

THE Syrian Church of Malabar

By

REV. FATHER I. DANIEL

*Everathu Kizhakathil, Cheppad, Haripad P.O.
Travancore, S. India*

*With a Commendatory Note from the
Metropolitan of the Diocese of Niranam*

MADRAS

PRINTED AT THE DIOCESAN PRESS

1945

Copyright Reserved

Price Re. 1

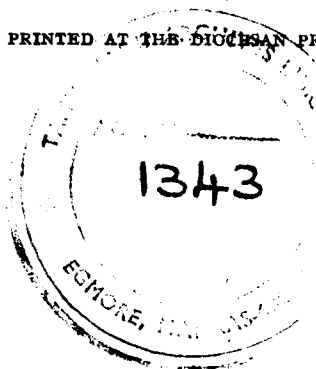
Acc. No 1343

Dt 12.12.77

275.118

(Dan--S)

PRINTED AT THE DIOCESAN PRESS, MADRAS-1945. C7949



Q62.218

N45



HIS HOLINESS MORAN MAR BASELIOS GHEVARGHESE II
Catholicos of the East & Metropolitan of Malabar

This Book is Dedicated
in loving and sacred memory of
Malabar's greatest Saint,
His Grace MAR GREGORIUS of Parumala,
who entered eternal and blessed rest
at the age of 54 on 2nd November 1902

A COMMENDATORY NOTE FROM
THE METROPOLITAN OF THE
DIOCESE OF NIRANAM.

I HAVE great pleasure to recommend to the members of the Church the book 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' of which the Rev. Father I. Daniel of Cheppad is the author. I know the author and I love his work both as a priest and as the writer of such books as Church History, etc. No doubt, this book will give the readers a clear conception of the facts of the history of the Church in South India in a handy form. I give him my blessings.

Bethany Palace, }
Tiruvella. } MAR THOMA DIONYSIUS

AN APPRECIATION

Letter from Dr. M. K. Alexander, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Arkansas State College, Pine Bluff, Arkansas, America, to Messrs. Fortuny's Publishers, 87 Fifth Avenue, New York City, as the book was first thought to be published in America.

SIRS,

I am happy to hear of your interest in the important manuscript of Rev. Father I. Daniel of Cheppad, Haripad, Travancore, South India, on 'The Syrian Church of Malabar'. From my acquaintance with the subject-matter I may say that the scholarly Father I. Daniel has made a contribution of great historic value. The need for such a work has been felt in every part of the western world where the amazing story of the Syrian Church of Malabar has been heard. It will be a real treat to the general reader and a handy reference volume to the scholar. I take this occasion to congratulate you in your effort and to assure you that this publication will be a highly significant undertaking.

Sincerely yours,
M. K. ALEXANDER.

FOREWORD

I HAD the privilege of reading the manuscript of 'The Syrian Church of Malabar' by Rev. Father I. Daniel of Cheppad, Travancore. It fulfils a much felt need for a publication of its kind in English. The Syrian Church existing from the first Century A.D. in the southernmost corner of India has not attracted the amount of attention it deserves from the rest of the world. This book gives a lucid and accurate narrative of the various incidents in the history of the Church from the coming of St. Thomas the Apostle.

The Syrian Church is eastern to the core and even now maintains its indigenous character. Western visitors Marcopolo, Dr. Buchanan, Bishop Gore, Lord Halifax and others have been very much impressed by the dogmas and practices of the Church which maintains the early purity. As can be seen from the book Dr. Buchanan's publications excited the sympathy of the westerners to some extent. I hope that the outside world will be very much impressed by this true account of the Christians of St. Thomas in Malabar. In conclusion I may say without any hesitation that in writing such a book Rev. Father I. Daniel has done a signal service to the Christian World.

P. A. OOMMAN, B.A., M.L.,
Travancore High Court, Advocate.
Trivandram.

PREFACE

THIS book aims at presenting in a condensed form the principal facts in the growth and development of the Syrian Church of Malabar founded by St. Thomas the Apostle of our Lord. The book speaks for itself how St. Thomas came to Malabar in A.D. 52 and established the Church here, and how it has grown to this day.

After having completed the book I wrote about it to my friend Miss Christina J. Braskamp, Biola's worldwide Prayer Circle Secretary in Los Angeles, California. She was very much interested in the book and so she wrote to me that this book could be published in New York in Messrs. Fortuny's Publishers' Printing House. Accordingly the manuscript was sent to the publishers with an appreciation letter from Dr. M. K. Alexander, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Arkansas State College, U.S.A. The publishers wrote to me in reply the following:—'It is with distinct pleasure that we beg to inform you that the reports which we have received today from our readers regarding the literary value and the sale possibilities of your religious manuscript, "The Syrian Church of Malabar" are quite encouraging.'

As the Publishers got very encouraging reports from their readers they were going to publish the book very soon. But owing to some reasons the publishers having stopped their publishing department recently the manuscript was returned to me. Thus I had to print it otherwise.

First of all I extend my hearty thanks to His Grace Mar Thoma Dionysius, Metropolitan of Niranam

Diocese, for his kindness in writing a commendatory note on this history. I am indebted to Rev. Father K. David, B.A., B.D., sometime Professor of Church History in the Syrian Theological College at Kottayam, for his valuable helps rendered in my writing this volume. I owe my thanks to the Church History expert, Mr. K. K. Lukose, B.A., B.L., Retired High Court Judge, for enlightening me on certain points of history. He sincerely believes, based on firm grounds of history, that the faith of the original Church of Malabar was that of the Syrian Orthodox Church. In a letter dated 17th December 1942 he wrote to me: 'I feel that the more I read, the more convinced I am of the soundness of our point of views, in regard to the faith of the original Church of Malabar.'

My thanks are also due to Dr. M. K. Alexander, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Arkansas State College, America, and to Mr. P. A. Oommen, B.A., M.L., Advocate, Mavelikara, who have written forewords to this book.

I owe my thanks to Rev. T. G. Platten, M.A., Acting Principal, Madras Christian College, and to Mr. G. Rose, M.A., Lecturer in English, Madras Christian College, Tambaram, for going through the manuscript, and for their valuable suggestions.

In conclusion, I may add a word of thanks to my nephew, Mr. M. Pappy, B.A., who took a keen interest in making arrangements for the printing of this volume.

REV. FATHER I. DANIEL,
Vicar, Orthodox Syrian Church.

CHEPPAD, TRAVANCORE,
2nd June, 1945.



AUTHOR
REV. FATHER I. DANIEL

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR ...	1
II. EVIDENCES TO SHOW THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH	4
III. PANTANEUS' VISIT AND THE HEBREW BIBLE	10
IV. IMMIGRATION OF THE SYRIANS UNDER THOMAS OF CANA AND THE ORIGIN OF THE CATHOLICATE	12
V. COMING OF MAR SAPORES AND MAR PHEROZ	19
VI. NESTORIAN BISHOPS IN MALABAR ...	21
VII. ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN INDIA ...	23
VIII. THE REVOLT OF THE SYRIANS AND THE COONAN CROSS AND MAR THOMA I TO MAR THOMA VI	32
IX. THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH OF THOZHIVUR, THE VISIT OF DR. BUCHANAN AND THE CHURCH ENDOWMENT FUND, MAR THOMA VI TO MAR DIONYSIUS II	38
X. THE SYRIAN CHURCH AND THE ANGLICAN CONNECTION AND MAR DIONYSIUS III AND IV	43
XI. SEPARATION OF THE REFORMED SYRIANS, MAR MATHEWS ATHANASIUS AND MAR DIONYSIUS V	47

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. MAR DIONYSIUS VI AND THE SUBSEQUENT STATE OF THE CHURCH. VISIT OF H.H. THE CATHOLICOS TO THE EDINBURGH CON- FERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER AND TOUR OF H.G. MAR THOMA DIONYSIUS THROUGH- OUT THE INDIA COMMAND ...	52
APPENDIX	
CHRONOLOGY OF THE MALABAR SYRIAN CHURCH PRELATES ; RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES FROM CHERAMAN PERUMAL TO THE SYRIANS ...	61

CHAPTER I

THE SYRIAN CHURCH OF MALABAR

THE Syrian Church of Malabar traces its history back to the first century and claims St. Thomas, one of the apostles, as its Founder. It is true that there is no clear historical proof about the apostolic origin of the Church. But the tradition and the circumstantial evidence are so strong that scholars hardly doubt the authenticity of the tradition.

Tradition about the Origin of the Church.—The tradition about the origin of the Syrian Church is as follows ; St. Thomas came to Musiris (Cranganore), an important seaport on the Malabar Coast, in one of the trading ships in 52 A.D. and he first preached the Gospel to the Jews and then turned to the heathen. A good many Brahmin families became Christians. He established churches at seven places, viz., Maliankara (Cranganore), Palur (Chavakad), Parur, Gokamangalam, Niranam, Chayal, Kollum (Quilon), and appointed priests or rather bishops, from four families—Pakalomatom, Sankarapuri, Kalli, Kaliyankal. Then he went over to the East Coast and there also he founded a few churches. It is believed that he went even to China and preached the Gospel. When he returned he was put to death at Mylapore near Madras and buried there. His remains were then taken over to Edessa in Persia and were given a decent burial there. This is the substance of the tradition as we have got it.

The Acts of St. Thomas.—The account given in the Acts of St. Thomas regarding the origin of the

Indian Church is highly interesting. The regions of the world were divided among the apostles and by lot India fell to St. Thomas. But he hesitated to go. The Lord appeared to him and said 'Fear not, Thomas, go to India and proclaim the Word.' But he did not obey, saying, 'Wherever thou wishest to send me, send me elsewhere, to the Indians I am not going.' While speaking thus there came a man named Abbanes sent by king Gondophorus of India to fetch a carpenter.

Abbanes met our Lord and our Lord pointed to St. Thomas and sold him for three pounds of silver. They sailed for India and on the way the ship landed at Andropolis, a royal city. There was a marriage feast in the city. The king's daughter was being given in marriage. St. Thomas and Abbanes were both invited to it. During the marriage feast a servant struck St. Thomas and the Apostle said that that hand would be dragged along by a dog, and so it happened. That servant, who was the cup-bearer, went to draw some water from a fountain and then there came a lion, killed him and tore away his limbs. A black dog took the right hand in its mouth and brought it to the banquet hall. The flute girl who was a Hebrew had understood all the words of the Apostle. She told the whole story to the people and they all believed in St. Thomas.

They then sailed and landed in the kingdom of Gondophorus in India. They came to the king. The King asked St. Thomas to build a palace for him to which he readily agreed. The king gave him money, gold and silver, and whatever he asked. The Apostle distributed them all freely among the poor and afflicted. One day the king came to the

city and enquired of the people about the palace and he knew from them that Thomas went round and preached the Gospel, healing the sick, leading a very simple life, and they further told him that he spent whatever he got on the poor and the sick. The king got angry, sent for the merchant and Thomas and imprisoned them both, considering how to kill them. That very night his brother by name Gad fell ill and died. His soul was taken to heaven by the angels and was shown the beautiful places and dwellings there. When he came to the beautiful palace built by St. Thomas he begged the angels to permit him to dwell in one of its underground rooms. The angels said they could not do anything since it already belonged to his brother. Gad then told them to allow him to go back to his brother so that he might buy the palace from him as he did not know what it was like. The story goes that the soul came back to earth just before his body was buried and called for his brother. The brother was overwhelmed with joy. Gad then made an entreaty to him, 'Assure me, brother, that you will grant me whatever I ask.' He agreed to give whatever he asked. Then he asked the king to sell to him the palace which St. Thomas had built in heaven. The king was surprised to hear it and could not believe what he told him. Then he narrated the whole story to the king. St. Thomas and the merchant were both released from prison and the royal family embraced the new Faith preached by St. Thomas.

