

CHRISTIANITY IN MALABAR

Among the numerous writers who have produced quite a mass of literature on the ancient Church of Malabar, a few, mostly Protestants, are found who deny St. Thomas the Apostle to be its founder. When the unanimous Christian tradition believes that St. Thomas preached and died a martyr in India, these writers try to identify India with Parthia, Persia or any country other than India. While admitting the fact of St. Thomas coming to S. India, others deny the Orthodoxy of the Christians before the Synod of Diamper. We find nothing novel in this, as few facts of history (those connected with dogmas not excluded) have not been called into question by somebody or other. Hence this thesis has three parts:-(1) St. Thomas did come to S. India, (2) the St. Thomas' Christians were Catholics before the synod of Diamper; (3) a third part will deal with the Church in Malabar at present.

PART I

APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA

A preliminary question might be put: "How could St. Thomas come to India?"-J. N. Farquhar, writing in 1927, in the "Bulletin of the John Rylands Library" (Manchester) says, "Thirty years ago the balance of probability stood absolutely against the story of the Apostolate of St. Thomas in India. We suggest that the balance of probability to-day is distinctly on the side of its historicity" J.F. Fleet, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (London 1905) distinctly excludes Persia, Arabia and Ethiopia from the limits of ancient India. This is confirmed by the Bible itself. In the book of *Esther* (1/1), we read: "King Assuerus reigned from India to Ethiopia over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces." This shows clearly that a wide tract of country lay between India and Ethiopia. Persia is mentioned as a separate kingdom in *Esther* 16/14; and Arabia is spoken of as a quite distinct country (3 *Kings* 10/15; *Jer.* 25/24; *Gal.* 1/17; 4/25.) Pliny in his "Natural History" (50-60 A.D.) (6 vol. 26 ch.) speaks of the way to India and of the Monsoon or Trade winds of July which had been discovered under Claudius in 45 A.D. by a captain named Hippalus. "From Osseliss, the southern point of Arabia, after forty days of journey, the ship reaches Mussirissi (मुसिरिस्सि) (i.e. Kodungalloor) the chief town of commerce." Then he speaks of other places of commerce such as Bakarai (= Vaikarai) the haven of Kottayam in Travancore and Puhar (= Pukar) also called Kaveripadhinam, then at the mouth of the Kaveri River.

An anonymous writer in his book "*Periplus Maris Erithrae*" writes in 60 A.D. : "Near the river Indus, lies the kingdom of 'Scythia' (=Sithia) with its headquarters Minnagaram, ruled by Parthian kings. On the other side of the Bay of Baracea, lie Bariyagasa (Broach) and the coasts of Ariyaka, which is the boundary of India. The west of this is not called India. On the east of Scythia, lies the territory of Abira (the land of Abhiras) and the coast is called Syrastrane" (=Saurashtram). Macrindle says that Ariyaka was on the south of Larick (which is the present Gujarat); "Syrastrane is the present Kathiavar," according to Schoof. Hence, we see that in the "India" of the ancient westerners, not even Sindu was included.—

Pliny says that Indian clothes, pepper, china-silks etc. existed in Italy. When Alaric conquered Rome, he took away 5000 lbs. of pepper.-Sewell in "*Pentingers Table*" says there were Egyptian merchants in Kodungalloor; a temple in honour of Augustus was built and 1200 Roman soldiers lived there to protect commerce.

The two Indian systems of Astronomy, Polisa and Romaka, and the various terms used in Astronomy, show the connection of India with Greece. Some European terms of trade articles are taken from Tamil and Malayalam (see Caldwell's *Comparative Grammar*).

H.C. Rawlinson, in his "*Intercourse between India and the Western World from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Rome*," says that after the civil war, Augustus settled down to organize his vast possessions and that the effect of "*Pax Romana*" upon trade was very marked. Roman and Indian emperors sent their representatives to each other. In 20 B.C. "King Pandion," the Pandya King of Madura, sent a mission to Augustus (+ 14 A.D.) (*Journal R. A. S.* Vol. 18/309) Roman coins of Augustus and Nero, were found in S. India. Professor Vincent Smith says that in S. India, the Roman *Aureus* (gold coin) circulated as currency. Pliny deplored the extravagance of the Romans, instancing the enormous drain of gold to the East. This is confirmed by the large hoards of Roman coins dug up in Central and South India.

Dio Chrysostom, who lived in the reign of Trajan and died C. 117 A.D., mentions Indians among the cosmopolitan crowds to be found in the bazaars of Alexandria and he says, they came "by way of trade." A Greek story written in Alexandria in the 1st century A.D., represents one member speaking a foreign language, which seems to be Canarese (*J. R. A. S.* 104/399). This suggests that the foreign merchants learned our Indian languages.

Clement of Alexandria, who derived much of his knowledge of India from his master Pantaenus who visited India about the end of the 2nd century, tells us that the Brahmin sects abstain from wine and fleshmeat; that they despise death and set no value on life because they believe in Transmigration, also that the Buddhists worship a kind of pyramid beneath which they imagine that the bones of a divinity of some kind lie buried. This remarkable allusion to the Buddhist "*Stupa*," says Rawlinson, is the earliest reference in western literature to a unique feature of Buddhism, and must have been derived from some informant intimately acquainted with the doctrines of Gautama. Clement distinguishes clearly between Buddhists and Brahmins, while earlier writers confuse them.

Rev. W.J. Richards, for thirty-five years C.M.S. missionary in Travancore shows that there were Jews as well as Brahmins in the Apostolic age in Malabar. (*The Indian Christians of St. Thomas* 1908), and Vincent Smith (*Oxford History of India* 1923), holds that the Brahmins penetrated into the South many centuries before the Christian Era. According to the Cochin Census Report, 1901, as quoted by Thurston in "*Castes and Tribes of South India*," 1909, the Jews are supposed to have first come in contact with a Dravidian people as early as the time of Solomon about 1000 B.C. for 'Philology proves that the precious cargoes of Solomon's merchant ships came from the ancient coast of Malabar.' Mr. Logan, in the "*Manual of Malabar*," writes that the Jews have traditions which carry back their arrival on the coast to the time of their escape from servitude under Cyrus in the 6th century B.C. The same fact is referred to by Sir William Hunter in his "*History of British India*."

Ptolemy's Geography (C. 150 A.D.) gives the boundary lines of India thus :—"On the West Paropanisalee (i.e. Syrastrane according to Periplus), Arachosia, Gedrosia; on the North, Imaos (=Himalaya mountains); on the East, the Ganges; South and West, the Indian Ocean." - "Cosmas Indicopleustes in his *Topographia Christiana*" (C. 522-545 A.D.) says:—"Sindu is where India begins. India and Persia are separated by Sindu." He speaks of R. Kabaris, Baiscara, Mussirissi and several towns of commerce in Malabar.

There were in fact four great trade routes between India and the West:-(1) The easiest and oldest was from Malabar to the River Indus, the Persian Gulf, the Euphrates, then by road to Antioch and Levantine Ports.

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(2) The overland route from the Indian passes to Balk, Oxus and the Caspian Sea.

(3) The circuitous popular route along the coastline from India, Persia and Arabia to Aden, and thence up the Red Sea to Alexandria and Rome.

(4) From Malabar straight to the Island of Sokotra, the Cape Guardafui and along the African coast or up the Red Sea.

Charlesworth says that "no less than 120 ships sailed annually from Egypt to India." If these Roman Egyptian and Syrian traders could come to India, why not also an Apostle of Christ? St. Thomas could have easily "booked" his passage at one of these ports.

