

LIGHTS IN THE WORLD

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Rajaiah D.
Paul



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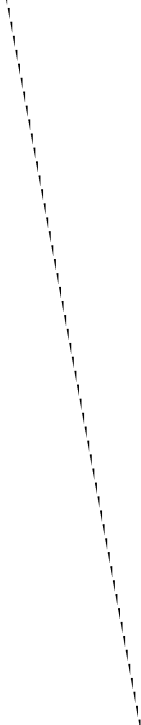
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Lights in the World

Life sketches of Maulvi Safdar Ali and
The Rev. Janni Alli

by
Rajaiah D. Paul

LUCKNOW PUBLISHING HOUSE

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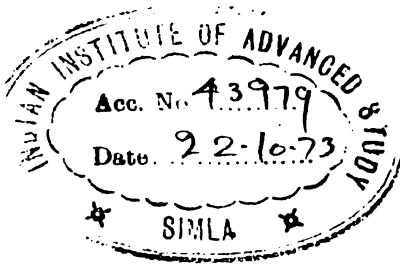


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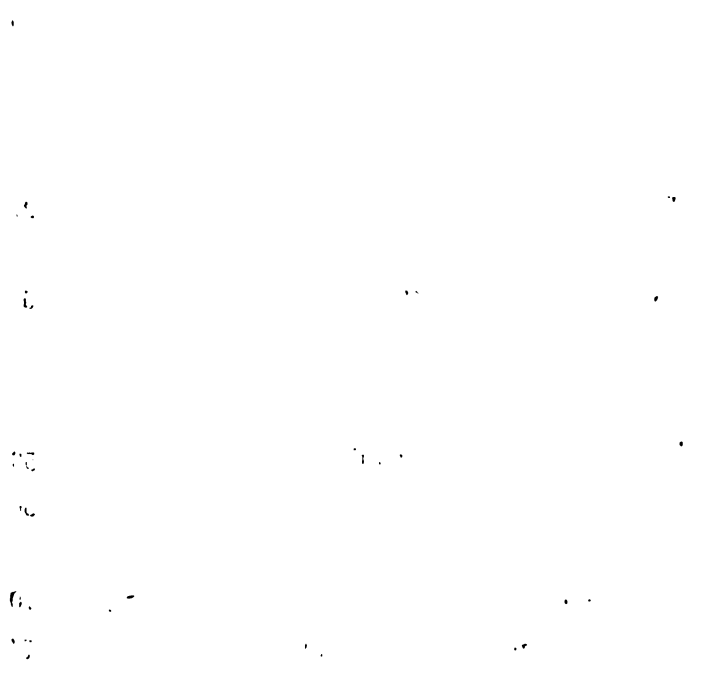
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Figure 1



Author's Introductory Note

During the years I have been a student of Indian Church history and have been writing these biographical sketches of our early converts in India, and presented them more as historical studies than as interesting stories,¹ nothing has interested me more and given me more delight than the lives of our early converts from Islam. I have written about five such men. This book deals with two of the five.

Sheik Salih got deeply interested in Christianity on reading the Urdu translation of the New Testament which Henry Martyn had made. (The manuscript had been given to him to be bound.) He was convinced of the truth of Christianity on hearing Henry Martyn preach and expound the Ten Commandments to a Muslim audience which had gathered in his compound. Sheik Salih was not as learned in the scriptures of his ancestral religion as Maulvie Imad-ud-din and Maulvie Safdar Ali, though he was very orthodox and had been taught by his own father—a zealous Muslim and himself a man of some learning—the tenets of his religion as well as Persian and Arabic. Compared also to them, he did not subject himself to as severe discipline as they underwent in their search for Truth.

On conversion, he decided to serve Christ and no other, and took the name of Abdul Masih—the servant of Christ. He was employed by Daniel Corrie first as a “reader” (of the Scriptures in public places to non-Christian audiences) and then as a catechist and a preacher. His conversations and discussions with enquirers evinced a degree of piety, tact and conviction which showed how well he had understood the basic doctrines of Christianity. Corrie then used him as his (unordained) assistant in looking

¹ *The Cross Over India*, (S. C. M. Press, London, 1952) Ch. VI. p. 65-83; *Chosen Vessels*, (Christian Students' Library Series, No. 25.) G. I. S., Madras, 1961; *Triumphs of His Grace*, C. L. S., Madras, 1967.

after the Indian congregation which he (Corrie) had gathered in Agra. Finally he was ordained and placed in full charge of the congregation in Kuttra.²

Imad-ud-din was a very learned Muslim divine who, before he came to find the end of his spiritual quest in Christ, began as a controversialist and opponent of Christianity. He was an ardent seeker after truth. He was prepared to do anything, go to any length, suffer any privation, undergo any self-mortification if only he could find Truth. And he found Truth after several years of intense physical suffering, mental anguish and spiritual longing. The matter was finally clinched when at his own request the missionary to whom he went read and explained to him the New Testament. It took him a year of such study of the life and teachings of Christ before he was convinced that salvation is to be found in Christ and none else. He then became as keen a student and exponent of the Scriptures as he had been of Islamic precepts and practice. He left behind a rich legacy of expository literature and commentaries which the Indian Church can even in these days use with great effect in explaining Christ's religion to the followers of Islam.

Safdar Ali, of whom I have written in this book, was of this same ardent, orthodox and learned type of Muslim. He also began as a strong opponent of Christianity and was determined to go down to the very depths of his religion through intense search, and self-mortification, as prescribed by the learned divines of Islam and of Sufi mysticism. This led him nowhere. He noticed that the books of the mystics and the fakeers from which he sought enlightenment themselves indicated the need for an infallible guide—a sure director—without whose help it is impossible to attain (to quote his own words) “to either perfection in my practices or to full assurance in my religious belief.”

Of the early life of Wilayat Ali, the third Muslim I have written about in my earlier books, we know little. But he was immortalized himself by his martyrdom. His is a story of a glorious spiritual triumph, to be for ever

² Vide “Chosen Vessels.” p. 59-86.

preserved in the annals of the history of the Christian Church in India.

The lives of Safdar Ali and of Janni Alli in this book should therefore interest all who are seeking to witness about Christ among the followers of Islam. As far as I know they have never before been written about in English.

My sincere thanks are due and are gratefully given to Miss Woods, the Librarian at C.M.S. Headquarters in London, who got, at my request, and for my use a micro-film made of Janni Alli's letters and reports to the secretary of the C.M.S. in London. It is on these that my sketch of Janni Alli in this book is based—material which has never before been published in any form either here or in England.

May the Lord of the Church use this book for his glory.

Madras.
St. Stephen's day, 1968

RAJAI AH D. PAUL.



Figure 1. Relationship between the number of fish and the number of fish eaten.

where N is the number of fish and E is the number of fish eaten.

The relationship between N and E is shown in Figure 1.

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Qazi Maulvi Sayad Safdar Ali

I. The Great Debate

It is the morning of the tenth of April, 1854—a deliciously cool morning. In that part of the country at that time of the year, the hot winds come only about midday.

The school of the Church Missionary Society in the Kuttra, the mission compound in the city of Agra, presents a striking scene. In the enclosure is to be seen the house occupied forty years earlier by Abdul Masih, Henry Martyn's first convert from Islam, who later became the first ordained agent of the C.M.S. in North India and Bishop Heber's first Indian clergyman in Anglican orders. The balcony from which he used to preach to the people assembled in the compound to hear him is still there. Near by stands the small chapel built by Daniel Corrie when he was the East India Company's chaplain in Agra.

The compound is thronged with people. Muslims predominate in the crowd. More people keep coming into the enclosure, but could not gain entrance into the school hall, where already 150 persons, chiefly Muslims, are seated cross-legged on the floor, in orderly rows and in silent decorum. Those who could not get in are crowding round every opening. The missionaries stationed in Agra and a few Christian friends arrive in carriages. They enter the hall, led by the Revs. C. G. Pfander and Thomas Valpy French and sit on one side of the table. Then comes a young *maulvie*, named Rahmat Ullah of Delhi, the most learned Muslim divine of the day. He is accompanied by Wazir Khan, the government sub-assistant surgeon of Agra, who having studied all the available books in English on the textual criticism of the Bible, had acquired a masterly knowledge of the subject,

especially of the textual variations. He it was who had helped Rahmat Ullah to produce two books to controvert Dr. Pfander's books on Islam in relation to Christianity. They were the leaders on the Muslim side: and they take their seat on the other side of the table. Behind them sit a group of young Muslims, firm in their faith, eager to defend it and determined to see that Christianity does not gain any more victories than it had already obtained in the Punjab.

What is to happen presently is a public disputation on the relative merits of Christianity and Islam. A dialectical controversy had been going on for some years, in Delhi, Agra and Lucknow. The leading *maulvies* of Islam, having made themselves well versed in the various critical difficulties connected with the text of the books of the Bible, had made bold to challenge Pfander and French to a public discussion at Agra on the acceptability of the Christian Scriptures and their reliability as compared to the Koran. The subject of discussion on this occasion was *The Abrogation and Corruption of the Christian Scriptures*.

The champions of Islam brought with them a heap of books in English and German by well-known European anti-Christian scholars of the day like Horne, Michaelis and Strauss. There they are on the table.

The discussion begins in a cordial atmosphere and is carried on with vehemence but without anger, as befits exchange of arguments between learned men. The argument of the *maulvies* was that, admittedly, the readings of some of the texts verbally vary in the several extant manuscripts of the New Testament. That is to say, it is impossible to deduce what was the correct original reading because of such differences in words. Hence, the text of the New Testament as it is accepted at present, is untrustworthy, inaccurate and at variance with the original—the Gospel spoken of in the Koran. It must therefore be superseded by a new and fresh revelation. This had come through Mohammed and the Koran.

When asked to produce (or say where it was to be

found and how it could be found out) the Gospel spoken of in the Koran, which had received no additions or alterations and which contained nothing but Christ's own words, and to state when they thought the alterations had taken place and why, the *maulvies* declined to say anything. The discussion, which occupied two hours each time on two consecutive mornings, came to an inconclusive end. The Muslims claimed to have won the victory. But the Christians were happy in the confidence that God, in his own way and in his own time, would use all this stir and would yet bring many from among the Muslims to a knowledge of the Truth.

And this actually happened, though not immediately. That public disputation gave such a shaking to the convictions of two of the young Muslim assistants that they had to think it all over again. They felt that their backing of the position of Rahmat Ullah and Wazir Khan might not after all be justified. Years later, after prolonged intellectual wrestlings and spiritual adventuring and experimentation, they became convinced of the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and gave up their ancestral religion to embrace his way of salvation. One of them entered the whole-time ministry of the church. He was the famous Dr. Imad-ud-din, an outstanding expounder of the Christian Gospel to Muslims and a respected leader of the church in North India.¹ The other was Safdar Ali, the subject of this sketch. He was in the service of the government in the education department when he was baptized; and all through his life he continued to give a powerful witness to Christ by his life and his writings.

2. Agra

Historically and otherwise, Agra is one of the most important cities of India. It is certainly more widely known, and is visited by more people, than any other because of the world-wide fame of Taj Mahal.

¹For a sketch of the life of Dr. Imad-ud-din, see the author's *Chosen Vessels*, Christian Students' Library, vol. 25, (C.L.S., Madras).

Agra lies on the banks of the river Yamuna, about 124 miles from Delhi. An ancient city, it rose to prominence and glory under the great Moghul emperors. Although Delhi continued to be the imperial capital, Agra became the residential capital of the Moghul rulers from the days of Babar, the founder of the dynasty. Akbar removed the seat of the government from Delhi to Agra and resided there all the time. He adorned it with a number of new buildings, including the famous Fort, which he built in 1566. He died there in 1605 and was buried in the noble mausóleum at Sikandra, the mingled architecture of which—Buddhist design and Arabesque tracery—bears witness to his composite faith.

It was, however, Shah Jehan, his rebel son, who immortalized Agra by building the Taj Mahal—the finest monument of conjugal love and fidelity in the whole world, “a dream in marble designed by Titans and finished by jewellers.”¹

The Moghul Empire attained its peak, both in strength and opulence, in his reign. The magnificence of his court was the wonder of European travellers. “His peacock throne with its tail blazing in the shifting natural colours of rubies, sapphires and emeralds, was valued by the jeweller Tavernier at 6½ millions sterling.”²

In 1658 he was deposed by his son Aurangazeb, who proclaimed himself emperor. The unhappy old Shah Jehan was kept in confinement for seven years and died a state prisoner in the Fort in Agra in 1666. Aurangazeb transferred the capital back to Delhi.

As soon as the British overlordship in North India was assured, Agra was made the capital of a Presidency in 1834, subsequently changed into a Lieutenant Governorship in 1836.

In 1811, one of the Serampore missionaries, Mr. Chamberlain, went to Agra, to begin evangelistic work there, but was instantly ordered off and sent back to Serampore under a military escort. Later, when he was invited by a military officer under the East India

¹Sir William Hunter, *History of India*, p. 362.

²*Ibid* p. 364.

Company to be the tutor to his children, Mr. Chamberlain was a second time ordered back by Lord Hastings, the Governor-General, who said with reference to Christian evangelistic work among the Hindu and Muslim population, that "one might fire a pistol into a magazine and it might not explode, but no wise man would hazard the experiment."

During the middle years of the nineteenth century, Agra was the most interesting and fruitful station of the Church Missionary Society in North India. Actual evangelistic work had been begun there by Daniel Corrie, with the help of the newly converted Abdul Masih in 1812. A small congregation had come into existence. Abdul Masih laboured there till he received Episcopal ordination at the hands of Bishop Heber, in December 1825, after which he left Agra for Lucknow, where his old mother still lived.

Agra became a station of the C.M.S. when four German missionaries of the Basle Mission, Schneider, Hoernle, Pfander and Kreiss, who had been expelled from the North-west of Persia when the Russians conquered and annexed the province they were working in, made their way into India, without returning to Europe. They were warmly welcomed by the corresponding committee of the C.M.S. in Calcutta, and stationed in Agra, in order that they might be able to use their knowledge of Islam in evangelizing the Mohammedan population of Agra which was a Muslim stronghold. They were in Lutheran orders but worked for several years under the auspices of the C.M.S. Ultimately, except for Kreiss who had died, they were ordained as clergymen of the Church of England by Bishop Cotton.

In addition to the ordinary work of preaching and teaching they had the care of a large number of famine orphans, thrown upon the society's hands after the terrible famine of 1837-38. For accommodating them, the Government gave the society the tomb of Miriam Zamani (the traditional Christian wife of Akbar the Great) opposite Akbar's own grand mausoleum at Sikandra, six miles from Agra. After working the orphanage for some

years, Hoernle started a printing press so that when the orphan boys grow up they may be taught a useful occupation and later also given employment in the press. The press became a successful institution. It earned large profits which went towards the support of the orphanage. It also gave work to a large number of youths, kept them under Christian supervision and helped them to become satisfactory Christian citizens. They all lived in the village of Sikandra itself which thus gradually grew to be a Christian village.

Leading men at Agra, Government officials and others—including the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces, Mr. James Thomason and his successive secretaries, Mr. John Thornton and Mr. (later Sir) William Muir—had for some time been urging the society to open a high class educational institution modelled on Dr. Duff's institution in Calcutta. The society had already Jay Narain's School in Benares, but they wanted a college, an institution of higher learning. The committee had neither the men nor the means at their disposal. But in April 1850, the offer of two young university men, Messrs. Thomas Valpy French and E. C. Stuart at the same time seemed to supply the one need. The friends in Agra raised among themselves £1500 to supply the other. The committee allotted from the Jubilee Fund an equal amount in order to make it possible to begin the new college. French and Stuart had come out with a determination to make higher education their field of work. Even during the voyage, they named the college to be opened "St. John's," after Henry Martyn's College at Cambridge, "with additional reference to St. John as the Apostle of oriental churches." They began work by teaching in an existing mission high school while studying the local languages. The new college buildings were not completed till three years later and were opened on December 16th, 1853.

From the first the college began to attract boys in large numbers, although there was a large government college in the city. In that institution the Bible was not taught; but intelligent parents, though they did not wish that

their sons should become Christians—and indeed had no fear of their doing so—did want them to learn truthfulness and honesty and to have their characters moulded by the practice of moral virtues. Christian teaching always does this even when there is no conversion. But French, of course, aimed at conversions. He worked and prayed for them, and soon discerned tokens of the Spirit's working among his pupils. He is reported to have told the European congregation in the Civil Lines Church while preaching to them that several of his students, though unbaptized, had "probably endured more for Jesus than any in the congregation, and in respect of Bible knowledge his upper classes were at least as well instructed in Scripture history as the average undergraduates of Oxford." Actual conversions and visible results were very small. His main objective was to help create a native ministry and he wrote in 1858:

"I have ten boys in my first English class. . . . In two at least (both young Brahmins) I see many of those elements of character and principle which would lead me in more hopeful moments to picture them to myself as enrolled at some future time among the native apostles, or at least the Tituses and Timothies of India! but how often it is proved that the instruments we would select as fittest for doing God's work are not the ones which He is pleased to employ! The raising up of one such I should feel an overabundant recompense for the seven years' work which I have expended on the college."

There was however one student in whom this hope was fulfilled. Madho Ram was, some years after his baptism, raised to the ministry and became a pastor of an Indian congregation in Jubbulpore. Something about him has been said in the life of Professor Ramchundra.¹

There was at this time, as has already been mentioned, much dialectical conflict between Christian missionaries and Mohammedan *maulvies* in Agra. Dr. Pfander, "that prince among the assailants of Islam," was in Agra from

¹ In the author's book *Triumphs of His Cross*.

1841 to 1854. He had written, after a close study of the Koran and the sacred books of the Mohammedans, three treatises in Persian—*Mizan-ul-Haqq* (The Balance of Truth), a defence of Christianity and refutation of the Koran, *Tariq-ul-Hayat* (The Way of Life), a treatise on sin and redemption, and *Miftah-ul-Asrar* (The Key of Secrets) on the Divinity of Christ and the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, which made a great stir among the Muslim divines. They wrote several books in order to refute these three. Dr. Pfander wrote two more treatises in 1847 to controvert the books produced by the *maulvies*. It was upon this that the *maulvies* invited the missionaries to take part in public discussions between theologians of both sides about the relative merits and acceptability of Christian and Islamic doctrines. The missionaries readily accepted the invitation. The first of these discussions took place in Agra in 1848. It evoked great interest and was attended by some of the most respectable and learned Muslims in Agra. This was followed by some others. The last and the most momentous from the point of view of the Christian enterprize was in April 1854. This has been described earlier in this narrative.

Missionary work among the Muslims had created a general stir among all thinking Muslims. The most learned among them put forth their best efforts to build a strong citadel of defence in which all Muslims who were disturbed by Christian preaching could take shelter.

Safdar Ali, a teacher in the local government college in Agra, already mentioned as one of the two young *maulvies* who were assisting Rahmat Ullah at the public disputation in April 1854, was one whom the carefully devised defences failed to protect. He has himself described the questionings which raged in his heart for several years, his prolonged struggles to obtain rest from such doubts and fears through the practice of severe asceticism and self-mortification, and how his soul's hunger and thirst were finally assuaged when, after a sincere and close study of the Christian Scriptures, under the direction of a spiritual guide who had himself gone

through similar spiritual struggle and was therefore able to give him just the help he needed, he gave himself up to Jesus, the Saviour of mankind.

3. Early Spiritual Struggles

Safdar Ali was the son of an orthodox Syud (descendant of the Prophet) who was during the earlier part of his life, like his ancestors before him, the qazi (judge) of the native State of Dholpur. By an unexpected and sudden reverse of fortune he was obliged to resign his position as judge, together with all its hereditary dignities and perquisites and had to go and live in Agra in comparatively straitened circumstances.

This however did not prevent his giving his son a good secular education in the government school and a good grounding in his ancestral religion through his own teaching.

The boy went on to the government college in Agra, and being intelligent and intent upon learning made the best use of the teaching in the college. The government institutions at that time did not encourage any religious or philosophical studies, but concentrated their teaching on the physical sciences and mathematics, in addition to introducing the students to English literature.

Safdar Ali's mind had a philosophical bent and interested itself in metaphysical problems rather than in the facts of physical science. Hailing from an orthodox, religious family and being the son of a father who was anxious that the boy should grow to be a virile Muslim, learned in the faith of his fathers, had created in him a keen interest in the Mohammedan religion. The boy had also received help from other scholars in the city and the Muslim teachers in the government college itself, so that he had learnt all that was to be learned about the religion of Islam as it was practised by the devout Muslims of the day. He had also amassed a vast amount of Arabic learning. Safdar Ali was not however one to be satisfied with merely fulfilling the duties prescribed for a Muslim.

By nature he was intent on plumbing the very depths of spiritual understanding and religious experience.

The story that follows is the story of his spiritual struggle, his intense efforts to find soul-satisfaction in the religion of his youth, his failure to achieve it, his groping towards more light and how at last he found the Light of the world, Jesus Christ, who captured him, heart, mind and soul and pressed him into His service and, even though he was in secular employment, used him as a witness to the Truth.

As in the case of Imad-ud-din who produced an autobiographical account of the spiritual struggles which finally brought him to the feet of Jesus, so have we an account (though a much shorter one) in Safdar Ali's own words of his spiritual wrestlings. He did intend to write a complete account of his spiritual adventures, but it does not appear to have been translated and made available to English readers. Instead, we have a short account given in response to a request by the secretaries of the Church Missionary Society.

When the news of his conversion and baptism, and the illtreatment which he was receiving after becoming a Christian, reached England, the secretaries of the C.M.S. wrote to him encouraging letters in order to comfort him and strengthen him in his new faith. He appreciated these letters greatly, and in due course replied them in his characteristic style. His letter of May 1865, was published in full.¹ The extracts below are taken from it. Feeling himself unequal to express his feelings and sentiments adequately in English, he wrote the letter in Urdu. It was translated into English and printed.

The letter begins and ends in characteristic oriental style, and these paragraphs may be quoted for their own somewhat quaint interest.

"To the gentlemen of High Offices, Exalted etc.
After customary salutations, Greeting.

"With my respects and Christian love, I beg to inform you that your valued letter, dated March 17th, the

¹ *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, July 1866, p. 215 to 221.

current year, came to hand and I became apprised of its contents.