The Apostle then left the kingdom of Gondophorus and visited the court of Misdus, another Indian king. There the king's own wife and children were converted to Christianity. The king's resent-

ment was so great that St. Thomas died a martyr's death. Such is the most ancient existing account of the Life of St. Thomas. As a contribution to history it cannot be taken seriously and yet it is not without value. It speaks clearly that the scene of St. Thomas' labours was India. Till the middle of the 19th century Gondophorus was an unknown person and was thought to be a mere creation of the imagination. But excavations made in the last century and the coins dug out bearing the name and figure of the king have conclusively proved that Gondophorus was a historical person of the 1st century.

Till the last century nobody would have believed that there was such a man as Gondophorus and that St. Thomas visited his court and therefore we can reasonably hope that many of the other facts connected with the tradition will in due course be proved to be true. The kingdom of Gondophorus extended over the Punjab and the banks of the Indus. It is quite likely therefore that St. Thomas left his kingdom and came over to S. India to continue his Christian work and probably Misdeus ruled over S. India at that time.

CHAPTER II

EVIDENCES TO SHOW THE APOSTOLIC ORIGIN OF THE INDIAN CHURCH

A. TRADE CONNECTION BETWEEN INDIA AND WESTERN COUNTRIES

A. THE trade connection between India and western countries such as Egypt, Palestine, Greece,

and so forth, is likely to prove the possibility of the coming of St. Thomas.

1. For centuries prior to the time of Christ trade between India and western countries flourished and was conducted along three well-defined routes :

(i) Through the Khiber Pass by caravans to the shores of the Black Sea.

(ii) By coasting ships into the Persian Gulf from where cargoes were taken by caravans and camels along the Euphrates Valley into the interior regions.

(iii) By sea route. From the West Coast of India to the Red Sea from where goods were carried to Alexandria by boat or caravan and from there to the European countries. This last was a very tedious voyage ; but in the middle of the 1st century an Egyptian sailor, by name Hippalus, discovered a new route to the Indian coast through the Indian ocean by the help of the monsoon wind by which ships could reach India from the Red Sea within forty days. This discovery of the new route greatly helped the trade which rapidly multiplied. As there was regular trade between India and Palestine in the 1st century it is quite possible that St. Thomas came in one of the trading ships to India to preach the Gospel.

B. CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

St. Thomas' Mount near Madras is supposed to be the place of St. Thomas' death. Another sacred site connected with St. Thomas is the tomb at Mylapore where the body of the Apostle is buried. Over the tomb is a Roman Catholic Cathedral and of its treasures the most precious is the reliquary in which are preserved fragments of the bones of the

Apostle and the tip of the lance that pierced him. These places have now become regular places of pilgrimage. There is a place still shown as one in which St. Thomas took refuge in St. Thomas' Mount.

C. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

1. *Marcopolo*.—Marcopolo, a Venetian traveller, visited India twice in 1288 and 1292 and his account of the Church on the Coromandal Coast is of priceless value. It is as follows:—'The body of St. Thomas the Apostle lies in this province of Malabar at a certain little town having no great population. It is a place where few traders go because there is little merchandise there and it is a place not very accessible. Both Christians and Saracens frequent it in pilgrimage, for the Saracens also do hold the Saint in great reverence and say that he was one of their own Saracens and a great prophet. The Christians who go there in pilgrimage take earth from the place where the Saint was killed and give a portion thereof to anyone sick of fever, and, by the power of God and of St. Thomas, the sick man is cured. The earth I should tell you is red.'

Ever since Marcopolo's time many European travellers have visited the place and given their account of what they saw there. The evidence of Marcopolo is a sufficient proof that in the 13th century Mylapore was accepted by the Christians in India as the shrine of St. Thomas and the site of his martyrdom. Such traditions never spring up in a day and we can reasonably think that for a considerable time prior to Marcopolo's visit Mylapore was a place of pilgrimage from its association with St. Thomas.

2. *The Anglo-Saxon chronicle*.—The Anglo-Saxon chronicle tells how King Alfred in the 9th century made a vow when he was besieged by the Danes that he would send alms to the tomb of St. Thomas in India and how he fulfilled his vow. The record runs thus:—'In the year 883 Sighelm and Aethelstan conveyed to Rome the alms which the King had vowed to send there and also to India to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, when they sat down against the army at London and there their prayer was very successful after that vow.'

Later chronicles confirm this sending of royal alms to India. This account shows that the existence of a Christian community which venerated the name of St. Thomas was known to England in the 9th century.

3. More interesting and more valuable is the reference in a book written by Bishop Gregory of Tours (in Spain) named '*Gloria Martyrdom*' in the last part of the 6th century. It is as follows:—'Thomas the Apostle, according to the history of his passion, is declared to have suffered in India. After a long time his remains were taken into the city which they called Edessa (east of Palestine on the valley of Euphrates and Tigris) in Syria and there buried. Therefore in that Indian place where he first rested, there is a monastery and a church of wonderful size carefully adorned and arranged. In this temple God exhibits a great Miracle, for a lamp which is placed in it and lighted before the place of his burial, burns by the divine will night and day receiving from no one a supply of oil or wick; neither is it extinguished by wind nor upset by accident, nor is it exhausted by burning. It has its supply through the merits of the Apostle. This was

told me by Theodorus who went to the very place.

This account at least proves that the work and martyrdom of St. Thomas in India was accepted by the western church in the 6th century.

D. EVIDENCE FROM CHURCH HISTORY

There are very few references in Church History to the work of St. Thomas. But the few we get speak with practical unanimity and definiteness that the field of St. Thomas' labours was India. The apparent exception to this is Eusebius of Cæsarea, the father of Church History, who says that St. Thomas laboured in Parthia.

Parthia included part of what we now call India, *viz.*, Punjab and other N.-W. Provinces. St. Jerome in the 4th century wrote:—'The son of God was present in all places, with Thomas in India, with Peter in Rome, with Paul in Illyria, with Titus in Crete, with Andrew in Achaia, and with every preacher of the Gospel in all the regions they traversed.' We know from this that St. Jerome believed that St. Thomas came to India.

St. Ephraim, the great Syriac writer of the 4th century, in one of the hymns, addressed to St. Thomas in the following verses:—

'Blessed art thou, like unto the solar ray from the great orb, thy grateful dawn India's painful darkness doeth dispel.

'Thou the great lamp, one among the twelve, with oil from thy cross replenished.

India's dark night floodest with light. Blessed art thou, whom the great King hath sent. That India to his one begotten thou shouldest espouse.

'Above snow and linen white the dark bride didst

make fair. Blessed art thou who hast faith in the bride whom from heathenism, from demons' errors and from enslavement to sacrifices thou didst preserve.

Her saving, thou cleanest; the sunburnt thou hast made fair, the cross of light her darkened shades effacing.'

It is clear from these stanzas that the Church at Edessa believed that St. Thomas carried the light of the Gospel to India.

To sum up our arguments for the apostolic origin of the Malabar Church (Indian Church) as there was regular trade connection between India and Palestine even before the time of our Lord, and as the Apostles must have been eager to follow the advice of our Lord to go abroad and to preach the Gospel, it is quite likely that St. Thomas, one of the Apostles, may have come to India in one of the trading ships to spread the Gospel among the heathens. This surmise is supported by the apocryphal writing of the Acts of St. Thomas and archæological researches made in the last century. Besides, we have found how the early Christian Fathers such as Jerome, St. Ephraim and Gregory of Tours and the great Venetian traveller Marcopolo have testified to the same effect. The strong tradition of the Syrian Church and the tradition connected with St. Thomas' Mount near Mylapore have strengthened the other evidences.

CHAPTER III

PANTANEUS' VISIT AND THE HEBREW BIBLE

PANTANEUS was the first missionary to come to India, in A.D. 190. Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, received a message from the Indian Christians somewhere about A.D. 190 to send them a teacher to instruct them in the faith and doctrines of Christ. They sent this message by some of the vessels that were constantly visiting their shores from Egypt. At that time one Pantaneus, a stoic philosopher and head of the celebrated school of Alexandria, offered himself for the work. It is said that when he visited India he found a copy of the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Hebrew language which St. Bartholomew was supposed to have brought there.

Jerome (A.D. 340-420) and Clement of Alexandria speak of Pantaneus' visit to India. Eusebius (A.D. 265-340) says, 'About the year A.D. 180 the school of faithful at Alexandria was governed by a man most distinguished for his learning, whose name was Pantaneus. He is said to have displayed such an ardent and zealous disposition respecting the Divine Word that he was constituted a herald of the Gospel of Christ to the nations of the East and advanced even as far as India, for there were many evangelists to the Word, who were ardently striving to employ their inspired zeal after the apostolic example to increase and build up the Divine Word of God. Of these Pantaneus is said to have come as far as India and the report is that he found his arrival there anticipated by some who were acquainted with the Gospel of

St. Matthew to whom Bartholomew had preached, and had left them the Gospel of St. Matthew in the Hebrew characters which was also preserved until this time.' It is likely that Pantaneus mistook the 'Mar Thoma' of local tradition for 'Bartholomew'.

Jerome's writings contain two valuable references to Pantaneus. 1. 'Pantaneus, a stoic philosopher, was a man of great erudition, as well in the divine scripture as in secular literature, so that he was sent to India by Demetrius, Bishop of Alexandria, at the request of the ambassador of that nation. There he found that Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the Gospel of St. Matthew which, written in Hebrew characters, he brought with him on his return to Alexandria.'

2. 'Pantaneus, on account of the rumour of his excellent learning, was sent by Demetrius into India that he might preach Jesus Christ among the Brahmins and philosophers of that nation.'

The evidence from Clement of Alexandria, Pantaneus' disciple, is equally strong. He describes the *Yogis* and Brahmins of India and speaks of the God Buddha. This information must have been obtained from his teacher Pantaneus after his return from India.

These references from early Fathers clearly show that there was a Christian Church in India in the 2nd century. Some people attempted to show that the scene of Pantaneus' labours was not the west coast of India but Arabia or N.-W. of India. It is not likely, because the trade route by sea was to the west coast of India.

Besides if there were Christians in N.-W. of India (Punjab), and if they wanted a guide to teach



them they could have more easily approached the Church of Selucia and Persia.

The question of the Hebrew Bible.—Probably it was the copy of the Bible used by Jewish Christians. It is almost certain that there were Jews in the Malabar Coast even from the 1st century. In that case some must have embraced Christianity and they might have preferred a Gospel in the same tongue as their own Scripture, namely Hebrew. The visit of Pantaneus proved beyond doubt the existence of a Church in India in A.D. 190.

St. John of Persia and Great India (4th century).—Among the Bishops present at the Council of Nicea, A.D. 325, there was a bishop named John representing the Church of Persia and India. He signed the decrees of the Council as 'John of Persia and of Great India'. Probably his headquarters was Persia and his jurisdiction must have extended over India: whether the whole of India or only a portion we are not quite sure. This reference to John sufficiently indicates that the Indian Church in the 4th century was an episcopal church, a church governed by a bishop, and further the Indian Church had some connection with the Persian Church.

