A.J.APPASAMY

A BISHOP'S STORY

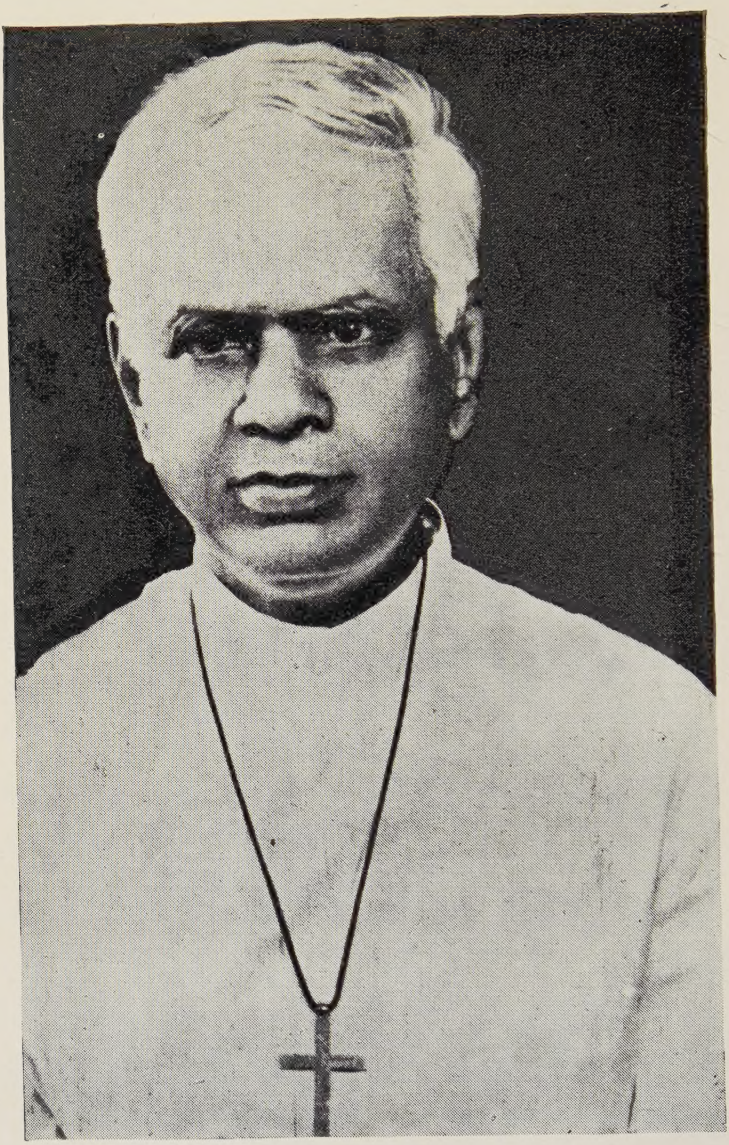
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A. J. APPASAMY

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A BISHOP'S STORY

BY

A. J. APPASAMY



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PREFACE

In 1950 I was consecrated Bishop in Coimbatore. This was a time of unusual interest and significance. The British had withdrawn from India after ruling it for one hundred and fifty years. Under the powerful influence of Mahatma Gandhi, at once politician and saint, the Congress Party took over the government of the country and were making many new plans for the progress of India. Those who had taken part in the struggle for independence and had gone to prison were now holding important offices in the State. Many of them, however, failed to come up to the high standards of sacrifice and integrity which Gandhiji constantly placed before the people. It was important to observe the new government at work and to understand its programmes, particularly the effect they had upon Christian work. I spent three months in New Delhi in 1948 and interviewed many leaders. Some of the chapters in this book describe the ideals which the Congress Government had, the practical ways in which they sought to implement them, their failures and their successes.

The Church of South India had been inaugurated in 1947. The Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists working in South India had come together, after thirty years of negotiation, into a new Church. As a member of the Joint Committee for eighteen years I was clearly aware of the ideals we had in view and the difficulties we met with, both in India and elsewhere. When we lived together and worked together we realized that unity was not enough; that the pooling of material resources was not enough; that the setting up of an efficient administrative machinery was not enough. The Church must be rooted and grounded in Christ. We must grow in spiritual life and power. In the Coimbatore Diocese we gave evangelism top priority in our work. Many remarkable conversions took place; dozens of prayer groups were formed; some of these prayer groups prayed for the healing of the sick and their prayers were heard. Many gave personal witness to Christ in evangelistic work. I have tried to explain the teaching I gave on prayer. Some of the chapters of this book describe God's marvellous answer to our deepest longings.

The main problem to which I have been returning again and again in my ministry is this: How can the Church of Christ take root and grow in India? Many new Churches in Africa and Asia are facing this problem. The older Churches in the West are facing this problem too but from different backgrounds and for different reasons. The conviction which has been the driving force behind much of my thinking and writing is that the Christian Church should develop in India patterns of Christian work which are based on the religious patterns which have already been found to be fruitful in the country. These patterns should cover all fields—the development of Christian theology, the shaping of Christian worship, the use of Indian art in buildings, music, painting and poetry. Indian Christians bear still the strong western impress which missionaries gave them in past years. We must now do our own thinking and formulate our own theology and worship, using the noblest traditions available in so old and in many ways so spiritual a country. We must be continually on our guard against the dangers of nationalism which may lead to pride, exclusiveness and the lust for sovereignty. Several of the chapters in this book describe the attempts we have made in encouraging indigenous patterns.

I had numerous opportunities for proclaiming up and down India the Gospel of Christ in its relation to the spiritual background of the country. The substance of my lectures is now found in four books—*Christ in the Indian Church, Christianity as Bhakti Marga, What is Moksha?* and *The Gospel and India's Heritage*. For some years I taught in theological colleges preparing young men for ministry. It was felt by church officials that the people who could write were often immersed in practical work. I was, therefore, given complete freedom for some years to carry on research and writing. For some years I served simple rural folk, teaching them to read and write, giving them financial help and providing them with opportunities for work. These years of rural service brought me very close to the needs of men who are struggling on the brink of poverty to make a living so that they could have at least one or two square meals a day.

In 1959 I retired from active ministry and a good deal of my time has been spent in reflecting on the past, the work which has been done, the tasks which have not been completed and the books which need to be written.

In the course of a long writing life, I have described in print the outstanding events of my life. These accounts will be found in books and periodicals. I have here used some of this material, often written immediately after the events and therefore fresh and accurate. As I have now edited them and brought them up-to-date for this book I have not thought it necessary to show where they first appeared in print and what changes I have made.

'Manorama'
Redfields
Coimbatore-18
South India

A. J. Appasamy

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1

A CHRISTIAN HOME IN INDIA

My father, Dewan Bahadur A. S. Appasamy, was a Hindu. When he was a young man of 24, he accepted Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He was baptised in 1871. He became a lawyer and built up a successful practice, living at Palayamkottai, a Church Missionary Society station in the extreme south of India. In his 54th year, after a serious illness, he responded to an inner urge and, retiring from his legal practice, devoted the rest of his life to prayer and evangelistic work.

My father was very regular in attending church worship on Sundays, both morning and evening. He looked an impressive figure when he went to church—a tall, well-built man, dark-skinned, with bright, penetrating eyes, clad in dhoti and long coat, a large turban on his head, all spotlessly white. He received Holy Communion regularly. He listened attentively to the Bible lessons in church as well as to the sermons. But he always felt that some of his deeper spiritual problems were not dealt with from the pulpit.

At home he was ceaselessly engaged in the spiritual quest. Every morning he read a passage from the New Testament. His large New Testament in English, in bold, clear type, was much thumbed. But for some reason he did not study the Old Testament. Perhaps he was put off by the many difficult problems connected with it. A book of readings by the great English Baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, appealed to him, and he read it daily, year after year.

My father had an enquiring mind. He often quoted St Paul's teaching, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good' (1 Thess. 5:21). Also he quoted from the Tamil classic *Kural:* 'Whatsoever you hear and from whomsoever, find out the real truth; that is knowledge.'

He taught us that everything should be tested by scripture, reason and experience. These are the three tests which are laid down in Indian Logic.

He had an accurate knowledge of Hinduism. Though he was not a scholar himself, he asked Sanskrit and Tamil scholars

to explain to him the meaning of difficult passages in the Hindu scriptures.

He spent much time in meditation. Daily he went on solitary walks or for drives in a cushion-lined coach drawn by bullocks. On various important passages from the Bible he lingered long in meditation. During the last 12 years of his life he practised Yoga, and in his book, *Fifty Years' Pilgrimage of a Convert,* he has told us how Yoga helped him.

He was an ardent evangelist and eagerly passed on to others his experience in Christ. He often visited his Hindu friends and invited them to his house so that he could tell them what Christ had done for him. Sometimes he would go to one of the schools run by the C.M.S. and give a course of addresses on Christian life and experience to the sixth form boys. When the Indian Missionary Society was started by the Tirunelveli Christians he was chosen as its first President. He continued in that office to the end of his life. This Society has done much evangelistic work in the Hyderabad area on the initiative of Bishop V. S. Azariah. Mr Azariah (as he was then) used to spend long hours with my father, talking over with him the problems of missionary work in Dornakal. Every year in the annual meeting of the I.M.S. my father was asked to give a message, for which he prepared carefully.

He was anxious to bear his testimony to Christ in print. When we grew up we helped him during the holidays, taking down his dictation and writing out the many corrected copies. A Tamil book, *Why I Became a Christian,* and the English book, *Fifty Years' Pilgrimage of a Convert,* were thus written. He printed the first editions at his own expense and distributed them free. The second edition was brought out by the Christian Literature Society, Madras.

For nearly 25 years my father was able to pursue this life of study, prayer and writing, but not without distractions. He had bought some property (mostly paddy fields) and had planned to live for the rest of his life on the income from it. But the management of the property often raised difficult questions. Suits had to be filed sometimes. Arrears had to be collected from defaulting lessees. The limited water supplies had to be increased. There were times when the monsoon failed and new problems

arose. All this took up two or three hours daily. The men and women working in his paddy fields required much help. They needed places for Christian worship. My father built two such places, one of them at Rajaputhukudy village, a strong, solid church of masonry which could accommodate a hundred people. He was also anxious to give education to the children. Two elementary schools were started, one of which is now a higher elementary school with about 200 pupils.

A man of outstanding gifts, he had also many failings. These were the failings of a self-made man. As a young man, he had given up his Hindu father and mother and had to depend upon his own efforts to earn a living. Being a man of keen intelligence, shrewd judgment and steady industry, he had made good. And he tended to be very impatient with people who were slow, irresponsible or indolent. He had much confidence in his own ability and was inclined to brag, in spite of his deep faith in God. A man with a large family and with many clerks and servants, he expected implicit obedience, and often there were outbursts of anger on his part when people did not do as they were told.

He must have been aware of his faults for we often heard him reciting in his unmusical voice a Tamil lyric of penitence composed by his teacher in school, H. A. Krishna Pillai. It was this teacher's love and personal work, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, which had led my father to the feet of Christ.

> As Thy true worshipper I sing not;
> As Thy pure one, I act not.
> For I, deceiver, pass each day in sin.
> Although today I live, it is th'uncertain life
> Of one of whom tomorrow
> 'Tis said that he is dead!
> For senseless me, save for abundant Grace,
> There is no saving way, O God.
> O therefore say to me, 'Fear not!'
> And grant to me safe refuge.[1]

My mother's father, W. E. Ganapathi Pillai, was a man of considerable social standing. As a Hindu he had belonged to a caste whose special prerogative was to chant Tamil Bhakti

[1] *Rakshanya Yatrikam,* Tr. by E. E. White, p. 326.

hymns in the Hindu temples. When my grandfather heard Christian teaching he gave up his former social position and became a humble follower of the Lord Jesus. He joined the Government Revenue Department and by dint of ability, hard work and character he rose high. My mother was only 14 when she married, and the wedding was on a grand scale. The bridegroom was a stranger, aged 27, but the bride's family fully believed that he would make good. He lived to be 79 and she, 81, and they were devoted to each other.

My mother was humble, gentle, patient and loving. She was also deeply religious, though her religion differed from my father's. She was an extreme Protestant and believed that only Protestants would go to heaven. There were six children—four boys and two girls. During one of my mother's confinements her hearing became badly affected. On account of this handicap she lived in a world of her own, attending to her children and house-keeping. She was very fond of reading, and there were always books under her pillow. One book to which she was attached was Andrew Murray's *Abide in Christ* in Tamil translation. In church she always sat in the front pew on the women's side and a relative or friend sat next to her to show her what was being read or sung. There were family prayers every evening. My mother read a passage from the Bible, and my father made a comment or two and then offered a prayer.

I was born on September 3, 1891. My recollection of my early life begins only from my seventh year. My father spent six months every year at Palayamkottai, three months at Kodaikanal, and three at Courtalam. He used to say that he was following the old Indian ideal according to which a man lives first as a student, then marries and has a family, and then goes with his family to the forest for prayer and study. He regarded himself as being in the third stage, or *Vanaprastha*. As he wanted much solitude he would take with him only one of the children during the school holidays. I was taken more often than the others. There was a faithful servant who cooked for us. We had no company. My father was fond of beautiful sights and sounds, and nature was for him a real pathway to God. During these visits to the hills I also acquired some of my love for nature. My father could not walk long distances but he had some Brahmin

friends, former colleagues in the legal profession, who came to Kodaikanal for their holidays; he used to send me for morning and evening walks with them. So I had the peculiar experience of spending most of my time with much older folk.

The girls in the family learnt Carnatic music. As a boy I listened to their violin practice for two to three hours every day. They became experts and had such sweet voices that they were asked to sing in the C.M.S. Centenary Hall where there would be large audiences. Seated on the platform the girls in our family would sing beautiful Tamil lyrics. One of the lyrics is still clear in my memory:

> That day, that day is good,
> When you do something good to others,
> That day, that day is good.

Many large prints of oil paintings by Ravi Varma, a member of the royal family of Travancore, were hung in our home. They brought vividly before us the classical stories of India, most of them from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. There was a picture of Harishchandra, the king who gave up his throne and agreed to send his wife and child into slavery so that he might keep his word. Nala and Damayanti, the romantic young people who fell in love through hearing of each other's accomplishments from a swan, were also depicted. A picture of Sakuntala, a Rishi's adopted daughter with whom a king fell in love during a hunting expedition, became familiar to us. From early life we realised that there is a cultural heritage of India both in music and in art.

2

DECISION FOR CHRIST

When I was thirteen, a remarkable Englishman held many meetings at Palayamkottai. He was Mr R. T. Archibald of the Children's Special Service Mission. He was very young. He played with us and moved freely with us. We looked forward to his meetings after school.

He pleaded with us to yield ourselves to Christ. He taught us to love the Bible and to study it with care, marking the great verses with ink so that they stood out impressively. His Indian assistant was equally remarkable for his love of boys. Together they took us—a large number of us—by storm: we could not but heed their appeal. That was in 1904.

Archibald kept in close touch with us in after years, praying for us and writing to us. Fifteen years later, he called on me while I was studying theology at Oxford, and we had lunch together, reviving old memories.

At the age of thirteen I did not realize the meaning of what had happened. Only my subsequent life and reflection convinced me of its importance. But that a change had taken place was evident to me and to others. From that time, I began to read the Bible carefully. I formed regular habits of prayer. I found joy in attending religious meetings. The missionary cause became dear to my heart.

About a hundred of us who had decided for Christ were taken that September to a Boys' Camp at Courtalam at the foot of the Western Ghats with their blue hills, lovely falls and clear streams. Mr V. S. Azariah was one of the speakers. He had spent much time in the Connemara Public Library, Madras, and had made a careful study of the needs of evangelistic work in India. Though we were in our early teens, he gave us many facts and figures. A map of India was spread before us. He pointed out to us where the Hindus were in a majority and where the Muslims and the Christians and the Parsees lived.

One particular part of his address still remains fresh in my memory after sixty years. He held his watch in his hand and

paused for a minute. He always spoke with slow and measured emphasis: 'During this minute, twenty people in India have passed into eternity without ever having heard of Christ. Will you boys decide to serve Christ and to proclaim His name?' In response to that appeal, I dedicated myself to work in His Church.

My parents were quite glad to hear of my decision to enter the ministry. Only an old family servant was disappointed. 'You ought to become a judge!' he said. Though quite illiterate, he had caught the current idea that to join the Indian Civil Service was *the* thing for an ambitious young man.

On May 23, 1907 I was attending the Missionary Conference in the American Church, Kodaikanal. One of the speakers was Mr V. Krishnasamy Iyer, a brilliant lawyer who had a flourishing practice in Madras.

I met Mr Krishnasamy Iyer later that evening, as he walked along the Lake Road. 'What profession do you intend to follow?' he asked.

'I would like to become a clergyman.'

He said: 'I disapprove of making uncultured men religious workers. A clergyman must have intellectual training also. You should know the explanations for the seeming inconsistencies between Christianity and science. You should lead Christians and non-Christians through the labyrinth of controversy and show that Christianity is the best religion. Such men as Butler and Newman were up-to-date in their scientific knowledge.'

I answered, 'Modern sermons lack the energy and enthusiasm of ancient sermons, because too much attention is paid to intellectual matters.'

He said, 'While a minister of God acquaints himself with science, and arms himself with arguments in favour of his religion, he must be in incessant communion with God and must not lose sight of spirituality. Intellectual grasp combined with spiritual strength is the greatest requisite for a servant of God.'

All this confirmed my desire to get the advanced training necessary for work among educated men.

I was amazed at the intense patriotism Mr Krishnasamy Iyer showed. He said: 'I am very proud that the Asiatic Continent gave birth to Jesus Christ. Christ valued the East and her people,

for He ordered that He should be born in the East and He illumined the Eastern magi and not Western astronomers.'

Later my religious ardour began to disappear. I am inclined to attribute the change to the passage of time and the lack of stimulants to a holy life. My regular habits of Bible study, prayer and attendance at church, and my interest in religious questions, continued. But I went through them as a matter of course.

In the year 1908—I was seventeen then—I had my season of doubt. Rev. W. Howard Campbell, a well-read missionary of broad views, to whom I applied for help, sent prompt and often satisfactory replies to my queries. During those years of doubt my eyes did not, however, become blind to the supreme majesty of the character and teaching of Jesus Christ. I still clung to my habit of prayer.

Indeed a belief in prayer was the only positive element in my creed. I had to base even my belief in the existence of God on that. This is how I argued: 'I pray. My prayers are answered. Therefore, there must be a God who answers prayers.' Very simple reasoning, but very, very satisfying!

My mother fretted about my growing indifference in matters spiritual. She suspected that every book I read might poison me. When I associated with a boy who had no belief, she was afraid that I would become an athiest. I began to read Hindu books to improve my knowledge of Tamil and she was afraid that I might become a Hindu.

I myself was considerably exercised over the change. But how could I command a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit? My devotional habits did not help me much. This state of affairs continued for many months.

My father held the view that my religion was probably becoming more mature. He said, 'The young leaves of a mango tree are tender and have unusual beauty. Not so the mature leaves. Their early charm goes.'

Then came another awakening. In 1911 I attended a College Students' Camp. There, the Holy Spirit spoke to me. A course of studies on Immortality infused new strength into my hopes. The death of a class-mate was the occasion, during the camp, of a memorable address. The speaker—by whose personality I had already become attracted—described the life after death with such

vividness and force that I came to regard death as a glorious thing.

I kept up the habit of Bible study. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ, in particular, influenced my thoughts and deeds. The books of the Bible which captured my imagination were Job, (because of the praises lavished upon it by men of letters like Carlyle, Froude and others), Isaiah, (because of its eloquence), the Gospel of John (because of its mysticism) and the Epistle to the Romans (because of its logic and philosophic depth).

The Psalms failed to thrill me. The wisdom of Proverbs appeared to me commonplace and monotonous. The method of studying the Bible, which appealed to me most, was the biographical. I loved to group the incidents around the great men of the Bible.

I had experienced the happiness of surrendering myself entirely to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. My temptations were many. Chief among them were pride and self-centredness. I was afraid that at any moment I might be swept off my feet by them. Prayer and meditation on Jesus Christ helped me much.

My father and I met Dr Sherwood Eddy every season at Kodaikanal. We had lunch with him every Sunday and he had lunch with us every Saturday. Eddy had private means and was an honorary missionary. When the call to serve Christ in India came to him, he gave up his ambition of making 'big' money in the lumber business in the United States.

What impressed me most about Eddy was his steady and unremitting application. Except when he came out for his meals, the door of his study was closed. Most of his fellow-missionaries were taking it easy on their holiday, going out for picnics, boating on the lake and playing tennis. But he was glued to his desk. Soon we knew what such diligence could achieve. Eddy undertook to give a series of Bible readings in the American Church on Thursday afternoons in the mid-week prayer meetings. Generally this prayer meeting was poorly attended. But when he gave his Bible studies on the book of Isaiah and expounded clearly and earnestly Isaiah's deep belief in a living God, the large church was filled with missionaries. Eddy's repeated declaration 'I believe in God' (summing up Isaiah's teaching) keeps ringing in my ears.

Eddy also came and stayed with us in our home at *Manorama*, Palayamkottai, for a month once. He was beginning his study of Tamil and was anxious to live in a Tamil home and speak the language with Tamil people. At Palayamkottai too he applied himself heart and soul to his work. Apart from an hour every day for his morning devotions and fifteen minutes for glancing through the daily paper, he concentrated on language study, wearing a picturesque green shade over his eyes to keep the glare off. The only exercise he took was a steady run round the compound of our house.

When Dr John R. Mott invited Eddy to do student work all over Asia in 1911, the Madurai Mission lost a valuable missionary. But Asia (and later the world) gained a powerful evangelist. He became a beloved colleague of Mott in many of his world-wide evangelistic campaigns.

In the summer of 1916, Sherwood Eddy invited me to spend a month of my summer vacation in his home at Forest Hills on Long Island, near New York City. I was then studying in the Hartford Theological Seminary. Forest Hills was a lovely suburb. Eddy went to New York daily for his work when he was not speaking in conferences and camps. A remarkable Sunday morning service still lingers in my memory. Dr J. H. Jowett was the Pastor of a wealthy church on Fifth Avenue, New York. Eddy and his family were members there. I said I would like to hear that famous preacher. The church was full and the sermon was a masterpiece of pulpit oratory on the text 'And cast their crowns before the throne' (Revelation 4:10). On this unusual text Jowett preached a powerful sermon pleading with his people to commit themselves wholly to Christ. His earnestness, his apt illustrations and his choice language won for him an attentive hearing from beginning to end.

In the 1920's Eddy visited Madras and asked that he might meet a small group of representative Christian workers there. A few of us spent a day with him. He had now begun to preach the social gospel, the application of Christ's teaching to the manifold and complex problems of human society—the race problem, relation between capital and labour, sex and family life, war and peace. He was trying to cover an immense range of subjects, so varied indeed that only a team of experts could deal with them.

Anyone seeking to understand how he as a committed Christian advocated justice and peace in society should read his autobiography *Eighty Adventurous Years* (Harper), written in his eighties, with the vigour and enthusiasm of youth.

I am grateful that I came into intimate personal contact with such a keen evangelist as Eddy in the days of my youth.

3

COLLEGE LIFE IN MADRAS

After completing my education in St John's High School, Palayamkottai, I joined St John's College, Tirunelveli in 1907. The Principal was the Rev. H. J. Schaffter, an English missionary. He was keen that Indian boys should learn the nineteen rules of politeness he had drawn up. Every day we came together in a large hall upstairs for prayer before the classes began. We were asked to learn one rule each day. Immediately after prayer he would point to one of the boys—there were about five hundred of us—and ask for the rule of that day. If the boy gave out the rule, he was rewarded with a shining anna. If he failed to reply, there was a good deal of fun at his expense and he would be covered with shame. In this way the rules were drilled into our hearts and minds and, he hoped, also into our practice.

Some of the rules were:

* Do to others as you wish they should do to you.
* Always say 'Please' when asking for anything.
* Say 'Thank you' on receiving a kindness.
* Say 'I beg your pardon' or 'Excuse me' when contradicting another.

For the next two years I went to the Madras Christian College, at that time in the crowded area of George Town, Madras. The teaching of Scripture was given great importance. I had been receiving instruction in the Bible in high school and college classes, mostly from teachers who could not make their subjects come alive. But this was not so in the Christian College. The professors who taught the Bible spent considerable time preparing their lectures and based their instruction on recent biblical scholarship.

For one year Dr William Meston taught us the Book of Jeremiah. He gave us a clear picture of the historical circumstances in which the prophecies were made and brought out effectively the boldness of the prophet who spoke so emphatically against the social and religious abuses of his time. There were some 150 students in the class, and I am afraid many of the students were not particularly interested, as the Bible was not a part of the university syllabus. I followed the lectures with the deepest possible interest and took considerable pains to prepare for the examinations.

My special subject was philosophy, and we had some able men teaching psychology, ethics, logic and metaphysics. The outstanding professor was Dr A. G. Hogg. We realised how clear and thorough his grasp of philosophy was. Every lecture was a closely-knit piece of reasoning and if one sentence was missed the entire force of the argument was lost. But, however keen he was as a philosopher, his deepest interest was theology. He wrote constantly on theological subjects. His books, *Karma and Redemption* and *Christ's Message of the Kingdom* were widely used in India. His articles in *The International Review of Missions* and his lectures on *Redemption from the World* reached scholarly readers in many lands. His creative thinking in theology impressed us greatly, though we were not able to follow all his profound arguments.

We were also struck by the selflessness of his life. He and his wife sought to establish personal contacts with the students. Every Saturday there was an 'At-Home' to which we were invited. Some students played tennis or indoor games or chatted informally with the professor and his wife, whom we got to know well. At one time we saw a bed on the front verandah on which the Indian lecturer in logic, who was ill with tuberculosis, was being nursed. The household revolved around the sick man. We talked in whispers. Dr and Mrs Hogg attended to his needs so closely that they themselves became infected and had to be sent to the sanatorium at Madanapalle. We heard that the professor was set to dig in the garden, as part of his treatment. Fortunately both of them returned well, the disease having been dealt with at an early stage.

Another characteristic of Dr Hogg was his tireless industry. He was conscientious about his lectures and was always revising

them so as to bring them up-to-date. For some years he was the editor of the Madras Christian College Magazine. For one issue he found himself running short of matter. He sat down in the night to write an article. It was 4.30 a.m. when he finished it. He had a full day of lectures before him, so he went to sleep and woke up again at 6 a.m. to attend to his usual routine. Once he said, 'One has to kill one's self to write a book.' He encouraged me to write letters to him during the holidays, and though he did not answer them immediately he wrote in great detail when he did answer.

The university course for B.A. actually required only four years. But my health at that time was poor. I had many attacks of malaria. My father was anxious to have me at home to help him in his correspondence and literary work. My mother said, 'You must keep well. Otherwise how can you do anything? If you want a picture there must be a wall on which to paint it.' The result was that I took not four but seven years to complete my B.A. The period of enforced leisure had many compensations.

In 1904 my brother Paul returned from Cambridge University in England after a brilliant academic career. He was highly gifted. With his quick intelligence, retentive memory and steady work he came out at the top of almost all his examinations and carried away many medals and prizes. He loved books. He had travelled much. When he gave a lecture at Palayamkottai on 'London, Paris and Rome' to a large gathering, he held its attention for an hour and half. He had visited many art galleries in Europe. He stayed with our parents for three years, beginning his practice as a barrister and with plenty of time on hand. A born teacher, he sought hour after hour to instil in me a love of books, a delight in great paintings, a longing for wide travel, and a desire to fill my mind with noble thoughts expressed in noble language. He was a deeply religious man.

When my college education began he had already left home to live in Madras, but the foundations of the culture which he laid were there. He had taught me what to read and how. He had encouraged me to write. During those years I did much private study and wrote in English many articles which the editors of magazines such as *The Christian Patriot, The Young Men of India,* and *The Wednesday Review* gladly accepted. In this way I tried

to fill up a gap which the university course had left. I acquired a thirst for knowledge and its communication.

During the first two years of our college life we were asked by the University to write Tamil essays, but we did not do any other work in Tamil. All our education was in English and was of the Western type. I decided to apply myself to Tamil. For long hours I studied difficult Tamil books and was particularly attracted by the writings of Swami Vedachalam. He had been a Tamil Pandit of the Madras Christian College but had resigned in order to devote himself wholly to writing. He wrote on several subjects but mostly on the Saiva Siddhanta. In his later years he settled down at Pallavaram near Madras in a small house in the midst of a lovely cocoanut and mango garden. I also lived at Pallavaram and saw a good deal of him.

When the time for graduation came in 1914 a problem arose. I did not get a first class, though I got two gold medals and some prizes of books, and I became conscious of my limitations. I sought the spiritual counsel of Bishop Pakenham Walsh.

'I had a similar problem,' he said. 'One of my brothers is a general; another is a High Court judge. I am not as clever as either of them. But I now realise that there is much useful service which I can give to God with my handicaps.'

This counsel of Bishop Pakenham Walsh has helped me again and again in later years to know that, whatever one's limitations, there are many useful things one can do. As in our Lord's parable of the talents, I have felt it my duty to double by my industry whatever capacity God has given me, without asking why it is more or less than what others have (Matthew 25:14-30).

About this time I had some interesting glimpses of the versatile and well-stocked mind of K. T. Paul, who later became the General Secretary of the National Council of the Y.M.C.A.s in India. I had read the moving story of Henry Martyn. He had a brilliant career in Cambridge University and became the senior wrangler of his year. He sacrificed his prospects of worldly success and went out as a missionary to the Muslim world. He died in his thirty-second year of tuberculosis. Defying all signs of weakness and disease, he had worked hard until the end and burnt himself out in the service for Christ. In 1912, I wrote a biographical sketch of Henry Martyn and sent it to K. T. Paul,

who was then editing the *National Missionary Intelligencer,* the monthly magazine of the National Missionary Society. K. T. Paul was quite pleased with my article and began taking a deep personal interest in me which continued to the end of his life. My article on Henry Martyn was used widely by student study groups in India.

In 1915, the Hartford Theological Seminary in U.S.A. decided to give scholarships to two Indian students for the study of theology. The scholarships which they promised would cover all expenses during term time. But the students or their parents had to make themselves responsible for their passage and for expenses during the holidays.

When K. T. Paul spoke to me about this offer I said to him, 'I would like to go to Hartford but I don't know what my father will say about it. He is living at Shenbaganur, three miles below Kodaikanal. You are coming to Kodi to read a paper in one of the missionary conferences. Could you possibly meet him and make this suggestion to him?' He agreed to do so. He was busy all day long. The only time he could manage was in the evening after the meetings were over. We invited him to an evening meal. It was nearly 9 o'clock at night. He had not yet come. We were beginning to get anxious. Then he arrived in a rickshaw, the only conveyance he could get at that time. At much inconvenience to himself he had kept his word. My father agreed to send me to Hartford. This proved to be the beginning of seven years of fruitful and happy study in the West. For the many opportunities I had during those years, I feel deeply grateful to God, and to his servant K. T. Paul who opened the first door.

In 1927, it was proposed to observe in a fitting manner the centenary of the birth of H. A. Krishna Pillai, the Tamil Christian Poet, on 23rd of April, 1827. K. T. Paul took a keen interest in the arrangements which were made and also wrote a paper to be read at Kodi in a meeting (attended mostly by missionaries), held in connection with the celebrations. The paper which he wrote gives a fascinating account of how the writings of Krishna Pillai affected him and his wife. Soon after they were married, they began studying Krishna Pillai together. Daily they learnt verse after verse by heart. These verses seemed so natural an expression of their own deepest experiences, dyed in the spiritual

culture of their country. For long years these verses continued to help them in a life of much sunshine and many dark clouds. Like other Indian Christians, they loved the Psalms of the Hebrews and the Hymns of the English people but that was an acquired taste.

K. T. Paul says: 'Blessed indeed are a people who do have a deep fundamental heritage. Blessed, thrice blessed, indeed are they when a rare soul among them comes into a new experience and voices such experience.'

'K. T.' went to London along with Mahatma Gandhi and other national leaders of India to discuss with the British authorities how best political responsibility could be transferred from England to India. 'K. T.' took with him Krishna Pillai's *Rakshanya Yatrikam* for his study and meditation during that long journey by sea and back.

K. T. Paul was wholly dedicated to the service of Christ. He loved India and had a vision of its important place in the larger life of the world. He was eager to work with men of all races in a spirit of brotherhood and love. He did not make any claim to extraordinary intellectual gifts, but was alert and kept himself informed of the best thought of his time by constant study. The Y.M.C.A., the most progressive Christian organisation in India at that time, recognised his real worth and gave him a responsible post.

4

THEOLOGICAL STUDY IN AMERICA

I had dedicated myself to the Christian ministry. It was essential to get the necessary training. I felt convinced that this training should be first-rate. God requires the very best from us. I was keen to study theology in Oxford which has been the fountainhead of Christian theology in Europe for the past eight centuries. Education in Oxford is expensive and my father was not willing to provide the necessary funds; but a way had now opened for me to study theology in America. In August 1915 I sailed for the United States. I was then twenty-four years of age.

At that time Hartford had a population of one hundred thousand people. It was a pretty city with many parks and gardens, and my teachers and fellow students received me warmly. When I entered the Seminary building, a tall, well-built, Swedish janitor who was sweeping the corridor shook hands with me and bade me welcome. This was my first taste of American democracy. Men and women of many social classes mingle together and regard themselves as of equal rank.

There were forty-five students in the Seminary and we were divided into three classes. We had ten Professors and Lecturers. I was impressed by the high standard of their lectures. The teachers were specialists; one had devoted his whole life to the New Testament, another to the Old, another to Systematic Theology and yet another to Church History. Some of them had international reputation. The President of the Seminary, Dr Douglas Mackenzie, was a man of great learning and deep piety. He contributed the long and important article on Jesus Christ in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. The Dean, Dr M. W. Jacobus, had published a commentary on the Gospel of St Mark. He came to the Seminary in a fine Limousine driven by a chauffeur in uniform. We knew that Jacobus was a wealthy man, and served the Seminary diligently because of his sense of vocation. Dr L. B. Paton was an Old Testament specialist. He was a somewhat radical scholar. He contributed several articles to the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. Dr D. B. Macdonald was widely known as a great Semitic scholar.

There was much difference between the work I had done in the Madras Christian College and the work I now did in Hartford. For every course we had to do some home work. We had to go to the library, read up the books recommended by the teachers and write papers. We were not spoon-fed as in India. We had to dig up information for ourselves. We had to think and express our thoughts. On one occasion Dr Geer, the Professor of Church History, said that he would like us during the whole term to read up the life of a Saint and to write a paper on him. The Saint chosen was St Francis of Assisi. He suggested various books, one or more of which we could study. It was a wonderful experience to live in the company of this man of God for several weeks. This research enabled me to get a far better idea of St Francis and his times than a formal course of lectures with a test at the end.

At Hartford I realized that the study of theology is not primarily an intellectual pursuit which consists in understanding the arguments of learned theologians and deciding whether they are correct or wrong. It is not a question of linguistic ability and the interpretation of difficult biblical texts. Theological study is really listening to the voice of God, being ready to receive light from above, being open to divine guidance. For this purpose a theological student must learn to carry on his studies in a spirit of prayer; he must never read in a hurry; he must allow himself considerable time to grasp the spiritual significance of the teaching given by the sacred writers in the Bible and by the great theologians of the past and the present in their books. He must not get into the habit of reading hurriedly the lessons which may be assigned to him or of putting down in a perfunctory way the thoughts which come into his mind. Our teachers in the Seminary impressed upon us the profound truth that Christian Theology grows out of life and experience. It is not an intellectual exercise meant to sharpen our minds.

During the years I spent in America, I learnt to appreciate in a new way the culture and heritage of India. I saw the vast efforts which were made to instil in American children a love of their motherland. How often they were taught to think of their country as the best country in the world! This stirred in me a deep devotion to India, its culture and its beauty. I often visited churches to give missionary addresses. I was frequently asked: Have you been to the Himalayas? Have you seen the Taj Mahal? At that time I had to say 'No' as the extreme south of India is my home and the Himalayas are 2,000 miles away and the Taj Mahal also is quite far away. But I felt proud that the Himalayas were a part of my country and that the Taj was in India. When I returned to India I visited the Himalayas and the Taj Mahal and feasted my eyes on their glory.

In 1916 it was announced that Rabindranath Tagore would give readings from his books in a theatre in New York. I was keen to hear him. When I asked the Dean 'Could I go?' he immediately said, 'Certainly. If I had as distinguished a countryman as you have, I would want to hear him.' So I travelled 120 miles and attended the readings. The theatre was not full that afternoon but there was a large audience. The poet, clad in his long flowing robe, with his venerable beard, was an impressive

personality. We were kept spellbound as he read many selections in his musical voice. He read from *Gitanjali* which had been recently published and had won for him the Nobel prize. His readings from *The Crescent Moon* about little children and their innocent ways caused much merriment. He read the story of *Kabuliwallah*, which was received with considerable applause. It was good to see how warmly this cultured Indian was received.

We are apt to admire the unusual aspects of nature—the broad river, heaving in its majestic course, the sky torn with lightning, the expanse of spotless snow. But the little things of nature escape our attention. To Tagore, a sunbeam floating in through a window, a dark midnight, a leaf fluttering idly in the wind, have all a new meaning. Friendship and love seem to us to be nothing but incidents connected with the fact of life. But Tagore sees something more in them. Speaking of the Indian idea that young men should attend to the affairs of life and give old men leisure to think and pray, he reverses the old-world values and says that old men should take charge of account books and do other mundane things in order to give young people time to pass through the 'severe discipline of courtship.' What impressed me most about Tagore was his joyous, boundless optimism that discovered beauty in a world which to many of us seems so familiar and bereft of romance.

We have in India millions of people who are illiterate, unable even to sign their names. The education of the masses is a problem of signal importance. I visited the Hampton Institute in Virginia and studied in detail the excellent work which had been done there among emancipated Negroes by General Armstrong. He had an original mind and tackled the problem boldly. I wrote four articles in the *Young Men of India* with the rather high-sounding title, *A Challenge to India's Educators*.

At the end of three years of study Dr Douglas Mackenzie sent for me and said to me: 'We have elected you a travelling fellow.' I said, 'What exactly does that mean?' He said, 'For two years you may study theology in any part of the world and we shall pay you a fellowship to cover your expenses. We expect you to write to us every term and tell us what you are doing.' This, of course, was very good news. I knew in a general way that the best student of a three-year class was appointed a travelling fellow like this. I had prayed earnestly that I might be chosen. I had

also worked hard. But according to a rule of the Seminary, we were not told the marks in our various examinations. The idea was that we must not pay too much attention to the examinations. So no one knew who would be chosen for the travelling fellowship. I now decided to study at Oxford with the help of this fellowship and thus fulfil a longing of many years.

But before leaving the United States I spent a year at Harvard University making a special study of the religions of the world, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism. One particular seminar stands out in my memory. Dr George Foot Moore was a great scholar and was held in much respect by the University as well as the outside world. He offered a seminar on the attitude of educated men in the Roman Empire to Christianity. After the evening meal we went to his home once every fortnight and spent a couple of hours with him in his study when he suggested the different books we could read on that subject and discussed them and the papers we wrote, informally with us. He was a genuine scholar interested in the pursuit of knowledge; he believed in the utmost accuracy; every statement we made had to be proved from some ancient document. He did not believe in generalizations, brilliant or otherwise. He emphasized the historical background of every idea. I understood once again the problems and difficulties of Christian work among educated men and at the same time its supreme importance. At the end of a year of study in Harvard I was given the Master of Arts degree.