The question now is: *Did St. Thomas really come to India?* The *Roman Breviary* says that he preached the Christian faith to the Parthians, Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, and Bactrians; that finally betaking himself to the Indians, he instructed them in the Christian religion that he died a martyr at Calamina, by the order of the king of that nation, a worshipper of idols. This is supplemented by the *Roman Martyrology*, where it is further stated that his relics were first translated to Edessa, and then to Ortona in Central Italy.

There is also a work entitled "*Acta Thomae*", versions of which exist in Syriac, Greek, Latin, Armenian, Ethiopian, and Coptic. It was composed in the 2nd or in the beginning of the 3rd century at Edessa. It is a legend, but is based on tradition, and has an historic foundation. The tradition says that St. Thomas first came to North India, to the palace of King Gondophares; after some years of Apostolate there, when he got the intimation of our Lady's death, he went to Jerusalem. On his 2nd journey, he came to South India, worked in Malabar for many years and then went to the Coromandel Coast, where he died at Calamina (i.e. Mylapore), under King Masdai.

From recent excavations of coins in North India, (preserved in the Museum of Lahore, they have found out that there was a king called Gondophares, of a Parthian dynasty, though this name had never appeared in any other book except the "*Acta Thomae*." In 1834 a coin bearing the name of Gundaphara was dug up in Afghanistan; and since then many similar coins were found near Kabul, in parts of Sindh and Seistan and in the Punjab. The coins were not dated. The inscriptions were in Greek and an Indian tongue. Numismatists declared, (without even thinking of the Christian tradition) that they had been struck between 10 and 50 A.D. Their conclusions were confirmed when, in 1857, a votive inscription of about the same period was discovered in the ruins of a monastery near Peshawar. The inscription, now in the Lahore Museum, is known as the Takht-i-Bahi inscription.

A further interesting point is that in 1902-3 an intaglio (precious coin) bearing the name of Gad (the brother of King Gundaphara mentioned in the legend) was discovered at Charbada, in the Gandhara region. Dr. Fleet concludes "that there is an actual basis for the tradition in historical reality". Fr. A. Vaeth, S.J. is of opinion that Gundaphara was the last of his race and was followed by Kushans, a new and powerful dynasty who obliterated his empire.

We read in "*The Acts*" that the General, who heard of St. Thomas preaching "throughout India", came to him in a cart drawn "by cattle". Bishop Medlycott points out how travelling in a bullock-cart is characteristic of South India, whereas if the incident had occurred in the north, the horse would have been introduced on the scene. Gondophares, for instance, is figured on his coins riding a horse, not seated in a cart drawn by oxen. Further, the fact of "Mygdonia (Queen) using the *palki* or *palanquin*" is also peculiar to South India.

Sewell in his *Dynasties of Southern India* shows how common it was for kings to affix or prefix the term *Deva* to their names and that the name Mahadeva itself occurs very frequently. It is by no means unreasonable, therefore, to conclude that the name of the king who had St. Thomas martyred was Mahadeva, which would be popularly contracted into Mahadeo. "Now" remarks Bishop Medlycott, "if the name Mahadeo be passed through Iranian or Persian mouths, it will probably assume the form of "Masdeo" owing to the similarity of sound with the Iranian Mazdai; the outcome would be Masdeo, and would appear in Syriac as Mazdai".

But what about the coming of St. Thomas to Malabar? Hear what Fr. Albert Gille says, in his *Christianity at Home*:- "One may discuss or doubt the arrival of St. Thomas in South India; but it is not

safe to do so in Malabar, unless a man wants to be knocked on the head. This is exactly the reason why I believe it. Reduced to logical terms, the knock is nothing but a striking form of the argument of tradition". Mgr. Teixeira writes: "This tradition is written not on hard stones, or sheets of parchment, but in the hearts and memories of men assuredly as enduring a monument as granite".

This tradition has remained consistent ever since. It states the following numerous items:-

1. St. Thomas landed at Cranganore or rather Maliankara, the Mouziris of the Greeks or Muzirikode of the Jewish copper plates in the year 52 A.D., in search of the Jewish colony along the coast. At Palayur a village a few miles from the sea, he found a temple surrounded by tanks, in one of which Brahmins were bathing. There he performed a miracle and converted all the temple-servants, who in their turn transformed the temple into a church. Now, Cranganore still exists; near by, stands the "Jews' Hill". At Palayur, a Catholic Church stands in the midst of tanks, out of which Hindu articles may be dragged any day; there are sculptures of Hindu gods and goddesses and Hindu sacrificial stones are embedded in the Church walls. Today no Brahmin traveller, passing through Palayur, accepts any food in the locality which every Hindu knows by the name of "The accursed place" (சாபக்கூறு).

2. There existed from times immemorial a community called "St. Thomas Christians". They observe a national holiday on July 3rd. This feast, called *Duharana* (commemoration) became obligatory by force of custom, and is a proof of the Apostle's preaching in India. It is believed to be the day of his martyrdom, while 21st December is the day of his landing at Cranganore. In the Latin Church the feast of 21st December was started only in 495 A.D.

3. The divine Office of the Syriac rite for July 3rd with its octave, repeats the same tradition. No other place or rite has got this octave. I quote a few lines from that Breviary, where *Mar* means Lord:-

"Through Mar Thoma a splendid mansion was built for India in the heights of heaven. Through Mar Thoma, the Indians took up the spiritual weapon of baptism... Through Mar Thoma the country of India was washed from her stains.....Through Mar Thoma Churches and sanctuaries were constructed throughout India, in which prayers and praises are offered to Christ, the King."

A mistake about *Duharana* is to be corrected here. Bishop Medlycott and Fr. Paulinus (*India Orientalis*) and other writers hold that "*Duharana*" means translation, and the feast of July 3rd is kept in honour of the translation of the Apostle's bones to Edessa. The Syriac word *Duharana* never means translation; it only means "*commemoration*." Possibly the relics were removed to Edessa on July 3rd. In both cases our argument remains the same.

4. The ancient Malayalam ballad known as "*Thoma Parvam*" and the "*Margam Kali*" (like the Tamil *Koladdam*) explicitly state that St. Thomas was mortally wounded by Brahmins near a temple dedicated to Kali at Mylapore in the morning of July 3rd, 72 A.D. and that he died at 4.30 p.m. on the same day. Other ancient songs and the unanimous tradition of all Syrians (Catholics and others) confirm this Malabar tradition.

5. The "*Acts of St. Thomas*" says that he landed at Andropolis and died at CALAMINA. Where are these places? In Syriac, Andropolis is called Sandrok Mahosa. Mahosa is a common noun meaning town (= Polis in Greek) Sandrok is a corrupt form of Sandrokhal which in Sanskrit means "delighter in the moon," and so Sandrok refers to Siva. Kodungalloor (= Cranganore) or Kodilingapuri mean the same thing. Thus Sandrok Mahosa = Sandrok+polis=Sandropolis, which eventually became Andropolis.

Calamina is an ancient name given to the place of St. Thomas' martyrdom. Mylapore was dedicated to the goddess Kali, and after her name it was called Caliani or Caliana. When translated into other languages, it became Calamina. Other places like Caliangore, Kaliarkoil, Calian, Calicut.... were dedicated to the same goddess. When Cosmas visited India in the 6th century, Mylapore-a centre of trade-was known by the name Caliana. (This is the explanation of Fr. Bernard, T.O.C.D.) Bishop Medlycott thinks that Calamina a compound of *kalah* and *elmina*; *kalah* is the name of a port, the existence of

which in the vicinity of India is historically beyond doubt, and *elmina* in Syriac means a port. Dr. *Burnell* suggests that Calamina is in fact *Choramandalam* the Realm of "*Chora*," this being the Tamil form of the very ancient title of the Tamil Kings who reigned at Tanjore. This name occurs in the forms of Choramandalam or Solamandalam on the great temple inscription of Tanjore (IIth century). Dr. *Maclean* suggests that Calamina is a corruption of "*Coromandel*," the name of a small village north of Madras, which has come to be applied to part of the Eastern coast.