CHAPTER IV

IMMIGRATION OF SYRIANS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THOMAS OF CANA AND THE ORIGIN OF THE CATHOLICATE

In the 4th century, most probably in the year A.D. 345, a band of 400 Christians consisting of a bishop, Mar Joseph of Uraha or Edessa, several priests,

deacons and laymen emigrated to the Malabar Coast of India and settled down at Cranganore. The head of this group was a merchant of great influence and wealth by name Thomas of Cana. He is said to be a man of Jerusalem. He obtained from the then King of Malabar by name Cheraman Perumal several rights and privileges for the Christians. These Syrians settled down in the southern portion of the city of Mahadevar; and the natives, in the northern part. Those who lived in the south came to be called the Southernists, and others Northernists.

The tradition about the immigration is that the Bishop of Edessa had a dream about the distress and sufferings of the Christians in India and he went to the Catholicos of Selucia and reported the matter. The Catholicos summoned an honourable Christian merchant, named Thoma, living in Jerusalem and commanded him to go and ascertain the state of affairs in Malabar. Accordingly he arrived at the Malabar Coast and met with some people wearing crosses. He learned from them that they were in great distress for want of priests to look after them. He forthwith embarked in his ship and returned to Jerusalem. He told the holy Catholicos all the circumstances. Thereupon he sent with the honoured merchant, Bishop Joseph of Edessa, several priests and deacons and many men, women and children four hundred in all. They landed safely in Cranganore in the year A.D. 345.

The substantial accuracy of this tradition cannot be seriously doubted even though some historians have tried to place this immigration some 400 years later. Another fact that adds to the probability of this tradition is that at this time the Church of Persia was undergoing a bitter persecution at the hands of

the cruel emperor, Saphor II. It is therefore quite likely that some of them just to escape punishment may have emigrated from there. Added to this the news of the need of the Indian Church must have brought them over to India. This immigration resulted in many important consequences: (1) It raised the social status of the Christians. (2) A connection between the Indian Church and the Church of Persia was established which proved to be of an enduring character. (3) The Christians of India henceforward called themselves Syrians and the Church the Syrian Church.

Cosmos the Indian Voyager (6th century).—He was a rich and prosperous merchant of Alexandria who traded in his own ships with all the lands surrounding the Indian Ocean. He not only sought wealth in his travels but also knowledge. Wherever he went he made careful enquiries into the manners and customs and the lives of the various races. In his later life he entered into a monastery and led a retired life spending his time in writing books. He wrote 12 volumes, called 'Christian Topography', on what he saw and heard in his voyages. They are of immense value to us as they contain accounts of the Malabar Church which he visited in about 522 A.D.

He writes thus: 'In the land of Trapobane (Ceylon) in further India where the Indian Sea is, there is a church of Christians where clergy and faithful are to be found: whether also further beyond I am not sure. Such is also the case in the land called Male (Malabar) where pepper grows, and in the place called Kalliana (Quilon) there is a bishop usually ordained in Persia, as well as in the isle called the Isle of Dioscoris (Socotra) in the same Indian

Ocean. You find priests ordained in Persia sent there. There are also a number of Christians there.'

This record is invaluable inasmuch as it gives the first clear evidence of the existence in South India of an organized Christian Church. This account makes it also clear that the mother church to which the Indian Christians looked for help was the Church of Persia.

Which is this Persian Church to which the Indian Church owed allegiance: Nestorian or Jacobite (orthodox)?

In the 6th century both Nestorian and Jacobite (orthodox) Churches flourished in Persia, and we are not quite sure to which Church the Indian Church owed allegiance. Cosmos does not say anything about it. He simply says that Bishops came from Persia to India. The greater probability is that the orthodox party used to send their bishops to the Indian Church.

Stone Crosses at Mylapore and at Kottayam.—In the 16th century a stone cross was found at Mylapore while the Roman Christians (Portuguese Christians) were trying to build a church there. The cross contains certain inscriptions in Pallavi language which was the official language of Persia. Two other stone crosses containing similar inscriptions are to be found at Kottayam in the Valiapalli, of which one is older than the other. One of them contains Syriac inscriptions in Estrangeli. It is supposed that the older cross at Kottayam and the cross at Mylapore belong to 7th or 8th century A.D., and the other to the 10th century. The inscriptions on the cross at Mylapore are variously translated. Dr. Bornell translated it as follows:—

In punishment by the cross (was) the suffering

Acc. No. 1893
D+ 12.12.77

of this one; He who is true Christ and God above and guide ever pure.

Translation of Dr. E. W. West is as follows:—

What freed the true Messiah the forgiving the upbraiding from hardship? The crucifixion, from the tree and the anguish of this.

The Syriac inscriptions at the bottom of the other cross is Galatians vi. 14. 'Let me not glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

No records exist to tell who gave these stone tablets and from where they were obtained. It is supposed that some Persian sculptor living perhaps in Cranganore, must have inscribed them and they were taken to these various places by some pious Christians.

These inscriptions show how the connection between the Indian Church and the Persian Church continued to exist till the 8th or 9th century at least. The Indian Church was most probably connected with the Jacobite (orthodox) Church in Persia.

Originally it was the Persian Catholicos who sent Metropolitans to the Syrian Church of Malabar. The Persian Catholicate is actually older than the Antiochian Patriarchate. But till the year A.D. 231 it was the custom for Persians to go to Antioch for consecration.

In A.D. 231, according to the usual practice two clergymen, Ahodoboy and Komjesu, were sent to Antioch by the Persian Church for consecration. Antioch was at this time a part of the Roman Empire. There was hostility between the Roman and Persian Governments. Mistaking Ahodo-boy and Kom-Jesu for Persian spies, the Roman Government arrested them. Kom-Jesu was killed. But

Ahodo-boy managed to escape to Jerusalem. When the Metropolitan of Antioch came to know of this he wrote about it to the Prelates of Jerusalem.

The Prelates of Jerusalem consecrated Ahodo-boy and installed him as Catholicos giving authority to consecrate bishops and to perpetuate the Catholicate. He was also given a document (Stathicon) to the effect that the Persians need not thereafter be sent to Antioch for consecration and that the name of the Catholicos should be remembered in the great intercession (Thubaden). Thus in the year A.D. 231 the Catholicate in Persia was permanently established. The second Catholicos Sahalupa was installed in A.D. 246. It was during the time of the third Catholicos by name 'Pappa' that the Synod of Nicea was held in the year A.D. 325.

In the Synod of Nicea also we see the importance given to the Catholicate. The following is an extract from the decisions of the Synod of Nicea which occur in the VII chapter of the Canon of Bar Hebraus: 'According to the four divisions of the earth there should be four Patriarchs: one in Rome in the West, another in Constantinople in the North, another in Antioch in the East and still another in Alexandria in the South. But henceforth the Metropolitan of Jerusalem shall be called the fifth Patriarch and at the same time he shall be subject to the authority of the Metropolitan of Cæsaria. The Metropolitan of the East, like the Patriarch, shall have authority to consecrate metropolitans and he shall be known as catholicos and his name shall be remembered in the Great Intercession. At synods this Catholicos shall have precedence over all the metropolitans and shall be

accorded a seat of honour equal to that of the Patriarch of Jerusalem.'

The Catholicate which was thus given to Persia in the year A.D. 231 was confirmed in the Synod of Nicea in A.D. 325, and flourished till the time of Bar Hebraus, the famous Canon Law authority who was catholicos for the East in the 13th century. But after the 13th century there was no regular continuity of orthodox Catholicos to fill the Catholicate of the East in Tigris (Persia) on account of the decline of the orthodox Syrians in Persia.

In 1685 Mar Baselius was consecrated Catholicos just for the occasion and sent over to Malabar. He died at Kothamangalam. He was followed in 1751 by Sakralla Mar Baselius who died at Kandanad.

After a long time, in the year 1908 and previous to that also, the late revered learned Konattu Mathen, Malpan of Malabar, wrote to the Patriarch requesting him to transfer the Catholicate of the East from Persia to Malabar. In 1912 Moran Mar Abdul Messiah, the Patriarch of Antioch, visited Malabar and transferred the Catholicate of the East from Persia to Malabar. The installation ceremony of the first Malabar catholicos was conducted by the Patriarch at Niranam Church which was founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle of our Lord.

Patriarch Moran Mar Abdul Messiah installed Bishop Mar Ivanios of Kandanad Diocese as Catholicos I and also gave written orders to perpetuate the Catholicate. After the death of the first Catholicos Bishop Mar Philoxinos of Kottayam Diocese was installed as Catholicos II at Niranam Church. He died in 1928 and in his place Bishop Mar Gregorius of Niranam Diocese was installed Catholicos in the year 1929 at the Elia Chapel, Kottayam. He is the

present Catholicos and is very learned and extremely pious. He has attended the World Conference on Faith and Order held in 1937 at Edinburgh where he created a powerful impression.

CHAPTER V

COMING OF MAR SAPORES AND MAR PHEROZ.

SOMEWHERE about A.D. 825 two Syrian dignitaries, Mar Saporez or Sapair and Mar Pheroz or Prodh, are said to have visited Quilon from Persia along with a merchant named Sapir Iso. Nobody knows why they came. Probably they were sent by the Catholicos of Persia to strengthen the Indian Church and to spread the Gospel among the heathen. Whatever be their objects in coming, their mission was a great success. The then Raja of Travancore seeing the respect paid to them by his Christian subjects, conferred upon them many favours, gave them land free of tax or revenue and allowed them to erect churches wherever they pleased and to preach the Gospel among the heathen. The copper plates containing the privileges conferred on them are still extant. Both these Bishops were canonised as saints after their death, and churches were erected to their memory. Asseman gives a chronology of the Nestorian Bishops in Persia. Mar Saporez and Pheroz are not included in this list, so they are likely to be orthodox prelates.

Christian king named Baleartes (10th century).—
The Christians of Malabar enjoyed at one time so much privilege and independence that they had a

king of their own named Baleartes to rule over them. He assumed the title of Rajah of the Christians of St. Thomas. For sometime the Christians maintained their independence under their own kings until one of them adopted the Rajah of Diamper for his heir. This man was a heathen. By similar adoptions they became in course of time subject to the heathen Rajah of Cochin and other sovereigns.

A Venetian traveller Marcopolo's publication of an account of the Indian Church.—This Venetian traveller was an officer in the court of the Chinese Emperor. He was sent by the Emperor as an ambassador to Persia at the end of the 13th century. On his way he visited the coast of India and he made a record of what he saw and heard in India. From his account of the Indian Church we get much reliable information (see 'Documentary Evidence').

The publication of his Book in Europe aroused intense curiosity about India in the minds of Europeans. The result of it was that many Europeans began to penetrate into India, either for trade or missionary work. Of the missionaries that came to India in the early centuries from the Western Church, the best known was a Dominican Friar named Jordanus who, along with four other Friars, came to India through Persia in 1321. Jordanus worked with zeal for some years and converted many heathens. His companions were persecuted and put to death by Muhammadans. He returned to Europe after very trying experiences in India. He was sent back to India in A.D. 1330 as Bishop of Quilon carrying with him a Papal Letter to the Indian Christians inviting them to become reconciled to the Roman Catholic Church. Of the Bishop's doings in Quilon we have no knowledge. The account he gives in his

book, *Mirabilia*, of the Syrian Church is very curious and is as follows :—

'In this India (in the western coast from Karachi to North Malabar) there is a scattered people: one here, another there who called themselves Christians; but are not so, nor have they baptism nor do they know anything else about the Faith, nay, they believe St. Thomas to be Christ. There I baptized and brought into the Faith about three hundred souls of whom many were idolators and Saracens.'