There were about a hundred Indian Christian young men studying in America. We formed ourselves into an organization and published a mimeographed paper every month called *The Indian Patrika*. I was asked to be its editor. A considerable amount of my spare time was devoted to this work. We gave news of our students, the work we were doing in the various colleges and our ideals and hopes.

Though we lived in America and made many friends and learnt much about the American way of life, we were keen to treasure the spiritual and moral heritage of India and to see that our fellow Christians in India and in the West did the same.

Dr B. P. Hivale, one of our number, returned to India and founded the Ahmadnagar Christian College. Dr S. J. Theodore became a professor in the Madras Christian College. Mr K. K.

Kuruvilla became a Y.M.C.A. Secretary. We sought to follow the ideal in N. V. Tilak's poem:

'Not at all separate, but one, Jesus and I are one;
One, like a musician's hand and his lyre;
One, like thought and speech;
One, like the nose and sweet odors;
One, like mother and babe;
One, like the guide and misled wanderer;
One, like life and body;
One, like oil and the flame of the lamp;
One, like rain and the lake it fills;
One, like water and fish;
One, like the sun and the day;
Jesus and I are one, forever one.'

5

THEOLOGICAL STUDY IN ENGLAND

My father was in his seventies and my mother in her sixties. I had not seen them for four years. When I wrote to them in 1919 and asked for their permission to study in Oxford for three more years, they were disappointed. In my letter I said: 'You have allowed me to follow the noblest profession in the world, now you must permit me to equip myself adequately for it.' My mother rather reluctantly gave her permission on two conditions. The first was, I should write to her regularly every week; the second, I should send her a new photograph of myself every year! I agreed to both these conditions. My father was pleased that I had won a travelling fellowship and promised to keep me at Oxford for three years. The fellowship would cover only my major expenses during two years, so I was grateful for this additional allowance from my father.

I had known Dr J. N. Farquhar in India. He had written *The Crown of Hinduism* and edited many books for the Y.M.C.A. Publishing House. He was now spending six months every year at Oxford and the other six months travelling around India, gathering materials for his books. When I wrote to him that I would

like to study at Oxford he immediately had me admitted to Queen's College. He chose that college so that I could work under Canon B. H. Streeter who was the theological tutor there. This choice proved very fruitful.

Canon Streeter was foremost among the younger theologians in England at that time. He was in the prime of his life. He worked terribly hard. Though only in his forties he had the stooped shoulders of the scholar, and he had a beard which he fondled in his reflective moments. He took an active interest in the boat races. He was deeply concerned about missionary work and had visited India. I had heard him read a learned paper on 'Theological Reconstruction' at a Kodaikanal Missionary Conference. He had edited a few books like *Foundations, Immortality,* and *The Spirit.* He was particularly gifted in gathering together scholars representing different points of view. They would live together for a week or two, read papers, discuss them, re-write them, and then publish them as the outcome of their collective thinking. He was keen to expound Christian Doctrine so as to appeal to the modern mind trained in Science. He welcomed new ideas and made stimulating suggestions. While he was not a great preacher, he worked earnestly to win young people for a reasoned acceptance of the Christian religion. He would take young men and women for house parties lasting for a week or ten days so as to do some serious study and thinking. He was a popular leader in the Student Christian Movement meetings in Swanwick.

On the strength of my M.A. from Harvard University I was accepted by Oxford as an advanced student and allowed to work for the Doctor of Philosophy degree. Oxford always makes a distinction between itself and other universities. I was told, for instance, that I could not have the status of an Oxford M.A. but would be treated only as an Oxford B.A. 'What difference would it make?' I asked. I was told, 'If you are an Oxford M.A. you would be given a latch key and you could enter your lodgings any time day or night. But for a B.A. the landlady would have to open the door every time he enters his lodgings and let him in; she will send a weekly report to the Dean of Queen's College informing him at what time he comes in every night; he will be fined or disciplined if he comes late.' I bowed to the inevitable.

Our work at Oxford centred around the weekly essay. The tutor would suggest a subject for an essay, ask us to attend such lectures as would help us, study certain books and then write the essay which he discussed critically and personally with us. This taught us to read up a subject for ourselves and to give the result in an attractive and readable form. It developed in us originality of thought and expression and brought us into intimate contact with a tutor, who was generally an able scholar.

For my D.Phil. thesis I chose the subject, *The Gospel of St John and Hindu Bhakti Literature*. From my experience in India and my studies while in America, I had become convinced that Hindu Bhakti Literature with its emphasis on a personal relationship with a God of Love has much significance for Christianity. When the Gospel of St John is studied in close relation to Hindu Bhakti Literature, we may expect many new insights.

In February 1920, Sadhu Sundar Singh visited Oxford and spent a week there. My close contact with him began then; it has been a formative influence in my life. When I was a theological student in America, Sundar Singh was becoming more and more well-known in South India. Glowing accounts of him were published in *The Christian Patriot* (Madras) and my soul burned within me whenever I read about this man of God. His renunciation, his life of prayer, his active evangelistic work in forbidden lands like Tibet and Nepal, his eagerness to present the Gospel in genuinely Indian ways, the deep impression he made on multitudes of our people made me follow his work with real interest. In the course of his preaching he constantly used striking parables, which appealed to both illiterate and highly educated people.

So when I heard that he was coming to the Community House of the Cowley Fathers, I went there and met him at the earliest possible opportunity. He agreed to speak at various meetings. He also promised to meet small groups of under-graduates and senior people and speak to them informally about his life and experience.

Canon B. H. Streeter became deeply interested in him. I said to him, 'There were Saints in the past. Here is a living example from India. It will be a great help to the Church if we two could write a book about his life and teaching.' Books had already been written by Mr Alfred Zahir and Mrs Parker, but these tended

to emphasize the supernatural experiences in his life, to some of which no doubt he made claims. But we felt that behind his life of outer activity lay a life of prayer and contemplation, for no man could do the work he was doing unless he lived in close and continuous contact with God, the source of all power, love and goodness. Though at first he hesitated to reveal his inner life to us, he gradually gained confidence in us and told us a great deal about his life of prayer.

The book that we wrote was published in 1921, under the title *The Sadhu*. It went into eight editions and was translated into a number of languages. As desired by Sundar Singh the royalties were sent to the National Missionary Society in India.

The book did a real service to Sundar Singh by the critical and restrained style in which it was written. Canon Streeter often curbed my youthful admiration with the remark, 'Let us aim at insight; that is far better than enthusiasm.' Many people had tended to look upon him as a popular preacher wearing a saffron robe, but without deep experience or independent thought. This book showed him to be a man of genuine insight and spirituality who was living in close fellowship with God and had a vital message to give to the present generation.

The Indian feature of Sundar Singh which really attracted people was this. He lived the life of a *Sadhu*. Homeless, wearing a single orange-coloured robe and carrying a New Testament in his hand, he travelled from place to place. He did not know where his next meal would come from. But he was never anxious. His sole concern was to serve his Master and to make Him known to others.

The Sadhu method of work is an indigenous pattern which should be encouraged in the Indian Church, though not many of us possess the spiritual gifts needed for so high an ideal.

Immediately after the First World War, I found living in the Continent of Europe much cheaper than life in England. So I spent six of my vacations in France, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, living for weeks at a time with friends in their homes. I enjoyed particularly the visits to the Art Galleries. I realized how in India we often limit European culture to Anglo-Saxon culture; the Latin races have a rich culture of their own.

I was also able to save enough money to visit Palestine in 1922 for two months. For several years I had been studying God's disclosure of Himself through events recorded in the Bible. Now I longed to visit the land made holy by the footsteps of His law-givers, prophets and psalmists, and above all by His incarnate Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

For many years I had been praying earnestly that a way might open for me to study at Oxford. Now God opened many doors in Europe and I found free access to such distinguished theologians as Baron Von Hugel, Archbishop William Temple, Mrs Herman, Prof. Rudolf Otto, Prof. Heiler and others. These opportunities were beyond my dreams and my heart was filled with gratitude to God.

Baron Von Hugel was a man of considerable means who dedicated himself to prayer and work. Though in the very centre of London, he managed to live in an atmosphere of great peace. His impressive study, lined from ceiling to floor with books, many of them well-thumbed, became a kind of shrine for me. The tall, lean, haggard figure, bowed down with the weight of study and increasing weakness, the face furrowed with lonely thought and bodily pain, the hands thin, emaciated, and nervously grasping the ear-instrument in order to hear what was said—all these gave the impression that, though he had all that money could buy, he lived a life of intense toil and was being purified in the fire of suffering. He said he had been in frail health all his life and during the time I knew him (1919-22) he could work only three or four hours a day without getting worn out.

He not only read widely but read deeply. Every fact was investigated in all its bearings and thoroughly checked. When he undertook to give an address he often laid aside his normal work for several weeks and concentrated on the preparation of what he had to say. Once I sent to him a manuscript of a few pages into which he went with his characteristic thoroughness and wrote a letter telling me that this work had taken him five days. He also described himself as being a slow thinker and as having to brood for twenty-four hours before he could get a single new idea.

When Sundar Singh visited England, I wrote a letter to the Baron about him, and sent him a copy of Mrs Parker's book, and

requested an appointment. When we called I saw that he had read carefully Mrs Parker's book and had marked several points to discuss. One of them was whether Sundar Singh had any other interest besides religion and what he did when he felt himself too depressed to engage in prayer or contemplation. To this the Sadhu replied that he had not passed through any such experience and that there was no side-interest to his life. In the Baron's book, *Essays and Addresses*, there is a reference to this talk: 'I was surprised and disappointed when, some fifteen months ago, that deeply sincere Indian convert, the Sadhu Sundar Singh, told me that, never since his conversion thirteen years before, had he ever suffered one moment of spiritual dryness. I believe, with a very experienced psychologist and philosopher friend of mine, that this opinion indicates a strange lack of self-knowledge, perhaps also of what is precisely meant by such dryness, on the part of this devoted Christian' (p. 299). The point which the Baron makes in the address on prayer in which this allusion occurs is that in order to have a healthy spiritual life, it is necessary to live on two levels of action and interest. He gives as an example Jean Nicholas Grou whose spiritual writings remain fresh because he wrote on religious subjects only when the spiritual light was within him, and at other times he devoted himself to classical studies. In spite of the disappointment (really misunderstanding) to which he refers here, the Baron was greatly impressed by the Sadhu and wrote a memorandum suggesting several lines of thought when a book about him was projected. This letter was of considerable use to us when *The Sadhu* was in preparation and has since been widely circulated and translated. Though it claims to be only notes on the proposed book, it is largely a plea for the Sadhu to link himself closely to the Christian Church.

The Baron was a loyal member of the Roman Catholic Church and always stood up for it, though with characteristic courage he spoke also of its faults. He had his eyes and ears open to all forms of religion and worship and was ever eager to discover what was fine and noble as well as to point out what was base and ignoble. He founded and ran the London Society for the Study of Religion. This, though a small organisation, was an important one, due largely to the inspiring presence and energy of the Baron. About thirty scholars in London representing different religions met together every month to discuss seriously problems

of religion. All were distinguished scholars and leaders in one way or another. For these small meetings the Baron prepared himself with as much thoroughness as for any large meeting. He invited me to attend one of its meetings and to take part in the discussion. This I gladly did. The long and profound essay of the Baron on 'Suffering and God' was originally prepared for this Society. It is of particular importance to readers in India for he deals in it with the question as to whether God suffers.

The influence which the Baron exerted upon the religious life of the English-speaking world was deep. Men of all creeds looked up to him as a venerable religious teacher of immense learning and penetrating thought. Evelyn Underhill, whose books on Mysticism are so widely known and appreciated, looked up to him as her *guru* and regarded herself as his humble disciple.

The Mystical Element of Religion in two volumes is regarded as the greatest book in English on the subject of Mysticism. The Baron said that he had great difficulty in getting a publisher for this book. He also told me that a Baptist minister in America had written to him to say that if a second edition were published, he would dispose of one hundred copies. Thus did Roman Catholic theologian and Baptist minister meet in the realm of the spirit. When I saw him last he spoke with great pleasure of the invitation which had been given to him by the Gifford Trustees to give a course of lectures, and expressed surprise at the high emoluments which had been offered to him in that connection. At that time he told me that he was working on the subject of the Reality of God for these lectures. But before his work was complete he died, in his seventy-third year.

6

THEOLOGICAL STUDY IN GERMANY

Baron F. Von Hugel was always willing to help. He knew many scholars in Europe and kept in close touch with them. In 1921 I said to him: 'I am anxious to spend six months in Germany. Where should I go?' He said: 'Marburg will be a good place for you. Two fine men, Rudolf Otto and Friedrich Heiler, are teaching there. I know them and will give you letters of introduction.' So with these letters, which I knew carried much weight in scholarly circles, I went to Marburg.

Following a general practice in German universities, many students had come to Marburg mainly to hear Prof. Otto. Over one hundred and fifty students were enrolled in his classes. My knowledge of German was elementary and I could not understand the lectures. But Dr Otto took me as a private student. He was in frail health. On one occasion I could not meet him for some weeks. Whenever he was well I went to his home and had talks with him in English on the subject of my thesis, Mysticism of the Fourth Gospel and Hindu Bhakti Literature. He answered patiently and fully the many questions I asked him. He told me what to read in German. He gave me of his time generously.

Prof. Otto was a most interesting man. His subject was Theology. After an illness his doctor forbade him to do any work on this subject for some time but advised him to take up some other interest, quite unconnected with his usual work. He had been attracted by India and its thought. He decided to study Sanskrit. He told me that reading Valmiki's *Ramayana* in the original Sanskrit text was one of the great experiences of his life. This led to further study of Sanskrit, two visits to India and the writing of such books about India as *Vishnu-Narayana—Selections from Bhakti Literature, Christianity and the Indian Religion of Grace* and *Mysticism, East and West.*

In his earlier years Prof. Otto devoted much study to the theistic literature of India. He was greatly attracted by Ramanuja whom he regarded as coming nearest to St John in the intensity

of his faith, in the depth of his thought and in the restraint of his emotions. The Bhakti religions of India are followed by about two hundred millions of Hindus, nearly half the total population of India. Most of their literature is in the form of hymns which are sung in temples and homes daily by devout worshippers. Books like *Bhagavad Gita* and *Sri Bashya* deal with the philosophic aspects of the Bhakti religion. The legends of the Bhakti Saints have been put into immortal verse. Otto read widely in all this literature in Sanskrit and translated the more distinctive passages into German. But his last book, *Mysticism, East and West* is a painstaking study of two monists, Sankara of India and Eckhart of Germany.

Otto's book *Das Heilege* (*The Idea of the Holy*) aroused immense interest in the world of Theology. It is still being studied. I am informed that more than fifty editions of that book have now appeared. This in spite of the popularity of Barthian Theology, expounding a doctrine of Revelation quite different from that of Otto.

I found in Otto a fertile and active mind. Unlike most Western scholars who study only the Sanskrit texts he was interested in the living roots of religion in India and was constantly comparing them in his mind and in his books with Christian thought and experience. When he visited India he found a kindred spirit in Dr Johnson, a C.M.S. missionary in Benares who had made a prolonged study of Sanskrit. The two friends visited Hindu shrines and had dialogue with Hindu scholars, some of whom were also devout and saintly men.

'I read popular didactic and homiletic literature and biographies of Hindu saints to find out what effect the various dogmatics produced on the people,' Otto said. 'I tried to find out while in India how the four schools of Vaishnavite thought—Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimbarka and Vishnu Swamin—affected life and conduct.'

During his second visit to India he collected interesting specimens of Indian Art for a German museum.

Otto was a diligent student of the science of religions. He made a minute and careful study of the teachings and experiences of religious men of many lands and in many ages, particularly in India. He used this wide and deep knowledge constantly for

purposes of illustration, comparison and evaluation. He held that there is a fundamental oneness in all religious experience and that it is our duty to understand that unity. At the same time he fully believed that there are many vital differences, that these differences cannot be ignored and that some experiences are far more valuable than others. His approach was fresh, often original and always stimulating.

One day our conversation turned on the subject of Monism in St Paul's writings. Prof. Otto agreed that 1 Corinthians 15:28 (God all in all) teaches Monism but pointed out that this teaching is marginal in St Paul's Epistles and not central. The modern reader will be aware that in recent years Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit thinker, has made this emphasis a pivotal point of his teaching. Here in India Christian scholars like Brahmabandav Upadhyaya, P. Chenchiah and today Raymond Panikker have come under the spell of Sankara and have interpreted the Christian religion accordingly.

In *Mysticism, East and West*, Otto shows that the experience of Sankara, however difficult it may be to understand and however opposed it may be to orthodox Christian doctrine, is of great importance. With philosophical acumen and spiritual insight Otto points out both the weakness as well as the strength of these two stalwart thinkers, Sankara and Eckhart. As a scientific student of religion Otto feels that the experience of these two men has to be studied carefully in any effort we may make to understand the religious development of man.

Friedrich Heiler was Professor of the History of Religions in Marburg. My acquaintance with him, which began at that time, ripened through the years into friendship. I found him always ready to give whatever help he could. He reviewed *The Sadhu*. He was attracted by it but felt that it was inadequate in its treatment of the message of Sundar Singh. So he set out to write a book himself which was published in German in 1924 with the title *Sadhu Sundar Singh: Ein Apostel des Ostens und Westens*. This had a wide circulation in Germany (20,000 copies). Its English translation, *The Gospel of Sundar Singh*, unfortunately never went beyond its first edition and was out of print for many years until I persuaded the Lucknow Publishing House in 1968 to reprint it.

For many years this book, both in German and in English, was a favourite with me. Again and again I turned to its pages for guidance. The German text was much fuller and longer than its translation. In 1956 I spent my month's holiday alone at Kodaikanal. My only interests were long walks and the study of this book.

There were four reasons why I was so eager to study the book intensively.

1. Heiler has given an exceptionally good account of Sundar Singh's teaching about prayer. He had himself written a book about prayer in which he had studied with sympathy and understanding the theory as well as the practice of prayer in all the religions of the world. This book had won for him a place among the front-line historians of prayer in the world. What he said about the teaching of Sundar Singh on prayer came with a singular authority. He held that Sundar Singh gave a central place to prayer in his sermons. He made it a point to preach at least one sermon on prayer in every city or town he visited. Like many of the great mystics of the world he regarded prayer for God as the highest type of prayer. He illustrated this with numerous parables. Heiler quotes a prayer of Sundar Singh as an example.

'Lord, to sit at Thy Feet is many times better and grander than sitting before any royal throne on earth; indeed, it means to be enthroned for ever in the eternal kingdom. Now I offer myself as a burnt-offering on the altar of those holy Feet. Accept it as and where Thou wishest; use me according to Thy pleasure. For Thou art mine and I am Thine. Thou didst make me in Thine image out of this handful of dust, and grant me the right of becoming Thy child. May all honour and glory and praise be Thine for ever and ever. Amen.'

2 With his wide knowledge of the religions of India Heiler was able to show how the ancient ideals and traditions of India influenced Sundar Singh. It is good to be able to understand some of the roots of Sundar Singh's teaching which are found in the ancient scriptures of India. Heiler says that training in the Jewish Law led St Paul to a deep consciousness of his sinfulness; the rigorous discipline of a monastery taught Luther the depth of his sinful nature; so the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita* (which

Sundar Singh knew by heart even as a child of seven) made him clearly aware of his sinfulness.

3. Heiler has also a happy way of studying Sundar Singh against the background of the great religious teachers of the Christian Church. When I began to write a new biography of Sundar Singh many important letters which Sundar Singh had received during his last years and which were found in his home at Subathu were sent to me. I studied them with great care and interest. I think the most important letter among them was the first letter which Heiler wrote to Sundar Singh in February 1924. He had already written *The Gospel of Sundar Singh*. But until that time he had had no personal contact with him. In that letter he says:

'Since coming to know your life and your preaching, I read the New Testament with new eyes. But the problem of the true and pure Church, which has troubled me since my youth, you do not clear up. Indeed I think I am able to understand especially your position beyond all particular Christian churches, because I have not been satisfied either by Catholicism or by Protestantism. But, on the other hand, I see the great saints of Christianity from the Apostolic Fathers to the mystics of the Middle Ages in the communion of the Church. St Ignatius of Antioch, St Cyprian, St Augustine, St Chrysostom, St Thomas Aquinas, St Francis of Assisi, St Catherine of Genoa, St Teresa of Jesus—they all were devoted in fervent love and truth to their Church; they all could say: "Christian is my name, Catholic my surname." They all subordinated themselves to the authority and tradition of the Church; they all lived continually in liturgical and sacramental communion with the Church. In this synthesis between a living personal communion with Jesus Christ and a complete subordination to the great communion of the Church lay their strength' (*Sundar Singh, A Biography*, p. 199).

This approach of Heiler is quite characteristic of him. Every doctrine of Sundar Singh is examined in the light of the teaching of the great Christian saints, sometimes by way of contrast and sometimes by way of comparison.

4. It is necessary to study Sundar Singh for the theological insight he gives us. We know him as a great evangelist who travelled far and wide to preach the Gospel of Christ and had

many adventures. He walked barefoot on the heights of the Himalayas and boldly faced dangers from the political authorities of Tibet and Nepal which were at that time closed to the Gospel. But Heiler made a serious attempt to study the theological aspects of Sundar Singh's teaching. I realized that this was a task that had to be done. In September 1958 I gave a course of four lectures in the United Theological College, Bangalore on a theological estimate of Sundar Singh. But they were a very inadequate attempt at a large task. I hope many men will take up that line of study and write along those lines.

Between 1957 and 1959 Professor and Mrs Heiler spent several months in India. For a long time Heiler had wanted to visit India; he regarded it as his spiritual home; but it was only towards the end of his life that he was able to realise this ambition. I was very anxious to meet him. But the hot weather had begun in India and I had gone to Kodaikanal with my wife for a holiday. He and his wife very kindly travelled up to Kodaikanal and we spent a full day together, talking over many things—Sundar Singh, the study of religions and the work the Christian Church has to do in India.

I thought it would be good for him to meet the missionaries at Kodaikanal. It would be equally good for them to meet a man of learning who had done much independent thinking on many of the subjects which were occupying their minds. I arranged a meeting in the Kodaikanal Missionary Union. Over a hundred missionaries attended it. Prof. Heiler explained with his usual friendliness and understanding the nature of the work which the Church had to do in countries like India. But I am afraid his conception of the missionary task was not acceptable to the people who had gathered there. They felt that the distinguished scholar had not understood the real situation in India.

Heiler's sermons and lectures gave fascinating glimpses of a lovable personality who had striven hard for many years for Christian fellowship and unity. He has been distressed by the many Churches of Christendom and their endless debates, discussions and feuds. Instead of the followers of Christ living together as a family in peace and love there has been much strife and controversy. In his own life he had bitter experience of such conflicts which have raged among the Churches, particularly with

regard to Freedom and Authority. To these troubles pressure from political authorities was added during Hitler's regime. Heiler was strictly warned that he should be careful about every word he spoke, every letter he wrote and every tour he undertook. He was watched closely, especially his contacts with people outside Germany. Such restrictions were a burden to a deeply sensitive soul like Heiler's. So pained was he by these many conflicts that he described his own life as a fulfilment of St Paul's words: I 'now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church' (Colossians 1:24). This was the text of one of his 75th birthday sermons.

Slowly it became clear to Heiler that such conflicts would cease only when a new day of renewal and fellowship dawned for the whole Church. Essentially he was a lover of peace. He therefore took an active share in the plans which Dr Nathan Soderblom, the Archbishop of Uppsala, set on foot for the union of the Churches. Heiler's friendship with the Archbishop was a close and enduring one. Again and again he paid generous tribute to the Archbishop's understanding, sympathy and love. Heiler also rejoiced at the new age in the Christian Church which began with the appearance of Pope John XXIII on the ecumenical horizon. In fact, Heiler began to dream of fellowship among men of all religions and taught that that was the meaning of the prayer of Jesus 'that they may all be one' (John 17:21).

I heard with deep sorrow that Prof. Heiler passed away on April 28, 1967. His death removed from our midst a great scholar and a loyal friend.

7

TWO MONTHS IN THE HOLY LAND

In Palestine, more than anywhere else, I thought often: How does God reveal Himself to men? Through a People, through a Book, through a Temple, through Nature, through a Person, or directly, immediately, soul to soul? In Palestine I realized clearly how different religions understand—or misunderstand—these many ways of Revelation.

Were there in Jerusalem men of the prophetic spirit and temper, to see whom would be to understand better the great Hebrew prophets? In such a short time it was no doubt hard to make the acquaintance of such men, even if they lived now, though I came across one who, aware of the glory of Israel and of his own share in it, was disciplining himself, body and soul, for the hour when his destiny would be fulfilled. He ate little and that the Passover Bread, kept in store from the days of the Passover. He worked part time in an office to earn just enough to maintain himself and spent the rest of the day at the Wailing Wall, or at home in prayer and meditation and in prolonged and earnest study of the prophecies. His wife supported herself and their son. This man possessed, in a small measure, the fire of the Hebrew spiritual genius. Acquaintance with him brought home to me the fact that the men whose writings have come down to us in the Bible are perhaps but a few lofty, towering souls standing out from among hundreds.

The Hebrew experience of God was—and still continues to be—largely collective. The choice of the Eternal rests not upon a man but upon a nation. No service is possible in a synagogue without at least ten men of over thirty years of age. We visited an old synagogue in Palestine and heard a legend about it. Once nine men came to the synagogue eager to worship. But a stranger appeared and the service was held. People wondered who he was —he looked so much like Abraham. Most of the prayers in the Prayer Book are concerned with national and not merely individual welfare. The City of Jerusalem takes on a new meaning when it is realized that for centuries during the exile and again during

the many generations which have passed after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in 70 A.D. the dream of Psalmists and Seers was that in Jerusalem God would meet them as a people.

Even the Zionist movement was, in a measure, the urge of the Hebrew soul's longing for a collective experience of God. I lived for a few weeks with a Zionist family and learnt much about Zionist aspiration and achievement. Like nationalisms the world over, Jewish nationalism was inspired by many and mixed motives, and there were Jews to whom settlement in Palestine meant nothing more than a comfortable home, free from bitter persecution, in the land of their forefathers. But it would be wrong to ignore the deeper strata in the movement and neglect the long-cherished conviction that the Lord would speak to the nation as a whole.

An individual experience of God is deep but limited, almost confined to the utterances of the still small voice within. But the Hebrew idea of a God who reveals Himself in the movements of nations, in the din and rush of battle, in the clamour of politics, is a profound idea.

The Jews have been called 'the people of the Book.' That is very true. I visited three synagogues and was struck by the enormous importance still attached to the Law in Judaism. The place of honour in the synagogue was for the Ark where the scrolls of the Law were kept. There were many scrolls, as it was an act of piety to present the synagogue with a scroll. Before a scroll was taken out, those members of the congregation who were the descendants of Aaron stood on the platform in front of the Ark with loose mantles veiling their faces and engaged in prayer. During these solemn moments the rest of the congregation stood round, their eyes not allowed to gaze on the veiled figures. After the benediction, the Torah or the Law, being 'the Five Books of Moses', was taken out and every member of the congregation crowded around it to kiss it. Then as each section of the Torah was read, a member of the congregation was summoned near the Reader's desk to listen to it. This summons was a matter of great honour and much coveted. Those members of the congregation to whom anything special had happened in the week—the birth of a son, the death of a near relation, return from a long voyage—informed the Rabbi of the fact and were chosen for the honour. In the course of the week they made a contribution to the synagogue.

Both before and after the section was read the man summoned engaged in public prayer. After the appointed lessons were read the Torah was returned to the Ark, amidst the same impressive ceremonies.

The Jew repeats the Shema every day—morning, late afternoon and night, and several times on Sabbath days and Festivals in the public services—the words, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is one.' Surely Israel's great contribution to human thought is its insistence upon the One God. But have they not learnt the lesson already? Has not its meaning sunk already into their souls? The daily repetition need not be a burden. We are not annoyed by the sun rising and setting every day, by the flowers and fruits appearing in their due season. We rather learn to look for new glories on the horizon every morning and evening, to discern new values in each new harvest. Great truths likewise call for the observant eye and the meditative soul which sees depths of meaning unrevealed till now.

To us in India, setting out on a fresh formulation of old truths, the Shema ought to serve as a beacon-light. In a Jewish soul, drawn by the power of Christ, I saw the conflict—still urgent, still unsolved—between the demand of the Shema for belief in one God and the demand of Christians for belief in Christ also as God. Surely there cannot be two Gods. So the Jew argues, perhaps God was reflected in Christ as in a mirror, or Christ was God's right hand—i.e., the means by which God worked. These unsolved conflicts point out to us the necessity for an arduous quest for a Truth great enough to comprehend in itself the unity of the Godhead and the Godhead of Christ.

Does God reveal Himself through a Temple? The most moving experience in Jerusalem was the sight of the Jews at the Wailing Wall. A part of the western wall of the Temple was left, and there every Sabbath as well as on special days like the fast on the ninth of Ab, when the Temple was twice destroyed, the Jews gathered together to mourn the destruction of the Temple. It was a motley crowd with tragedy written on face and garb. They were from all parts of the world—Hungarian Jews with their fur caps and long velvet gowns of blue, red and yellow, often faded and threadbare; Spanish Jews; Jews from Arabia and Persia with their fez caps; modern Jews from Europe and America in present-day

Western clothes. The more pious Jews had their hair uncut, others threw over their head and shoulders, in token of reverence, a cream-coloured shawl with dark stripes and fringes. The men stood at one end, the women at the other. Most of them kept reading from Hebrew books—Psalms or Prophets. On the ninth of Ab they read the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Some of them wept, some kissed the massive stones still left of the Temple. Every now and then someone began chanting, sometimes in a sweet melodious voice and sometimes in a loud vehement voice that had no special charm but succeeded in giving powerful expression to concentrated feeling, and the others joined him. This has been going on for generations.

This moving scene raised many a thought in my mind. True, the grand temples of Solomon and Herod are gone, but the God who answered the prayers in the Temple is not gone, and the Temple of Nature, with the eternal hills as its foundation, overarched by the firmament with its wonderful blue, spacious beyond measure and surpassing in beauty any temple built with hands, is not gone. Why then do the Jews mourn as if God were not? It is quite probable that all of them were not there to mourn for the Temple. Some were there from mere habit, as Christians often go to church. But the main reason leading the Jews to the Wailing Wall was no doubt sorrow for the loss of the Temple. As a Jew who visited the Wall daily told me, every Jew was commanded by the Lord to present himself at the Temple three times a year, and as the Temple no longer existed, he came to this spot.

The spirit of prayer dwells in the Mosque of Omar. The artist's eye picked the right marble, of attractive hue and adequate proportion; the sculptor's hand chiselled it and took away its crude surfaces; the architect's hand fitted it where its beauty would be best seen; the millions of devout souls who have prayed in the mosque generation after generation must have wrought still further on the marble, turning the marble from beautiful, marvellously finished stone into a veritable sacrament, charging it with spiritual energy. Apparently there is a law of heredity among buildings as among men, the law which passes on greatness with replenished vigour to succeeding generations. The Mosque of Omar stands as a descendent of a remarkable line of sacred edifices. In this house of prayer on sacred soil would a Jew care to pray, even if the Moslem allowed him such a rare blessing? The thought

is blasphemy to Jew as well as to Moslem, to the Jew wailing for the Temple in which God dwelt and to the Moselm who disdains the Jew whom he has conquered.

It is significant to note here the attitude of our Lord towards the Temple. To one who stands on the hills of Nazareth this thought takes on a new urgency. Here among these beautiful hills His quiet life of fellowship with the Father was lived and perfected. The hills, the flowers on the wayside, the birds that flew by, the simple village scenes, formed the background on which this life of communion with the Father was worked out. But it looks as if such a life begun and nourished in such an environment had to reach its perfect development in the Temple and its vicinity. Jesus passed from Nazareth to Jerusalem and even so a life of prayer begun in solitude must be perfected in the crowd. To Him the Temple was not something opposed to inner piety but something which corrected and supplemented inner piety.

For this our authority is the Fourth Gospel. This, the most mystical of the Gospels, places the ministry of Jesus mainly in Jerusalem. No mere ecclesiastical bias leads the writer to lay this emphasis. He mentions many facts which a biassed writer would have found it natural and advantageous to suppress. Jesus commends Nathaniel who prays under a fig tree. The cleansing of the Temple, an act which a mere love of ecclesiasticism would have found hard to understand, is placed at the beginning of the ministry thus going against the Synoptists, who place it at the end. Again, here occurs the great utterance, 'God is Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and truth' (John 4:24). These facts modify considerably the notion that the Evangelist was an ecclesiastically-minded person. The same Jesus who loved solitude, who passed over the sea of Galilee to the other side for quiet, who agonized among the trees on the slope of the Mount of Olives, also loved the Temple and prayed in it with others. His ministry finds its centre here. He who took such an independent attitude with regard to the interpretation of the Law and the Sabbath could not be said to have prayed in the Temple simply because the Jews were in the habit of doing so. His attendance at the Temple must be as significant as His other acts; it must mean that He puts His sanction on institutional religion as well as on the mystical religion that seeks God in the depths of a forest or a cave.

As a Revealer, Nature is often stern and exacting. Like a jealous teacher, she chooses her disciples with great care, imposes upon them exacting disciplines, and teaches profound truths, now by half-veiled symbolism and now by strange formula. To catch the melody of the stars is harder than to understand the significance of a Psalm: to read the apocalypse of budding flower or ripening fruit is harder even than to grasp the meaning of a mystic's visions. This perhaps explains why most people have sought God more in a Book or in a Temple than in Nature, and why some have equated Nature with God. Trees and flowers, birds and rivers, are all God. The visitor to Palestine, interested in problems of Mysticism, wonders what in the natural surroundings of that country—her hills, her rivers, her trees—accounts for the fact that Hebrew thought is so free from this tendency to equate God with Nature.

To follow this line of thought is not to say that every aspect of Hebrew thought can be accounted for in terms of the natural scenery of the Holy Land and its influence on the thinker's mind. For instance, in visiting the Jordan valley, I realized that the wild country may account for the rugged figure of John the Baptist, stern and fierce. It may also account for the Baptist's burning words, which scathed his hearers in the same fierce way as the sun scorched the valley. But then, through the hot and wild depression runs the Jordan, cooling and refreshing beyond measure, and calls up on either bank abundant green trees and plants which afford shade and cheer. The desert might have made him a son of bronze, winging his words with cruel power. But the river with its cool and softening influences seems to have sped along without any visible effect on his life or work.

The social character of Hebrew thought may account partly for the absence of Nature-mysticism. The process by which a soul, moved by the awful splendour of the starry constellations on a quiet solemn night, loses itself in them is an individual rather than a social process. Crowd-psychology may add to the vigour of a revival meeting but not to this type of experience. We have been with friends meeting God in silence, or with *bhaktas* feeling the rapture of God through prayer and song, but we have not heard of companies of men feeling themselves one with the God who is not merely all-pervasive, but who *is* the glorious dawn, who *is* the river heaving with enormous flood.

In its higher reaches this type of experience is poetry transformed into religion. The vague, dim, chaotic yearning of the poet, when accompanied by a strong religious nature, becomes the stuff of Nature-mysticism. The poet looks for the beauty which is subtle and fine, often confused. Not so the seer. He too may be captivated by beauty, but it is the beauty that half hides, half reveals an inner significance. Like a bud which is even more lovely than a fully opened flower, simply because it reveals so strongly but a part of its real self, this beauty is doubly attractive to certain minds. The Hebrew is more seer than poet. Among the beautiful hills of Galilee I realized how much more of a seer than poet Jesus was. He does speak of the Western sky, but its red is a sign of the coming rain. The flowers remind Him of the Father who clothes them with a beauty surpassing the glory of Solomon.

The seer has too vivid a sense of the details to lose himself in Nature or in Nature's God. Nature-mysticism steps in when the details get blurred and the outlines become dim. That is why Nature-mysticism is not present in the Old Testament or in the New.

I found it very interesting to observe the carpenters' shops of Palestine. For in one such our Lord must have spent the greater part of His life. I noted—rather an obvious fact—that while some carpenters were engaged in doing heavy work, others were carving delicate flowers or leaves. To what category did Jesus belong? When we think of Him as a carpenter, we think of Him as making ploughs and yokes. But it is not at all improbable that He was a carpenter with the artist's eye and hand, fashioning things of beauty. If so, His careful observation of Nature—of which we have so much evidence in the Gospels—would enable him to carve flowers, leaves and fruits, at once accurate, vivid and varied. On the other hand, His trained eye and hand would confirm what was already present in Him, as a part of His equipment as a seer, His habit of noting the details, of remembering the outlines of things He saw. This would have made impossible the vague, indefinable poetic feeling that sometimes developed into the experience of the Nature-mystic.

There is, however, a feature of Palestinian scenery which may account, partly at least, for the absence of Nature-mysticism in the

Bible. The hills, rivers and trees were not so grand, so awe-inspiring as those, for instance, in India. The hills are low compared with the majestic Himalayas, the effect of whose cloud-capped, towering peaks is to impart to the beholder's mind a sense of grandeur and awe. The Jordan is the only river, the others being mere rills that swell with the rains. And even the Jordan, swift and impetuous as it is in fact, though not in appearance, boasts of no broad and vast expanse that strikes awe into the heart. The fig trees and olive trees of Palestine, abundant in their fruit and prolific in the images which they furnished to Hebrew thinkers, are small and by no means grand or magnificent. The Psalms make us wonder what turn Hebrew thought would have taken if the land had been full of grand and awe-inspiring scenery.

8

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE FOR INDIA

Grace Samuel was also born and brought up at Palayamkottai. But we had not met before I went abroad. We had moved in different family circles. She had her early education in the Sarah Tucker College run by the Church Missionary Society. There were ten English women teaching Scripture and English in the different classes. After two years of further study in the Women's Christian College, Madras, she obtained her B.A. Degree and worked for a further two years as a post-graduate student in History. We had many common interests. She had been greatly attracted by the sermons of R. T. Archibald, Sadhu Sundar Singh and Walker of Tirunelveli. She had read widely, particularly in English Literature and History. She loved to sing English hymns, which meant much to her. At the same time she read with growing appreciation the writings of Rabindranath Tagore, the modern Indian poet and *bhakta*.

On April 2, 1923 we were married in the Holy Trinity Cathedral, Palayamkottai. Now for a long stretch of years we have been working together in God's Church, sharing our deepest concerns.

We have three children—a son who is a mechanical engineer in a Government Fertiliser Factory; a daughter who is married

to a Y.M.C.A. Secretary working among students; and a daughter who, like her husband, is a doctor—both working mostly among mill workers in Coimbatore. We have five grand children.

Many missionaries and nationals had felt for a long time that the time had come for the Indian Church to do its own thinking under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This was what happened in the early Church when it had to encounter Greek Philosophy. Church Fathers like Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Ireneus and Augustine were familiar with the problems of the Greek philosophers and began to expound the Christian religion so as to meet their difficulties. That was how Christian Theology grew. Christian thinkers expressed their loyalty to Christ in no uncertain terms. But their teaching was so framed as to appeal to men steeped in Greek Philosophy. Religion and Philosophy are deeply rooted in the Indian soil. The Indian people are brought up on them and they treasure them as of great value. Christian scholars would do well to understand how best they may be helped.