"I am thankful to the Lord of lords for the kindness and attention which had been shown me by all you gentlemen. For of His unbounded mercy and love, through the precious body and blood of His only Son, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, He has made us, strangers, who lived in a state of estrangement and separation from his elect ones, to be now participators with them of the faith, of perfect charity, and of assured hope, and members of His Church; and so has granted us intimate friendship in the way of external and internal agreement, conformity, and unity. And in like manner also, through your kindness in opening a correspondence, usually considered the half-way stage to personal intercourse, He has given me, before unacquainted with you, the opportunity of paying my respects to you in writing."

And he ends it:—

"I have carried this letter to an undue length, and being but slightly acquainted with English, I have necessarily written it in Urdu. I trust that I may be excused.

"To the church of God which is in London, even to those that are sanctified through our Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ, together with all who in every place — India and elsewhere — call upon the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, be the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, for ever more. Amen.

"May 4, 1865. Your humble and obedient servant,
Safdar Ali."

It is however the body of the letter that is of greater and indeed absorbing interest. It lays bare before our eyes his inmost heart. To all who have themselves attempted to offer their lives "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God," in complete surrender and life-long allegiance, and to all those who have experienced in some measure the struggle in body, mind and soul which this involves, such self-revelation by a sincere and sensitive soul cannot but be interesting and instructive.

He begins by an acknowledgment of God's grace and

love which alone brought him into God's way of Salvation. "By grace ye are saved." "He loved us while we were yet sinners."

"The grace of a tender and merciful God towards one so wretched and helpless, has been boundless; for, as His goodness and care have been manifested and evidenced in me, by my creation, my preservation, continually and uninterruptedly, at all times and every moment; so, over and above all this, His illimitable grace and love are shown in perfection by His kind bestowal of the means whereby I have access to the high presence of Jesus Christ, the glorious King of kings, the most bounteous Lord. So that, although, I, contemptible and unworthy that I was, in my recklessness and wickedness, was guilty of every grievous rebellion and refractoriness; and although, in spite of repeated checks, and successive testimonies of conscience, I disobeyed His commandments, and never even so much as looked at His Holy word; yet that gracious and merciful One willed not to let me continue in the way of everlasting destruction, or to give me my way, or let me alone, that I might be laid hold of by eternal pains. On the contrary, in His exceeding love and pity He drew me gradually onwards, after a wonderful fashion, in an exquisite method and order, until He called me into that inestimable and incomparable love which is openly proclaimed to the whole race of Adam.

"If every hair of mine became a tongue,
E'en then the story of His love would be untold."

"When I was yet a child, my respected father, who was an orthodox believer of the Syud race and who, for a considerable period, had like his ancestors before him, enjoyed the dignity of qazi of Dholpur, by an unexpected turn of fortune was all at once obliged to resign his post, and other hereditary offices and employments; and, as it happened, he chose to go to Agra, and reside there.

"Although subsistence was, under these circumstances, sometimes a matter of difficulty, yet this was made the cause of my acquiring learning and an interest in religion; for all the hindrances to such acquisitions, such as worldly delights and pleasures, through which so many of the children of rich natives of India remain uncultivated and ignorant, were thus removed. In this state of things, also my father had leisure from business; and his daily, encouragements, instructions, and exhortations pro-

duced the deepest longings in my mind. Accordingly, for nearly twenty one years I did nothing but study the various sciences, and the prescriptions of the Mohammedan religion. I obtained perfection in the faith of my fathers. I received instruction from my honoured parent, and from other eminent scholars, both of the city and of the great government school."

He then goes on to describe his own personal and unaided efforts to satisfy the deepest longings of his soul by study, the acquisition of knowledge, the practice of asceticism and mechanical recital of prescribed prayers.

Religious Research

"During this period, I spent some time in perusing some of the religious books of the Hindus, and became acquainted with the articles of their creed, with the mode of their worship, and with their traditions and fables. The metaphysical books of the Greek philosophers also, in their Arabic versions; and moreover, the controversial and polemical works of atheists, sophists and deists, and other profound and mysterious subjects, passed under my review.

"Although I was aware that many of the stories and statements of the Koran and Hadis were plainly at variance with the fundamental principles and undoubted facts of true science, especially in the case of physics, astronomy, the healing art, and the phenomenon of creation; and though I was disturbed in mind on this account; yet I fortified myself with the common saying, "What has reason to do with revelation?" And this I did the more easily in that many of the institutions, precepts, and narratives of the Mohammedan religion were very superior to the creeds, and systems, and fanciful speculations above referred to. I concluded, therefore, that the religion of my fathers was trustworthy; and imagined that the knowledge thereof, and perfection therein, would be my greatest gain. And, carefully measuring the discrepancies of Islam, I avoided extremes and exaggerations, and chose a middle course.

"But I was guilty of one great omission which was injurious to my search after truth. Taking for granted, without inquiry or investigation, that Christianity was false, corrupt and abrogated, notwithstanding that discussion and preaching were carried on in many places,

and I had heard of several thoughtful and intelligent persons having become Christians — indeed two Sahibs had even given me some religious books which, however, I had not examined — I gave no attention to the subject. And, when a friend of mine showed a very strong inclination towards Christianity in those days, I was one of those who opposed his becoming a Christian.

"In short, conformity and adherence to my ancestral religion was my habit of mind. My special and constant studies were in commentaries and traditions, and other theological works. At this time it came about that from the Agra College, I went to Rawalpindi in the Punjab, having been appointed Deputy Inspector of Schools in that circle. I had not been there long when a certain Moulwee, sent me a pleasant book called "*The Masnavi of the Moulwee of Rum.*" And at the same time I had some intercourse with certain Sufis also, who, by a happy chance, came that way. From these I obtained some other books on mystical theology.

"The conversation of the Sufis,¹ and the perusal of their mystical books, awakened in me the greatest interest so that I was employed day and night in this study and having brought together a good many works on the subject made myself acquainted with their contents.

"Although the peculiar rules and practices of this sect (the Sufis), and some performances peculiar to the Fakeers, were more troublesome than the regulations and rites common to all Moslems, yet the spiritual laws and precepts for the inner life which they professed and which were specified and written for the good of mankind — such as had respect to purity of heart, virtue, goodness, the love of God, kindness to the servants of God; in short, directions respecting all matters pertaining to a future life, whether things damning or things

¹ Sufis are a sect of Mohammedan mystics. They regard themselves as a superior class, possessing esoteric knowledge of the Koran and the primitive traditions. They use technical expressions which even other Muslims cannot understand. They subject themselves to a prescribed ascetic and ethical discipline—under the guidance of a teacher or spiritual guide. Repentance or conversion (*tauba*) is the first step—i.e., the turning away from sin to God. They are a sect characterized by a definitely higher ethical conduct and a greater seriousness of religious purpose. They consistently practice unselfishness, renounce worldly possession and eschew all desires of every kind and try to be sincere and true and plain-spoken in word and deed, without regard to the opinions of others.

They follow special methods of spiritual discipline. They try to induce a state of mind in which "revelation" of the unseen is most likely to happen and in expectation of its happening. They call it *dhikr* (recollection) and consider this a basic requirement in spiritual progress.

saving (the source of all which instruction is the Holy Scriptures) — were so agreeable and delightful, that, although I appeared to be rigidly strict in conforming to the rites of Mohammedanism — which, indeed, the Sufis insisted upon — yet my soul altogether revolted against these external ordinances, and meditated very gravely respecting inward amendment, and purity and holiness of heart.

“For the attainment of these ends, I practised with great earnestness, different kinds of self-inflctions, austerities, long recitals, labours and meditations, conformably to the direction for spiritual acts and offices furnished by the Sheiks and devotees.”

From other sources we have some information about the austerities he underwent during this period when he was trying to conform to the heavy demands of Sufism.

“When he was a Sufi he used to eat only on one day in three, and spent all the night in meditation; yet he was all the while doing the duty of schools inspection under the Government. He was so great in performing *Zika* (*Zikr*, an extraordinary ceremony consisting in pronouncing the name of God, Allah, while drawing the breath, as it were, from different parts of his body) that he used to repeat the formula over a thousand times, holding his breath for a quarter of an hour. From this he contracted a permanent heart disease. His teacher far surpassed him in mortification, for he never slept at nights and lived on one pice (that is less than a half penny) a week. With this pice he bought a little of the cheapest grain, which, having ground to flour, he would take a pinch in a drop of water for a meal.

“Before being admitted as a disciple, each Sufi has to make a general confession, and the habit of confessing to the *Pir* (or spiritual father) is kept up sometimes daily. A prayer is said by the *Pir* for the penitent, but no absolution is pronounced. For the forgiveness of their sins they trust to the mercy of God and the intercession of the saints, whom for that purpose, they invoke daily. Among other saints, they invoke our Saviour. They hold a doctrine of the Trinity in a certain way; that is to say, they teach that there are in the Godhead seven *darje* (ranks or persons), of whom three are uncreated and four created. The three uncreated are all equal, and the first is manifest through

the second. Some even hold that the second became incarnate in Christ. They endeavour to practice all Christian virtues, rejecting the Mussalman practise of polygamy, *jehad*, etc., and in devotion to God far exceed Christians although they do not equal them in works of charity to man.

"One great point to which they strive to attain is to the *vision of Divine Light*. Not all attain this, even striving for a life time. This vision fills them with inexpressible pleasure. Safdar Ali attained to see this. He accounts for it by physical causes. He thinks it to be an electric light produced within the eye by the blood.

"This vision however did not satisfy him. He still doubted if it were from God and could find no proof. Nor could he get rest from Pantheism. His trouble was so great that he describes himself as a man dying of thirst who thinks of nothing, asks for nothing, but 'Water, water.'¹

Now to resume his own narration of his spiritual search:

"At length I ascertained clearly from the books of the mystics, and from the Fakeers, that without an infallible guide — a sure director — I could not possibly attain either to perfection in my practices, or to full assurance in my religious belief."

Need for a Guide

"Therefore in addition to the assiduous performance of my labours already enumerated, I began seeking from place to place, from street to street, house to house, for a guide into the way of truth.

"At this time by a wonderful concurrence of events, my (official) journeyings and sojournings were, one after another, in places and districts which thousands of Sufis and Sheiks, eminent in India and in other countries had, in former times, visited, where even still, very famous men adopted the style of Fakeers, and had thousands of disciples and adherents. That quarter is notorious for being, as it were, a nest of Sufis, and very considerable persons have written of it as follows:

¹ C. E. Gardner, *Life of Father Goreh*, (1900) pp. 120ff.

“The very dust of this place has been kneaded with the waters of love divine.”

I refer to Multan, Pakpattan, Tausa, Lahore etc.

“In my search after a guide, I waited upon a great number of Sheiks and Fakeers, but many of them turned out to be nothing better than worldlings and hypocrites. Some, indeed, had a true Sufi temper, and were devout persons loving God, and worshipping Him according to the instructions and directions of their spiritual guides, and employing themselves day and night in religious exercises and prayers. However, I was seeking for an infallible guide and unfailing director — for one who could discern and particularize my spiritual disease, and indicate its cause, and work a complete cure, and bring me full assurance — one who was not a quack — one who was not himself diseased.

“Such being my object, I could find no comfort in any direction; and a verse from *“The Moulwee of Rum”* and a couplet from a Hindee author, were perpetually recurring to my mind. They were respectively as follows:

Moulwee of Rum

Since devils oft in human shape appear;
Thou shouldst not place thy hand in every hand.

Hindee couplet

The Saviour whom we need must be like a sharpener of swords,

Who in a little moment scours off the rust of a lifetime.
But I could find none such.”

He then decided to ask for leave from Government for a year and, if refused, to resign. He wanted to make “a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina and see the great teachers there and obtain satisfaction or die. When he was about to put this plan into execution, he found that his family had incurred a debt and he was obliged to delay his leaving India till he could pay it.”

“At that time there was a band of ten or twelve Sufis living with him under one teacher. They were all dissatisfied with Pantheism and agreed that they would search for a true teacher, and whoever found him should communicate with the others.”¹

¹It is taken from a letter from Fr. O'Neill of the S.S.J.E. written at Saugor, June 30, 1878 and published in the *Cowley St. John Parish Magazine* of August 1878.

4. The Guide

It was about this time that Safdar Ali was transferred, in the course of his official career, from the Punjab to Jubbulpore.

Jubbulpore is a long way south of the Gangetic valley in which Agra is situated and even more from Rawalpindi. It is almost at the centre of India. It was a new station of the C.M.S. opened in 1854 and for many years the only station of that society in the Central Provinces. Like many another Indian mission station, its establishment was due to the Government officials of the place. In 1851, the district judge, Mr. Mosley Smith, began to invite Hindus to his house and read the Bible to them and talk to them about Christ. He was helped by the Government chaplain, Mr. Dawson, to raise a fund to start a regular mission and they then applied to the C.M.S. committee in Calcutta to send a man. In 1853 a Prussian catechist J. W. Rebsch, who had come to India under Gossner's Mission, was engaged and sent to Jubbulpore. Two years later the Rev. E. C. Stuart, French's Agra comrade, proceeded thither. Later he was sent away to Calcutta as secretary of the Calcutta corresponding committee. At the time Safdar Ali went to Jubbulpore, the missionary there was the Rev. E. Champion (who had earlier worked among the Gonds) and who was in the place for twenty years, 1860 to 1879.

By the time Safdar went to his new place, God had already prepared for him a guide who would help him to find the Truth he was so ardently seeking.

Not long after his arrival there, Pundit Nehemiah Goreh, the Sanskrit scholar who, after similar protracted seeking for Light, had found Christ and had embraced His religion in 1848 in Benares and who had already written his *magnum opus*, the *Shaddarshana Darpana*, arrived there in the company of Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall, the Government inspector of schools in the Central Provinces. The book, which had been published in 1860, immediately attracted wide attention in both Christian and orthodox

Hindu circles because it was a thorough examination of the philosophy by one who was a Sanskrit scholar learned in all the Hindu scriptures and a rational refutation of the whole Hindu philosophical system. Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall was so taken up with it that he wanted to translate it into English and in 1861 sent for the author and requested him to assist him in translating the book. Nehemiah Goreh spent the next three years in Dr. Hall's company and accompanied him in all his official tours so that he might be available to him whenever Dr. Hall found some respite from his official work which time he could devote to a study of the book.

When Dr. Hall came to Jubbulpore in the course of his official duties, Nehemiah Goreh came with him also. It is possible that Safdar Ali had heard of the conversion of Nilakanth Goreh, (which took place in 1848) because it did make much stir at the time. Lal Behari Day, a convert of the Free Church of Scotland when he was a student of the General Assembly's Institution in Calcutta, who, after having been for twelve years in the Presbyterian ministry, had taken up employment under Government in the education department was at this time the deputy inspector of schools under Dr. Hall in the Dainoh district. Safdar Ali knew him as a colleague in government service. Lal Behari Day came along with Dr. Hall and Nehemiah Goreh.

Hearing of their arrival, Safdar Ali called upon Lal Behari Day and Dr. Hall in their camp.¹ There he was introduced to Nehemiah Goreh, who was then a lay missionary and had not yet been ordained, whom he found conversing with Day on some religious topic. Maulvie Safdar Ali was much struck with him and the next day renewed his acquaintance. "Many hours of the day and night were spent together" by the two, "in a review of the evidence of the Christian faith and in teaching the Scriptures."² This lasted several days. These

¹ C. F. Andrews in his book *North India* in the Handbooks of English Church Expansion series (Mowbray, 1908) says that Safdar Ali on hearing about Nehemiah Goreh sent word to him to come and help him and that is why Nehemiah Goreh came to Jubbulpore.

² G. E. Gardner *Life of Father Goreh*, p. 125.

discussions scoured off much of the "rust of a life-time," but did not yet produce positive advance towards the finding of a Saviour—"a sharpener of swords."

Even more than his exposition of the Christian faith, the spiritual personality of the ex-Brahmin Christian ascetic impressed the inquirer more than any argument and Safdar Ali at the conclusion named Goreh his own *murshid* or spiritual guide and was prepared to go along the path he indicated.

Goreh found that Safdar Ali was then in the same state of doubt and hesitation about fully committing himself to accepting Christianity and giving up his ancestral religion just as he himself had once been. He was therefore able to help him at the point of his deepest need. Safdar Ali had read Dr. Pfander's *Mizan-ul-haqq* and had been convinced that the Koran was not the true or full or final revelation of God but was not at the moment prepared to accept the Christian faith as the one and only true divine revelation.

We are fortunate in possessing Safdar Ali's own description of this period of his soul struggle and it is wisest to quote it *verbatim*.

"At last it happened that I was transferred from the Punjab to Jubbulpore. Here I was more desolate than ever, for I found here no one to whom I could reveal the secret of my heart with any hope of sympathy. At last, with the advise and approval of my most intimate friends, I concluded that, since there was no hope to be looked for from India, it would be proper to go to Arabia; and having first ascertained from a *maulvie* who lived in Bombay, what the ship charges and other travelling expenses would be, I procured a month's leave of absence in order to visit my birthplace, that I might find some person there to take charge of my property, and then, either obtaining an extended leave, or resigning my situation, set out on my travels to Arabia.

"Up to this time, although I was fully conscious of being spiritually diseased, and felt a necessity and desire for health and recovery, yet I did not comprehend the nature of the disorder. I did not know in what health consisted. I was ignorant of the mode of cure, and of the proper remedy. And withal, I was so bigoted

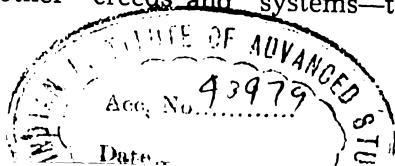
and prejudiced, that if the merciful and gracious God had not taken me by the hand I should have persevered in a ruinous course, which would have terminated in the loss of spiritual and temporal happiness, and imprisonment of eternal torment.

"But the Lord God did not leave or forsake me. When I reached my native place, I found that I was liable for certain expenses which had been incurred in repairing a house of mine. Out of this misfortune the Lord brought forth good. My conscience told me that it was my imperative duty to discharge this debt,—that I must postpone to this obligation my intended visit to Arabia. But the period of my leave was now nearly expired, and I collected some books to read on my way back. In searching for these books, I chanced upon the "*Mizan-ul-haqq*," and upon a portion of the Holy Scriptures. On looking at these, it suddenly came into my mind, that, false as Christianity no doubt was, yet as I could not proceed to Arabia until my debt was discharged, and as it was only proper that the investigation of opposing creeds should be made candidly, without prejudice, or leaning to the one side or the other, I might as well make myself absolutely certain that Islam, and the sect of the Sunnis, were right, before I went to Arabia.

"With this settled purpose, I got together, from far and near, in addition to the books which I already possessed, many other reliable works, controversial and polemical treatises, both of Christians and of Mohammedans. From the month of November 1861 I spent all the time that I could spare both night and day, in the study of the Mohammedan and Christian Scriptures, and works of controversy on both sides.

"In the course of the first year I clearly perceived that neither the Koran nor the Hadis was of divine origin, and that Mohammed was not the prophet of God. But still, in some points, doubts and difficulties remained. Especially I still had a high opinion of the value of those austerities and self-inflictions which are practised by the religious orders and which are stated to be of the class of most meritorious works, and tokens of piety and orthodoxy.

"In the Holy Scriptures I found a detailed statement of the diagnosis of spiritual disease, an account of its cause and origin, particular directions for its true and perfect cure,—all so accurate and correct, that I was assured of the divine character of its medicinal prescriptions. As to other creeds and systems—those of the



Hindus, and the philosophers, and the atheists—I now perceived them to be nothing more than either the fancies and speculations of the learned, or the perplexities of the unlearned,—the theories of men who, drowned in their own imaginations respecting the origin and order of creation, had lost sight of the true Creator and real First Cause.

“In the second year, too, notwithstanding that the superiority and triumph of Christianity over other religions was very evident, yet difficulties beset my mind from every quarter. The least difficulty begat great doubt. To be sure, I was not convinced of the emptiness of other religious systems, and especially I now saw the real character of the pretensions to spiritual knowledge, and the various practices and acts of religious meditation belonging to the Fakeers’ profession,—that they had no real connection with faith or religion, but were referable to causes inherent in temperament.

“During this year a mountain of anguish oppressed my sad heart, such as I had never before experienced. I rejected food, and neglected sleep. And especially when I was laid up with a severe bodily ailment, through which my life was despaired of, I felt and uttered keen regret that I was without creed or faith, and still unpossessed of eternal salvation!

“Neither Hindu, nor Moslem, nor Christian, nor Jew, am I; Sore perplexed is my soul to know what the issue will be!”

“In the end of the second and the beginning of the third year, my interest and attention in investigating and studying the sacred Scripture, the consistency of its teachings, and its future and eternal aims and issues were as intense as my sickness was violent. Many of my friends and acquaintances who were aware of my state of mind, remonstrated with me and represented the impossibility of any religious system being so faultlessly exact as to pass through such a process of minute and hypercritical investigation unblemished. ‘You are under a mistake,’ they said. ‘No religion is without some defects.’ But the Lord was with me, and at this stage. He continually gave me peace and comfort. I could not believe respecting the Most High—of whose existence there was no doubt—all of whose perfect qualities and attributes were matters of certainty—whose love also was sufficiently evident in the works of

creation—that our spiritual need being so manifest, He, who had made such large provisions for our perishing bodies, which today are and tomorrow are dust, could possibly or consistently with any experience, be supposed to have prepared no means of salvation, or way of supply for the spiritual necessities of man's immortal soul, or to have shown him in this world no way of everlasting felicity. I often sustained my heart with the following stanzas, and still, as far as possible, carried on my investigations:

“Weep not—the exiled Joseph shall yet return to Canaan;

Weep not—thy prickly sorrows shall yet bloom forth like roses;

Grieve not, O sorrowful heart, thy lot shall again be pleasant;

Weep not—the broken-hearted shall come in triumph again.

Be not despondent, although thou know not the secret of God;

Weep not—behind the curtain concealed blessings may lie.

Perilous is thy journey, and dim the goal of thy pilgrimage;

Yet refrain from weeping, for the longest way hath its terminus.

Comfort thy heart, for swift upon every sorrow comes gladness.

Weep not—for not an ill but hath its appropriate medicine.

If there be one that hath ranged the world untouched by sorrow,

Sorrow will find him yet; 'tis the lot of all; therefore weep not.”

The discussions referred to above between Nehemiah Goreh and Safdar Ali had no doubt been of tremendous help, but it would appear that only one half of the problem had been tackled. The soul's disease had been recognized and diagnosed. All advertised remedies had been examined and some even tried. One of them had even been found likely to be *the* cure for the malady. But the decision to accept that medicine was yet to be made. Intellectual conviction and spiritual perception had come. But more knowledge was needed and the will was yet to be goaded to the point of action.