Jordanus's missionary activities came to have no lasting result since there were not many missionaries to follow up his work.

CHAPTER VI

NESTORIAN BISHOPS IN MALABAR, 1490-1590

A DOCUMENT in the Vatican library of which Asseman, a historian, speaks, provides us with the following information :—

'In 1490 three Christians from the Malabar Church set out from India to ask Mar Simeon, the Nestorian Patriarch of Persia, to give bishops for their provinces. One of them died on the way. But the two survivors, Joseph and George, appeared before the Patriarch and stated their errand. Two monks were selected from the monastery of St. Eugene and were consecrated by the Patriarch under the names of Thomas and John. The Patriarch furnished them with letters under his signature and seal and sent them forth. The four arrived safely and were received with great joy by the Christians at Malabar, who ran to meet them

and carried before them the gospels, cross, torches and a censer. The two bishops consecrated altars, and ordained priests because there had been no bishops for a long time. Mar John remained in India. But Mar Thoma with Joseph returned to the Patriarch taking with them first fruits and offerings. In 1493 Joseph returned leaving Mar Thoma in Mesopotamia. Mar Simeon, the Patriarch, died in 1502. He was succeeded by Mar Elias who consecrated four bishops of whom three were David Japallah, George Danaha and Masud Jacob. The four started for India and found Bishop John still alive. They wrote a long report to the Patriarch about the Indian Church. 'There are about thirty thousand families here common in faith with us and they pray for your prosperity. Now they have commenced to build more churches and there is abundance of all things and they are mild and peaceable. Blessed be God. Also the church of St. Thomas is now again inhabited by Christians. It is distant— a journey of 25 days,—situated on the sea near a city called 'Mylapore' in the province of Silan. Our province in which Christians dwell is called Malabar and has about 20 cities of which three notable are Carangal, Palor, Colam.'

That the Syrian Church in the early part of the 16th century remained Nestorian is borne out by other evidences also. A man named Joseph went over to Europe in one of the ships of Capt. Cabral in 1501, and he has given an account of the Syrian Christians to some people in Venice and they have published a book called 'Voyages of Joseph the Indian', wherein it is stated that the Syrian Church is under Nestorian Catholicos who is subject to Antiochian Patriarch. It was this Joseph that

went to the Nestorian Patriarch Mar Simeon previously. Another Italian traveller, Ludovico, also gives a similar account. He is said to have passed down the Malabar Coast in 1505 and to have come to Kayamkulam and met with some Christians there and learned from them that they obtained their bishops from Babylon. Ludovico says that the priests use leavened bread for Eucharist, thereby showing that they were not Roman Catholics. Malankara people who were Orthodox Syrians could not understand the difference between Nestorian bishops and Orthodox bishops. So they received Nestorian bishops who came since 1490, as their own bishops.

CHAPTER VII

ROMAN CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN INDIA

THE discovery of a sea route from Europe to India around the Cape of Good Hope and the coming of the Portuguese into India in the early part of the 16th century had far-reaching results on Indian Christianity. The East and West were brought face to face with each other, and the Syrian Christians, who were quite ignorant of a Western Church, were surprised to find that the Portuguese were a strong and powerful body of Christians. When the Portuguese saw above a hundred churches in Malabar they said, 'These churches belong to the Pope'. 'Who is the Pope? We never have heard of him,' answered the Syrians. But with the establishment of an empire in India the Portuguese attempted to sow the seeds of Roman Christianity into the Indian soil. In India, according to them, they found

a schismatic body of Christians alien in faith and practice to themselves. So they thought it their duty to bring these erring Christians into the right faith and fold. The relations between the Syrians and the Roman Catholics at first were most cordial. The Syrian Church sought in them their support and help from the oppression and persecution of the heathen kings. They are said to have submitted the sceptre of their king to the Portuguese admiral, Vasco de Gama, when they first met them, and to have sought their help.

Now let us try to study the methods the Portuguese adopted to bring the Syrian Church into the Roman fold. Here we find three different stages adopted :—

1. *Education of the clergy and the laymen.*—

In Rome's judgment the Syrian errors were largely due to ignorance and therefore missionaries thought that if only the right faith was taught they would readily adopt it. So a college was established at Cranganore in 1545 by the Franciscan Order and Syrian youths were educated for the priesthood. Fr. Vincent was placed at its head. They sent the newly ordained priests to preach the new doctrine to the Syrians, but to no effect. The reasons were that they were not used to Latin rites and they were not used to the Roman costume. They shut the doors against these priests. Romans changed their policy. The service of the natives in those days was in Syriac. A new seminary was started at Vaipicotta near Cranganore to teach Syriac, in 1587. Syriac was taught there and the priests were allowed to put on their national dress. Even then the result was disappointing. The churches were closed against these new evangelists also and the

Syrians continued to pray for their Nestorian patriarch. Hence this legitimate method of winning over the people to the Roman side by convincing them of their mistakes, had to be abandoned.

2nd Stage.—Now they adopted a different method which was as dishonourable as the first was honourable. It consisted in kidnapping Syrian Bishops who came from Babylon and in preventing them from coming over to India and ordaining priests and bishops. In short, they attempted to cut off the connection between the Syrian Church and the Babylonian Church. Portuguese ships controlled the sea and orders were issued to all commanders to watch carefully the various ports where these bishops were likely to arrive. Babylonian Bishop Mar Joseph of the Malabar Church was arrested at Cochin for teaching something which the Romans thought to be heretical and sent to Goa for trial. He was then sent to Portugal and he came to the Queen of Portugal; confessed his errors and pledged to reform his Church and bring it under the Roman rule. He was therefore allowed to return. But after the arrival on his native soil he resumed the teaching of his old Nestorian faith. Hence he was craftily seized and sent to Rome; where he died, how, nobody knows.

Mar Abraham who was sent from Babylon to succeed Mar Joseph had to meet with the same fate. He was caught in 1557 and deported to Rome *via* Mozambique. On the voyage to Europe he escaped to Mosul. Having obtained necessary orders from the Patriarch as the Bishop of Angamali he proceeded to India. But first he went to Rome and there got the sanction of the Pope, by renouncing his faith, to return to India as the Bishop of

Angamali. But once safely arrived he proclaimed himself the Syrian of the Syrians and taught his people the doctrines he had once forsworn at Rome. Being of a flexible nature he had no difficulty in making a promise and then breaking it. Another bishop, by name Mar Simeon, was sent at this time from Babylon. He too was deported to Portugal where he was imprisoned and put to death. In 1590 Mar Abraham was invited to Goa to attend a synod, but refused to go. In 1597 he passed away in his own church at Angamali, after entrusting the charge of the Malankara Church with Archdeacon George of the ancient Pakalomatom family, and was buried there. He closed his career after many turnings, a Syrian of the Syrians. He was the last bishop of the undivided Syrian Church. With his death came Rome's best opportunity to subdue the Church.

3rd Stage.—Compulsion and brute force were applied. At the point of the sword the Church was forced to become Roman Catholic. In 1595 there came to India, as Archbishop of Goa, a man named Menezes with strict orders from the Pope to subjugate the persisting schismatic Church of Malabar. A Papal Brief dated 27th January 1595, authorized him to enquire into the errors of Mar Abraham to arrest him, if found guilty, and to appoint a Roman Bishop as his successor, and to take every precaution to prevent Babylonian Bishops from coming over to Malabar. Every attempt was so made. Many a bishop-designate from Babylon tried to come. But they were all captured and sent back. The See of Angamali remained vacant for many years. Archdeacon George (Ghevarughese) carried on ecclesiastical administration in the interval.

Archbishop Menezes sent a letter to the Archdeacon appointing him to the head of the Diocese on condition that he would sign a profession of the Roman faith. The Archdeacon paid no heed to the letter. He said, 'I am sure that the Roman Church has no more to do with the Apostolic Church of St. Thomas than the Apostle had to do with the Church of Rome.' A synod of the priests and leading laymen of the Church was summoned by the Archdeacon at Angamali. With one voice they all supported the Archdeacon and made a solemn pledge that they would stand by their ancient faith and practice and would have no bishop except one appointed by the Babylonian patriarch. In 1599 the Archbishop started from Goa for Cochin. The Archdeacon had been asked to meet him, and he came with a bodyguard of three thousand armed men.

Undismayed at this sight the Archdeacon was forced to sign a document which excommunicated the Patriarch of Babylon. He hesitated at first but a stern word from the Archbishop decided him. 'Sign it, Father, for it is full time to lay the axe at the root of the tree.' The Archdeacon at last submitted though unwillingly. When the people knew it they got enraged, but he pacified them by giving them the sorry excuse that there was time for everything. This was the time for dissimulation. He said that he signed the document to preserve the Church till a bishop from Babylon should arrive. The next attempt of the Bishop was to visit the various parishes and bring the people to the Roman faith. He went up and down the country by preaching in the churches and conciliating the priests and the laity by every means he

could devise, stooping even to bribery. He administered the Sacrament of Confirmation on some people and ordained in all some ninety young priests to get the majority in the ensuing Synod.

SYNOD OF DIAMPER—1599

Just before the Synod the Archdeacon was asked to subscribe to the Ten Articles which were presented to him. They were :

1. The abjuration of the errors of Nestorius.
2. A declaration that there is no separate doctrine of St. Thomas and doctrine of St. Peter but only one Gospel of Christ.
3. Acceptance of the confession of faith which the Archbishop sent from Goa.
4. All Syriac books to be delivered either for correction or for burning.
5. To accept the Pope as the head of all Christian Churches.
6. To excommunicate the Patriarch of Babylon and to cease all communications with him.
7. To admit no bishop into the Diocese except those sent by the Pope and recognised by the Archbishop.
8. To acknowledge the Archbishop of Goa as his ecclesiastical superior.
9. To convene a synod representative of all the Churches.
10. The Archdeacon is to accompany the Archbishop on a tour through the Diocese without any armed bodyguard.

The Archdeacon had to drink this bitter cup of humiliation. The ground being prepared for the Synod it was convened on June 20th, 1599. 813

members in all attended—133 priests, 20 deacons and 660 laymen. The Portuguese Governor of Cochin and other officers with armed soldiers were also present. Resolutions previously prepared by the Archbishop were passed one after another. The representatives were really afraid to raise any opposition. The Synod lasted for 8 days. The Archdeacon and all the priests present were forced to sign the resolutions though unwillingly. By the Synod the whole Syrian Church was brought under the Roman yoke. Syriac books were collected, some burnt, and others corrected. The priests were asked to divorce their wives. Image worship and other Roman rites were also introduced. The Patriarch of Babylon was excommunicated and the people were forced to acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope of Rome. Not only were the Roman rites and ceremonies introduced but doctrines, characteristic of the Roman Church were also introduced such as Transubstantiation in the Holy Eucharist, and teaching about Purgatory, Indulgence and Papal supremacy.

Just after the synod Menezes visited the various churches to enforce the resolutions of the Synod and to collect as many Syriac books as possible to burn them. During his tour he came to Cheppad church also and burnt a lot of Syriac books and other records and placed there an image of St. Mary with the child Jesus which still exists. The people were bought over by bribes and presents to Roman ways. Syrian usages were discarded everywhere and Roman methods adopted. Within ten months Menezes is said to have accomplished what an ordinary man could not have accomplished in ten years. After consecrating and appointing Father

Francisco Roz as the Bishop of Angamali he left for Goa as a victorious conqueror.