I was appointed English Editor of the Christian Literature Society, Madras, in 1923, and was given the necessary freedom and facilities to work at such a task. The funds came both from the National Christian Council and the C.L.S. I was told that I could live anywhere within easy reach of Madras so as to attend Committee meetings and have talks with the C.L.S. Secretary. I lived at Pallavaram, then a quiet and pretty village, twelve miles from Madras. We rented a pleasant cottage with a garden. The central room, bright and airy, was large and made a lovely study where all our books were arranged in neat glass almirahs. There were avenues of green trees in the locality along which I could go for short walks. A friend even asked 'Why are you living here like a recluse?' because I spent much time in study and prayer. The burden of my prayer was: 'Lord, show me the meaning of Thy Gospel and help me to make it clear to my educated country men.'

Some friends took a constant interest in my difficult and exacting work. Bishop Waller was one of them. He was paid by the British Government and his main responsibility was the spiritual life of the British civil and military personnel in Madras State. He had come out as a missionary of the C.M.S. and to the end he took genuine care of the Indian congregations included in

his diocese. On account of his position as the Bishop of Madras he had a high social standing and received invitations to all important public meetings in the city. He attended as many of them as possible and made many friends, both Indian and European. In this way he kept in touch with all new developments. He was a keen student of Church History. I could see him any time and get his help. Though a man with a rough exterior he had a heart of gold. He was prepared to attend even sub-committees appointed to deal with my work; once he went line by line through a manuscript at my request.

My Oxford thesis on the Fourth Gospel and Hindu Bhakti Literature had been accepted by the examiners, who had also commended its spiritual insight. But I felt strongly that before publication it should be rewritten in India. For two reasons. Only in India I could study enough Sanskrit to make the book adequate. I was fortunate in securing for nine years the services of a Sanskrit pandit who was a follower of Ramanuja the Bhakti philosopher, and had a competent knowledge of English.

The second reason for rewriting my Oxford thesis was that I felt it should come out of life. It should be explained to people so as to meet their difficulties and help their longings and I must hear their comments. There were many opportunities. I was invited to give courses of lectures in Theological Colleges, Arts Colleges, Y.M.C.A. Meetings, Indian Ministers' Conferences, Missionaries' Conferences and Evangelistic Meetings for Educated Hindus. I accepted these invitations which came from many parts of India and visited such places as Madras, Calcutta, Bangalore, Jaffna, Cuddalore, Pasumalai, Poona, Allahabad, Agra, Tiruppatur and Kodaikanal on different occasions. My approach was this. There have been a great many *bhaktas* in India. They had deep and profound longings for communion with a personal God. They had their frustrations and also their satisfying experiences. Some of their traditions such as image worship and the belief in Karma we cannot possibly accept as they are not in line with the mind of Christ. Christ alone is Our Lord and Saviour. He alone is our Friend and Counsellor. By dying on the Cross He has manifested the unlimited love of God for us and has brought us closer to Him. We need to follow Christ and whatever there is in the wealth of religious experience in Hindu Bhakti Literature which is in

harmony with the mind of Christ is ours. This was the gist of my teaching. A good many people were helped by it. In the light of practical experience my Oxford thesis was rewritten and published in two slim volumes—*Christianity as Bhakti Marga* (1928) and *What is Moksha?* (1931). Several hundred copies of them were sold also in England. I find that though the books are not now in print they are available in many of the missionary libraries in Europe and America. Recently I obtained a copy of *What is Moksha?* through a second-hand book-shop in New York.

Another outcome of my work during those years was the publication of *Temple Bells* in 1930. I was deeply moved by the Bhakti Hymns. They stirred in me a profound longing to serve God. Their earnestness, their sincerity and the depth of their passion for God captivated me. I yearned to have a similar Bhakti for Christ. And I also yearned that my fellow Christians should be similarly moved. So I prepared an anthology of Hindu Bhakti Literature from the earliest Upanishadic times down to the present day. Bishop Waller, the Chairman of the C.L.S. Committee, wrote a foreword commending the book. The manuscript was typed out and circulated among the members of the Committee who gave their general approval. But they expressed the fear that the orthodox supporters of the C.L.S. in England would not understand such a book and might withdraw their support from the Society. So I was asked to make my own arrangements about its publication. The Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, then in Calcutta, was publishing a series of books on the Heritage of India. They welcomed the manuscript as being in line with their work and spent much time providing suitable illustrations from modern Indian art and making the printed book as attractive as possible. The book has had a continual sale in India and many people have told me about the help and inspiration it has given them. The S.C.M. Press, London, ordered 2,000 copies in sheets, to be bound and sold in England with their imprint.

In 1923 Sadhu Sundar Singh invited me to Subathu near Simla to help him in translating his book *Reality and Religion* from the original Urdu manuscript. In 1928 he invited me again to spend a week with him at Subathu. I accepted both the invitations and travelled long distances by train to be with him. I had

been with him in various cities in Europe but he was then exceedingly busy with his meetings. Now his health had broken down and he had felt called to give his message to the world through the written word. As I recall my impressions after forty years, I was struck by the sincerity and humility of the man. He was living with a Punjabi family who looked after him during his illness and after his recovery. He loved their children and spent much time with them. There were no outward signs of holiness about him except his yellow robe. In prayer he followed the precept of Jesus and prayed in secret. I did not know when he prayed and how he prayed. He was eager to spread in the world the message which God had given him. Royalties from his books were coming in. He spent as little as possible on himself and added the rest to the trust fund for charitable purposes which he created.

Every year my father was in the habit of spending the summer months on the Kodaikanal hills. When the hot season of 1926 approached he hesitated a good deal as to whether he should undertake that year the journey to the hills. Though his mind and spirit were unusually active, he was losing physical strength and every month he was becoming feebler. With indomitable courage he was making his spirit master his steadily declining body. After consulting some doctors he finally made up his mind to go to Kodaikanal as usual and asked me to meet him at the Kodai Road station and to keep him company on the journey up the hills.

Normally his health improved when he went to Kodai. But this time his appetite was very poor; he was not able to take much nourishment. During the last days of his life he used to ask for the sixth Psalm and apparently felt and made his own the Psalmist's prayer 'Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.' But he continued to the last his life of prayer and meditation and study. On Sunday the 10th of April he took to bed and passed away peacefully on the 13th, in his seventy-ninth year. He was actually in bed for only about thirty-six hours. But during those hours he seemed to be suffering intense pain. All he could do was to recognize his wife and children with a feeble smile when they came to see him in his last moments. He could not even pray aloud as he usually did. He beckoned us to kneel by the bedside and laid his hands on our heads in silent blessing. Those were solemn moments for us.

It was sad to see a person of such vigorous and strong and powerful spirit battling against the weakness of his body. He died as he had often wished, a quick and peaceful death without prolonged illness or agony.

It almost seemed as if he had been summoned from the busy town of Palayamkottai to the quiet hills which he loved dearly so that he might meet his Master in peaceful surroundings. For twelve years he had been renting from the Sacred Heart College this small estate, Woodcot, three miles below Kodaikanal. The bungalow stood by itself in an immense wood; a lovely little stream ran through the grounds; the birds filled the air with their songs all hours of the day, particularly in early dawn. It was in such an atmosphere of peace and beauty that he breathed his last.

That morning his friend Bishop Abraham of the ancient Syrian Church called to see him and in the death chamber offered an earnest prayer begging for God's gracious mercy towards him and the members of his family. Soon after the nearest doctor was sent for. He was a Roman priest attached to the Sacred Heart College. He brought with him another priest. After examining the patient he requested the permission of the family to offer prayer. They then knelt down and silently and most reverently pleaded for one who was more or less a stranger to them. Soon after he died Bishop Tubbs, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Tirunelveli to which we belonged, came. He also prayed earnestly in the death chamber. Thus my father died as he lived, a catholic soul with the benediction of three great branches of the Christian Church, the Syrian, the Roman and the Anglican, resting upon him.

In 1930 I offered myself for Ordination in the Diocese of Madras. By that time I had got to know Bishop Waller well. He said, 'I shall be glad to ordain you but I should first like to have in writing your theological views. Will you write two long essays for me on "The Development of Christian Theology in the Early Christian Church" and "The Meaning of the Sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion"?'. He accepted the essays and I was ordained that April, first as Deacon, and after eight months, in December, as Priest. The ordinations took place in two impressive services in St George's Cathedral, Madras. The two essays I wrote were published in *The Madras Diocesan Magazine.*

On account of a severe economic depression in the West the funds which came from abroad to support my literary work dried up and my appointment came to an end in 1932.

9

WORK IN BISHOP'S COLLEGE, CALCUTTA

'We should like a man here to teach Philosophy of Religion and History of Religions. Could you come and help us?' So wrote Bishop Herbert Pakenham-Walsh, the Principal of Bishop's College, Calcutta, to me in 1932.

I was not a stranger to the College. In 1923 I had spent a term in the College giving a course of twelve lectures on the Gospel of St John and Hindu Bhakti Literature. The Principal of the College at that time was the Rev. R. L. Pelly. He and the other three members of the staff had welcomed me. I had enjoyed my work. This was the Theological College for the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon. About twenty-five men who had completed their College education, or who possessed a good general knowledge, were sent to the College in preparation for their ordination. They came from many parts of India. Some of them were Anglo-Indians. We had also students from the Jacobite Church and from the Mar Thoma Church of Kerala. We followed the syllabus of the Serampore B.D. I had heard much about the saintliness of Bishop Pakenham-Walsh. I gladly accepted his invitation.

The Bishop was a man of outstanding spiritual gifts. He and his wife, whom he married late in life, threw themselves heart and soul into the work of the College. There was a deep spiritual affinity between them. Even while living in Calcutta they led ascetic lives, wearing the simplest dress, eating the plainest food which Mrs Walsh herself cooked, riding only on bicycles even through heavy traffic, and giving away a good deal of their salary to help the poor. Sometimes they were a prey to the dishonesty and greed of the people who begged for their charity. Stories went round of men asking for the funeral expenses of the same person two or three times over! The Bishop was kind and

affectionate and a spirit of love prevailed in our little community of staff and students living on the same compound. There was an impression that students took advantage of his kindness and that there was slackness of discipline. But an impression of that kind is often inevitable if love, and not discipline, is the main note in the life of a College.

The College was well-endowed and all the students were given scholarships. The chapel was spotlessly clean and had the atmosphere of worship. The living quarters of the staff and students were comfortable though the buildings were old and needed repairs from time to time. There was an excellent garden with beautifully mown grass and a variety of flowers. Dahlias, Petunias, Chrysanthemums, Canas and Sweet Peas were in bloom in their seasons. The Bishop was a keen gardener. Sometimes he and his wife dug and pruned. They invited the staff and the students to help them when they needed extra labour. The rules of the College about flowers were generous. Every other morning the gardeners changed the flowers in our rooms. We were told there was no objection to the grown-ups picking flowers now and then. But children in the compound (of whom there were about twenty) must not gather them and throw them away. There were tennis, badminton and volley-ball courts which were well-maintained and well-used.

Teaching regular habits of prayer, both private and public, was one of the principal aims of the College.

6 a.m.	Sandhya
6.30 a.m.	Meditation
7 a.m.	Morning Prayer and Holy Communion
12 noon	Intercessions
4.30 p.m.	Evening Prayer
9.30 p.m.	Compline or Prayer before going to bed

Our students were expected to serve in parishes in which Catholic or Evangelical traditions were strong and their training had to be ecumenical.

Sandhya means meeting. It is a prayer offered in India for many centuries at the meeting of night and day i.e. at sunrise and at sunset. The Principal and his wife went up to the roof of their bungalow at early dawn and invited others to join them. After

some time of silence, a prayer for the illumination of the soul was offered. This is a helpful practice in India and may well be taken into the Christian Church.

Some of the critical students in the College spoke of this as sun worship. This was quite unfair. Christians who practise Sandhya do not worship the sun. We only worship the eternal and infinite God Who is the Source of all light. We need guidance every moment of our times. We should pray that God may shine in our hearts and give the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). At sunrise and at sunset the splendour of the sky and the beauty of the sun give intensity and depth to our prayer for light. In India even women and children, who know nothing about the Sanskrit prayers prescribed for such occasions, are often in the habit of standing in silence for a moment with clasped hands before the newly-risen sun.

Meditation is practically ignored in the Indian Church. Very few of us know how to meditate. No serious effort is made in our churches or schools to teach us meditation. All the patterns of our worship are wholly Western. Bishop Pakenham-Walsh tried to remedy this by instructing some of our future clergy in the art of meditation. This practice of Meditation, in which considerable experience has been accumulated in India as well as in the Christian Church, should certainly be taught in our Churches and schools. Meditation helps us to listen to the voice of God speaking in the depths of our soul.

In order to give intercessions breadth as well as depth topics for intercession covering the whole world with its many and vast needs were continually brought before us.

The intellectual equipment of ministers is another important objective of the College. We had men who made a deep study of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Principal himself lectured on Christian Doctrine, particularly as it had developed through the ages in the long history of the Church.

My subjects were Philosophy of Religion and History of Religions; both the subjects fascinated me immensely. About that time Archbishop William Temple's *Nature, Man and God* was published and I drank deep from that fountain of learning and piety.

We had an interesting time trying to understand modern religious movements in India. Calcutta proved a good centre for such study. During my earlier visit to the College in 1923 I had met Dr Radhakrishnan several times. He was at that time Professor of Indian Philosophy in the University. He was quite friendly and gave a lecture to our students on his interpretation of Hinduism. He was a quick reader and had even then read widely in Christian Theology. He borrowed some more books from our College Library and studied them.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chander Sen, Devendranath Tagore, Rabindranath Tagore, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo were all Bengalis. This list includes practically all the modern religious leaders in India. The only exceptions are Mahatma Gandhi of Gujarat and Dayananda Saraswati of the Punjab. Most of the leaders in Calcutta were dead, but their followers were active. We met some of them. They came to our College, had friendly cups of tea with us and told us what their movements stood for.

I suggested to the students that they see for themselves the work of these men and write essays showing both the weakness and the strength of their movements. This field work was an effective link between the class-room and the Hindu world of the day.

There were many outlets for our service. Bishop V. S. Azariah said to me, 'In the Dornakal Diocese today we have thousands of caste converts. We have no handbook of Christian teaching which we could use with them. Could you write for us a book of that type?' This invitation attracted me much. I spent several months writing the book. For some years I had been studying the Christian religion in close connection with the spiritual background of India. I had been trying to show how when thus studied together some new emphases came to light, some new glimpses of truth, some new insights. The work in Bishop's College had been an education to me. In explaining difficult ideas to our students I had learnt to be less abstract and more concrete and to use plenty of illustrations. When the manuscript was finished I sent it to the Bishop who decided that it was not the sort of book which would help his people. This was very disappointing to me. But the Editor of *The Guardian* (then published

in Calcutta) agreed to publish it as a series of articles in his weekly journal. The book was then published under the title *Christ in the Indian Church*. It was also translated into Urdu and Hindi.

In 1934 I received an invitation to Allahabad to take six classes for students in an All-India S.C.M. Conference held once every four years. I had an alert class of about one hundred college students who followed my lectures with interest. It was quite evident that they needed guidance on this problem: How can we be good Christians and at the same time keen nationalists, though not necessarily in the political sense? What should be our attitude towards the great religious leaders of the past and the present in India? Is there anything of permanent value in their religious experience, in their social ideals, in their cultural outlook? Should Indian literature, whether religious or secular, mean anything to us? Or should only Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson count? Such questions perplexed young men and women of that generation. I gave them the substance of my book, *Christ in the Indian Church*, and it seemed to help them.

Some keen missionaries who spent their summer holidays at Darjeeling on the Himalayas organized on their own initiative a summer school of religions in 1934. They asked the Rev. J. A. Subhan (now a Bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church) and Prof. J. N. Rawson of Serampore College to lecture. They asked me to give fifteen lectures on the Bhakti Saints in India. I traced the steady growth of Bhakti in India through the ages and cited various books to show the different stages of its development. These were *Katha Upanishad, Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavata Purana,* and the writings of Ramanuja, Tulsidas and Rabindranath Tagore. I closed the series with lectures on the Validity of Hindu Bhakti, the Weakness of Hindu Bhakti and the Survival Values of Hindu Bhakti. These lectures are being printed now.

The invitation to give these lectures gave me and my family a wonderful holiday. A lovely photograph of the snowy peaks as seen from Darjeeling hangs in our sitting room in Coimbatore and reminds us constantly of the beautiful Himalayas, our priceless heritage as Indians.

Our life in Calcutta came to an end in 1936. I fell ill and had to be taken to the Presidency General Hospital on two occasions. The humidity of the climate did not agree with me. Much to

my regret and the regret of my family, I resigned the appointment. We had, alas, to say farewell to the friends we had made, the beautiful garden in Bishop's College, the Cathedral with its great preachers and lovely music, the intellectual circles in the University and the attractions of a great city.

10

A SCHOOL OF HINDUISM IN BENARES

What was God's plan for my life? I was quite sure He had a definite plan for me, as for all people in the world. The abrupt way in which my life in Bishop's College came to an end raised this problem in an acute form. My students and fellow-teachers were affectionate and showed much love, particularly during my illness. When I had to give up this appointment, so congenial and so worthwhile, I was continually trying to see what pattern of life God had for me. Looking back I am now convinced that it was God's will that I should no longer live in a large city but must labour in rural areas. From 1936 till my retirement in 1959, for a period of twenty-three years, my work lay in rural parts.

Keen missionaries like Bishop Caldwell buried themselves in remote country places for more than forty years for building up schools and churches. It was Gandhiji in modern times who drew the attention of the country as a whole to the immense needs of the masses. There are seven hundred thousand villages in India. Over ninety per cent of the people are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Much needs to be done to educate them, to give them better wages, to help them raise more food, to give them such amenities as are possible in scattered hamlets.

My father took considerable interest in the village of Rajaputhukudi, sixteen miles from Palayamkottai and built there a substantial church and a small single-teacher school. He asked me to continue this work and provided the necessary funds. For the next few years I spent much time and energy in this work. The school had to be raised to a higher standard and the building enlarged. Today there are over two hundred children here receiving instruction from eight teachers. A flourishing Co-operative Credit Society gives loans for agricultural purposes.

Many old wells have been deepened and enlarged; some new wells have been sunk; when the monsoons are delayed or become weak, the water from these wells saves some crops. During the summer months when the local tank dries up, the wells serve as excellent swimming pools, giving the village folk much enjoyment. The water from one of the newly deepened wells proved to be sweet and fresh and was set apart for drinking purposes. The services in the church are taken Sunday after Sunday either by laymen or by priests from the neighbourhood.

Though my main work now was research, writing and social service in this village, I went out occasionally to give courses of lectures. One such course was given in Benares in 1940 and another in 1941.

There were at that time over two hundred and fifty millions of Hindus in India and much evangelistic work was done among them. In many ways Christians were brought into intimate contact with Hindus. Christians in India should have a sympathetic and accurate knowledge of Hinduism. Some friends felt that a new beginning should be made in this direction and a School of Hinduism was run in Benares from January 6 to February 11, 1940.

We had seventeen students in the school. Of these thirteen came from outside, travelling from five hundred to a thousand miles. Two were Englishmen, two Australians, four Americans and the rest were Indians. We had district missionaries, pastors, evangelists, teachers and theological students.

The daily work began with prayers at seven-thirty; at eight o'clock the students left with a competent guide to study the beliefs and practices of Hindus in the city. The bathing *ghats,* the main temples, monasteries and religious institutions, the Benares Hindu University, the new Buddhist Temple and the old Buddhist relics at Sarnath were visited. Benares was an excellent centre for a practical study of Hinduism. All the sects of Hinduism were represented there. The evenings were devoted to lectures.

The Rev. R. C. Das was our leader. He was teaching for several years in St Paul's College, Calcutta and then in St John's College, Agra. Himself a convert, he felt the call to do evangelistic work, resigned his educational appointment in 1931 and took up work in the Benares United City Mission. He had a wide knowledge of Hinduism, both in its practical and philosophical sides.

He had also many contacts with the pilgrims as well as the leading Hindus of the city. He lectured on aspects of popular Hinduism, such as image worship, bathing in the Ganges, caste, the worship of Krishna and Hindu culture.

Among other lecturers was the Rev. H. H. Presler, an American missionary who had made an independent study of Hinduism from a fresh angle, its social problems throughout its long history. The Rev. A. C. Chakravarty, a Brahman convert, lectured on the Bhakti saints of India. Eight leading Hindus in the city spoke to us on different phases of Hinduism.

My subject was the Gospel and India's Heritage and I used the manuscript of a new book on which I was then working. I pointed out that as Indian Christians we must use all that is good and true and noble in the heritage of India. There are some genuine difficulties in the way, such as the vastness and complexity of the subject, the indifference and even hostility of some Christians and the real fear of compromise with Hinduism. Provided these dangers are safeguarded much that is of value can be learnt from Hinduism. I took the doctrines of God, Forgiveness, Fellowship with God and the Church, and showed how Christian thought and experience could use the Indian heritage. I stressed the importance of studying the inner life of Jesus, which was so deep and profound. We generally dwell on the outer aspects of His ministry, His ministry of service and unparalleled suffering. In my earlier books I had pointed out the relevance of the Fourth Gospel to the spiritual quest of India. In this book I dealt with the relevance of all the four Gospels to India.

S.P.C.K., London, published my manuscript in 1942, under the title *The Gospel and India's Heritage*.

There was a multitude of widows in the city of Benares. Through their hardships and sufferings they were often led to engage seriously in the religious quest. One of the saddest sights in the city was the Widows' Home where, through the twenty-four hours of the day, singing praises to Krishna was kept up by relays of widows. In the mornings there were crowds of them. The large room and the adjoining verandah were filled with more than two hundred women, seated before a picture of Krishna. They sang vigorously and fervently with cymbals and drums, and at 10.30 a.m. received small quantities of rice, dhal and ghee,

provided by the generosity of the founder; they then returned to their houses.

It was Christmas Eve. The Ramakrishna Mission had arranged a Christmas celebration. In a large room in the hospital on the wall a picture was hung of the Virgin Mary holding the child Jesus in her arms; a beautiful garland of flowers was placed around the picture, which was illuminated with electric lights. Under the picture were arranged lovely chrysanthemums. About two hundred people, men and women, were present. After the story of Christ's birth was read from St Luke's Gospel, four brief addresses were given about the meaning of Christmas, the first two by the *swamis* of the Mission, the third by a professor at Benares Hindu University and the fourth by myself. The celebration was followed by the distribution of light refreshments.

Many educated Hindus today are willing to regard Jesus as an incarnation and worship Him. We met a typical old Sanskrit pandit, one of the half a dozen leading Sanskrit scholars in the whole of India. He began speaking of Jesus as an incarnation and wanted to know exactly what the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation meant. We requested a Hindu Sadhu, the active head of a widespread organisation, to expound the Hindu religion. He was very old. He wore a long saffron robe, and a pile of long, uncut hair on his head was tied up into a knot. He reclined on an easy-chair and discoursed fluently about the charts on the walls, which he had prepared to illustrate different Hindu philosophical doctrines. We began talking about Jesus, and he said: 'The Christian Church survives today not because of its followers but because of Jesus.' Educated Hindus, while attracted by the figure of Jesus, are not willing to accept Him as the only Incarnation. There was, however, a general readiness to hear about Jesus.

Benares is a most important centre for Christian work. There are hundreds of Sanskrit scholars in the city, some of them men of enormous learning. Pilgrims come to the city from every part of India, and among them many are genuine seekers after truth. The Christian work in Benares must surely be strengthened. Benares is particularly valuable for Christian scholars who want to study both the theory and the practice of the Hindu religion. The memory of the C.M.S. missionary, Pandit Johnson, and of the Brahman convert, Nehemiah Nilakantha Goreh Shastri, both

of whom delved deep into Hindu philosophy, is still cherished in the city. It is a pity there are no scholars of this type now in Benares who could command the confidence of Hindus and Christians alike.

11

THE DAWN OF POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE

In June 1946 Bishop G. T. Selwyn of Tirunelveli Diocese appointed me Archdeacon of Palayamkottai. One of my responsibilities was to be the correspondent in charge of five Diocesan High Schools. As a senior presbyter in the Diocese I was asked to guide the headmasters in such matters as the appointment of new teachers and the best use of school funds. Our people in the Diocese were eager to start new high schools and even in villages where the resources were limited they were clamouring for them. They were opened where the resources were available and careful use was made of the slender funds.

A good deal of my time was spent for the spiritual education of the two thousand teachers in the six hundred elementary schools of the Diocese. Missionaries in the past felt that in every possible village there ought to be a church and a school—a church to worship God in and a school to give the people an education. The two ought to go hand-in-hand. An illiterate Christian population would be unfortunate. So would be a secular Christian community. Many of these two thousand Christian teachers were taking services for village churches as part of their work. Some of them were doing it well, and the others were careless and indifferent. It was necessary to urge them to do some serious study so that their work in the church may be well grounded. Each year four Tamil books were published, one on a book of the Old Testament, another on a book of the New Testament, another on Christian Doctrine and yet another on Church History. All these books were written specially for them with their rural background and elementary knowledge in view and they were asked to take examinations in them. It was one of the duties of the Archdeacon to organise this work. I spent a good deal of time getting these books written and published.

As Archdeacon of Palayamkottai I was given a stall in the Cathedral in which I had been worshipping from my childhood. It was good to have this seat in a church which had become precious to me through years of worship. The festival services such as those on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Easter Day and so forth were attended by crowded congregations. On Christmas morning a service was held at 4.30 a.m. but people would arrive in Church even from midnight. The Bishop or the Archdeacon was expected to preach on these important occasions. In my sermons I urged that these festivals might be real steps to spiritual growth rather than opportunities for merry-making.

In 1948 there was a chance for me to travel for three months in North India. I spent most of that time in New Delhi but visited also Ludhiana, Lucknow and Calcutta. The Congress Party had come to power in 1947. I met many interesting people who were shaping the life of the country and laying down the policy of the new Government.

I was told that even the highest officials in New Delhi were more accessible than in the British days, and I wrote to the Governor-General Sri C. Rajagopalachari asking for an interview. When I went to the Government House, I was led through numerous corridors and halls to the large and beautifully furnished room in which the Governor-General was seated at an office table. The establishment attached to the Government House was immense. Five thousand people were looking after the Governor-General and his staff. The Government House was a huge mansion built lavishly to add to the prestige of the British Empire. The Governor-General himself, clad in a simple white cloth and shirt of *khaddar* (home-spun-yarn), stood up courteously to receive me and after we sat down began talking about the future of Christians in India. He said he was only thinking aloud and frankly expressed his views. 'I realize that the future may be quite difficult for Christians. My own idea is that you should continue to run your Ashrams and orphanages and your schools and colleges, and thus serve the nation.'

I suggested that we should throw in our lot in the political life of the country; otherwise our influence in India would not be much.

'The influence of Jesus has been profound in the world,' he said. 'He did not take any part in the politics of His day. When He was asked about this matter He said, "Render unto Caesar

the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the thing that are God's."[1] His tremendous influence in the world is due to His selfless service and suffering love. In India there was a great difference between Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was a saint, pure and simple; he was devoted to God and his whole life was poured out in service. Swami Vivekananda was a great organizer. It is generally acknowledged that Ramakrishna was the greater of the two.' It was Rajaji's rooted idea that those who desired to be truly religious should not be involved in the world. This, of course, is one of the central convictions of Hinduism.

Rajaji is a man of great political sagacity. As Governor-General he had no authority to decide on matters, but owing to the weight of his personality the Prime Minister and others in authority often took his advice. Some years ago he broke away from the Congress. He was convinced it was going along wrong lines. He founded a new party of his own (*Swatantra*). Today in his 90th year he is the most powerful and relentless critic of the Congress Government in India.

Rajaji has strong religious convictions. The commentaries and books he has written on the *Upanishads* during the years when he was not holding office show clearly where his real interests lie. He expresses in many of his speeches a profound faith in God.

I reflected a good deal on the advice of the Governor-General. I also talked with several of our Christian leaders on this subject. Their almost universal conviction, however, was that in Independent India we should identify ourselves completely with our nation, not merely in the sphere of humanitarian activities but also in the political field. The conditions in our Lord's time were quite different. He was living as a citizen in the Roman Empire, where his only duty was to pay his taxes and to obey the Government. He was not expected to take any share, large or small, in running his country. Today a democracy is being established in India. Every citizen is expected to have his say as to who should become legislators and how they should run the Government. If our influence in the country is to be real, we cannot stand aloof, devoting our attention only to humanitarian work, however necessary it may be.

Dr John Matthai, the Finance Minister of the Indian Govern-

[1] St Matthew 22:21.

ment, belonged to the Syrian Church in Travancore, which has produced many remarkable men and women. After several years of service as Professor of Economics at the Presidency College, Madras, Dr John Matthai was for long a member, and later the Chairman, of the Tariff Board for the whole of India. In later years he was connected with the Tata Company in Bombay. Thus he had numerous opportunities for gaining a wide and intimate knowledge of financial problems, both on the theoretical and the practical side, in all parts of India. He had the great reputation of being a man of sound and well-balanced views. When I met him in New Delhi he stressed the need for political education among our people, and said that citizen groups in connection with different parishes would be quite helpful. 'It is necessary,' he said, 'that Christian people should know something of the programme of the Congress, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party. They could align themselves with one or another party according to their best judgement. I know some good Christians who are members of the Communist Party. But there is one thing which Christians should not do, and that is, they should not form a Christian party, working along communal lines.'

In New Delhi I met Dr H. C. Mukerjea quite often. In later years he became the Governor of West Bengal. In 1947 Dr Mukerjea was asked whether he would serve as Vice-President of the Constituent Assembly and he gladly agreed. On account of the frail health of the President, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Dr Mukerjea actually presided over the Constituent Assembly for several weeks. When we talked about his age, Dr Mukerjea said to me, 'I am seventy-two years old. You can see that I am quite strong and healthy.' Presiding over the meetings of the Assembly which was drawing up the Constitution of India was quite an arduous business. The members of the Central Cabinet were generally there. Over three hundred members, including some of the ablest men in India, dealt with matters of great importance. That Dr Mukerjea was able at this advanced age of his life to guide the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly was a testimony both to his vigour of intellect and vitality of body. He was a short, lean man, wearing black shell-rimmed spectacles. Seated informally among his friends he puffed at his *hookah* and talked frankly and intimately about his long and varied experience of men and affairs. His wit was sometimes devastating.

From 1937 to 1944 he visited many large Christian centres all over India on behalf of the All-India Council of Indian Christians. In the numerous places which he visited he came into contact with other Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsis. He stayed with all sorts and conditions of men, rich and poor, and saw for himself many of the problems which were agitating their minds. Always a nationalist, he actually joined the Congress only the day after Gandhiji's death.

He confessed that when his only son was alive, he had no desire to give liberally. But the death of his son made a profound change in his outlook and he decided to endow large sums of money for education, keeping for his own use only what was absolutely necessary for the elementary needs of life.

I was greatly impressed by the keenness of the Congress leaders to be on friendly terms with Christians when I called on Mrs Sarojini Naidu, the Governor of the United Provinces, a few months before her death. I was in Lucknow on 15th August, 1948, when the first anniversary of Independence was celebrated. The Evening Service in Christ Church was conducted as a thanksgiving service for Independence, and I was asked to preach the sermon. Mrs Sarojini Naidu had been invited to attend the service. There was a crowded congregation and many non-Christians who would not normally have attended a Christian service were present in the church. In the course of the sermon I pointed out that it was a matter of great rejoicing for Christians that Independence had come to our motherland. Many Christians were lukewarm or indifferent, and some were actually afraid of the future, because we were a minority community in the midst of a large Hindu population. Our position in new India would depend upon the zeal and integrity with which we served her. We had done excellent pioneering work in former years in such fields as education. There were a great many more things for us to do now. The masses had to be educated. Goodwill and harmony between the different communities had to be established. These tremendous tasks of vast complexity were ahead of the nation. As followers of Jesus Christ we must seek to spread light and love and peace. If we really help in such nation-building activities there would be a genuine place of great value for us in the country.

On the following day I called on Mrs Naidu. Her name had been familiar to me for years, but I was a perfect stranger to her. She was sitting on a sofa in one of the many beautifully furnished parlours in the Government House in Lucknow. She must have been well over seventy, and her health had long been frail, but her vigour of intellect seemed unimpaired.

To make conversation she asked me what true greatness was. She said that the true greatness of a man did not consist in the multitudes of people whom he swayed by the magnetic power of his personality. If it had been so, Hitler would have been a truly great man, for there were millions of people who were ready to do his bidding. But true greatness consisted in absolute selflessness. Among the people she knew there were only two whom she would be inclined to call truly great—Mahatma Gandhi and her own father. She had known Mahatma Gandhi intimately for a great number of years and had been associated closely with him. During the last few months of his life when, refusing all office in Independent India, Gandhiji worked in Bengal and Delhi where communal bitterness was at its worst, and at the constant risk of his life sought to bring about love and peace between Hindu and Muslim, he really grew in spiritual stature.

I asked her whether Rabindranath Tagore could be considered to have possessed true greatness and she quickly replied: 'A great poet, yes; but not a great man.'

I asked her whether she knew of Albert Schweitzer, who, when he was achieving a great reputation as a theologian and musician in Europe, gave it all up and buried himself on the edge of a primeval forest in Africa serving the poor as a doctor. She had not heard the name, but agreed that there were no doubt truly great people like him in the world, now as at all times.

Her own special mission in life, she seemed to suggest, was to help in establishing communal unity. Mahatma Gandhi had urged her to accept her appointment as Governor of Uttar Pradesh, as he was sure she would be able to help in bringing about communal peace and love. As a result of the partition of India streams of refugees from the Punjab had poured into the neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, and her hands had been quite full trying to serve them and help them to settle down to a useful way of life.

This interview convinced me that some of the top leaders in the Congress were genuinely anxious to establish harmonious

relationship between the different communities in India, and were particularly keen to make the minorities feel, beyond a shadow of doubt, that they had a real place in independent India and that they would be treated not only fairly but with affection and respect.

12

INDIAN POLITICS AND CHRISTIAN WORK

The Rev. J. J. M. Nichols-Roy, the Minister of Public Works in the Government of Assam, was attending the Constituent Assembly in New Delhi as its member. I called on him in 1948 to find out what he thought should be a Christian's task in the new India. He was 64 at that time. He said: 'When I was a student, Christ was regarded as a foreign God. Christ is no longer a foreigner. This is due to the work of Mahatma Gandhi. He has brought Christ and His ideals close to the heart of India. No one who loves Mahatma Gandhi can hate Christ. I am not afraid of the future. Christianity will never be wiped out of India. If there is any persecution, Christianity will flourish all the more as in the first century.'

'Could you tell me how you became a Minister of the Assam Government?' I asked. He said:

'I am sure it is God's leading. I have been an elected member of the Assam Legislature since 1921, from the Shillong Constituency—non-communal; my work in the Legislature was appreciated by the country. In 1926 some friends came to me and said that I should be offered the responsibility of a Minister of the Government, and they requested me not to decline the office; but at first I was very doubtful whether it was God's will for me. One day when I was at prayer with my wife and other friends, beseeching God earnestly to prevent everything contrary to His will, a car drove into my compound from Government House bringing a letter from the Governor asking me to go and see him. I went there and he invited me to join the ministry. I said that I had some difficulties in accepting this responsibility. If I were to be prevented by this appointment from preaching the Gospel, then I would not be able to accept it. The other difficulty was

that the Governor should give his assent to my Bill which had been passed in the Legislative Council prohibiting altogether the smoking of opium by anybody. In order to defeat my Bill, the Government had introduced a Bill to prohibit smoking in company but to allow smoking in private. That Bill had been passed by the Legislative Council before my Bill was passed. My Bill came on the Agenda in the last days of the Legislative Council. I canvassed among the members and asked them to pass my Bill also. Some said: 'How can we pass two Bills on the same subject in the same session?' I said: 'Why not? It is the Governor who will give his assent, either to the Government Bill or to my Bill.' So the members agreed and my Bill also was passed. In the interview with the Governor, I told him that unless he gave his assent to my Bill that had been passed by the Legislature, in preference to the Government Bill, I could not accept the appointment. He agreed to give his assent to my Bill. But as regards preaching he said that he would look up the rules, consult the Chief Secretary, and then let me know. I returned home, and after some hours he wrote to me that I was free to preach the Gospel. Then I accepted the responsibility of a Minister of the Government. That was in 1927. I have been returned in every election, and have been a Minister of the Assam Government three times.

'Could you tell me something about your Christian life?' I said.

'This is a long story, covering over half a century', answered Mr Nichols-Roy. 'I am a Khasi by birth and I followed the religion of my people. I went to a mission school and there heard the Gospel of Christ. When I was 14 years old there was a terrible earthquake, and torrential rain was pouring day and night for a whole week. The river running through my village, Shella, rose high and there was a tremendous flood. Houses fell and many were buried under the debris. I was terribly shaken by this great convulsion of nature and my heart was moved to seek God. Anxiously I cried "Who is God? How can I find the true God?" I was then a student in the High School in my native village. That earthquake destroyed my village and the High School could no longer continue, so I went to Shillong to continue my studies.

'In the month of November 1898 I was studying for an examination until past midnight. I prayed to know who is God

and how to find Him. Something wonderful happened in the early hours of the morning. A light flashed into my soul. The fact that Jesus Christ came into the world 1900 years ago was brought home to my heart, and his crucifixion came clearly before me; my heart was greatly touched. I gave myself to the Lord Jesus Christ and acknowledged Him as my God. An inner voice spoke to me: "The true God is the God who loves you, and He who loves you is the one who came to seek you and to suffer for you."

'After a few months I was received into the Church of God. Before they received me into the Church, I was asked to speak and tell the people why I wanted to be a Christian. I then preached my first sermon for Christ. I was later baptized.

'Once I was seriously ill with a bad attack of rheumatism and dysentery. I grew weaker and weaker. The doctor who treated me gave up all hope. I had heard of Divine Healing and I decided to trust myself to God entirely and refused to take any medicine. An elder of the Church where I was staying came to see me. I asked him to anoint me with oil and to pray for me, as the Bible teaches (in the Epistle of St James, 5:14). He did not anoint me, but he prayed for me. I put my whole trust in God alone and got well. After a few months I was able to walk thirty miles. This episode in my life greatly helped my faith.

'I joined the Duff College, Calcutta. A large conference was held of students from India, Burma and Ceylon at Serampore, the first mission station of Dr Carey. One of the speakers held a consecration meeting. He pleaded with us to surrender ourselves to Christ and to pray to God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. Seven of us prayed aloud, one after another, and consecrated ourselves to Christ. Then he suggested that we band ourselves together and do evangelistic work. We formed a band called: "Indian Christian Workers' Band." I was its secretary.

'When I was studying for M.A., there was an inner call to give up my studies and to go about preaching. I sought God earnestly. For nearly two months I delayed, as I did not know whether it was God who spoke to me, or whether it was my own mind. I asked God to give me some signs and decided to leave Calcutta and go to my village first. I had a little money which was not sufficient for my journey home; I visited some friends—

two of them put money into my hands as I shook hands with them. No one on earth knew that I did not have much money. I thanked God for the money I received. When I reached home, my mother and brothers were in great distress. They thought that I had really lost my mind; my mother wept and threw herself on the floor thinking that my mind was deranged; but the Lord Jesus was with me. I told them that the Lord had called me and I had obeyed Him. There was a great commotion in my home and among my relatives. I began preaching. The Lord worked. The sick were healed, devils were cast out. I never knew where my meals would come from, but the Lord supplied them.

'I felt that I should not depend upon any Church or missionary organization for my support. I depended upon God alone, telling no man when I was in need.

'I started a company for the cultivation of oranges and other fruits. This company is now prospering. We have about four hundred acres under cultivation. We also prepare orange and other fruit squashes for the market. One of my sons is now in America studying food technology.

