s salary is one of the heaviest items in school expenses. It will also enable the people to grow rice on the land near the tank. All these developments contributed in their own way to make Idaiyangudi a model mission station in a rural neighbourhood.\(^{43}\)

Condition of Church Service at the Time of his Arrival

At the time of his arrival he described how at their Sunday worship, “Several hymns were sung by the catechist and school masters very slowly and dolefully and very much out of tunes. It was only on the great festivals after service was over, that the people were delighted with the singing of their own national tunes”.\(^{44}\)

\(^{42}\) R.Caldwell, *Ten Years in Tinnevelly*, pp-301-302

\(^{43}\) Ibid, p-301

\(^{44}\) Gibbs, M.E., *The Anglican Church in India*, p-149
On week days after a few prayers, the catechist taught the people to repeat the creed of the Lord’s Prayer and the 10 commandments without any attempt to explain its meanings. As for the schools, they rarely succeeded in making anyone able to read fluently and intelligently. Women attended the service but never responded to any portion of the service on Sundays and other week days. No public meeting was held. All this was reformed by Caldwell.

On every Sunday he delivered the sermons which were full of beautiful word pictures which touched the imagination and charmed the hearers. It was his style of preaching that was particularly impressive to the emotional Hindus. Every morning and evening he conducted divine service in the schools with a good deal of singing intermixed and a sermon especially suited to the non-Christians. Those who profess themselves as Christians followed the service, stood and knelt at the proper time during service. The non-Christians remained sitting during the whole time of the service.

The Hindus observed a special day at the commencement of the Palmyra season when jiggery season began. Caldwell adopted the custom and conducted a solemn service where implements of Palmyra climbing were brought to the altar. The prayers were “the tree might yield its fruit and the climber’s feet might not slide”. Many ‘fatal accidents like falling from trees 40 to 60 feet high may occur. So this type of religious service was accepted by the people.’

He visited two villages per day by assembling the Christians in Church for service, sermon,

advice and encouragement. Sometimes in the evening meetings, he lectured on some general subjects like geography of Tirunelveli, Indian literature, Vedas, the Puranas etc. Fourteen or fifteen people were appointed to work in their villages.

**His Evangelistic Mission**

In 1876, he carried on for about a year, a series of evangelistic missions in places inhabited by the so called higher castes who had not yet been induced to join the Christian Church by any of the agencies. He enlisted a band of competent zealous assistants namely A.Masilamani, D.Samuel, S.G.Yesudian and J.J.Wyatt, his son-in-law and went to the neighboring villages. The only place where the evangelistic work had direct fruit was at Alvartirunagari, a brahminical town. The Brahmins were so friendly with Caldwell and his assistants and they went there often and devoted several days to give more private addresses to inquiries and 15 to 20 persons became Christians and 6 were baptized.\(^{47}\)

In Tuticorin in order to strengthen the missionary work he appointed D.Samuel the senior native clergyman of Idaiyangudi and Asirvatham, a catechist from Madras and three other catechists to go from home to home among the non-Christians. D.Samuel spent much of his time in private conversations with individuals belonging to the higher classes. Besides which he held meeting and enlivened by singing in the high caste quarters of the town where he delivered lectures. These meetings were held in one place weekly; in another once a fortnight and the meetings were well attended. The addresses were in Tamil but on Sundays he held Bible studies

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47. Wyatt, J.L., *Reminiscence*, p-126
for persons acquainted with English, where portions from the Bible were read. Whether people accepted the message or not, the catechists remained as their best friends.

There was a class of natives in the town called ‘Maravars’ and among them an encouraging beginning had been made. The headman of the community had been thinking long of becoming a Christian and when Asirvatham who belonged to the same class arrived he came to a decision and he also made his family including his grown up sons got baptized. The caste feeling, jealousy and suspicion which prevailed in the beginning later on subsided.

**Holy Trinity Church at Idaiyangudi**

Caldwell was keen to build a substantial church in Idaiyangudi, large enough to accommodate not only the Christian inhabitants of the village, but also the members of the other congregations in the neighbourhood. He visualized it as a simple permanent stone church, which would be not merely a specimen of good architecture for the entire district but will be the mother church for a large circle of mission churches.  

The church built in the Gothic style, comprised a nave, two aisles, chancel and vestry. The architectural vocabulary of windows, doors and the timber work of the roof were initially casted ingeniously by Caldwell himself in clay in full size, and then they were exactly reproduced in stone and wood by artisans and carpenters. All the workmen engaged in the construction were drawn from nearby villages and were familiar only with the rough stone work. The final version however, was a very fine, large and elegant stone church rising in the central part of the Christian village. Holy Trinity Church, as it was named,

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48. R. Caldwell, *Lectures*, pp-86-87
was marked out as a crowning act of the good Bishop’s work, and was consecrated and opened for service on July 6, 1880.\textsuperscript{49}

\textbf{Caldwell as a Builder}

When Caldwell arrived at Idaiyangudi, he saw a confused collection of poor houses, torturous lanes, a small church and a one roomed bungalow. His first effort was to make Idaiyangudi a well-planned model Christian village. He purchased as much land as possible for the erection of Church, Schools, and a house for the missionary from a Nadar, a landlord. He began laying out regular streets and built houses in clay which made the people to build their houses copying them. He climbed up a tall tree and looked below to ensure that the streets intersected each other at right angle. Then he planted trees along the streets and he dug wells in various places. Lord Napier, Governor of Madras donated enough money for planting 1000 Palmyras. With the donation of \£100 by J.M.Fenton in England, Caldwell developed Fenton estate on a hill slope gifted by the government. The villagers, who were normally resistant to any change, came to appreciate Caldwell’s labours in beautifying their village which reposed confidence in him.

The Christian villages were distinguished from the Hindu villagers by the straightness and regularity of the streets, the superior construction and neatness and cleanness of the cottages, the double row of tulip trees or coconut or palms planted along each street for adornment as well as for shade. After conversion their houses were built twice or thrice as large as the houses they

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p-88
were content to live in before, besides being much loftier and more respectable-looking with little verandas in the front. Thus well ventilated houses were built and good sanitation was provided and various other arrangements which used to be seen only in the houses of high caste people in the towns and rooms for architectural improvement and for sanitary improvement were made.

**Church Building**

Caldwell built a bungalow where he lived with his wife and children at Idaiyangudi. Near that he built a Church which was enlarged four times to meet the requirements of the increasing congregation. He got the plan of Church building and money from the Building society in London. He obtained valuable building stones from Tisayanvilai. The rock was lime stone and it was largely composed of communitied shells. Since the soil was of loose nature, the foundation was laid very deep. When Isabella saw the projected Church whose foundation had been laid by his father in 1843, standing only one foot above the basement for a long time, she wrote to her friends in England and got money from them. The very first letter brought 250 pounds from an old friend in England and other friends also continued their help. Lord Napier donated Rs.500 to the church and the district collector, P.K.Buckle gave Rs.100. The church is decorated in the Gothic style, the chief beauty of which lies in the windows. The great east west windows are of extreme beauty. The dedication service of the Holy Trinity Church Idaiyangudi, took place on 6th July, 1880 and Bishop Sargent conducted the service. About 5000 assembled, out of whom 2000 were non-Christians.

After 70 years Caldwell often fell ill and he resigned his post in 1891 and retired to Kodaikanal to take rest. While he was staying there, he found that there was no church to worship for him in the charming station of Kodaikanal on the Putney hills in the Madras districts. So he requested Levinchi, a government officer to construct a church at Kodaikanal. Levinchi not only selected a place for the church but also granted money for the work. J.L. Wyatt, Caldwell’s son-in-low finished St. Peter’s Church beautifully at Kodaikanal and Bishop Caldwell dedicated it in 1886.