Nehemiah Goreh found that what was needed was actual instruction in the Christian Scriptures and that this might well prove to be the last stage in the soul's awakening and bring about a complete cure from the soul's malady. He therefore introduced Safdar Ali to the local missionary and entrusted to him the spiritual guardianship of the unusual enquirer who, in spite of his sensitiveness and intellectual conviction, was yet unable to take the final decision to accept the one medicine which was sure to cure him once for all and give him the peace he was longing for.

The Rev. E. Champion gave him the Bible and some other books, which the inquirer readily accepted and studied with his usual eagerness for spiritual knowledge. Very naturally his intellect raised several difficulties. His mind brought up many questions and there were portions not readily intelligible and which needed explanation. And there began naturally and inevitably, between Mr. Champion and the *maulvie*, a long-drawn discussion, joint study of the Scriptures, intercourse of the same peculiar character as that which had taken place between Mr. Smith of Benares and Nilakanth Goreh some years previously, questions and replies, doubts and explanations, problems posed and solutions suggested.

As Safdar Ali read the New Testament and thought about what he read, and as Mr. Champion helped him over the more difficult passages, too hard to be understood by any reading them for the first time and too strange-sounding to one from a completely different religious background, he became more and more convinced that Christianity was the means of salvation prepared by God, the divine "way of supply for the spiritual necessities of man's immortal soul." He had already given up for a long time attendance at Mohammedan prayers and the ascetic practices on which he had relied for help for so long. Now he did more. He began openly to give expression to his convictions about the truth of Christianity. So that his friends and co-religionists became alarmed and threatened to take from him his wife

and subjected him to severe social and intellectual pressure.

Just at this crisis Safdar Ali was led by God to think of asking his *murshid* again to come to his help. He sent word to Benares requesting that Nehemiah Goreh should come down at once and give him his encouraging companionship and inspiring presence. The pundit complied at once and came again to Jubbulpore. The two embraced each other warmly when they met. Conversation began at once on spiritual matters and especially about Safdar Ali's state of mind and the stage he had reached in his spiritual quest. Nehemiah Goreh was soon able to find that the *maulvie's* vascillation and hesitation was not due to any incomplete conviction or intellectual lacuna but was purely a psychological inability to make up his mind, which disability would vanish only if and when he crossed the rubicon, voluntarily or by persuasion. Once the plunge was taken his mind would be set completely at rest and his soul would get the peace it was longing for. He therefore advised and later insisted on Safdar Ali accepting baptism.

"My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself" (St. John 7:17).

The Last Stage

The last stage in the spiritual pilgrimage through which he was brought to a final decision by means of a study of God's Word and the help of his *murshid* is described by Mr. Champion.

"It is with much pleasure and thankfulness to God that I write to inform the committee of the baptism, on Christmas day, of *Maulvie* Safdar Ali and another young Mohammedan. Some of the notices of the *Maulvie* have appeared in my journal from time to time, and you probably heard at Benares that Pundit Nehemiah had come back to confer with him and his friends at his request. The result is as above stated.

"If I were not deeply sensible that this is all God's work I should hesitate to speak of the *Maulvie* in the terms I must speak of him if I speak at all, lest I should seem to glory in man. He has, however, been so clearly a subject of the sacred influence of God's spirit, that, in speaking as I feel I am but exalting God's grace in him.

"He appears for many years to have been of a thoughtful disposition, and anxious as regards his soul. In this state his mind was directed to the consideration of Christianity, and he read, only to find fault at first, Dr. Pfander's works. Still truth seems to have gained upon him; and when Nehemiah was here about three years ago they became acquainted, and he has often told me that one half of the difficulties which possessed his mind were cleared away by their intercourse.

"Up to this time he had not seen our Bible, and, at Nehemiah's suggestion, he came to me, and procured this and other books. In this way our intercourse began. He was a most thoughtful and indefatigable reader, and often visited me, and propounded difficulties, and asked for explanations, which showed he read with great care, and possessed great powers of mind. I answered his difficulties to the best of my ability, and always found what I said was received with impartiality and serious attention. He soon confessed himself much struck with the morality of the Bible, which he said surpassed anything which he had ever met with, and at length declared that Christianity was far better than either Hinduism or Mohammedanism: still some doubts remained regarding the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Nor was this exercise of mind a mere intellectual one. He plainly said it was peace to a troubled mind which he sought. As he came to me from week to week I wondered at the great change I saw going on within him, and could entertain no doubt as to the final result. His last request to me, as I was going to the Benares Conference, was that I would ask the missionaries to pray for him. In this and other events, the Christianity which had already imbued his mind displayed itself. He had given up attendance on the Mohammedan prayers long since, and was so open in the expression of his predilection for Christianity, that the Mohammedans declared he was an *Isai*, and his relatives threatened to take away his wife. This was the state of things when Nehemiah came, whose kind and sympathetic instructions cleared away his remaining doubts, and decided him to be baptized at once.

"On my return journey, when forty miles from Jubbulpore, I received this delightful information; and on the very evening of my arrival he called, requesting, as his mind was quite made up, there might be no delay. He is the deputy inspector of schools in this district and receives a salary of some 150 rupees per month. Thus his motives were beyond doubt. He is a man too of sound education and irreproachable character, highly respected by his superiors and all who know him.

"The younger man is at present a Government village school master and is the fruit of Safdar Ali's inquiries. He was formerly his servant and when in that capacity began to read the New Testament with him. Two days ago when reading part of the 11th of Hebrews to him, and explaining how we (and he especially) have to give up much here, but only, like Moses, in hope of a much greater reward hereafter, he said, 'A thousand, thousand thanks to God for his mercy. I am only worthy of eternal fire.' This seems to indicate a right sense of the sinfulness of sin and of the exceeding greatness of God's grace in Christ. The determined way in which he stepped into the water after the *maulvie* (they were baptized by immersion at their own request) was very remarkable.

"It only remains that I should ask your prayers for them during this trying time, when they have to see the sorrow of those whom they most love and to endure their anger."¹

The baptism by immersion was at the request of Safdar Ali and Quasim Khan, who was baptized along with him. They were both baptized in a pond.

Safdar Ali did not want to give up his Muslim name, but agreed to add "Moses" as his first (Christian) name. He does not appear to have used it much or to have been known by it at any time.

The entry in the register of baptisms describes Safdar Ali as "a *maulvie* and deputy inspector of schools; a Mohammadan of the Sufi sect."

5. Baptized Christian Government Official

Thus, ten years after the great disputation in Agra when he was among the doughty champions of Islam,

¹Church Missionary Intelligencer, April 1865, p. 124.

Maulvie Safdar Ali became a Christian, a bond-servant of Christ who had chosen him to be a witness to His name among Muslims and whose voice he had not paid heed to for so long.

He wrote about the great happiness that had come to him on his baptism and said:

“And now, thousands upon thousands of thanks and praises be to God, the wise and the gracious, who, of His compassion and goodness, not on account of my pains and toils, but according to His own love and kindness, took pity upon the miserable and forlorn condition of me a sinner, and gradually, by the leading of His wonderful Word, by means of commentaries and expositions of learned Christians, and by the instrumentality of certain brethren who laid the truth before me, put to flight all my difficulties and doubts, my temptations and fears and solved for me every question; thus clearing my mind of the darkness of all its doubts and illuminating it with the light of counsel and understanding. He bestowed upon me full assurance so that I knew His way to be the way of salvation, and accepted with confidence as my master and leader, Him who is the infallible pilot, the guide of the erring, the Saviour of sinners, the Redeemer of the world, the most merciful one, the Lord of heaven and earth, the Sun of righteousness and Prince of peace, to whom all the prophets and apostles, since the world began, successively bore testimony; whose innumerable perfections and illimitable beneficence surpass the limits of understanding—our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whose grace and mercy are everlasting.—Amen

“On the day when I obtained the full assurance of salvation, my relieved heart breathed forth these lines—

‘My friend was very near me, and I roamed far in search of Him;

My well was full of water while I was parched and thirsty.’

“And these also—

‘Praise upon praise! today my journey is ended;
Now the last stage is reached—my pilgrimage is o’er.’

“Another curious coincidence now took place. When I was quite ready to receive baptism I wrote word to that effect to my two dearest friends. One of these, Kasim Khan by name, who for more than two years had been my confidential and sympathizing companion in

religious inquiry, as a preliminary step to a visit in person, addressed a letter to me at Jubbulpore, to say that he would now no longer delay to receive baptism, for in heart he was a Christian already; and that of course he would not attempt to hinder me. As I was on an official tour at the time, the letter did not reach me until after the arrival of my friend himself. And it actually came to pass that Kasim Khan and I were both baptized on the same day—the feast of Christ's nativity. My other friend, Karim Baksh, still entertained doubts; but they were removed, and, in a little time after, he suddenly arrived in Jubbulpore, and was also baptized.

"Such, then, being my case, Sir, it is meet and right that I should offer up continual praises and thanksgiving with all the ability and tongue, and mind, and spirit. Such vast goodness transcends the reach of thought and comprehension. And it is a matter for special thankfulness, that, during the process of my inquiries, the Lord granted me just such opportunities as I needed, of learning that to Christianity belonged that church into which I have now been baptized, which is free from improbabilities and exaggerations, and is adorned and beautified with the jewel of truth.

"Now, if I had procured this unhopèd for, imperishable and unmixed benefit, which from first to last was of the Divine love and pity, and all this happiness and joy, at the cost of dear life and worldly goods, it would have been well worth the price. But the Lord gave it to me *freely*. Of what consequence, then, are the few temporal trials which may be mingled with my lot? And though, in India, the becoming a Christian is a cause of much suffering—friends and strangers alike seeking one's ruin, humiliation and annoyance in every way—still by the grace of God, our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria the Great reigns here, and there is abundance of protection and security. None can inflict illegal injury with impunity. And there is here but little of the affliction which brethren elsewhere have been called to bear. And they endured all and glorified God. And let our trials be ever so great, the comfort, and peace, and grace which the Lord gives us, are infinitely greater.

"I am thankful also, that as the Lord healed my spiritual disease, so that I am fully assured of enjoying by His grace perfect health, and inward strength, and spiritual power, and of being numbered with His people; in like manner He has vouchsafed my deliverance from my dangerous bodily disease, which I had been doctoring

for two years without effect. From the day of my baptism to the present time I have been well. Let who will consider this a chance or coincidence, let who will ascribe it to the accession of confidence and cheerfulness of heart; I accept it as the gift of the Lord.

"It would be my delight, and is my earnest desire, that my fellow countrymen, especially all my friends and neighbours of my own native place, and my own position in life, should become inquirers, and be made partners and partakers with myself in this indefectible grace. I am heartily at their service with tongue and pen, so far as my leisure permits; and indeed I have already made a beginning in this direction. But alas! the bigotry and complacency of these people are immense. If I were the disciple of some Jakeer, no doubt I should procure him a thousand adherents. But immediately people hear the name of Jesus, or of a Christian, they will not listen to a single word; they will not suffer themselves even to look at the Christian advocate.

"When the tidings of my conversion first spread about, many of my friends absolutely refused to credit them. They inquired of myself; and, on obtaining my reply, they declined to correspond with me any further. Nevertheless, there is cause for thankfulness that some individuals have set on foot a series of religious inquiries; and a strong determination is perceptible to search out the truth of the case, and to engage the doctors and eminent men of Islam in a written controversy. So, I am rejoiced to think that the Lord may help these inquirers, and strengthen their hearts, that they may seek after truth and righteousness, until they are embraced by the free grace of God. Amen."

After Baptism

Immediately after his baptism he returned home from the Church as usual. There he drew up a letter informing his family that he had taken the step he had so long contemplated and stated his reasons for having changed his religion. He gave it to his father-in-law and went to the second Christmas day service in the church. He hoped that his baptism would be accepted by his people as a matter of course and that it would not affect his domestic relations with his family and his social position in the Muslim community. Religious allegiance should

not indeed affect a man's social life but in a country where religion is the bond which knits people in a community, it is inevitable that when a man changes his religion he is considered to have deliberately cut himself off from his community. It is still the same in India even today.

Safdar Ali's family, well aware as they were of the severe struggle and the intense austerities which he underwent in his search for truth, his gradual abandonment of all the practices enjoined by Islam on the faithful and his eager study of Christianity with the help of Nehemiah Goreh and the missionary, were, or affected to be, completely astounded when he publicly avowed his faith in Christ and received baptism. It was clear that they had not taken him in earnest and had hoped that he would not, for their sakes if not for any other reason, accept baptism, thus identifying himself with Christian infidels.

His wife threw herself on the ground and remained lying on the floor for three days, refusing to move or take food; and no effort of his could prevail on her to speak to him. It had been a terrible blow to her and to the others in the family. Their attitude and actions were an almost unbearable grief and pain to him. But a day before he had been one of them—loved, respected and relied upon. Now he was one amongst them, but not one of them; his interests were not theirs; his plans did not affect them. They stood apart, all, down to the lowest servant, regarding him with dislike and suspicion.

It was on the fourth day that his wife was persuaded to take food, and her restored strength was employed only to heap reproaches upon him as a faithless husband. Day by day he hoped that she would relent; but she only got more and more bitter against him and she declared that she would never live with him again. The result was that Safdar Ali, with great sorrow and the utmost reluctance, and after using every effort, thought it best to let her have her own way, and sent her and her father and his little girl all back to their home in Agra. Very soon he made them an ample allowance for their

maintenance and continued to make it as long as it was necessary. He also let them, on their departure from Jubbulpore, take whatever they wanted of his things.

The Muslim community received the news of his conversion with great disgust. He was ostracised by his friends and treated with disrespect and contempt by all his former co-religionists. The contumely, the abuses and the reproach with which he was met wherever he went he found it very hard to bear. His official position and social status saved him from open persecution, physical violence and molestation which would otherwise have been his lot. "Him, whom they before regarded as a learned *maulvie*, a man of sound sense, they now declared a fool and a mad man. His friends when they saw him coming, turned aside and took a different path, to avoid him; and the lower sort did not spare, by look and words, to show their dislike."

The leaders of the Mussalman community, "amidst all concealed enmity, affected to lament his having made so foolish and ill-advised a step, and assured him that, had he consulted them, they would have soon set his doubts at rest, and they told him, as a set off against his loss, that an European had just renounced Christianity for Islam. Even Hindus who, one would have supposed, would have felt no interest one way or the other, joined the Mussalmans in lamenting his folly."

Soon after his baptism, Safdar Ali himself wrote his apology to his Mohammedan brethren for his change of faith, under the title *Niygaznamma*. It is said to have become a "standard work." No Mohammedan controversialist has been able to answer it and no better book can be put into the hands of a Mohammedan inquirer. It is not known if it was made available to readers unacquainted with Urdu.

.....
 Later, he gave an account of his conversion in his Urdu-Persian poem, *Gaza-e-Ruh*.

It was also known that he engaged himself in writing his autobiography. But the present writer, and those who have helped him, have not been able to discover if

it was ever completed and if so whether it was translated into English and published.

All his life long he suffered continuous ill-health because of heart trouble. His heart had been seriously injured during his life of asceticism as a Sufi *fakeer*. One of the rigorous practices which he followed in self-mortification was to hold his breath unduly long as a means of subjecting the body to the mind. This had affected his heart. But when at his baptism the intense strain came to an end, his physical health began vastly to improve.

The following paragraph from the communication which Mr. Champion sent to London headquarters of the C.M.S. which was published in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* will be read with interest.

“I am anxious to let you know how the conversion of the *Maulvie* was received by the authorities here; indeed, I feel it to be a duty to them, and to myself and the English public. I know that it is sometimes thought and said that Europeans in India display a lamentable indifference, nay, almost opposition, to the spread of the Gospel. To some extent this is true, but in its exaggerated form it is unjust and untrue, as I now hope to show. I am not now about to speak of the feeling entertained towards the *Maulvie* by the Europeans generally, many of whom expressed themselves in the kindest manner when speaking to me of him. I wish to show that those who hold responsible posts as Government servants and were his masters, were ready to welcome him, and give him the right hand of fellowship.

“My remarks refer to four gentlemen, whose names of course I do not give. One, on hearing from a third party of *Maulvie's* baptism, of his own accord wrote him a short note, as follows—‘My dear Safdar Ali, accept my sympathy, and be assured that I shall pray that God will give you that peace of mind which passeth all understanding. Yours sincerely, &c.’ Another assured him of his earnest desire to serve him, and his wish that one who had given such a proof of strength and conscientiousness of mind, should be promoted to a more important post, where his integrity and high qualities might be more useful and commanding. Another told him, that now he was a brother, and that, although he had liked him before, he liked him much more now, and

concluded by giving him his hand, an honour much coveted, and highly thought of, by natives. The fourth wrote to him thus—'It is with much joy and thankfulness that I hear of your having been baptized into the faith of Christ. As God, in his mercy and goodness has removed your doubts, and shown both to you and to me, the true light, let us strive in our daily life and practice to be Christians, not in name only, but in deed
Your sincere friend &c.'

"The gentleman first mentioned, on hearing of the news of his baptism from himself, wrote, 'Dear Safdar Ali, I received your note only last night. I was, and am, delighted to hear that you had obtained consolation through faith in Christ. I hear that you endure many trials; but you know also the words, 'Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.' I pray that you may be delivered out of your troubles. . . . I hear that you are baptized by immersion. That is, no doubt, the primitive form of baptism. With every good wish, yours truly, &c.'

"These men, let it be remembered, are not picked men. They were merely the men who happened to be the *Maulvie's* superiors at or about the time of his baptism, and there are many others, I am convinced, who would have acted in the same way. Thus our countrymen are not so opposed to the progress of Christianity as is often supposed, are not Christian heathen, but are willing to countenance, help, and sympathize with those who, from pure motives, embrace our faith.

"A few words will describe his course since. He has been steadfast under an accumulation of trial, and zealous too. Like Paul, he has received all that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching them the things which concern the Lord Jesus. His position in his department, and his high character, render it impossible for his enemies to attack him openly, or to endeavour to crush him at a blow; but perhaps the thousand petty annoyances he has been subjected to are harder to bear. His letters have been opened and read, or they have not reached their destination. His plans have been frustrated; his printing (he has a press) found fault with; his creditors have been set against him; agents have refused to act for him; his ill-health has been commented upon, and rejoiced in, and regarded as the first fruit of his conversion. His press was so near being ruined that at one time he had resolved to close it.

"He has not, it is true, been exposed to insult or danger, but the spirit which breathes in Mohammedanism is the same as ever; but for our rule he had long since been murdered without doubt. When in attendance on the Deputy Commissioner one day he remained outside in his *palka*, and overheard the conversation of some Mussalmans, who did not know he was near. After conversing for some time about his conversion one of them asked, 'What is to be done with such?' The reply was, 'There is nothing for it but killing them.'

"Some time after his baptism the storm of opposition seemed lulled. It, however, broke out with more violence than ever, the cause apparently being that several Mohammedans had visited him for conversation on religious subjects. His enemies paid him the high compliment of saying his house was the Christian fortress, and he the maker of Christians. They met together to plan means of ruining him. They said that no one should render him any assistance, and, if possible, supplies for his household should be stopped. As his workmen were helping a Christian, no one should offer them his pipe, or give them water to drink.

"Amidst all this he is steadfast, and exhibits the most Christian temper."

Like Nehemiah Goreh, Safdar Ali retained the old Muslim dress and his Muslim manner of life, except that instead of Muslim prayers and attendance at the mosque he went to worship in the Christian church and used Christian prayers in his private devotions at home. He continued to study the Bible diligently and discovered more and more spiritual riches and used them in his attempts to live as a witness to Christ in his official and social position. Likewise he wisely retained his Mohammedan name and did not feel called upon to exchange it for any un-Indian and outlandish name which would have marked him out as a convert. For all outward appearance, he was still a Muslim and moved freely and without feeling strange and awkward among Muslims in as friendly a manner as they would let him. He was "one among his brethren in all that he lawfully and Christianly could be."

This made it possible for him to exercise considerable spiritual influence over those whom he moved with and

gave him many opportunities of being useful to them. They were also thus enabled to watch his conduct and behaviour as a follower of Christ. His unimpeachable honesty, his unmistakable humility of spirit, the complete absence of pride or a superiority complex because of his official position, marked him out as a sincere Christian who was humbly endeavouring to follow in the footsteps of his Master.

Amidst all his trials and difficulties he was in touch with his *guru* and faithful friend Nehemiah Goreh, and got from him constant advise and great encouragement to bear his cross without flinching.

6. His Writings

The supreme value to the Indian Church of converts like Maulvies Safdar Ali and Imad-ud-din and of learned Hindu scholars like Pundit Nehemiah Goreh and Krishna Mohun Banerjea lies, (quite apart from their proving how Christianity is acceptable to minds deeply impregnated with Hindu and Muslim religious thought) partly in the exemplary manner of their search for truth, but mainly in their re-interpretation of Christian truth on the basis of their religious backgrounds. Such a re-interpretation is bound to be of the greatest practical and effective use in Christian apologetics. It is a great pity that nowadays the writings of such distinguished converts, learned in their own ancient religions, are not utilised in Christian evangelism. In the faint-hearted and diffident approaches that are sporadically made these days to take the Gospel to the Hindu and Muslim intelligentsia no attempt is made to benefit by what such men have written.

It is apparently presumed—without much reason—that these century old writings must necessarily have become obsolete. But when one reads some of them one feels that, apart from the inevitable change in the intellectual attitudes of educated Hindus and Muslims which has undoubtedly taken place during the last one hundred years, the basic religious and philosophic position of the two religions remain the same; and needs to be controverted in

much the same way as ever—and an appeal intelligible to them be made. In this, the re-thinking of Christianity as well as Hinduism and Islam which these learned scholars did, and the way in which their incisive intelligence and keen minds became satisfied with Truth as it is found in Christianity, must necessarily be of the greatest value. It is a great pity that competent Christian evangelists to the intelligentsia are not made to study these writings, old as they have become.

One fails to understand why Nehemiah Goreh's *Hindu Philosophical Systems, A Rational Refutation*, (or its original *The Shaddarshana Darpana*), and his *Christianity Not of Man But of God*, Krishna Mohun Banerjea's *Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy*, Dr. Imad-ud-din's *Talim-i-Muhammed* (a comparison of the teachings of Mohammed with those of the Holy Scriptures) and *Apology of Al Kindy* (a translation into Urdu of an important Arabic defence of Christianity unearthed by Sir William Muir), and Safdar Ali's *Niygaznanma* are not being as extensively used, as they should be. They are now of more than merely antiquarian interest. One can only plead for a fresh study of these books with a view to assess their value for work among the intelligentsia of today.