The Faith and Practice of the Syrian Church before the Synod of Diamper.—The Acts and Decrees of Diamper are of no inconsiderable value, as an historical record of the faith and practice of the Syrian Church. No other valuable records now exist showing the doctrines or customs of our Church before the 16th century as Menezes burnt them all. The following facts are clear from these records:—

1. The Syrian Church rejected the Papal supremacy. It was with very great difficulty that the Syrians were made to mention the name of the Pope in their public services. What Menezes did was to erase the name of Patriarch and write the name of the Pope in its place. Even Gouvea the historian admits that they abhorred the Pope and the Church of Rome as anti-christian and that for the reason that they pretended to superiority and jurisdiction over all churches. The Syrian Church always acknowledged the Patriarch of Babylon as its spiritual head and not the Pope of Rome, and it is seen from the decrees of the Council that this Patriarch was ex-communicated, and that the Syrians were not allowed to use his name in their prayers (liturgies.)

2nd Point.—They condemned the use of images as idolatrous. The Syrian Church before the Synod of Diamper never used images in their churches. The only symbol they used was the cross which they venerated with great devotion. On Good Friday they used to have special services in connection with the Holy Cross.

3rd Point.—The Syrian Church never believed in the transubstantiation theory of the Holy Eucharist. But they believed that after consecration the

holy elements (Bread and Wine) become the body and blood of Christ. How they become so, they have never tried to explain.

4. Prayer for the dead and invocation of the saints were common in the church.

Session 3.—Decree 9 of the Synod definitely says that the Church commemorated Nestorius and other Nestorian saints in the Holy Mass and that prayers were offered to them. Besides, saints' days were celebrated with great pomp and splendour. Their liturgies contained prayers for the departed souls as all ancient liturgies contained. Menezes abolished the Saints' days of the Church and substituted Roman Saints' days. The Church seems to have neglected the practice of offering prayers and holy Eucharist on behalf of the departed.

5. The Church accepted all the Seven Sacraments even though some of them had not been in practice, e.g. very few members of the Church went for regular confession and communion.

6. The Church observed the five fasting periods. The Holy Lent of forty days, Fast of Advent, Fast of Jonah, Fast of the Apostles, and the Fast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mary.

During the Lent days they abstain from eggs, cheese, anything made of milk, fish or meat. They abstain totally from wine and from their wives. Besides the five fasts Wednesdays and Fridays also were observed every week. But Menezes introduced the observance of Saturday for Wednesday and the observance of midnight-fasts.

7. The priests were all married till the time of the Synod, but Menezes insisted on their remaining unmarried.

8. Introduction of unleavened bread.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REVOLT OF THE SYRIANS AND THE
COONAN CROSS—1653, AND MAR THOMA
1ST TO MAR THOMA 6TH

THE first Roman Bishop of Angamali, Francisco Roz, was succeeded by Xavier who in turn was succeeded by Stephen de Britto. In 1634 a Jesuit Bishop named Garcia ruled the Syrians with an iron rod. He attempted to abolish the Syriac language and to introduce Latin in Church Services. The Carmelite Order was now introduced into India and gradually rose to power and position in various places. One of their bishops named Joseph even surpassed Archbishop Menezes in the oppression and persecution of the Syrians.

By this time Archdeacon George had passed away in 1637 and had been succeeded by Archdeacon Thomas. Such oppressions continuing for over 50 years and the introduction of so many Roman rites and ceremonies into the Church, one after another, roused the patient spirit of the Syrians, who were groaning under the weight of the Roman yoke into violent action. They revolted in the year 1653. The occasion was the following:—

A Jacobite (orthodox) prelate by name Ahathalla, or Ignatius according to some, sent by the Antiochian Patriarch at the request of the Syrian Church in distress came from Alexandria and on landing at Surat he was caught by the Jesuits and sent to Mylapore where he was kept as a prisoner. At this time two Syrian deacons, Itty and Kurien by name, had gone to Mylapore to make a vow at the shrine of St. Thomas. The Bishop is said to have

managed to send a letter to the Syrians through the deacons, asking Archdeacon Thomas to carry on ecclesiastical functions in the church as its head of the Church. Meanwhile Ahathalla was put on board the Portuguese fleet bound for Goa. When the fleet reached Cochin some 25 thousand armed Syrians came to the Portuguese authorities and demanded the release of their Bishop. The Portuguese turned a deaf ear to this request and closed the gates of the town. At night the Bishop was taken on board the ship and drowned in the sea. According to another version he was burnt at Goa by the Court of Inquisition.

The Syrians were greatly infuriated at this news and assembled at Mattanchery in Cochin before the Coonan Cross and took a solemn oath renouncing all obedience to the Roman Pope. All except 400 men out of the population numbering about 200,000 left the Roman Church and returned to their original mother Syrian Church. People who remained in the Roman Church came to be called Pazhayakoot and those who left it were called by the Romans Puthenkoot whereas the reverse is the truth.

News of this revolt reached Rome and the newly elected Pope Alexander VII entrusted to the Carmelites the task of bringing back the Syrians to the Roman fold which attempt in the end proved to be futile. Archdeacon Thomas assumed the title of Mar Thoma. Some say that twelve Syrian priests laid their hands on him and consecrated him. It cannot be a fact. A meeting of the Syrians was convened at Alangad and there a council of four members was appointed to help Mar Thoma: members being Kadavil Fr. Chandy, Kadathuruthi; Vengoor Fr. Ghevarughese, Angamali; Anjilimootil Fr. Itty

Thomen, Kalliseri ; Palliveetil Fr. Chandy, Kuravallangad.

Meanwhile a good many of the Syrians left their Mother Church and joined the Roman Church as they had no duly consecrated bishop. They had written to the Patriarch of Antioch to send them a bishop. Then Mar Thoma and his party had to undergo untold hardships at the hands of the Romans. In 1665 Gregorius, Metropolitan of Jerusalem, came to Malabar and consecrated Archdeacon Thoma as Bishop Mar Thoma I. Bishop Gregorius remained here till his death in A.D. 1670. The year 1665 is important since it was then that the Syrian Church came to have direct connection with the Antiochian Church for the first time.

Mar Thoma I (of the Pakalomatom family) died in 1670 and was buried at Angamali. He is the first native bishop of the Syrian Church according to some historians.

MAR THOMA II—1670-1686

Mar Gregorius with the help of Mar Thoma I consecrated a brother of Mar Thoma I as Mar Thoma II. Very little is known of this man except that in his time two prelates from Syria—Mar Baselius and Mar Ivanios—visited Malabar in 1685. Mar Baselius was a Catholicos and the other a Bishop. They both came to Kothamangalam, and the former of the two passed away at Kothamangalam a few days after their arrival and was interred in that church.

Mar Ivanios being a zealous bishop worked assiduously for the uplift of the Church and got back many of the Syrians who had embraced the Roman

faith. Mar Thoma II died in 1686 and was buried in the church at Niranam.

MAR THOMA III—1686-1688

Mar Thoma the III, another member of the Pakalomatom family, was consecrated bishop by Mar Ivanios. He did not live long as bishop. Having died in 1688 he was buried at the church at Kadampnanad and was succeeded by Mar Thoma IV.

MAR THOMA IV—1688-1728

He also belongs to the Pakalomatom family and was consecrated bishop by Mar Ivanios. Mar Ivanios died in 1693 in Mulanthuruthi. In the year 1708 there arrived in Malabar a Nestorian bishop named Gabriel who caused much trouble in the Syrian Church till his death in 1731. He was buried in Cheriapalli, Kottayam. Mar Thoma was so much annoyed by him that he wrote a letter to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in 1709 about his struggles requesting him to send some bishop from there.

The letter was entrusted to the Dutch Company to be given to the Patriarch. But it found its way to Europe. Another letter was similarly written in 1720 to the Patriarch of Antioch. But that too did not reach its destination. Both these letters were published later in Europe. Mar Thoma IV died in 1728 and was buried in the Kandanad church. Before his death he consecrated a cousin of his as Mar Thoma V.

MAR THOMA V—1728-1765

He was a very zealous Bishop. His zeal against the Roman Church and against Nestorianism is

shown in his correspondence with the Dutch authorities at Cochin. In one of his letters he wrote in 1729 it is stated as follows: 'We acknowledge the Church of Antioch for our head, that the Messiah has but one Nature and one Person and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father only and in the Holy Sacrament of Eucharist we distribute fresh bread which is baked that same day; also in fasting there is a difference between us and the Nestorians.'

The Dutch Chaplain replied to this letter by saying that both the Nestorian Bishops, Mar Gabriel and Mar Thoma, were heretics, the one a Nestorian and the other a Eutican, and that the only way of saving them and their Church is by inviting them to join the Protestant Mission. Mar Thoma wrote in 1730 from Kandanad that he could not reply to that letter and agree to their proposal unless and until he got permission from the Patriarch and then the matter was stopped there.

Mar Thoma was uneasy about the validity of his consecration and hence he tried to get down a Bishop from Antioch. First he sent a letter by a Jew named Ezakiel who accordingly brought a Bishop, Ivanius by name, from Antioch. But for some reason he was regarded with suspicion and so Mar Thoma did not receive consecration at his hands. Next he sent another letter to Antioch by a deacon named Anthonius. At the same time he made arrangements with the Dutch Company at Cochin to pay them Rs. 4,000, to bring over these Bishops. In 1751 there landed at Cochin in a Dutch ship Mapriana Baselius, Mar Gregorius, one Remban John, one core Episcopa and a deacon with credentials from the Patriarch Ignatius XXVIII.

According to the letter which these prelates

brought with them from the Patriarch, Bishop Ivanius left Malabar. A dispute then arose between Mar Thoma V and the Dutch authorities about the passage money and the Company at last filed a suit against Mar Thoma in the Court of Travancore and Mar Thoma with great difficulty had to pay up the amount. Though the passage money was thus paid and the bishops from Syria set free, the Syrian bishops were never satisfied with Mar Thoma's attitude and behaviour and consequently they refrained from consecrating Mar Thoma. The breach between them lasted till Mar Thoma's death in 1765, who before his death consecrated Mar Thoma VI.

Mar Baselius Mapriana built a church at Mattancherry and spent the remaining days of his life there. Before he died at Kandanad in 1764 he consecrated Ramban John as Bishop Mar Ivanius.

MAR THOMA VI or

MAR DIONYSIUS I. (THE GREAT).—1765-1808

Mar Thoma V was succeeded by his nephew Mar Thoma VI in 1765. He was one of our greatest and ablest Metropolitans. His consecration was completed by Mar Gregorius and Mar Ivanius, the two Syrian bishops at the Niranam church in 1772. He henceforward took up the name of Mar Dionysius. The staff and the cross which the Syrian bishops had brought with them from Antioch for Mar Thoma V, was handed over to Mar Dionysius.