Rev. James Doyle believes Calamina was an ancient town at the foot of St. Thomas' Mount, that has wholly disappeared with the vicissitudes of the times.

At any rate, if there was no historic foundation, surely the St. Thomas Christians would not have accepted this. They would have indicated some place in Malabar.

6. *The Viradian Song*. This song contains the tradition regarding the preaching of St. Thomas, the coming of Thomas Cana in 345 A.D. and the privileges and honours obtained from Cheraman Perumal. Viradians are Nairs of Calliculam who go about Christian houses singing this song and then get some gift from them.

7. *The Seven Churches*. Tradition attributes to St. Thomas the building of seven churches at Quilon, Niranam, Chayal or Nilackal, (in ruins) Kokamangalam, Kottakavu (N. Paraur), Cranganore and Palur. There are many crosses also erected by him. The Jews, Hindus and Mahomedans as well believe in this Malabar tradition and they make offerings at these churches.

8. *The Pilgrimage to Mylapore*. Every year, till 1653, at least once in his life time, every Christian made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore. To give alms for this pilgrimage was a glorious custom among the St. Thomas Christians.

9. The name of Thomas is given to at least one child in each family. Nowhere else in the world is St. Thomas honoured as in Malabar. No other nation claims the tomb of St. Thomas. On the contrary, all admit our tradition.

10. Nobody else claims the introduction of Christianity in Malabar, not even the Church of Mesopotamia.

11. The Christian community which existed in the island of Sokotra told the same thing to St. Francis Xavier in 1542. They admitted that St. Thomas after converting their forefathers, went to Malabar and died in Mylapore.

12. The name of St. Thomas Christians and the seven or eight lakhs of Eastern Catholics in Malabar are a living proof to our tradition. The utter destruction of the Scytho-Parthian Empire of Gondophares, accounts for the absence of any tradition in North India. Similarly when a violent persecution broke out on the Coromandal Coast at a later period, many of the Christians of Mylapore took refuge with their brethren of the West Coast where they remained. This was told to St. Francis Xavier by the Malabar Christians.

13. From a Syriac work entitled "*The Doctrine of the Apostles*," written by an Edessan in the 2nd century we cull the line "India, all its countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farther sea, received the Apostles' Hand of Priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the Church which he built and administered there."

14. Origen (186-254) and Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea (315-340) both state that St. Thomas evangelized Parthia (roughly Persia and Afghanistan). There is no contradiction in this statement, since we admit that St. Thomas came to Parthia during his first visit. St. Ephraem (300-373 A.D.) explicitly states that St. Thomas was martyred in India and that his relics had been brought to Edessa, by a merchant. If there was no tradition in Syria, how could they admit the fact and receive the body of St. Thomas? - *St. Jerome* (+ 420 A.D.) writes: "Our Lord was present in all places, with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achara with each apostolic man in each and all countries." The writings of Abdias (190 A.D.), Dorotheus (254 A.D.), St. Gregory Naziansen (389) and St. Gregory of Tours (593 A.D.), are in harmony with the tradition (Journal R. A. S. London 1835).

15. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that King Alfred in 883

sent the Bishop of Marborne on an embassy to Rome and to the shrine of St. Thomas in India, in fulfilment of a vow made at the time he was besieged by the heathen Danes. - Marco Polo and Friar John of Monte Corvino appear to have both visited the tomb in 1292 or 1293 and their testimonies are brought forward. - Blessed Odorie of Pordenone (1324-1325), Bishop John de Marignolis (1349) and Nicolo de Conti (1425-1430), speak of "the houses of St. Thomas (=Bes-Thoma, in Syriac) in a city, on the sea coast named Meliapur."

16. There is also ecclesiastical support to the tradition. Pope Paul V erected the diocese of San Thome of Mylapore in 1606, "because there lay buried the body of St. Thomas." Again Leo XIII in his Apostolic Letter, of Sept. 1886, extending the Episcopal hierarchy in India speaks in the following terms:-

"It has been the constant tradition of the Church that the duty of discharging the apostolic office in the vast regions of the East Indies fell to the lot of St. Thomas. He indeed it was, as ancient monuments testify who...travelled to Ethiopia, Persia, Hyreania and finally to the Peninsula beyond the Indus...India never altogether ceased to revere the Apostle, who had deserved so well of that country."

PART II

HAVE THE ST. THOMAS CHRISTIANS ALWAYS REMAINED CATHOLICS?

The ancient tradition, tenaciously clung to by the St. Thomas Christians, and corroborated by documents and facts suggests but one answer to all those who may ask about the orthodoxy of the Syrians before the coming of the Portuguese namely that, through the mercy of Almighty God, they, as a body, never fell into the Nestorian or any other heresy. The late Bishop Charles Lavigne S.J., had this tradition before him, when, as the Vicar Apostolic of Kottayam, he reported to *The Madras Catholic Directory* of 1893, "The true faith, which the greater part of these Christians have preserved up to this date, is a precious inheritance which their forefathers received from St. Thomas the Apostle and left to their posterity".

Bishop Adolphus Medlycott, Vicar Apostolic of Trichur, held a contrary view - a view based on facts ignored, misunderstood, or in many cases misrepresented by interested historians. On the contrary, we, the Catholics of Malabar, unanimously hold we were, neither formally nor materially Nestorians, but always good and loyal Catholics, as much as our lights and the distance from Rome allowed.

It is a canon of historical criticism that, for the validity of the statements of a witness, his sincerity should be above suspicion. On this point Rev. De Smedt S.J., says:-

"It is not sufficient merely to show that the witness did not wish to utter a deliberate lie. If it could be reasonably shown that he had a personal interest in warping the truth, grave suspicions would be raised as to the veracity of all his statements. Frequently prejudice or passion secretly perverts the natural sincerity of a man who really respects himself and esteems the respect of others. It is possible, and that with a certain good faith, to deceive both oneself and others."

The book that is responsible, for the dissemination throughout Europe of the opinion (that the St. Thomas Christians were Nestorians) is the "*Jornada*" of Fr. Gouvea. Antony Gouvea, a Portuguese Augustinian at Goa, possessed the full confidence of Archbishop Menezes, also an Austin friar. At the command of his Provincial, he wrote the account of the Synod of Diamper (about which we shall speak later on). Naturally, it should be for the credit of his Order and for the glory of the Portuguese. The majority of other historians produced their works relying on this work of Gouvea and so "the St. Thomas

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Christians became Nestorians”.

Another source of this error is a confusion of terms. “Nestorian” is the name commonly applied to the Syro-Chaldaic or East Syriac language. When Nestorianism spread in the East, the Syro-Chaldaean language also underwent changes in characters and pronunciation, and came to be known by the name of Nestorian. Nestorian and Chaldaean being convertible terms, historians have called all those who used this modified tongue Nestorians. This practice continued for centuries, but, in 1445, the Catholics- improperly called Nestorians- sent a petition to Pope Eugenius IV; and the Pope ordered, under pain of excommunication, that, in future, they should not be called Nestorians, but Catholic Chaldaeans. (Vide Samuel Giamil “*Genuinae Relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldaeorum Ecclesiam*” 1902, Rome.) Again, in 1553, Cardinal Maffeus, in his declaration on the state of the Chaldaean Church, made before the cardinals assembled in Rome to witness the conferring of the pallium on Simon Sulaka, said, “the Chaldaeans seem to have had but the *name* of Nestorians, and not to have held any Nestorian error.” In 1580 also, we find Mar Elia, Archbishop of Amed, asking the Holy See to abolish the improper practice of addressing the Syro-Chaldaeans as Nestorians. Mr. Mackenzie in the “*Travancore State Manual*” says, “It must be conceded that the epithet Nestorian is loosely used by Portuguese writers and sometimes denotes a member of the oriental Church without connoting any idea of heresy”. It was common to call the Chaldaean Catholics Nestorians; it is not strange, therefore, that historians considered them all as heretics.