I

When the Secretaries of the Church Missionary Society wrote to Safdar Ali, soon after his baptism, as mentioned above, they very rightly asked him for his opinion of Dr. Pfander's book *Mizan-ul-haqq*, as to how far it was useful and could be used in evangelistic work among Mohammedans. In his letter in reply, already quoted from, Safdar Ali gave his opinion about the books and also took the occasion to point out two important things which need to be attended to in such books intended to be apologetics. He wrote:

“You have been pleased to consult me about the ‘*Mizan-ul-Haqq*.’ I shall be in a better position to reply to your queries when I have read it through once more. But, so far as I made acquaintance with it when pursu-

ing my religious inquiries, to the best of my recollection, the work in question I consider an excellent one, and adequate to the instruction of Mohammedans.

"There are, certainly, two things which ought to be attended to in such treatises.

"First, I admit that of all the particular arguments, questions and points contained in those books which the Mohammedans have written to prove the corruption of Scripture—one or two violent and voluminous ones, too, in our author's time—there are very few indeed which have not been answered in the '*Mizan-ul-Haqq*' and in respect of which the inquirer cannot therein find full satisfaction. But these objections have been expressed in detail; many of them have been copied from learned men, both Jewish and Christian, and, in reference to the Old Testament particularly, great pains have been taken. Now the refutation of these objections, is, in this work, given in a *general* and *summary* way, while the objections themselves are given bit by bit, and the reasons for the objections one by one. I am of opinion that the more enlarged and particular the reply can be made, the more satisfactory it will be; and this should be especially borne in mind in the case of the apocrypha. The diversities of opinion, also respecting the authority of the several sacred books, and their inspiration or non-inspiration, which have been recorded, ought to be more fully dealt with. I consider that these objections ought to be attended to, as their refutation is not to be found in Commentaries.

"Secondly, Mohammedans have disparaged the contents of the Bible, either from their own misapprehension of them, or through copying from the writings of atheists, heretics, and unbelievers. Although these animadversions do not prove the corruption of the sacred Scriptures, or refute the arguments which have been alleged for the non-inspiration of the Koran and Hadis, and for the emptiness of Mohammed's prophetic pretensions; still when a man has come to his ancestral religion, and to be assured of its falsity, he will doubt all religions, and will magnify small difficulties, and fall into quite a state of scepticism. I think, therefore, that as the defects said to be in the Bible, e.g., the mutual contradiction of passages, narratives &c., the doctrines which imply conflicting qualities in the Divine nature, some of the prophecies and miracles and many more besides, are serious difficulties and hindrances in the way of inquirers, explanations of them, and conse-

quent removal of those difficulties and hindrances, is most desirable.”

Both these points which Safdar Ali makes are important and must be noted by those engaged in writing apologetic books for the use of Muslim inquirers. It is well known that non-Christians notice, or discover, defects in our Scriptures and in our religious conceptions and practices which, because of our familiarity with them and the long period they have existed among us, do not appear to us to be peculiar and open to criticism. It requires a convert from Hinduism or Islam to point these out to us and to tell us how they strike the Hindu or Muslim who takes a new but interested look at our religious tenets and practices.

The points that he makes are (1) that the objections of Hindus and Muslims must be taken seriously and every attempt should be made to examine them and refute them in full detail and to the intellectual satisfaction of the objector; (2) matters like defects in the Bible, the so-called mutual contradictions, the doctrines which seem to contradict commonly accepted ideas of what divine nature is should also not be treated lightly. What has been acceptably dealt with in Christian circles might still loom large as obstructions to understanding by those outside, and we must not spare any pains to explain them in a way satisfactory to the inquirer.

II

The importance of “Preaching to Mohammedans” and doing it effectively was dealt with by Safdar Ali, his friend and fellow-student and along with him an equally zealous defender of the faith and later also a convert to Christianity, Imad-ud-din, and the Rev. T. Valpy French, in the papers they gave to the General Missionary Conference for All-India which was held in Allahabad at the end of 1872—the first of its kind in India,—which later became a decennial affair. One hundred and twenty-two missionaries representing nineteen missionary societies assembled. There were, besides, 14 independent

persons not connected with any missionary society. There were 28 prominent Indian Christian pastors and laymen in the gathering. Papers were read (followed by discussions) on subjects grouped under the following seven heads: Prayer for the Holy Spirit; Preaching; Education and the Educated Classes; Medical Missions; the Native Church; the Press; and Miscellaneous. The three papers on preaching to Mohammedans mentioned above were among the most notable among the papers presented. They are well worth being treated at length. They are replete with wise and practical suggestions as to how evangelism among Muslims should be undertaken, and carried out. Imad-ud-din (who was then the pastor in Amritsar) and Safdar Ali who was extra assistant commissioner in Jubbulpore, sent their papers in Urdu and they were read in the Conference, translated into English.

Imad-ud-din

Imad-ud-din emphasized the need to make very special efforts to reach Muslims. "Many books have been written for them and there has been much preaching. But at this time I see that it is most important that we should do *certain things* for them." The great obstacles which hinder Muslims accepting Christian truth are the doctrines of the Trinity, the Sonship of Christ and the Divinity of Christ. "The salvation of men depends on these truths. Hence we should first of all show that the Bible which reveals these things is indeed and of a truth the Word of God and that it was revealed to us gradually." The books of the Bible prove these doctrines. The books so far written to prove that the Bible is the Word of God are not sufficient and are not convincing enough. "Mohammedans do not think them sufficient, but they wish for a book on this particular point, a book which would be filled with arguments conclusive and silencing." We want a book which will give the evidence of the Church on this point, generation after generation.

The second need is for a short abridged commentary on the Bible specially written for Muslims, which would put an end to their confused understanding of the Bible and

silence their "stupid objection" which keep them far from the truth. It should show them the "beauties of God's Word" and solve their special difficulties.

It is then necessary to show them "that the Christian religion does not interfere with the customs of the country" and the indigenou manner of life. It has only to do with the heart.

"The stumbling blocks which we as Christians place in the way of Mussalmans should be removed." We by our un-Christian living form the greatest obstacles to the spread of Christianity in the country. "The religion of Christ, from the first until now, has been propogated by example; but now in our congregations we have few worthy of being reckoned examples." "We preach a new birth, but in our own lives we do not exemplify our new birth. How can they shine who have no light in themselves? Of what use is it in books to show forth the Christian religion, when in the morals of our people the effects of the Gospel are not found?"

How true Imad-ud-din was—and is even today in respect of conditions at present. His words are perfectly applicable to the situation today and explain why Christian preaching, even where it is still being done (and alas! it is not being done in many places) is still so utterly ineffective. It is not being backed by life.

"Of preaching in the bazaar I can only say that only strong, full-grown Christians should be sent into the city streets—men who would put forth reasonable and convincing arguments. We should not send men of low attainments amongst them. Only those preachers who fight with spiritual weapons will be successful against Mussalmans. But disputes on words, and hard speeches, such as are sometimes heard in the bazaar sermon, only cause their hearts to become more hardened against the truth.

"We should cultivate the society of Mohammedans and love them. In their troubles we should help them. In their sickness we should make tender enquiries after them. At death we should follow them on the bier to their graves. In joy we should wish them joy and rejoice with them. This yearning after them is better than bazaar preaching. It is of no use to go near them to preach and then live far off from them."

How true, how very true even today!

It is only proper that the paper of Safdar Ali should be quoted in full.

Maulvie Safdar Ali

"I regret that I am unable, from want of time, either to give this important subject the consideration it deserves, or to write my thoughts upon it with careful arrangement. In this paper I place at your service whatever I have been able thus hastily to compose.

"There are several topics regarding preaching to Mohammedans, which are, in my opinion, deserving the earnest attention of every preacher—nay, I will say, they have a special and imperative claim on it. Some of these are of course those which demand the attention not only of those who address themselves to Mohammedans, but of those who preach to other peoples; and indeed of all Christians.

"Our first and great work among non-Christians is to spread the knowledge of God's word, and especially to make them acquainted with the Gospel of that salvation which is to be obtained through our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence we ought to pray for God's guidance and assistance, that the statement of the faith, and love, and glorious hope of the Christian may (as far as possible and more than other things) be always, everywhere and in detail, set forth. I urge this because I believe that, excepting a very few persons indeed, most Mohammedans are quite unacquainted with these most important and heart-attracting truths, and have learned to regard as comprising the sum and substance of the Christian religion such sentences as these: 'Understand that Christ was put to death for our sins. Enough. Nothing more is necessary for salvation. Salvation is prepared.' There are many causes of this ignorance, but with God's blessing the removal of it will be easy through preaching and writing, if only they be more abundantly employed.

"Would that all preachers were more fond of preaching the perfect and pure, guiding truths of the word of God than they are of objecting to the useless and bad teachings of the Vedas and Puranas, the Hadis and Quran! Would that they narrated first and with much greater clearness and detail the super-excellent and pre-eminent works and words of Christ—rather than the details of the unworthy conduct of Krishna and

Mohammed,—and that instead of the two or three tracts such as the “*Din ki Tariq*,” and the “*Tariq-ul-Hayat*,” we had hundred of books of similar character!

“It is no reply to this to say, that the sowers of God’s word have to remove the stones and uproot the weeds, which for a length of time have collected in the soil, that is, they must make manifest the untruth of the old religions of this country, and expose the ignorance of their founders. For a sower must not forget his principal work of sowing, nor give more attention to his second work of gathering weeds and stones than to his first work. Nor is it by any means right for him so to perform his second work, that the land should become more spoiled, or should become hard, or that other mischievous, hard stones should become imbedded in it; or other noxious weeds should grow up in it.

“In these days, and for some time past, I have heard certain complaints made, and indeed have observed them in newspapers and books, and these complaints as regards some native Christian brethren are true, and it is necessary to remove the cause of them, and to do it quickly, and that some means should be adopted that in the future not a vestige of them may remain among us.

“Among the things complained of, the first is this, that some of us have left the great, important and established truths of our religion, and have begun to speak and write of small, insignificant and fanciful matters.

“Another is this, that they do not bear with the bigotry, violence and abuse of the Mohammedans as they ought, but answer them in the same manner, and even adopting their style, going so far as to employ hard words, and contemptuous expressions in their writings and addresses, and without reason pain the hearts of jealous and sensitive people, and enrage them. Although I have pointed out so great a fault as this, it must be remembered, that I do not bring this charge against all, but against a few only—yet as I perceive that great harm results from their conduct, on this account, I think it necessary to speak of it.

“There are certain sects among the Mohammedans, which are known as Sufis, Mashaikhs, Faquirs and Darweshes and are found in different parts of India, in some places many, in some few. In the Punjab especially there are many, and in the districts of Multan and Uchch their villages are numerous. I think that it is most desirable that our efforts should be directed to these people. It is true that among them many, who

are called Pirzade, Sahibzade, Makhdum Sahib, Hazratji, and so forth are worldly men, who on account of the fame of their ancestors or from having in various ways made themselves famous as Darweshes, secure much riches and worldly honour.

“Yet there is no doubt, that among these and among their disciples and enquirers, there are many men who truly love God and earnestly desire to obtain his favour, and who practise on this account exceedingly severe austerities, and engage in labours night and day. They leave the world, and wander about in the jungles, hungry and thirsty, lamenting their ignorance of God and His will, and continue every moment in disquietude and unrest on this account. And although they have derived from their leaders many fanciful notions of the ancient philosophers, and beholding certain wonderful phenomena (such as those of mesmerism) have been misled to regard them as miraculous and beneficent manifestations vouchsafed by God as confirmations of these fanciful notions, and thus fall into error; yet their inquiries and spiritual longings are not satisfied. These longings God has aroused in these people in various ways, and to a much greater extent than among other Mohammedans, and has in His wondrous wisdom caused very much of His Holy Law to reach them, and produced in their hearts a constant and deep conviction of sin and truly, &c.’

“At this time India does not sleep or remain careless regarding religious questions. It is evident that in various places an agitating movement has set in, which has been caused by the spread of God’s Word, by preaching and teaching. Many, both Hindus and Mussalmans, stand ready, and have sent forth books, tracts, and newspapers with the object of establishing the truth of their religion. In these they write articles, in which not only are the claims of their own religions advanced, but many arguments are urged against the Christian religion, and these are read by a great many people. On this account I would suggest, that regarding this as a most favourable opportunity, certain persons should be selected from among us, who should read all these books, tracts and papers, and should consult together and arrange to reply to them in some paper in the manner which may be thought most desirable.

“There is one other matter, which it is imperative I should represent to this great meeting. It is this; in the army which is aiming at the conquest of this land, of late a division appears to have arisen, which has gone

so far that when two soldiers meet they begin at once to fight together! I mean, that in these days among brother Christians of different Missions much greater controversy than formerly has begun. In fact they strive to refute and contradict each other's statements, and not only so, but they have begun to write books and tracts to confute each other. On account of this among us brethren, and especially among us Indian Christians, who are new converts and not accustomed to discussion as it is carried on among fully civilized nations, there is great cause for anxiety, that that love should be diminished which should be our special characteristic."

How greatly do we need to learn this lesson of love among Christians and mutual co-operation in the service of the Master instead of petty rivalry! Christ's religion of love cannot be preached by people who do not love one another, nor except through sincerely loving the people who are preached to.

The paper of the Rev. T. V. French does not need to be summarized. A few sentences may however be quoted.

"There is another lesson also which the study of sufi works often impresses on me, as it was impressed on Henry Martyn in Shiraz; that there is a deep feeling of need stirring in the hearts of many devout Moslem, need of nearness to God, of a higher, divine life; of fellowship with the best, purest, truest, loveliest Being, with God; a dim, restless, unsatisfied craving after a life the counterpart of that which St. Paul describes as experienced in himself; 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.' Certain new developments of the Christian consciousness and religious experience both in England and America, seem almost exactly to correspond to this craving; and calculated to meet this deep unsatisfied need.

"I have a strong conviction that in preaching to Mohammedans, still more in writing for them, there are some aspirations in common between the most pious and most spiritual of them and us, to which our attention should be carefully directed: and the satisfaction of which they would find to be fully contemplated and as fully attained in the provisions of the plan of Redemption.

"The need is for preaching to the better class of Mohammedans more by our lives and our writings; lives

of more humility and holiness; more poverty and self-denial; more weaned-ness and detachment of spirit from this earth; lives, in fact, better becoming these high teachings and upward drawings of the Gospel of Christ;—and *works* of a less controversial and more devotional and spiritual cast; which is at present a marked and most deplorable desideratum of our Tract and Book Societies.” How true again of the present day!

III

There is one other piece of Safdar Ali's writing which can, very appropriately to our purpose and with great benefit to our readers, be quoted. He wrote it 34 years after his baptism, in the maturity of Christian experience and about the end of his life. Like all his writings it reveals something about his own inner life.

The early association of Safdar Ali and Imad-ud-din, as zealous co-defenders of their inherited religion which they had learnt well and in which they had steeped themselves, their parallel spiritual adventures, both undergoing intense physical, mental and spiritual travail in the pursuit of truth, both finding their haven in utter abandonment to Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour, have already been mentioned. As Christians however they had to live not only geographically far apart but under vastly different conditions. It does not appear that they ever met and exchanged confidences. But each kept in touch with the other. How else could it be! They were kindred souls, though so far apart from each other in so many ways. One was an ordained minister of the Gospel, in full time service of the Church. The other was a layman, a well-placed Government servant and yet as faithful a disciple as the other, considering himself in all his ways a servant of Christ and trying his best to live as such and to fulfil in his own secular occupation all the demands of Christian living and the obligation of Christian witnessing by life and word.

It purports to be a review of the three commentaries which his friend Imad-ud-din had written—on *St. Matthew*, *St. John* and the *Book of the Acts of the*

Apostles—in Urdu, and had published some time earlier, for the use of Urdu speaking Christians and those who had come from a Muslim background. Safdar Ali had not merely read them but had been using them daily in his morning devotions. He had found them so very useful in his spiritual life that he writes to commend the commentaries for similar regular use by Christian people.

When he wrote it he had grown old. He had retired from government service some years earlier, having risen to the important position of extra assistant commissioner in the Central Provinces. His life and conduct as a Christian government servant had been exemplary and noticeable for its integrity and efficiency. He had also become well known as a distinguished Christian writer in Urdu. It is a great pity that nothing of his writings has been made available in English.

The article on Imad-ud-din's commentaries was also written in Urdu. It was translated into English and published in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*.¹ Introducing it to the readers of the magazine, the editor says:

"The article brings before us the pleasing spectacle of one of these old friends reaching out the hand of welcome to the work of his fellow-student, whom he had not seen for many years. It is also interesting in itself, not only for the biographical facts it contains, but for the glimpse it affords of the devout and liberal mind of the author. It is entitled "Glad Tidings for Christians—concerning Three Commentaries on the New Testament" and is as follows:

"For more than a year past I have daily, at a fixed time read a stated portion of these commentaries on *St. Matthew*, *St. John*, and *the Acts of the Apostles*, to obtain spiritual blessing. I have read, not cursorily, but with deep attention, much meditation and fervent prayer. The books are in Urdu. They are the joint product of the Rev. Robert Clark, M.A., and the Rev. *Maulvie* Imad-ud-din, D.D. My daily readings in these three com-

¹ Vol. XLIX, 1898. pp. 597-600.

mentaries have resulted in much spiritual benefit, and have enriched me in matters of the faith, both theoretical and practical. What I now write, I do so because of the gratitude and thankfulness that is in my heart.

"It is a fact that the Rev. *Maulvie* Imad-ud-din and I have been friends in religion ever since we were students together in Agra, now more than forty-five years ago. While we were yet Mohammedans we were never in accord in matters concerning that faith. He was not only a staunch, but an ardent and intolerant Sunni,¹ while I, though a Sunni, was a Tafzeelea in heart. After a while *Maulvie* Imad-ud-din became a Ghairmuqalid, and so remained *mauqadar*, while I was a firm Muqalid Hanfi.

"He then became a bigoted Wahabi,² and I, abjuring alike Wahabis and heretics, walked in the plain, middle path of orthodoxy. Finally, Imad-ud-din became a Sufi and the disciple of a light of Sufism, while I for long declined even to turn my mind to the teachings of this sect, though in the end I, too, accepted their faith. Nevertheless we differed, for while he was in the state of *Sukr* (=intoxication) I was in that of *Sahaf*.

"When, some thirty or thirty-five years ago, we began to inquire into religion, he was in Lahore, in the Punjab, and I was at Jubbulpore, in Central India. From then till now it has been our hap only to meet three or four times, and that for a few hours, during which neither these commentaries, nor indeed any others, as far as I can remember, have ever been mentioned between us.

"In matters of the faith, the *Maulvie* Sahib owes his teaching, training and blessing to the Rev. R. Clark, whom he calls his spiritual father; and I know not by whom Mr. Clark was taught, or through whom he was blessed. It has been my privilege only some three times to see (and then merely for a few minutes) this noble and honoured servant of God. I was taught concerning the faith, first by the Rev. Mr. Champion, and latterly by the Rev. Father Goreh; while he, in turn, was taught

¹ Sunni is a follower of the sunnah ("form", "outline", "mode") i.e., the view and usage of the Prophet.

² Wahabis;—a community or sect founded in 1691 by one Mohammed-ibn-Abdul Wahhab, in Nejd, a village in Arabia, with the intention of restoring Islam to its original purity. It was brought to India by one Sayyid Ahmad, who was born in 1786 in Rai Bareli. It started a revivalist movement among Muslims in India.

and fashioned by many good men at different times, in number perhaps over a hundred.

"Our lives have run in different and widely separate channels; yet, despite it all, it is indeed a matter to me of utmost astonishment and most hearty joy and assurance to find that, with the exception of two or three minor points, so insignificant that I cannot at this moment even remember them, I am in hearty accord with these commentaries in every way, so much as, indeed that had I myself been a fellow-worker with these more experienced writers, I would have written naught else than they have done.

"I thankfully confess that this is the outcome of the work of the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of unity and of one mind, who has caused us, so widely separate and of such different minds, to be of one heart, one faith, one purpose, and one walk. We all now drink the Water of one Fountain, and eat of the one Bread. Blessed be His Name for ever! Amen.

"Grant, O Lord, that all they that do confess Thy Holy Name, may agree in the truth of Thy Holy Word, and live in unity and godly love.

"In truth, such commentaries are needed on every portion of the Word of God and the need is unfulfilled as yet, for many of the portions are not treated of in these books. For long on every hand we have been hearing the cry that the Church needs to grow in spiritual life, and for those who do not know English, a very great means of promoting such growth are commentaries in the vernacular. For those who, like me, live in places away from the ministrations of religion, of teaching, and the companionship of the godly, such commentaries are a mercy, and a good gift and blessing from God, for which He is to be humbly thanked.

"I have read these three commentaries from one end to the other. They are built on the foundation, solid, strong, and good, of the Word of God itself. The subject-matter dealt with is illustrated by other verses which bear on it. It is manifest that no commentary on the Word of God can equal the commentary of the Word itself, when one verse is made to illumine another.

"Careful examination has satisfied me that there are no useless references, nor any mere verbosity. All is clear, concise, and to the point. On the other hand, there is no stint in writing, or in references, wherever such are needed, to elucidate a matter to the full. In subsequent editions, where now, in some places, references are given, it would, in my opinion, be well to

quote the verses themselves. This would obviate the difficulty and inconvenience attendant to the reader in searching out the references given.

"The authors have further been at great pains to lay the foundations of their commentaries on matters in which all agree, not in things doubtful, or on those on which opinions differ; so that these books, though the product of clergymen of the Church of England, are nevertheless for the profit and help of all the Churches of God. Whenever the commentators have come to any subject on which differences exist, they have frankly said so. They have written in plain, unvarnished language, with nothing of prejudice or desire to push forward their own ideas, so that the members of all Churches may be able to see their own faces in their own glasses.

"It has been a very great joy to me to observe that, though the commentators are both honoured and leading clergymen of the Church of England, yet in matters which affect the Churches they are liberal-minded and fair-hearted, and put all things in a most candid and kind manner. They are neither High Church nor Low Church, but are as liberal in thought as is worthy, and as heart could wish. They have written, not as members of a church, but simply as servants of Christ to whom they belong. They have given the meaning in words and sentences worthy of the subject.