CHAPTER IX

ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH OF THOZHIYUR OR ANJOOR

*" The visit of Dr. Buchanan and the Church
Endowment Fund and Mar Thoma VI to
Mar Dionysius II*

MAR GREGORIUS stayed at Mattancherry with one Remban Ghevarughese of Kattumangad near Paravur, whom he consecrated in 1772 as Bishop Cyril (Koorilos). Bishop Dionysius did not like this. Therefore Mar Cyril had to flee from Travancore to British parts. He went over to Thozhiyur near Cochin and founded an independant Bishopric which continues to this day. The present Mar Koorilos is the ninth Metropolitan of that See. To the fourth of these, *i.e.* to Mar Philoxinos II, the Syrian Church is indebted for the consecration of three Metropolitans, Mar Dionysius II, Mar Dionysius III and Mar Dionysius IV and to the latter the Thozhiyur church is indebted in turn for the consecration of his successor, Mar Koorilos III.

Visit of Dr. Buchanan.—Another important event in the time of Mar Dionysius was the visit of Dr. Buchanan, Vice-Principal of Fort William College at Calcutta in the year 1806. He came here with a view to collecting ancient Syriac manuscripts and information about the Syrian Church. He visited several churches such as Mavelikara, Chengannoor, Kalliseri, Puthenkavu, Maramon, Kozhenchery, Niranam, Ranni, Kandanad, Angamali and Kunnamkulam and had interviews with many priests and with Mar Dionysius. He discussed with Mar Dionysius the possibilities of a union

between the Syrian Church and the Church of England (Anglican Church). When Mar Dionysius was asked about the Church union he said that though certain extraneous customs which crept into or were latterly introduced into the Syrian Church required reform, yet he would not do anything that would affect the purity and dignity of his ancient Church. Dr. Buchanan had very great appreciation of Mar Dionysius. In one place he describes him as follows:—

'He was dressed in a Vestment of dark red silk, a gold cross hung from his neck and his venerable beard reached below his girdle. Similar, thought I, was the appearance of Chrysostom of the Early Church. I find him to be far superior in knowlege to any of his clergy whom I had seen; very devout and punctilious in observances.'

Mar Dionysius presented him with a Syriac manuscript of the Bible about which he says: 'It had been supposed that the Roman Catholics had destroyed in 1599 all the Syriac books; but it appears that they did not destroy one copy of the Bible and I have now in my possession some manuscripts of scriptures of a high antiquity. The Bishop presented to me an ancient copy of the Old Testament and New Testament in Syriac on thick vellum reputed to be as old as the Alexandrian manuscripts.'

Dr. Buchanan took this manuscript and presented it to the Cambridge University where it was printed and published. Dr. Buchanan on his return to Europe published in 1811 his famous book named 'Christian Researches in Asia', a book which brought to the knowledge of the British public the existence of the Syrian Church in India, which had lasting results on the Syrian Church.

Another important event in the administration of Mar Dionysius was the invasion of Tippu in Travancore and Cochin. Tippu demolished some Churches in Cochin and North Travancore.

In the year 1807 another foreign Bishop named Dioscoros sent by the Patriarch is said to have visited the Syrian Church. While visiting the various churches in the interior he misappropriated funds belonging to them and hence he was arrested and transported by the Government.

The Church Endowment Fund.—The sum of three thousand star pagodas (gold coin worth $3\frac{1}{2}$ rupees) equal to Rs. 10,500 was invested in 1808 as a perpetual loan with the Madras Government; at the high and favoured rate of 8 per cent interest in the name of Mar Thoma VII, the successor of Mar Dionysius, with the understanding that the interest was to be drawn by the Syrian Church for charitable or religious purposes.

A similar sum was invested for the benefit of the Roman Catholic Church also. Both these investments remain to this day. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Verapoly draws the interest on their part. Different versions are given about the origin of this Fund. One version is that the money was the amount saved by Mar Dionysius and that Col. Macaulay, the then Resident of Travancore, in the troublous times of the revolt of 1808, borrowed this sum from the Bishop and that instead of repaying the amount it was thus invested with the British Government.

Another version is, that these sums were the forfeited property of a wealthy christian named Mathu Tharakan, and still another version is that it was the private money of the Resident given as a

thankoffering when he escaped in the Revolt of 1808.

In 1796 Mar Dionysius consecrated his successor Mar Thoma VII. Mar Dionysius died at Niranam in 1808 at the age of 80. His body was removed to Puthenkavu church and buried there according to his request. It was this Dionysius that built the Puthenkavu church.

MAR THOMA VII—1808—1809

He did not live long after the death of Mar Dionysius. He also belonged to the Pakalomatom family. One year after his consecration he passed away after consecrating his successor, another Mar Thoma belonging to the female branch of his family. This Consecration of Mar Thoma VIII is said to have been done, when the Bishop was on the point of death by placing the Metropolitan's hand on the head of the candidate. All kinds of dispute arose after this Consecration.

MAR THOMA VIII—1809—1816

Dissension arose in the Church on account of the irregular consecration of the Bishop. Joseph Remban of Kunnamkulam was the leader of the Opposition party. Both parties approached the then Resident Col. Macaulay for a settlement of the dispute. As Macaulay had to leave Travancore shortly the question remained undecided for some years.

Col. Munro, his successor, came in 1810. He was both the Dewan and Resident of Travancore. The question was again taken up. As Mar Thoma was not a properly ordained Bishop, Col. Munro handed over the four years' interest of the Trust

Fund, amounting to Rs. 3,360, to Joseph Remban. Joseph Remban was at this time collecting money from the various churches to build an educational institution. The money he got from Col. Munro was spent in building up of the Old Seminary, Kottayam, which he started in 1813 and completed in a year's time.

H. H. The Maha Rani Parvathi Bai of Travancore gave the site for the Seminary free of tax and Rs. 8,000 in addition. Another sum of twenty thousand rupees and the Munro Isle were also given to the Syrian Church by the Maha Rani through the influence of Col. Munro.

In 1815 Remban Joseph of Kunnamkulam was consecrated Bishop by Mar Philoxinos of Thozhiyur in the name of Mar Dionysius II. He made the Kottayam seminary his permanent abode where he passed away.

Mar Thoma VIII died in 1816 after consecrating a relative of his by name Fr. Eapen under the title of Mar Thoma IX. His Consecration was also invalid. Col. Munro is said to have addressed seventeen questions concerning the state of the Syrian Church to Mar Thoma VIII in 1813.

Mar Thoma IX was the last bishop of Pakalamatom family and in fact Mar Thoma VIII and IX were not descended from the male line of the family but of the female line.

MAR DIONYSIUS II—1815-1818

His Consecration was confirmed by a Royal Proclamation of the Government. Col. Munro the Resident made for the first time the suggestion that the Anglican Church and the Syrian Church should work together in harmony and co-operation for the

improvement of the Church and for the extension of the Church among the heathen. The Bishop was called over to Quilon and the Resident had an interview with him. He requested the Bishop to admit the C. M. S. priest by name Norton in the Seminary. He stoutly opposed this but at the same time he allowed C. M. S. missionaries to visit the Syrian church and preach to the Syrian people.

CHAPTER X

THE SYRIAN CHURCH AND THE ANGLICAN CONNECTION 1816—1840, AND MAR DIONYSIUS III AND IV

THE publication of Dr. Buchanan's Christian Researches excited sympathy and interest in the minds of Englishmen on behalf of the Syrians. Col. Macaulay, the British Resident in Travancore, was a friend and sympathiser of the Syrian Church. It was his successor, Col. Munro, who took a definite step to ameliorate the conditions of the Church which was in a very declining state both spiritually and socially. He persuaded the Maha Rani Parvathi Bai to make a grant to the Church. He wrote to the Church Missionary Society in England to send out clergy for the purpose of instructing the people. Accordingly Messrs. Baile, Baker and Fenn were sent to work among the Syrians. Norton settled at Alleppy and started his work among the heathen. Mr. Baile opened a Mission at Kottayam. English education was started in the old Seminary. Schools were set up in different centres. The Bible was

translated and printed; the churches were visited and the Word of God was preached to the people. The Seminary was later transferred to the place where the C.M.S. College now stands. Everything worked smoothly for some years. The Missionaries took the deepest interest in their work. Most friendly and most amicable relation existed between the Missionaries and the Metropolitan. The Metropolitan was only pleased with their zeal for souls, their emphasis on biblical truths and their indefatigable energy. But gradually Missionaries began to change their policy. They had started their work among the Syrians with the definite understanding that they would not interfere with the Faith or practice of the Church or destroy its independence. After some years they began to introduce certain alterations in the Liturgy and in some centres they introduced the Anglican liturgy in place of Syrian liturgy. Besides they preached against the doctrines of the Church such as Prayer for the Dead, Invocation of the Saints, Holy Eucharist as a sacrifice and so forth. Hence the Bishop, Mar Dionysius of Cheppad, stoutly opposed all such attempts. Feelings between the Missionaries and the Metropolitan got estranged and there was a breach of peace.

The breach was at length widened when Bishop Wilson of Calcutta visited Travancore in 1832. Bishop Wilson demanded that the Metropolitan should ordain only those who produce certificates of ability and character from the heads of the College. (2) The accounts of the Church and the College should be audited under the supervision of the Resident. (3) The practice of saying Mass for the Dead should be abolished. Mar Dionysius very

well thought that this was an encroachment of the independence of the Syrian Church. He therefore convened a Synod at Mavelikara in 1836 to consider these proposals. They finally rejected the proposals and decided that they should have no more connection with the C.M.S. Church.

Division of the Property.—The Union being thus dissolved arbitrators were appointed by the Travancore Government. The Board of Arbitrators consisted of Baron De Albedyhlh nominated by the missionaries, J. S. Vernede nominated by the Metropolitan and W. H. Horsely nominated by the Government. Both parties placed their case before the arbitrators and adduced evidences in support of their contentions. The Board gave their decision in 1840. According to the finding of their decision all the funds and endowments obtained prior to the arrival of the Missionaries were to belong to the Syrians and administered by the Metropolitan in conjunction with a Syrian priest and layman elected by the Syrians. Thus the old Seminary and the property adjoining to it and the 3,000 star pagodas came to the possession of the Syrian Church. As regards other properties and endowments received subsequent to the arrival of the Missionaries, namely, the Munro island, the College compound and the buildings thereon, the Board decided that they should be administered by the missionaries since the Metropolitan refused to work with them.

MAR DIONYSIUS III AND IV

Mar Dionysius III—1818-1825.—At the death of Dionysius II, Philoxinos of Thozhiyur assumed the charge of the Church as the Malankara Metropolitan and George Kathanar of Punnathra house

was made his Archdeacon. This arrangement lasted only for eight months. After that the Archdeacon was made Bishop by Philoxinos with the title of Mar Dionysius III. and Mar Philoxinos retired to his Diocese in Thozhiyur. Mar Dionysius' appointment as the Metropolitan of Malankara was acknowledged by the Government by means of the usual proclamation. Like Mar Dionysius II he heartily co-operated with the Missionaries. Col. Digby Macbirt, who visited him some four years after his consecration speaks of him as a gentleman and humble Christian and as one who does not neglect the habit of private prayer. He was very loyal to the Patriarch of Antioch. He wrote more than one letter to him requesting His Holiness to send to Malankara a Malpan or a Bishop. After a short rule of eight years he passed away in 1825 after an attack of cholera. He was not more than forty years old when he died and he was buried in the Cheriapalli Kottayam.

After the death of Dionysius III, Mar Philoxinos was proclaimed as the rightful Malankara Metropolitan. The successor to Mar Dionysius III was chosen by casting lots and the lot fell to Cheppad Philipose Kathanar and he was consecrated by Mar Philoxinos under the title Mar Dionysius IV in the year 1825 as an assistant to Mar Philoxinos. This arrangement lasted till the death of Mar Philoxinos which took place in 1830.