The third source of this error is the sweeping statement of historians that all oriental Churches fell into heresy. They have never scrutinized the local traditions, documents and other monuments before passing such remarks. That reliable historian Joseph Assemani (*Bibliotheca Orientalis*) proves apodeictically that there were Syro-Chaldaeans in various-parts of Syria, Mesopotamia and Persia who vigorously opposed the spread of the pernicious doctrines of Nestorius, and defended their ancient Faith against its incursions. The lives of Simon, Bishop of Beth-Arsam in Persia (510-25), Bishop St. Isaac of Niniveh, Bishop Sahaduna of Garmiah, and the monk John Saba of the monastery of Delaita, bear witness to the above statement.

A close study of the pages of Assemani, Le Quien, Guriel and others, and a careful perusal of the Vatican documents which have been recently searched out by the learned Samuel Giamil, Procurator-General of the Catholic Chaldaean Patriarch at the court of Rome- and published in 1902 under the title, “*Genuinae Relationes*” (quoted above), reveals the undeniable fact that, from as early as the 8th century forward, there have been Catholic Patriarchs on the throne of Seleucia. Persia was getting Metropolitans from Seleucia, and the Malabar Church got Bishops chiefly from Persia but also from Antioch and Babel. In 498, the Catholicos of Seleucia became Nestorian. But the Primate of Persia, true to his religion, refused to obey a head who had strayed away from the ancient faith. This is proved from the letter of the Nestorian Patriarch to Simon, the Primate of Persia. (Assemani 4/27).

We shall now examine the state of the Malabar Church. “*Nemo malus, nisi probetur*”. Until positive evidences are brought forward, we have to accept the St. Thomas Christians as Catholic Christians. No solid evidence has ever been brought forward to shake this statement. On the contrary there are positive proofs of their orthodoxy. Then how could the Portuguese say those Christians were heretics? Bishop Francis Roz S.J., a Spaniard and the first Latin Bishop of Angamalee, says in a work published in 1604: “Some of the Portuguese, even the religious, *understood nothing at all that was not of the Latin Rite, and declared everything else to be heresy and superstition*” (G. Schurhammer S.J. P. 22. Trichinopoly, 1934.) In another place he says, “Portuguese missionaries in Cranganore, hindered their priests from saying Mass with leavened bread, made people eat fish on fast days...” Besides this colossal ignorance of oriental rites there were political motives. Fr. Pimenta, a Portuguese, wrote to his superior at Rome, just after the Synod of Diamper: “No one can say how important was the step to promote the interests of the Portuguese Crown”. A third reason was the hatred of the Portuguese for Mar

Abraham, who had refused to attend the earlier Provincial Synods at Goa, “because they had ill-treated him once before at Goa, and had twice thrown him into prison” despite his credentials from Pope Pius IV. (More about this lower down).

The orthodoxy of the St. Thomas Christians may be shown across the centuries as follows:

1. From the history of the council of Nicea in 325, we see that Mar John, Bishop of Persia and Greater India, had attended the council and put his signature to its decrees. Therefore, he was a Catholic Bishop.

2. About the year 345 A.D. Thomas Cana, a merchant, landed in Travancore with a colony of Christians from Syria. Surely they were not Nestorians. They joined with the Malabar brethren and got special privileges from King Cheraman Perumal (+346). (*Trav. State Manual*, II Vol. P. 139-142.)

3. In 522, Cosmas, a Greek navigator, came to India and Ceylon and saw “with his own eyes the church widely diffused in Taprobane (Ceylon) and in Male (Malabar) where the pepper grows.”

4. Let us examine the base-relief cross with Pahlavi (Persian) inscriptions, which is at the St. Thomas Mount, (300 ft. high and 8 miles S.W. of Madras.) Experts say that the cross is of the 7th or 8th century. There are different versions. Dr. Burnell translates this way:- “In punishment by the cross was the suffering of this One, who is the true Christ, God above and Guide ever pure.”

The one who suffered the punishment of the Cross “is the true Christ and God above,” i.e. He had the true human nature and the divine nature, and was therefore, at the time of the crucifixion, both man and God. Now, this belief is opposed to Nestorianism. Practically the same inscription is found round the two Crosses in the Valiyapalli Church at Kottayam in Travancore. The larger cross has at the foot a text in Old Syriac (= Estranghela) from Galatians (6/14): “But far be it from me to glory, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Pahlavi text is the same as that of St. Thomas Mount.

During his tour in Travancore, Fr. Hosten examined the 4th Pahlavi Cross at Kattamattam in 1921. There is a *fifth* Cross at Muthuchira, with a double line of Pahlavi, and a *6th* Cross, one part of which is at Kuvapalli, and the other at Nilackal. The inscription is in Roman or Greek capitals, but is illegible.

The representation of the Holy Virgin and the Child at St. Thomas Mount is believed to be one of the seven portraits painted by St. Luke, brought by St. Thomas to India. Nestorians do not venerate Our Lady, but the Malabar Christians did.

5. In 880, two brothers, Sapor Iso and Protho, came to Malabar. Le Quien describes them as holy men who built several churches and converted many people to the Faith in several places, especially at Quilon. This is attested by all the local writers.

6. There are historical proofs that Monophysites and Nestorians entered Persia before the 8th century (according to Fr. L. Perrier, S.J.) But there is no proof that all the Bishops and people of Persia became heretics *ipso facto*.

In 1122, Archbishop Mar John III of India went to Constantinople and thence to Rome. He received the Pallium from Pope Callixtus II, and exposed before the Pope and the Cardinals the miracles that were wrought at the tomb of St. Thomas in Mylapore. If he were a Nestorian, why did he not go to a Nestorian Patriarch?

7. Later we have the testimony of the Venetian traveller Marco Polo (in 1288), and two letters (1305) of Bishop John of Monte Corvino, the first European missionary who visited India on his way to China (1291). He never called them Nestorians, but merely mentioned that “the people persecute much the Christians and all who bear the Christian name.”

8. In 1329, Pope John XXII, at Avignon, consecrated a French Dominican, Jordan de Severac, Bishop of Quilon (Milne Rae. p. 198). He was sent with a Pontifical Bull dated 8th April 1330 addressed to the chief of the Nazaranes (Christians) in Quilon. Popes do not send pastors to Nestorians. Four Franciscans, Fathers Thomas, James, Peter and a Muslim convert Bro. Demetrius had preceded him, but were martyred by Muhammadans at Thana, north of Bombay in 1321. The Bishop also ended his life at Thana, by martyrdom.

9. In 1348, the Franciscan Bishop, John de Marignolis, also came to India as Legate of Pope Clement VI to Pekin. He says:

"The Christians of St. Thomas are the proprietors of pepper, and the masters of the public weighing office, from which I derived as a perquisite of my office as Pope's Legate, every month, a hundred gold fanams and a thousand when I left.... So, after a year and four months, I took leave of the brethren."