Caldwell as a Bishop

As a Bishop his life had been a very chequered one. The years from 1877 to 1888 witnessed severe famine and an outbreak of cholera all over Tirunelveli district and the Bishop completely involved himself in relief work among the entire community irrespective of religion. He came into access with all the SPG churches and had to travel a lot. A scholar of international repute he started a number of schools for boys and girls and revamped the Sawyerpuram educational complex. He made the high school a second Grade (FA) College and got it affiliated to Madras University in 1880. When Bishop Johnson visited Sawyerpuram in 1881, he recommended that Tuticorin should be made as SPG headquarters and the college should be transplanted to Tuticorin. So Caldwell set about raising fund and in 1883 purchased a discussed cotton press with a bungalow attached with it and the college and the high school were transferred to Tuticorin from Sawyerpuram.

51. Ian Jacob, *Caldwell School Centenary Souvenir (1883-1983)*, Tuticorin, 1983, pp-7-8
In 1879 Caldwell was invited to deliver the convocation address to the University of Madras. The greatest day in his life was 6th July 1880, when he consecrated the Holy Trinity Church at Idaiyangudi, which he had laboured with his own hands from time to time for 35 years. Bishop Sargent participated in the service with 5 missionary clergymen, 35 Indian clergymen and 5000 people. From 1883 onwards on the advice of Bishop Johnson, he left Idaiyangudi and lived in Tuticorin which became the headquarters since then. Then he went to England for the third and last time to attend the meeting of SPG, CMS and SPCK and was able to silence the opposition for starting a college. For about 53 years he devoted his eminent talents to the furtherance of the Gospel and building churches among the Tamil people in Tirunelveli. To make a study of his life and work is truly rewarding and that it lays bare before the reader how the strength of his convictions fortified him to work among the non-Christians with sincerity and dedication, austerity and determination, sanctity and holiness.

Caldwell’s Contribution to History of Tirunelveli

Caldwell’s book entitled A Political and General History of the District of Tinnevelly contains the earliest period to its cession to the English government in 1801 was published by the then Government of Madras at public expense and Caldwell received an honorarium of Rs.1000 for it. He found that the early history of Tinnevelly was, in fact, shrouded in mystery. He attempts to trace the earlier accounts of Tirunelveli from the Tamil classical books. The earliest word to denote Tirunelveli, distinct from Madurai, was Ten Pandi the southern Pandya Kingdom.
where ‘Kodun-Tamil’ or bad Tamil was spoken. He considered the Paraiyars and Pallas, the lowest castes in the social scale, the long-oppresses tribes, probably as the native inhabitants. Probably the earliest inhabitants came to be mixed up so completely with the succeeding immigrants that it will be impossible to distinguish them now. The Dravidians were the earliest stock of people from central tracts of Asia to arrive in India.52

Caldwell has given an interesting and elaborate description about the river Tamiraparani, the climate and physical features of the place in his two books –Lectures on Tinnevelly Mission and A History of Tinnevelly. Such description was necessary as he felt that many highly respectable educated people of India were not aware of the oriental geography. In their ignorance he was once described as “Caldwell, a missionary from Tirunelveli, South Africa”. He defined Tamiraparani as ‘tree with red leaves’. When the Greeks under Alexander, the Great, invaded India, the Buddhist called the river Tamiraparani as found in an Asokan inscription at Girner. In earlier times, Tirunelveli district had no separate existence, but formed merely the Southern portion of the Pandya country and later was under the Cholas, the early Muhammadans and the Nayaks. He understood that the Pandya Kings of Madurai never sprang from any of the royal dynasties of North India. The earliest reference to the Pandyan Kingdom is found in one of the Asoka’s inscriptions of about 250 B.C. It is thus learnt that the Pandya Kingdom was one of the very ancient and renowned kingdom in India. They maintained friendly commercial relations with Emperor Augustus and they were the only Indian princes who perceived the advantages of

52. Caldwell, R., A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian Family of Languages, University of Madras, 2000 (Reprint), P-105
European alliance. He saw the old coins and models collected by the Maharaja of Travancore, conducted research work and concluded that the coins belonged to the period of Augustus. These repeatedly impressed on his mind the high standard of the ancient Tamilnadu.

As the Nayaks were firmly established at Madurai they brought southern districts of Ramnad and Tirunelveli under their control. Viswanatha Nayak (1529-1564) divided his territories into 72 palayam and Palayamkottai was one among them. Soon after the Poligar wars in 1783 and 1799, against Kattabomma Nayaka, Poligar of Panjalamkurichi, and the Nawab gave the Tirunelveli district to the British East India Company in 1801.

Caldwell identified the important places mentioned in foreign literatures on Tamilnadu inspite of the limitations of the time and lack of original data. In the words of R.Tirumalai, “The records and data were not complete. Many terms were obscure and an interpretation could only be attempted by the contextual occurrence of the terms and at best could have the status of hypothesis”. At this situation Caldwell gave his interpretation boldly and identified some places like Korkai, Kayal and Cape Comorin as known to the Greeks and this identification helped to forward other identification. Caldwell visited Korkai and Kayal in 1861 and identified them with the Kolkhoi of the Greeks and the ‘Carl’ of Marcopolo respectively. Marcopolo’s Kayal was Punnaikayal, a small port and not Kayalpattinam. It was in this city that all the ships that came from the west touched. ‘The Greeks came to Korkai and purchased pearls, certainly soon after the Christian era, probably many years before and represented it as the head quarters

of pearl trade”. They called the Gulf of Mannar as the Kolchic Gulf. This was the Korkai to which all native traditions pointed as “the cradle of South Indian civilization”. Kayal carried on an immense direct trade with China and Arabia, the evidence was seen like broken pieces in China and Arabian pottery as found lying all over the open plain on which the city stood.

**Caldwell’s views on the Society in Tirunelveli**

The people were divided into 3 classes as Brahmins, Sudras and lower classes. The lower class especially Shanars depended upon the palmyra for their livelihood. Among this class Christianity was under much progress. So Caldwell wrote a separate book titled *The Tinnevelly Shanars* in 1849 in which he gives an elaborate description of their social and economic conditions. Caldwell simply quotes the tradition that “it is commonly supposed that the Vellalas came from the Chola country, the Maravas from the Ramnad country and the Shanars from Ceylon”.

The Shanars or Nadars, were also known by other names as the Shantrar, Shantore, and Nadazhvar and they were a peasant community with learned men, warriors, merchants and toddy-tappers in their fold. The word ‘Shanar’ or ‘Nadar’ is not found in the earlier Tamil literature. Two inscriptions at Kallidaikurichi suggest that in medieval times the Nadars served as administrators and accountants both in the Chera and the Pandya countries. There is no proof that they were descendants of the Pandyas, the Cholas or the Cheras. The Muslim and Telugu conquests administered a serious blow to the glory of the Nadars. They suffered inequality and

54. Thurston, Edgar, *Castes and Tribes of South India*, pp-368-370
were treated as untouchables in 1822. By force and violence, they were made to cut roads, repair water courses and construct public buildings. The Nadar women were strictly prohibited from wearing any scarf or upper cloth and must keep the upper portion of their bodies bare not only as a token of submission but also for identification of their status as untouchables.\textsuperscript{55} The Shanars who wore their long hair and kudumi were not allowed to enter the temples. But when they were converted they adopted Christianity together with their kudumi.\textsuperscript{56} They were prohibited to use the Hindu temples and were treated below the Vellalas, Maravars and other classes.\textsuperscript{57} From 1828 onwards riots broke out in many places against Nayars for social equality.\textsuperscript{58} In the beginning the Nadar women were allowed to cover the upper part of the body and the Christian missionary women devised a loose jacket for them.