"These commentaries have of very truth been written for the teaching and nourishment of the Church. We who are Urdu speakers may rightly deem them our Indian 'Scott's Commentaries.' They contain also the best teaching for non-Christians, and especially for Mohammedans. Their doubts and objections and deep difficulties are tersely dealt with, that they, too, may benefit.

"To pastors and evangelists these books are of the greatest importance. They form a treasure-house of texts and teaching for them, and for every preacher of the Gospel. For private, family, or public reading these commentaries are especially suitable.

"I have examined also their literary merits. They are not writing in the sapless, dry language of the would-be mullah, nor in that of the pedagogue or pedant. The style is simple, natural, polished, terse, yet attractive.

"The commentary on the *Gospel according to St. John* concerns itself, especially in parts, with the refutation of Unitarianism, but all other portions are also ably dealt with. I trust those dear friends of mine who for

some time have been under the spell of Unitarianism will profit by these books.

"In my opinion these three commentaries are of such high value that they ought to be in every Urdu-reading household. So great would be the profit, that it would be a most right and good thing were those who are able to purchase them to do so, and present them to such households as are unable to buy them for themselves.

"The Servant,

SAFDAR ALI

"Of Bhandara, Central Provinces of India."

7. Above Everything a Christian

Such is the story of one who may well be described as an ideal Christian layman in secular employment. His story reminds us all the time of Professor Ramchundra of Delhi, who like-wise had struggled his way through from orthodox Hinduism to Christianity and who like Safdar Ali was in the service of the Government in the education department but considered himself above everything else a Christian, with a Christian's obligations to live for Christ and to witness to his love. Both remain shining examples to all laymen who occupy for their living secular positions and yet who, because of their Christian vocation must be proclaimers to the world by life and word of the love of God in Christ Jesus.

One essential pre-requisite for effective Christian living is a hunger and thirst for God. No one whose soul does not pant after God, "as the heart panteth after the water brooks," can ever find him. You do not come upon God casually. You must seek him till you find him. For everyone that seeketh findeth. Indifference, nominal allegiance to religion, pretence at religion, hypocrisy, show—these lead nowhere, and never to God. You cannot attain to any real knowledge of God, can never get any compelling experience of him in the depths of your soul, unless you devote yourself wholly and whole-heartedly and all the time, without intermission and interruption, to this search for God.

The second requirement for effective Christian living—the only kind of living demanded of Christians—is utter committal to truth, complete discipleship. To live Christ, to live for Christ, to live in Christ, must become the sole and all-mastering ambition of life—not the petty baubles of official preferment, social prestige, worldly competence, local fame, “salutes in the market place.” Alas! these have become these days the be-all and the end-all of most Christians. Hence our ineffectiveness in our own lives and our impotence as witnesses to Christ. Hence also our moribund churches.

In these days lives like Safdar Ali's and Ramchundra's must be read and re-read. That is why they have been written.

Janni Alli

1. Noble's "Children in the Faith"

On the morning of the 18th of November 1865, a month after the death of the Rev. Robert Turlington Noble, a large concourse of the most prominent and highly respectable citizens of Masulipatam assembled in the Buttayah Pettah Church mission hall to honour the memory of the deceased missionary, to perpetuate his name by starting a Noble Memorial Fund and to give expression to the high esteem in which he and his work were held by the public of the place.

Gudur Krishnarow Pantulu Garu was in the chair. Other leading members of the local Hindu community were present, along with a large number of the old pupils of Noble's school to all of whom he had been a personal friend.

The school had then been in existence for 22 years. During that period no less than 11 pupils of the school had abandoned the faith of their fathers and had embraced Christianity. Every one of them had become an emissary of Christ and all were actively at work attempting to spread the Gospel among the Telugu people.

A prominent part is taken in the proceedings by a distinguished looking young man, Janni Alli, a convert of Noble from Islam. Having finished his schooling in Noble's school, he was assisting in one of the allied mission schools. Having been trained by the Englishman to speak English, he spoke it with a polished accent and with a profuse vocabulary. He had been asked to give the main address at the meeting in English. After the address had been delivered, the purport of the address was explained in fluent Telugu by Surayya Garu, for the benefit of those in the audience who, not having been to

Noble's school, were not familiar with English. The chairman who opened and closed the meeting with dignified solemnity paid a noble tribute to the missionary. Those present subscribed Rs. 1,290 on the spot towards the memorial fund.

Robert Noble was a great missionary—one of the greatest—not only because he was a pioneer, but also because like his Master he sought not his own glory, but “laid himself out for the sole glory of Christ.”¹ His life was one of utter devotion to his Master. He wanted nothing for himself, except to be used in His service. As Janni Alli mentioned in his address, “His true greatness was his love and gratitude to his greatest Benefactor, best Friend and most merciful Saviour, which were reflected in his love for the souls and bodies of his fellow-sinners.”

Having come out to give and to be spent in the service of his beloved Saviour, he never once went home for rest or recoupment. He never thought of himself all the 24 years of his life in Masulipatam. He spent himself out for the country which he had adopted as his own.

His achievement was no insignificant one. No less than eleven of his high caste pupils had seen the true light and had been drawn towards it.

1. Ratnam, Brahmin
2. Bushanam, Soodra
3. Kristayya, Brahmin
4. Mullaya, Brahmin
5. Janni Alli, Mussulman
6. Narasimhulu, Brahmin
7. Venkatachellum, Brahmin
8. Sivaramkistamma, Brahmin
9. Subbarayudu, Brahmin
10. Venkatramayya, Brahmin
11. Ramchundra, Brahmin.

¹ Noble was asked, on his death-bed, by his friend Mr. Sharp, some questions. One of them was, “What ought a missionary to do?” Noble answered, “Lay himself out for the sole glory of God.” (vide *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1866, p. 80).

All Brahmins, with two exceptions—one a *soodra* of a class ranking next to the Brahmin, and the other a Mussulman, a class more difficult of access than either the Brahmin or the *Soodra*. A unique achievement.

Robert Noble began and ran his school exclusively for the higher classes in Hindu society and admitted into the school none but Brahmins, *Soodras* and Muslims. But so far from the school being intended to abet caste prejudices, it was organized and worked for the express purpose of extirpating caste from the minds of the pupils. No distinctions of caste were allowed inside the school. His young converts carried with them no caste prejudices into the Christianity they embraced.

This was clearly demonstrated when Noble's body was carried to the grave by six Christians—five of them Noble's own converts from different social backgrounds—a Brahmin, a *velama*, a *Soodra* of a lower caste, a *pariah* and a Muslim. The sixth was an Englishman. (The precedent for Christian burials in India had been set very early in the history of Christianity in India when sixty-two years earlier—in October 1803—the body of Golook, a Bengalee *Soodra* who had been baptized two years before, was carried to the burial ground by a baptized *koolin* Brahmin, Bhyrub, a baptized Mohammedan, Peeroo, and two Englishmen, Felix Carey and Joshua Marshman.)

And this influence and effect was not confined to the converts alone. Noble's non-Christian pupils, who later came to occupy important positions all over the country, exhibited a similar victory over caste prejudices and followed an entirely new standard of justice and uprightness, uncommon in those days (and, alas, even now). The government of the day knew how to appreciate this. If you had been in Noble's school it was a qualification for public service. Sir Charles Trevelyan called the school "the Cambridge of South India." The government wanted just magistrates and honest revenue collectors; and in the Northern Circars they were to be found only among Noble's students. Though for themselves they had

resisted the personal call of Christ, they sought to emulate in character those who had. They bore no ill will towards the few who had become Christians but held them all in high esteem. This was clearly demonstrated at the public meeting mentioned above. More will be said about it at the proper place in this narrative, which is the story of the Muslim convert of Robert Noble, who delivered at public request the main address at that meeting.

2. Disciple of Christ

Janni Alli was born in a respectable Persian family in the Hyderabad State (as it then was) about 1838. His father was a merchant. The family moved to Masulipatam when he was a boy, probably for business reasons. At the age of fifteen years, in 1853, Janni Alli was admitted as a pupil in Robert Noble's school.

Within two years after his admission into the school the boy felt compelled, as were two other Brahmin boys, to renounce his ancestral religion and become a disciple of Christ. This was the second batch of converts from the school. (The first batch had been three years earlier.) One of the two Brahmins had been in the school for more than five years, the other two years and a half, and Janni Alli just over two years. All three were good and diligent students, exemplary in character, thoughtful and religiously minded. Their application, not only to the secular subjects but also to the scriptural instruction which they received, compelled them to give serious thought to the new religion about which their teacher spoke to them and of which they felt he was an exemplary follower.

It cannot be said that at that early age these young men were in a position to see, from an intellectual and philosophic point of view, that Christianity had a better claim to their allegiance than their own inherited religions. But there was before their eyes a living example of what that religion could do with a man. Here was a person who demonstrated in his own life and in

every word and in every action, its superiority and its uniqueness. He was one whose character and actions were moulded and guided by the love of God in Christ Jesus, who with no thought of self was wearing himself out in service to others. It was his holy life that was responsible, even more than his teaching, for attracting these young men and all his pupils to Christ and His religion. Though not all of them felt impelled to answer Christ's call, they could see in his self-sacrificing life how the love of Christ was constraining him and how it imbued his life with a sanctity and power which they had not met anywhere before. He was all that the saints and *rishis* of their own religions had been reputed to be, except that he was not a recluse but lived among men and not for himself but wholly for others. His way of life was exactly what their religious books, as far as they knew them, prescribed for devotees. He acquired sanctity exactly as they were reputed to have acquired theirs, by self-mortification and utter devotion to God. No wonder they felt attracted by his teaching. He taught them what he practised. His example compelled them to accept what he taught them about Christ and His religion.

Janni Alli and his two Brahmin co-pupils, S. Mullaya and G. Kristayya were baptized in March 1855.

This time there was less excitement than on the first occasion when the first two converts, both Brahmins, were baptized, but not less "grief and sorrowing on the part of the relatives." It could not be otherwise.

Noble announced the event to the committee of the society in Madras in the following words:

"I hope it is a matter for solid joy that two intelligent young Brahmins, and one a scholar in our school, together with a superior young Mussulman, all seventeen years old, decided yesterday morning to break caste and renounce error. They have been very diligent students and their answers at our morning readings and prayer, when I sometimes catechise the school, have been often very encouraging and excellent.

"As we were just closing our evening prayer last night, about half past eight, the bitter wail of the aged

mother broke upon our ears. We invited her and her eldest son to come in and the interview that followed was most heart-rending. Nothing but a deep sense of man's perishing state while alienated from God, of the awful realities of eternity and the infinitely superior claims to obedience which God has over parents (as He shows by His love on the cross, dying for His enemies) can fortify one to go through such painful scenes.

"When it was over I felt quite ill for several hours. This morning the aged father, perhaps eighty years of age, came with the mother and brother to see the same dear youth again. Her violence of grief was gone; but her silent sorrow was more affecting. The young man showed great affection towards his parents; embraced them very warmly; but retired, apparently unshaken in his resolution to follow Christ. The other Brahmin is from Ellore; and if his father does not summon us before the magistrates when he comes, I hope we shall not have to appear as there was no anger in the interview this morning.

"May Jesus guide us and keep them and us humble, giving Him all the praise!

"I have now with me four Brahmins, the young Vellama and David. Pray for us, dear friend, for truly I do feel our need for my Saviour's spirit to be very great. I fear our fine school will be again scattered to the winds. Oh, may God prevent this! It would be a great grief to me if it should be. The young Mussulman and his grand-mother live together. I may just add that the three youths were all in the second class, under Mr. Howley, who is much encouraged by this token for good. David goes on very well indeed."

In a later letter of May 29th, Noble said,

"Our dear young friends have been carried safely through the surf and are well afloat on their Christian voyage. May the spirit of Jesus unite them to Him. No outward bond of iron even of brass or silver or gold will suffice."

In the case of the first conversions, it was nearly two years before the Brahmins returned to the school; but now, after the second batch of conversions, within four months after the baptisms, Noble could report to the committee at Madras:

"Our school numbers now seventy-four. Some very respectable Brahmin lads are now returning. We are trustfully hoping you will be able to send us two efficient masters, for we greatly need them; and the lower classes, as well as the higher, are not receiving proper attention. God, as a tender Father in Christ, is looking on, and the Holy Spirit's delight is to remove the darkness of man's mind and the unbelief of his heart. Oh, that we had more faith and more prayer."

It is pleasing to record that these young Brahmins as well as the Muslim kept steadfast in their profession of Christianity. Mullaya became a distinguished scholar and assisted Noble in his school. He was, alas, drowned in the cyclone of 1864 nine years later, together with his young wife, also a Christian woman of the *kamma* caste. He was a devoted Christian and greatly respected and honoured by all people. Kristayya assisted in the native English school at Ellore.

Janni Alli also assisted Noble for some time in his school, but subsequently left to teach in another Christian school.

Noble wrote at this time to a friend, then on her way to England.

"Our dear young converts have been going on extremely well. They are very regular and industrious and I cannot but think that they are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and so are able to take pleasure in the things of God which none but a renewed man is capable of."
.....

Noble's converts were beginning also to win the esteem of the non-Christian leaders of the place, as is seen from the prominence given to them, when a month after Noble's death, the native gentlemen of Masulipatam, (as stated at the beginning) held a meeting to raise a memorial to their departed friend. The report of the meeting is taken from Rev. John Noble's *Memoir of R. T. Noble* (1867).

"On the morning of the 18th November 1865, the committee for the Noble Memorial Fund convened in Buttayah Petta C.M. Hall, a meeting of the principal members of the native community in the town, among

whom were D. Purushotamaya Garu, Gudur Krishnarow Pantulu Garu, C. Venkobarow Garu, T. Narasingam Garu, V. Damodaraya Garu, T. Pattabhiramaya Garu, Janni Alli Sahib, P. Suraya Garu, V. Venkatachalam Garu, V. Subrahmanyam Garu, Makarla Ramaya Nayudu Garu, Veda Krishnaswami Garu, Vetsa Bhamaya Garu, Vetsa Bhashyakarlu Garu, Jiddu Ramanna Garu etc., and Rev. M. Ratnam (the secretary) and Rev. Ai. Bushanam (treasurer).

"Gudur Krishnarow Pantulu Garu having kindly accepted the Chair, the secretary opened the meeting by requesting Janni Alli Sahib (one of the best pupils of Rev. R. Noble) to read the following English address, prepared for the occasion, which he did in clear tone and in an extremely impressive manner. The close of this excellent performance was followed by a very loud and hearty clapping of hands. This done, the purport of the discourse was most idiomatically delivered by P. Suraya Garu, in the form of a Telugu address, on account of those not familiar with English.

"The Chairman then rose and urged upon the assembly the expediency and necessity of the measure so strongly advocated in the address; V. Damodaraya Garu seconding him. Subscription papers were then sent round; and the value of donations put down amounted to rupees 1,290."

Address

"Every country has had its heroes, patriots and philanthropists, whose memory has ever been held sacred, whose names idolized, and whose deeds immortalized, by the nation in their ballads, recorded in their archives, and extolled in history. Further, they have been raised to perpetuate their names and deeds, by foreigners. In many, if not in most instances, lasting monuments of different shapes, in various manners, have been raised to perpetuate their names and deeds, by grateful friends as well as admiring strangers. These have served the after-generations, from age to age, to be proud of their nation and ancestry, and have, in a great measure, excited in them a spirit of emulation. Moreover, others saw and acknowledged in these monuments the regard and gratitude of the country for their heroes etc. We need not go far in search to exemplify the above statement; in India itself such cases have taken place.

"The subject of the present address, you are all aware, was a Protestant missionary; therefore it is necessary to

produce similar instances; consequently others, which might be very striking and peculiar have been omitted as irrelevant. Hitherto, though no native community perhaps has had an occasion exclusively to do anything to honour the memory of a departed European, yet they have most liberally contributed towards it, in common with Europeans etc., *exempli gratia*, towards Duff Memorial Hall at Calcutta, and Anderson Church at Madras.

"Some years back, at Madras, a mission schoolmaster's wife died, and all the pupils subscribed and built her tomb. During the savage mutiny and the inhuman massacre of 1857, missionary life was almost everywhere spared. All these evidently show the feeling and regard the natives have towards missionaries, especially those connected with education. Should these towns come forward with their money, and show their love and gratitude in a solid manner, and we merely talk and not give proof of our real feelings? Far from it! Lately you showed the same spirit in contributing towards the relief of Lancashire sufferers, and in gracing, most deservedly, the departure of our beloved and invaluable Collector. It is hoped the same liberal spirit will be manifested on the present occasion also.

"Let us for a moment consider the past life and labours, and their fruits, of our departed missionary friend and benefactor, and see whether he is not worthy of our regard and gratitude, to vindicate the reasonableness and utility of our present project. The late Rev. Robert Turlington Noble was the fourth son and youngest child of a clergyman in Leicestershire; the family consisted of four sons, and two daughters. He was his father's Benjamin, and 'tenderly beloved in the sight of his mother.' The eldest brother rose to become a member of Parliament for the town of Leicester and died about five years ago; the other two, one a clergyman, and the other a surgeon, are still alive. Of the sisters, the eldest, who was more than a mother to him, and to whom, he often said, he owed all his comforts, died, to his great grief, in 1863: the youngest who had taught him to remember his Creator in the days of his youth which was the germ of his devoted life, died before he came out to India.

"We are not much acquainted with his early life, nor does it at all concern us for the present. One fact might interest us all and that is, while very young he had decided, in spite of his companions ridiculing him, and against the will of his parents, to become a missionary.

His father had intended him for his curate (that is, assistant). He was educated at Oakham, in Rutlandshire, and entered at Christ's College, Cambridge, but graduated from Sidney Sussex College. While at College, he fell so very sick that all despaired of his life; but he was spared for us—he had a work to do.

“At the age of about thirty-two he came out to this country, in 1841, with the full intention of burying his bones in Masulipatam; he kept his purpose. After spending a few months in Madras, in acquainting himself a little about the district to which he was bound and in storing his mind with the best of advice as to the plan to be pursued in accomplishing the object for which he had made great sacrifices, he arrived at Bandar, at the end of the same year. On his arrival he had to study the language, in order to gain free access to the people; this was rather a hard task for a man of more than thirty, still he devoted to it two years, and passed a creditable examination. In the meanwhile, fresh and unforeseen difficulties were presented to him—European discussion and native discouragement. An officer, who had wasted his time and fortune in trying to cultivate the swamp behind the cantonment, told him one day, that all the labour on the natives of Masulipatam would be as vain as his own on the swamp had proved.

“On one occasion a civilian remarked to him, that to educate and convert the natives, especially the Brahmins, was quite impossible; this gentleman had the privilege in 1857, to see hundreds of native youth, the Brahmins forming a fair proportion, undergo a course of the best education, to be had in these parts, and also five converts of whom three were Brahmins. On another occasion a native gentleman, who was a staunch friend of the mission to the end of his life, warned Mr. Noble not to expect more than five and twenty boys in the school which he was about to open; this friend was permitted to see the school crowded with three hundred native youths. Another's mind would have sunk by such remarks; a person of a different character would have given up all idea of a school as a useless attempt. But it was not so with Mr. Noble; his well-known watchwords, ‘firmness and perseverance,’ kept him from such failings, and he derived strength and courage from a source of which his short-sighted friends were ignorant. Under these disadvantageous circumstances, in conjunction with Rev. J. E. Sharkey, he opened the school with two pupils, in 1843. This ominous beginning was

sufficient to have damped the ardour of any person of ordinary character. 'What! two teachers for two pupils?' one might have reasonably cried.

"Just at this time a very tempting offer of a chaplaincy, with a salary of Rupees 700 per month, was made to him. Any one would have gladly availed himself of it as the most opportune and providential offer; but he magnanimously refused it and patiently persevered in the school. It need not now be said how the numbers gradually increased, what falls it has had, and how, every time, phoenix-like, it rose; or in what way it has attained to its present position to be the very first in every respect, among the schools of the Northern Circars, and one of the two best grant-in-aid schools in the whole Presidency of Madras. This has repeatedly been said of it by the Inspector and the Director in their reports.

"Pupils from this institute have reached the altitude of situations; they have become deputy collectors, sheristadars, tahsildars, sub-magistrates, missionaries, sheristadars, tahsildars, sub-magistrates, missionaries, every department; the official ranks, not only in this and the adjoining districts, but also in far distant ones, are for the most part filled by them. . . The school has become a kind of reservoir, sending forth its refreshing streams almost in every direction; it has been a glorious sun, radiating its moral and intellectual light to the surrounding country. As our late governor, Sir Charles Trevelyan, very keenly observed that no sooner had he landed at Kakinada than he began to feel the blessed influence of Mr. Noble's school was spreading. To what can all this be attributed? To his faithful labour, watchful diligence, unflinching firmness and praiseworthy perseverance under Divine blessing.

"His conduct was quite consonant with his name; his name was most significant; he was *noble* by name, *noble* in mind, *noble* in action, *noble* in purpose; he was altogether *noble*, made of a *noble* stuff, and endowed with *noble* faculties; by his nobleness he was endeared to people of different ranks, creeds and dispositions. He became the friend of young and old, rich and poor, master and servant, high and low, enlightened and ignorant.

"Several times he was violently opposed by Europeans and natives. He had open enemies to contend with, and treacherous friends to guard against. . . . He might well have groaned under his difficulties, and cried.

'My Soul, with various tempests tossed,
Her hopes o'ertumed, her projects crossed,
Sees every day new straits attend,
And wonders where the scene will end.'

"But he had, with John Newton, 'a frame of adamant and a soul of fire'. . . And all the time an Unseen Hand was supporting and delivering him, so that in the end he rose superior to every obstacle, trial and trouble; his enemies were vanquished and put to flight; and he lived to see the desire of his heart accomplished. Thus he has left behind him a glorious name and an imperishable fame. It can truly be said in honour of his memory: *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice.*

"He loved Masulipatam and its inhabitants to his death—an untimely death at the premature age of fifty-six."

The address went on to make an eloquent appeal for funds to perpetuate his memory and ended:

"The real cause of our friend's true greatness was his love and gratitude to his greatest Benefactor, best Friend, most merciful Saviour, which were reflected in his love to the souls and bodies of his fellow-sinners. If there be any love and gratitude in our bosom to our friend and benefactor, they can no longer extend to him, but can and ought to be manifested in aiding that cause for which he lived and died and, so to speak, in which his spirit is sure to take delight."