10. Tradition testifies that the Christians had a king of their own with his capital at Diamper; (Journal R.A.S. London 1835). Some monuments still remaining in Diamper and a few documents which support this tradition. Pope John XXII, addressed in 1330 a letter to "the noble lord of the Christians." Pope Eugene IV in 1439, wrote as follows "To my most beloved Son in Christ, Thomas (of Villarvatham) the illustrious Ruler of the Indians, Health and Apostolic Benediction. There has often reached Us a constant rumour that Your Serenity and all who are the subjects of your kingdom are true Christians." (*Trav. State Manual*, II, p. 147). The Christian dynasty seems to have lasted from the 9th to 14th century. (Giraud and Le Quien support this view.) When Vasco de Gama arrived at Cochin in 1502, the St. Thomas Christians sent representatives and informed him that formerly they had a king of their own and showed him the sceptre of the last king. It was a red rod, tipped with silver, having three small bells at the top. They presented the sceptre to Gama and sought protection against the Muhammedans. Gama solemnly accepted the sceptre and promised protection in the name of the King of Portugal. (*Trav. State Manual* 147.)

11. Louis Kadmstock, who visited Keralam in 1493, testified that the St. Thomas Christians knew that the Pope resided in Rome, believed and accepted the Pope as the head of the Church, (Fr. Placid, Ph.D., D.D., D.C.L.) in his "*Eastern Churches*" p. 44.

12. "*Travels of Ludovico de Varthema*" in 1505, says:

"In this city (Kayankulom = Quilon) we found Christians of St. Thomas, some of whom are merchants and believe in Christ, as we do. They say that every three years a priest comes from Babylon, to baptise children. These Christians keep Lent longer than we do. (Even now the Syrians keep Lent for 50 days). They keep Easter and observe all the solemnities that we do. But they say Mass like Greeks."

(N.B.-Babylon at that time was Catholic. See "*Relationes Genuinae*...")

13. (John Stevens, London 1695). When Vasco de Gama and his companions landed in Cochin in 1502, "they were taken (by Christians) to a chapel of good structure with brass gates; within it was the statue of a lady which, by reason of the darkness, could not be clearly seen. The Portuguese asking what it was, the Christians answered aloud and with a joyful reverence, "Mary, Mary, Mary" and prostrated themselves on the ground. Our men also did the same." Veneration of images is strictly forbidden by Nestorians. Hence, we have to conclude logically that the St. Thomas Christians at that time were Catholics.

14. In 1490, two Bishops, Mar Thomas and Mar John, were sent to Malabar by Mar Simon, Patriarch of the East. After a time Mar Thomas returned to the Patriarch. In 1502, Mar Elias, successor of Mar Simon, consecrated three monks from the monastery of St. Eugene under the names of Mar Jaballa, Mar Denha and Mar Jacob. These three with Mar Thomas came to Malabar and found the aged Mar John still living. In 1504, these four Bishops sent a long report to their Patriarch, from which we quote the following: (At Cannanore in the Portuguese Chapel), "after their priests had celebrated, we also were admitted and performed the holy Sacrifice and it was greatly pleasing in their eyes." Portuguese priests allowed them to say Mass, because they believed the Bishops to be Catholic. They had been with the Portuguese for 2½ months. Moreover Mar Jacob, who was praised as a saintly Bishop by St. Francis Xavier in 1549, being one of these four Bishops, we have to conclude that his companions also were Catholics. Fr. D'Souza and Bishop Roz, S.J., say that Mar John raised to life the sacristan of Cranganore, who had died from a fall.

15. Fr. Roz, S.J. (afterwards Bishop) in his book written in 1586, i.e. thirteen years before the Synod of Diamper, explicitly states that the Christians were Catholics ("*Romanam fidem Catholicam fuerint professi*") that they left out the names of Nestorius, Diodoros and

others while saying their Breviary (some of the books had these names), that they openly acknowledged the Bl. V. Mary was the Mother of God ("*Publice Beatam Virginem Dei Matrem praedicabant*") etc. etc. (*Orientalia Christiana*, p. 15-32- 31.)

16. In 1530, John de Albuquerque, the first Portuguese Bishop of Goa, sent to Cochin a Franciscan, Fr. Vincent de Lagos, to educate the local Christians. Fr. Vincent opened a Seminary for the youths who wished to study for the priesthood. Were they then Nestorians?

17. Soon after 1550 Pope Julius III consecrated Mar John Sulaka as the Patriarch of the East. But he was put to death by the Turks in 1554. His successor, Ebed Jesus also visited Rome and assisted at the last session of the Council of Trent. In 1549 Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar, died. So the Patriarch Ebed Jesus consecrated Mar Joseph, a brother of John Sulaka, as Archbishop of Malabar and Mar Elias as the representative of the Patriarch. When they reached Goa, in spite of the introductory letters to the Viceroy from Patriarch Abdissu, the Portuguese authorities, always disliking the appearance of Chaldaean Bishops in India (though evidently in communion with Rome), sent them both to Bassein, near Bombay, where they remained practically imprisoned for a year and a half within the Franciscan monastery. A letter written by the famous Franciscan missionary Antonio do Porto to the King of Portugal, on 20 Nov. 1557 justifies, according to Fr. Heras, S.J., the following four conclusions:

(1) "Fr. Antonio had not the least doubt about the orthodoxy of the two Bishops. They were even very edifying and holy in their lives and customs." (2) "The two Bishops had been induced by the Portuguese Friars, probably moved by higher authorities, to learn the Roman rite for the celebration of the Mass. Very likely they realized that this was the only way to regain their freedom and proceed to their destination." (3) "It was not pleasing to Portuguese eyes to see the Chaldaean Bishops, although acknowledged as Catholics, going to exercise their spiritual ministry among the Christians of Malabar." (4) In the year 1557, the Portuguese Church authorities were already said to exercise jurisdiction over Malabar when this jurisdiction was not granted by the Pope till 1597 and only for a time and accidentally, i.e. at the death of Mar Abraham, and eventually till 1600, when it was granted for ever."

After one and a half years of imprisonment the two Bishops were set free and with Friar Atonio, they came to Malabar. They visited all the Christians of Malabar with unflagging zeal for 2½ years. When asked by the Portuguese to ordain the Seminarians of Cranganore, Mar Joseph refused on the plea that they did not know Syriac. (*Trav. State Manual*, p. 162.) This refusal earned him the ill-will of the Portuguese. Suddenly, one morning, we see Mar Joseph being deported to Portugal "by Order of the Holy Inquisition of India" "because he was teaching Nestorianism." (This is the first time we hear of the Nestorianism of those Christians.) As Fr. Jann, O.M. Cap. observes "this was a very grave offence in Portuguese eyes, because they had founded that Seminary; they wanted to abolish the use of Syriac and to pass all those Christians to the jurisdiction of Goa." Mar Joseph wanted to keep the Syriac rite.

Mar Joseph was in Portugal in 1563. He was examined by the Queen Dona Catharina and by Infanta Dona Maria, and later on by Cardinal Infante Dom Henrique. They all passed favourable judgement about his orthodoxy. He was to be sent back to Malabar with commendatory letters for the Portuguese Viceroy. When he came back, the Portuguese authorities did not allow him to go to his diocese, but put him in prison again. At this time the Patriarch sent Mar Abraham as Bishop. The Portuguese shipped him also to Portugal. But he escaped on the way and went to his Patriarch. Then he was sent to Pope Pius IV, who requested the Patriarch to divide the Syrian Christians between Mar Abraham and Mar Joseph.

In 1567, Mar Joseph attended the provincial council of Goa. The charge of heresy being framed against him, he was again sent to Portugal and thence to Rome. After an examination by the Pope and the Cardinals, they were convinced that the charge of heresy was unfounded. Recognising his great learning, piety and other virtues, they resolved to create him a Cardinal, when his unexpected death put an end to any such project. (*Asiatic Researches* 7/373 Calcutta 1801).