By that time many foreign missionaries came and spread the gospel and they petitioned to their government for privileges to the Nadars and they achieved success. Caldwell enriched this community by his missionary activities and services and raised their status in the society above the other minor caste- Pallar and Paraiyar.

There were five sub-castes in the Nadar community namely Karukku-pattayar, Mel-Nattar, Nattatti, Kodikkal and Kalla Nadars.\textsuperscript{59} Caldwell was much impressed by the fact that

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{56} Robert Caldwell, “\textit{Kudumi}” \textit{Indian Antiquary, vol-iv.}, June, 1875, pp-166-173
\bibitem{57} Thurston, Edgar, \textit{Castes and Tribes of South India}, p-370
\bibitem{58} Rajayyan.K., Ibid, pp-286-287
\end{thebibliography}
Nadars went to Madurai to meet and welcome him to their district. He wrote, “I could not but be struck first by their long ears, long pendent earrings, long hair tied in a knot behind the head like the women, their presents of sugar candy and their graceful salaam with folded hands.”

There were other tribes such as Vellalas, Reddies, Maravas, Pariahs and Pallas but undoubtedly majorities of the people were Shanars. When a Hindu Shanar was converted, he was not declared as an outcaste. This facility gave them an easy open door to accept Christianity. So the Shanar community still forms the staple of the Christianity in Tirunelveli.

Women were not allowed to eat or walk with their husbands. Some men refused to be converted because of the refusal of their wives. Caldwell felt that no progress could be made in moral reforms or little progress of any kind, if the women were not heartily supporting them. Women education was considered harmful by the Hindus even though they found educated women far better than the illiterate. They disliked the idea of children and others being compelled to attend Sunday classes to improve their knowledge of the Bible.

**Caldwell, the Scholar- Missionary Author**

Caldwell’s scholarly training at Glasgow and his comparative philology greatly helped him in his intellectual pursuits. Influenced by his Greek Professor, Sir Daniel Sandford, who was well known for the comparative study of languages, he had developed a fascination for

60. Wyatt, J.L., *Reminiscence*, p-77
comparative philology while studying at Glasgow. This early formed resolution was the seed out
of which eventually “My Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian languages” grew.\textsuperscript{62} In order to
have close interaction with the people of this region, Caldwell became absorbed in learning
about their language, history, geography, customs etc. Caldwell wrote four major works, (1) \textit{A
Comparative Grammar}, (2) \textit{Lectures on Tinnevelly Missions}, (3) \textit{History of Tinnevelly and
Records of Tinnevelly Mission}, together with his famous treatise (4) \textit{The Shanars of Tinnevelly}
and a few other particularly significant articles.

Caldwell was aware that the people of India had always shown a great interest in
grammatical studies but had failed to compare the grammar of their own language with others.
Dr. Caldwell’s \textit{Comparative Grammar of Dravidian Languages}, is indeed a mighty contribution
which has revolutionized our approach to Tamil grammar.\textsuperscript{63} Caldwell worked on the South
Indian languages when he went to England in December 1853 on his first furlough. His furlough
lasted nearly four years and was prolonged for him to recoup his health and also to share his
missionary experiences with congregation in England. It was a valuable opportunity to improve
his scholarship in the Tamil language, and he had taken with him all the materials that he had
collected in India so as to write a book. It took about eighteen months to complete his work and
in June 1856 it was published in London. It was Caldwell who introduced the term ‘Dravidian’
which gained currency following the publication of his \textit{Comparative Grammar} in 1856. He

\textsuperscript{62} J.L.Wyatt, \textit{Reminiscences}, p-7

\textsuperscript{63} K.Meenakshisundaram, \textit{The Contribution of the European Scholars}, University of Madras, 1974, p-167
described this, in his first and longest work as; “In the introduction I explain the origin and meaning of the common term ‘Dravidian’ which I was the first to use, instead of the narrower term ‘Tamulian’ and which has found its place in all works on the Indian languages”.

Caldwell argued that Dravidian languages were fundamentally different from Sanskrit and had a common origin. He investigated their early history and their mutual affinities. In his judgment, Tamil owed nothing to Sanskrit and was “the most highly cultivated of all Dravidian idioms, can dispense with its Sanskrit, if need be, and not only stand alone but flourish, without its aid”. Caldwell outlined the theory that Tamil culture had a separate and independent existence before the coming of Brahmans into South India. He claimed that Sanskrit was originally brought to the South by migrating Brahmans. He also argued that the coming of Aryan Brahmin colonists to the South led to the spread of a peculiar version of Hinduism heralding the proliferation of idol worship. Caldwell’s claim of a Dravidian alternative to the Aryan-Sanskrit Brahmin culture was not limited in its significance to the confines of mission management. Its implications were far reaching. His grammar set the tone for fixing a new identity and genealogy for the Dravidian languages and culture and the Tamil people. This new ideology was selectively appropriated by the English educated non-Brahmin elite to challenge the power and influence of the Brahmans and Brahmanism, leading to the non Brahmin Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu.

Caldwell’s ear list writings ‘Lectures on the Tinnevelly Mission’, descriptive of the field, work and the results, with an introductory lecture on the progress of Christianity in India was

64. R.Caldwell, Reminiscences, p-150
65. R.Caldwell, A Comparative Grammar of the Dravidian or South Indian Family of Languages, University of Madras, 2000, (Reprint), p-48-49
published in 1857. It contains a series of lectures that had appeared previously in a missionary journal, ‘The Colonial Church Chronicle and Missionary Journal. The lectures in this volume were intended to dispel the profound ignorance of the English about missionary work and the progress Christianity had made in certain parts of India.\(^\text{66}\)

Caldwell’s concern about lack of historical consciousness among Indians led to his second book published in 1881 and entitled ‘A Political and General History of the District of Tinnevelly in the Madras presidency, From the Earliest Period to its cession to the English Government in A.D1801’. He spent long years searching and gathering materials for his book, examining local inscriptions and books available at the British Museum, and laying his hands on documents and records of the Madras Government related to the period of his study. Recognizing Caldwell’s expertise, this book was sponsored by the Madras Government. The book attempted to recover along expanse a period of 2000 years of Tinnevelly’s history in relation to the wider history of South India.\(^\text{67}\)

In the same year as his ‘General History 1881’ Caldwell’s fourth book about mission history entitled, Records of the early History of the society for the Propagation of the Gospel was published. This was a work on the protestant Christian movement in Tirunelveli district spearheaded by missionaries aided by native priests and catechists. The introduction of Christianity and the impact of conversion upon Tirunelveli society form the basis for this historical sketch of the early Tirunelveli Mission. It is essentially a compilation of materials

66. R.Caldwell, Lectures, p-4


43
from reports, journals, letters and other documents and records, with explanatory notes. Caldwell noted, “I have generally allowed the reports, letters and other documents to speak for themselves, contenting myself as far as possible, with the work of a collector and editor”.68

One of Caldwell’s earliest works was about the Shanars among whom he lived and spent a large part of his time and energy. The response of the Shanars to the Gospel was becoming proverbial and he undertook this work as an assessment of their pre-conversion state. He published this influential and controversial pamphlet under the title *The Tinnevelly Shanars* in the year 1849. *The Tinnevelly Shanars* was Caldwell’s first major ethnographic treatise. It was essentially a missionary ethnography, and gave a negative portrayal of the religion, culture, social standing and intellectual capacity of the Shanars, who were the principal objects of his missionary reform and conversion efforts. The pamphlet was withdrawn from circulation later as the Shanars vehemently protested against their inferior representation. He claimed that the Shanars originally emigrated from Ceylon to the Tamil region and were Hindus not of the Brahmanical but of the Tamil or aboriginal race.69 As such they were, he argued among the original inhabitants of the Tamil region, distinct from its colonizers, the Brahmins. Caldwell also claimed that the Shanars religion was demonolatry, which stood outside the fold of Brahmanical religion.