"Every word of the address was accepted as true and completely fitting. There was loud applause, when it came to a close. And, suiting action to sentiment, the non-Christian public of Masulipatam contributed liberally to the memorial fund."

3. Preparing for Christian Service

Soon after Janni Alli finished the full course in the school, Noble engaged him as an assistant in the school, as also Mullaya. These were the only two Christian assistants in the school. There was another assistant by name Surayya, a Hindu. Comparing them with Surayya, Noble wrote to the committee on April 3, 1863.

"As to the native teachers, I had not calculated on so many succeeding in the government examinations so well. All those receiving salaries from 30 rupees a month and upwards, are passed candidates, save one heathen, who quitted the head office of his department

to join us, and our two valuable Christian teachers Janni Alli and Mullaya. They are Surayya's equals, who now receives 100 rupees a month. They receive only 40 rupees. The reason is this: I sought to bring up the two last as Christians for the Mission. I studiously kept them back from the intensely secularising government course, to study what I am sure is much more useful to them as Christian men and teachers—I mean, more of the Bible, Greek Testament, Alison's History, Hindustani, Sanscrit. But the consequence is they have not offered themselves for the government examinations, and so can receive no grant. I think it would greatly subserve the cause of the Gospel if our young men who embrace Christianity could receive their increased allowances without submitting to the government tests. Competition for these so frightfully secularises the mind—so injuriously to their influence on the Christian natives around them, and on the heathen—so thwarts, so opposes itself to the course of study the missionary would mark out for them, with a single eye to their efficiency as Christian agents.

"May I beg the committee's kind consideration of this point. Janni Alli is Surayya's superior; Mullaya and Kristayya, his equals. Surayya has taken what the government consider equal to a Bachelor of Arts degree. He has passed for the third grade of schoolmaster. Ratnam would have exceeded them. Yet these are all receiving only 40 rupees, while Surayya gets 100."

Writing to his brother John from Masulipatam—3rd June 1863—Noble says:

"I should, however, like to show you my sons, and wish I could bring them for your blessing. Two are preparing for ordination next February. Three aid in our schools. Four more are diligent students. You would like to have taken a peep at us on Saturday evening. They, their wives and their children, all take their evening meal with me. One little Brahmin girl is a charming child. Her eyes sparkle with delight at the sound of '*There is a happy land.*' One of our first converts has had lately the happiness of welcoming his widowed mother and his uncle into the fold of my good and great Shepherd.

"You will not wonder to hear that the zealots of idolatry and caste are very active in their opposition. They have bought the house I wanted for the native teacher, and have pulled it down. They are organising

an active system of support for the opposition school where no Bible is taught. Yet our school never was in so flourishing a state. We never seemed to have the confidence of the natives as we have now, and yet I think the converts connected with our school, cannot now be less than fifteen or twenty."

While teaching in the school, Janni Alli took a great interest in the evangelistic work being carried on in the area. The earlier converts, Manchala Ratnam and Ainala Bhushanam were both employed in the mission to assist in evangelistic work among the people and had been brought to Masulipatam for being trained to the ordained ministry. Janni Alli used to accompany them and the missionaries on their village preaching tours.

"In those early days the influence upon him of his Mohammedan up-bringing, combined with some traits of character, which mellowed with advancing years, required all the wise discipline and loving patience of Noble, a man of iron will, to train him and guide wisely the strong-minded young convert from Islam. They did not always see eye to eye. But the respect and affection of the pupil for his guru was very genuine."¹

He retained this gratitude and admiration to the very end and the memory of his revered teacher continued to inspire Janni Alli throughout his life.

Some time later, Janni Alli left the school and joined another Christian school but kept up his connection with the church mission. A little later he joined the postal department of the Government and subsequently got a good appointment in another government department in Berar. Later he worked in the public works department in Bombay for a time. But his one great object was to serve his Master. Even when he was in secular employment he did all in his power to advance the cause of his new religion. He helped many a convert with money and with spiritual counsel and encouragement. He was also the happy instrument for leading his own grandmother, who was living with him, to Christ. One of the

¹ Rev. P. Ireland Jones, *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1895, p. 7.

stations in which he was located while in the service of the Government was Aurangabad. There (as elsewhere) "he exercised a marked Christian influence among the officials, native and Eurasian, of the service." "This fact was told me" writes his friend, Rev. P. Ireland Jones, (who wrote *From Islam to Christ, some memories of the late Rev. Janni Allî*, in the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1895) "by an English gentleman, a Commissioner, whom I afterwards met."

During the years he was in the service of the Government, Janni Alli saved the money required to go to England.

In April 1873 Janni Alli went to England along with Mr. and Mrs. N. Subramanyam. His original object was to study for the bar but, God having other purposes for his life, he was led to alter his purpose. He joined Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, the College of Ragland and Meadows, with a view to study for the ministry. In a letter written 16 years later Janni Alli wrote (in July 1889):

"I Have just seen the death of the Rev. W. Knight in Tiverton; what recollections have crowded my mind! He was one of the oldest friends I had in England, a college friend of Henry Fox. It was he who gave a turn to my life work. You may not have heard that I first came to England to study for the bar, and went to stay with him this month sixteen years ago, when I first met Gem and Faithful. Talking over the subject with him led me to decide for the ministry, Gem suggested Cambridge and I chose Corpus to be with him. 'God moves in a mysterious way!'"

Janni Alli made a very large circle of friends while at Cambridge. His quiet, unobtrusive manner coupled with his handsome appearance, his high culture and gentlemanliness which was natural to a scion of a high class Persian family of ancient lineage, made him exceedingly popular with his fellow undergraduates and other members of the university. Several of the professors became his friends and later supporters of his work.

Henry Parker was then at Trinity. The two first met in the home of those well tried friends of mission work,

Professor and Mrs. Babington who became such loving helpers to Alli ever since that time. They had written, "In H. Parker, second bishop of E. E. Africa, we have a link, strong and bright, with our beloved friend Janni Alli at Calcutta. Thus has India been permitted in the good providence of God to reach forth the hand of practical sympathy with the 'Dark Continent.'" Writing to them in reply in January 1887, Janni Alli said, "Your allusion to Parker is touching. God did make use of me at Cambridge. His was the agency and His will be the glory and I only an instrument in His all-powerful hand."

Janni Alli studied for honours in philosophy but his health did not permit him to appear for the final examination, though the examiners allowed him an *aegrotat* degree which he took in 1876. Even while at Cambridge, Janni Alli was in great requisition at missionary meetings. The service that he rendered to the cause of missions and that of the Church Missionary Society in particular was of the most solid and valuable kind.

He was ordained deacon in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on May 27th, 1877. This date became with him an ever-remembered anniversary and the day was spent by him in self-examination, prayer and meditation. He wrote twelve years later, "I am His, in spite of my unworthiness. What goodness and faithfulness on God, my loving Father's part, what unprofitableness on mine. The return of that day makes me tremble to think how insufficient and unfaithful I have proved. All the glory is His."

If only every man ordained to Christ's ministry would feel that way, frequently reminding himself of God's mercy and goodness in calling him to His service in spite of unworthiness, of the divine strength which upholds him in that service and of the vows that he made at the time of his ordination, how much more active and sincere would he be in that ministry. Some of our ordained men do not even remember on what date they were ordained and they never observe its anniversaries.

Janni Alli offered his services to the C.M.S. and was accepted as a missionary to his own country. It was at

first proposed that he should take up work in the high school at Hyderabad, Sindh. But his own thought turned to Bombay where he had been working as a government servant for a period just prior to his going abroad. He wanted to open a hostel for Christian students in Bombay. Some kind friends of the C.M.S. in Hertfordshire, interested in him, generously offered to support him and his work for three years.

Janni Alli was therefore sent to Bombay, with the status of an English missionary as one recruited in England; and given a free hand to start and carry on work as he was led by the Holy Spirit. He arrived in Bombay on November 29th, 1877. On the voyage out he made himself useful to the passengers on board, taking Sunday services for them and preaching.

He wrote to Mr. Gray, clerical secretary for Indian affairs at C.M.S. headquarters,¹ on December 3rd, announcing his arrival in Bombay. Describing the voyage he said:

“I arrived on Thursday last. There was nothing very particular on the voyage to mention, beyond that it was rather slow and uncomfortable, as nearly the whole way we had had winds. Notwithstanding this, I was privileged to have ‘morning prayers’ and a short address the two Sundays I was in the *Olympic*, between Suez and Bombay. Most of the passengers, the Captain and the officers attended. Of the other three Sundays, the first I spent at Milan² and preached in the afternoon for Mr. Menge,³ one of your retired missionaries from North India; and the third at Suez where I had to wait five days for the *Olympic*, here also I preached in the morning to a crowded room in the hotel.”

¹ The Rev. William Gray, a distinguished alumnus of Trinity College, Dublin, came out as a missionary and worked as an itinerating missionary in North Tinnevely and later as C.M.S. secretary at Madras. He was appointed clerical secretary in 1874 at headquarters, specially to take charge of Indian affairs, after working from 1870 to 1874 in the Society's home service.

² These extracts from Janni Alli's correspondence are taken from the C.M.S. archives. A microfilm of the letters was made specially for me (at my expense). All the letters are in Janni Alli's own handwriting. When manuscript has to be deciphered from a microfilm, proper names are occasionally misread, which is inevitable.

³ Rev. C.C. Menge, who arrived in Bombay in 1836, retired in June 1874.

4. Bombay

In Bombay, Protestant missionary work began in the second decade of the nineteenth century. The story of the arrival of the Revs. Gordon Hall and Samuel Nott and Mrs. Nott in Bombay on 11th February 1813, after having been refused permission to land in Calcutta or to stay there, is well known.¹ After reaching Bombay, they had to spend three years in enforced inactivity, living there on sufferance. It was in November 1815, two years after the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company by Parliament in 1813—so long did it take for orders to be transferred into action in those days—that Sir Evan Napéan the governor of Bombay Presidency, gave them permission to stay in Bombay or go anywhere in the Presidency and start the work which they had come out to do. And the pious man that he was, and personally friendly toward Christian work, he added, "I heartily wish you success in your work."

The Charter Act of 1813 opened the door for the entry into India of persons who desired to labour for "the introduction among the inhabitants of the British Dominions in India, of useful knowledge and for their religious and moral improvement."² This new opportunity was availed of by a few missionary societies of Europe and America. The first missionaries of the American Board (Congregationalists) above mentioned were followed by others sent out by that Board. The Church Missionary Society sent out its first missionary to Bombay, the Rev. R. R. Kenney, in 1820. The first missionary of the Church of Scotland mission, the Rev. Donald Mitchell, came in January 1823. A small mission started by the Wesleyans in 1817 was however abandoned in 1821.

Various circumstances delayed the coming of other missionary societies into the field. Till the sixties of that century, the above mentioned denominations were the only three working in Bombay. Each had however

¹ Dr. E. G. K. Hewat, *Christ and Western India*, pp. 31-61.

² Sec. 33 of the Act. (53 Geo 3, c. 155.)

met with considerable success and had established a fairly strong Indian Church of its own persuasion.

To say that the Company Government's direct opposition of Christian work within its territories ceased from 1833, after the next renewal of the Company's Charter that year, will not be true. The Government was still more than half-hearted and sometimes even downright opposed to giving even passive encouragement to missions. It was mortally afraid of wounding the feelings of its non-Christian subjects (they were of course the vast majority), and of giving room even for a suspicion that the Government itself had any intention of encouraging the people to become Christians. Because of this over cautiousness, it took up not a neutral but a pro-Hindu attitude. Official administration of Hindu temples, keeping them in good repairs out of public funds, participation by Government officials, both civilian and military, in celebrations of Hindu festivals were among the means employed in order to parade its so-called neutrality.¹

The Government was however not averse to availing itself of the advantages which accrued from the work of missionary societies. Their activities in the educational field were producing a vast army of persons literate in English who were used to fill the subordinate ranks in the public administration, and were also creating a ferment in the social and religious thinking of the people which threw up from time to time leaders in various aspects of public life.

In the meanwhile, the Government, in fulfilment of its obligations to its European employees—both civilian and military—had necessarily to build up a large ecclesiastical establishment, beginning with the few Chaplains of the Company who were then in existence when the Anglican See of Calcutta, with three Arch-deaconries (Calcutta, Madras and Bombay) was created by letters patent in May 1814. After the passing of the Government of India Act of 1833, the two Arch-deaconries of

¹ The story of Government connection with idolatry has been vividly told by Sir John Kaye, *Christianity in India*, 1859, Chapter X, p. 366 ff.

Madras and Bombay became separate dioceses—Madras on October 10th 1835, Bombay on July 1st, 1838. The ecclesiastical establishment had nothing to do with the preaching of the Gospel to the non-Christian population. It confined its activities to spiritual ministrations to European government servants only. Occasionally some missionary-minded Chaplains here and there attempted to do a little for non-Christian and Christian Indians, but their lack of knowledge of the local language was a great handicap to their usefulness.

In 1844 there were in the three dioceses, 106 episcopal churches, chapels or other places authorized for divine worship and 108 chaplains. 125 other clergy who were missionaries of the Anglican Missionary Societies also came under the episcopal jurisdiction of the three bishops. Whenever there was a need and wherever there was no chaplain, the Government used them and non-episcopally ordained missionaries to perform, unofficially and mostly un-remunerated, the duties of chaplains.

A considerable expansion of the Church of England in India took place after the creation of the three dioceses. As the number of missionaries of the Anglican Missionary Societies and as the result of their labours the size of the Christian community increased, other dioceses had to be created—Colombo in 1845, Lahore and Rangoon in 1877.¹

The appointment of the Rev. Thomas Valpy French, a missionary of the C.M.S., as the first bishop of Lahore, inaugurated a new method of selecting bishops for the Indian episcopate, that of choosing outstanding missionaries as bishops of the new dioceses as they came into being one after another.

It is somewhat curious but readily intelligible, that a large proportion of Indian Christians had always been Anglicans,—until 20 years ago when five hundred thousand Anglicans gave up their Anglicanism and be-

¹ For the sake of completeness, it may be stated that the next new dioceses were Travancore and Cochin, 1879; Chota Nagpur, 1890, and Lucknow 1893. The first bishop of Lucknow was Alfred Clifford, also a missionary of the C.M.S. and a friend of Janni Alli.

came members of a United (Episcopal) Church—the Church of South India.

Coming back to Bombay, the sixty years which followed the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries in Bombay were years of great expansion of the missionary enterprise in Bombay city and Bombay Presidency, as well as of phenomenal growth in the size and importance of Bombay city itself. As the means of communication between India and Europe improved Bombay became literally the gateway of India and was soon drawn into the main stream of world commerce.

A regular service of mail steamers between England and Alexandria and between Suez and Bombay was established by the Peninsular and Orient Company in 1841. The journey between Alexandria and Suez was done overland in wagons provided by the Company. After Suez was opened in 1869, the length and the arduousness of the journey was considerably reduced (before aeroplanes largely displaced the use of steamers), till the journey could be done in seventeen to twenty days.

Inland, the introduction of railways miraculously changed the face of the country and its social customs. The first line to be opened in all India was between Bombay and Thana—33 miles—on April 16, 1853. On February 5th, 1855, the first railway in the Bengal Presidency was opened between Calcutta and Burdwan—67 miles. By the year 1870, the Indian railway mileage stood at 8494.

Then there was the invention of the electric telegraph. By 1857 there was telegraphic communication between the main cities in North India and in Madras and Bombay provinces. The laying down of a cable from Bombay to Suez in 1870, the opening of Bombay port's first wet dock, the Sassoon Dock, connected Bombay with the outside world more closely than ever before.

All these happenings directly helped the Christian enterprise in India, lessening the hardships of the travel when missionaries came to the country from the West, creating closer and more frequent contacts between missionary headquarters and their corresponding com-

mittees in India, facilitating the import of religious and other books, making increasingly possible visits by Indians to Britain and Europe for intellectual enlargement or for taking educational courses. All these produced a tremendous revolution in the life of the people of India.

5. Janni Alli in Bombay—1877 to 1882

Janni Alli's plan was to open a hostel for Christian high school students in a place where they could be influenced by teaching and example to love their Saviour and, if they felt called by God, to offer themselves for His service.

When he arrived in Bombay he heard that the Church of Scotland missionaries had just opened a hostel, with the same end in view, with ten boys. This caused him some perplexity. "I will not comment on this," he wrote in his first letter to England to Mr. Gray, the home secretary, on December 3rd 1877, "beyond saying that it shows that a hostel was much needed for Bombay and the fuss that was made was altogether unnecessary. I am told that the Free Church people knew that I was coming out for a hostel and did not mention their own views on it to any one till they actually took a house. I am quite at a loss what to do. I commit myself and my plans to God. If they are for His glory and the extension of His Son's kingdom, He will remove all obstacles and make my path clear."

The matter was considered by the local corresponding committee of which the Rev. T. H. Weatherhead was the secretary *sub protem*. The committee appears to have felt that a hostel opened by another Christian agency was no obstacle. There was need for another, and especially for boys connected with the Church of England. So they encouraged Janni Alli to go ahead.

"What they considered most needful," he wrote on February 11th, 1878 to Mr. Gray from a house in Khativady Road, "was my proposal to have an opportun-

ity of visiting the boys and young men, who attend the Robert Money Institution, at their homes and thus have personal interviews with them and with it exert personal influence and by this means get at their friends also. This brings me to my connection with the school, which I must treat separately. You will have also heard that they allowed me to engage a smaller house at present than was intended. Mr. Weatherhead and I tried for nearly a month, only in vain, to get a suitable house for Rs. 80 or 75, the sum mentioned by the committee. Then at last I took this house for Rs. 90; of this the C.M.S. allows me Rs. 30, the hostel fund is charged Rs. 50 and I have to pay Rs. 10/-. The house has accommodation for six boys, allowing two a room, besides one for myself. Of this, I have two already; three I expect in the course of a week or so; then there will be room for one more. I hope soon that not only will that one come but also more.

"How thankful I feel to God and grateful to the friends who have helped me in this work. More than one native Christian has told me that a home of this kind was much needed. I must tell you as well that my hostel is different from the Free Church one; that is more like a barrack; one of the junior missionaries has taken a house on his own responsibility and placed it under the charge of one who was a few years ago one of their agents in Poona. The young men have very little intercourse with him, as he is a married man and has his meals separately and the young men have a separate cook for theirs.

"But in my case we are, I think, like one family. We eat together, have family worship together and have one establishment. Seeing this, even Rev. Narayan Seshadri¹ has sent his second son to me and pays for him the maximum sum of Rs. 20/-. When I have the full number I hope I shall charge the fund only for the house rent and not for servants. And everyone will pay, the lowest will be what it will cost actually for food, and from what the others pay in excess, I will employ servants. Up to present I have only taken Rs. 750/- towards furnishing, that is a good deal less than £75 sanctioned for the purpose."

His friends had already raised enough funds to cover all the expenses of the hostel for more than three years,

¹ For a sketch of the life of Rev. Narayan Seshadri, see this author's *Chosen Vessels*, Christian Students' Library series, 1960, (C. L. S. Madras).

as estimated by him. But from the beginning he was trying to run the hostel more economically and on a joint family system, those who can afford paying more than the poorer boys. The hostel was to be run as a Christian institution, the object being to create an atmosphere which will conduce to mutual love, unselfishness and devotion to Christ, under the influence of the warden who was to set an example of self-sacrificial living.

The initial difficulty about opening a hostel for Christian boys—according to his plan—having been got over, another problem came up in connection with Janni Alli giving a little free part-time help to the Robert Money Institution.

The Robert Money Institution was a boys' English school, started by the C.M.S. in 1836 "pledged to the then novel practice of developing both the study of English and the teaching of 'Christianity'—like the earlier Ambroli English School founded by the Church of Scotland Mission in 1832 which in 1836 came to be known as the General Assembly's English School and later became the parent of the present Wilson College.

The school was named after a Robert Money, "a brilliant young civil servant, born in India and a lover of the land of his birth, an able linguist, at home in Persian and Hindustani and other Indian languages, a government secretary and revenue officer, a firm believer in giving the youth of Bombay the best that Christian and western education could supply and a wholehearted follower of Lord Jesus Christ."¹

It was a school with a proud record, headed by some very able missionary principals. It had produced a few distinguished converts like Sorabji Kharshedji, a Parsee student baptized in October 1841. Whenever there was a conversion the school was emptied for a whole term or more, but invariably recovered.

The school had been greatly handicapped by frequent changes of principals, due in most cases to death or severe illness. With the erection of new buildings in

¹ Dr. Elizabeth G. K. Hewat, *Christ and Western India*, p. 94.

1855, the school was launched on a fresh period of usefulness. Conversions continued to occur, though at infrequent intervals, and the school had a reputation for imparting sound learning on a Christian basis.

When Janni Alli arrived in Bombay, the principal was the Rev. Thomas Carss who had come out in 1862.

Before he left England Janni Alli had been told that he would be free to help in that school in whatever way he wanted to and could. When he had had a look at the working of the school, he felt that there was much he could do for the school. But the principal was not willing to avail himself of Janni Alli's help. (We have seen many European and even Indian heads of institutions taking up a similar attitude and, unmindful of the good of the institution but solicitous merely of their personal prestige, not wanting "outsiders" to help or as they usually put it to "interfere.") Janni Alli writes about this to the home secretary:

"I will only state the facts and leave you to draw your own conclusions. There are upwards of 200 boys and young men, attending the Robert Money Institution. These are divided into seven classes, to each of these there is a heathen teacher, I fancy, responsible for their studies. In addition to these there are three Christian teachers (2 Europeans and one native) and one Sanskrit pundit who draws Rs. 50 for coming only two hours. The school hours are from 10.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. and 2 to 4.30. Of these 5½ hours, each teacher works for only four hours on an average according to the arrangement. As there is a teacher for each class, when that class goes to the Christian teacher for lesson, the heathen teacher has nothing to do. It was on this ground Mr. Carss objected to my teaching in the school, as during the time that I taught the proper teacher would have nothing to do.

"Then as to Christian instruction; the lower classes numbering about 120 are taught by the native Christian; in order to bring all these into the time, he has a class of nearly 80 boys, only for ½ hour, for Christian instruction. Can it be a wonder that boys in a mission school learn nothing of Christianity? Teaching even the highest but one class of only about one-fourth that number I find half an hour too little! I should have thought that when such was the case, Mr. Carss would

have been only too glad to get my help to take the higher class in their Bible and so relieve him and his assistant to take the lower ones, who require greater attention, and a knowledge of Maharattee. But instead of that, I was told that I was not required, as himself and Mr. Graham have not enough to do; and Mr. Carss wrote to Mr. Weatherhead to that effect. Though according to Mr. Carss' own saying they are not worked as they should be, yet he and Mr. Graham draw each Rs. 250, as if overworked, to go every year to the Hills during the summer vacation. While 120 boys, more than half the school, are left to an inexperienced young man. This kind of management of a school is something new to me.