'I am still carrying on my work as a preacher of the Gospel. I preach in my congregation in Shillong every Sunday whenever I am there. When I go out on tour, I preach wherever I get the opportunity. Annually we have our Church Assembly and I preach there also, instructing the people in the ways of the Lord Jesus Christ. The people who are adherents in the Church of God with me number about six thousand. Our work does not have any financial connection with any foreign country. It is entirely self-supporting; we believe in giving our tithes to the Lord.

'I have preached in U.S.A., Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, Japan, China and Australia. Friends in America, who heard my addresses, said to me: "You are always exalting Christ in your preaching. Here we tend so much to emphasize our denominational doctrines, and to widen the gulf between the various Churches." '

The agony of Christ on the Cross is the foundation stone of Mr Nichols-Roy's Christian belief. He said, 'For a long time the cry of Christ on the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" troubled me beyond measure. I knew there must

be a really good reason behind the cry, but I could not discover it. The commentaries and theological books I read gave me no help in the matter. I was once preaching a course of sermons on the Passion of Christ. I had announced that one of the addresses in the series would be devoted to "The Cry on the Cross." I had no idea what I was going to say in the address. I had been asking God in fasting and prayer to give me light on this agony of Christ, at least to satisfy my own mind. In the service I began reading the story of the Passion at that point, and went on explaining it. Then the meaning of the cry flashed upon me like a bright light and I saw standing before me vividly the word "Identification". Then the agony of Christ on the Cross was made very plain to me. My intellectual difficulties were cleared up, and my whole being was filled with the love of God as manifested in this cry of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. Tears of inexpressible gratitude to the Heavenly Father flowed freely from my eyes, and I preached for about two hours and many in the congregation were likewise moved to tears. Several persons were convinced of their sins, and gave their hearts to God.'

Mr Nichols-Roy explained to me what he meant by Identification. 'Once a Hindu, a magistrate by profession, said to me: "I studied in a Christian college; when I came to the story of the Passion of Christ, I was always troubled and did not quite understand it. I sought for explanation from many, but I was not satisfied. I saw in the Cry on the Cross the weakness of Christ." ' Nichols-Roy said: 'That Cry on the Cross is to me the revelation of the Heavenly Father's heart to me. He asked me: "How?" I asked him whether he had children. He said "Yes." Then I asked him: "Supposing you are carrying on a pleasant conversation with your friends, and someone brings to you the news that your son has been caught in a great crime, how would you feel?" He said "I would be distressed and I would not be able to eat or drink." I asked him: "Why?" He said: "Because he is my son." "But," I said, "he is a separate entity from you; where is the connection between you and your son?" Then he said: "Because I love him." "It is in the heart then," I said. "Your son's sin and shame become yours. Your son's distress is yours, is it not?" He said, "Yes, I never thought of it in that way." Then I said to him: "The love in your heart is only a spark of the eternal love of God; love draws the suffering of the one whom we love

to ourselves. We can't help it; it is a normal action in the realm of moral beings. As you cannot know a man unless you know his heart, so you cannot know God unless you know His heart, that heart is seen in this Cry; the sins of his persecutors and of all men, and their final doom and their agony as they face God's judgement are vividly before him. He hears them crying: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But they are all his own. He loves them; therefore their agony and cry become his, and he cries out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me." '

'When we parted company, the Hindu gentleman thanked me heartily for what I had said and added: "It is providential that I have met you today." '

13

ST AUGUSTINE'S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY

When I was teaching in Bishop's College, Calcutta we had come together for a meeting of our College Theological Society. I happened to comment that St Augustine's use of Neo-platonic philosophy was full of significance for us here in India. Father Noel Hall, who later became the Bishop of Chota-Nagpur, took strong objection to this view. He was a fine scholar and was often consulted on account of his wide and exact knowledge of Church History. He held that St Augustine was certainly a great thinker but unfortunately in this matter he went astray. He was great not because he had assimilated Neo-Platonism in his Christian life and thought but in spite of it. The meeting became a theological debate. Our students, who filled the room, listened to the debate intently. This was a matter of deep concern in a country like India with its many religions and philosophies and they were eager to find out what we two thought of our theological task. My interest in St Augustine, always deep, became even deeper because I now wanted to find out for myself how far Bishop Hall's view was correct. The opportunity for this further study of St Augustine came some years later.

The Government of India decided to publish a History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western. Dr S. Radhakrishnan was

the Chairman of the Editorial Board. He held that while there were many excellent histories of European Philosophy and of Indian Philosophy, there was no single book in which the main schools of Eastern and Western thought were described and their interactions one upon the other were assessed. In these days of intimate contact between East and West it is necessary to show how through the ages they have influenced each other. The immediate aim was to show what contribution Indian philosophy had made to world-thought as a whole. When asked in the Indian Parliament why the Government should launch on such a project as this, the Minister for Education, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, explained that the Government felt that no private publisher, whether in India or abroad, would be prepared to sink money on an undertaking of this kind.

I received an invitation from Mr Humayun Kabir to write the article on St Augustine for this book. Mr Humayun Kabir was at that time the Joint Educational Adviser to the Government of India. I met him while I was in New Delhi. Educated at Oxford, in his time he was a leading member of the Oxford Union. For several years he was on the staff of the University of Calcutta. A Muslim, he had identified himself completely with the Congress and had always stood for the whole-hearted co-operation of Hindu and Muslim. As a member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and as a Muslim youth leader he had exerted considerable influence in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. For some time he was the Education Minister of the Central Government. He was a man of versatile gifts and had written, both in English and in Bengali, many stories and poems which had aroused much interest. He explained to me in some detail the scope and purpose of this new History of Philosophy.

St Augustine's earnest search for truth, his close acquaintance with the philosophy and culture of his day, and his clear insight into the deepest aspects of the Christian religion had fascinated me. Though he lived from A.D. 354 to 430, his thought and experience were determined by influences which came from such widely scattered lands as Africa, Persia, Greece, Rome and Palestine. He was born in Tagaste in Africa and was a citizen of the far-flung Roman Empire. Semitic influences affected him through the Phoenicians, with whose language and ideas he was familiar. For a period of nine years he was an ardent follower of the

doctrines of Manicheism, which had originated in Persia. He was brought up on Latin and Greek classics, though he was far more familiar with Latin than with Greek. As a Christian he was deeply rooted in the Bible. After St Paul there is no greater Christian thinker than St Augustine. His influence in the Christian Church has been both profound and continuous. That an early Christian thinker of such spiritual and intellectual stature should have been helped by schools of thought from such widely scattered lands is certainly a matter of great significance.

St Augustine is particularly important for the way in which he has woven into the texture of his thought the nobler elements in Neo-Platonism. For several years he studied carefully the writings of Plotinus, and when he was converted to the Christian religion he brought into a living synthesis in his own thought and experience all that was best in Neo-Platonism and Christianity. The account in his *Confessions* of his conversation with his mother at Ostia is perhaps the finest expression of this living synthesis. A brilliant young man, his moral life had been in a chaotic state, and his mother Monica had prayed night and day with tears for his conversion, which took place when he was thirty-two years old. A year after his conversion mother and son, who were devoted to each other, were standing by a window in a house at Ostia gazing on the garden and talking about the things of eternity. As she died soon after, this conversation has a poignant interest:

> We were saying then: If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed, hushed the images of earth and waters and air, hushed also the poles of heaven, yea the very soul be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self, surmount self, hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign, and whatsoever exists only in transition, since if any could hear all these say, *we made not ourselves, but he made us that abideth for ever*—If then having uttered this, they too should be hushed, having roused only our ears to him who made them, and he alone speak, not by them, but by himself, that we may hear his word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor angel's voice, nor sound of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but might hear him whom in these things we love, might hear his very self without these (as we two now strained our-

> selves, and in swift thought touched on that Eternal wisdom, which abideth over all)—could this be continued on, and other visions of kind far unlike be withdrawn, and this one ravish, and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might be for ever like that one moment of understanding which now we sighed after; were not this, *Enter into thy Master's Joy?* And when shall that be? When *we shall all rise again,* though *we* shall not all be changed (*Confessions,* p. 195).

Here St Augustine is very much under the influence of Neo-Platonism. The tumult of the flesh is hushed; the distractions which come to us through the eye and the ear are subdued; the world of nature with its loveliness ceases to speak. The direct communion of God with the soul cannot be expressed in words; even images of words are quite inadequate to convey it. The human spirit and the Divine Spirit meet together on a lofty range and rouse in us the deepest joy. It is difficult for us to understand what the Master's joy (Matthew 25:21, 23) will be like. In this passage St Augustine suggests that it will be like the blissful experience here and now in our direct contact with God, the profound difference being that here our fellowship with God is imperfect and short-lived, whereas in the hereafter it will be continuous and permanent.

From this brief account of the teaching of St Augustine, it is evident that he owed a heavy debt to Neo-platonism. But he was emphatic and clear in recognizing its final inadequacy. Contrasting the Platonic books and the Bible he writes that the former teach 'that He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. But, that He came unto His own, and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, as many as believed His name; this I read not there. Again I read there, that God the Word was born not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God. But that the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, I read not there' (*Confessions,* p. 131).

The projected volume, *Philosophy: Eastern and Western,* was published in London by George Allen and Unwin in two volumes in 1953.

14

INDIAN THEOLOGY

In January 1950, the National Christian Council in India convened a conference on Indian Theology at the Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur.

Representatives from all the important Theological Colleges in India came there. The staff and students of Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, attended our meetings. Also some of the local people. Though we were a small group (about thirty) we were quite representative and held many different points of view. I was asked to be the Chairman of the Conference.

The purpose of the Conference, I explained in my opening address, was to stimulate the growth of Indian Theology. While the Bible is our main authority, it is interpreted differently by different men according to their social, cultural and religious background. For instance, Archbishop William Temple was an Anglo-Saxon, belonged to the Church of England and lived in the twentieth century. His interpretation of Scripture was considerably influenced by all these facts. Much of his attraction to people in England is due to these. In the same way Indian theologians will interpret the Bible with different emphases. Western theologians are not familiar with Oriental culture. They are tempted to ignore many of our problems. We cannot dismiss our age-long religious quest in India as a meaningless groping outside the purpose of God. We can see the self-disclosure of God in India's religions. Many devout Christians in India regard the Gospel of St John, Chapters 14 to 17, as the starting point as well as the climax of Christian experience. If the Christian thinkers of the West would rather begin with the Epistle to the Romans they should remember that the Gospel of St John belongs also to the very heart of the Christian religion and not merely the Epistle to the Romans. The trend of religious thinking in India to stress the Gospel of St John need not be traced to Neo-Platonist or Hindu influence.

Some Indian leaders like Mr P. Chenchiah and Dr Surjit Singh were members of the conference. For forty years Mr Chenchiah had been interpreting Christ to India. Though a lawyer by pro-

fession he had some valuable qualifications for this work. A man of deep religious faith and wide study of Religion, Philosophy and Science, he approached the subject from a fresh point of view. With a quick and alert mind and a background of Hindu contacts, he felt that Christianity had to be re-thought in India and he inspired a group of men in Madras with the zeal and industry needed for that work. They were convinced that the most original contributions to Hindu religious thought were made not by the Hindu priests but by the seers of the Upanishads who were not connected with any organization, who thought boldly and independently and explained clearly the conclusions to which they came, though they were opposed to popular belief.

Chenchiah and the other men in his group were laymen. They did not pass through the discipline of study in theological colleges. They did not delve deep into Church History and the development of Christian thought in the past nor did they make any attempt to grapple with the difficulties of the different languages in which the books of the Bible were written. These were their weak points.

Mr Chenchiah stood emphatically for a new interpretation of Christ. Jesus, he held, was an absolutely new type in the history of mankind. There is an immense difference between matter and life and again between instinct and reason. Similarly there is a vast gulf between the ordinary man and Jesus. Long before Teilhard de Chardin's thought was known, Chenchiah was developing a Christian Theology very much along those lines. It is an interesting study to see how these two men, living in different environments and subject to different influences, came to a similar understanding and held that the Christification of mankind is the ultimate goal towards which all life is moving. In Jabalpur Chenchiah spoke frequently in our conference and many sparks flew from the theological debates between him and others.

Dr Surjit Singh wrote an important book entitled *A Preface to Personality* (Christian Literature Society, Madras). He devoted half the book to a consideration of Radhakrishnan's philosophy. He later became a Professor at a Theological Seminary in San Francisco. At the time of the conference, his book was still in manuscript and he read a chapter from it and was warmly commended.

Is God personal or impersonal? Have we separate personalities or is it an illusion to say that we have? What is the nature of our relationship to God—personal or impersonal? What happens in the life after death? Do our personalities survive or do they become merged in the Absolute? These are the major problems of Indian religion and so Dr Surjit Singh's careful study of Personality was quite valuable.

Dr Emil Brunner, well-known throughout the Christian world, attended all the sessions and took an active share in the proceedings. After each paper I suggested that Dr Brunner might make his comments. Some of us did not agree with him on many points. But we all felt that we should hear carefully what he had to say. Some members of the conference believed fully in direct mystical experience of God, but he regarded it as unscriptural and unsound. Many in the conference were of his way of thinking.

My own contribution to the Conference was a paper on Christological Reconstruction and Ramanuja's Philosophy. This was published in the *International Review of Missions* in April, 1952. Here is a summary of the paper.

Ramanuja, the Hindu religious thinker who lived in the twelfth century, is particularly important for us as he realizes with clearness of insight and depth of conviction that God is an ocean of love. In India there has been an utterly bewildering variety of beliefs about God. Popular religion has believed in many gods, most or all of them fierce, vindictive and a terror to their worshippers. In the highly philosophical school of Sankara, God is immersed in His own bliss and has nothing whatever to do with the struggles and sufferings of mankind. In contrast, Ramanuja holds to the conviction that God is full of love and goodness and forgives the sins of those who surrender themselves completely to Him.

Ramanuja is equally clear in his conviction that out of love for mankind God becomes incarnate. The special object of His incarnations is to satisfy the deep-rooted longing of the human soul for the vision of God. Many devotees are strongly moved by a desire to have a clear and vivid realization of His presence. Ramanuja teaches that God becomes incarnate in order to satisfy this longing of the human soul for God.

There is one other conviction of Ramanuja which has an

important bearing on this subject. He holds that God is not a distant and remote reality dwelling in the far-off heavens, but is the inner ruler. His favourite picture for the intimate relationship between God and the world is drawn from the body and the soul. Just as the soul is within the body, controlling it and directing it, so God is within the world of nature and of human beings, ruling over it from its inner depths.

These, then, are some of the central convictions of Ramanuja. God is an ocean of love and forgives the sins of all those who surrender themselves to Him. He becomes incarnate in the world to meet the ardent longing of His devotees for a vision of God. His intimate contact with the world is not confined to those points in time and space at which His incarnation takes place. It is a continuous and intimate relationship of immanence.

We would do well to emphasise these doctrines in India. They are entirely scriptural and make an unfailing appeal to the heart of India.

We are taught in the Word of God that we should abide in Christ and that He would abide in us. Who is this Christ who thus abides in us? He is the One who lived on this earth twenty centuries ago, wrought and suffered for us, rose from the dead and is now ascended to the heavenly regions. As the living and eternal Christ, He now dwells in our hearts and purifies us with His mighty power of love. Any doctrine of Christ which develops in India would lay considerable stress on the living Christ, who was also the Jesus of history.

Dr Emil Brunner made some stimulating comments on my paper. He said that at first he thought that the link with Indian thought might lead to the separation of Christ as transcendent, creative and indwelling from Christ as Mediator. That would be a false theological development. Brunner agreed that in modern Protestant Theology Christ as transcendent, creative and indwelling, has not been clearly stressed. That again is a false development. All these four aspects must be considered together. Brunner felt sure that such treatment would lead to a more accurate understanding of the Gospel. But he gave us the advice that less conscious attention should be paid to Ramanuja.

A united service for all the Christians in the city had been arranged for Sunday. At that time an old Garrison Church just

outside the city was going a-begging; the British army with a large contingent in Jabalpur had been withdrawn from India; the Indian Government offered the Garrison Church building to any Indian Church which was willing to maintain it and use it. No Church in Jabalpur came forward to do this because it was such a large building and not centrally situated. But it proved to be an excellent building for this united service. Christians belonging to all the churches in the city came there in large numbers. Dr Emil Brunner was the preacher. He wore a Geneva gown. We saw another aspect of his personality in the pulpit—not the learned scholar, not the bold thinker, not the keen debater but the devout preacher who served a large congregation of ordinary Christian people with the nourishing food of the Word of God.

The Conference was over. We were leaving for our various places. Dr Brunner was walking in the college garden, absorbed in thought. He shook hands with me warmly and said, 'One thing I have certainly learnt from India—the importance of the Living Christ. I expect to write about it in my future books.'

15

BIRTH OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA

Along with others Bishop V. S. Azariah had seen in 1919 a vision of the Church of South India and had begun negotiations with relevant church councils.

I knew Azariah intimately. He had been a friend of the family for many years. When I was a boy attending a camp at Courtallam he gave a moving address on the need for Christian workers and there I had dedicated myself for Christian ministry. I did not understand what confirmation stood for and had delayed taking it. Azariah prepared me for confirmation and also confirmed me. I was then studying in the B.A. class. He taught me the meaning of Confirmation and gave me some books on the subject to read. At that time he was in charge of the diocese of Tirunelveli for a few months.

Though we lived in different parts of India I met him frequently in conferences and committees. I knew with what great regard the Christian Church in the world held him. His addresses

were clear, practical, interesting and to the point. He did splendid work in the Dornakal Diocese where from the year 1912, under the guidance of the Spirit of God, the Church steadily grew from strength to strength. Every year 10,000 people joined the Church in Dornakal. He took great trouble to see that these large numbers who came into the Church were carefully prepared for baptism and then effectively shepherded. He was keen on Indianization and gave many key-posts in his diocese to Indians. He introduced Indian music in almost all the churches in his diocese. The Telugus are gifted in music and the services are beautifully sung. The Cathedral which he built was an attempt, and a successful attempt, to design a Christian place of worship suited to the genius and tradition of India. When I visited Dornakal to take a Retreat for his clergy I was impressed by his long and remarkable record of service. He had showed how well an Indian bishop could run his diocese.

In addition to his genius for practical work he was a student to the end of his days. He kept abreast of the latest theological literature and was prepared to discuss wherever one met him a recent book on Christian Theology. He had an alert and open mind and was always trying out new methods (for instance in Rural Reconstruction and the removal of illiteracy). He was a member of the Tamil Bible Revision Committee for several years and had always apt and stimulating comments to make on the Tamil translation of the Bible, his knowledge of the Bible being both wide and deep.

He was keen on Church Union and made every possible effort to bring together the Anglican Church, the South Indian United Church and the Methodist Church. He took an active share in ecumenical activities throughout the world. He died two years before the Church of South India came into being.

A Joint Committee on Church Union in South India was appointed with forty-five members—fifteen from the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, fifteen from the South India United Church and fifteen from the Methodist Church. About half of the delegates were Europeans and the other half were Indians, though there was no rule regarding the proportion of Europeans and Indians.

In 1929 I was appointed a member of the Joint Committee on Church Union and continued to serve on it until 1947. We

met at least once every year for three days of gruelling committee work.

Azariah's powerful plea, oft repeated, was always this: Church Union in the West may be of academic interest but it is a matter of life and death with us here in India, living as we do in the midst of a vast non-Christian population.

In 1936, there was a crisis in our negotiations. We did not seem to go forward. At that time Azariah called together all the Indian members of the Committee and said to us: 'Our European friends are not going to help us. These subtle points of doctrine and practice which they raise have little or no meaning for us here in India. We must force the pace.' This was an unusual thing for Azariah to say or do. He was always patient and tactful, though he never yielded on the main issues. At that time I had resigned from Bishop's College, Calcutta, and did not hold any particular appointment. He said to me: 'You have more time now than the rest of us. Why don't you organize and do some publicity work for the Indian point of view?' This I agreed to do. We drew up a memorandum on the subject and got it signed by many representative Indians and sent it to all church councils, missionary societies and religious papers which were interested in the subject. This trouble, however, blew over and eleven years later in 1947 the Church of South India was inaugurated.

For eighteen years I served on the Joint Committee for Church Union in South India. What were my ideals and dreams during those years for the Church of South India? How many of them have been realised? How many more still remain to be fulfilled?

The churches in South India had been founded by the Older Churches in Europe and America. The methods of church government and public worship were exactly the same as in the West. Some of us wanted to have an Indian Church embodying the best traditions and ideals in the religious life of India. Of course, only such Indian ideals as conformed to the standard of Jesus Christ should be permitted in the Indian Church.

There did not seem to be much possibility of the Indian Church being given an opportunity to work out its own patterns of doctrine, worship and Church government. Missionaries were firmly convinced that church life as they knew it from their childhood in their own denominational set-up in the West conformed

best to the New Testament. Most of our own Indian leaders, both pastors and laymen, were loyal to the traditions of church life on which they had been brought up, even more loyal than their missionary teachers. In the Anglican Church in South India, for instance, many of our Indian people were not ready to give up the Prayer Book or to depart even an inch from the rules and regulations of the Anglican Church as they had been introduced into India from England.

For the first time in the life of the Church in India we began asking questions. What is the meaning of Holy Communion? Who can celebrate it? Should we have Bishops? Should they necessarily ordain all ministers? Should they alone take confirmations? Why should we recite the Creeds? We debated these and other questions fully and frankly. Though we had been drawn from various churches, we sought to be candid and open about the way in which doctrines and practices worked in our own churches.

This was a great advantage indeed. A Methodist, for instance, would be loyal to his own church tradition but was always willing to admit 'where the shoe pinched'. He would also be ready to hear how other churches worked and whether they worked better or worse than his own. In an unexpected way the freedom which some of us had sought for the Indian Church was being given to us. We were told that we need not necessarily conform to the doctrine and practice of the Mother Churches which had established us. We could have our own Prayer Book, not necessarily the Prayer Book of the Anglican Church. We could have extempore prayers. We could have a form of Episcopacy suited to the spiritual needs of India. We could have a Church Constitution fitted to Indian conditions.

The Church of South India during the last twenty-two years of its existence has made a beginning in these directions. Several new services of worship—Holy Communion, Confirmation, Baptism, and Ordination—have been drawn up. Our services are not just services of worship followed in England and America and translated into the regional languages of India. I hope that the indigenisation of Christian worship in the Church of South India will continue steadily. I must confess that very few of our Indian Presbyters and Bishops (including myself) and Indian laymen have made a careful study of the liturgies of the Christian

Church all over the world. Nor have we made a sympathetic research into the methods of worship in India, though we realise that Hinduism, while rich in private devotional life, has not much to contribute to public worship.

The Nicene Creed was written against the background of Greek philosophy. In the Indian Church the problems of Greek thought have little or no meaning. But there are many problems of Hindu philosophy. Is God one or many? What is His relationship to the world? Does He rule it as a transcendent or as an immanent Being? If God the Spirit dwells in all beings, what is His relation to the Supreme God on the one hand and to the Incarnate Christ on the other? Is our personality merged in the Divine or does it continue to exist even in the state of final bliss? To realize our unity with the rest of Christendom we decided to say the Creeds in all our services but we acknowledged the need to think afresh our Christian Theology. We put it on record that the time may come for the formulation of supplementary Creeds dealing with Indian problems.

16

YEAR OF PRAYER

The Brough Memorial Church at Erode stands where four roads meet and is quite a landmark. Its two domed towers on the front and the turrets on either side are very striking in their simple beauty. Inside the church the high roof of the nave rests on strong stone pillars, with lotus flowers carved on them. The floor is of polished stone, black and white. There is intricate fretwork of teak wood on the windows. A large stone pulpit on the left near the chancel is for the ministry of the Word. Beyond the choir stalls on the right stands the Communion Table for the ministry of the Sacrament.

The Rev. E. W. Brough, a Congregationalist missionary who laboured long and faithfully in the Erode area, planned a church really characteristic of the East, and built it in the Saracenic style so familiar in North India.

This large and beautiful church was filled to its utmost capacity on September 27, 1950.

It was the inauguration Service of the Diocese of Coimbatore, which included the districts of Coimbatore, Nilgiri and Salem in South India. Delegates from all parts of the Diocese had come—Indians and Europeans, representatives from comparatively prosperous and well-educated town congregations as well as members from simple, mostly illiterate, village churches. There were also numerous representatives from the Church of South India which had come into existence three years earlier on the same date. A spirit of subdued enthusiasm prevailed among the congregation. For three years the Congregationalists in that area had not come into the Church of South India, fearful that their Free Church traditions might be in peril, and now they had come in, expecting great things, hoping for new life.

I had been appointed Bishop in Coimbatore. This area was quite unknown to me. I had to preach the Installation Sermon. I was much in prayer that God would give me a message for that important occasion. At that time I was reading *The Second Evangelical Awakening in Britain* by Dr Edwin Orr. I was led—I am now convinced by the Spirit of God—to preach on the text, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you (Luke 11:9). I urged that the new Diocese should plan to hold evangelistic missions in every parish and pray earnestly to God that He might bring about a great spiritual awakening.

The Diocesan Council, the Standing Committees and the leaders in the Coimbatore Diocese co-operated fully with me in implementing the proposal which I had made in my sermon during the Service of Installation. No one raised any difficulty whatsoever—that the time was not ripe for such a Mission or that such a mission would not serve any useful purpose. Our resources were very limited. We did not know where we would find the numerous evangelists who would be needed to reach all our three hundred congregations. And we certainly did not have the funds to meet the expenses we might have to meet. Only one thing was clear. We should spend the year 1951 in prayer, Bible study and spiritual preparation. On this we were all agreed.

It was suggested that I might write a pastoral letter to be read in all the churches of the Diocese on Sunday, 14th January, 1951.

In the course of the letter I said: Why do we need a year of prayer?

St Paul gives us a fitting answer. 'But this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus' (Philippians 3:13, 14).

All through his life St Paul had steadily grown in spiritual stature. We need only compare the Epistles to the Thessalonians of his earlier years with the Epistles to the Romans and Philippians written towards the end of his life. How much fuller and richer his understanding of the religion of Christ had become! To take only one instance, his friendships had become wider and their intimacy had become deeper. There is delicate tact in his Epistle to Philemon written in the last years of his life. We need to remember how nearly everybody referred to in this letter had originally been alien to St Paul in race, in social status and in intellectual and religious outlook. On the claims of Christ he was as uncompromising at the end of his career as he was in the beginning. But he took more and more trouble to understand men, to sympathise with them and, by sheer friendship, to win them over for Christ. The aged Paul forgot the things which were behind him—successes as well as failures—and reached forth unto the things which were before him. He did not allow his failures to depress him nor his successes to elate him but he endeavoured steadily to reach a higher standard of devotion to Christ and of love for Him.

In her autobiography *I Follow After,* the widow of Narayan Vaman Tilak, the distinguished Mahratta poet, describes with vivid detail and rare candour her husband's steady spiritual growth. Ten years after his baptism he had his second conversion. His natural pride disappeared and a spirit of utter dependence on God took its place. At that time he wrote a hymn in which he sang about this change which had been wrought in him and his eyes filled with tears whenever he sang it. Here is the hymn:

> At last my Lord and King, to Thy dear feet I cling.
> All lost, this life of mine without the light of Thine.
> I saw my own self stand the first at Christ's right hand,
> In pride of strength and grace. Ah, now before Thy face,
> That pride is low as dust. No more myself I trust.
>
> (p. 255)

In that pastoral letter I made various suggestions as to how we could spend the year of preparation. The most important one was that people might gather together in various places to study the Bible and spend time in prayer for a spiritual awakening.

Bishop Pakenham-Walsh had founded an Ashram at Tadagam, only nine miles from Coimbatore. His long, rich and varied Christian experience was always available to us. His presence in our midst was certainly a rare blessing God had given us. The Bishop at our request prepared a small book on Prayer for use by our study groups.

The burden of my preaching during the year 1951 was the need for Revival. I visited every large congregation and some of the smaller congregations and urged people to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Some years ago I wanted to plant some trees in a garden. The saplings were brought from a distance of twenty miles at some expense. I told the gardener, 'You must plant these saplings and water them regularly.' Then after some time I asked him whether he was watering them as I had asked him to do. He said to me, 'Sir, what is the use of watering them? Some of the plants are quite dead.' I am afraid in our congregations and Sunday Schools we often keep on watering plants which have not taken root and which have no life. We speak of giving regular spiritual nourishment to our people. Such nourishment is only useful to men and women who have committed their lives to Christ, who have become rooted in Him and are seeking to grow in grace and in knowledge. In a Revival we are convicted of our sins. We pray for forgiveness through the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ and we accept Him as our Saviour. That was why we needed a Revival in the Christian Church so that all its members might be Christians in reality and not in name only.

What was the response in the Diocese to this call for prayer? One of our women said to me: 'I am no good at organization. I cannot take services. I cannot give addresses. But I am feeling an urge within me to devote myself more and more to prayer.' Another woman said to me: 'I read in a religious paper how a remarkable spiritual movement began in the Lutheran Church in Hungary through the prayer of a devout woman. Since then I have been praying earnestly and regularly for a revival of the Christian Church in our country. For many years when my husband was at work and the children were growing up, I had

very little time for prayer. But now I am trying to "catch up arrears" in prayer. I devote half my time to duties in the home, looking after my people. The other half I devote to prayer.'

In one of our churches thirty-five women came together once a week to pray. In another church some keen people studied the teaching of the Bible about prayer, using Bishop Pakenham-Walsh's little book. In another congregation the church was kept open every morning and some people came and prayed for Revival. In another church every Wednesday there was an address about Indian Christian leaders like Sadhu Sundar Singh, Pandita Ramabai and N. V. Tilak. The address was followed by a season of prayer. In many churches Revival songs were sung frequently.

17

GOD'S AMAZING ANSWER

God answered amazingly. He sent evangelists from the ends of the earth to help us in our need. Widely different in temperament and in method, they were faithful in their devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and God blessed their ministry abundantly.

A missioner who helped us often was Mr N. Daniel. He was a man of much prayer and Bible study, spending hours each day at his devotions. One of his hosts told us that he and his wife were heard praying in the room next to hers until two in the morning. In 1935, just as he was going to be made the Headmaster of a Baptist Mission High School, he felt the call of God to work as an evangelist on his own. He resigned from Mission Service and went with his wife to live in Madras, not knowing what the future held for him. By faith they lived and worked, depending entirely upon God for all their needs. During all these years their faith has been strengthened by the wonderful way in which God has cared for them, not always giving them ease and comfort, but never failing them. Mr and Mrs Daniel, together with their eldest son and daughter, work as a team.

May Collins, one of our missionaries, wrote about Muthusammy in the London Mission *Chronicle* of September 1956. Here is a digest of her article about this convert in one of Daniel's meetings.

Muthusammy is a village farmer who lives in a small Christian settlement about fifteen miles from Salem. For many years he was a great problem and a real thorn in the flesh of pastors and district missionaries. I can remember one day walking down the long drive to our bungalow in Salem. As I approached the house I heard loud and angry voices and a great uproar coming from the front room. A consultation was being held over the disposal of some mission land among the Christians, and Muthusammy's voice was louder than the rest. Everyone wanted the largest share, and none was satisfied with the proposed distribution. As I listened, the commotion increased, and I remember wondering whether it might ever be possible for such men to be changed.

Within six months I saw the Holy Spirit work a miracle. Muthusammy came to Salem to attend a series of evangelistic meetings led by Mr N. Daniel. During these meetings Muthusammy came face to face with the Lord Himself.

Muthusammy left before the meetings were finished and went straight back to his village. He called six of his friends together, and also his wife, gave them bus fares to Salem, and asked them to go to the meetings and stay until the end. On Sunday morning Muthusammy went to the small village church, and at the end of the service he stood up and spoke to the congregation. Taking a bundle of rupee notes out of his pocket he handed varying sums from ten to twenty or thirty rupees, to various men in the congregation, including his own brother. 'This is the money' he said, 'that I took from you as commissions for all kinds of transactions which were wrong and not according to the law of Christ. I want to return this money and to say that if I owe money to anyone else I will repay it. This week in Salem I met the Lord Jesus Christ, and henceforth my life belongs to Him.'

Muthusammy bought a Bible and carried it with him wherever he went. He could not read it, but he prayed that God would help him to learn. In the bus or in the train, on the platform or at the bus stop, he opens his Bible, or his reading primer, and asks anyone who can read to help him. And everywhere he witnesses to the saving grace of his Lord. He is not able to speak his own language correctly and when he prays his sentences are rough and unfinished, and yet such is the radiant joy shining on his face and the overwhelming sense of the presence of the

Lord in which he lives and moves, that everywhere he goes men and women are brought to the saving power of Christ.

Muthusammy's home has been completely changed in the course of a few months. His wife looks happy and contented; the old, tired, haggard expression has gone from her face. Muthusammy tells you with a smile that now he is able to go out into the fields and work with his men on the land all day long, whereas before he could not manage the use of a spade at all.

Perhaps a detailed account of one of the congregations (Alambady) will give a clear picture of what was happening in some of our villages as a result of the Revival.

I went to a Service in a school in this village at 5.30 a.m. It was still dark in the room. In the dim light of the hurricane lanterns on the table, I could see that men and women of all ages (including many children) had come. There were about sixty people. I was told that this congregation was meeting every day for worship like this. The lay preacher in charge of the congregation informed me that he had been teaching the people to begin the day's work with a time of worship. They were extremely poor and most of them, both men and women, worked on the road as coolies.

After the Revival meetings led by Mr N. Daniel there was a real change in the congregation. Formerly the lay preacher had to go from house to house urging the people to come even once a week to the Sunday Service. Now they were assembling every day for morning worship.

When I asked the lay preacher whether they had been converted and whether their lives had been changed, he paused for a moment and then said: 'Yes, I am sure many of the women here have been really converted.'

The lay preacher, S. Ponniah, had himself passed through a striking spiritual experience. Though he was in charge of that congregation he was seeking to evade God even when he saw many members of his own congregation bearing their testimony. His excuse was that a family man could not live the dedicated life which Jesus required. He was a gifted singer and was drawn to secular dramas. His songs were appreciated and his interest in secular plays made him worldly and distracted him from a life

of devotion to Christ. Mr Daniel's meetings in Kangayam produced a remarkable effect on him. He wept for his sins and confessed them. The Lord forgave him and assured him of his salvation through Isaiah 43:1, 'Oh, Israel, fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.'

In their service, after a hymn, the people of Alambady were reading a chapter of the Bible. They had finished the whole of the New Testament, reading it chapter by chapter. Then they had read through the Psalms and were now reading the book of Isaiah. The lay preacher said that they were thus seeking to read through all the most valuable parts of the Bible. These were certainly the cream of the Bible!

Some of the young people in the congregation attended the District Board High School in the neighbourhood. It was these high school students, both boys and girls, who were asked to read the lesson from the Bible. They took this responsibility seriously and read the chapter in advance, sometimes going over it even seven or eight times. I was impressed by the clear and distinct way in which the lesson (Isaiah Chapter 41) was read in the Service which I attended. This was followed by two earnest prayers offered by women, asking for God's help to live that day according to His will.

If there were sick people in the congregation prayers were offered in these morning services. In the evenings ten or twelve of the people, along with the lay preacher, went to the sick man's house and prayed for him.

I was living in the travellers' bungalow when the doors and windows were being painted. One of the men who was doing the painting told me how he had been healed in response to the prayers of this congregation. He was a mechanic working on a steam roller and had been badly hurt in an accident. His body was swollen; he could not breathe properly; and he was nearly dying. The Alambady congregation prayed for him and he told me that he was perfectly well now and was able to do normal work.

Dr Joe Church and Mr William Nagenda visited the Coimbatore Diocese more than once and held many evangelistic meetings. Their first visit was on May 7, 1952, when they spoke to our men in a summer school at Wellington.

Dr Joe Church is an Englishman, a C.M.S. missionary doctor, who is working in Ruanda. He has been used by God as a

powerful instrument in beginning a new spiritual movement in Africa. When he came to Wellington, he was in his fifties. His African companion, Mr William Nagenda, was short of stature and looked quite young. But he told us that he had six children; so we thought he must be at least forty years of age. As he spoke I observed his dark skin, his curly hair, and his perfect teeth, white and shining. The men in our Summer School were deeply interested in this African Christian, who had flown several thousand miles to share with us and others in India his rich and rare Christian experience.

The two evangelists gave their testimony in a soft, quiet voice and related how they had come to serve the Lord. Joe Church told us that though he was the son of a parson he was converted only during his college days. When he went to Africa to work as a missionary, he had strong racial prejudice and tended to look upon himself as being superior to the African. The Lord redeemed him from his sins, including his racial prejudice, and made him a new man. William Nagenda related how before his conversion he had been in Government Service and had been dishonest. When he surrendered himself to Christ, he had to make restitution, though this was most difficult and risky and he might have found himself in prison.

Joe Church and William Nagenda were modest and unassuming men. They were no spell-binders. There was no eloquence in their speech. They did not know the tricks of rhetoric. They told in plain and simple language what the Lord had wrought in their lives and such personal testimony was convincing and effective for the salvation of souls.

During their visit to Salem, the Rev. D. P. Collins, one of our senior missionaries, experienced a remarkable change of heart. Here is his testimony.

> That night I could not get to sleep. I was restless and unhappy. Then suddenly things began to take shape in my mind. I realised that God was confronting me with something in my own life, something which he had been seeking to show me before but which I had never been willing to face up to. I began to recall vividly similar situations in the past in which I had played a leading part, situations in which I had acted ruthlessly, blindly and without grace.

I saw how by my hard unloving attitude and my pride of race I had brought sorrow and injury into the lives of others. Above all I began to see what a disappointment I had been to the Lord, in whose name I had been trying to serve. I could see now so clearly why there had been such barrenness and dryness in my ministry. It was as if I lay under sentence of death. It was then that I became aware of the Cross as a present reality in a far deeper way than I had ever experienced before. It was as if Christ was hanging upon the Cross then and there for my sin. There was no other way out for me but to repent and accept the atonement which He had wrought for me. I did so, and immediately all the frustration and the fear was gone and a great peace and joy came flooding in, filling my heart with praise. I knew that I was in personal touch with Jesus. It was He who had come into my heart and His still small voice was telling me clearly the next step that I should take.

The Rev. C. R. Thomson was the Madras Director of the Youth for Christ organization. He took a great deal of interest in the Coimbatore Diocese, visiting it often and helping us in many ways. Youth for Christ is an active Christian organisation in the West and aims to win young people for Christ, especially in the large cities, by holding Saturday night rallies. Young people are attracted to various forms of worldly enjoyment on Saturday nights. This organization attracts them by providing wholesome music with a serious Christian appeal. Many young people become the disciples of Jesus and set out to win others. They also send their representatives to different parts of the world to help other young people. So we had young men from the United States, from Canada, from England, from Australia and from New Zealand coming and holding Youth Rallies which were made attractive with popular music. Their ministry in our midst for many years was a great blessing.

18

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

There was an eager desire among our people to read the Bible. Young men, who formerly spent a good deal of time in reading Communist literature or the comic magazines in Tamil, were now found studying the Bible with great earnestness. From the Erode depot alone three hundred Bibles were sold in five months. Each Tamil Bible cost Rs 5, quite a large amount in those days when famine conditions prevailed in that part of the Diocese due to the failure of monsoons in successive years. Four men from the Nilgiris went to a depot to buy Bibles. The cheaper editions were sold out. Only Bibles for Rs 16 were available and they bought them. When they were rebuked for their extravagance, one of them said: 'We spend Rs 22 in buying a new pair of shoes. Why should we not buy a Bible for Rs 16?'