69. R.Caldwell, *The Tinnevelly Shanars*; Madras; Christian knowledge society’s press, 1849, pp-13 @28

44
Translations

Caldwell devoted much time to the Tamil Bible and Prayer Book translations and for developing other kinds of Christian literature in Tamil. In 1842, soon after his arrival in Tirunelveli, he joined a committee named ‘Revision of the Tamil Version of the Prayer Book’, constituted by the leading Anglican Missionaries of Tirunelveli district. He considered the regular meetings of the committee once a month for three or four days to be very useful and pleasant.\textsuperscript{70} The Revised Prayer Book was published in 1846. Caldwell also revised the Tamil Hymn Book and rearranged it for using it in the Anglican service. This book contains his translation into Tamil of ‘The Church’s one Foundation’, a hymn which came into general use throughout Tamil Nadu. He also included, in the appropriate places, a few translations of special English hymns, among which are ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’, two Easter Hymns, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’, a translation of the first portion of the 103\textsuperscript{rd} Psalm and ‘The Voice that breathed o’er Eden’.\textsuperscript{71}

Caldwell also published a number of Tamil booklets pertaining to Holy Communion and catechism. \textit{A Companion to the Holy Communion} was published in 1851 since there was no book to give proper guidance about the sacrament and preparation for Holy Communion. This booklet contains a set of meditations and prayers. One interesting booklet by Caldwell is ‘An Elementary Catechism’, which has two hundred and forty-three questions and answers addressed

\textsuperscript{70} R.Caldwell, \textit{Reminiscences}, p-139
\textsuperscript{71} Ibid, p-155
to converts, highlighting the basics of Christianity and its tenets in simple language. So that even children and those who cannot read, can understand. His major works also contributed to the emergence and development of the discourse on Tamil advancement that was taking shape in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Importantly Caldwell’s commitment as a scholarly author publishing at regular intervals did not impose any restrictions on his missionary work which was always his first priority.

**Caldwell’s Last Years**

Robert Caldwell, widely known as a savant of Tamil literature and Dravidian languages, was primarily a Protestant Missionary from England who had dedicated his life for the cause of the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Tamil Nadu, particularly in Tirunelveli district. The work that he did incidentally not only in language and literature but also in historical studies and for the betterment of the communities, among whom he worked, has left an indelible mark in all the areas he laboured and is cherished by the people even today. His social and educational services and scholarly contribution to the Dravidian Languages and history gave him the highest place in the history of Tirunelveli Diocese and among the historians of Tamil Nadu.

The 8th January 1888 marked the Golden Jubilee of Bishop Caldwell’s landing in India as a missionary and it was celebrated in Tuticorin. Even in his old age of about 70 years, he never went in retirement. He continued his ecclesiastical duties in the two SPG districts of Tirunelveli and Ramanadhapuram. He found the climate of Kodaikanal more congenial to his declining

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health and most of the time he lived there and conducted the business in his office. He was weakened by age and continued exertion and was not able to move between Kodaikanal and Tuticorin. So he resigned his job and his position as Bishop on 31st January 1891 and went to Kodaikanal to take a lifetime rest. But on 19th August 1891, he was called to his heavenly home after a brief period of illness. After a long wakeful night of anxiety by his bedside, next morning at 9’o clock on August 28, 1891, Eliza and his children watched as Caldwell entered into eternal rest at the age of 77. Caldwell’s missionary life had spanned a period of fifty three years, the entire span a determined step in the advance of Christianity in India. Robert Caldwell’s contribution to Tamil literature and culture received a visible embodiment. Caldwell is remembered not only as an illustrious missionary but also as a great scholar. To fulfill his desire, his body was brought to his mission field, Idaiyangudi where he worked for more than 40 years and buried beneath the alter of the Holy Trinity Church, Idaiyangudi. His life became an inspiration and a challenge to many new missionaries in any land and also to scholars.

**George Uglow Pope Early Life (1820-1908)**

George Uglow Pope, popularly known as Dr.G.U.Pope, the great European missionary, was born in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia on April 24, 1820. His parents were John Pope and Catherine Uglow. In 1818, John and Catherine sailed to Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia to join his brother Joseph who had already set up business there as a ship builder and merchant. John and Catherine had ten children, six sons and four daughters. George was their

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73. Dudley Pope, “Early Years of Dr.Pope” and A note on Dr.G.U.Pope, Dr.G.U.Pope commemoration souvenir, Sawyerpuram, 1963, p-10
second child. The first four among them namely Richard, George, William and Thomas distinguished themselves in different ways. Richard at first worked as a follower of Cardinal Newman. George became a great missionary and educationist in India. William became the president of the Wesleyan Conference. Thomas the fourth son became a Roman Catholic.74

In 1826, John was sent as a missionary to the Island of St.Vincent in West Indies. He faced many hardships because of the climatic variations. George was nine years old when the family returned to England owing to financial difficulties. After their return they settled down in Plymouth. George had his schooling in Turnchapal near Plymouth. Very early in his boyhood; at the age of thirteen George desired to go as a missionary to India.75 As soon as he was eighteen he offered himself as a probationer for missionary work in India and was accepted by the Wesleyan Mission.76

George began to prepare himself for the life of a missionary in South India and began to learn French, German, Latin, Greek and Tamil, working eight hours a day. He learnt Hebrew and Greek languages so as to study the Bible thoroughly, for Old Testament was written in Hebrew and New Testament in Greek language. He wanted to be a sincere and true follower and promised to do service to the suffering classes.77 Taking South India as his mission field, he wished to live and die in India.78

74. Ibid, p-12
76. Ibid, pp-46-47
77. Arul Thangaiah,A., Pulavar Pope Iyer,(Tamil), Madras, 1946, p-13
78. The Times of London, 12 February, 1908, p-12
Leaving his family, friends, parents and motherland, he left for South India, as a missionary in 1839 at the age of nineteen.\textsuperscript{79} At first he belonged to the Methodist Church. He was appointed as an assistant to Rev. Robert Carver. He fell in love with Jane Mary Carver, the daughter of Robert Carver. G.U. Pope married her in 1841. After careful study and prayerful thought, he decided to join the Church of England and he offered to serve the Society for the Propagation of Gospel (SPG).\textsuperscript{80} During her second child birth, his wife Mary Pope died in 1845 at the age of twenty one. She was buried in Tuticorin. After her death, Pope married Henrietta, daughter of Codlieb Van Someran, of the banking and commercial firm of Arbuthnot and Company, Madras.

Dr. Pope had nine sons, two of whom died at infancy and four daughters. None of his children survive today. Some of his grandchildren and great grandchildren have settled at different countries.\textsuperscript{81} Dr. Pope was a skilled chess player. His recreation was playing chess and had the patience to keep three or four games going mostly winning them.\textsuperscript{82} G.U. Pope devoted his attention in the propagation of gospel among the people.

In order to make leaders for this purpose, he started a seminary and other educational agencies. It was at Sawyerpuram that he developed interest in Tamil literature. This too helped him to make his work more popular and acceptable among the Tamilians.