Mar Dionysius II and III cherished more or less a friendly attitude towards the Missionaries. But Mar Dionysius IV was a contrast to them. We have already seen how he vehemently opposed their attempts to introduce reforms in the faith and practice of the Syrian Church and how he at the

Synod of Mavelikara in 1836 passed resolutions against the proposals of Bishop Wilson.

In 1825 the Patriarch sent to Malabar a Bishop named Athanasius to regularise the Consecration of Mar Dionysius and of Mar Philoxinos and ex-communicate them if they refused.

CHAPTER XI

SEPARATION OF THE REFORMED SYRIANS, MAR MATHEWS ATHANASIOS AND MAR DIONYSIUS V

SEEDS of Reformation were sown in the Church by the Protestant missionaries. They gradually began to take root in many souls and to fructify. Abraham Malpan of Palakunnathu Maramon, who imbibed the Protestant principles during his period of education under the Protestant missionaries at the College, Kottayam, was mainly instrumental in introducing and giving an impetus to the Reformation Movement in the Syrian Church. He first introduced reforms in his own parish at Maramon. He made alterations in the Liturgy. Auricular Confession, Prayer for the Dead, Invocation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebration of the Eucharist when there was none to communicate were all put a stop to. In administering the Lord's Supper he gave the bread and wine separately as in Protestant churches. The Reformation began to spread beyond the parish and the deacons who were receiving instructions under the Malpan stood by him. When Mar Dionysius of Cheppad came to know of this he

became uneasy and excommunicated Abraham Malpan and the Maramon Congregation and gave out that he would not ordain to priesthood any of the deacons who placed themselves under his training. The Malpan then devised a new plan of getting consecrated a bishop who would be favourable to his reforms. He chose one of the deacons, his own nephew Mathen (Mathew) who was having his education in the C. M. S. school at Madras.

He sent him to Mesopotamia. He was the first Bishop who went to Mesopotamia for Consecration. Deacon Mathew started to Mesopotamia in 1841. He stayed there for two years and was consecrated in the name of Mar Athanasius as Metropolitan of Malankara church. It is stated that he had taken with him a few false documents with the signatures of the people of Malankara requesting the Patriarch to consecrate him and that while he was deacon he celebrated Holy Kurbana (Eucharist) at Mosul. In 1843 he returned to Malabar as Metropolitan with his Stathicon. The Travancore Government and the British Resident recognised him as the regular Metropolitan. As soon as he reached Malabar Mar Dionysius IV of Cheppad sent memorials to the Patriarch to the effect that the new Bishop got his position by deception and that he was inclined to Protestantism. Therefore the Patriarch sent his secretary, Mar Kurilos, Bishop, with full powers, and with a number of blank papers signed by him to be used when necessity arose.

Mar Dionysius IV of Cheppad and Mar Kurilos worked together to expel Mar Athanasius. Mar Kurilos assumed the charge of the church of Malankara Metropolitan and Mar Dionysius retired to Cheppad where he died in 1855. The matter of contention

was reported to the Resident. The Resident appointed a committee at Quilon to look into the documents of Kurilos and Athanasius. They decided that the documents produced by Mar Kurilos were forged ones and those of Athanasius genuine and as such Mar Athanasius was the rightful Metropolitan. Upon this report in 1852 a royal proclamation was made that Mar Athanasius was the rightful Metropolitan. At this time there came another foreign Bishop named Stephanos from the Patriarch. His arrival brought fresh troubles. Hence the Resident asked him not to interfere in any church matters. Against this order he made an appeal to the Board of Directors in England. They issued orders that the Syrian Christians should be left to themselves and that the Resident should not interfere in church matters.

Accordingly in 1863 the Travancore Government issued an order giving notice that the people were at liberty to follow Mar Kurilos or Athanasius as they liked. The next stage in the life of Mar Athanasius was coming of Pulikottil Joseph Kathanar as Dionysius V after having been consecrated at the hands of the Patriarch. Joseph Dionysius was a close relative of Ittoop Remban or Dionysius II. Joseph Dionysius returned to Malabar in 1865 with the Stathicon authorising him as the Malankara Metropolitan. Fresh troubles arose when he arrived. He appealed to the Government against Mar Athanasius that he should be recognised as the lawful Metropolitan since he had been consecrated by the Patriarch and Mar Athanasius had been dismissed. At the same time he tried to obtain a royal proclamation in his favour. But to no effect.

In 1869 Mar Athanasius consecrated his cousin Thomas Kathanar as his successor with the title Thomas Athanasius. The consecration of a bishop without the sanction or approval of the Patriarch was an open breach with Antioch.

"Patriarch Jacob II died and was succeeded by Peter III in 1872. Mar Dionysius V at last succeeded in bringing him to Malankara in 1875. On his way to Malabar he visited England and had an interview with Queen Victoria and arrived in India with a few letters of introduction and recommendation to the Madras Government.

As soon as he arrived here the tables were turned. The Travancore Government withdrew the proclamation granted to Athanasius and in 1876 the Government issued an order to the effect that the Government would no more interfere with the affairs of the Church and the two parties should establish their claims in a civil court.

THE SYNOD OF MULANTHURUTHI—1876

Patriarch Peter III convened a synod at Mulanthuruthi in 1876. Mar Dionysius V was confirmed as Malankara Metropolitan. Six other bishops were consecrated by the Patriarch. Parumala Mar Gregorius was one among them. The Church considers him as the greatest saint that has risen in Malabar. He was Bishop for 25 years. He passed away in 1902 at the age of 54 and was buried at Parumala. His shrine is a place of pilgrimage for the Syrian Christians. The Malankara Church was divided into seven Dioceses and the Bishops consecrated by Patriarch Peter were appointed over each. The Patriarch returned to Mesopotamia after two years.

Mar Athanasius died in Maramon Church in 1877 and was succeeded by Thomas Athanasius, son of Abraham Malpan. Immediately after the departure of the Patriarch Mar Dionysius V filed a suit in the Alleppey Court on March 4th, 1879, to recover from Thomas Athanasius the Kottayam Seminary and other properties. The suit was before the court for ten years. In 1889 the final judgement was pronounced. The Appellate Court was composed of three judges: two Brahmins and one European. Mr. Ormsby the European judge pronounced a minority judgement. According to him the Syrian Church remained an autonomous Church in Malabar with a custom that each Bishop consecrated his successor and that the consent of the Patriarch was not necessary for the validity of the consecration or for the due succession of prelates in the Church. The Brahmin judges on the other hand held that the Church was under the Patriarch of Antioch who is the only authority competent to consecrate Bishops of the Syrian Church. Mar Dionysius, being duly consecrated by a Patriarch and accepted by the majority of the Church at Synod held at Mulanthuruthi in 1876, was the rightful Malankara Metropolitan and as such the Kottayam Seminary and other properties must go to him. This was followed by a number of suits regarding individual churches in possession of the reformed party. These suits were mostly decided in the end after 10 years in favour of Mar Dionysius. The split between the reformed party and the orthodox party became permanent. The reformed section formed a new church styling themselves as Mar Thoma Church contending that theirs is the true Church founded by St. Thomas. After the death of Mar

Thomas Athanasius in 1885 he was succeeded by his brother Titus Mar Thoma. The recently deceased Metropolitan Titus II. Mar Thoma was his successor. During his time the reformed Syrians or Marthomites as they began to call themselves later, have made great progress in Church government and now they number about 1,74,000.

CHAPTER XII

MAR DIONYSIUS VI AND THE SUBSEQUENT STATE OF THE CHURCH

The visit of H. H. The Catholicos to the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order and the tour of H. G. Mar Thoma Dionysius throughout the India Command.

IN THE year 1908 Vattaseril Ghevarughese Malpan and one Poulouse Remban were sent to the Patriarch and they returned duly consecrated bishops as Mar Dionysius VI and Mar Kurilos. Mar Dionysius V died in 1909 and was buried in the old seminary, Kottayam. In the year 1910 Patriarch Moran Mar Abdulla came to Malabar from Mesopotamia. This Abdulla patriarch was for ten years in the Roman Catholic Church when he failed to get the Patriarchate for the first chance. This time Abdul Messiah came to the Patriarchal throne. It is believed that Patriarch Abdul Messiah was made to be deposed by withdrawal of Government sanction (Firman) through the influence of Mar Abdulla and thus Mar Abdulla got the chance of becoming Patriarch.

When Patriarch Abdulla came to Malabar he demanded from Mar Dionysius VI an agreement in matters regarding the property of the Church. This Mar Dionysius VI refused to give. So according to the persuasion of a party Patriarch Abdulla excommunicated Mar Dionysius VI. Due to this excommunication, Patriarch's party received Bishop Mar Kurilos as exercising powers over Malabar. In 1913 Kurilos Bishop filed suit against Mar Dionysius VI for handing over charge of the church properties and funds. At this time the Patriarch Abdul Messiah who was deposed by illegal means came to Malabar and re-established the Catholicate of the East. He installed Bishop Mar Ivanios of Kandanad as the 1st Catholicos of the East in Malabar in the year 1912.

The then Patriarch who was on the throne was against this re-establishment of the Catholicate. According to Canon Law if two patriarchs happen to be in existence the senior patriarch must exercise powers. Mar Dionysius VI adhering to this principle explains the validity of the installation of Catholicos by Abdul Messiah. Patriarch Abdul Messiah returned in 1913. In 1915 Abdul Messiah died and was buried in the patriarchal grave.

In 1920 the Zilla Court pronounced judgement to the effect that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius VI was invalid. Patriarch's party appealed to the High Court. By that time Mar Kurilos had passed away and Mar Athanasius of Alwaye Seminary had succeeded him. In the year 1923 Mar Dionysius VI went over to Mardin to see the then Patriarch Elias and to make a compromise for the breach which had taken place between the previous Patriarch Abdullah and Dionysius VI.

The excommunication of Mar Dionysius VI made by Abdullah was cancelled by Patriarch Elias, and Delegate Mar Eulios was sent along with Mar Dionysius with the order cancelling the excommunication.

Delegate Mar Eulios, when he reached Malabar on account of the persuasion of a few interested people, did not proclaim the order cancelling the excommunication.

In 1923 the High Court pronounced the judgment that the excommunication of Mar Dionysius VI was valid. In 1925 Mar Dionysius VI filed a revision appeal in the Travancore High Court and the decision was favourable to him. Meanwhile the 1st Catholicos died. Installation of the 2nd Catholicos took place in 1925 and in the same year Father P. T. Ghevarughese, M.A., was made Bishop of Bethany ashram belonging to the Syrian Church. In 1930 Mar Ivanios, Bishop of Bethany ashram, renounced the Syrian faith and joined the Roman Church where he became an archbishop.

In 1927 a great meeting of the representatives of every parish of the Syrian Church in Malabar was convened in Alwaye to consider the possibilities of a compromise between the two parties. Priests and laity of both parties (Patriarch's party and Catholicos' party) attended the meeting largely. One generous planter, Mr. E. Kochumman of Cheppad, Municipal Chairman of Alwaye and a leading member of the community, spent a lot of money and took a very keen interest in the successful carrying out of the meeting. In the meeting it was decided that a certain number of the representatives of Malabar including priests and laity must go to Mesopotamia for the attainment of a compromise with the Patriarch. Due to inconveniences to the

selected representatives they did not go as arranged in the meeting. Yet the meeting was a great success. It really created a friendly atmosphere among the two parties.