One of the remarkable things in the Diocese now was the spontaneous formation of prayer groups in various places. In a Government College, where no provision was made for worship or religious instruction, some of the Christian students were meeting regularly during the midday recess for worship in each other's rooms. Sometimes when there were Hindu students sharing the room, they also took part in the worship.

As I went on one of my tours, a young man met me in a railway station and told me how on the previous evening he had gone to a neighbouring village to pray along with the group there. He had expected to spend an hour with them and to return home. Just as he was about to leave the prayer meeting after a short time, a person suffering from 'possession' was brought to them and the little group began to pray for him. There was no immediate answer to the prayer and they went on praying until 1.30 in the night. When they left, they had the conviction that the patient would become well after a few days.

In one town congregation, six groups began to pray. One of them was a group of young men who met regularly every day in the vestry at 9 p.m. after the day's work was over. A group of women was meeting regularly every Wednesday for prayer in the same church. At first there were five women and later the

number rose to twenty-five. In the same town the Pastors and the workers were coming together once a week for prayer.

A group of young men in one of our villages in the Coimbatore area walked a distance of eighteen miles to attend a Quiet Day which was held for them in the Ashram of Bishop Pakenham-Walsh.

In another village I found a group of earnest young men. When I asked how this group had come into being I was told an interesting story. A young man had been very critical and bitter about the Church, about the missionaries and about the Indian workers. One day he was bitten by a snake. The Pastor took him into his house and looked after him for some days. As the young man lay in bed he kept looking at a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ which was hung on the wall opposite. There was a great storm on the sea and Jesus was standing in a boat, which swayed to and fro. He commanded the turbulent waves and the storm ceased. This picture of Jesus moved the young man deeply. He decided that if he became well, he would be a true and sincere follower of Jesus, and he offered himself up to Him. From that time he was a new man. He had a very wholesome influence on the young men of the village who gathered round him and were ready to do his bidding.

When Dr Glenn Clark asked whether he could visit the Coimbatore Diocese and help, I gladly welcomed him.

In the United States he was invited to many camps and conferences run by the Student Christian Movement, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. His main duty was to lead the devotional meetings and the hours of prayer.

He felt that in these camps there was light but that in some of them it was fitful and dim as in a faulty kerosene lamp, and in others it was bright and glorious as in a powerful electric light. This was due to the harmony or lack of harmony among the leaders. In one conference he found great jealousy among the leading speakers as to who would be allowed to give the largest number of important speeches. In another conference a professor of Psychology and a full-time evangelist were at loggerheads, the one bitterly criticising the methods of the other. Glenn Clark also found that in these camps and conferences much importance was given to lectures and discussions, prayer being given a

minor and formal place. In these camps too much time was spent on running the organisation, on raising money and on enrolling new members.

Glenn Clark longed to start his own camps, with leaders who believed that prayer was the mightiest force in the world. For many years he ran such camps. They were called Camps Farthest Out, as the folk attending them were taught to go farthest out in their surrender to God. They met once a year in one of the States and spent a week or ten days in some lovely spot, deepening their life of fellowship with God and man. Having spread a belt of prayer in the United States, Dr Clark had the vision of spreading a belt of prayer all over the world. His visit to Coimbatore on March 8, 9 and 10, 1954 proved quite timely. He was then in his seventies. Some of us had been reading with much profit his books on prayer.

A prayer group had been started in the bungalow of Mr H. O. Fowler, the Principal of Stanes High School, Coimbatore. The group was deliberately kept small—about half a dozen friends. Dr Glenn Clerk had taught that prayer must be made with one accord as in the Acts of the Apostles. He had also taught that prayer should be specific and intimate, not general and vague as in large prayer meetings.

This prayer group was meeting regularly once a week for many years.

I said to Mrs Fowler, 'Have you had any outstanding answers to the prayers in your group?'

'Yes', she said, 'for many years my husband wanted to serve the Church as an ordained minister. In our prayer group we asked God that He might open the way for my husband to be ordained. God did open the way. A scholarship was available for theological study in the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, California. You sent him there for two years. We are sure this was a definite answer from God.'

After Mr Fowler returned from the United States it gave me great joy to ordain him, first as Honorary Deacon and a year later as Honorary Presbyter. He is now serving the Church faithfully, taking services every Sunday and making pastoral calls on his people, in addition to his heavy duties as the Principal of a large and flourishing High School.

The Missions were being held in different parts of the Diocese. Reports were coming in of the varying response to them. It was necessary for some of us to come together in a quiet place to pray for the work which was going on and at the same time to consider how best to follow it up.

A great many of our people, especially young people, were asking for Bible Study. There was a hunger for the Word of God. We needed to train leaders who could take Bible Study classes. Men and women who had been converted needed considerable help in learning to live the victorious life and to share with others the spiritual blessings they had received.

The Coimbatore Diocese was very fortunate in having St George's Church at Wellington on the Nilgiris, with a large parsonage attached to it. The natural surroundings of the church and the parsonage are beautiful and their peaceful setting is ideal for prayer and study. They are centrally situated in the Church of South India. The cool and pleasant climate of Wellington (6,000 feet high) during the months of April and May was a great attraction to many visitors. There was no difficulty in getting distinguished speakers (who came to the Nilgiris for their holiday) to help in our meetings. So we decided to use the Wellington church and parsonage as a Retreat and Conference House.

> Mountains are the source of life.
> Mountains offer security.
> Mountains inspire us with the desire to ascend.
> Mountains give us a view of the distant horizons.

The Indian Rishis and their disciples had realized such truths on the Himalayas. We found them also true on the Nilgiris.

Fifty of our congregations lived on the Nilgiris. I constantly travelled to and fro to meet these congregations and take services for them. Wellington became my halting place on numerous occasions. During my visits to the blue mountains (Nilgiris literally means that) I was well-nourished in body and spirit by their loveliness. I kept praising God for calling me to serve Him in such beautiful places.

Summer schools and conferences, some of them lasting for ten days each, were arranged at Wellington. The maximum number of people who could be accommodated was fifteen. These

groups were not too small or too large. The leaders and the students came to know one another. We had much informal discussion. Holy Communion, Bible Study, Reports from Pastors, Intercessions, Recreation—these occupied our time and brought us close to God and close to one another. I am inclined to regard these seminars as the really vital part of my ministry.

As a Bishop I had many problems of my own. I was asked to read a paper in the C.S.I. Synod, Tiruchirapalli, in January 1956. I said there: 'A Bishop has many difficult things to do—presiding over noisy meetings in which people make heated speeches, facing angry laymen who are anxious to teach the Bishop his job, taking disciplinary action against his workers and dealing with court cases. All these are in the day's work for a Bishop. He copes with them with as much tact, love and wisdom as he can, continually seeking God's guidance. But, as I see it, the most difficult thing which a Bishop has to do is so to organize his time and energy that the most important and worthwhile duties of his office (such as prayer, study and teaching) are performed, whatever may or may not happen to the many other duties which are expected of him.'

In 1949 it became clear to me that the time was ripe for a complete biography of Sundar Singh. He had died in 1929. Many of his friends were slowly passing away. I was one of the few men who had known him intimately. When I wrote to people asking for materials, they responded promptly and generously. Several books about him in English, German, Swedish, French and Tamil were sent to me. Shorthand reports of his addresses, newspaper cuttings about his meetings in various parts of the world and his letters to his friends as well as their reminiscences of him also came. They needed considerable study. The biography had then to be written.

As a Bishop I had little time for literary work. When I was not on tour I formed the habit of going to bed early for some years, waking up in the middle of the night and working at the manuscript for an hour or two without any disturbance. *Sundar Singh: A Biography* was published by the Lutterworth Press, London, in 1958.

I may say that the work on this book was a continual inspiration to me. It was good to lay aside for some time the normal

work of a Bishop and to live in the company of a saintly man. I also found it helpful to speak frequently about his life and work in the churches of the diocese. Most of our people were keenly interested in him.

19

LAY PREACHERS

Mr Paul S. Kadambavanam was another missioner who helped us much. He was a convert from Hinduism. I have known him for sixty years as a devout Christian. He was the Head Clerk in the Bishop's Office in Rangoon for twenty-five years.

In 1940, during World War II, like a great many other Indians, he had to leave Burma in a hurry with his family. When he returned to Madras he was about fifty years of age and was quite active in body and mind. He was eager to continue his service of God and was waiting for His guidance. He had a dream. Three friends of his took him to a water tap, made him sit on the washing stone and poured on his head water drawn from the tap. He had a dozen potfuls of water thus poured over him. He became curious and was restless to know what this dream meant. At that time I was the Archdeacon of Palayamkottai and wrote a letter inviting him to be the honorary Diocesan Missioner of Tirunelveli with opportunities to lead Revival Meetings, Parish Missions, Retreats and Bible Classes. This letter reached him three days after the dream, and seemed to him a clear interpretation of it. He was being cleansed and made ready for fresh service in the Church. He began this new career and has steadily followed it to the present day when he is over eighty years of age.

I wrote to him and asked him whether he could spend the whole of 1952 in the Coimbatore Diocese and he readily agreed. He stayed for a week in each centre and held meetings both for the people and for the workers. The meetings were all well attended. He also prayed for the sick and there were some cases of healing. He spent much time in personal work, particularly seeking to bring about reconciliation in broken homes. The Rev. H. A. Popley reported that he baptized many Hindus after Kadambavanam's evangelistic meetings on the Nilgiris.

An English hymn sums up clearly and beautifully the essentials of Kadambavanam's life and teaching:

> He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today.
> He walks with me and talks with me
> Along life's narrow way.
> He lives! He lives! Salvation to impart.
> You ask me how I know He lives—
> He lives within my heart.

After holding some Missions on the Nilgiris, Mr Kadambavanam told us:

> There are great opportunities for evangelistic work among the coolies on the tea and coffee estates. They have real spiritual hunger and are quite anxious to listen to the Gospel message. Some of the keen Christians on the Nilgiris should be brought together for an informal conference as to how these abundant opportunities could be effectively met.

We sent out notices for a conference on May 18, 1952 in the Wellington Parsonage. About twenty people came from different parts of the Nilgiris and we spent a morning together, praying and thinking about the best way of carrying on evangelistic work in so fruitful a field. The conclusion to which we came was that we should get a large number of lay men really interested in the work and ready to take a responsible share in it. Other parts of the Diocese also expressed the same desire for laymen's work.

And so an Order of Lay Preachers was proposed, of men and women who would agree to take a regular share in the pastoral and evangelistic work of the Diocese. They should be recommended to the Bishop for the Lay Preacher's Licence by at least two Presbyters in their area. They should have done five years of voluntary Christian work. They should undertake to study the Bible and Christian Theology regularly, with the help of four Tamil books prescribed every year for this purpose. They should agree to meet together in their own Pastorates once a month for prayer, study and fellowship. They should be willing to attend an annual Retreat of three days. These rules were modified during the years in the light of experience.

The response to our appeal for lay preachers was quite good. The earnestness with which many applied for admission to this Order was partly at least due to the spiritual awakening which was going on throughout the Diocese.

On December 7, 1952 a Commissioning Service was held in the Immanuel Church in Coimbatore. The lovely Service of Holy Communion, authorized by the Church of South India, was used. The responses were sung to Indian music by a choir, which had been specially trained for the purpose. A Commissioning Service was drafted by the Liturgy Committee of the Church of South India, which was quite impressive and helpful. Bishop E. B. Thorp, a former Methodist and the Bishop in Tiruchirapalli, preached the sermon. I issued licences to one hundred and eight lay preachers, most of whom took seriously this opportunity which was being given to them for close association with the work of the Church. Some of the English women missionaries in the Diocese, on their own initiative, were admitted to this Order so that they could identify themselves with the Indian Church.

Other Commissioning Services were held in different parts of the Diocese and licences were given to more lay preachers with prayer and exhortation. Large and devout congregations attended the Commissioning Services.

Most of our 182 lay preachers were teachers in Diocesan schools or Government schools. One was the manager of a coffee estate, another a medical practitioner, another a road maistry, yet another a farmer. Some were clerks. We had various professions represented by our lay preachers.

Miss Stone was one of our lay preachers. She had lived in Coonoor for a number of years and had taken an active part in evangelistic work in the Nilgiris. When the Order of Lay Preachers was begun in the Coimbatore Diocese, she expressed a desire to join it. She served the Diocese in an honorary capacity. Though she was getting on in years, she went out every day in her car and called on various well-to-do people in their homes and sold Bibles and New Testaments to them. This often led to conversation about Christ and His religion. In the Staff College at Wellington one hundred students came from all parts of India for a year's advanced study in the Defence Services. She made it a point to call on as many of these men and their families as possible. From time to time organisations like the National Cadet

Corps lived in camp for some weeks in the neighbourhood of Coonoor. Excursion parties of students from colleges also came to Coonoor. She met many such persons and offered to sell them Bibles. She took a keen interest in new converts to Christianity and their families and sought to help them, both spiritually and financially. Her death in 1959 left a real gap in the work of the Diocese.

Mr Benjamin, one of the lay preachers in the Coimbatore area, had been doing steady evangelistic work in a neighbouring village. Two or three days before Christmas (1952) sixty-four persons, including women and children, were baptized there. He visited them afterwards regularly once a week for some months to give them further instruction in the Christian life.

Many of our lay preachers, say fifty per cent, were taking their responsibilities seriously and were working faithfully in the congregations to which they were assigned. The other lay preachers, however, were slack and indifferent in their work. Such lay preachers were asked to return their licences to me. No one, however, did so. There was no point in their holding the licences if they were not able or willing to help regularly in the work of the Church. All those who desired to do regular work and continue to hold the Bishop's licence were asked to have it renewed every year.

The Church of South India was very anxious that lay preachers should do some regular study every year and write examinations. Four books were published in Tamil for this purpose. Tamil-speaking lay preachers were fortunate that year after year books were printed in their own language for their special benefit. On the whole, the standard reached by these books was quite high and their price was very moderate.

The books prescribed for 1955 were:

1. *Sin and Salvation* by Bishop Newbigin.
2. *Holy Matrimony* by Bishop Azariah.
3. *I and II Timothy* by the Rev. G. S. William.
4. *Selected Psalms* by the Rev. D. S. Vedanayagam.

Arrangements were made for lay preachers in each Pastorate to come together once a month for the study of these books, prayer and fellowship. Competent leaders were asked to take the classes. In many centres this was done regularly. On the Nilgiris monthly

classes could not be held, mainly due to lack of leaders. Some of the areas (which could afford it) were meeting half the cost of the books. Lay preachers were asked to take advantage of these facilities. I urged that such study should be done with the heart as well as with the head. The purpose of the course was not so much to acquire a certain amount of new knowledge as to grow in one's own spiritual life so that one could help others.

As we had only sixty ordained ministers these lay preachers were of immense help. Some of them were later chosen for ordination. There was a tendency on the part of some of the lay preachers in the town congregations to occupy the pulpit on Sunday mornings when the church was full, rather than go out to small congregations some miles away. But many men chose the more difficult pastoral and evangelistic tasks and did them faithfully and well.

20

DIVINE HEALING

Some of our congregations took up whole-heartedly the work of praying for the sick. I heard instance after instance of how the sick had been healed in response to such prayers. One man told us how his father had dangerous haemorrhages and had to give up his work. Now as a result of the people in his congregation praying earnestly, he was quite well and was able to go back to his work.

Another man reported that his child had whooping cough and was taken to a Mission Hospital for treatment. The doctor said that there was no stock of the necessary drug and asked him to get it. It was too expensive for him to buy. He came home disappointed and also annoyed that a Mission Hospital had not helped him. But he prayed and the child soon got well.

A pastor reported that when his grandchild fell ill, he asked the congregation to pray and they prayed, even the children, and the child recovered.

When these accounts of Divine Healing were given, I noticed that those who gave the reports were very particular to say 'we' and not 'I'. The healing took place in response to the prayers

of many ordinary folk, not in response to the prayer of an exceptionally gifted Divine Healer. One of those engaged in this ministry was emphatic that the prayers for the sick are not heard if those who offer the prayers lead a life which is inconsistent with Christian ideals.

It was necessary to give careful instruction to the leaders of the prayer groups. There is always the danger, especially in a country like India, that the belief in Divine Healing might degenerate into superstition and magic.

The presbyters and lay preachers in the diocese had come together in the Stanes High School in Coimbatore for a three-day Convention from January 3rd to 6th, 1955. It was a difficult time of the year, as most people engaged in Church work had been very busy during Christmas and New Year. Yet about two hundred people attended. There was much interest among several other laymen who wanted to come but we could not admit them for lack of room.

We thought it would be very useful if Bishop Pakenham-Walsh could give an address on Divine Healing. As usual, he gladly accepted the invitation and came from his Ashram nearby. He was held in great respect in the diocese. Many of our people had asked him to pray for the sick and his prayers had been answered.

Bishop Pakenham-Walsh gave an address on Divine Healing. He was eighty-three years of age. A tall man, his back was now quite bent. He had a long, flowing beard, grey with age. He was clad in a cotton cassock, originally purple in colour but now nearly white from constant washing. He had a small wooden cross on the breast. Too feeble to stand and give the address, he was seated. He spoke in English and was rather inaudible; but what the interpreter said in Tamil could be heard by every one.

He was particular that the patients who asked for his prayers should be spiritually prepared. Every day he wrote ten to twenty letters, giving clear directions as to how they should commit themselves entirely to Christ. It was only in very serious cases that he took the Anointing Service after instructing the patients carefully.

During the last years of his ministry of intercession he prayed regularly for as many as one thousand patients, dividing them into batches and taking them on different days of the week. In well-bound black note-books he wrote out their case histories.

He would spend five hours a day with a note book spread on the table before him. Then he would pray for each patient, remembering the important details.

The Coimbatore Diocesan Magazine for May 1956 gave an account of a remarkable instance of Divine Healing in the diocese.

Mr Verghese, Railway Guard, his wife and their four children, all members of the Podanur congregation, went to attend a wedding on 15th January 1956. That was a festive occasion. The parents were busy meeting their relations and friends. The children played with other children and were quite happy.

Susan, aged six, went to sleep quite early. The other children with whom she had been playing woke her up and said to her, 'What is this? We are all having a jolly good time; we do not go to a wedding every day; you want to leave us and go to sleep; get up and play with us.' They pulled her legs roughly and made her get up.

The next day the parents saw that Susan was limping. They had her examined in a hospital and arranged for an X-ray photograph. It was found that Susan's hip joint had been dislocated and that one leg had become slightly longer than the other. This was very serious. Susan was a pretty girl. It looked as if she would have to be lame for the rest of her life. The parents and their friends were filled with anxiety. They decided that the best medical treatment should be given to the child. She was kept in a hospital for twenty-three days and was not allowed to leave her bed. Her legs were put in plaster cast with heavy weights attached to them and she was asked not to move even an inch this way or that way.

On the twenty-fourth day the doctor took off the cast of plaster. The mother who was a devout woman, was in continuous prayer that the child's legs might become normal. In Jericho a blind man kept crying: 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me' (Mark 10:46-51). In the same way this mother kept crying silently but earnestly, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on my child.'

But even after the prolonged treatment in the hospital, Susan was the same as before. She had become so weak that she could not even stand and when she attempted to walk the bad limp was still there. The doctor urged the parents to take the child for further treatment to Madras.

The Pastor of the Podanur Church, the Rev. R. Devasirvatham, asked his Congregation as well as the Women's Fellowship to pray for the child. He urged the mother: 'God can do everything. He can certainly heal your child. You should spend three days in fasting and prayer for her. I shall also fast and pray with you during those days.'

The mother wrote about Susan to Bishop Pakenham-Walsh in the Tadagam Ashram nearby and asked for his prayers. She also wrote to two of her friends to pray for the child.

On March 31st the mother saw a vision of Jesus. He was an effulgent figure and came through the open heavens swiftly in response to the prayers of those who had called on Him for His help. He stopped where Susan was and touched her where the hip joint had been dislocated. He then disappeared.

The child now became quite well. Her limp was gone. Her legs were normal. This was certainly the work of God and the parents and their friends were filled with gratitude to Him for the miracle which He had wrought.

When I visited the Podanur Church some time later I saw Susan and her parents after a service. She came to me walking normally and well. The people in the Church spoke to me with wonder and astonishment about God's remarkable answer to their prayers.

When we started in 1951 to pray for a spiritual awakening in the diocese, we did not know at all how God would answer the prayer. But now we realize that Divine Healing was certainly one of the many channels through which He sent His blessings to us.

In this land of thousands of villages it is often impossible for rural folk to reach the hospitals with their trained doctors and their modern equipment. Millions of people are too poor even to travel to the hospitals and to pay the small charges which are expected of them. In all these cases belief in Divine Healing is of immense help. Even the poorest of villagers have access to the infinite resources of God.

The various happenings in the Coimbatore Diocese have convinced us that there is a remarkable faith in God among our humblest folk. We have been amazed again and again by the persistent belief of people who are willing to come together in

groups and to pray until the sick are healed. Often in our regular services in Church the names of the sick are mentioned and prayer is offered for them. But we do not know what they are suffering from. We do not know what medical treatment has been given to them. We do not even hear the names properly. How can there be intensive prayer unless we know something about the people for whom the prayer is offered? We need to encourage the formation of prayer groups and the holding of Healing Services in every congregation or at least in every congregation in which there are men and women who believe in prayer and are ready to come to them.

There is a real danger that people may be interested only in their physical health. It cannot be emphasised too often or too clearly that genuine well-being must include body, mind and spirit. Careful instruction about the need for penitence, surrender to Christ and the acceptance of God's forgiveness is absolutely essential.

I was invited to give the address on the College Day of the Vellore Medical College on August 27, 1951. This was a particularly exacting demand. As I remember now, there were in Vellore at that time one hundred and fifty doctors, two hundred and fifty men and women training to become doctors and four hundred women in training as nurses. Many of them were spending years of toil on study and research. What did they think of Divine Healing? Had I anything useful to say to them as a result of the many remarkable healings which were taking place in the Coimbatore Diocese? Here is the substance of what I said to them:

1. Medical science has made immense strides. Numerous powerful drugs have been discovered. Surgeons perform wonders. We need to remember that all this growth of medical knowledge is from God and that the fullest use must be made of it. But even the cleverest physicians and surgeons fail at times. There is a limit to all human ability. But the resources of God are unlimited. His wisdom, truth, power, beauty, goodness, love are beyond all description, beyond all calculation. We have no measure with which to measure them. The brightest light which man can invent pales into insignificance when the sun comes up.

2. Prayer, meditation, Holy Communion, Bible study,

spiritual reading, contact with nature—these are the means by which we draw from the infinite resources of God. They all need energy, application, patience, time. There is no shortcut to reach God any more than there is to complete your medical education.

3. We now realize clearly that body, mind and spirit are closely knit together. There are three levels on which healing has to be wrought—bodily, mental, spiritual. Recovery, to be complete, must be spiritual as well as physical. The body is the temple of the living God. Do not merely repair the ravages in the physical structure; clean the temple, as it is the abode of the living God.

4. In our congregations there are keen people who believe in the power of prayer as an essential factor in the healing of the sick. But they need someone to bring them together and to help them to make their prayer intelligent, regular and earnest. That someone could be *you*. Be the life and soul of a praying group. This is good for the doctor. This is good for our church people. Take especially *hard* cases. The soul of each of your patients is precious in the sight of God; let it be precious in your sight too.

5. Dr Somervell, the famous missionary surgeon, told me that in his personal experience he had come across patients who had not responded to surgical treatment but had been healed by prayer. A man had been operated on but did not improve. His friends rallied round him and prayed earnestly for him. He also prayed, full of faith. Dr Somervell was clear in his mind that the patient became well after the prayer though he did not show any signs of recovery after the operation.

21

EVANGELISTIC WORK

Bishop Festo Olang arrived in Coimbatore on Friday, November 29, 1957, and spent three days with us. He had been invited by the Church of India to visit the churches in this country. He preached in Christ Church, Coimbatore, on Sunday morning and took part in five Fellowship Meetings. We were greatly impressed by his simple and clear exposition of passages from the Bible with illustrations here and there from everyday life. It was evident that he had studied the Bible diligently.

Bishop Olang told me the story of his life.

> As a boy of twelve I was converted to Christianity from the African religion. I was working as a teacher in a C.M.S. Boys' School, which had one hundred and forty boarders. A team of eight persons, including Dr Joe Church and the Rev. Eric Sabiti, held a week's Mission in the school in 1938. I was convicted of sin but did not go forward for fear of what the school might think of me.
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> When a fire is kindled heavy logs take a long time to burn. I was one of those heavy logs, stubborn and unwilling to be lit. But in the following year I was converted and joined the Revival Movement.
>
> I received my theological training, first in St Paul's Diocesan Divinity School at Limuru in Africa for two years and later, in Wycliffe Hall at Oxford for one year. I was ordained priest in 1950 in the Diocese of Mombasa. In 1955 I was consecrated Bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the Diocese of Mombasa was under him. The consecration took place in the Namirembe Cathedral (literally the Cathedral of Peace) in Kampala, Uganda. Four African Bishops were consecrated in that service. All of us had been influenced by the Revival Movement. This was a very impressive service.

Bishop Festo Olang won the affection of our people by his kind and gentle manners. He told us about his wife, 'the person

he loved most in the world.' He told us that they had eleven children, whose pictures he carried about with him. Some of our people were quite amused when he took a little time to remember the name of one of his children! He was very friendly and good-humoured and mingled quite freely with all of us. It was, of course, a great experience for us to come in close contact with a fellow-Christian from a distant land. The Christian Church is really an immense family, spread over the whole world.

Bishop Olang told me about the Revival Movement which took place in the Diocese of Mombasa in Kenya. The Diocesan Bishop lived in Nairobi. Bishop Olang as Assistant Bishop had his head-quarters at Maseno, situated beautifully on the edge of the immense fresh water lake, Lake Victoria. The Bishop said:

> I can speak with confidence only about the work in my own area, in and around Maseno. Every Saturday morning there was a Fellowship meeting in the important centres. It lasted for about two hours and brought together men and women belonging to various denominations—the Anglicans, the Presbyterians, the Methodists and the Pentecostalists. After a hymn, prayers were offered and two or three messages were given from the Bible by different people as they were led by the Holy Spirit. Then there was a time for sharing. People gave testimonies as to what the Lord had done for them, particularly during the last few days. If they had any problems or difficulties, they put them before the group and asked for its advice. The Africans had lovely voices and there was enthusiastic chorus singing from time to time. About two hundred people gathered in this way every Saturday.
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> Once a month there was a Fellowship Meeting, also on a Saturday morning, for people from all over the area. If there was a special event such as the visit of a guest speaker, as many as three thousand people might assemble, travelling at their own expense and making their own arrangements about food. These meetings were also very informal, without any fixed programme, people taking part in them as they were led by God. These larger Fellowship Meetings also were interdenominational, though the Anglicans might be in a majority. Everyone was welcome. People

who had no spiritual experience were not forbidden. They were allowed to attend in the hope that God the Holy Spirit might work in their hearts and minds.

Bishop Olang stressed the need for the Church authorities to be sympathetic to these groups of enthusiastic Christians, drawn from many different backgrounds and with many different experiences. 'If the work of these Fellowship Groups is dealt with critically, there is a real danger of their going away from the Church and forming separatist groups of their own. The fact that some of the Bishops now consecrated in East Africa have themselves passed through a spiritual awakening enables us to deal sympathetically with such Fellowship Groups. Whenever I was free, I attended the Fellowship Meetings, but not as a Bishop. I was a brother among brethren of various Churches.'

God works in different countries and in different ages in different ways. We need not necessarily follow all the methods they followed in East Africa. But the African experience showed clearly the need for special meetings in addition to the usual Church services. In such meetings those who were spiritually awakened had many opportunities for informal fellowship and spiritual growth.

The Vellore Evangelistic Council invited me to give a course of three addresses in March 1955 to non-Christians.

My subjects were: (1) Do we need to believe in God today? (2) What is the nature of God? (3) How should we worship God? An Indian Presbyter asked me: 'Is God interested in social and economic equality among people? How do we know that He is so interested? What is the Christian teaching on this subject?' Another Indian Presbyter came to me and said to me. 'You say the Holy Spirit is working in the minds of men today. Why should we not believe that the plea which many communist leaders are making for social and economic equality is really the work of the Holy Spirit? Would it not be good for us to accept the fact that these men are led by God? By doing so, we shall bring into the Church all their zeal for social righteousness.' In my addresses in Vellore I tried to answer these questions.

The Vellore Evangelistic Council planned to run similar courses once every few months and the Christians were urged to bring

their non-Christian friends to the meetings which were held in Cobb Hall in the Voorheese College. The organizers expected about one hundred non-Christians to attend. The first two addresses were given in Tamil. On the last night the address had to be given in English (with a brief summary in Tamil at the end) as there was a large contingent from the Christian Medical College, both staff and students, a great proportion of whom did not know Tamil.

God sent many evangelists to help us in the Coimbatore Diocese. They came from many countries and from different backgrounds. Edwin Orr was one of them. We became friends. When his publisher asked me to write the story of his life I gladly agreed, as his life is full of faith, adventure and travel. He saw the vision of a revived Church and preached this message all over the world for thirty-five years. He is continually growing in intellectual and spiritual stature. He came to realise that it is necessary to reach the intellectual classes, the university students and professors and win them for Christ. Today when science has made vast advances there are millions of people who have no use for religion and who do not believe in God or prayer or the Bible. They think that modern scientific thought has made belief in them unnecessary or impossible. So Edwin Orr began to give what he called pre-evangelistic addresses.

We had arranged for Dr Orr a public meeting every night and a prayer meeting every morning in Coimbatore for a fortnight in 1958. When he arrived he expressed a great concern for the young people in the colleges. More meetings were quickly arranged in four of the colleges—the Government Arts College, the P.S.G. Arts College, the Government Polytechnic and the Government College of Technology. In the P.S.G. Arts College his audience was small. In the other three colleges he had three or four hundred students to speak to. His doctor's degree from Oxford University was of great help when these meetings were arranged. He taught with a wealth of argument and illustration that there is a God. Dr Orr's approach rivetted the attention of his student audiences. He gave another address to a large audience of college students engaged in Social Service. He invited his student audiences to attend his mass meetings in the Stadium to hear the Gospel message and hundreds of them came there.

The Presbyters and the people of the Holy Trinity Church, Ootacamund, made widespread evangelistic efforts in connection with the centenary celebrations of their church from 1st April to 20th April 1958.

They said, 'We would like to preach the Gospel in a hundred villages. We would like to baptise a hundred new Christians. We would like to present for Confirmation a hundred candidates, both young and old. We would like to give our thank-offerings to the church in hundreds—a hundred rupees if we can afford it or a hundred four-anna pieces or at least a hundred one annas.'

I was very glad they thought of these things rather than of garden parties and fire-works!

The Rev. Gell Knight was the Presbyter in charge of that church. He had worked in the Dornakal Diocese as an Indian Missionary for twenty years under Bishop Azariah and was full of evangelistic zeal.

As preparation for the celebration, the Church Committee decided that the church bell should be rung every morning at 5.30 from the first of September 1957. A few waited in front of the altar before the throne of grace for blessings during the centenary celebration and after it. Meditation on the Passion of our Lord, adoration of the Crucified One, intercessions for the people of Ooty Taluk, the consecration of ourselves individually and as a church for God's work here on earth, were the purpose of the early morning devotions. On Sundays, a short Morning Service was sung at that time.

This early morning watch was a great blessing to many. A saint has sung:

> Oh the pure delight of a single hour
> Which before thy throne I spend
> When I kneel in Prayer and with Thee my God
> I commune as friend with Friend.

'The cool still air, the chirping of early birds and the dawn of the morning Star added joy to these morning prayers', wrote Gell Knight in the report he sent to me.

For twenty days in April there were many varied and interesting services and meetings which were enthusiastically attended by large crowds.

On December 13th, eight months after the centenary celebration, I drove to Ootacamund, a distance of fifty-six miles from Coimbatore, to examine some of the new converts and to confirm them on the following day. The car was delayed and I was late by an hour but the two Presbyters and the ten confirmation candidates were patiently waiting in the cold and empty Holy Trinity Church until I reached it at 6 p.m.

Thirty-one persons (including four Hindu families) were baptised on April 13 and some of them had now been prepared for Confirmation.

The group I met in Holy Trinity Church on that day was quite interesting. They were ordinary folk engaged in such simple tasks as chopping wood or doing ayah's work. They were illiterate but alert. They knew by heart the Lord's Prayer and the Creed. They sang well the Christian hymns which had been taught to them.

I rejoiced that I had made that journey to meet these simple men and women who were starting out on their Christian pilgrimage.

Their Presbyter writes about them:

> The changed life of these adults who were baptised gives us great joy. Before Baptism they did their work shabbily, quarrelling with house-wives when they wanted the wood to be chopped in smaller pieces. They refused to chop knotted wood, but after Baptism they calmly and peacefully did their jobs, even cutting to pieces knotted wood.

On a later occasion I visited St John's Church at Kandal There was much excitement in the congregation as this was the first time a Bishop had come to that small church which belonged to the parish of Holy Trinity Church, Ootacamund.

I saw many stirrings of new life in that congregation. A new church bell had been bought. The building had been repaired and whitewashed. The church was filled with devout worshippers, many of them having been recently baptised and confirmed. It moved me to see all these signs of new life.

The Gospel was preached to men of all communities and castes in and around Ootacamund. But the people who responded were, as in all ages, from the most backward classes. It was significant

that in spite of the various kinds of economic help which the Indian Government was giving, men and women of the backward communities were still eager to join the Christian Church with its many opportunities for equality and brotherhood.

Ootacamund was one of the places where the Revival took deep root. Many of the Indian Presbyters, English missionaries and the other diocesan workers in the town came profoundly under its influence. Some of them were people of vision and energy There were also some active and keen Lay Preachers. A young men's group set the pace for the grown-up folk. This group met twice a week regularly—once for prayer and the other time for Bible study. They were always ready for whatever active service was asked of them. The call for evangelistic work spread through seven months met with a generous response from the church people. Many of them spent their hard-earned leisure during week ends for visiting villages which were often not easily accessible.

This vast land can only be evangelised properly when every congregation takes seriously its responsibility for the people in whose midst they live.

The news of God's doings in the Coimbatore Diocese spread widely. I was asked to give courses of addresses in various places, which I did. I preached in the Bangalore and Medak Cathedrals; the Madurai Diocesan meetings; the North Kerala Diocesan meetings; meetings at Poona and the Spiritual Life Centre, Nasrapur. An unforgettable occasion was the Maramon Convention in February 1954. To this vast gathering of the Mar Thoma Syrian Church as many as fifty thousand people came and many of them were keenly interested in hearing about a spiritual awakening in a neighbouring diocese. This immense assembly sat on the sands of a dry river bed and as I spoke I could see the waters gleaming at a distance over the heads of the people. A temporary booth of plaited cocoanut palm leaves was put up by the different parishes working together. Quite a technique had been perfected for putting up the booth year after year with a minimum of expense. The huge congregation (including the children) had been trained by the priests to listen quietly during the long hours of the meetings.

In all these addresses I emphasised that God the Holy Spirit is ever active and willing to help but people must be ready. There are seasons of new life in the Church. The monsoon does not

come every day. But the farmer provides carefully for it. He tills the soil, he collects the seeds, he engages the workmen. Then when the monsoon breaks he is ready to begin cultivation. He cannot make the rain fall; that is God's work. But he should make the best use of the showers when they do fall.

22

LOVE IS MORE POTENT THAN FEAR

John Ramachander sat for hours on the broad steps of Lechler Memorial Church, Salem. People began to gather around him and ask him why he was sitting there. He told them that he had been discharged from his work as a writer in the London Mission High School without sufficient grounds and he was going to fight this matter out non-violently. Unless he was reinstated he would fast unto death. He was determined about it. Some of the people who saw him sympathised with him. They began to ask why the school authorities should be so harsh and treat him so severely. This will put his wife and innocent children to great hardship. Certainly something should be done to have this decision reviewed and to help this man who had been so unjustly treated.

It was at that time Mr William Nagenda, the African Evangelist, came to Salem to hold meetings. When he heard about Ramachander he was worried. He met Ramachander and asked him several questions about the termination of his service. Ramachander put all the blame on the Headmaster and the Correspondent of the school and did not accept the responsibility for even a single fault. At last Nagenda gave him an illustration, vividly demonstrating with his fingers; he said that when we point out another man's fault with one finger, three fingers are pointing towards us and showing us our many faults. Then he prayed with Ramachander. This illustration went home and was the cause of his conversion. He accepted Christ as his personal Saviour. From that day he lived in peace. His conversion took place in 1954.

Ramachander was forgiven and appointed as a writer in another diocesan school. He could not be sufficiently thankful to the authorities for giving him another chance to serve the Diocese. Love, we found, was more potent than fear.

I kept in touch with Ramachander from his conversion to my retirement in 1959. He told me a good deal about his life and his work for Christ. I gave him such help and guidance as I could.

My father was a Brahman convert to the Christian religion. I was educated in the C.M.S. High School at Srivilliputhur. After my school course I wanted to be entirely free and so left my parents and lived a bad life. Like the Prodigal Son I returned home. Even then I was not happy with my parents. I served in the Navy from 1942 to 1946.

Then I got a writer's post in the London Mission High School at Salem. I was a nominal Christian. There was no sincerity in my life. I was very proud of my father's Brahman ancestry and of the S.P.G. Church at Salem to which I belonged, as most of the Government officials of the town attended that Church. I did not respect anybody. I criticised everyone. There were no family prayers in our house. I did not do my duty by my wife or my children. I paid very little to God and very much to doctors.

In the High School I gave the Headmaster considerable trouble and my service was terminated. I started a fast unto death which ended on my conversion.

On 3rd of September 1955 Ramachander and his friends inaugurated an Evangelistic Band with the name, 'Soldiers Of The Cross Brigade'. September 3rd is a significant day in the Indian Church. This is the date on which Sundar Singh was born in 1889 and also the date on which he was baptised as a Christian sixteen years later. It was, therefore, quite appropriate that the Salem Evangelistic Brigade should begin on that date.

Ramachander and his friend Mr M. J. Williams, another writer in the Diocese, went every week-end and every office holiday to preach the Gospel in the villages of the Salem District.

Ramachander was full of evangelistic zeal and had a gift for organization. He applied to the Diocese for a loan of Rs 500 for the purchase of a projector to show film strips. This loan was given to him. I wondered how he was going to return the loan from his small salary as a clerk. He made vegetable pickles and sold them. Many people bought the pickle and added some donation for the Brigade. With the sale proceeds of the pickle

bottles he cleared the loan. His friends gave him over one hundred and twenty pictures on the Life of Christ, the Good Samaritan and Pilgrim's Progress. He borrowed from the National Christian Council Film Library film strips on the Prodigal Son and other subjects.

The Brigade worked in co-operation with the other Churches and Missions in Salem District—the Strict Baptist Mission, the Ceylon and India General Mission and the Eaton Memorial Church. Pastor Viswasam of the Philadelphia Pentecostal Church went often with the team and gave *Kalakshepams* on the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. He told these great stories vividly and at great length. He also sang lyrics specially composed on his themes and was accompanied by Indian musical instruments. *Kalakshepams* are a characteristically Indian method of giving religious instruction.

The Brigade planned to work among middle-class non-Christians. They carried tracts and Gospels. When they saw four or five people standing together on the road, they stopped, gave out the tracts and started a conversation about Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the world. They sold 4,800 Gospels and gave away thousands of hand bills. They also sold some Bibles and New Testaments. When they reached a village they showed the slides and explained them in churches or schools. They carried with them specimen copies of the Bible Correspondence Courses in Tamil run by Dr J. H. Piet of Vellore. They sought to introduce these Courses to the men, particularly the young men, whom they met in their evangelistic tours.