"Leaving Mr. Noble out of the question, who was quite an exception, all his assistants taught regularly six hours a day; the classes were so arranged that no one, either Christian or heathen teacher, had any time to waste and each was responsible for something, and not, as here, only heathens responsible and Christians superintendents. The other day I was speaking to the native pastor of the Free Church—a convert of the late Mr. Wilson—and he assured me that schools badly managed brought missions into contempt and did no good whatever; either they should be thoroughly and efficiently worked or given up altogether. I quite agreed with him.

"I thought it right to tell you all this in confidence that you may know what to do with regard to the college. I think a school without a college is of no use whatever in a Presidency town; it is of immense use in the country where I find Anglo-vernacular schools in every corner. About the college, if you see your way clear to it, you will do a great good, particularly at this time, when I am told the Governor thinks that the higher education should be left to private bodies; he made some reference to it in his speech at the last convocation.

"I take the highest class in their matriculation mathematical subjects, and the rest in their Bible; in these classes there are some most intelligent and interesting youths and I shall be very sorry to lose them after they pass their matriculation. The additional expense to the Society I don't think will be great. Mr. Jackson, I would say, should be retained as the head master of the school department, which I think he will be glad to do and as such be useful. I fear at present he is wasted. I have written to Parker so. Then, I am already on the

spot and will be ready to teach $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 hours. So three fresh men will be all that would be necessary for the present. In that case, seven heathen teachers, as at present, will not be required, the savings from this source will cover the salary of one European teacher, then you will have to provide only for one man.

"Since coming out I have only heard from Mrs. Babbington from Cambridge. She is most willing to do what she can to raise money among their old Indian friends and acquaintances and I am sure Mr. Nesbitt of Benges, Hertford, will also help you. I will write to him. Then Mr. Potts of Cambridge takes a very deep interest in the Christian education of India, and he has friends all over England; he will do what he can; I have written to him; and if you would also write and ask him, you will see what he has to say. You will not find much difficulty in raising money for a definite object. Several complained to me in England about that; they did not like to give not knowing exactly to what they gave.

"Then as to men, I don't think you will experience that difficulty which you have felt hitherto. True Bishop French could not get men at Oxford; but you must bear in mind Bishop French's manner; again Mr. Baring failed at Cambridge to get men for his school at Amritsar; but Baring,¹ though a Bishop's son, scarcely knew any one, and as to influence he had none whatever. If a committee of leading evangelical men be formed at Cambridge with a distinct object of interesting men in mission work prayerfully, I have not the slightest doubt of men offering themselves. Last year ten men offered their services to different societies, the largest number yet known at Cambridge; that argues well and I see no reason why there should not be a larger number every year.

"Before I left I wrote to Cambridge, asking them to do something of the kind; by the last mail I heard that there will soon be a committee with Mr. Babbington as its president. I do trust God's blessing will rest on these proceedings. At first there will be some objection to it, lest it appear to be in opposition to the Delhi Mission Committee; but if it be managed cautiously, without treading on their toes, it will be successful.

"As to domiciliary visits I have not commenced yet partly because I have to learn Maharatee enough to

¹ Rev. F. H. Baring arrived in India 1872, retired from Amritsar, April 1880.

speaking it, and partly I don't know the boys enough and I fear the teachers have been set against me. So I have to be most careful in what I do, lest it be misconstrued, as already my coming to Bombay has given rise to suspicions.

"Pray, dear Mr. Gray, that everything may be ordered and over-ruled for God's glory.

"Bishop French gave an excellent sermon last evening calculated to do a great deal of good. The church was thronged.

"I am, ever sincerely yours

JANNI ALLI."

It is unnecessary to add any comments to these letters. They give us an inkling of the background. An Indian given the status of a "missionary" (and not that of just a native clergyman) had his own difficulties, even though he was one of C.M.S.'s own converts and had been educated in England. The times partly explain this, and human nature accounts for the rest.

Janni Alli's work in Bombay was of the very highest order. He was intent upon making the Christian boys in the hostel life-long and committed devotees of Christ. That is the way Christian hostels should be run. The teaching in the school and the contacts it made possible led to his paying "domiciliary visits" especially to Mohammedan homes—a way of personal evangelism almost completely lost sight of and never used in these days. At the same time he assisted in the services of divine worship in Girgaum Church.

His first "annual letter" to Mr. Gray may be reproduced in full—because of its inherent interest. Space forbids verbatim reproduction of his subsequent reports. A few extracts should suffice.

"Western India
Bombay

29th November 1878

"My dear Mr. Gray,

It is a year today since I returned to India after an absence of 4½ years in England. Though some may regard this time as lost, yet I cannot be sufficiently thankful for the opportunity I have had of preparing myself for the work at that ancient seat of learning—

Cambridge—which will ever be dear to me; and the very mention of its name will always bring to my mind the most pleasant reminiscences of a happy time agreeably spent (though not without drawbacks owing to ill health) in not only reading for an academic degree, but also, which has been of immense importance to me, in freely associating with so many good and learned people in different parts of the Kingdom and learning from them useful for this world and profitable for the next. And also forming acquaintances and in some instances true friendships which have proved of the greatest service both to me and the work.

“In this first annual letter, I feel it my duty to pay this tribute of gratitude publicly to the English friends and acquaintances, who are not only praying for and sympathising with, but also materially helping me in the work. If I had not been led to Cambridge whither I had not even dreamt of going when I left India, and if English Christians had not shown so much interest and sympathy, humanly speaking, I could never have returned to India as an ordained missionary. Now I feel deeply thankful to God for so wonderfully ordering everything for me, most unworthy as I am to be His minister, which I always longed to be ever since my baptism, but had to wait for God’s time these many years. “This is the Lord’s doing—it is marvellous in our eyes.”

“Now about the work. At the time of arranging it with the parent committee I had no idea of the difficulties and trials that were awaiting my arrival at Bombay; but of these I will not speak now. It is very painful to think of them. As I most sincerely trust the clouds are dispersed and there is in store sunshine yet for me in Bombay, so I will say only of God’s goodness and mercy.

“1. *The hostel*: I was privileged to open it in January with one boarder but within a fortnight another came, then a third and so on till I had six. This number I had for several months but one was obliged to return to his parents failing to pass the examination necessary for entrance into the government medical college. Of the 5 at present, one is the son of the Revd. Narayan Seshadri of the Free Church of Scotland; his name I mention with some satisfaction because though a hostel was opened in connection with his own Mission only 3 days after I landed, yet Mr. Seshadri preferred sending his son to me. Two are sons of Rev. Appaji Bapuji and one of the Rev. Ruttonji Nouroji. Four of the boys

attend the Robert Money School and are in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 6th. standards respectively: their ages vary from 12 to 18. Both Mr. Carss and Mr. Jackson speak favourably of them as well behaved and diligent students. On Sunday I teach them the collect for the day and a hymn; every evening they are catechised at family prayers and in the morning I give them help in their lessons. They all pay for their board. Out of the amount raised by my English friends for the hostel for three years, I have been spending per mensem only Rs. 60 on house rent and about Rs. 9 for a servant, these are a good deal below the sums put down by me in the estimate I submitted to the committee.

"2. *School*: I take 2 classes in the Robert Money School: the highest preparing for matriculation in mathematics (Arithmetic, Geometry and Algebra) and the next in Scripture. As these will be reported on by Mr. Carss, I need only just mention that there are some very nice and interesting boys in the Bible class. Besides teaching them the daily portion, I allow them to state their objections and have their difficulties removed. Sometimes they put very sensible questions, showing that they do pay attention to the subject of religion; but I grieve to add that some just get hold of European infidel objections. One day a boy asked me one or two questions which puzzled me a little to know how he came to know them. On enquiring he produced a monthly publication in English and Maharatee called 'Exposure of Hypocrisy' containing extracts from '*La Bible l'Inde* of M. Louis Jacolliott.' Besides trying to answer these questions one can only pray that they may be directed aright in their search after the truth. I have had some encouraging visits at my house from the boys; their primary object is to get help in their studies and when this is given, it affords one splendid opportunities of leading them on to higher and better subjects.

"3. *Domiciliary visits*: These I am extremely sorry to say I have not been able to pay except at two houses. There have been several difficulties in the way—1st. not having a conveyance for several months, then the monsoon, after that having to go to school twice a day and reading for priest's orders. Still these could have been overcome had there been friends to introduce me to at least a few of the native gentry. However I hope, nothing preventing, D.V., to make an attempt next year. Both the gentlemen whose acquaintance I have formed are very respectable and well-educated. One a Hindu, M.A. of Calcutta and holding an important position

under the Bombay Government; the other a Mohammedan solicitor educated at University College, London. I have found both these open to conviction, willing to converse freely on religion and ready to read religious works. With the Mohammedan and his cousin I have had some intensely interesting talks.

"One afternoon he invited me to his spacious house, splendidly furnished in English style, and introduced me to his father and the family moulvie, a very learned but subtle man. After conversing with them all for nearly 2 hours on religion we parted in a very friendly way. Since then I have seen the young man several times, but the moulvie suspecting that he was in danger of losing all faith in Mohammedanism has placed him under regular instruction, at the same time getting a promise from him never to tell me what he has been learning; very strangely the moulvie admits almost all the Christian doctrines, even the sonship of our Lord, but has his own interpretations. He says that every word in the Bible and the Koran has two meanings, one for the vulgar and the other—the true one—for those initiated into the mysteries of his peculiar system.

"Then there is a Mohammedan enquirer who has been reading the New Testament with me for an hour every evening for more than 3 months. He first heard the gospel from Mr. Roberts¹ at Mallagaon. More than once he has asked for baptism. After baptizing him I shall give all the particulars.

"This will just give you an idea how the Lord has been blessing me. Pray that I may be faithful and bold and never be ashamed of Jesus and His love.

Yours sincerely
JANNI ALLI.

His second year's work may be briefly summarized.

"*The hostel:* The Lord has blessed me very wonderfully in this charge. There are at present nine boys and young men, representatives of three branches of Christ's Catholic Church planted in this land by the three countries forming the United Kingdom. Seven belong to the Church of England—three of whom are fresh comers. One of these is a son of Rev. Lucas Maloba of our Society. One comes from the Irish Presbyterian Mission of Surat. He is reading for the B.A. degree in the institution of the Free Church of Scotland. The ninth belongs to the Free Church of Scotland."

¹ The Rev. W. A. Roberts, missionary of the G.M.S., who after working in Mallagaon, went to Nasik.

The hostel had been removed during the year from a back obscure street into a house on a busy and noisy road, and nearer to the school; and thereafter it had begun to be noticed.

His work in the school had greatly increased because the classes had become so large that they had to be divided into two sections, if the teaching was to be profitable. In addition to teaching Scripture he was teaching mathematics to the matriculation class.

"I can pay more attention to each boy now, I know them all personally and they have understood me better. In a mission school money and time should be of secondary consideration compared with individual dealing. One of the results of taking smaller classes has been that boys have come to my house with greater confidence. A few come regularly for an hour every Sunday."

He had started the nucleus of a library with £ 10 sent as a gift by Mr. Potts of Cambridge.

About enquirers he says, "I had a young Mohammedan visiting and reading with me for 3 or 4 months. He being from Nellore and having no work, I felt I ought not to baptize him before knowing more of him. Growing impatient he applied and was baptised by a missionary of the S.P.G. without any reference to me. He has been to see me since and is still without work."

"Domiciliary visits: I have not made much progress in this direction yet. During the year I have formed the acquaintance of only three more gentlemen—one of them is really a just man in every sense of the word. This gentleman is one of the first M.A.'s of the Bombay University and a very good Oriental Scholar; he holds a high position under Government and the European officials have a high opinion of him. I have seldom been so much at home with another Hindu. He has paid some attention to Christianity and is altogether unbiassed. A thorough and leading reformer among the Hindus of this place.

"I might have known a few more had not my mornings been so occupied necessarily in the hostel. Not having a houskeeper I am obliged to look to everything

myself and morning is the only convenient time to find Government officials at home.

I remain
Yours sincerely
Janni Alli."

On the 1st January, 1881, the Rev. Janni Alli reported about his work for the third year. A few extracts may be given.

"*The hostel*—As in a few days the three years for which the friends of the Society, and my personal friends in England, had guaranteed the expenses connected with the hostel will be over, it becomes necessary to review the work of the hostel during these years, so that not only those particular and dear friends, but also the friends and supporters of the Society in general, may know what has been done and I trust that the parent committee will see that the object for which the hostel was opened as a trial has, in some measure at least, been accomplished, and that they can now take it over.

"For the greater part of the year there were ten lads under my charge, the largest number I have had; one of these, George David, from East Africa, has just left, to return to his parents; and in a day or two I expect two fresh boys, so that when the school reopens, on the 4th, there will be in the hostel eleven—a larger number than ever.

"You will remember that in January 1878, I began with one boarder, and the year closed with five; at the close of 1879 there were nine; and had there not been three withdrawals during the year, the number would have been thirteen at the end of 1880—as many as I could possibly have accommodated in the present house. Since the hostel was opened, fifteen have been in it. Of the ten in it last year, the first, from the Irish Presbyterian Mission, has passed the B.A. examination of the Bombay University; the second, a grandson of the Rev. David Mohun, pastor of the C.M.S. congregation of Allahabad, an under-graduate of the Calcutta University is studying at the Grant Medical College for the Indian Medical Service; one is apprenticed to a mechanic; the rest are in different standards in the Robert Money School. Of the five who have left, one has just passed the University Matriculation Examination, another is employed on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and is doing well. He writes such nice, grateful letters. The third has joined the Nasik High School—

he was getting on well in the R.M. School, but had to leave on account of ill health.

"On Sunday afternoons the senior boys have regularly gone through the church catechism, the confirmation service, and the morning prayer. The junior ones committed to memory only the collect for the day. As many as are able take down notes of the evening sermon in English, and afterwards read them to me; this not only makes them fix their minds on the sermon, but also affords them the means of learning how to treat a scriptural subject, which may be of immense use to them should it please the Great Shepherd of souls to call any of them to His sacred ministry.

"On Saturday evenings they have a debating meeting amongst themselves for an hour, which I generally attend as a visitor.

"This morning three youths were confirmed. I had prepared four, but the fourth returned home a few months ago and died of brain fever.

"I have had some trouble with two or three of the lads, but the majority of them have given me and their teachers satisfaction; nay, two or three on the other hand, have been a source of comfort by their exemplary conduct, diligence in studies, and by ready and cheerful obedience to the rules of the hostel. On my last birthday they more than repaid me for all that I have been able to do for them, by collecting amongst themselves and buying Farrar's *Life of Christ*. It was a joyful surprise to me to receive the first thing in the morning such a valuable present. It shows that native Christians are not devoid of gratitude, but do possess, in common with other professing Christians, all the nobler feelings, and when these are educated and sanctified by grace, they are capable of responding to love and sympathy.

"You will have noticed that the hostel has grown every year both in numbers and efficiency and is likely to become a success by God's blessing."

(He goes on to thank all those friends in England by name who have helped the hostel with funds. The whole paragraph is omitted.)

"School: I have continued to teach in the Robert Money School three hours a day, as in the past year, taking standard 6 and 5, each in two divisions, in Scripture and standard 7, division 1, in mathematics. One longs to see some of these dear youths come out boldly to make an open profession of their faith in Christ Jesus as their only Saviour, but I want more faith,

more patience to bide God's time, and earnest pleading for an outpouring of the Spirit, to bless the reading and teaching of His own Word, which is quietly working its way. A few weeks ago Mr. Carss overheard a conversation between two boys of standard 6. One of them wanted the other to say or do something; he in return, reproved him thus 'If we do not act honestly and morally, what is the use of reading the Bible?' One is thankful for this kind of testimony, but should not rest satisfied with it. Boys in this state of mind need heart-felt sympathy and to be led further."

6. Janni Alli on Christian Schools and Hostels

These letters and reports help us to see how completely Janni Alli put his heart and soul into his work—running the hostel for Christian boys, helping in the high school, teaching mathematics and Scripture for the top classes, giving time and attention to bringing up the boys in the hostel in the knowledge of all "things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health" and to their being "virtuously brought up to lead a godly and a Christian life," encouraging the non-Christian pupils in the school to come to him for private conversations on religious matters, while at the same time assisting in the divine services in the Girgaum church and preparing himself for priest's orders.

From these we can learn some good lessons in the running of hostels for Christian boys who are in high schools. The numbers must be small, making it possible for the person in charge to give personal attention to each of the boys. The superintendent or warden or whatever the man in charge of the hostel is called, must be a very select, suitable person, a committed Christian, and not, as in most cases at present, a nominal Christian. He must be one who is keen on serving Christ through feeding His lambs, prepared to devote his whole attention to the work, not keen on making money by licit or illicit means, not misappropriating money or engaging in side-

line money-making activities, as is quite common in these days.

Janni Alli's keen interest in Christian schools and the education imparted in them is also apparent. Questions like the wisdom of employing non-Christian teachers in Anglo-vernacular schools (as they were called at that time) especially as headmasters; the importance of giving Christian children as well as the others a sound education based on religion, and of efficient teaching in mission schools at every stage; the training of Christian teachers who are to be employed in Christian schools; the importance of mission agents being trusted with real responsibility and taught independence and self-reliance, instead of being spoon-fed all the time—these are all dealt with by him in his letters to the general secretary of the society in London.

The following letter is a good instance.

“My dear Mr. Gray,

It is now more than four months since I wrote to you last and of late you have not heard from me, not because I have had nothing to write about but thought it best to wait a little to see what you would do about the R.M. School. Though nothing yet seems to have been done, yet I know and have heard that you are seriously thinking of it.

“First of all, allow me to thank the committee most sincerely for the steps they have taken with regard to the place and employment of teachers (both Christian and heathen) in mission schools. Your communication to Mr. Weatherhead on the subject was read to us last week, when the conference had met. The proceedings of the conference will be sent to you in due course, so I need not repeat them here; but there was one subject which was discussed but apparently dropped so you will not know anything about it, which I should like to mention and which formed an important part of your communication.

“You are perfectly right in insisting on not to employ heathens as headmasters of Anglo-vernacular schools and should there be no prospect of getting them, to close the schools. Since the conference met I have seen Sathianathan's remarks on mission schools. It was only yesterday that I read them with very great pleasure and satisfaction. I could and would endorse the whole. In

fact it was about the same line of argument I pursued at the conference and I am so thankful for not only doing my duty at the conference but also to find a brother convert of Sathianathan's wide experience to be of the same opinion. To remedy this evil, which is growing daily, I ventured to urge on the parent committee the necessity of giving the rising Christian generation a sound and thorough education based on religion. I am almost sure if the same had been steadily kept in view from the very commencement you would not have been reduced to the necessity of closing some of your promising schools for want of competent Christian headmasters, which I fear will have to be done now at Mallagaon and elsewhere.

"I think the education of the native Christian children is of the utmost importance not only for their own sake but also for mission purposes; it is real economy and true missionary work. The Americans who have all along been against education and have tried to give the native agents a mere pittance, are opening their eyes to the mistakes made. They are about to open a large educational establishment at Ahmadnagar, for the higher education and better training of their agents.

"At the conference I asked the members whether they did not consider the time had arrived to form a normal class for the training of Anglo-vernacular masters, and was told to my great surprise that the Society had some years ago sanctioned the formation of it and had also offered scholarships, but that for want of an educational man at Sharanpore the work was not carried on at present. In connection with this Mr. Weatherhead is going to ask you for three men for Sharanpore, one for the station, one for education, and the third for the district. Instead of this I suggested that the higher education should be transferred to Bombay where every facility could be afforded for carrying it on and thus you would not require a third man at Sharanpore for education. Under the superintendence of the station missionary and with the assistance of the present Christian head master, who is a matriculated student, all that is required could be done, that is, sound vernacular and elementary English education and the training of vernacular teachers for villages.

"Merely for the sake of the orphanage and a few Christian boys it was not necessary to have an educational missionary. And only $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 miles from Sharanpore, at Nasik, there is a first rate Government Anglo-

vernacular school; as there is no prospect of getting heathen boys to Sharanpore, nor should I think they ever came. In Bombay the advantages would be so many. There is the R.M. School which should be made a thorough Christian institution, which would be done by encouraging native Christians to attend more and by having a normal class attached to it. Here the teaching staff is already in existence. So there will be no increase of expenditure in this respect; on the contrary, a decrease. The normal class could every day take the junior classes for an hour or so, and thus themselves learn the art of teaching and exercise a Christian influence on the boys and teach the Bible more systematically than it is done at present. Mr. Johan is a trained master, he will be of service in training these boys. And some of the heathen teachers could be dispensed with. In this way R.M. School would be doing some direct work.

"I am so thankful to learn that you are still looking out for two university men for the college classes. Parker's¹ appointment to Calcutta is a sore disappointment to me. Still I should not grudge at what has taken place. I do earnestly hope that you will soon succeed in securing the services of some men for Bombay.

"I doubt not you have heard of the very great interest created at Cambridge in the Bombay work; surely there should be no difficulty in getting men. To my suggestion I fear there will be some opposition—that the young men will acquire habits in Bombay, which they would not at Sharanpore. I do freely admit that they would acquire certain habits here, but I trust under proper supervision they would not be very objectionable; but on the contrary, I hope they will only keep pace with their heathen countrymen, in neatness, cleanliness etc., which should be recommendations instead of objections. I fear the suspicion is that they might not yield that submission to which they are trained at present. Though this might appear an objection to some, yet I should think that agents should be taught independence and self-reliance and not be kept in leading strings, which has to a great extent stunted the growth of the native church. After all whatever

¹ Henry Perrott Parker was an intimate friend of Janni Alli from Cambridge days. As has been mentioned earlier, it was through Alli's personal influence that Parker offered himself for service in the mission field. He came out first as Secretary in Calcutta and was later appointed bishop and succeeded Bishop Hannington in Eastern Equatorial Africa.

the objections may be, I don't think the habits acquired at Bombay would be more serious than those acquired at Sharanpore. There have been some most grievous cases. Habits of civilization are not at all to be compared with sins. Mr. R. A. Squires is in England and he will be able to enlighten you on the subject. To this you might say the human heart is the same everywhere, and they might fall into sin in Bombay as well. Yes, they might, whether in Bombay or Sharanpore, only the preventive force of God can keep one from sin; but it is a known fact that the cases of Sharanpore are attributable to some other causes.