In 1928 the 2nd Catholicos died, and in 1929 the 3rd and present Catholicos was installed. At this time Lord Halifax was the Viceroy of India. He was very much interested in the Syrian Church and he was instrumental in getting down Patriarch Elias for peace negotiation. In 1930 Patriarch Moran Mar Elias came to Malabar and cancelled the excommunication of Mar Dionysius VI. But the installation of Catholicos by Abdul Messiah patriarch remained still a disputed point. Before coming to any final settlement Patriarch Elias died in Manjinikara church, Omalloor, Travancore. In 1934 Mar Dionysius VI died and was buried in the old Seminary chapel at Kottayam.

In the same year Moran Mar Baselius, Catholicos of the East, went to Palestine together with the Patriarch's delegate Bishop Mar Eulios, Very Rev. Remban Thomas (now Mar Thoma Dionysius), and Rev. Father C. J. Skaria to try for a reconciliation with the present Patriarch, Mar Aprem Severios. In this compromise consultation the Patriarch wanted a statement wherein it must be recorded that Abdul Messiah's ordination was invalid. According to Canon Law Abdul Messiah being senior Patriarch, and he being not excommunicated by synod then, his ordination remains valid. So the Catholicos could not consent to the demand of the Patriarch. After so many consultations the Catholicos had to return without effecting any compromise. The then Anglican Bishop at Jerusalem helped the Catholicos a great deal in arranging conveniences for compromise. The Syrian

Church remembers him with gratitude a great deal.

In the year 1937 Moran Mar Baselios, Catholicos of the Apostolic throne of the East, was invited to the World Conference on Faith and Order held at Edinburgh. The Catholicos together with the Very Rev. Abo Alexios, O.I.C. (now Bishop Mar Theodosius), and the Very Rev. Remban Thomas (now Bishop Mar Dionysius), in accordance with the invitation, attended the Conference. A Scottish paper, *The Daily Record and Mail* of August 4, 1937, writes thus on the visit of the Catholicos to Edinburgh: 'His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Ghevarughese, 2nd Catholicos of the East, chief priest of the orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar, is the most notable visitor to the World Conference on Faith and Order. Autograph hunters tumbled over each other yesterday for the signature of Edinburgh's most spectacular visitor. Patriarchal and dignified he walked the Capital's street beaming with kindness, a little perturbed that he seemed spectacular. He signed the books, shook proffered hands, patted the heads of children The Catholicos is the most fascinating of all delegates to the World Conference on Faith and Order representative of all the churches of the world'.

After the death of Mar Dionysius VI the party of the Catholicos entrusted him with the office of the Metropolitan of Malabar too in December 1934. After four years Mar Athanasius of the Patriarch's party filed a suit to establish that he is the lawful Metropolitan. While it was pending a round table conference of the prelates on both sides (the Catholicos, Mar Gregorius, Mar Philoxinos, Mar Theodosius, and Mar Thoma Dionysius on one side and

Mar Athanasius, Mar Michael Dionysius, Mar Timotheos and Mar Eulios on the other side) met in the Alwaye Union College on the 24th March 1941. The Conference continued for two weeks and its progress was hopeful. The Foreign Bishop, Mar Eulios, was not cordial in his attitude and left the Conference in its early stage. In spite of that the peace negotiation went on. For the sake of peace the Catholicos agreed to give over his office as the Metropolitan of Malabar and the church properties in his possession, to Mar Athanasius and even condescended for an acceptance service at his hands. Accordingly on the 4th of April the Catholicos went over from the College to the residence of the Metropolitan close by. But the previous night he was turned back by certain inveterates on the Patriarch's party who had gone from Kottayam instigated by Mar Eulios on his way back. Though the Conference failed in its first attempt, it continued for five days more and again reached a hopeful climax. But then came like lightning a telegram from Patriarch Moran Mar Aprem to Mar Athanasius—'Urgency dangerous. Depend Bull 1934. Not else. Declare conditions. Question important. Unjustifiable hurry. Repentants must submit.' The Conference could not be completed and it dispersed on the 9th of April. This grieved Mar Timotheos of the Patriarch's party so much that he, who had from the beginning firm conviction of the full validity of the Catholicate and had taken a leading part in the Conference, made his submission to the Catholicos about a year later. Meanwhile the litigation was going on. The lower court rejected the petition on the 18th of January 1943, finding after five years of investigation that

His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Ghevarughese II. is the lawful Metropolitan of Malabar and Catholicos of the East. The Plaintiff has appealed to the High Court. Though the Church stands divided, it is hoped that sooner or later a reconciliation is possible as both parties continue to hold, as from the beginning, the same Apostolic faith and practices.

The strength of the orthodox Syrian Church is about 4,35,000. Besides the Catholicos it has seven Metropolitans, seven Rembans, a theological seminary, about 350 priests, and 508 churches, ten high schools, 25 middle schools and over 100 Malayalam schools. The Sunday School Smajam, the Bethany Ashram, the Servants of the Cross, the Martha Mariam Mandiram, the Mount Tabor Ashram and Convent, the Coimbatore Christa Sishya Ashram, the Foreign Mission, the Immanuel Missionary Society and the Eraviperoor St. Thomas' Hospital are its important missionary activities.

The Church is not idle in its responsibility towards the Syrian youths who have gone for Military Service. In the present World War there are thousands of Syrian youths, men and women serving with His Majesty's Forces in India and outside. In view of the great need for their spiritual ministrations the Church authorities in Travancore and abroad requested the Holy Synod of the Syrian Church to arrange to send one of the Bishops specially deputed for the purpose and the Synod nominated the Most Rev. Mar Thoma Dionysius, Metropolitan of the ancient Apostolic See of Niranam. His Grace travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country visiting the Syrian Christian troops, arranging meetings and performing

sacramental ministrations for them. His visits included almost all the military units and areas in the North and had occasions to contact not only his own orthodox flock but also the troops and officers of the British and American Army, Navy and Air Force.

His Majesty's Government of India through the official permit of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council gave His Grace authority and all facilities for his travel throughout the commands and armies in India and South East Asia.

To quote the words of one of the leading papers: 'It is for the first time in the history of India and in the history of the Syrian Church that a Bishop of the ancient Apostolic Church of India undertook to travel throughout the India Command to visit his flock now serving in the Army, Navy and Air Force in and outside the country. In spite of the fact that he had to experience air raids in the Eastern frontier he continued his arduous journey travelling nearly fifteen thousand miles in about six months' time. His visits have not only helped a great deal for the spiritual shepherding of his flock but also greatly enhanced the morale of the Indian Army.'

When he returned to Travancore besides narrating the story of his tour His Grace also expressed his pleasure at the cheerful spirit of the Syrian troops and his deep gratitude to the authorities of His Majesty's Government of India, to the English Bishops and Clergy and Army Chaplains of the various districts and areas who so kindly helped him as well as to the various officers whom he could contact in the India Command.

The orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar is one of the oldest churches in Christendom and the most

ancient Church in India. She holds the Apostolic Faith of the Undivided Church. She maintains the Nicene Creed as first accepted and has not introduced into it the later addition of the Filioque clause. She condemns the Monophysitism of Eutychus and rejects the Diophysitism of Leo in its technical form and wording. She views the Church as a divinely established body—membership within which is necessary for salvation and the Holy Scripture as the inspired Word of God, besides laying great stress on Holy Traditions. In common with all ancient Churches she keeps Seven Sacraments, Prayer for the Departed and Invocation of saints. Holy Kurbana (Eucharist) is her central act of worship, of which she believes that it is not only a sacrament, but also a sacrifice. Besides Wednesdays and Fridays she observes five seasons of Lent. She holds the Canon compiled by the great Syriac scholar, Maphrian Gregorius Bar Hebraeus, 'the Light of the East and West.' To the faith of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in her undivided state, she has not added anything like the Roman Catholicos, nor has she taken away anything from it like the Protestants. Thus she has preserved pure to the present day, the ancient faith of Christendom, a matter to be indeed very proud of.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF MALANKARA (MALABAR)
SYRIAN CHURCH PRELATES

	From	To
St. Thomas A.D. ...	52	72
Priests and Prelates of Sankarapuri and Pakalomatom families ...	52	345
Mar Joseph of Edesa (1st Metropolitan) ...	345	...
* Pakalomatom Archdeacons and Babylonian Bishops ...	345	1597
Archdeacon George (Ghevarughese of Pakalomatom) ...	1597	1637
Archdeacon Thomas who afterwards became Mar Thoma I ...	1637	1670
Mar Thoma II ...	1670	1686
Mar Thoma III ...	1686	1688
Mar Thoma IV ...	1688	1728
Mar Thoma V ...	1728	1765
Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I) ...	1765	1808
Mar Kurilos (Kattumangad) ...	1772	1774
Mar Thoma VII ...	1808	1809
Mar Thoma VIII ...	1809	1816
Mar Thoma IX ...	1816	...
Mar Dionysius II (Pulikottil) ...	1815	1818
Mar Dionysius III (Punnathra) ...	1818	1825
Mar Dionysius IV (Cheppad) ...	1825	1855
Mar Mathews Athanasius (Palakunnathu) ...	1844	1877
Mar Dionysius V (Pulikottil) ...	1865	1909
Mar Dionysius VI (Vattaseril) ...	1909	1934
His Holiness Moran Mar Basilius, Catholicos of the East (Metropolitan of Malabar) ...	1934	...

CONNECTION OF OTHER CHURCHES WITH MALANKARA
CHURCH AND SOME IMPORTANT EVENTS.

A.D. 345—1490	Persian Orthodox connection.
1490—1599	Nestorian connection.
1599—1653	Roman connection.
1599—	Synod of Diamper.
1653—	Oath at the Coonan cross.
1665—	Antiochian connection.

* Pakalomatom family is in Kuravallangad.

The following is an English rendering of the rights and privileges Cheraman Perumal, the then King of Malabar gave inscribed on copper plates to the Syrians and to their Bishop Mar Joseph who emigrated from Syria under the leadership of Thomas of Cana in the year A.D. 345. (From *Travancore State Manual*, vol. II, page 266.)

'To that God of His Almighty will and pleasure created this world, and I, King Eravy Varma, lift up my hand in adoration and bestow this grant as from time immemorial our sovereignty existed on the day of the 36th year of our reign at Cranganore, and thus I do hereby ordain and give all manner of power to Joseph Rabban to wear of different colours, to be saluted by firing guns, to ride on elephants and horses, the call on the roads, to make converts of nations, to use of lamp of the day, to walk on carpets, clothes spread on the ground to adorn houses, to use Palanquins, high parasols, kettle drums, trumpets and small drums and of all these privileges. I grant unto him and seventy-two of their houses free of ground rent and duty scales and appoint him as the head of all the subjects and Churches in whatever part of the country they may be established and all the above cited privileges and hereby and without any of the least differences or contradiction fully granted by the copper plates unto the said five coloured Mar Joseph Rabban and his heirs, male, female, bride and bridegroom to hold and exercise as long as the sun shines on the face of the Earth and his descendants shall exist and may God grant his blessings to the undermentioned witnesses:—princes of Kings of Travancore, Thekumkur, Vadakumkur, Quilon, Nerangoot, Samoorin, Paliathachen and Colastri; written by Kelampoo Kelappan and as Perumpadapu the Cochin Raja is my heir, his name is not including in this signature.'