\textsuperscript{79} Sokkalingam, D.A., \textit{Tamilvalartha Pariyar} (Tamil), Madras, 1960, p-20

\textsuperscript{80} S.P.G. Report for the year 1842, p-46

\textsuperscript{81} Dudley Pope, op.cit. P-10

\textsuperscript{82} Paul Rajaiah, D., op.cit., p-30
G.U. Pope in Madras

Rev. George Uglow Pope came to Madras in connection with the Wesleyan Missionary Society in the year 1839. His arrival at Madras marks the beginning of an epoch in the Mission history of India. The ship bound for India set sail from Plymouth in England in 1839. It was a period before the steamship navigation came into existence. Among the passengers was George Uglow Pope, the youth of 19 year old who had some text books in Tamil and Sanskrit. The ship was sixteen weeks at sea without a sight of land. He never wasted a minute of his long voyage. He utilized the time fully for learning Tamil and other Indian languages for eight hours per day. During his journey he prepared a sermon in Tamil. It was said that during the eight months of his voyage, he thoroughly mastered the new language Tamil, that on alighting at Madras, he preached in Tamil to the fisher folk of Santhome. He attained proficiency in Tamil with the help of a person named Aryangavu Pillai after coming to Madras.

G.U. Pope came to India on behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, but later joined the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He gave his first sermon in Tamil because of his earnest desire that, “You must talk in the language, the mother tongue of the Indian people think in it and feel in it, before you can know of them”. Besides, his ambition was to talk only in

84. Dudley Pope, op. cit. P-6
85. Meenakshisundaram, k., The contribution of European Scholars to Tamil, Madras, 1974, p-56
86. Ibid, p-57
87. Pope, G.U., The Indian Magazine and Review, December 1894, p-15
Tamil when he landed in the Tamil soil. In spite of some mistakes in the course of his talks, his attempt proved to be successful in due course.\textsuperscript{88} He was in Madras for two years (1839-1841). He did missionary service at Santhome. In 1841 he left Madras to work in Tinnevelly under the S.P.G. and was sent in May 1842 for missionary work at Sawyerpuram and the surrounding villages.\textsuperscript{89} The beginning of his life in Tamil Nadu, offered him the best training ground for his subsequent missionary career in India. This was the first step that he took in the fulfillment of his desire to serve the South Indians.

**Contribution of G.U. Pope to Christianity**

**Dutch and Danish Missions in Tirunelveli**

The district of Tirunelveli in Madras State, occupies almost the South-Eastern extremity of the Peninsula of India between $8^0$ and $10^0$ degrees of North Latitude. Its climate is one of the hottest and driest in India. Its people have been very favourably inclined to matters pertaining to the spirit and have been admirably responding to the Word of God, preached by his messengers from time to time.

In 1658, the Dutch captured the harbour town of Tuticorin from the Protugese. This paved way for the first impact of Protestant Christianity on Tirunelveli. The Church of the Holy Trinity at Tuticorin known as the Dutch Church and later as the English Church dates back to

\textsuperscript{88} Sokkalingam, D.A., *Tamil Valartha Periyar*, p-81

\textsuperscript{89} Arul Thangaiah, A., op.cit., p-20
this period (1750). The Dutch East India Company which erected this solid structure has inscribed the date 1750, over the porch. This is therefore, the oldest Protestant Christian Church in Tirunelveli District. The contribution of the Dutch to the Tirunelveli Church however is negligible. Rev. Jaenicke in his journal records 29 April 1792 as the date on which the first sermon is preached in the Church. With the departure of the Dutch in 1825, the Church fell into disuse until taken over by the S.P.G. missionaries in 1843. It is still used for regular English services.

The Dutch Mission in Tirunelveli was rather a passing phase. But of a more abiding and effective character was the thrust into Tirunelveli by the Danish missionaries who had already been stationed at Tranquebar. The pious king, Fredrick IV instituted the Danish Royal Mission in 1705. The earliest among them, Zieganbalg and Harry Plutschau, the first Protestant German missionaries landed at Tranquebar in 1706 and did excellent work all over South India. Their journals reaching very much like chapters taken out of “Acts of the Apostles” in the Holy Bible was translated into English and soon they aroused great interest among the English people. With timely reimbursement of funds by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K.) they could extend their mission in Tirunelveli.

Schwartz was one of the greatest Tranquebar missionaries and founder of the Tirunelveli Church. He came to India in 1750 and spent the first twelve years at Tranquebar. He was also the founder objectives to translate New Testament into Tamil and established schools for

91. Caldwell,R., Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission, Madras,1881, p-9
the education of natives. Some of Schwartz’s able S.P.C.K. Catechists – Savarimuthu, Rayappan, Gnanapragasam and Savarirayan frequently visited Tirunelveli and prepared the ground. It was during his first visit to Tirunelveli on 3rd March 1778, Schwartz baptized Clorinda, a Maratha Brahmin lady attached to the Tanjore Royal family. She was married to an English officer from whom she learnt about Christ. Her name heads the list of name in the Tirunelveli Church register. Before Schwartz’s second visit to Tirunelveli in 1785, Clorinda mostly at her own expense, had erected a small, but substantial Church that still stands in Palayamkottai. Schwartz dedicated it in 1785 and appointed Sathianathan, the ablest of his catechists to be in charge of the new congregation. Clorinda’s Church served the earliest Christian until the Trinity Church and Christ Church were built in 1816 and 1856 respectively.

Rev.J.D.Jaenicke was the first Tranquebar missionary to reside in Palayamkottai and to supervise the work done in Tirunelveli district during 1794-1795. In 1799 was formed the first purely Christian settlement in the district- Mudalur (the first village) was formed on the initiative of David, the first convert of the place and with financial assistance by captain Everett, a friend of the S.P.C.K in Palayamkottai. The first small Church built by the early Christians was burnt by the non-Christians in 1803. This resulted in a Church being built with brick and mortar in 1816 which was renewed and extended by Rev.Norman in 1883. The magnificent tower was added in 1929. Gericke and kohloff were in nominal charge of the S.P.C.K. Mission in

Tirunelveli after Schwartz and Jaenicke. The terrible famine in 1810-1811 took a heavy toll of the Christians and the opposition of Christians stiffened everywhere. It was then that James Hough who became Government Chaplain in Tirunelveli in 1816, held the breach so valiantly.

**Church Missionary Society**

Rev. Schwartz planted the early church of Tirunelveli and left it in the care of Sathianathan and his band of catechists. The sapling church was watered by the S.P.C.K. missionaries operating from Tranquebar and Tanjore and at the time of drought it was saved by Rev. James Hough, the Army chaplain at Palayamkottai. From the middle of the nineteenth century there flowed in two new mainstreams to water this promising field. One was the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S) and the other, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G) to which S.P.C.K. transferred its field in 1825. The two missions themselves merged their fields into a single diocese in 1924. 96

The Church Missionary Society had been formed in England in 1799. It was on July 7, 1820, that Rhenius, the first C.M.S. missionary reached Tirunelveli to take over the district charge of the field, which was till then in the remote care of the Tranquebar mission and the S.P.C.K. For the next fifteen years Rhenius was the main spring in the Tirunelveli mission.

Finding that Clorinda’s Church had been too small and too far off, Rhenius planned and built in 1826, the Trinity Church at Palayamkottai, the present Holy Trinity Cathedral. It has

96. George Muller, D.S., op.cit., p-21
become a landmark in the district. It was Pettitt who added to it later in 1845, the lofty steeple (155 feet high) out-topping the neighbouring Hindu temples.