In 1568, Mar Abraham arrived at Goa with credentials from the Pope (dated 28th Feb. 1565) and the Patriarch. The Pope requested the Bishop of Cochin to treat Mar Abraham as a brother, so that "without any molestation and impediment, he might be able to remain there where his Patriarch had placed him" ...for "he perseveres in faith and in his obedience to the Holy See . . .". Yet Mar Abraham was confined in the Dominican convent at Goa. But he managed to escape. We have to note here that when the Portuguese say "the Holy See was deceived by the Oriental Prelates," that is a mark of zeal for the Catholic religion; but when the Orientals complain of Portuguese misrepresentations occasionally finding a place in Papal pronouncements, that is called *scoffing at Papal Bulls*.

In 1578, Mar Abraham refused to attend the council of Goa, on the ground that he was responsible only to the Patriarch (i.e. immediately) and that he had been ill-treated and twice thrown into prison. To this effect, he induced the Raja of Cochin to write to Pope Gregory XIII, 2nd January 1576.

"He has asked me (Raja) to inform Your Holiness that he remains an obedient Son of the Holy Apostolic See, and that if Your Holiness will assure him, he will be present at the council of these states and will communicate with Portuguese Prelates....His Archdeacon George of Christ has requested me to obtain for him from Your Holiness certain indulgences for a church he has newly built in honour of the Assumption, which feast is celebrated in the month of August. I will consider it a great favour were your Holiness to grant this petition...."

The Pope wrote again to the Archbishop of Goa and to the King of Portugal to protect Mar Abraham. For the next fourteen years, Mar Abraham lived on somewhat peacefully. In 1577, he sent his profession of Faith to Pope Gregory XIII, and in 1579 he made a request of the pallium to the Pope. There is a memorandum on the subject in the Vatican Library. (Giamil.)

In 1578, a Bishop Mar Simon came to Malabar, calling himself Metropolitan of the Syrians. All historians are agreed that he was a Nestorian. Pope Gregory XIII, in his letter dated March 1580, warned the Christians to be obedient to Mar Abraham and to archdeacon George, who was by the time bishop-elect of Palur, and to reject Mar Simon. Yet, Mar Simon managed to get a few priests and faithful and continued the Schism for twenty-two years more. He was deported to Portugal in 1585.

In a letter which one of the Jesuit Fathers wrote to the Pope, he praises Mar Abraham and archdeacon George, and suggests the latter as the fittest man for the administration of the diocese after the death of Mar Abraham. (Giamil, p. 78-82).

In the provincial council of Goa in 1585, Mar Abraham was asked to re-ordain some priests whom he had ordained according to the Chaldaean rite, because the Portuguese considered the ordination by the imposition of hands and with the empty chalice and paten invalid. Mar Abraham consented to many of their requests in these things. The Patriarch (Catholic) called upon him to submit an explanation of his conduct. Mar Abraham answered that he did these things at the insistence of the Portuguese, "who were over his head as a hammer over an anvil." After this warning, Mar Abraham in 1590 refused to ordain the Seminarians according to the Latin Ritual. Two years later, he refused to attend the council of Goa. Thereupon, the Portuguese began to report about him to the Pope, as teaching heresy. Yet, as Peter du Jarric, S.J., testifies, "Mar Abraham loved the Jesuits, invited the Rector of Vaipicotta when he was dangerously ill, committed his flock to the care of the Jesuits, and commanded all his clergy to obey them and regard the Pope as their own Patriarch." He died in 1597. Thus we see that Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham lived and died as Catholic Bishops, and yet historians have written of them as Nestorians.

There are some other letters of the Pope and of Jesuit Fathers (Fr. A. Monserrate, S.J., in 1579) which prove my thesis. I pass them over and come to the Synod of Diamper, convoked by Archbishop Menezes of Goa, former Bishop of Cochin, in virtue of his metropolitan right and also of Apostolic letters conferring him powers of administration *sede vacante*.

The synodal proceedings are very instructive. Here is first an

extract from the circular of Menezes convening the Synod.

"We were also moved by the piety of the people, and the mercy God had shown in having preserved so many thousand souls in the Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, from the time that the Holy Apostle Thomas had preached to them until this day"....(Hence they were Catholics in his eyes). "We do, therefore, by virtue of holy obedience and under pain of excommunication (*latae sententiae*), command the Rev. Archdeacon and all the other priests... to be present at the said town of Diamper. We do under the same precept and censure command all Christians in all towns and villages of this Bishopric...to choose four of the most honourable...men to come in their name to the Synod...."

We cannot excommunicate one who is not already in communion with us. Now the 4th decree of 1st session was this:

"We do admonish and command *all Christians*, as well ecclesiastics as seculars, to *confess* their sins with a true contrition, and all *priests to say Mass* and others to receive the most Holy Sacrament of the altar...(for the success of the Synod), "to which intent there shall be two solemn Masses said in the Church every day during the session of the Synod, one of the Latins to the Holy Spirit, and the other of the Syrians to Our Lady....."

Could Nestorians be commanded to say Mass and receive Communion? Besides, these recommendations were made on the first day of the Synod, whereas the so-called corrections in the Taksas (= Missale) were made only on the third day, in the 9th decree of the third session.

Again in the profession of Faith read to the archdeacon by the Portuguese, we find:

"I do also promise, vow and swear to God on this Cross and these Holy Gospels, never to receive into this Church and Bishopric of the Serra (mountains), any Bishop, Archbishop, Prelate, pastor or governor whatsoever, but who shall be appointed immediately by the Holy Apostolic See and the Bishop of Rome..... without expecting any message from or having any further dependence upon the Patriarch of Babylon."

"The Roman Mass to be translated into Syriac, because *the Syrian Mass is too long* for priests that have a mind to celebrate daily.." (And not because it was heretical.)

"In the Syriac Missals of this episcopate, there is an impious and sacrilegious rite prescribed; the priest holding the parted half of the host in his right hand, dipped in the Sacred Blood as the host is, makes the sign of the Cross with it on the other half of the host placed in the paten, which done, he folds the wet portion of the host under the false idea that the Blood would thus penetrate the Body. This opinion and ceremony is a spontaneous outcome of the Nestorian heresy..."

The local priests are forbidden to perform this ceremony in virtue of holy obedience and under pain of excommunication incurred *ipso facto*. This "*Nestorian*" ceremony and others like it are still to be found in the *Taksas* of the Catholic Syriac rite of Malabar and Babylon, both printed at Rome with the approbation of the Holy See. Mere ignorance of the Syriac rite and ceremonies was the cause of the Portuguese condemning the St. Thomas Christians as Nestorians. In the Latin rite the priest not only dips but drops the particle into the Chalice. Richard Simon says: "Menezes, Gouvea, and the Fathers at Diamper err as many times as they attribute these errors to the Nestorians." Assemani, in trying to hold the position of an impartial judge, says that the Fathers at Diamper were not mistaken in all the decrees, nor does he absolve them from all error. He believes they blundered in many parts, and were mistaken in law (*peccavisse in jure*) when they affirmed that a Bishop is the *only lawful (legitimum et solum)* minister of Confirmation, etc.

However some of the decrees of the Synod forbade actual Nestorian ceremonies or errors that had crept into this Church; v.g. some of the *Taksas* contained the names of Nestorius. This was due to Mar Simon, who came in 1578, and his followers. Few Nestorians must have been present at the Synod, because afterwards we do not even once hear mention made of Nestorians in Malabar.-Besides, the possession of heretical books does not make one a heretic. Even to-day in Italy, in Malabar etc., reunited Catholics use their old books, (with the necessary corrections). Recall to your mind the testimony of Bishop Roz S.J., about the Syrian priests.