In this way they visited hundreds of villages and towns in Salem district. Their evangelistic work was wholly voluntary. They travelled on bicycles to save expense. When hospitality was not offered by local people, they bought their own food. This was a new type of Evangelism—Cycle Evangelism!

They applied to Bishop Newbigin (our next door neighbour at that time) for permission to tour in his Diocese of Madurai during the month of May in 1957 and 1958. He gladly gave them permission and prepared a careful programme for them for every day during those months and also wrote to his people to welcome them. When I was at Kodaikanal in the Madurai Diocese they met me on May 6, 1957. Ramachander and Gabriel, one of the young teachers in a Salem Diocesan Elementary School,

had come from Salem to Batlagundu on their bicycles, a distance of about two hundred miles, preaching the Gospel all along the way. Kodaikanal is 7,000 feet high. They could not come there on their bicycles and so had travelled by bus from Batlagundu to hold their meetings. I was glad to meet them in the course of their evangelistic tour and to hear their report. This was certainly a most useful way of spending their holiday month.

After three and a half years of such active evangelistic work I asked Ramachander various questions.

'Do Christians and Hindus attend your meetings?' I said.

His reply was: 'In the town churches only Christians come to our meetings. In the village churches both Christians and Hindus come. To open air meetings only Hindus come.'

'Is there opposition from Hindus to the Gospel message? What are the grounds of their opposition?' I asked.

'During the last three and a half years there was no opposition except in one village. A leading person in that village objected to our preaching the Gospel on the ground that he did not want the religion of low-caste people to come to his village. He said that he would do propaganda against the Gospel if we preached it. Then I asked him how he could do anti-propaganda unless he knew the Gospel well. Other Hindus accepted my argument and made him buy a Gospel from me. Many others also bought Gospels from me.'

I asked Ramachander another question. 'Have any Hindus accepted Christ and been baptised?'

His answer was this: 'As we were touring preachers we directed all enquirers to the nearest Protestant pastor or teacher. We supplied only literature. One father, a Hindu, who was adamant in not allowing his bad son to come home, after seeing our pictures of the Prodigal Son, forgave his son and allowed him to come back to his house. He often sought advice of the Christians in his village if there was any trouble in his family. He read the Bible. Some other Hindus are reading the Bible regularly and will be ready for baptism in course of time. We often got letters asking for prayer from Hindu friends who heard the Christian message through our team.'

In South India during the last month of the Tamil year Hindu devotees sing songs of praise (*Devaram*) to God with musical instruments early in the morning and go through the streets.

Following this practice Ramachander and his friends went round the streets of Salem every morning from 4 a.m. to 6 a.m. during the whole month of December 1958 singing nativity songs and giving Christmas messages. Many Christians and Hindus told them that their songs and messages gave them and their families peace. This was quite an interesting instance of Christianity becoming indigenous in India.

In 1959 Ramachander offered for full-time Christian work. We needed a man who would devote his whole time to evangelistic work. So we accepted his offer gladly and he was sent for training in the Theological College at Tirumaraiyur in the extreme south of India. He was ordained by my successor, Bishop S. J. Samuel, and has been carrying on fruitful evangelistic work.

23

SOCIAL CONCERN AND THE CHURCH

In the Methodist Revival in England, the intensely personal message of Salvation had social results which changed England. 'The Gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social,' said Wesley, 'no holiness but social holiness.' Without the evangelical revival there is no explaining John Howard's prison reforms or William Wilberforce's anti-slavery campaign. 'O be not weary of well doing!' wrote Wesley to Wilberforce. 'Go on, in the name of God and in the power of His might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.' A new social conscience was created in England, with results so far-reaching that the historian Lecky attributes England's escape from a French Revolution largely to the Evangelical Movement, and another historian J. R. Green says that 'a religious revival burst forth which changed in a few years the whole temper of English society.'

I shall tell here how we applied the Gospel to social and economic conditions in the Coimbatore Diocese.

The Indian Government has been implementing various Five Year Plans for the rapid development of the nation. This is an attempt to help all the people in the country, particularly those in the villages, to reach a higher standard of living. Schools, community centres, roads, wells and houses have been provided.

We explored how best our people in the villages could avail themselves of these advantages offered by the Government.

A Seminar was held in a large village called Kangayam, forty miles from Coimbatore, on November 22 to 24, 1957. The meetings took place in the new Community Centre with its convenient, though small, hall which had been built in 1953 by the joint efforts of former members of the Congregational, Anglican and Methodist Churches. The Rev. V. Jeyamani Joseph, who had recently returned to India after spending some months in the Iona Community in Scotland, was responsible for the local arrangements. Sister Joyce Woollard and Sister Grace Aaron, who were doing active evangelistic and pastoral work among the women in that area, looked after the catering. Fifty-seven students attended the Seminar. I was particularly impressed by the fact that most of them were keen and enthusiastic young men, who had already done social work in their villages and were anxious to do it now more effectively and on a larger scale.

Dr T. Koilpillai was the Secretary of the Seminar. He is a professor in a Hindu College (P.S.G. Arts College, Coimbatore). He had been the moving spirit of the Social Service League in that College for some years. This League did some active and useful work in the villages near the College. Koilpillai and his wife, who was also well-educated, were greatly helped by the evangelistic meetings held in the Diocese, particularly by the teaching on Prayer given by Dr Glenn Clark and the Rev. Roland Brown. Koilpillai was sent by his College to the Jamia Millia Islamia near Delhi for four months' training in the production of Tamil books for people who learnt to read and write as adults. I arranged to send him later to the University of Chicago for a year of advanced study in Sociology.

In the seminar there were four speakers. Dr R. R. Keithan, Dr J. J. De Valois, Mr A. S. Ratnam and myself. Keithan was in close touch with the national movements in India begun by Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave. A missionary from America, he was given freedom by his mission to experiment along new lines of social action in close association with the national leaders. In his two addresses he pointed out that though some social movements were active in the country, Christians on the whole had stood aloof from them. Gandhiji, Vinobaji and their numerous followers were filled with love for the common people. They

were not Christians but they put most of us to shame by the selfless way in which they devoted themselves to the service of the poor and the needy. The great lesson we needed to learn from them was that we must live together as a family, in peace one with another and working for the good of all. Keithan himself, by his simple way of life and his complete identification, was a striking example of how Christian social action should be carried on. His intimate knowledge of village conditions and his long years of social work were great assets to the Indian Church.

J. J. De Valois had established and developed an Agricultural Farm at Katpadi near Vellore. The son of a farmer, he had received scientific training in an Agricultural College in America and opened an agricultural school with extension work on a large scale. The Central Government in New Delhi entrusted him with huge amounts of money to develop a poultry project. He had to supply the Government every year with 50,000 eggs of high grade fowls like White Leghorns and Black Minorcas so as to improve the poultry stock in India. He had arrived at Katpadi thirty-seven years ago along with other agricultural missionaries belonging to different missions and working in different parts of the country. Scientific agriculture proved very difficult in India and one by one several of the agricultural missionaries left. When De Valois returned from America after a furlough, he brought with him some chickens of an improved breed and an Indian Pastor rebuked him: 'Other missionaries bring from America teachers, doctors and evangelists to take us away from the filth and poverty of our villages and to teach us a higher standard of life. You bring us these chickens! Do you want us to go back to the poverty and dirt of our villages?'

De Valois saw in 1957 a vast change in our people, particularly in the national leaders of India. The villages have not yet improved. They are still small and impoverished. But there is a real awakening in the hearts of the leaders and a genuine desire to raise the standard of rural living. He illustrated his address with many beautiful pictures which he had taken of his work at Katpadi. It was inspiring to see his unabated enthusiasm for helping the people toiling in the villages of India.

We were fortunate in having A. S. Ratnam in our midst. He had been appointed by the Government to organize educational and social work in one hundred and twenty villages in the area of

the Coimbatore Diocese. He was an active member of the Prayer Group at Kodumudi where he lived. He attended the Billy Graham meetings in Madras in 1956 and was greatly helped by them. In the Seminar he explained to us clearly the aims of the Government in the Five Year Plans. As a Diocese we decided to concentrate on the village of Arampalayam, twelve miles from Erode. There were seventy-two Christian families in the village. They made their living by cutting imitation diamonds. They earned good wages and were much better off than the people of other villages. A keen group of young people was active there.

A careful questionnaire was prepared and a survey team of three men spent some busy days in the village visiting each family and gathering accurate information about its social, economic and religious condition. They reported that the religious life of the people had been greatly neglected in past years. There were no visits by any Pastor. The people, though nominally Christians, had completely given up religion. The Mission School in the village had been closed. The survey team made many useful recommendations and prompt action was taken by the Diocese.

Ratnam did excellent social work in that village. He organized a Co-operative society which gave loans. It began with a small capital of Rs 5. The Government gave a loan. The people borrowed from the Society and paid money back to it, instead of getting loans from money lenders. The Society made a profit of Rs 1,200 in the course of twelve months. Out of this profit a grant of Rs 700 was made towards the construction of a small church. A night school for adults was run by the Government. The village proposed to build a community hall and the Government agreed to equip it with a radio, sports materials, musical instruments, books and newspapers, and place a man in charge. The people of the village worked as a family through a co-operative organization and were able to do many things for themselves.

We began Sunday, November 24, with a Service of Holy Communion in the morning. The C.S.I. Liturgy was followed, the responses being sung to Indian music. After the Service I took a Bible Study Class on the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St John. I said:

> (Verse 5). Multitudes of people were coming to hear the teaching of Jesus. He was anxious to instruct them about

the Kingdom of God but He was convinced that there could be no effective teaching when men were hungry and had no food. We not only need food, we need clothes to wear, houses to live in, education for our children and recreation during our leisure hours. All those who seek to follow the way of the Lord Jesus should provide for these needs.

(Verses 9-11). The resources at our disposal are very limited indeed and we may often wonder how much good we can do with them. But however small our resources we need to offer them up to Christ so that He may make the best use of them. He can multiply them beyond measure.

(Verse 15). It is very essential that all our social work should rest on a strong foundation of prayer. Whenever Jesus passed through a spiritual crisis, He went away to be alone with God. He was in a desert place for forty days, fasting and praying, before He began His ministry. He sought the guidance of His Father before He chose the twelve disciples. He went to the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed earnestly so that He could meet the great ordeal before Him. Jesus passed through some such crisis in this chapter also. He had sought to satisfy the physical needs of men but that had only led to misunderstanding. He was very greatly distressed that bodily enjoyment seemed to be the only goal of many men. In all our social work we need to be continually on our guard against making the physical enjoyment of life the main end of man.

(Verse 27). The Madras Government is seeking to provide free education to children whose parents are earning below Rs 100 a month. Large sums of money are being spent on building hospitals and teaching the people improved methods of agriculture, so that we may have sufficient food. In the course of the next few years the Government with its resources may be able to meet some at least of the many needs of men—food, education, houses, health and recreation. Even then the Church will have a real service to render. We should not labour for the meat which perisheth but for the meat which endureth unto everlasting life.

24

BUILDING VILLAGE CHURCHES

There were two remarkable spiritual awakenings in Wales. One of them took place in 1859; the other in 1904. Evan Roberts was greatly used by God during the momentous days of 1904. One hundred thousand people were profoundly influenced by that awakening. Missionaries from Wales were working among the Khasi people in Assam and the awakening extended here to this part of the world also. When Edwin Orr, the historian of evangelical awakenings, visited Wales and travelled through it, he observed that many chapels and churches were 'built in 1860 and rebuilt in 1905'. This meant that the men and women who were changed by the two awakenings found it necessary to build or enlarge their places of worship for spiritual fellowship.

I had some significant experience in the Coimbatore Diocese when new places of worship were constructed with enthusiasm and manual toil so that the people who received new life might have closer fellowship with God and with man.

A surveyor, Seenivasagam by name, often called on me. I found him obliging, pleasant and efficient. When he was young, he was expelled from a boarding school for his rebellious behaviour. Later he joined the Army and its discipline helped him. During the evangelistic meetings in the Diocese he gave his heart to Christ. He was now a man of some means. He gave Rs 630, for the extension of the Chapel at Kommacoil (his native village). In 1953 I was invited to rededicate the building. He was also giving a small sum every month to two women to do the work of God among women in his village and its neighbourhood. God was teaching many people in the Diocese that giving is gaining and the more cheerfully we give for God the more He blesses the giver and the receiver.

Basuvapatti (22 miles from Erode) had a small Christian congregation consisting of nine families. The Christian teacher there, T. Thangamuthu, was touched deeply by God in a Teachers' Convention conducted by Mr N. Daniel. As the teacher repented and waited on God, his cry was heard and a voice bade him read Psalm 40. When he read, 'He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and he set my feet upon a rock,

and established my goings', he received the assurance that his sins were forgiven. He gave a moving witness of how he had struggled with his burden of sin and how he now enjoyed peace in his heart.

When he returned home God gave him a vision of what he should do for his own village. The few families there were divided among themselves and there was no fellowship in the congregation. His brokenness helped him to humble himself and be reconciled with those with whom he had differences in the past.

He felt strongly that God was calling him to erect a chapel for worship as there was no adequate building and the one they were using was a small thatched shed. The congregation rallied round him, but was it God's will? One day, praying intently to know His will, he asked God to speak to him through an appropriate verse in the Bible if it was His will that a chapel should be built. After prayer the first verses he read were, 'For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek Thy good' (Ps. 122:8, 9).

His faith was now strengthened and he proceeded to erect the chapel. The people in the village joined him. They put their trust in God. As they approached the village casteman for a gift of trees, he gave them the very trees which they had desired. The mission gave a small sum but the rest of the money came through prayer in response to the teacher's appeal. They made their own bricks and they were their own masons and carpenters. The manual labour that was necessary was provided by the teacher, his wife and relations, and the co-operation from the villagers was wonderful. Thus a small chapel, which would normally cost Rs 800 to build, was completed at a cost of Rs 250 only.

I dedicated the chapel on 14th March 1954. The congregation rejoiced to worship in their new chapel and were filled with gratitude to God for the way in which He had led the teacher in faith to serve his small village.

The Service of Dedication was coming to an end. It was a devout Service but, like all special Services in our village congregations, it had been quite long. We were getting ready to close the Service and go home.

The Presbyter in charge of the Service came to me and said: 'A woman in the congregation wants to bear witness to what God has done for her'. I agreed to her request.

She was poorly clad and had probably received little or no education. But she stood before this large congregation and spoke boldly about how God had heard her prayer.

> My son, who was seventeen years old, left the village seven years ago and no one knew where he was. All my efforts to get in touch with him failed. Many began to say that he was probably dead as there was no news from him.
>
> When I saw the walls of the small chapel going up, I went there daily and prayed earnestly, often with tears, that God would restore my lost boy to me. Sometimes I would cry aloud in the fields when at work and pray that God would bring back my son. Some people made fun of me for my prayers but I persisted. It was my deep longing that before the chapel was dedicated I should hear news of my son. I also prayed to God that if He sent me news of my son before the dedication of the chapel, I would bring an offering of sweets for distribution to the congregation.
>
> I fully believed that God would answer my prayer. And He did.
>
> Two weeks before the Service of Dedication I received news that my son was working in Calcutta. This definite answer to my longings has strengthened my faith immensely.
>
> Now I would ask the congregation to pray with me that my son may visit me in the village at an early date.

We all rejoiced to hear this moving testimony to the power of God and to the wonderful way in which He was leading this small congregation to follow Him and to worship Him.

In 1956 I visited the village of Arampalayam. There was a keen group of young people there. A Convention had been conducted in the village by Mr Victor Manogaram (now President, Youth for Christ, India) and others. Several people were greatly blessed by the Convention. They wanted to build a church for their worship and had the active interest and ready co-operation of Mr A. S. Ratnam, a Christian Government official for Community Development. He obtained a grant of Rs 700 for the church building from the Co-operative Society which he had

organized in the village. A church building which held about a hundred people was erected. I dedicated it.

As several hundred people had come, the Services of Confirmation and Holy Communion were held inside the church with a loudspeaker but the public meetings, both before and after the Service, took place in a large temporary structure of thatched cocoanut leaves outside the church. I was informed afterwards that the man who read the address of welcome to me was once a drunkard but had been converted during the evangelistic meetings. A college student from Erode, who had received new life, had been appointed to work as an Evangelist in that village. He did good work, a young man among young men. In the Confirmation Service about thirty people were presented.

The function terminated with an interesting item. A. S. Ratnam and his friends Jeremiah and Doss told the story of the Lord Jesus Christ to the accompaniment of Indian music. For over half an hour several hundred people, including a large number of Hindus, listened to this great story told in a fashion which is quite familiar in the villages of India (*Villu Pattu*).

On July 13th 1958 I dedicated a Church building at Kaniyur, about fifteen miles from Coimbatore. We travelled most of the distance by car on an excellent motor road. Kaniyur is about half a mile from the main road and we had to walk along a rough and stony path, with the earth washed away by heavy rains. About a year ago the small Christian community of Kaniyur decided to build a church for its use. There were thirty-six Christian families, all of them landless labourers earning a rupee a day by their work. The Diocese gave a small contribution of Rs 300 towards the building. The congregation raised Rs 900 from among themselves and their relations working in the Tea Estates on the Nilgiris and on the Anamalais. This was not enough to cover all the expenses connected with the building. Stone, timber for the roof and wood for doors and windows had to be bought. The cash which they collected was enough only for such purposes. So they bravely decided to do all the manual work themselves. They worked hard all day long to earn their daily food. When they returned home they took their evening meal and with hurricane lanterns built the church, digging the foundations, laying the stone and doing all the unskilled work. They had then to pay for

masons and carpenters for the skilled labour which was necessary to finish the building.

For some months I had been hearing about the great effort which the people of the village were making to build a church for themelves. The dedication of the church was, therefore, a matter of great rejoicing for all of us, diocesan workers as well as the people of the village. The little church was full, with about one hundred and thirty people. Even some of the Hindus in the village attended the Service and shared in the general rejoicing. I was glad to note one important fact. The people who had taken an active part in building the church and who were active also at the time of the Dedication Service were all young men. The older men were in the background and the work was being done by the young folk.

25

A C.S.I. BISHOP AT WORK

'Why are Bishops needed in the Church of South India? What is to be the status of the ministers now serving in the Churches who are not ordained by Bishops?' The Joint Committee on Church Union spent more time discussing these questions than any other. In that Committee I learnt much about the traditions of the three Churches which proposed to unite. In the Coimbatore Diocese we had 23,000 Congregationalists, 5,000 Methodists and 4,000 Anglicans. I fully believe that God gave me a training for many years in the Joint Committee before calling me to the difficult task of being the Bishop of a Diocese in which three such different traditions were represented. For important tasks God always does give special training.

The Anglicans made it quite clear that there could be no Church Union unless the United Church agreed to accept the Historic Episcopate. Most of the members of the Joint Committee did not believe in Apostolic Succession. But some of the Anglican leaders held firmly to that belief and insisted that there should be room in the new United Church for those who held it. The other members of the Joint Committee were ready to accept Bishops for the sake of the pastoral and administrative work they could do but were not prepared to accept any theory of

Apostolic Succession. Finally it was decided that the new United Church would have Bishops in the historic succession but that no interpretation of Episcopacy would be demanded of its members.

All my time in Coimbatore I was conscious of the fact that I was working in a Diocese in which some of the Free Church folk did not see any special need for Bishops. In an early stage of Church Union negotiations a missionary lady from Erode exclaimed in a conference, 'We do not want Bishops in the Indian Church! We had trouble enough from prelates in England.' When I left the Diocese numerous meetings were arranged and many farewell addresses, warm with love, were read to me. One of them began with the words, 'Dear Father-in-God', a term of affection which particularly appealed to me. A Missionary lady of the Free Church tradition who saw this address queried sharply, 'Who is Father-in-God?' I knew this attitude of people and I proceeded slowly and cautiously. I constantly remembered the great service of Consecration in which eight Bishops and three Presbyters had prayed with the laying-on of hands that I might receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Surely God answered that prayer. In every Communion Service the congregations in the Diocese prayed for me by name; surely God responded to them. Several prayer groups in the Diocese reported that they were praying regularly for me as well as for the Diocese. Certainly God listened to those prayers.

In the light of my experience in the United Church for several years as one of its Bishops I would like to ask here: What is the type of Episcopacy which is developing in the Church of South India? The only answer I can give is to describe in some detail the work I did from day to day.

Office Work. A Bishop gets many letters every day. There is no difficulty in answering them if he is in his office where he has the necessary clerical help. But when he is on tour for fifteen or twenty days in the month, as he often is, the letters begin to sort themselves out into Category I: *Most urgent letters,* Category II: *Letters not so urgent* and Category III: *Letters not urgent at all.* There is also another category, Category IV: *Letters which should go at once into the waste paper basket*—anonymous letters, begging letters, insulting letters, threatening letters and notices of public meetings and social functions which one can never attend on account of the pressure of work. Many of the letters require

careful answers. It is a real struggle to catch up with arrears in correspondence. I was staying with one of our Bishops in his home. He said to me, 'Will you excuse me? I have to read and deal with sixty letters which are now lying on my office table', and left the room.

A Bishop serves on many committees, presiding over most of them. Once the then Bishop of London (Dr Wand) complained that he was a member of two hundred committees and organisations! No C.S.I. Bishop is burdened with that many committees. But he has his share of committee work and it consumes a great deal of his time. The relevant papers have to be studied, enquiries have to be made and important decisions reached, giving due weight to the conflicting opinions of persons who travel long distances to express them.

Interviews with officials of the Diocese, and representatives of congregations who are apt to think that their local problems ought to occupy the main attention of the Bishop, take up a good deal of his time. After an hour or two he has to bring these interviews, friendly or otherwise, to an end as tactfully as he can.

Along with these responsibilities he has to prepare the twenty or twenty-five addresses he has to give every month in the course of his pastoral work. Some of these addresses require a great deal of careful thought. A Bishop has the good fortune to meet large and devout congregations wherever he goes, particularly during Services of Ordination and Confirmation. But this means that along with his administrative work he must find some time every day for preparing his many addresses. Our Church people who attend these important services and for which they prepare for weeks ahead rarely realize that they are being taken by men who are doing considerable administrative work at the same time. I spent much time preparing numerous Bible studies for the Summer Schools and Fellowship Meetings. There were also requests for lectures or sermons outside the Diocese, besides requests for books and articles.

Ordinations. The London Missionary Society had sent regularly every quarter a grant for the training of Presbyters. The local missionaries and the Indian leaders had decided from time to time that there were no suitable candidates and had put the money into a Ministerial Training Fund. There was a considerable sum

when I took charge of the Diocese. In the United Church there were many opportunities for opening new pastorates and many more men were offering for the ministry. I urged the relevant committees to send for training the best men available. We found that if men were ordained and did good work, their support could easily be found by their congregations. Several new pastorates were formed, particularly in growing industrial areas, though some of the poorer rural pastorates had to be closed.

During my term of service I ordained twenty-eight men. In former years men without much education had often been ordained. The Church of South India insisted that every Presbyter should have completed at least his High School education. The C.S.I. Theological Colleges recommended that their students should undergo training for a period of four years. In the case of elderly men with a good knowledge of the Bible and considerable experience in Christian work as laymen, we ordained them and put them into churches after they had been in a Theological College for a year or two. I was disappointed that of the men I ordained, only three had had university education. Our town congregations had many educated people and the need for well-qualified Pastors was steadily growing.

The Ordination Services always needed considerable preparation and were attended by large congregations. It was a joy to me to pray for these men with the laying-on of hands and to send them out into various churches in the Diocese.

The Church of South India fully recognized the validity of non-episcopal ordination and gave the ministers so ordained the same status as episcopally ordained ministers. But all the new Presbyters were ordained by Bishops, without any exception. Both Presbyters and people accepted this gladly.

Confirmations. Should only Bishops take Confirmations or should Presbyters also take them? We discussed this question again and again in the Joint Committee on Church Union. The Anglican representatives urged that only the Bishops should take them. The Free Church representatives asked that Presbyters also might be allowed to take them. In the end we decided that either the Bishops or the Presbyters could take the Confirmation Services. But the hope was expressed that in course of time only the Bishops might be allowed to take Confirmations.

My experience in this matter was quite interesting. One missionary lady of the Free Church tradition insisted that the girls in her boarding home should be admitted to full membership by the Pastor. Their parents supported this move. This was the only congregation in which the Presbyter took the Confirmation Service regularly and not the Bishop. All the other congregations invited me to take their Confirmation Services. Rarely, when it was not possible for me to go, the local Presbyter would take this Service with my permission.

Presbyters of different traditions would present their candidates at the same time. In one congregation a former English S.P.G. Missionary and a former Tamil London Mission Minister presented their candidates together. On the Nilgiris, quite often, candidates of former Anglican and Methodist Churches were confirmed at the same Service.

The new Service of Confirmation drawn up by the Church of South India is rich and significant. This Service consists of three parts. In the first part the candidates accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. In the second part the Bishop or the Presbyter prays with the laying-on of hands that the candidates may receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Before the laying-on of hands the whole congregation also prays for the candidates. In the third part the newly admitted members are welcomed into the fellowship of the Church. This C.S.I. Confirmation Service is deeply impressive and most of the congregations ask for it.

Evangelistic and Teaching Missions. Generally, organizations like the Evangelical Fellowship of India, Youth for Christ, Camps Farthest Out and the National Missionary Society of India offered the services of Evangelists. Occasionally our Presbyters wrote to me about some Evangelists and suggested that I might invite them. Sometimes the Evangelists themselves wrote to me direct. If the Evangelists were not known to me I made enquiries about them. Often they sent to me their books or some literature about their work. I studied them carefully to know something about the men and their teaching. Then I would suggest the parishes to which they could go.

I attended at least one meeting in each Mission held in Coimbatore. Sometimes it was possible to attend more than one. I always made it a point to have one or more personal talks with

the Evangelists over a cup of tea. They were men whom God had blessed wonderfully in their ministry. Many of them had world-wide contacts and it was stimulating to hear their first-hand accounts of the work of the Holy Spirit in different lands.

After the Missions I sought to stir the local leaders to do the follow-up work as faithfully as they could. I am afraid this was not often done effectively. I tried to keep in close touch with the outstanding converts.

Days of Prayer and Testimony. Our congregations were widely scattered and there were hundreds of them. It was not possible for me to visit all of them to find out how people had responded to the Evangelistic Missions, who had been converted and who had grown in their spiritual life. The Diocese was organised as four areas. I formed the habit of visiting the headquarters of each area from time to time and of inviting the Presbyters and the Lay Preachers to come for a Day of Prayer and Testimony. The response was always good. There were forty or fifty of them in each Fellowship Meeting. Some of them had to travel fifteen or twenty miles by bus or cycle. The laymen had to take leave from their school or office. Even those who did not fully believe in the value of such meetings came regularly. There was much rejoicing that God had helped them in their difficulties and blessed them in their family life as well as in their work in the school or in the office. Many of them were anxious to share this joy with others. If they had been defeated, they told us about their failures too.

We assembled at nine in the morning and went on until four in the afternoon with an interval for lunch. We began with an hour's Bible Study, which I always took. Then the meeting was thrown open for testimony and prayer. I suggested that no one should take more than five minutes. So there were always plenty of people who took part. Every now and then we spent time in praise for the blessings which God had given or in prayer for the outstanding needs which had been mentioned.

During the mid-day recess there was much informal conversation. These days of prayer and testimony were helpful to all of us.

Pastoral Letters and Sermons. Many prayer groups were started in the Diocese and it was necessary to provide them with

subjects for praise and prayer. It is no use saying to people 'Pray, pray, pray'. We must give them constant guidance about the things for which they should pray and the spirit in which they should pray. If fires are to be kept burning, they must be continually replenished with fuel. I began to write in English a series of pastoral letters and sermons and to distribute them among all the Presbyters and Lay Preachers. They were also printed in Tamil in the *Coimbatore Diocesan Magazine* and reached several hundred people.

In my sermons I frequently told the people about what was happening in different parts of the Diocese under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the marvellous things we saw with our own eyes and heard with our own ears. Once I was taken to task for not preaching theological sermons. The greater part of the Bible, we need to remember, is not abstract theology but narratives of God's dealings with men and nations.

All my life I had been writing books. I had written them with infinite toil, correcting and rewriting again and agais. I now longed as a Bishop to offer up to Christ any special skill in literary work I may have acquired through all those years of hard work. The human voice from our pulpits reaches only a few hundred people and what is said cannot be studied with care and at leisure in the home.

So I was led to spend much time writing pastoral letters and sermons. However busy I was, I felt I had to find the time to write them, even though they demanded much minute and painstaking effort and cost me many precious hours. I often wondered who read this literature which I was putting forth. The leaders of the prayer groups told me that they prayed for the topics mentioned in my letters; that made all my trouble worthwhile. I also received some requests from outside the Diocese asking for this literature. This was an essential part of my ministry.

Pastorate Committees. A good deal of my time was spent in dealing with Pastorate Committees. We decided in the Joint Committee that there would be room in the Church of South India for the episcopal, the presbyterian and the congregational elements. I should like to explain here how the presbyterian and the congregational elements made themselves felt in the Church. This was particularly evident in the procedure we followed in the posting of Presbyters to the various churches. In former days

Bishops in the Anglican Church in India transferred their clergy using their best judgment. They did not have to consult any committees. But in the Church of South India when a Presbyter is sent to a church, its Pastorate Committee must be consulted and it must be allowed to express its judgment about the proposed stationing. We could not consult the congregations as they were large and unwieldy. So we dealt with the Pastorate Committees which were elected once in two years by the congregations.

Every year a few Presbyters retired, died or left the Diocese. Some Presbyters went for further study. Some Presbyters asked for transfer for the sake of their children's education. Some Presbyters quarrelled with their congregations or their congregations quarrelled with them and they had to be sent to other churches. In the month of February the Bishop and the officials of the Diocese met and drew up a tentative list of transfers which was sent to all the Presbyters and churches concerned. This gave rise to a flood of letters, telegrams, petitions and interviews. Often two or three churches would ask for the same man; he could not go to all of them! If a man was known to be slack or quarrelsome, no church would have him. The Presbyter himself had his own wishes and sometimes he sought to influence the concerned committees.

The Bishop had the difficult task of helping his Presbyters to the best of his ability. He had also to satisfy the Pastorate Committees. These were not easy things to do. Much precious time was spent in persuading Presbyters and Pastorate Committees to accept the proposed arrangements. The Bishop needed considerable tact, patience and love to deal with the awkward situations which often arose.

The Ministerial Committee of the Diocese then met, considered all the proposed transfers and the comments of the churches and made its final recommendations to me. I then passed the orders of transfer, which took effect in May. The months from February to May were a particularly difficult time for the Bishop. They gave him many headaches.

Missionaries. 'Why do we want Missionaries in this Diocese? We can certainly get along without them.' Extremist nationals said this to me every now and then. Responsible Government officials also said the same to me: 'Can you not get Indians to do

this work? Why do you want men from Europe? You should train your own people and give them positions of responsibility.' On this ground the Government refused to permit a Swiss Missionary who was working in the Diocese to return to his station after furlough.

There were twenty Europeans on the staff of the Diocese, including the chaplains of the English-speaking churches. They had their failings, like all of us. At one time they had held positions of responsibility. There were five District Missionaries at Ootacamund, Ketti, Coimbatore, Erode and Salem. One of them was a C.M.S. Missionary. Another was a Methodist Missionary. The others were Missionaries of the London Mission. Each District Missionary was in control of the work in his area. He worked in consultation with local committees. He was on the spot. He was in close contact with all the workers in the area—ministers, evangelists and teachers. He paid them their salaries, met them often, visited their churches and schools and checked their work. The appointment of an Indian Bishop meant that the major responsibilities of the five District Missionaries were transferred to him and the Diocesan Committees. The powers of the District Missionaries were greatly curtailed. They were now called District Workers. One of them said to me frankly: 'I find it difficult to take a second place. But I shall learn in time!'

There were sometimes quarrels among the Missionaries or between the Missionaries and the Indian workers. In spite of such problems the Missionaries did excellent work. They were as a rule faithful, conscientious and hard-working. They were loyal to the Diocese and sought to abide by its rules. Most of them were filled with evangelistic zeal. They were better educated than the Indian workers. They kept careful accounts of the large sums of money which were entrusted to them, while some of our Indian leaders were lacking in integrity. They brought to us the lessons which they had learnt in the Older Churches of the West. Their presence in our midst was a continual reminder of the fact that we were all members of a World Church. I was convinced that there would be a great loss to the Diocese if for any reason their services were withdrawn. There would be an immense gap which it would be most difficult to fill. I pointed this out again and again to our extreme nationalists as well as to government authorities.

Problems of Co-operation. The criticism was sometimes made that many of our guest preachers belonged to other Churches. Was it wise to invite them? The doctrinal position of the Church of South India is very clearly set out in our Constitution. The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed are fully accepted in the Church of South India and are regularly used in our Services of worship. We always made it clear that the friends who came to help us from distant lands, often from unexpected quarters, should respect the teaching of the Church of South India. There are some points on which they may believe and teach in their own churches differently from us. But when speaking to our people they should not refer to these controversial doctrines.

Two guest preachers failed to abide by this rule. They taught that believer's baptism of adults by immersion alone is scriptural and valid and not infant baptism. They gave about a dozen of our people believer's baptism by immersion even though they had been baptised as infants. This roused considerable disturbance in the Diocese and we had to withdraw our permission to these men to work in the Diocese. In due course they left the Diocese. We had also to forbid those who had been baptised again to hold responsible positions in the Diocese or to impart any such teaching to our people.

One problem which gave us some anxiety was as to whether the people who were converted would leave the Church and set up as independent groups. In the first flush of their new enthusiasm, they saw a great deal in the Church which seemed entirely un-Christian. Some of the Evangelists who preached were also quite critical of the Church and its ministers. The converts tended to look up to the Evangelists as their spiritual guides rather than to their own Presbyters. No permanent groups were, however, set up in the Coimbatore Diocese, partly because a stream of Evangelists came to us and not just one or two to whom the people could have easily given their allegiance. Also our Missionaries and Pastors did everything they could to keep the converted people within the Church. When the Pastors and Christian workers throw themselves heart and soul into an evangelistic movement, there is little or no fear of schismatic groups being set up.

We tended to depend entirely on visiting Evangelists for appeals for commitment to Christ. It is true that effective appeals for

Christian commitment cannot be made by everyone. In our day and generation God is using Billy Graham mightily for such work. Certainly some at least of our Presbyters ought to develop any talents they may have for successful evangelism among nominal Christians and their ministry should be made continually available for that type of work.

Father-in-God. My contacts with the bulk of church people in the Diocese were quite slight. There were many thousands of them and I could not get to know them or help them. But I tried to keep in close touch with all the workers in the Diocese—Missionaries, Presbyters, Lay Preachers, candidates for the Ministry, the staff of the hospitals and the teachers in our elementary and high schools. I longed to be their Father-in-God. I endeavoured to understand their individual capacities and urged the relevant committees to give them spheres of work in which their special gifts would be most useful. When they wanted to see me I was always available. However busy I was, I laid aside my work to talk with the people who called on me, though occasionally they came at inconvenient times. I listened to whatever they had to say. It was not always possible to do what they wanted. But at least they felt that they had been given an opportunity to explain their views.

A Bishop in an Indian Diocese today has to spend much time seeking to establish peace and love between Presbyters and congregations, between heads of institutions and their staff, and among teachers. 'Blessed are the peace-makers for they shall be called the children of God.' I had to remind myself of this beatitude more often than of any other saying of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is amazing to see how much friction there is in the Church, which seeks to spread love and peace in the world. We have to forgive not once, not twice, not even seven times, but seventy times seven.

Difficult cases of discipline, particularly against our Presbyters, came up now and then. I was sometimes blamed for not being firm enough. On the recommendation of the concerned committees I took action against three Presbyters and two church workers and asked them to leave the Diocese. I also wrote to a Missionary Society to withdraw from the Diocese one of its Missionaries. All this was very painful to me.

26

WHAT IS PRAYER?

A wonderful spiritual awakening took place in the Coimbatore Diocese. Many people were fervent in prayer and some most unexpected things happened. We realized that God is infinite in His love and willing to bless abundantly those who pray.

There were many problems. Can we pray for worldly blessings or should we pray only for spiritual blessings? Saints have spoken of the need for a pure love of God in prayer. What does it mean? Is it possible for all of us to pray that type of prayer? Or is it possible only for saints? How does God help? In view of these and many other problems which I felt keenly, I devoted much time to the study and practice of prayer and taught that prayer to be full and rich must include all the five elements of Adoration, Confession, Petition, Intercession and Communion. Lacking in any of these, prayer is incomplete and fragmentary.

Adoration: The Psalmist sings: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits' (Psalm 103:1-2). Whenever I read these verses I am reminded of my aged father who was constantly reciting them in the last years of his life. He had the ailments and handicaps of old age. His diet was strictly limited and for many meals he was allowed only liquid food. He could not walk any great distance. He had the usual worries and anxieties of a family man—bereavements, illnesses, moral lapses in those for whom he was responsible, financial difficulties and so on. But he was convinced that God had been very good to him during the seventy-nine years of his life. God had blessed him in many ways and his lips were full of praise and thanksgiving.

That deeply religious teacher, Baron Von Hugel, taught us that Religion is Adoration. We need to consider whether this is true and in what sense. Not in the sense that Adoration alone is Religion. The prophet Isaiah said: 'Learn to do well; seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow' (Isaiah 1:17). The Lord Jesus taught us to love God with

all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind. He also taught us to love our neighbours as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-39). These two commandments are equally important. Religion is not only worship but also social action. The Prophets are as important as the Psalmists, in many ways even more important.

But there is a real sense in which Religion is Adoration. We need to dwell on God's glory, His might, His love, His mercy, particularly as shown on the Cross of Christ. The more we turn away from ourselves, the more we draw near to God, the deeper is our religion. In other words, Religion is Adoration. Religion is being aware of the reality of God, the majesty of God, the infinite love of God, man's entire dependence on God.

The conflict between the urge for adoration on the one hand and social action on the other often takes strange forms. One such conflict occurred in the life of Sundar Singh and the way he solved it was particularly significant. He had the gift of healing and on more than one occasion realised it. When he was in Colombo in 1918 he was asked to visit a hospital and pray for a boy who was ill. He knew the parents well, and went to the hospital. The boy was healed. This raised a serious problem in Sundar Singh's mind. Was he to make Spiritual Healing an integral part of his ministry as many Evangelists have done, as the Lord Jesus has done? Sundar Singh felt sure that his duty was not to practise this ministry. He was anxious to preach. He was prepared to spend hours in prayer and in contemplation, often passing into ecstasy and becoming oblivious of the world. Some may question whether he did wisely in not exercising his gift as a spiritual healer. It is not for us to judge. According to the guidance of the Holy Spirit each man should express his love for God and man.

Confession: H. A. Krishna Pillai was a learned Tamil Pandit who became a Christian in his thirtieth year after searching enquiry and keen mental struggle. He longed to write a substantial book of Tamil Christian poetry which coming generations would treasure, telling the story of Christ and giving an account of Salvation as it is described in the Bible. But when he came to sing about the Life of Christ, he found that he could devote only five hundred stanzas to it. He decided that all these stanzas should tell the story of the Holy Week fully. He, therefore, described the

happenings during that week with deep and moving piety and shared with his readers his gratitude to God for the wonderful manifestation on the Cross of His love for mankind.

This vision of Christ on the Cross moves the poet again and again to confess his sins.