From Palayamkottai, the C.M.S. Missionaries directed their labours to the outstations far and near. Different missionaries adopted different stations for themselves where their names are still cherished and remembered. Churches sprang up in all Christian settlement like Megnanapuram, Dohnavur, Nallur, Pannavilai and Vellalanvilai. The work of C.M.S. was so through-going and rewarding that in the year of the centenary of the C.M.S., they could lay claim to 1028 churches or houses of worship in as many villages in the Tirunelveli district with the strength of 48,225 baptised Christians to worship in them. This was roughly the contribution of the C.M.S. tributary to the Tirunelveli Church when its first Bishop took charge in 1896.

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (S.P.G)

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts (S.P.G) had been constituted by a royal charter in London on 27th June 1701. In 1825 the S.P.G. inherited its Tirunelveli field from the S.P.C.K. Mission and began concentrating its operations in the east of the district. One of their most promising centres was Nazareth where the agents of Schwartz had been preaching the Gospel since 1798. Rev.Rosen, the first S.P.G. missionary, laid the foundation for a solid church in 1829. It was dedicated in 1830. It served till 1920 when it was pulled down and the present stately church was built on the same site and dedicated by Bishop

97. Paul Appasamy, A., op.cit., p-20
Tubbs in 1928. From Nazareth, the Church extended to dozens of neighbouring villages like Pillayanmanai, Agapaikulam, Valaiydi, Mookuperi, Pragasapuram, Oyangudi, etc which had got some very imposing churches to show worthy movements in the depth of Christian life and witness among the rural folk of this area.

Another flourishing S.P.G. centre in the forties of the last century was Sawyerpuram, a village which has been gratefully named after Mr. Sawyer who was friendly with the S.P.C.K. As early in 1828, the pioneer Christians had built for them a small church which can still be seen. It was however, with the advent of the intrepid young Dr. Pope in 1842 that Sawyerpuram shot into prominence in the annals of missionary history. For three quarter of a century the two great streams of C.M.S. and S.P.G. had been watering the Tirunelveli Church. The smallness of the field made it inevitable that these streams should ultimately coalesce. It was inevitable that in fullness of time the two missions should merge and that could be only in a single separate Bishopric. It was achieved in 1896.

**G.U.Pope in the Sawyerpuram Mission**

Rev. Pope came to Sawyerpuram in 1842. 98 Though he was a European by birth, he was appropriately called as “Pope Iyer of Sawyerpuram”. 99 His brief career at Sawyerpuram had a long lasting effect in and around that area. The present development of Sawyerpuram with

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98. G.U. Pope., *Report to the Bishop of Madras for the year 1845*, p-33

educational institutions and well planned buildings testify his work there. Tuticorin was then a small hamlet inhabited by fishermen and a few European merchants. Rev. Pope made use of the palmyrah trees that were cut down while clearing the jungles for putting up buildings such as schools, churches and houses.

This place Sawyerpuram has an interesting history behind it. Sawyer, a genuine Christian was an Anglo-Indian by birth. The Church in Tinnevelly owes a great debt to Mr. Sawyer, who was instrumental in finding a Christian village. The S.P.C.K. missionary society that had been functioning in Tinnevelly, sent its money to Sawyer, the honorary lay missionary and gave salaries to catechists and teachers in the missionary schools. Mr. Sawyer bought a large tract of land and settled them in that haven of peace. The village thus founded with such laudable motives in 1841 has been named by settlers as ‘Sawyerpuram’ in sheer gratitude of its benefactor. But for his benefaction, the light of the gospel would doubtless have been extinguished during the long period when no European missionaries visited the congregation.

This village of Sawyerpuram was a teri (barren land) surrounded by large stretches of sand dunes which had a strange fascination for Rev. Pope. Sawyerpuram had a hot climate and the European found it difficult to stand the heat especially during summer. Dr. G.U. Pope dug a pit in the earth sufficient to accommodate him, in which water was stored. In this he kept himself submerged up to the neck during the intolerable hot months while he proceeded for his reading.\(^{100}\) He made Sawyerpuram and its neighbourhood the field of his labours for about twelve years from 1842 to 1854.

\(^{100}\) Meenakshi Sundaram, k., op. cit., p-56
Sawyerpuram Seminary

S.P.G chose the right person, Rev.G.U.Pope who immediately after his arrival at Sawyerpuram had settled himself, with characteristic zeal to the two fold work of founding congregations and schools in the various districts, North of the river Thamiraparani and of establishing in the place, where he took up his abode institution called “Seminary”. These seminaries- one in Madras, a second at Vadiarpuram in Tanjore and the third in Sawyerpuram were founded by Rev.Pope, while he labored at these stations.

Rev.Pope was a man of varied abilities and accomplishments and an enthusiastic teacher. He taught his students not only classical Tamil but also Greek, Latin and Hebrew. He was a good Hebrew scholar. He taught his students not only during the day, but also from 8 to 11 p.m every night. Dr.Pope was equally earnest about the teaching of theology in all its branches. His aim was to make Sawyerpuram a kind of university surpassing anything of the kind that was to be found at that time in the Madras presidency.

This seminary was intended for the education of six boys from each of the five districts of the society for the Propagation of the Gospel’s Missions in Tinnevelly. Rev.Pope planned to make the seminary as a multipurpose seat of learning, a training school to train teacher catechists for the Christian schools and a theological seminary to equip the Indian clergy. From 1862 a high school was started which sent out the first batch of matriculates in December 1864.

101. Wyatt,J.L., (ed), op.cit, p-130
104. Pascae,C.F., *Two Hundred Years of S.P.G.*, p-150
He experienced great difficulties at first in finding the students for his seminary. All kinds of inducements had been offered to parents to send their boys. Encouragement was given to them to remain at school. They were well fed and clothed. They paid no fees, but had a little pocket money given to them for their holidays and were supplied with everything they wanted. Once the students came into the seminary, they were subjected to severe discipline as could be seen from a Tamil motto which Rev.Pope chose for his seminary good education and good thrashing.  

The Society for the Propagation of Gospel recognized the high standards that their Sawyerpuram seminary maintained and regarded their schools at Idaiyangudi, Nazareth, Mudalur and Tuticirin only as feeder institutions for their superior seminary at Sawyerpuram. Rev.Pope reigned supreme over the seminary for five years (1844-1849) when he went on furlough and proceeded to ‘fresh fields’ and pastures new in Tanjore.  

Rev.Pope had succeeded in his attempt of making Sawyerpuram a kind of university. Firstly, it was an unsuitable site which was not a town like Tuticorin; but an insignificant village. Another was the dullness of most of his pupils who belonged to the socially backward classes. The chief drawback to his success was the severity of his discipline which, after a succession of petty campus quarrels, led to his withdrawal. One great advantage he enjoyed was the

105. Ibid., p-153
107. Ibid., p-155
108. Wyatt, J.L., op. cit., pp-59-60
co-operation and encouragement he received from the Madras Diocesan Committee of that time which extended him all possible helps.\textsuperscript{109}

**Evangelisation in and Around Sawyerpuram**

Rev.Pope took charge in 1842. There was no congregation in and around Sawyerpuram. On account of the incessant and fervent labours of Rev.Pope, the light of Gospel began to shine in every village in Sawyerpuram area and the number of Christians rapidly increased. School masters and catechists in Christian doctrine fell upon Rev.Pope. He had to teach them Tamil also.\textsuperscript{110}

In 1842 when Rev Pope came to Sawyerpuram, it belonged to the taluk of Nazareth. After his arrival Sawyerpuram was made the headquarters for the places North of Thamraparani. Rev.Pope was made the chief priest of that taluk. From that time onwards Sawyerpuram was marching towards progress. There took place a great religious revival in the country.\textsuperscript{111} At the time of his arrival to Sawyerpuram in 1842 there were 512 Christians and five Catechists. There was only one Christian school and there were thirteen students. This increased slowly and in 1844 there began an encouraging movement towards Christianity in and around Sawyerpuram.\textsuperscript{112} “Nightsy six villages in the mission of Sawyerpuram came forward unsolicited”.

\begin{itemize}
\item 109. Wyatt,J.L., op.cit., p-156
\item 110. Sharrock,J.A., op.cit., p-161
\item 111. Arul Thangaiah,A., op.cit., pp-42-44
\item 112. Ibid., p-43
\end{itemize}
The present church of Sawyerpuram was opened in 1887. The church building society that was formed in 1844 at Sawyerpuram, helped the construction of churches, for the new converts and to enlarge the old churches. As a result new Churches were constructed at Puthiamputhur, Sivathaiyapuram, Subramaniyapuram and Pudukottai. Sawyerpuram which was placed under Rev. Pope had twenty two congregations. The mission area was divided into four circles- Sawyerpuram, Pudukottai, Puthiamputhur and Veppelodai.