I conclude this part with the words of Fr. J.C. Houpert S.J., "The Crusaders of Western Christendom to Palestine (1099-1291) failed to break through the double wall of Schism and Islam. Yet the Indian Church stood firm. Probably up to 1653, with the exception of some later immigrants from Persia tainted with Nestorianism, there was no Christian in India, at least no Indian Christian, but was a Roman Catholic." (*Catholic Church History of India* p. 6.)

PART III PRESENT STATE OF CHRISTIANITY

Cochin and Travancore with a population of 6,301,000 had in 1931 not less than 1,939,000 Christians, or almost one-third. They form three groups: Catholics, Schismatics and Protestants.

A. The Catholics in Cochin and Travancore

In 1936 the three different rites were represented as follows: Latin rite (including Cochin diocese) 586,000; Syro-Malabar, Chaldaean or East Syriac rite 666,000 and Syro-Malankara, Antiochene or West Syriac rite 41,000—a total of 1,293,000, or fully one-third, 33.4 per cent of all the Catholics of British, French and Portuguese India and Burma, who in 1936 numbered 3,859,000.

1^o Catholics of the Syro-Malabar Rite

"The Synod of Diamper inaugurated the new Syro-Malabar rite, which is neither Roman nor Chaldaean; so too is the present Syro-Malabar calendar. Even after the Synod the priests and laity went on asking for Bishops. The archdeacon sent petitions regarding the troubles in the Church to the Papal Nuncio at the Court of Lisbon in 1608 and 1628. Again in 1632, the archdeacon and the priests wrote to the king of Portugal. Seeing they could not obtain redress for their grievances through Portugal, they sent a deputation to Babylon to ask for a Bishop. Eventually a Chaldaean Bishop, called Ahatalla or Jaballa, came to Malabar in 1652. The Portuguese took hold of him and sent him to Cochin, where he was kept aboard a ship. The Christians, coming to know of the fact, assembled armed men and threatened to storm the fort which the Governor had to man with his soldiers, while the ship sailed away to Goa during the night.

A rumour (believed even to-day by some Jacobites) spread in the country that he was drowned in the sea off Cochin. At once priests and people assembled on January 3rd 1653 at the Mattanchery Church near Cochin and holding a rope tied to "the Coonan Cross" took the oath they would no longer obey Archbishop Garcia. In the same year on May 22nd at a council held at Alengad, twelve priests sacrilegiously attempted to make the archdeacon Thomas de Campo their Bishop. Fr. Ittythoman the leader of the party forged a letter of the Pope authorising twelve priests to consecrate the archdeacon Bishop. The faithful at large did not know the forgery. But through the efforts of Alexander Kadavil and Chandy Perambil (Alexander de Campo), who were the chief councillors of the archdeacon but who repented very soon, forty-four churches had come back to unity in 1657 after the coming of the Carmelites and 40 others between 1661 and 62. But thirty-two churches have remained in Schism, to this day. The two priests just mentioned sent a petition to the Pope through the Carmelites of Goa. The Pope sent four Carmelite Fathers to Malabar, among whom was Joseph of Sebastiani. This Sebastiani went to Rome to place his report before the Pope. He was consecrated Bishop and returned to Malabar with power to consecrate one or two priests as Vicars Apostolic of the Eastern Christians. When the Dutch took Cochin, the Carmelites had to leave the country. Hence Sebastiani in 1663 consecrated Alexander de Campo, as Bishop of Megara and Vicar Apostolic of Malabar. Bishop Alexander ruled for twenty-five years and brought numerous Schismatics back to Catholic unity.

In 1674 Bishop Alexander petitioned Rome to give him a coadjutor. The Pope appointed in 1675, four Carmelites as commissaries to elect a Bishop. The commissaries, without paying heed to Alexander, chose an Indo-Portuguese named Raphael Figueredo of the Latin rite. Hence complaints again began and the reunion movement stopped. Bishop Raphael died in 1695. The following year Pope Innocent XII appointed the Carmelite Father Peter Paul, his nephew, Vicar Apostolic of Malabar. With him began the regular Carmelite rule for two hundred years (1696- 1887). In this period

some sixteen Eastern parishes with many of their parishioners were "Latinised".

They are Cannanore, Thodamala and Calicut in British Malabar (after 1653); the two Churches at Cranganore (after 1701), the Church of St. Thomas in Cochin (after 1687), Mattanchery (after 1687), and a Church at Quilon (after 1701). Other Latinised Churches are Thuruthipuram, Idacochy, a Church at Melarcot (in Coimbatore) and another in its vicinity (after 1850). Mathilakam and the Perumanur new Church, Ernakulam central and the Petta Church in Trivandrum were built by the St. Thomas Christians; Verapoly too was theirs originally.

Occasionally both the Catholics and the Schismatics under the archdeacons sent petitions to the Catholic patriarch of Babylon. As a result there came occasionally Catholic Bishops from Babylon. In 1701 Bishop Simon came, but had to leave the country immediately after consecrating the Carmelite Bishop Angelus. Bishop Gabriel, who arrived in Malabar in 1708, was forbidden by Rome to interfere in Church affairs. Two others came in the second half of the 19th century, i.e., Thomas Roccas, and Elias Mellus.

In 1861 a Catholic Chaldaean Bishop, Thomas Roccas, came to Malabar and created a Schism. But at the command of Pope Pius IX he went away to Mesopotamia within the same year. In 1874 another Chaldaean Bishop Elias Mellus came to Malabar and a new Schism occurred. When he too left the place the Schismatics came back to Catholic unity; but a small party remained in Schism at Trichur and later on accepted a Nestorian Bishop and fell into heresy.

In 1887 Pope Leo XIII transferred the government of the Eastern Church to two new Vicars Apostolic, Bishops Charles Lavigne S.J. and Adolphus Medlycott at Trichur and Kottayam. All this time Malabar went on pleading for Indian Bishops until Leo XIII, in the face of strong opposition, appointed three Indian Bishops in 1896, at Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry. Pius X added one more in 1911 at Kottayam for "the southerners." Pius XI established the Hierarchy of the Syriac rite in 1923. There is one religious congregation of Carmelite Friars, of Papal right, the only Indian one in India approved "*in perpetuity*" by the Holy See; there are two diocesan religious orders of priests, and seven different religious congregations of nuns. There are two colleges, many high schools, training schools, middle schools, charitable institutions etc., in those dioceses.

2^o The Catholics of the Syro-Malankara Rite

For already many years, as we have seen, the Schismatics have turned longing eyes to the Catholic Church. The spiritual barrenness of their Church and the litigations among the various factions have made many of the clergy and laity contemplate a plan of reunion to the Church of Rome. A priest of the Metropolitan party, named P.T. Ghiverghese (M.A. of Calcutta) founded religious orders, for men and women, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady (Congregation of Bethany).

Later on, Father Ghiverghese was consecrated Bishop of Bethany. The division created in the Jacobite Church and the consequent enmity between the two parties caused many chiefly the Bishops to look towards the Catholic Church. This reached the ears of Mar Ignatios Rahmini, the Catholic Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, who sent a letter in 1924, to the Jacobite Metropolitan of Malabar.

Now, Mar Ivanios of Bethany was called by the Metropolitan to read the letter and prepare-a reply. Mar Georgios Dionysios the Metropolitan dictated his reply forthwith. He said "Though personally willing to reunite, we have to consult our priests and the leaders among our faithful, before taking the final step."

Mar Ivanios asked: "If only Your Grace expressed a wish in favour of reunion, all the priests and people would at once follow." To this Mar Georgios Dionysios asked "If we take such a step, shall we not be obliged to leave our present residences?" -To which Mar Ivanios courageously retorted: "If at death such a step is unavoidable, why not take it now?"