O Lord of grace, immense like a mountain peak of goodness!
Do thou forgive my sins!
When my spirit leaves the body
Let me behold thy Divine face, radiant like the lotus,
Even on the cross on which thine enemies nailed thee.
And let my heart rejoice in thy sacred name.
Grant thou this boon to me, O Lord!

(*Rakshanya Yatrikam*, Vol. I, p. xxii. Tr. by A. J. Appasamy.)

Petition: In any normal human relationship there is both petition and communion. A boy goes to College and writes to his parents from time to time. He tells them about his friends, his games, the books he reads and of his ideals and aspirations. When there is need he also asks them for money. It is a very natural thing for him to do. In ordinary human relationships there is a sharing of all our interests and experiences. So in prayer. God is our Father. He cares for us supremely. We place before Him all our needs and anxieties and He helps us as He thinks best.

'Give us this day our daily bread.' This petition in our Lord's Prayer begs for God's gift to fulfil our physical needs. Sometimes I am tempted to ask whether I should pray for simple wants like food and clothes. The teaching of Jesus here is however quite clear.

Intercession: Intercession, we know, was a very important element in the prayer of Jesus. In the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of St John we have an intercessory prayer which Jesus offered. We find how earnestly He prayed for His own disciples and for others who came to Him through them. He told Simon that he would pray for Him so that he might not fall. Before the choice of His twelve disciples He spent a whole night in prayer. There is no doubt that there was an essential connection between that whole night of prayer and the momentous choice which took place on the following day. He probably not merely prayed for God's guidance so that He might choose the right

disciples but also that they might give clear and powerful witness in the coming days. Thus we know that intercession formed a very important part in the prayer-life of Jesus.

He said about Himself, 'For their sakes I sanctify myself'. He offered Himself up to God in order that He might be filled with God's love. In the Western Ghats, dams have been built at Papanasam and empty valleys are being filled with water; electricity is generated; with this electricity houses and streets are lit; machines are run; water is raised from wells and taken to fields; and many other useful purposes are fulfilled. The empty valleys are filled with water, not for their own sake but for the sake of others. In the same way we must seek the joy of God's Presence not for ourselves but for others.

Communion: In the Bible we read that Job is a devout man and receives many blessings from God. Satan contends that it is because of the worldly blessings which he receives that Job follows God. Take these blessings away from Job, Satan says, and he will cease to follow God. So these blessings are taken away. Then come numerous disasters and Job even curses the day of his birth, but finally he realizes that God must be worshipped for His own sake. We must love God not for any material gifts which He may give us and even if suffering and trouble are the consequences of such love (Job 42:1-6).

We should love God for Himself without any thought of receiving any gifts from Him. This is known as the pure love of God, that is, the love of God for Himself and apart from any thing He does for us. There are four important reasons why this pure love may be regarded as the highest expression of our love for God.

1. God is greater than any gift He gives. God gives us various gifts according to the stage of our spiritual development. If our spiritual life is of an elementary type we are apt to place before God only petitions for health, success in life, the welfare of our family and so forth. When we are in trouble we may ask God to help us. At that stage we may not even think of others and their needs. But as we advance in our spiritual life we pray for spiritual needs such as the forgiveness of sins, victory over sin and the capacity for spiritual helpfulness. Even these may centre a good deal around our personal lives. As we advance still further

in the spiritual life we begin to think of others and of the help which they need from God. In Intercession we plead that others may receive from God the light and the strength which He is so willing to give them. As we grow yet more in our spiritual life we do not think of any immediate needs either of ourselves or of others but we are moved by the pure love of God. We long to abide in Him because He is greater than any gift He can possibly give us.

Let us run our minds over the various gifts He can give. The gift of health—God is certainly greater than that. The gift of success in life—of course, He is far greater than any success He can grant us. Forgiveness of sins, victory over temptation, power to help others—compared with Him and His Presence and His Love, all these are small things indeed. He is willing to give us goodness and truth and beauty and love, but as He is Himself the Source of all these things, He is much greater than any gift He gives. We may prize highly the pearls which we take from the depths of the ocean. They shine with lustre. But they are only a few pearls and however lovely they are, they are limited in number. The ocean itself is full of pearls and it is impossible to exhaust its riches. The more we dive in the more pearls we bring out. Thus the ocean is greater than any pearls which we may bring out from its depths. God is greater than any gifts He gives us.

We arrange for a wedding and urge our near relations and friends to attend it. We look forward to their coming. We are quite pleased if they arrive and by their presence add to the joy of the occasion. If, on the other hand, they write to us and tell us that they are sending their gifts but are not coming themselves, we are quite disappointed. What we want is not their gifts but their presence. However costly the gifts may be, it is the presence of our friends and the relations whom we love, that we desire and not what they give.

2. Love itself is a priceless gem. We do not regard love as the highest thing in life because of what it can buy for us. We consider pure love as something of infinite value.

In our family we had a servant who was with us for over fifty years. He was completely devoted to my father. He went with my father wherever he travelled and looked after him with the

utmost faithfulness. We were sure that wherever my father was he was in good hands. If we happened to fall ill this faithful servant looked after us equally well and we knew that there would be nothing lacking. He continued in our service to the end of his life. He was paid a small salary every month, but the service which he rendered cannot be estimated in terms of money. I regard my contact with him as a great experience in my life. He was faithful and devoted, not so much for the money which he received from us but because loyalty was a real part of his nature. Such faithfulness shows that there is a genuine spark of goodness in man. One who loves God for Himself and not for anything He does has that spark.

3. If we love God only for what He does, we may cease to love Him if we think that He does not help us. Sometimes people say, 'Why should I go to Church when God does not answer my prayer? I asked for His help to get a job. I have not got it. Why should I worship Him?' This is a completely wrong attitude. We do not worship God because He enables us to pass an examination or because He gives us robust health, but because He is good and loving and righteous. What happens to us may appear good or bad; it may be success or failure, health or sickness. We cannot always understand why God deals with us in certain ways rather than in certain other ways. But we believe in His goodness and grace and we love Him with a pure love without reference to any particular blessings which He may or may not give us.

4. Living in God's presence does make an immense difference. Mountain air is bracing and builds up our bodies. Many people in India plan to spend their holidays on the hills so as to get stronger and healthier for their work on the plains during the other months of the year. The hill tribes are not aware of any invigorating effect of the mountain air. They are living there because their forefathers were living there. They do not know anything about the power of the mountain air which puts new energy into men.

Those who live in the Presence of God constantly without desiring to get anything from Him are likewise invigorated. They may not be aware of this, and yet they are different men. They are filled with love. They are truthful and good because they are in constant touch with the Source of truth and goodness. There is a beauty pervading their lives because they are in communion

with the Source of all beauty. If a man says he is living in the Presence of God and is untruthful, selfish, greedy, jealous or arrogant, we cannot believe that he is really living in the Presence of God.

All men seek the help of God in times of need. Even worldly people are stirred to pray when, for instance, a loved one is dying. Those who believe in God and in prayer are constantly led to place before Him their immediate needs and the needs of those with whom they are connected. This urge to get God's help is deeply rooted in all religious people. The deeper and stronger the religious experience of a devotee, the keener is his longing to place his wants before God. This is a very natural thing. All religious men and women can point to numerous occasions when they had received of God's goodness. The volume of answered prayer, which gradually increases in the case of each individual in the course of of time, lends strength to this belief. We are not merely influenced by the answers which we ourselves have received in our experience, but we take into account the vast amount of answered prayer which has accumulated in the experience of religious people all through the ages and in all nations. It is but reasonable that petition for our own needs and intercession for the needs of others should occupy an important place in our prayer life.

But prayer is not complete unless, besides petition and intercession, there is also communion. In addition to our confession of sin, our prayer for spiritual help, our intercession on behalf of others, we should also wait upon God, abiding in His Presence, dwelling on His goodness, gazing on His beauty. A great deal of our prayer is merely petition and intercession. While these are important, they are not the only prayer we should offer. They should certainly be supplemented and enriched by periods of waiting upon God and abiding in His love. Otherwise our prayer will be fragmentary and badly mutilated.

27

A RUSSIAN ORTHODOX MONK

Father Lazarus, a monk of the Russian Orthodox Church, Mr Allen Lovekin, a young man from America who was studying Theology in the United Theological College in Bangalore, the Rev. J. Nathaniel, one of our Presbyters, and his son Samuel had an elephant ride. The American student was keen to visit the hill tribes and also to ride on an elephant in order to see the herds of wild elephants and bison which are found on these hills.

In his parish leaflet Nathaniel wrote about a case of Divine Healing which took place at that time:

> After the elephant ride on 16th April 1958, I took Father Lazarus and Mr Lovekin to some of the Paniya, Kurumba, Kota and Chetty Settlements of hill tribes. When we entered a colony of Paniyas, a woman named Nanjee came out of her hut, tightly holding her head with both her hands and asking me to give her some medicine for her acute headache. She was unable to open her eyes and behaved like a mad woman. We had no tablets of any sort, nor could we give her any medical aid.
>
> Father Lazarus spoke to her about the Great Physician, the Lord Jesus Christ; after a short message, we made her kneel down; and all three laid our hands on her head; Father Lazarus prayed in English and his prayer was translated into Tamil. As we concluded the prayer, a miracle happened, and she was restored to normal health immediately.
>
> After this incident I met her more than half a dozen times; she has been telling about this miraculous cure to her relations and others. During a visit to this settlement, she said to me, 'Take me and change my name!' She and many of her relations say the simple prayer, 'Jesus, Save me'.

Father Lazarus was an Anglican Priest and had joined the Russian Orthodox Church, attracted no doubt by its wonderfully rich liturgy, its many solemn rites and its abundant devotional

literature. He had a small Ashram at Kotagiri. There were regular prayers in his Chapel every day, sometimes attended by a few worshippers. He lived a simple life, eating vegetarian food and seeking to serve the people by his prayers. His tall figure, clad in a white cassock, with his long brown beard and his head always covered with a white skull cap, was a familiar sight to the people of Kotagiri.

In May 1955, some time after he settled down at Kotagiri, he called on me when I was on holiday there. He was then fifty-three years of age. We began talking and I found that he was greatly interested in the biography of Sundar Singh which I was writing at that time.

'Would you like to read through the manuscript and make some suggestions?' I asked. He readily agreed.

He came to see me several times, walking six miles to and fro each time he came. He was an indefatigable walker. He worked through the manuscript carefully and I found his criticism and comments very useful. Later we met occasionally, exchanged books and had long talks.

Of a literary bent of mind, Father Lazarus spent the greater part of his time every day in translating Greek and Russian services of worship and devotional books into English. These were published in America for the use of the members of the Russian Orthodox Church who had taken refuge in that country. The rising generation cannot read these books in Russian or Greek and their translation into English is a necessity. Father Lazarus did this work with meticulous care.

Father Lazarus and I realized clearly how necessary it was to wait and pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We prepared a Service for use on the Day of Pentecost (which came a few days later), printed it both in English and in Tamil and sent it to all the churches in the Coimbatore Diocese. The prayers were taken largely from some beautiful Services used in the Greek Orthodox Church during the season of Pentecost. We reminded ourselves that in this Service we were using prayers which were said during Whitsuntide by millions of Orthodox Christians in different parts of the world.

This Service drawn up in Tamil for the Day of Pentecost was used in St George's Church, Wellington and the Rev. W. H.

Kuhrt of Madras preached an inspiring sermon. The Service was attended by Tamil Christians from various churches on the Nilgiris. Some of our C.S.I. Bishops and Presbyters asked for copies of this Service for use in their own Dioceses and Churches.

Father Lazarus translated into English *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* by St John Climacus of the late sixth and early seventh centuries. The English poet, T. S. Eliot, became interested in the manuscript and arranged for its publication in England by Faber and Faber. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* in Greek was treasured generation after generation by the Greek world, and its Russian translation by the neighbouring Slav people. I reviewed the book in the *International Review of Missions,* London (April 1962).

If St John Climacus were living at the present day, he would have made an excellent psychiatrist. He probed into the springs of human conduct with remarkable accuracy. *The Ladder of Divine Ascent* is named after the ladder which Jacob saw at Bethel. *The Ladder* has thirty rungs, like the thirty years spent by Jesus before He began His ministry. In simple words, continually illumined by telling illustrations, the author describes the thirty steps to the Vision of God. He is primarily an ethical teacher. He speaks of prayer and heaven on earth, but he devotes far more space to such subjects as detachment, poverty and meekness, all preliminary stages of importance in the spiritual path.

Father Lazarus was always very friendly with the members of the Church of South India. Some of our Presbyters in the Diocese invited him to preach in their crowded Services on such important occasions as Christmas, Good Friday and Easter. He gladly accepted their invitations and the people heard him attentively. He also read learned papers at meetings of our Presbyters and Lay Preachers. Our people went to him for prayer for the sick and reported instances of recovery. They also went to pray with him concerning their personal and family troubles.

Once he read to us a paper on Divine Healing, which showed how carefully he had studied the teaching of the Bible on this subject.

In 1963 Dr E. Stanley Jones established an Ecumenical Ashram at Sat Tal, near Naini Tal in Uttar Pradesh. He invited Father Lazarus to live at Sat Tal all the year round and to help him in running the Ashram. Father Lazarus accepted this invitation and moved from the Blue Mountains to the Himalayas. He has

some marked gifts—love of worship, habit of painstaking study, fluency as a writer and the ability to make friends with men of all types.

Father Lazarus has now published a new translation of the Book of Psalms, based on the Septuagint version used in the Orthodox Churches. He concludes his long introduction appropriately with a stirring panegyric on the Psalms by St Chrysostom, one of the early Orthodox Church Fathers.

> If we keep vigil in church, David comes first, last and central. If early in the morning we want songs and hymns, first, last and central is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of those who have fallen asleep, or if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last and central. O amazing wonder! All other men at night are overcome by sleep. David alone is active, and gathering the servants of God into seraphic bands, he turns earth into heaven, and converts men into angels.

28

THE TIRUPPATTUR ASHRAM

My first visit to the Tiruppattur Ashram was in 1925. Since then I have visited it several times, often spending a week and taking a Bible class daily for the doctors and the volunteers. After I became Bishop the Ashram brothers warmly invited me to live in the Ashram whenever I went to visit the churches in that area though there was no official connection between the Ashram and the Coimbatore Diocese.

It has been a great experience to visit the Ashram during the different stages of its growth, to see the new buildings going up, and to meet from time to time the workers in the Ashram.

The Tiruppattur Ashram was founded by Dr S. Jesudason and Dr E. F. Paton in 1921. It is the oldest Christian Ashram in India. It is also large and active. At present there are four permanent members in the Ashram, Dr E. Forrester Paton, Dr Raja Savarirayan, Mr Jaya David and Mr R. S. Victor. The first two are highly qualified doctors. Dr Jesudason died in 1969

after long and faithful service. Dr Paton who is 78 is no longer doing medical work. He is devoting himself to prayer, Bible study, personal counselling and evangelistic work among nominal Christians and non-Christians. Dr Raja Savarirayan is in charge of the Ashram Hospital. Mr Victor looks after the buildings and lands. Mr Jaya David is the Headmaster of the Elementary School. Volunteers come for one or more years and help in the hospital and in the school.

There is a well-equipped hospital with seventy beds, a House of Prayer, a Library, buildings for members of the Ashram to live in, and a large Guest House which is often used for Retreats and Conferences. Much of the food which is required for the Ashram is raised on its own Farm.

Until 1955 the Ashram stood definitely for four things:

1. *Devotion to Christ.* The members of the Ashram sought to follow Christ without identifying themselves with any one church or denomination. They committed their lives to Christ and were anxious to serve Him as faithfully as they could.

2. *Community Life.* They lived as a community. They did not receive any monthly salary but only their food and clothes and their immediate requirements such as soap, razor blades, postage stamps and so on. They were celibates. The members put into a common fund whatever private property they had.

3. *Service to the Sick and Poor.* The Ashram was built at Tirupattur because it was a rural area and there were thousands of people in the villages nearby who needed medical and economic help.

4. *Indian Ways of Christian Worship.* The Ashram has built a place of prayer modelled on the temples of South India with their towers. The worship takes place in the central hall with a flat roof of stone resting on beautifully carved stone pillars and open on three sides. The garden with its roses and crotons all round the House of Prayer is very lovely. Two cisterns in front provide water for those who would like to wash their feet before entering the place of worship. A massive stone wall, encloses the hall and the garden and gives seclusion to the worshippers. Many lyrics have been composed by Dr S. Jesudason and they are sung beautifully to the accompaniment of Indian musical instruments.

Every day the members of the Ashram meet outside the chapel on a circular platform at the time of sunset and spend an hour in silent worship, praise and intercession. This is in accordance with the Indian practice of *Sandhya*, a prayer offered to God twice daily by Brahmans at the time of sunrise and sunset asking for spiritual light to illumine the soul.

In 1955 Dr E. F. Forrester Paton attended a Billy Graham Campaign in Glasgow. He worked as an adviser in the Counselling Room. All the people in the Prayer Room went on praying until Dr Graham began his address, which was relayed to them. When the address was over and the enquirers came into the Counselling Room, they gave them spiritual counsel.

Dr Paton came to develop certain new convictions at that time. There were millions of nominal Christians in the older Churches of the West. What about the Indian Church? In India also there are millions of nominal Christians. India can be won for Christ only when every nominal Christian is converted and becomes an evangelist. A vast country like India cannot be led to Christ unless this takes place.

In his sixty-third year Dr Paton left the Ashram for some time and began working in close association with the Laymen's Evangelical Fellowship in Madras; Mr N. Daniel is its leader. The continuous life of prayer which the members of the team led, their faithful study of the Bible, their ceaseless work for the spiritual awakening of the Indian Church—all these greatly attracted Dr Paton. He felt that he could learn much from them. So he lived with them for two and a half years, helped them in the various revival meetings which they held in the Tamil and Telugu countries and profited much from his close contact with them.

While there has always been much prayer in the Hospital, now difficult cases are treated with special prayer. Every Wednesday some of the patients who need such help are brought to the Consulting Room and earnest prayer is offered to God for their healing.

Very often people want to become Christians from unworthy motives. They desire education for their children. They need

economic help. So the Ashram did not encourage baptism without a long period of testing.

The brothers in the Ashram were held in very great respect and affection by the local people who knew that they were doing incessant and selfless work as *Sannyasis* among the poor. Many Hindus and some Muslims attended regularly Christian worship in the Ashram chapel. The members of the Ashram have now come to the conclusion that it is not enough if people hear the Gospel and even come to Christian worship. They must commit themselves definitely to Him, join His Church whatever its weaknesses and be helped by its Christian fellowship to grow in the spiritual life. So today baptisms are given by the Presbyters of the Coimbatore Diocese who work in close association with the lay brothers in the Ashram.

In recent years special efforts have been made by the Presbyters of the National Missionary Society and the Ashram brothers to carry the Gospel to some of the seventy unevangelised villages on the Jawadi Hills. Three new evangelists have also been appointed by the N.M.S.

Lectures for educated Hindus were being arranged at Tiruppattur from time to time. Interested Hindus who would not be reached by open air preaching attended these lectures. Some of the friends at Tiruppattur asked me to give a lecture on 'Sundar Singh as a Christian Mystic'. This subject is dear to my heart. I spoke about his deeper experiences in prayer and his visions of Christ and showed how his ecstasies led to active evangelistic work even at the peril of persecution and imprisonment.

God has His wonderful plans for His Church. Today the Holy Spirit is working in many lands to bring men and women closer to God and Christ. It is very significant that the Tirupattur Ashram, which has done excellent work in the past, is now being summoned by God to carry new burdens and to enter into new fields of service.

29

CHRISTIAN JOURNALISM

The Hindu is an English paper published daily from Madras. It has over one hundred and fifty thousand subscribers which, for a country where English is not the mother tongue of the people, is very good circulation. The paper takes a good deal of trouble to provide careful reviews of new books every Sunday. Books on Hinduism are sent to Hindu scholars, books on Islam to Muslim scholars and books on Christianity to Christian reviewers. From the year 1930 to the present day the Editor has been sending books to me for review.

Looking through my files I find that the books sent to me were of various types and of unequal value. I think readers of this book will be interested in a line of thought which I sometimes followed in the reviews. While taking root in different countries Christianity has been influenced by the distinctive genius of different nations.

My house 'Prospect' at Kodaikanal, in which some of these reviews were written, commands a beautiful view. There are long stretches of plains with green fields, avenues of trees, meandering streams and large sheets of water. In the distance are ranges of blue hills. Over this vision of beauty masses of clouds are often found floating. Early in the morning the sun covers the whole region with a mantle of glorious light. This lovely view is always more or less the same but people are attracted by different aspects of it. To some the main charm lies in the blue hills lying in the distance; to others the plains with their signs of human industry are the great attraction, and to others the masses of clouds drifting lazily along are of particular interest; there are yet others who are drawn by the play of light and shade as the sun or the moon throws its radiance on the landscape. While the Christian Gospel is the same to every one, different people are attracted by different parts of it. The Anglo-Saxon mind develops its practical aspects, the German mind its philosophical side and so on.

In Archbishop William Temple we see how Christ shaped the life and work of an Englishman. My memory goes back to

the year 1921 when he gave a course of lectures in Glasgow to students. It was a joy to hear those lectures. There was a great deal of calm and persuasive reasoning in them and one felt that one was listening to the sincere and genuine approach of an alert, well-read and thoughtful man to the fundamental problems of the Christian faith.

The range of Temple's interests was wide and far-reaching. He was a keen theologian and wrote several valuable books. He was an ardent advocate of the application of the Gospel message to social problems and took an active interest in the education of working people. He was one of the acknowledged leaders in the movement for Church Union. He kept in constant touch with the problems of missionary work abroad. His influence reached far beyond the Church of England.

The central thesis of his book *Christian Faith and Life*, which I reviewed for *The Hindu*, was that companionship with Christ is the prime business of life. It is not the duty merely of religious people. Everyone who wants to do his job well must seek this fellowship with Christ. As he put it well:

> Our characters are shaped by our companions and by the objects to which we give most of our thoughts and with which we fill our imaginations. We cannot always be thinking even about Christ, but we can refuse to dwell on any thoughts which are out of tune with Him. We can, above all, quite deliberately turn our minds towards Him when those thoughts come in. You will find it is not possible for a vivid memory of Jesus Christ and an unclean thought or a mean and treacherous desire to be in your mind at the same time. It cannot happen. What we have to drill ourselves in—it means drill—is quite constantly to bring our minds, thoughts, desires, hopes, plans, and ambitions back to the touch-stone; will they stand without discord in His presence?

In the life and writings of Dr Albert Schweitzer we see a German genius coming under the sway of Christ. Early in life he made a mark for himself as a bold theologian by his book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. He was a gifted musician and when he gave recitals on an organ large crowds of people flocked to

hear him. But the call to serve as a doctor in Africa came to him. He read about the miseries of the people of Africa. He felt that men in Europe who had profited much by the advance of Medical Science and knew a great deal about disease and pain and discovered innumerable means of dealing with them had a duty to live in Africa and relieve the suffering of the people there. In response to this call he entered a medical college and studied medicine. From the year 1913 to the end of his long life he laboured as a doctor on the edge of a primeval forest. He recorded his experiences and ideas in his autobiographies, which I had the good fortune to review. While serving the people of Africa as a doctor he also found time to write two profound volumes on the Philosophy of Civilization. He had many gifts—skill in music, courage as a speculative theologian, a deeply philosophical mind, boundless compassion for all living beings, unwearied industry; all these gifts he offered up to Christ who blessed them abundantly.

When Berdyaev passed away in 1948 *The Times* said that he had been one of the greatest philosophers and prophets of our time. This is high praise indeed. Born in 1874 near Kiev in Russia of well-to-do parents, at an early age, when he was about thirteen, he had a sudden transformation and began to take a deep interest in philosophy. At 17 he passed an examination in Mill's *Logic* and Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. His father was a cultured man and a free thinker. His mother was of French origin and a devout Roman Catholic. The boy was left a good deal to himself, the only other child in the family being a brother who had been born fifteen years earlier. While the life of other young men was full of gaiety and laughter Berdyaev lived a serious, reserved life. He had close contacts with a trade union organisation. He came under the spell of Marxism like many other Russian intellectuals of his day. He had strong political and economic convictions and took part in many heated and learned discussions, in public and in private. In fact all through his life he was in contact with many fertile minds and had prolonged debates with them on philosophical and religious subjects. When the Russian revolution broke out in 1917 he saw that some of the old crimes of the Russian rule crept into the country under new names. In place of the old Czars there were new dictators exercising power ruthlessly over the life of people. Berdyaev was an

idealist. He stood for freedom and the dignity of man. He spoke boldly against the Communist rulers in Russia.

After severe warnings he was banished from Russia in 1922. He spent the rest of his life first in Berlin and then in Paris, lecturing and writing for twenty-five years on a wide range of subjects, philosophical, religious, economic and political. He was no armchair philosopher. He had seen for himself the evils of Communism in Russia. He had spoken forcefully against them while he was in Russia, unafraid of the consequences. Now as an exile he was able to take an unbiassed view of things. He had many followers and exerted much influence. His great contribution to mankind was his clear and emphatic advocacy of the higher and nobler values of the new social forces at work.

He moved far from his early devotion to Marxism and became a loyal member of the Russian Orthodox Church. He felt sure that that Church had a real service to render to the Christian world, both Catholic and Protestant. He gave people a new idea of the Christian Church in its true dimensions.

In him we see a Russian mind surrendering itself to the power of Christ.

The story of Kagawa's life reads like a romance. He has been described as one of the leading figures in the Japanese Christian world and probably in all Japan. He made his mark upon the life of Japan as labour leader, economist, novelist and evangelist. His remarkable intellectual and spiritual achievements may be briefly recounted here. Born in 1888, his father died early, and he was brought up by an uncle. He joined a Bible Class with a view to learn English, and became a Christian. While studying theology he had an attack of tuberculosis and had to go to a fishing village near the sea to get well. While living there, he came into close and intimate contact with the poor and developed a desire to work for them in the slums. He began this work in Shinkawa and found innumerable opportunities to love and suffer. He shared with the poor all that he had, even his food and clothes. Every evening he preached the Gospel message. His work grew and he started a dispensary. He taught children from 5 to 7 in the morning and from 7 to 8 at night. But feeling that any social work he might do like this would only be remedial, he began to plan for dealing in a large way with economic and social questions. In order to fit himself for this larger life of use-

fulness he spent a period of study at the University of Princeton in America. Soon after his return he began organising workers into unions and in 1921 was put in prison as he helped the dockers in a strike.

In 1923 Tokyo was ravaged by earthquake and fire. The Government, which before had imprisoned him, now entrusted him with relief work. From 1923-27 he worked hard at this relief work.

He worked for universal suffrage and for organising the proletariat as a political party. He went to Europe and studied the organisation of Socialist parties there. In February 1928 he went on an election campaign in Japan in favour of six Christian candidates.

In 1926, after long private meditation, he disclosed the plan for an evangelistic campaign for a million souls. His purpose was to devote half his time to evangelistic work for three years, leaving the other half free for writing and social service.

Kagawa combined service with prayer in a remarkable way. All these innumerable activities arose from his deep religious experience as a Christian. He was a mystic who lived in close communion with God and translated into every-day life the depth and passion of his love for God and man.

Lakshmibai Tilak's vivid and interesting autobiography was sent to me for review. The hero of that book is her husband, Narayan Vaman Tilak. He was born in the year 1861 in the Maratha country, of strictly orthodox Brahman parents. He was a deeply religious man and studied with great care the religions of India. He was not satisfied with any of them and wanted to found a new religion. When travelling by train a missionary gave him a copy of the New Testament which immediately gripped his attention. After much study and prayer he was baptised as a Christian in 1895. His wife refused to join the Christian Church, but due to his continued persuasion she followed in her husband's footsteps after five years of separation.

His greatest contribution to the life of India, which he loved passionately, was made through his poetry. He composed many Christian lyrics and poems which are widely sung today in the Maratha country. Towards the latter part of his life he was very anxious to write a classical Life of Christ and so began the

Christayana. He was able to compose only the first three chapters of this book. He died in 1919.

Tilak completely humbled himself before God. Here is a poem which shows his intense longing for Christ:

The more I attain to Thee, so much the more do I desire thee.
Such is the state of my heart, O Lord.
I have seen Thee with mine eyes,
Yet still my eyes hunger for Thee.
I have embraced Thee, and should now unclasp my hands,
Yet still I long again to hold Thee fast.
Thou dwellest in my heart,
Yet still my soul burns with wild desire for Thee
The Servant says—Ah! dearest Lord Jesus Christ.
Tell me, what can I do?

We have here five men—Temple, Schweitzer, Berdyaev, Kagawa and Tilak. They are greatly endowed by God with intellectual and spiritual gifts. Life is far more appealing than theology. We need to see in such men the power of Christ working mightily, though in different ways according to their national genius.

30

INDIAN CULTURE AND THE CHURCH

Culture and National Integration

Early in my ministry (1942) the Oxford University Press, Bombay, invited me to write an article on the Cultural Problem and Christianity for a pamphlet they proposed to issue. Four other writers also wrote in it about their religions and their impact on the Cultural Problem. Dr S. Radhakrishnan wrote on Hinduism, Sir Abdul Qadir on Islam, Sir Rustom Masani on Zorastrianism and Sir Joghinder Singh on Sikhism. There were many points on which we differed but we all realized the importance of the problem and the need for dealing with it effectively. We proposed diverse solutions to the problem.

My suggestion was this. In India the different communities have developed their own cultures in close association with their

religions. Each of the religions has its own music, its own sculpture, its own poetry and its own architecture. There cannot be any fusion of these various cultures. Each religion stands distinctively for certain truths and they are expressed in its buildings, in its songs and in its dances. To separate them completely is neither possible nor desirable. But the different communities should live together and work together in peace. There must be one nation in India. There are many dangers threatening this great ideal of national unity. Communal differences are among the most dangerous menaces in the country. There are fanatics, both politicians and others, who may be interested in feeding the flames of communal prejudice and hatred, but all reasonable men would desire that there should be peace and harmony among the various peoples of India though we may believe and worship differently.

This is possible only by a readiness to appreciate all that is good and noble in the religion and culture of our neighbours, without in any way surrendering our faith in God. Possibilities of conflicts there are in many matters but we need rather to appreciate the best in each other.

Many years ago I saw a Tamil film called *Sakuntala*. It was a modern version of Kalidasa's famous Sanskrit play. The life of a Rishi in his forest hermitage, the devotion of his disciples to him, the prayers and meditations in which they were engaged daily, the many glimpses of nature in its beautiful aspects, the kindness and love which were shown to animals—in all these we saw Hinduism at its best. Against this characteristically Hindu background, the love story of Sakuntala and Dushyantha was acted. This ancient story was brought to life again by the consummate skill of a modern film-maker and large audiences of men and women, educated as well as illiterate, drawn from the different religions of India, saw the picture. I am sure they appreciated in different degrees some of the deepest truths of the play. Most of those people would never read Kalidasa's play in its original Sanskrit or even in a translation, but they were attracted by a modern film and assembled in large numbers to enjoy it. It was only one small way in which the different communities in India came together and appreciated, though in varying measure, the deepest and noblest truths for which India has stood through the centuries. There are innumerable other ways occurring almost

daily in which we can come together and live together in peace even though we may be followers of different religions and different cultures.

The Church and our Indian Heritage

What should be the attitude of the Church to Indian Culture? For many years this problem has exercised my mind. It is quite true that a great deal of our Indian culture is closely associated with Hinduism. Music has grown in intimate connection with worship. Some of my relations on my mother's side were engaged in singing devotional hymns in Hindu temples as their profession. One of them was a fine violinist. He played beautifully on the violin at my sister's wedding to a large and appreciative audience. The stories of India are closely connected with the doctrines of the Hindu religion. As children we eagerly asked for stories and some Hindu women servants in our house held our attention as they told them. The architecture of the country has developed in connection with the building of temples, particularly in South India.

Most missionaries are aware of this close association between the Hindu religion and Indian culture and have taught their converts not to take any interest in Indian culture. This has led to the unfortunate result that most of our Christians are very Western in their cultural outlook, more interested in Western music than in Eastern, more at home in English literature than in Tamil. India is an ancient country. Its music, literature and art have developed enormously in the course of the centuries and we, as Indians, have a vital share in this heritage.

Dr J. N. Farquhar gave us a clear lead in this matter. I got to know him well in my Oxford days as he was appointed by the University to direct my post-graduate study. I often called on him in his home and we had many talks together. With the strong backing of Dr John R. Mott, that far-sighted missionary statesman, Farqubar planned a series of books on the Heritage of India. They were published jointly by the National Council of Y.M.C.As in India and the Oxford University Press. Written by experts, they tell the young men of India what has been achieved in literature, music and art.

Kalachepams have been popular in India through the centuries. Great classics like *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata*

Purana have been taught to the people by professional singers chanting the poems with musical instruments and explaining their meaning. This kind of exposition goes on night after night for some hours daily. When the singer is an able and devout man, crowds would come and listen for weeks and sometimes for months together.

The Christian poet, H. A. Krishna Pillai, was well versed in the Tamil classics. He had a great ambition to write a Tamil Christian classic which would be read for generations. He spent fourteen years writing such a book. As a young Hindu he had read Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in Tamil translation. He had been greatly attracted by it. This interest steadily increased after his baptism. He found in Bunyan's immortal allegory a reflection of his own struggles and experiences—the deep conviction of his sin and utter unworthiness, the profound meaning of the Cross of Christ and the wonderful joy which filled him when he committed his life wholly to Christ.

When, therefore, he began to write a Christian classic in Tamil, *Rakshanya Yatrikam*, he used the story of *Pilgrim's Progress* as the setting for communicating to others his own profound understanding and experience of the Christian faith. Speaking to Miss Carmichael he said, 'I have poured my life into that book. My heart's deepest is in it'.

Rakshanya Yatrikam has now won a permanent place for itself in Tamil literature. Selections from it are included in the textbooks prescribed in the University of Madras for study in college classes. Serampore College has also made the study of the book compulsory for all students taking the B.D. and L.Th. courses.

I am convinced that not merely students in Arts and Theological Colleges but the rank and file of our Christian people should come to know its beauty and be helped by it spiritually. My father came to Christ through the personal work of H. A. Krishna Pillai. So his poetry was quite familiar in our home. My father constantly chanted his lyrics. The women in the family, who were well-trained in Indian music, would sing these and other Tamil lyrics, accompanying them beautifully on violins.

In 1955 we invited Mr P. S. Kadambavanam to give some addresses on *Rakshanya Yatrikam* to the Presbyters and Lay Preachers in the Coimbatore Diocese. This he did with his usual enthusiasm. In 1957 Vidwan D. G. Thangaraj, now Head

Master, C.S.I. High School, Nagapattinam, gave some learned lectures on *Rakshanya Yatrikam*. On my suggestion he also wrote a Tamil book about the life and writings of H. A. Krishna Pillai and had it published privately.

For four days, December 27 to 30, 1958, Vidwan Sathia Satchy, M.A., B.O.L., gave a course of *Kalachepams* in the Immanuel Church in Coimbatore on *Rakshanya Yatrikam,* which were greatly appreciated. He is now Tamil Lecturer in the Madras Christian College.

He began his series of *Kalachepams* two days after Christmas, when our people were still busy with Christmas festivities. The attendance on the first day was quite disappointing. Though the church was well-filled when the speaker began, dozens of people slowly left the church and there was a greatly diminished congregation at the end. This was partly due to the fact that many of the people who came to the meeting were already tired, having attended Christmas functions in the afternoon and evening.

It was also due to the fact that Krishna Pillai's poetry is indeed very difficult for ordinary Tamil Christians. Sixty-nine stanzas had been printed and were carefully explained in the addresses. They were a great help in following the learned discourses.

The most important reason for the smallness of the audience was the fact that, alas, a knowledge of Krishna Pillai's life and poetry is not being kept alive in the Tamil Church. Vedanayaga Sastriar's poetry is far simpler. Its influence is continued by his faithful descendants and by the many lyrics included in the lyric book used in churches.

Vidwan Sathia Satchy and his team were seated on a low platform facing the pews. He was clad in a white dhoti and kurta. His wife also was clad simply. They had lovely voices and sang reverently and devoutly. They were accompanied by two men, one of whom played on a violin and the other on a mruthangam. A mike carried their voice to the people standing in the church compound and on the road nearby.

There was an average attendance of one hundred and fifty people inside the church, listening attentively to the last three addresses and the music. I observed, also, that the small boys and girls who sat near the platform listened to him with absorbed attention. They knew now what to expect.

The most moving address was that in which the speaker expounded the sufferings of Jesus on the Cross. His body streaming with blood from the scourging, His head crowned with thorns, Jesus hung on the Cross enduring untold agony. It was during those moments that He cried to God, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' The poet H. A. Krishna Pillai well asks, 'Do we need any further evidence to show that Christ is indeed the Saviour of the world?' In explaining the meaning of such stanzas Vidwan Sathia Satchy showed how clearly he had understood the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

In the Immanuel Chusch, Coimbatore, numerous evangelistic addresses had been given and several people had been converted. Now also the message was the same, the significance of the Cross, but given with the characteristic beauty which Tamil poetry and music can impart to it.

Krishna Pillai grew steadily in his spiritual stature until his death in his seventy-third year. He had a passionate desire to see Jesus. This longing he expressed in many passages of deep feeling.

I invited R. P. Sethu Pillai, a Hindu professor in charge of Tamil studies in Madras University, to give four lectures in the Centenary Hall, Palayamkottai and expound the literary beauty of this great Christian poem.

After my retirement I had an opportunity to write a small book about Krishna Pillai. When Stephen Neill was Bishop in the Tirunelveli Diocese, he had been greatly attracted by the life and writings of Krishna Pillai. Neill is a scholar with a rare gift for the study of languages. After his return to England he edited the World Christian Books. One purpose of the series is to show how the Christian faith is understood and explained in different countries by men with different temperaments and backgrounds. He invited me to write a book about Krishna Pillai which was published in 1966 in London by the Lutterworth Press with the title *Tamil Christian Poet*. The many passages quoted in it show clearly that Krishna Pillai, though wholly dedicated to Christ, was able to enjoy the cultural treasure of his own language and literature.

Villupattu is a valuable indigenous pattern of preaching the Gospel. Dr V. Selvaraj, District Medical Officer, and his brother Mr A. S. Ratnam, Government Officer for Village Development, conducted some *Villupattu* performances in the Diocese. The

leader was in charge of a team of ten men and women all clad in simple Indian costume.

Villupattu is a Tamil word which means 'Song with a bow'. The leader sat on the floor in front of a large bow, to which were attached a number of small bells. The choir sat behind him in a group. He chanted from a carefully prepared manuscript and told the story of the Lord Jesus Christ in beautiful Tamil prose. His choir repeated together the important words of the story and sang in unison when its leading episodes were described. The leader played on the bow and rang the bells to maintain rhythm. Another man kept time with a mud pot. The *Villupattu* lasted for two hours and was listened to with close attention.

A. D. Thomas is an interesting example of how Christian artists are understanding and interpreting Indian art today. Thomas comes of a family which has been Christian for the last three generations. He is a devout member of the Church of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon. He received his training first in the Lucknow School of Art. Then he went to Shantiniketan in Bengal, where he came under the influence of Abanendranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose. Abanendranath belonged to the famous Tagore family and was an uncle of Rabindranath Tagore, the poet. Abanendranath was an eminent artist and one of the leaders in the Bengali School of Painting, in which the old ideals of Indian art took on new forms of grace and beauty to suit the modern taste. Nandalal Bose was another leader in the same school. The work of these two painters has exerted considerable influence not only in Bengal but all over India. A. D. Thomas has also spent much time in Italy studying the Old Masters with the keen eye and the alert spirit of the born artist. His picture of 'Christ of the Indian Road' is very popular and hangs in many Christian homes in India. His book entitled *The Life of Christ* was published in London by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. It contains a foreword in which Bishop Hubback, the Metropolitan of the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, gives an appreciation of the pictures of Thomas. An all-too-brief introduction explains the principles behind his art. Then follow a number of pictures of Christ, some in colour and others in black and white. The colours are all sober and restrained, as in the Bengali paintings. The pictures seeking to depict Christ in an Indian setting are very interesting, and all lovers of art who desire

to see how Christ appeals to a modern Indian artist with a rich and varied training and a deeply devotional spirit would do well to study them carefully.