In January 1845 Rev. Pope started an association called the Native Gospel Society to carry out evangelistic work. After 1845 the Christians suffered severe persecution at the hands of the Hindus. Overcoming these difficulties Rev. Pope and other preachers did active evangelisation. At Puthiamputhur the inhabitants gave him a building suited for a temporary church and a catechist’s house.

The first church erected by the Sawyerpuram Native Church Building Society was opened for public worship at Puthiamputhur on 17th September 1845. The village of Puthiamputhur was one of the most populous and thriving in that part of Tinnevelly. As a very ancient village, it exerted a great influence over the surrounding hamlets. It had a large stone temple erected by the ancestors of the Zamindar of Ettayapuram. Thus a Christian congregation and a church were permanently established at Puthiamputhur under the missionary supervision of G.U. Pope. The people of Sivathaiyapuram a neighbouring village situated east of Sawyerpuram

113. Ibid., pp-45-46
114. Ibid., p-50
tried hard to prevent the spread of Christianity. But there also a Christian congregation was established and many became the true followers of Christ.\textsuperscript{115}

In 1846 Rev.G.U.Pope worked hard to establish churches at Subramaniyapuram and Pudukottai. In Subramaniyapuram situated South of Sawyerpuram, in 1846 a Christian Church was built on the site of a Hindu Temple. It was named All Saints Church. Even today regular services are being conducted there.\textsuperscript{116} Rev.Pope could not stay at Sawyerpuram for long. Though his selfless services had been praised from different quarters, his strict and disciplined treatment of the students developed some aversion among the people towards him. Besides his body could not adjust with the hot climate of Sawyerpuram which very much impaired his health. So he left for England on a furlong in 1849 at the age of thirty.\textsuperscript{117}

**Dr.G.U.Pope’s literary works**

G.U.Pope’s ambition on landing the Indian soil was that, he must talk only in Tamil. It was this ambition which enabled him to make valuable contributions to the world. By translating the great works like *Kural, Tiruvachagam, Naladiar* and *Manimekalai*, he has made the greatness of these works, known to the European and created in them a love for Tamil. Dr.G.U.Pope came to India at a time when the Hindu Tamilians were called Ajanics. There were Christian missionaries who objected their children to read the Tamil poetry.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{115} Bower,H., *History of Christianity in India*, Madras, 1879, p-40  
\textsuperscript{116} Arul Thangaiah,A., op.cit., p-47  
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., p-51  
\textsuperscript{118} Paul Rajaiah,D., op.cit., p-95
Dr. G.U. Pope himself at first refused to read Kamattupal which formed the third part of *Thirukkural*. He had done first the translations of three books which he had considered great, *Thirukkural*, *Naladiar* and *Tiruvachakam*. Tiruvachakam is a saivite work. That he could get into the spirit of these works in these days of violent Christian prejudice against Hinduism which speaks volumes of his Catholicity.¹¹⁹

Since ancient times Tamil was the language of the people of Tamilaham and was the most internationally accepted of all the Indian languages. The pioneering effort made by the Christian missionaries and the Muslim scholars led to a Tamil revivalism. The Christian missionaries in their bid to reach the masses adopted Tamil as the language of communication. This led them to the study of Tamil for the explanation of religious dogmas and for the writing of books. The catholic missionaries of the eighteenth century took a great interest in the study of Tamil.¹²⁰

Dr. G.U. Pope was one of these western scholars of the last century who did good services in the field of Tamil language and literature. He had left his indelible marks behind him in his services rendered to Tamil in the fields of grammar, literature, ethics, religion and philosophy. He had a very great regard for Tamil and Tamilians. “Tamil is not a dialect of Sanskrit, but an independent language with a copious and original vocabulary, having a very clear and philosophical grammatical system very highly cultivated and in every respect equal to Sanskrit itself”.¹²¹

Dr. G. U. Pope proved himself as a great writer. During his stay at Sawyerpuram, he is said to have written four books viz., (1) *A Treatise on the Person of Christ*, (2) *A Compendium of Religious Teaching for Schools and Christian Families*, (3) *The Folly of Demon Worship*, (4) *The Prayer book* in Tamil and the English Church in South India. In this book, *A Treatise on the Person of Christ* in 192 pages, written in 1848, he brought out the Trinity of Christ. In this book the author examined the ‘Person of Christ’ on the basis of the only testing stone to find out whether the Christian principles or doctrines are true or false. This book blossomed out of the knowledge and handwork of Dr. Pope. It is a mirror which explains the bible truths.

While was at Tanjore, Dr. Pope wrote a number of books viz., (1) *A Tamil Handbook for the use of foreigners learning Tamil and of Tamilians learning English*, (2) *A Catechism of Tamil Grammar Book, vol-1*, (3) *A Catechism of Tamil Grammar Book, vol-2*, (4) *Pope’s Third Tamil Grammar, part’s 1 and 2*. It came to be known as the larger grammar of the Tamil language in both its dialects. It was written in 1859. (5) *A Tamil poetical Anthology with Grammatical Notes and Vocabulary* (1859). The main reason for writing this book was that Dr. G. U. Pope strongly opposed the ordinary method of studying Tamil poetry with the aid of verbal commentaries and this compilation was an attempt to introduce a better system.

Dr. G. U. Pope had written a few history books also. While he was at Ooty, he wrote two books on *The History of India*—one to guide the researchers and the other for the students. In 1880 he wrote, *A Text Book of Indian History*. In 1883 he wrote *Little Rajas – Primer of Indian*

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122. Meenakshisundaram, K., op. cit., p-57
History and Historical Notes about 2154 B.C., Ancient World, Panja – taca – pirakarnam or the fifteen lectures. Besides he studied the Toda language and wrote an outstanding book on its grammar.\(^{123}\)

Dr. Pope was a devoted student of Tamil classics and grammar. Realizing the unsuitability of the Tamil grammar works like Tolkapiam and Nannul for class room use, he ventured to bring out elementary grammar books of his own compilation.\(^{124}\) Besides he had contributed articles as a result of his Tamil studies to The Royal Asiatic Quarterly, The Indian Antiquary and The Indian Magazine and Review. This great Tamil scholar –cum-missionary has been aptly praised in a beautiful Tamil poem by a Frenchman Julian Vinson.\(^{125}\) The wonderful translations of the old and classical works like the Sacred Kural, The Sonorous Naladiar, The Sublime Purananoor, The Sweet Manimegalai. The soul stirring Tiruvachagam have entitled Dr. Pope to be included in the galaxy of the eminent Tamilian savants. In 1886 he completed translating Thirukkural into English. By this translation, Dr. Pope made the Sacred Kural available to the world.\(^{126}\) He got many reasons for translating this great work. He was profoundly impressed by the ethical quality of Thirukkural the greatest of all Tamil Classics, which was probably composed in the second century A.D. Dr. Pope got the credit of being the first person to translate Kural into English.