Not long after, Mar Georgios Dionysios went to Mesopotamia to visit his Patriarch at Mardin, and see whether there could be any amicable settlement in the Church. Nothing was effected. But through the strategy of the Jacobite Patriarch, the Metropolitan had to return to India without visiting the Catholic Patriarch, Ignatios Rahmani.

On November 1st 1926, a meeting of the Jacobite Bishops of the Metropolitan party met at Kottayam. (Metropolitan Dionysios, Catholicos Basilios II, Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios): Mar Ivanios was entrusted by his confreres with the task of corresponding with the Holy See, proposing the reunion of the whole Jacobite Church of Malabar. Before a reply came from Rome Mar Basilios II, (Catholicos) passed away in 1929. Mar Gregorios became the Catholicos (Basilios III) on 16th February 1929. The same day, Mar Theophilos (the novice master of the congregation of Bethany) was consecrated Bishop, and Mar Ivanios was made the Metropolitan of Bethany. One year later, the Holy See, after consulting the Apostolic Delegate and the Catholic Bishops of Malabar, sent a reply to Mar Ivanios agreeing to his terms of reunion. Now the Metropolitan was hesitating.

It was on July 4, 1930, that the Sacred Oriental Congregation decreed that the two Malabar Jacobite prelates, Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Bishop Mar Theophilos, could be received into the Catholic Church, keeping their rite and status. On Sept. 20th 1930, they were received by Bishop Benziger, in the name of Archbishop Edward Mooney, then Apostolic Delegate. Finally Mar Joseph Severios, Metropolitan of Niranam, now the Administrator of Tiruvalla diocese, was received into the Church by the Delegate Apostolic on 25th Dec. 1937.

The Syro-Malankara Hierarchy was erected on 11th June 1932. There are two religious orders of priests and two congregations of nuns in the Malankara rite. The Province consists of Trivandrum as Archdiocese and the Tiruvalla Diocese.

3° Catholics of the Latin Rite

With the coming of the Portuguese to India in 1498 began the spread of Christianity. In Malabar, there were many conversions, thanks to the various religious orders: Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians, Jesuits and Carmelites. During the Carmelite rule in Malabar (1696-1887) many of the Syrian parishes and Parishioners were "latinised." These and new converts together form the present population of the Christians of the Latin Rite.

In 1838, Pope Gregory XVI abolished the Sees of Cranganore and Cochin, and transferred the jurisdiction to the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly (Varapuzha). The present archdiocese of Verapoly has for suffragans the dioceses of Quilon, Kottar, Vijayapuram and Trivandrum. In 1887, the Syrian Catholics were grouped into the vicariates of Trichur and Kottayam and in 1896 received Bishops of their own race. The present diocese of Cochin, suffragan to Goa, was reorganised in 1886, and has a Catholic population of 140, 708.

B. The Schismatic Churches

1° *Jacobites*. The Synod of Diamper took place in 1599. Though the Christians submitted to all its decisions, the archdeacon George sent letters to the papal Nuncio at Lisbon in 1608, and 1628, and to the King of Portugal in 1632, to obtain redress for their grievances. Hence, as we saw, the "Coonan Cross" oath was taken in 1653. But it was only in 1665, that the Jacobite Schism, which claims to-day 373,000 adherents, was born. The Schismatics are governed by their own Bishops. They attempted several times to reunite, but without success: once in 1700, but Bishop Simon was not allowed by the Carmelites to receive them. In 1704, Mar Thomas IV sent a petition to Rome for reunion, saying that they had left the Church on account of the molestations of the Paulists (Jesuit Fathers). In 1748, again Thomas V did the same. Another attempt at reunion was made in the 2nd half of the 18th century. In 1772, a Jacobite Mar Gregory came to Malabar. Thomas VI, the pseudo-bishop, went to him, got valid ordinations to the priesthood, and then was consecrated Bishop, with the name Mar Dionisius I. This was done with the help of the Dutch. In 1778, he sought admission into the Catholic Church with his whole flock. The Latin Bishops did not believe in his sincerity. Thomas VI appealed to Joseph Cariatil, a Malabar Catholic priest who had taken the doctorate in philosophy, theology and canon law at Propaganda College. "Even if my life is lost, I shall go to Rome for your sake" said Dr. Cariatil. He went in fact to Lisbon, then to Rome and secured the necessary faculties for receiving Thomas VI and his flock. He was consecrated Archbishop of Cranganore at Lisbon in 1783. Unfortunately, on his way home he met with a sudden death at Goa under suspicious circumstances. His secretary and companion, Father

Parayammakal, as administrator of that Church till 1799, tried to carry out the mission of Dr. Cariatil. Again the Latin Bishop of Cochin, Joseph Soledad, ("*Vir asperi ingenii et nemini indulgens, infinitos in Ora Travancoridi excitavit tumulus.*" (Cf. Paulinus) renewed his opposition to recognize the episcopal status of the Jacobite Bishop. Thus another golden opportunity of the wholesale conversion of the Jacobites was lost. Soon after, they fell under the influence of Protestants and their conversion became more difficult. In 1846, through a foreign Bishop Cyril, the Jacobites introduced many changes in their rites and ceremonies. When the Jacobite patriarch came to Malabar in 1875, he substituted completely the West Syriac and Jacobite ceremonies to the East Syriac and Catholic ceremonies up to then practised by the Malabar Jacobites. Owing to the combined pressure of the foreign Jacobite Bishops and Protestant missionaries and taken up by the glittering gold offered to them by the British Resident, Col. Monroe, who paid the dowries of the brides-the Jacobite secular clergy gradually gave up celibacy and became a married clergy.

In 1909, the Jacobite Bishop, Mar Dionysius, tried to have a wholesale reunion. Privately, he even went to the Delegate Apostolic in Ootacamund. But somehow, that attempt also was not successful. On the 2nd coming of the patriarch in 1909, the Jacobites divided themselves into two new parties: one denied the authority of the Patriarch in temporal matters, ("Bishop's party") and the other upheld it ("Patriarch's party"). This division has led to litigations and quarrels between the two parties which go on to the present time.

In 1931 the Orthodox Syrian or Jacobite Church had 366,000 followers in Cochin and Travancore and 7000 in British Malabar.

2° *Nestorians*. They are the aftermath of the Mellusian Schism of 1874. They have a Bishop and number about 8,000.

3° *The Mar Thoma Syrian Church*. After the coming of the (Anglican) Church Missionary Society in 1816, many Jacobites formed the Mar Thoma or "Reformed Syrian Church." They have no valid orders at present and number 145,000.

C. The Protestant Sects

1806 the London Missionary Society has now over 130,000 members.

1816 the Anglican C.M.S. won over 6,000 Jacobites in 1838 and has now over 85,000 members.

1834 The (Lutheran) Basel German Mission and Missouri Evangelical Lutherans have now 1,700 members.

1890 The Salvation Army now claims 59,000 members.

There are also Open Brethren, the Assembly of God Mission, the South India United Church and Seventh-day Adventists.

In 1931 all the Protestants in Cochin and Travancore numbered about 318,000.

Church Organisation

Catholics or Roman Catholics follow three rites.

1. *Latin rite*: the Archdiocese of Verapoly; suffragans: Kottar, Quilon, Vijayapuram and Trivandrum. Also Cochin, suffragan of Goa.

2. *Syro-Malabar rite*: the Archdiocese of Ernakulam; suffragans: Changanacherry, Kottayam and Trichur.

3. *Syro-Malankara rite*: the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, suffragan: Tiruvella.

The three Archbishops and six of the ten Bishops are of the country.

The Orthodox Syrian (Jacobite) Church has one Catholicos and 8 or 9 Bishops. It follows the Syro-Malankara rite partly in Malayalam, so also the Mar Thoma Syrian Church but the liturgy is mostly in the vernacular.

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