I think we should recognize that there is a great deal in Indian culture which is quite unconnected with Hinduism and which the Indian Christian can use without any hesitation whatever. In an exhibition of Indian art in Government House, New Delhi, in 1948, I found, for instance, an excellent photograph of an Indus valley seal depicting a well-developed and spirited bull. This photograph, published by the Department of Archaeology in New Delhi, is very interesting as showing how extraordinarily ancient our civilization is. The seal is believed to have been produced between 3,200 and 2,500 B.C. It shows how in that far-off time an Indian artist with great skill portrayed a bull and brought out its energy and its strength. That such a striking and animated picture should have been drawn in India five thousand years ago is clear evidence that our civilization has its roots in the hoary past.

I also found in the exhibition two interesting photographs of sculptured figures which are seen in the Bhubanesvar Temple in Orissa. They both belonged to the eleventh century of our era. One is an excellent representation of a mother and child, and another of a woman writing letters. They are remarkable examples of vivid portraiture in sand-stone. The sculptor has chiselled out, with great dexterity, human figures which are at once life-like and graceful. Photographs of such figures would adorn any Christian home or school. No objection can be taken to them on the ground that they are mixed up with Hinduism. There are also many Mogul paintings which portray scenes from domestic life or from nature.

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BISHOP PAKENHAM-WALSH

On September 27, 1950, I was consecrated Bishop in Coimbatore. It was a strenuous day. There were three long services with many impressive and moving moments. Hundreds of greetings poured in. Certainly to me the most touching greeting during that memorable day was when Bishop Pakenham-Walsh, that veteran servant of the Cross, said to me, 'You are now *my* Bishop'. The presence of Bishop Pakenham-Walsh and Mrs Walsh so near us and their continual help in the Diocese was of very great value to us, though their Ashram had no official connection with the Diocese of Coimbatore.

When Bishop Pakenham-Walsh was the Principal of Bishop's College, there was among his students a small group of Orthodox Syrian Christian young men, who had been studying in the Union Christian College at Alwaye, and had been praying that God would remove the reproach from their Church of not having sent out missionaries to other parts of India or of the world, during the many centuries of its existence. One of those students was K. C. Verghese. In consultation with this group, the Bishop decided that, with the approval of the Bishops of the Orthodox Syrian Church, an Ashram outside Travancore and Cochin should be started as the first foreign mission field of their Church; that it should admit families as well as single men; that the Bishop should resign his post and go there with his wife, while a member of the Orthodox Syrian Church should be the Head. Though Walsh was approaching the retirement age of 65, his decision to leave the College and Calcutta earlier than he would normally have done caused much disappointment to his many friends. I was teaching in Bishop's College at that time and the news of his decision to resign from the College caused me considerable sorrow. But the Ashram ideal with its simplicity, its community life, its routine of manual labour, its regular hours of prayer and its many opportunities for service had always appealed to the Walshes. They left Bishop's College in 1935.

In due course the present site of the Tadagam Ashram was chosen; a gift of money from Walsh's grateful past and present

students of Bishop's College paid for the land. The Bishop's provident fund met the cost of the Chapel and of the simple buildings around it. K. C. Verghese was ordained and appointed Head of the Ashram in 1936. Dividends from the Bishop's investments and those of his wife, together with donations, enabled them to meet all current expenses.

Tadagam is in a very beautiful valley surrounded on three sides by hills, nine miles from Coimbatore, with a frequent bus service to and from the city. There is a number of large and small villages within a few miles' radius.

The Tadagam Ashram where Walsh ministered for nearly quarter of a century was his most distinctive service to the Church of Christ. Mrs Walsh proved a splendid partner and threw herself heart and soul into the life of the Ashram.

The members of the Ashram, about fifteen in number during Walsh's later years, had all things in common. None of them, while in the Ashram, possessed money; anything they received went into a common fund, from which all their needs were met.

They met in the Chapel in the early morning, at noon and after dark; their services in Tamil were those of the Orthodox Syrian Church, with the addition of the Psalms and Lessons for the day, the former in English, and the latter in Malayalam or Tamil. If any of their ordained brethren were present on Sunday or a great Festival, the Holy Qurbana (literally 'the Holy Gift', the Syrian name for Holy Communion) was celebrated. The Bishop celebrated the Holy Communion in English on two days in the week, and sometimes on Sundays.

They had a daily dispensary to which a lot of sick folk came; if the disease was serious, they persuaded the patient to go to the Coimbatore Government Hospital. One of their women workers was a trained midwife, and was greatly in demand at child-births throughout the valley. There was a small library. The men gave regular teaching, by request, in several villages, and took medical help where needed. They made friends with the High School boys at Tadagam, and organized them in social service, village sanitation, and adult literacy; especially in Bible studies, and in occasional camps. Quite a number of villagers, men and women, came along with their children to a Service of worship in the Chapel on Sunday.

Besides the celibate men, married couples joined the Ashram; at times children were also living in the Ashram. They had always three or more women who, though they did not take the Ashram promises, were most helpful in spiritual life and worked within the Ashram and among the Hindu women of the villages. The Ashram raised some garden produce for which they had paid workers, supplementing the work of the Ashram members. The cooking of food, sweeping and other necessary labour were done by Ashram members. As far as possible they followed Indian customs, such as sitting on mats for food and in the chapel.

The Bishop wrote in his Lent letter for 1954:

> The most extraordinary feature about our Ashram is that members of two ancient Churches, the Orthodox Syrian Church of Travancore and the Anglican Church (now the Church of South India), live and worship together, despite the fact that the former Church is so far not even on its way to be in communion with the latter. That members of these two Churches should live united together as members of Christ's one holy, catholic and apostolic Church, should worship together at their respective Holy Communion and Holy Qurbana services, and should accept the painful inhibition that they must not receive the sacred elements from the hands of the Bishops or Presbyters of the other Church is an order that we all obey, believing that when we are not allowed to receive sacramentally the Body and Blood of Christ, He is giving us spiritually His very Body and Blood and is thereby uniting us, though members of two separated Churches, in His own Body, the holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Besides his ministry of healing, which I have already described in the chapter on Divine Healing, Walsh was always ready to visit our churches for holding teaching missions and retreats. He was particularly good when he expounded the Apostles' Creed in a simple and popular way to large congregations. He was also ready to help in Holy Week Services and on Festival days when we needed his help. Apart from these activities of teaching, preaching and healing he spent much time writing out his lectures on Church History which he had given in Bishop's College. They were published by the S.P.C.K. in three volumes, with the title

Lights and Shades of Christendom. He wrote a little study book on Prayer for the Coimbatore Diocese which proved very useful. He was an indefatigable worker and continued to serve the Church to the end of his life.

I was told that he was ill. On December 19, 1968, I went to the Ashram and found him seated in the garden. The young men in the Ashram had carried him in a chair. The sun had gone down and it was beginning to get cool. He had a warm rug on.

To the left were the blue hills which gave beauty and fertility to the Tadagam Valley. He loved the hills and liked to spend the evening looking at them. In front of him was the vegetable garden of the Ashram and tomatoes were being plucked and put near his chair. The flower garden close by was in lovely bloom.

He seemed to be in normal health. He was quite cheerful, as usual. When I asked him how he felt, he said, with a smile, 'Oh, I am all right.'

The account which Mrs Walsh gave of him was not so good. She said that for some time he had given up his ministry of intercession for the sick. He had had sometimes as many as a thousand patients on his prayer list. He found this work too taxing and the letters asking for his prayers had now been forwarded to the Rev. C. F. Ash, Chaplain of the Cathedral in Bangalore. Mr Ash and a group of people in his church were meeting regularly to pray for the sick, whose names and needs had been sent to them.

We heard later that the Bishop was not able to take any food and that his strength was going down. On Friday, January 9th, the Rev. B. F. Tiliander of the Swedish Lutheran Church was calling on me. At that time a young man from the Ashram came and informed us that the Bishop was sinking. On one occasion the Bishop had prayed for Mr Tiliander in an Anointing Service which had been greatly blessed. Mr Tiliander was also anxious to see the Bishop and so we immediately left in his car for Tadagam.

It had already become dark. Bishop Walsh's friends were standing here and there on the verandah and in the garden talking in whispers. We were taken to see him. He was lying on the hard wooden cot on which he generally slept. His room was quite small, with a tiled roof, the walls only three or four feet high and the rest of the space covered with bamboo mats. He had

already begun to breathe hard, the painful breath of a dying man. He could not recognise us.

His faithful and loyal companion through the years, Mrs Walsh, sat on her hard wooden cot and kept watch. She was reading a deeply abstruse book on *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*. All their friends were standing near, ready to give him whatever help was necessary.

On the morning of the 10th I was informed that he had passed away and that the funeral would take place at Tadagam. The end had come on Friday, Jan. 9th, at 8.30 p.m. in his eighty-seventh year. The folk in the Ashram cycled long distances in the night and informed all his friends in Coimbatore about the Funeral Service.

The Bishop had expressed the wish that he might be buried according to the Anglican rite. The Ashram folk asked me to take the Service. The Funeral Service was arranged at mid-day on Saturday. Though this was a difficult hour for many people, there was a large congregation. Hundreds of people had come to Tadagam, travelling on bicycles, in buses or in cars. The Bishop was laid in the centre of the chapel in the simple robes of a C.S.I. Bishop. He was wearing a much used cotton cassock with the purple colour faded, a rochet and a saffron stole. His cot was covered with the many wreaths and garlands which his friends had brought.

The Bishop worked for Church Union all his life. In the Funeral Service representatives from many churches took part. The Rev. B. F. Tiliander read a Psalm. The Rev. Sena Rufus represented the London Mission and read another passage from Scripture. The Rev. T. T. Joseph of the Mar Thoma Church read some prayers. Representing the Church of South India, I took the Anglican Burial Service. Mr Ninan of the Orthodox Syrian Church paid a fine tribute to the Bishop. Bishop Mar Eusthathios, also of the Orthodox Syrian Church, gave the final blessing. It was quite long but was chanted devoutly and beautifully.

Bishop Pakenham-Walsh had expressed the desire that no coffin might be made for him. He had lived the simple life and he wanted to be buried simply. Immediately outside the chapel a grave was dug. A few rough planks were put in the sides of

the grave so that the body could rest in between. It was into this simplest of graves that the Bishop's remains were lowered.

The Rev. K. C. Verghese continues to be the Head of the Tadagam Ashram. All its property, including five hundred acres on the Attapadi Hills, is managed by a registered Trust. Bishop and Mrs Walsh have left their property to the Ashram.

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THE INFLUENCE OF SUNDAR SINGH

I often recall the eagerness with which I went to hear Sundar Singh preach in the cities of Europe in 1921 and 1922. Even the largest church used to be crowded and many had to leave for lack of room. I always tried to get a seat from where I could see the Sadhu well. He told us in simple words with many illustrations and parables how he lived daily for Christ and how ready he was to die for Him. A man of great humility, he had a deeply rooted faith in God. His long hours of contemplation gave him a wonderful serenity and an altogether other-worldly appearance. Indeed many thought he looked very much like Jesus, who had met him as He had met St Paul on the road to Damascus and who now had full control over his life.

For some reason there is no complete collection of his sermons though small editions of his sermons were published from time to time. His friends Friedrich Heiler and C. F. Andrews did contemplate preparing an anthology, but nothing was done. It would have been interesting to compare Sundar Singh the preacher with Sundar Singh the writer.

Sundar Singh wrote seven little books. They are:

1. *At the Master's Feet* (1922).
2. *Reality and Religion* (1923).
3. *The Search After Reality* (1924).
4. *The Spiritual Life* (1925).
5. *The Spiritual World* (1926).
6. *With and Without Christ* (1928).
7. *The Real Life* (Date of writing not known).

These books have been translated into forty languages and read by millions of people. They were out of print for many years. They have been published again and are now available from the Christian Literature Society, Madras. They contain the sum and substance of his teaching.

Sundar Singh taught that man is created for fellowship with God. This is the purpose of creation. Every one is called to enter into the joy of this fellowship, which is higher and nobler than every other joy in the world. One should not seek this fellowship selfishly. One should get others also to enter it. Such a life of bliss begins here and now and lasts all through eternity. Sundar Singh was emphatic in his belief that God in His infinite love is always offering to man the wonder and glory of such fellowship with Him. Only we in our folly, wilfulness and sin are constantly rejecting His offer. The writings of Sundar Singh are the outcome of the joy he personally experienced in Christ and the continuous endeavour he made to bring others into it.

An important point is brought out in his devotional books. Sundar Singh held that, not due to any goodness on his part but because of His supreme love, God revealed Himself again and again to His servant. He believed that in moments of ecstasy he learnt more about God than he would have done by years of study in a Theological College. In Geneva Sundar Singh was asked about his theological education. In answer to this question he said:

> When I spent hours at His Feet in prayer, then I found enlightenment, and God taught me so many things that I cannot express them even in my own language. Sit at the Master's Feet in prayer; it is the greatest Theological College in this world. We know *about* theology, but He is the source of theology itself. He explains in a few seconds a truth that has taken me years to understand. Whatever I have learnt has been learnt only at His Feet. Not only learning, but life, I have found at His Feet in prayer. (*Sundar Singh: A Biography,* p. 38).

The substance of these books came to him in hours of contemplation. There are many problems in human life. Sundar Singh was troubled about them, like all deeply religious people. It was during these hours of ecstasy (not by strenuous thought or hard study) that many of these difficulties were removed. The

reader of these books can come to his own conclusion as to whether God does clearly illumine in this way the hearts of men who obey Him and follow Him. We must judge Sundar Singh's ecstasies by the fruits of his life—his renunciation, his complete devotion to Christ and his eager, loving service of men.

Dr Friso Melzer, a former Basel Mission worker in India, has done a substantial service to the Christian Church by translating into German six of the devotional books of Sundar Singh and publishing them as a compact and well-bound omnibus volume. He has written an introduction to each book and provided scholarly notes on difficult points of Indian philosophy and religion. When I last heard in 1967, 10,500 copies of the omnibus volume had been sold. The publishers are Evang. Missions Verlag, Stuttgart, Germany.

One of my major interests has been to spread a knowledge of Sundar Singh's life and teaching as widely as possible. This work has absorbed much of my time and energy.

When I was Bishop and took a month's holiday at Kodaikanal in 1955 I wrote a little book on Sundar Singh to be published in World Christian Books. The number of Christians in the world who can read is steadily increasing and it is necessary to provide them with reading material. The basic texts are first published in England and then translated into various languages. The General Editor of the series was Bishop Stephen Neill at that time. He urged me from Geneva to write a book on Sundar Singh, pointing out that his teaching had great relevance for the present time with its tension and anxiety.

The book consisted of a long biographical introduction, followed by selections from the unpublished writings of Sundar Singh. It came out from the Lutterworth Press in London with the title *The Cross is Heaven*. In this book I tried to bring out a leading idea in the life and teaching of Sundar Singh—the idea that all suffering is bliss to the Christian who lives in fellowship with Christ. Up to the end of 1964, 11,205 copies were sold and the book was translated into four languages—Arabic, Chinese, Sinhalese and Tamil. It has now been translated into Gujarati also.

Dr Cecil Northcott, the Editor of the Lutterworth Press, London, had accepted the manuscript of my book *Sundar Singh: A Biography*, but found it too long and asked my permission to shorten it. I said, 'Yes, you may reduce its length but be sure to

show clearly that he was a man of prayer.' And he agreed. He was particularly careful to carry out this instruction.

The book was priced at thirty shillings a copy. Most people (certainly in India) cannot afford to buy a book at that price. The Lutterworth Press were not willing to print it again as they did not think there was sufficient demand for a second edition. After considerable correspondence and negotiations, an Indian edition was published by the C.L.S. at a much cheaper price in 1966.

In 1922 Dr Nathan Soderblom was the Archbishop of Uppsala. He was one of the ecumenical leaders of his generation. A man of wide scholarship, he had an alert mind and he realized that Sundar Singh had a genuine contribution to make to the World Church. Sundar Singh's was a distinctively Indian soul and it was good to see how it blossomed into new beauty under the touch of Christ. When he heard that Sundar Singh was visiting Sweden he invited him to come and stay with him for ten days in his palace. They had many intimate talks about spiritual problems. Soderblom felt that in *The Sadhu* Canon Streeter and I tried too much to assess him as a systematic theologian. It was the Archbishop's belief that this was a wrong method of estimating him. The right method would be to regard him as throwing out a number of valuable theological ideas without seeking to see how they cohered into a system. The Archbishop himself wrote a Swedish book entitled *Sundar Singhs Budskap*. This book has not yet been translated into English.

About 1961 the Mehr Licht Publishers (Hamburg, Germany) sent me some of their German books. As they publish books by Oral Roberts and William Branham I think they are Pentecostal publishers. They are doing much to spread the teaching of Sundar Singh. They have brought out a large edition of *The Sadhu* in German. This book went out of print some years ago and from time to time I receive enquiries as to where it is available. I am glad these publishers have now made it once more available. They have also published forty-eight thousand copies of *Visions of the Spiritual World*. This book has attracted much attention in English. The future life is a subject of perennial interest and many people have been eager to read what Sundar Singh has to say about it.

But I am not happy about their pamphlet on the Maharishi of Kailash. The cover is very attractive and shows the snow-clad Himalayas in all their glory. There has always been much interest among some people in the Maharishi of Kailash. At one time Sundar Singh did write at great length about him. He was deeply stirred by this man of God living in a cave on the Himalayas and spending all his time in prayer for others. The Maharishi claimed to be three hundred years old and Sundar Singh repeated this claim far and wide. His own integrity was called in question. People began asking 'Is there really a Maharishi? Or is Sundar Singh making it all up? Why is it that no one else has seen him?' In later years Sundar Singh was so troubled by these questions that he ceased to talk about the Maharishi and said, 'I have very great respect for him but my work in the world is to preach Christ, not the Maharishi'. This pamphlet closes with this saying of Sundar Singh but I wish it had not been printed as it raises in some peoples' minds fresh doubts about the integrity of Sundar Singh.

Queen Wilhelmina who ruled over Holland for many years was profoundly influenced by the life and teaching of Sundar Singh. She sent me a copy of her book *Lonely But Not Alone* (1960). On the first page she had written with her own hand in bold, clear letters: 'With Christian greetings from a member of Christ Universal Church, the author.' This book occupies an honoured place in my library. She has written in it at length about Sundar Singh. I should like to give here a brief extract:

> I bought everything written by him and about him. I read and re-read these writings for years. They included a biography by Mrs Parker, who emphasized that to us westerners obsessed by the materialistic spirit of the times, Sundar represented the supremacy of the spiritual. I was also struck by Sundar's idea that the Spirit of God awakes (within the limitation of our spirit—which is part of God's creation) the consciousness of His presence in man on earth. Whenever I read Sundar it seemed to me that Christ's own life became present to me, such was his intimacy with our Saviour and the desire to share his suffering. (p. 129).

In 1966 the Rev. R. H. S. Boyd, teaching at the Gujarat United School of Theology in Ahmedabad, was given a Ph.D. degree from Edinburgh University for his thesis on the developing Theology in the Indian Church. He has made a comprehensive survey of all that Indian theologians have written in recent years in the field of Theology. He says that Sundar Singh was not a theologian in the technical sense of the word. But he did have a remarkable spiritual insight and that is of very great importance to the Indian Church.

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr Michael Ramsey) attended the World Council of Churches Meeting in New Delhi in 1961. After that visit the Archbishop wrote to me:

> The books of yours which I know are first of all *The Sadhu* which I read when I was an undergraduate, and which made a deep impression upon me. I also read your book *The Cross is Heaven*. Unfortunately I have not read your larger biographical work and your letter is a summons to me to do so. I am sure that I shall enjoy it. My visit to India revived in me many thoughts which I had when I read your first book many years ago.

33

THE KUMARAPPA BROTHERS

Dr J. C. Kumarappa and Dr Bharatan Kumarappa played an important part in the national movement as close associates of Gandhiji. This story is well worth telling. They were my close relations and intimate friends from youth.

In October 1922 I spent ten days in Bombay as the guest of J.C. At that time he was a young man attached to a firm of chartered accountants. He was receiving a good salary but his ambition was to set up private practice and to earn Rs 5,000 a month. He had been well trained in England and America and his prospects were good. But he came under the spell of Gandhiji. They met and Gandhiji invited J.C. to give up his work in Bombay and to help him in his national service, particularly in the development of village industries.

Gandhiji had a clear vision for India. He had studied widely and thought deeply about many of the problems of India and had

his own constructive solutions for each problem. One important matter which engaged his attention was the development of cottage industries. There are 7,00,000 villages in India. People in these villages are extremely poor. They have to depend a good deal on the monsoons which fail some years. Even during the seasons they do not fail, for some months in the year the village people have no work to do as the crops are growing and are not ready for the harvest. Gandhiji's idea was that cottage industries should be developed on a large scale so as to give them remunerative occupation and sufficient food.

When I went to Wardha some years later, I spent a few days with J.C. He was now a completely altered man. His method of living had changed and his ambition now was to live on four annas (twenty-five naye paise) a day: to have only one or two extra sets of clothes which he himself could wash; to travel only in the third class, carrying his own simple luggage. Gandhiji appointed him Secretary of All India Village Industries Association with its headquarters near Wardha. Several students from many parts of India came there for study and practical experience. They lived in simple village surroundings and had plain but nourishing food. They spun for an hour or so every day. Industries such as paper-making, gur-making, oil-pressing, bee-keeping, fruit-growing and so on were taught and each student learned one or two industries. After finishing their course at Wardha they returned to their homes in different parts of the country and devoted themselves to developing the village industries on a very small salary.

J.C. asked his brother Bharatan in join him. Bharatan had studied Christian Theology in Hartford Theological Seminary, U.S.A. and was elected a Travelling Fellow for further study. He spent some years in Edinburgh University and London University studying Indian as well as European philosophy and took doctorates, from both universities. On his return to India he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in the Madras Christian College. But he declined to teach Christian Scripture in his classes as he felt that his views were not orthodox enough. These two brothers now lived a simple life in Wardha in village conditions. They gave lectures on rural economics and devoted the greater part of their time to answering enquiries from different parts of India about village industries.

During my visit to Wardha I expressed a desire to meet Gandhiji and J.C. agreed to take me to him. Gandhiji was living in a simple village hut with mud walls. It was cold weather and he was wrapped in a snow-white Khaddar sheet while at work. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who had joined the national movement, was looking after his personal needs with much devotion and care as his secretary.

I attended one of his prayer meetings. It was a *Bhajan* in adoration of Sri Rama, whom Gandhiji regarded as the incarnate God embodying the highest moral and spiritual values. The daily prayer meeting was an essential part of the national movement. Gandhiji and his fellow workers met together in prayer every day. He was very particular that this daily engagement should never be left out for lack of time. Such members of the public as were interested were allowed to join him in the prayer meetings. During this service of adoration we saw how much Gandhiji depended on God for strength, courage and light.

From the Kumarappa brothers I also heard about the close and intimate relationship which existed between Gandhiji and his followers. He was deeply interested in the personal problems of each one of them. It was amazing to hear how effective and wonderful Gandhiji's love was. Thousands of his followers willingly underwent imprisonment with their leader for their *Satyagraha* activities. J.C. and Bharatan went to prison on some occasions.

When the new Government was formed J.C. refused to accept any high office but continued to work as he had done before for the good of villagers. Bharatan, however, accepted the responsibility for editing all the writings of Gandhiji for publication in many volumes by the Government of India. Bharatan was the first Editor of this standard edition. He died early.

The Kumarappas gave us many glimpses of what was happening behind the scenes in the national movement. Gandhiji welcomed into his inner circle men of all religions,—Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. His fellowship with them was complete. He appreciated their work and considered it as invaluable.

Dr J. M. Kumarappa is another distinguished member of the Kumarappa family. He built up the Tata School of Social Science in Bombay and served it well for many years.

34

LIFE IN RETIREMENT

When the call to serve in Coimbatore came to me in 1950 we were at Palayamkottai. We had been there for thirteen years. I was the Archdeacon there. We were comfortably settled in our family house. My library was conveniently arranged for easy reference. Our three children had just finished college or were going through it. I was fifty-nine years of age. I knew that my term of service in the Coimbatore Diocese would not be long. But strangely enough the question of what would happen when I retired from service was never raised by me or by the family. We booked two railway wagons, packed in them all our furniture, every stick and every scrap of paper (so precious to a writer), and came to Coimbatore. I began touring the Diocese immediately and the family settled down.

During the eight and a half years of my service in Coimbatore, my daughter finished her training at the Christian Medical College, Vellore as doctor, married another doctor practising in the city and both of them warmly welcomed me and my wife to live with them after my retirement. The other two are working near Calcutta and in New Delhi; they come to Coimbatore whenever they get leave. I am convinced that we see clear evidence of a Father's loving care in all this. There was no argument as to where we should settle down and what we should do when we got there. The doors opened gently but effectively to a new period of activity. Nothing else but a kindly Providence could have given us such joy and such usefulness. We have come to realize that God will do the best for every one who fully trusts Him. St Paul says, 'All things work together for good to them that love God' (Romans 8:28). As God does His best for us we should do the best for Him and for others. I now plan only for a day at a time and even for that day I constantly ask, 'Am I doing my best for God as well as for others?'

Time is running fast. On what should I concentrate? In this house in which we are now settled, there are four large glass windows facing the East. Occasionally it is cloudy or there is

heavy dew but on normal days, after six in the morning, the eastern sky begins to glow with a lovely red tint and the sun slowly comes up filling the world with its glorious light. The sight of the rising sun stirs me to pray for guidance, for knowledge, for a clearer realization of God's presence in the world. For one who is keen to write, such illumination is quite necessary. A good deal of my time during these years of leisure is spent in praying that God might illumine my spirit; I shall then be able to help others to have a better understanding of Him and the wonderful way in which He directs the world. .

I have been writing for sixty years. My files contain many notes and outlines of projected books. It is a wonder they have survived my many transfers. These outlines have to be developed. A great deal has happened in the world during the past sixty years. One has to keep up-to-date. One has to know what is being thought and written today so that what one says may be of help. Many of the books which I have accumulated through the years have become out of date. New books have to be bought and they are so expensive. So many thousands of them are being published every year. I manage to read a few every month.

The arrival of the postman every day is a great event. The material he brings keeps us in touch with the wide world and its many problems. The papers and magazines are like so many windows through which we see the world. The picture is most distressing and painful. There are troubles in all parts of the world—political turmoil, economic crises, racial hatred, increase of crime, juvenile delinquency, lowering of moral standards, growing tendency to eat, drink and be happy today as tomorrow we die. What is the Christian Church doing in the midst of these conflicts? What are the other religions doing? I am particularly interested to follow with care some of the powerful efforts which are being made to meet these critical conditions. The vast evangelistic campaigns of Billy Graham and others calling for complete surrender to Christ as the beginning of a new life are certainly helping thousands of people. Our own experience in the Coimbatore Diocese on a small scale makes this clear to me. But there are also Christian leaders who strongly feel that the message which is given by Billy Graham and Evangelists like him does not apply to the whole man. Christianity, they say, must transform the

individual as well as the Society in which he lives and works. I would like to know what is being done to implement this ideal. Many leaders are at work re-shaping Christian thought so as to make it possible for men who believe in the scientific method to accept the truth of religion. The world has become much smaller than it was sixty years ago and our knowledge of other people, other religions and other cultures is becoming much clearer. Is it possible to have one world government, one world religion? What is the significance of the various religions of the world? What is the meaning of our Lord's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature, in the light of these new problems which have arisen?

When I began to write sixty years ago a number of us were very keen to re-think Christianity in India. Men like V. Chakkarai, P. Chenchiah, G. V. Job, Eddy Asirvatham, S. Jesudason, R. C. Das and others did a good deal of such thinking and writing. Besides publishing books we wrote constantly in *The Christian Patriot* and in *The Guardian*. As a young man I absorbed a good deal of their keenness to re-think Christianity. After retirement I found that there had been a loss of interest in the books we had written. There was great difficulty even in getting some of them. Did it mean that people didn't want to part with them? Two or three friends sent me their copies.

But now I see there is a revived interest in our efforts. On the initiative of Dr Russell Chandran of the United Theological College, Bangalore, plans are being made to reprint some of the important books which were published with this objective. We do not expect every reader to agree with us but we do expect him to do some serious thinking along this line. In Theological Colleges our young men are being fed on the theology produced in Basle, Zurich, Edinburgh, London or New York. The theologians who write it are great men. But the situation in which they write is quite different from the situation in India. We need to face the problems and difficulties of people here in India. In view of this revived interest in re-thinking Christianity my duty is to go on writing with this objective, remembering also the difficulties of the modern man.

As the years pass by I find that many of my friends are slowly passing away. How many of them have already left us! It seems

impossible to fill the gaps and yet other people are coming, some of them with a better outlook, some of them with greater energy.

I said the other day to my grand-daughter Sita, one of our five grand-children, 'You are a lucky girl, you have a holiday today'. She said, 'Why am I lucky? You are on holiday all the time. You don't have to go to school or office.' In spite of what she said, my wife and I are always glad when we get the opportunity to go away to Kodaikanal every year for two or three months. There is a complete change of occupation, with new faces and new interests, in pleasant climate. I have been going there now for nearly seventy years during the hot weather except at the times when I have gone to other hill stations in India or to other countries. The beauty of the mountains is my food and drink. The Psalmist wrote: 'I will lift up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven on earth' (Psalm 121:1-2). These were favourite verses with my father and he often feasted his eyes on the lovely mountains in the spirit of the Psalmist. The floating clouds, the tall eucalyptus trees, the many plants with lovely roses or dahlias in bloom, the fruit trees, all these take up a good deal of our time when we are there. Friends spend more time with us when they too have their holidays. Christian workers, particularly missionaries, from many parts of India, come there every year and so I get personal information as to what is happening in the different mission fields. It is good to be in close touch with men and women who are actively engaged in the work of the Church and who are seeking to witness to God's love and power during the difficult conditions of today.

35

VISIONS OF HEAVEN

On Sunday, 11th June 1967 I was preparing to go to Church when I felt unwell. I was asked by my doctor (Dr K. N. Panicker) to remain in bed. For some days I was terribly weak, unable to take normal food, unable to sleep properly, undergoing intensive medical treatment. The doctor diagnosed the trouble as connected with my liver and treated me accordingly.

During those days and nights of my illness I heard lovely music. In this neighbourhood there are three churches and perhaps, I thought, people were singing in them. Or perhaps there were singing parties in nearby homes. But it was not for a few hours only, as in a church service or a sacred concert, but it was prolonged and continuous. I could not see the singers, or the instruments on which they were playing. Only the music was heard, and it was delightful, enchanting, celestial, sweeter than any music on earth.

It was eight years since I retired. During those years I had had much time for study, meditation and prayer. In his infinite goodness God was giving me plenty of notice to get ready. My mind turned again and again to problems of the future life. Will there be a future life? Will there be opportunities in it for spiritual growth and loving service or will there be what can only be described as the peace of the grave? We often speak of both these things together. Everlasting rest or eternal growth—what is it going to be? Shall we see God face to face? Shall we recognize our relatives and friends in the multitude of immortal spirits or will there be no possibility of coming into personal contact with them?

We know that if our children are to learn geography it is not enough to teach them in the class-room about different places with maps, atlases, globes, pictures and books. Children should be taken on excursions to places of historical importance or natural beauty in the neighbourhood. They must see for themselves such places so that their knowledge becomes vivid and clear. God was now taking me on excursions to the heavenly regions.

In the visions which I saw during those days, life in heaven had three clear marks—love, peace and joy.

I did not see God there even as I have not seen Him on earth. 'God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24). The eternal God is not visible in heaven but the workings of His mind, the signs of His love, the evidence of His power are far more clear there than in this world. We know He is there from His dynamic activity. Where God is, there is love. Where God is, there is peace. Where God is, there is joy. In this world God's love, peace and joy are often sadly missing. In a family where they may be expected to flourish they are frequently absent and disunity and friction prevail. Even in the Church discord and quarrels are rampant. But this is not so in heaven.

I saw multitudes of human beings, clad in Indian garments. As in any crowd, people were coming and going, busy on their errands. But there was a pure atmosphere of love and peace. In ordinary crowds there are misunderstandings, conflicts, passion and strife but in heaven there is activity but not strife, service but not conflict. The serenity of God dwells in the midst of activity. The chimes which peal from time to time (and which I heard clearly) add to the joy of heaven, which has always a festive air.

The Bible teaches us that wherever there is God there are love, peace and joy. In the First Epistle of John we read 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him' (1 John 4:16). In his Epistle to the Philippians, St Paul writes: 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus' (Philippians 4:7). This is a blessing for which the Church often prays in its Services of worship. Our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man travelling into a far country who called his servants and entrusted them with His goods. To one he gave five talents, to another he gave two and yet to another one; to each one according to his ability. The man who received the five talents traded with them carefully and intellingently and increased them to ten. The man who received two talents increased them to four by his diligence and care. When the master of the house returned he was pleased with their industry and said to them that as a reward for their faithful service they

could enter the joy of their Lord. Joy is a characteristic of the life lived in eternal communion with God. It is shared by all those who are faithful to Him (Matthew 25:14-23).

God brought home to me the great truth that love, peace and joy abound wherever God dwells. My spiritual eyes and ears were opened and I beheld and heard spiritual things with increasing clearness. In my visions I was welcomed into the fellowship of the faithful. No words were spoken and yet I had the definite conviction that a hearty welcome was being given to me. The things which the Bible taught were not mere abstract truths but became a part and parcel of my life. There was a certainty about my convictions which could not be ignored. One is only too aware of one's sins and shortcomings but God (like the father of the prodigal son) forgives and takes one into His loving fellowship; there is no doubt of its warmth and closeness.

In his Second Epistle to Corinthians, Chapter 12, St Paul teaches us briefly but clearly the principles we should follow in describing a mystical experience and estimating its value.

1. St Paul does not even mention the fact that he himself was the person who passed through that experience. He simply says: 'I knew a man in Christ about fourteen years ago who was caught up to the third heaven' (verse 2).

2. Speaking of this man St Paul says: 'Whether in the body I cannot tell or whether out of the body I cannot tell, God knows' (verse 2). In describing the mystical experience St Paul is extremely cautious, remembering the inadequacy of words to describe rare and sublime facts.

3. He declines to divulge what he heard during those ineffable moments. He says that 'he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter' (verse 4). From the sense of awe with which St Paul speaks and the intensity of his conviction we know that the revelation he received at that time was of immense value. But he himself dared not disclose this revelation to others lest they misunderstand or misinterpret it.

4. Any man recalling such an experience might be tempted to glory in it, because he has received a special favour from God, a favour which has not been given to others. Instead of taking

pride for having been chosen as an instrument for the disclosure of God's mind, Paul finds delight in remembering his infirmity and says 'Though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me' (verse 6). He remembers that God's grace is his strength. 'And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me' (verse 9).

From this brief but clear teaching of St Paul we realize the importance of mystical experience, the need to treasure its great value, and the fact that we ourselves are unworthy channels through which God's revelation comes and that we are helped in our infirmity by His grace.

The work of the Coimbatore Diocese is steadily growing. It has been found necessary to put up an excellent building to accommodate the diocesan officials and their clerks. As the first Bishop of the Diocese my portrait was unveiled on March 13, 1968 and many kind words were spoken by the present Bishop (Bishop S. J. Samuel) and others on the occasion. I was invited to be present and to give a devotional address to the Executive Committee of the Coimbatore Diocese. I gave an account of the experience I had passed through on my sick bed in June 1967 and then commented on it:

> Thinkers the world over have again and again wondered what sort of life is possible when the human body with which life as we know it is so closely associated, perishes. The experience I had was this: At a time when my physical energy was at its lowest ebb, my life in the spirit was most active. Many people confirm this from their experience. Those who practise fasting, mortification or any other discipline of that kind do so because they are convinced that when the physical energies of man are functioning least, his spiritual powers are most active. God may be invisible to the physical eye but not to the spiritual eye. The vision of love and fellowship among devotees may not be seen by the physical eye but it is certainly evident to the spiritual eye.

Scientific students of religion are now beginning to understand a little more clearly that this is true. Normally knowledge comes to us through our senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. Psychology has made rapid strides in modern times and has taught us that knowledge comes to us not through these senses only but through other senses as well. This extra-sensory perception is being studied with all the care and diligence with which the other phenomena of the world are studied and scientific students of religions are beginning to acknowledge that there is a measure of truth in this extra-sensory perception which may have been ignored in the past.

I have been thinking for several months on the meaning of my experience. What exactly is its significance? Is it all wishful thinking? I have to make it clear that this particular experience at that time was quite unexpected. It was not a part of my normal waking life. It was not a dream, like other dreams which all of us have from time to time. It was an experience in a class by itself. An astronomer observes the sun with a telescope. Because he has got that instrument to help him we say that he has a better knowledge of the sun than the one who sees the sun with his naked eyes. There are hundreds of men with telescopes constantly examining the sun today and coming often to different conclusions. The results of their observations are summed up in careful scientific statements. All that the astronomers with their telescopes can claim is that because of the instruments they are using they have a better knowledge of the sun than others. All our knowledge of the future life is incomplete and fragmentary. Why should we not say that those who happen to pass through mystical experience (as I did) have probably an understanding of certain aspects of reality different from that of others? We do not say to the astronomer: 'We do not see all that you describe. So what you say is all a figment of your imagination.' Nor do we despise him as a visionary or a dreamer because he reports things which we do not see.

I closed my address to the Executive Committee with a personal testimony. I have sought God and tasted of His goodness

for the last seventy-six years. From my young years I have committed myself into His hands. I have experienced His love and goodness throughout my life both in joy and in sorrow. The Maratha Christian poet N. V. Tilak has taught us what Prayer at its best is.

'Prayer is the gracious Father's knee;
On it the child climbs lovingly.
Love's rain, the Spirit's holy ray,
And tears of joy, are theirs who pray,
To walk with God, to feel His kiss,
Yes, prayer, His servant owns, is this.'

(*Bhakti Niranjana*, p. 85)

When Sundar Singh went on a preaching tour to Switzerland in 1922 he was called upon to pray at a small private reception. He offered this prayer:

'Our Lord God, our all in all, Life of our life, and Spirit of our spirit, look in mercy upon us and so fill us with Thy Holy Spirit that our hearts shall have no room for love of aught but Thee. We seek from Thee no other gift but Thyself, who art the Giver of life and all its blessings. From Thee we ask not for the world or its treasures, nor yet for heaven, but Thee alone do we desire and long for, and where Thou art there is Heaven. The hunger and the thirst of this heart of ours can be satisfied only with Thee who hast given it birth. O our Creator! Thou hast created our hearts for Thyself alone, and not for another, therefore these our hearts can find no rest or ease save in Thee, in Thee who hast both created them and set in them this very longing for rest. Take away then from our hearts all that is opposed to Thee, and enter and abide and rule for ever. Amen.'

This is also my constant prayer, my longing, my deep desire.

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