\(^{123}\) Sethupillai, R.P., Krittavat Tamil Tandarkal, Madras, 1963, op.cit., p-25

\(^{124}\) Ibid., p-30

\(^{125}\) Ibid., p-323

\(^{126}\) Wyatt, J.L., Reminences, op.cit., p-100
In 1893 Dr.G.U.Pope completed translating Naladiar. He translated this work while he was in the Oxford University. The Naladi-Nannuru or four hundred quatrains is often called the ‘Vellalar-Vetham’- the bible of the cultivations of the soil. There is no mention of God in Naladiar and no trace of religion. His main aim in translating this work was to introduce Tamil thoughts into the minds of English students.

Dr.Pope translated 658 songs of Tiruvachakam while he was working in the Oxford University. He published the translated work in 1900 at the age of eighty. Dr.G.U.Pope’s view was that Tiruvachagam has touched the hearts of the vast majority of the Tamil speaking people with a power, some-what akin to that of the psalms. During his time, many books and papers were published. The western custom of reviewing them was adopted and in South India printed books were reviewed. Cilappathikaram, translated as The Lady of the Anklet was a review by Dr.Pope. One of the two epics Manimekalai was translated by Dr.Pope in several articles contributed to Siddhanta Deepika volumes 11 and 12. Dr.Pope had written that Manimekalai was little known to outsiders and that it was a very interesting work, full of various information regarding Buddhism in South India. His translation of Manimekalai was left incomplete due to his sudden death in February 1908. He also seemed to have translated many minor works collectively called Ten Idylls.

127. Sethupillai, R.P., Krittavat Tamil Tondarkal, p-20
129. Subramaniya Aiyar, K.V., Historical Sketches of Ancient Deccan, p-98
130. Ibid., p-280
J.A. Dubois, a Roman Catholic Scholar from France who lived for thirty years in Mysore wrote a book entitled *A Description of the Character, Manners and customs of the people of India* explaining the customs and traditions he had learned there. The English East India Company bought it and translated it into English from French and published it in 1816. In 1862 Dr. G.U. Pope examined the English edition of this work by adding some more materials and published it. Another work edited by Dr. G.U. Pope was *Tamil Poetic Anthology* in 1859. Rev. G.U. Pope proved himself to be a great writer, editor, and translator. His immortal contributions earned for him a place to be ranked with great literarians of the world. His books are still popular testifying his scholarly outlook. His writings have stimulated an interest in the foreigners to learn and understand the Tamil language.

**Dr. G.U. Pope Last Years**

Dr. G.U. Pope’s efforts were equally directed to the extension of the church. He built All Saint Church at Subramaniapuram enduring extreme hostility and insult. G.U. Pope is a “Tamil Patran”. Because of Dr. G.U. Pope the students of Tamil bloomed into a scholar of Tamil, Sanskrit, and Telugu. G.U. Pope setup several schools and taught Latin, English, Hebrew, Mathematics and Philosophy. G.U. Pope believed in the theory: Things have trees. He worked with the motto ‘Conscience within and God above’. Dr. G.U. Pope wished to die in harness at Oxford. That evening he went for his usual long walk and on his way back home, sat in a park to read. He caught a chill, which carried him off and under its impact he passed away quietly on February 11, 1908 at the age of eighty eight. His wife and most of his sons and daughters were
by his side at the time of his death. At his request he was laid to rest near his friend Jowett. The service in Balliol Chapel was read by his friend Palmer, later Bishop of Bombay. Dr.G.U. Pope delivered his last sermon in Balliol Chapel on May 26, 1907. He sent it to his Indian friends, with a letter dated 25th December as a Christmas greeting and as his last message. He gave it the title “The Soul’s up rise and his text was Luke 14:18. “I arise and go to my father”. His Indian friends were deeply touched by his loving remembrance of them. His ambition was that, whenever and wherever he die, the words ‘A Student of Tamil’ should be inscribed on his tomb. It was fulfilled. Though he primarily devoted to the cause of education wherever he went, he never neglected his boyhood vision of being a missionary. This could very well be seen by his service in the mission field.

The present study of Caldwell and G.U. Pope make it clear that starting their career as a missionary from a small village, Sawyerpuram and Idaiyangudi in Tirunelveli district, they rose to a great prominence as a great literarian of Dravidian languages, as the first foreign historian to write about the history of Tirunelveli, as the educationist to start schools and colleges, and as a social reformer. This status they achieved by hard work with dedication to the call of Jesus Christ, with patience, preservance and prayers. Hailing from the modest but orthodox Christian family, they had undergone all kinds of stress and strains of life (by leaving his mother in her death bed and other family members). They came to India with a strong determination to serve God as a missionary.

131. Poul Rajaiah, D., op. cit, p-85
132. Pope, G.U., 20 October 1900, letter to J.M. Nallasami Pillai, editor of Siddhanta Deepika, Oxford
As a serious student of Philology, they studied entirely strange and new languages and literatures namely Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Canadian and Tulu and were successful in making a comparative grammatical analysis. They felt that it was their bounden duty to awake the people about the importance of education, especially girls, and to enlighten them with the significance of the Gospel, to embolden them to face struggles in life, to civilize their behaviour and way of life to serve as witnesses for the love of God.

While tracing the history of Tirunelveli, Caldwell found vast scope for unraveling the true, accurate and correct understanding of the past. He was very much captivated by the availability of numerous source materials, literature, both native and foreign, found throughout the area. He regretted that the Indians lacked historical sense and how they failed to preserve the monuments from destruction. To instill and to inspire historical sense among the graduates of the University of Madras, in his convocation address he called upon to make a collection of the data and to write the history of their own country. He was not a fanatic preacher of the Gospel alone. Whenever he was given a chance to address the gatherings he lectured on secular subjects also.

Coming under his impact, many anthropologists, theologians, historians and researchers on Tamil and other Dravidian languages and many modern scientific scholars tired of focusing their attention on the riddles of the history of Tamilnadu, the origin of the Dravidians, their connection with the Aryans, their literature, comparative studies of languages, religious, local
customs and social behaviour etc. They could not but admire Caldwell’s skillful handling of the vast corpus of Dravidian languages and foreign literary sources in his hand and his command over them.

Caldwell’s works, A History of Tinnevelly, A Comparative Grammar and The Tinnevelly Shanars, in fact revealed to the world that micro-level historians more appropriately local histories form an integral part of the whole national history. Most of his observations are rich in meanings and values. His writings are preserved for the future generation to draw inspiration and enthusiasm. Even though he did not follow the methodological rigours, his work remain excellent specimen for the study of local histories in the modern period, especially the Nadars, the prominent community of Tirunelveli, the local Pogilgar revolt, the Nayak’s rule etc. His study was an attempt to record some of the traditional beliefs, customs, manners and misconceptions deeply rooted among the natives.

The chief difference between Caldwell and G.U.Pope consisted in their activities being centered around mainly spreading of the gospel i.e preaching, converting, baptizing, confirming and making them as preachers and asking them to conduct church services and Bible studies. But Caldwell and G.U.Pope besides doing all these spiritual work could find time for secular writings, for translations, for establishing educational institutions and for writing scholarly accounts both literary and historical. They lived and spent their entire life amidst their village people and did social service for the betterment of the people.