"While this is the case, is it not far preferable to carry on the training work in Bombay where the advantages are so great? The Presbyterians are doing the same, all the Scotch and Irish are combining to send their men to be trained from the whole Presidency to Bombay. At the conference I was told that they had before now thought of making Bombay the centre of all the training operations, but the difficulty was where to lodge the men and who to have the management of them out of school. This difficulty is now to a certain extent removed by the hostel. With a proper understanding, all the details can easily be arranged. Of course, there will have to be made a difference between those who are to be trained for the mission and for whose board and lodge the Society pays, and those who are not bound down and are supported by their friends.

"These are of secondary moment. I hope you will take this subject into your consideration and find that my proposal is feasible. I have to thank you very warmly for taking such kind notice of me and my work in your publications and particularly for requesting the friends of the Society to pray for me. The consciousness that so many dear people in England were praying for me and their sympathising letters have been of the greatest help and comfort to me during the trial I have had to undergo since returning to India.

"You will be glad to learn that the hostel is making progress, though it be very slow. I have now five youths, two of these sons of your pastors and I am daily expecting a son of a third pastor. I feel it to be a most important work, and quite missionary; so I can look to God to bless it and help me to carry it on according to His own mind. I was truly sorry to see this morning Mr. Ellington's death. It will be a shock to Mrs. Ellington, who passed through this in March last, fully expecting to return in six months, hoping

that the house at Raghapur would be completed by that time.¹

"The Annual meeting was a success; Mr. Sathianathan did shine.

"We are most anxious to know who will be our secretary here during Mr. Weatherhead's absence. I suppose the Squires will be returning next October.

"I trust you and Mrs. Gray are keeping well. With very kind regards to yourself and Mrs. Gray.

Yours very sincerely
Janni Alli."

Some of the points which Janni Alli makes are well worth notice and consideration. They have become more relevant now under the present educational system, which subsidized and controlled by the Government, leaves no room for paying any attention to the spiritual growth of Christian boys and girls, and to distinguish between those who can be prepared for whole-time service in the Church and its institutions and those who are likely and must be allowed to seek secular employment. Even these need special attention if they are to be Christians, in the full sense of the word, in the world.

It is time the Church in India worked out some method of ensuring that there is a constant stream of devoted servants of the Church. It is no use deploring the growing secularism, materialism and indifference to religion of Christian youth at the present time if the Church fails—as now—to capture them for Christ. Children who are allowed to grow up as Christians in nothing more than in name cannot be expected to choose whole-time Christian service with its demands for self-sacrifice, utter devotion to Christ and a deep personal experience of the love of God in Christ. The deterioration which has taken place in the quality of our ordained ministers and lay workers in Christian institutions is to be ascribed wholly to their being persons who did not choose such service

¹ The story of Raghavapuram and of the Revs. T. Y. Darling, W. Ellington and J. Stone who pioneered there, may be read in the life-sketch of Pagolu Venkayya,—a dacoit turned disciple in the author's book *Triumphs of His Grace*, C. L. S., Madras.

deliberately as the result of their utter commitment to Christ and their experience of the constraining love of Christ.

7. Difficulties of an Indian “Missionary”

Reference has already been made to the difficulties which Janni Alli had when he began his work in Bombay. There were also others which were partly due to the fact that he was the first Indian to have “missionary status” and the local corresponding committee of the Society at the time does not appear to have been sufficiently broad-minded. It was partly also due to the fact that Janni Alli was determined to uphold that status by not submitting to any invidious distinctions being made between him and the European missionaries in the place. Reading the correspondence it is quite clear that he was not quarrelling over rupees, annas and pies, but standing up for principles. He wanted to be trusted, to be given a free hand and a chance to show his spirit of self-denial.

An attempt was made by the Bombay committee to pay him less than the salary fixed by the home committee and he had to write to the home secretary. (In such matters it seems best to quote his own words than to paraphrase them.)

“Please do not consider this as a complaint,” Janni Alli writes on 27th January 1879, “against any. I write this simply for information that I may know exactly what to expect and what not, and that I may not unnecessarily distress myself, being in the dark.

“In the instructions delivered (to me) at the dismissal I find this passage—‘the peculiar and happy circumstances of your being a native of India renders some special arrangements necessary; but the committee are glad that in the work to which they have appointed you your standing as a university graduate, enables them without inconsistency with their established practice to place you on the footing of an European missionary.’ The ‘special arrangements’ alluded to are contained in

the detailed instructions given me on the eve of my leaving England which are, 'the Bombay committee will be instructed to pay you a block salary of not less than Rs. 200 and not exceeding Rs. 250/- a month and also a sufficient allowance for house rent not exceeding Rs. 30 per mensem.' This being the only allusion to the special arrangements, I left England perfectly satisfied, hoping to work happily in Bombay. And in confirmation of this I received 'passage money,' 'outfit allowance' and £10 for incidental expenses as any European; thus no difference was made between an European and me. When I asked you the meaning of 'block salary' you said it included my salary and the allowance for wife and children, as the committee decided it but to give me in this way and not as to European missionaries, so much for a bachelor, so much for a married man, and so much for each child and that whether I remained single or married, it would be the same.

"But the Bombay committee decided that Rs. 200 was to be a bachelor's salary and Rs. 250, a married man's salary. Not that I am a great loser for not receiving Rs. 300 but on principle I ask it. When you have accepted me on the footing of an European missionary, I have a right to expect to be treated as such, except where it is other-wise specified. Again European missionaries receive every year Rs. 250 to enable them to recruit their health, and it is a known fact that some have spent only a portion of this sum and pocketed the rest. Last year I was obliged to go for a change and remained out only 3 nights and then hurried back to attend to my duties; this change was necessitated by the worry and anxiety connected with school work. As I was not allowed to charge 'the furniture money' in the salary bill, till the question was settled by you, I did not ask for the Rs. 30 spent in going to Matheran for three days only, though I mentioned it to Mr. Weatherhead.

"Now my object in writing all this to you is that you may come to some definite understanding with Mr. Weatherhead and let me know it, that I may act accordingly. I had told Mr. Weatherhead before he left Bombay, that I would write to you on this subject.

"At present, as far as I can see there are three points:

"1. *Furniture money.*

"2. *Allowance for recruiting health.* I want neither to go out of Bombay every year nor to pocket part of the allowance; but when it is absolutely necessary, I shall feel thankful for *bonafide* expenses. Neither

this nor furniture money could by any construction be said to be included in block salary.

"3. *My relation to European missionaries of the C.M.S.* In your last annual report I find my name below that of Rev. Appaji Bapuji and without a date. Not that I care where and how my name appears, but your agents take advantage of it. You are very particular to distinguish the men sent out from England from those engaged in the country and why should not something of the kind be done in my case? True I am a native of India, still I was engaged in England and on European footing: I am not ashamed to see my name below that of Mr. Appaji, but on principle and for the sake of others who might follow my example, I must beg of you only to carry out your own instructions to me. Should my name remain where it is at present, when fresh missionaries come out, their names according to your usual practice will be found above Mr. Appaji's and so above mine; thus by implication, I shall be superseded, which I must plainly tell you I shall never subject to, because no European missionary is in this way superseded and if I am taken on similar footing I ought not to be superseded too. When in government situation I took my proper place, and at the university it was the same, and last month the Bishop strictly adhered to it at the ordination, Mr. Rivington being junior to me was ordained after me, as we had been instructed by the Bishop.

"Hoping soon to hear from you, and to be relieved.

I am

Yours sincerely
Janni Alli."

The difficulties in the school appear to have continued and he had to write another long letter to London about these.

...

"Khativady,
Bombay, 24th March 1879.

"My dear Mr. Fenn,

Please accept my sincere thanks for your most kind, instructive and long letter of 14th ultimo with its two supplements. I wish I could send you a similarly interesting reply, but it is beyond my power.

"The principal subject of your letter I am not able to discuss in this, as I have not seen all whom I would like to consult. I have had several conversations with Mr. Appaji and have as well seen your letter to him. but it will be necessary to see Mr. Rustonji as well. And be-

fore we three could meet, we cannot arrive at any satisfactory conclusion, which just now it is not possible to do on account of poor Rustonji's bad accident; but on the very first opportunity we will see what can be done to promote the object you have so much at heart and which sooner or later must be done if the Church in India is to become independent and self-supporting. I feel much obliged to you for sending me the medium of explaining your views with regard to the letters of A.B.C. in the *Bombay Guardian* and his proposals.

"If confidence in me has prompted you to do this I feel deeply grateful to you for it; but if there be any impression that I have been, either directly or indirectly connected with the authorship of these letters, I seize this opportunity to tell you distinctly and once for all that I hate writing anonymously. I consider it mean and cowardly to attack another in the dark. My boldly speaking to you and others on different occasions about these unhappy differences between missionaries and native Christians might have probably led some to suspect me, but it is not right to suspect those who speak out their mind. This will only show you that there are others, not only in connection with the C.M.S. but also in other denominations, who are dissatisfied with the treatment of European missionaries.

"Were I so inclined, I could have done a great deal of mischief while in England by writing undesirable facts to the papers and periodicals; but I had more regard for God's work than for my personal feelings and wrongs done to me and I do thank God from the bottom of my heart for giving me grace to overlook all these and still to return to India to work with such missionaries with my eyes open. I may also here state that the letter signed 'A Native Christian' gives the real feeling of the Indian Christian community. There you will have observed that the writer condemns the tone of A.B.C. altogether and still gives the public to understand that the native Christians have their grievances.

"I value much your kind sympathy in my difficulties at Bombay. As you say, 'after prayer to God for guidance' I deliberately elected Bombay in preference to the easier post at Hyderabad and that difficulties should not prevent a man from doing his duty; particularly to a Christian missionary, who leans only on God's grace, difficulties should be nothing. So that you quite understand that in electing Bombay I did not seek my own ease or consult my own feelings but was simply guided by providential circumstances and wished only

for that post where I could most usefully be used here. I did not expect sympathy and co-operation; still I must confess, direct opposition from missionaries had never entered into my head. Though Mr. Noble was considered to be an autocrat, yet he never objected to the appointments made by the parental committees but always gave a fair treatment to his assistants, as I have been. If people are disposed to be kind and friendly to me, I shall feel grateful; if otherwise, I will not grudge their indifference; but I cannot understand their taking advantage of my native position and trying to use me as a foot-ball, as almost every C.M.S. man has attempted to do. The respect of such men I can never gain, as you think I could, nor shall I endeavour for it, sacrificing my conscience and feelings.

"I must explain my exact position in the school. You are aware of what took place at first. After I had quietly worked for nearly three months in the school in rearranging the classes, provision was made for all the other subjects of the matriculation class but mathematics, which I had been teaching and this just two months before the examination. When I protested against this I was told the boys could prepare mathematics by themselves and it was their wish to do so. When I asked the boys, they at once denied it and begged of me to intercede for them to get some time for mathematics; so I had to take them out of school hours and on an average out of 14, 12 regularly attended. This was the reason why I went to school twice a day mentioned in my annual letter. And I am glad I did so, if the boys had failed in mathematics I would have been put down as an incompetent teacher. No one would have known the true cause. As it is, 7 out of 13 passed, so good a percentage hither-to unknown, and it is of no consequence.

"Again about two months ago, when the boys came to know my exact position in the school, they began to neglect their Bible lesson. Failing in every other attempt, I threatened to punish them in various ways. This they reported, for which I received the severest letter I have ever received in my life, containing a threat to turn me out of school and charging me with being the cause of making the boys hate their Bible lesson; when I demanded an explanation and begged that the matter might be referred to the committee who have appointed me to the school, the letter was withdrawn. And instead of the boys hating my way of teaching the Bible, they have been regularly coming to my house, for the last four Sundays for an hour.

"It is the work of the spirit. I will by God's grace work as long as He permits me to do so without minding what others think or say of or do to me. If it is His will that I should stay in Bombay, He will help me to bear everything with Christian submission; if not I feel confident He will show me where I am to work. There are many other things more of a private nature which I don't wish to mention. Literally I have not a single soul in Bombay to whom I can talk freely, still I am by no means dis-heartened; if God be for me, I care for nothing else. The saying of John Wesley, 'when I devote to God my case, my time, my life, did I except my reputation?' I like most; and I have grace to follow it out fully.

"Please pardon for this long story and believe me.

Yours very sincerely
Janni Alli."

Yet another letter must also be quoted, one dealing again with his allowances. These money matters are not minor matters. They involve moral principles which need to be safeguarded.

This letter is dated 21st April 1879, written from Girgaum and addressed to Mr. Gray.

"Please accept my very sincere thanks for your kind letter of 7th March. I feel deeply grateful to the Committee for their favourable consideration of my letter. This clearly shows that they are ready to redress, as far as they can, the grievances of their missionaries and wish to make them as much as possible comfortable and free from unnecessary anxieties that they may carry on the work allotted to them in peace and work amicably with themselves. I do hope and pray that I may notice the just kindness of the committee and continue to work with them on the best of terms by the help of God.

"Mr. Squires has paid me Rs. 300/- for furniture. With regard to an allowance for recruiting health, kindly allow me to make one or two remarks. I distinctly told you in mine that I neither wished to leave Bombay every year nor would ever think of asking for more than *bonafide* expenses; so my case would be different from that of an European who draws or is allowed to draw every year Rs. 250/-. So then I don't quite see how the corresponding committee can consider how much would be needed for or by me and when, because, as the case stands, though I am in my own country, yet I have not the least advantage over an European. The

only advantage might be in the mode of travelling; if the European travels first class, I can very well travel second class. I can never be allowed to occupy a *serai* or *chattram* should there be such a place at Sanatorium nor have I friends to put up with; then where am I to go? I must of necessity go to a Travellers' Bungalow, or a Hotel.

"Also I had a talk the other day with Mr. Squires who thought your letter implied that a medical certificate would be necessary everytime I wished to leave Bombay. I am very sorry that I should not have as much freedom as an European. I will not say that you have no confidence in my conscientiousness and uprightness. By your constricting my liberty in this way, you do not give me an opportunity of showing real self-denial; then you should no longer charge us with a want of spirit of self-denial.

"Believe me, that I fight only for principle, not for £ S and D as some would make out. I will work cheerfully as long as God grants me health and strength; but I cannot accept your offer with all its limitations.

"Thanking you again for the affectionate nature and sympathizing spirit of your letter.

"I am, very sincerely yours

Janni Alli."

8. Calcutta Calling

For part of 1882 and 1883, Janni Alli was in England, seeking to win new interest among friends on behalf of India, and especially to secure wider support for his work in Bombay. But God had other plans for him than to continue his work in Bombay.

There was at this time a revival of interest in evangelistic work among Mohammedans. The Church Missionary Society had always been paying special attention to work among this community in Muslim countries. Some of the society's missionaries in India had always been set apart for work among Mohammedans. It had also to its credit a considerable number of converts from Islam. Some of them later became well-known as ardent preachers of the Gospel among their co-religionists of earlier days. The first ordained Indian in the list of the society's missionaries was Abdul Masih, a fruit of the labours of Henry

Martyn. The Rev. Imad-ud-din, converted in 1866, and ordained in 1868, had become the most outstanding pastor in the diocese of Lahore and a doughty champion of the Christian faith, a writer of distinction of Christian apologetics—commentaries on *St. Matthew*, the *Acts* and the *Apocalypse* and a life of Mohammed from the Christian point of view—specially for the use of Muslim enquirers. He was at this time in Amritsar, and besides being pastor of a congregation did evangelistic work through public lectures and preaching.

Safdar Ali was another distinguished convert. He remained a layman and was employed in the service of the Government, but had written able and useful Christian treatises. The Rev. Mian Sadiq Masih, the son of a convert from Islam, was connected with the Punjab Itinerant Mission. The Rev. Imam Shah was an ordained pastor at Peshawar. And there was Janni Alli himself.

The Rev. John Williams (an Indian), a medical man as well as a clergyman, was working in the Punjab at Tank and was greatly honoured and beloved by the tribes round about. For several years the C.M.S. had had a succession of medical missionaries who had done both medical and evangelistic work among the thousands of patients who came to them.

Interest began to be aroused in preaching the Gospel to Mohammedans by Dr. Pfander—originally sent out from Basle to Persia in 1825—who joined the C.M.S. in 1840 and had been sent to Agra. There, in 1854, he held a public discussion with the three most learned *maulvies* whom the Mohammedans could put forward. Two of the three *maulvies* (Imad-ud-din and Safdar Ali) later embraced Christianity as the result of the thinking which this public disputation provoked. Dr. Pfander had written an admirable book, *Mizan-ul-Haqq* (Balance of Truth) in English, which he himself translated into Arabic and Turkish. It became the most outstanding book explaining Christianity to Muslims. It had great influence in Turkey and Persia as well as India.

In India, at this time, the seventies and eighties of the nineteenth century, there were estimated to be no less

than forty million Mohammedans. But the obligation to preach the Gospel to them had been only partially discharged. In Bombay city, where there were 1,50,000 Muslims, the Rev. J. G. Deimler had been working under the auspices of the C.M.S. since 1859, through house visiting, street preaching and private discussions with invited to come and take part.

In October 1875, there was held a two-day conference in the C.M.S. House in London, seeing that several missionaries engaged in work among Muslims were in England together. Missions to Mohammedans in the Middle East, Africa and India were dealt with and their problems ably and with personal knowledge discussed by several who were actually at work in those countries. From India, the Revs. French, Keene, Bateman, Long, Hughes, Brodie, Sheldon and D. Fenn were present. Janni Alli, then an undergraduate in Cambridge, was specially invited to come and take part.

“The principal impression conveyed by this conference was that the Mohammedans had been almost universally neglected. The great American Missions in the East scarcely attempted to touch them; how little the C.M.S. had done there we have seen; and there were no other agencies of importance. In West Africa the Mohammedan population was reported as quite accessible but no one was attempting their evangelization. Even in India, where religious liberty prevailed and where important converts had been gained, this branch of work was scarcely at all cultivated. ‘The higher Mohammedans are touched by no mission,’ said the Rev. Edward Sell of Madras. ‘Very little has been done among the Mohammedans in Bengal,’ said James Long of Calcutta. And it was the same story everywhere. As to the best methods of reaching the Muslims, there was much diversity of opinion, governed largely by the circumstances of the particular fields from which the men had respectively come. Those from India contrasted the liberty there with the hindrances in the Turkish Empire, and urged that strength be thrown into the Indian work; while those from ‘the East’ affirmed that India and Africa were only the ‘outskirts’ of Islam—it should be attacked at the centre, and particularly where its sacred language, Arabic, was the vernacular,

as in Palestine. Some thought the only way to reach the Moslems of the East was through the Eastern Churches; others, that the Eastern Churches were the greatest obstacles to the evangelization of the Moslems.

"Striking evidence was given by the Punjab men, especially by the Rev. T. Valpy French, to the fact that underneath the hard crust of Mohammedan pride and bigotry, there was often to be found a heart that craved for peace and rest and holiness, and that the profounder parts of Scripture, such as the *First Epistle of St. John*, seemed especially effective in such cases. On the other hand, the men from West Africa testified to the worthlessness of much of the supposed enlightenment and civilization spreading over the Dark Continent by the agency of the 'missionaries' from the University of El Azhar at Cairo."¹

Again, at the Church Congress at Croydon in 1877, Mohammedanism in its relation to Christianity and the prospects of missionary work among Mohammedans were the special subjects dealt with. Three first class authorities on Islam—Bishop Edward Steere who had become in 1874 Bishop to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa in Zanzibar, professor E. H. Palmer, an authority on Persian, and Sir William Muir, Lt. Governor of the North West Provinces of India, who had made a special study of Islam and later wrote several books for the use of missionaries engaged in work among Muslims—participated in the deliberations of the congress. But the highlight of the discussion was the impressive speech of the Rev. Janni Alli which was vociferously applauded. The president was compelled by the loud demands of the audience to allow him to exceed the time limit.

"In his valuable address—not omitting to state plainly what may be of good in Islam, and any good it has done—he dealt specially with four separate lines of inquiry: How far does Islam agree with Christianity? In what points do they differ? Is Islam the ally of Christianity? Is it potential to satisfy the wants of man's spiritual nature? To the two latter questions Mr. Alli speaking

¹ It is a pity that the librarian at C.M.S. House, London, has not been able to find any record of Janni Alli's speech at this two-day conference in C.M.S. House of October 1875.

The above paragraphs describing the conference have been taken from the *History of the C.M.S.*

with a fulness of knowledge and experience which some English apologists for Islam cannot claim to possess, answered emphatically 'No;' and we would commend his calm, strong statements for the study of any who desire information, given with the authority of an expert, and the moderation of a true friend of his people. He also bore remarkable testimony, speaking as one from within the bosom of Moslems, as to the hopelessness of their own creed to give life and peace. He closed his speech with an earnest appeal for the manifestation of the best attributes of the true-hearted missionary to the Moslems, which he considered to be faith, sympathy, love, and perseverance, even more than zeal and learning. He quoted, the words of General Lake, who loved the Mohammedans of India; "The Mohammedan quarry, so to speak, contains materials which only require the touch of the Master Builder to form out of it pillars for that Temple which is being raised to His glory in this earth." The whole debate repays careful reading."¹

It is no wonder that Janni Alli's address won respectful attention from its hearers.

In the year 1881, there was a sudden outburst of interest in Christianity among the Muslim population of Krishnagar district of Bengal. The Rev. A. Clifford (who had succeeded the Rev. James Vaughan in the superintendence of that district) reported:

"Much enquiry about Christianity has been going on among the Mussulmans in the north of the Nadiya district. It commenced in the cold season of 1880-81." As a result of it there had been a number of baptisms, in spite of intense persecution by the other Mohammedans of the converts. "The excitement caused by these Baptisms, and the interest evinced in the Christian religion are without precedent in the history of this Mission for the last forty years. There can be no doubt that God has opened for us a door in this part of the mission field and I earnestly trust that we shall be able to seize the opportunity given us."

At the Decennial Missionary Conference held in Calcutta during the closing days of the year 1882—the

¹*History of the C.M.S.*, Vol. iii, pp. 117-118.

subjects discussed was Mohammedan work. The paper was by the Rev. Malcolm Goldsmith who had been working among Muslims from the time he arrived in 1872 first in Madras, then for a couple of years in Calcutta and again in Madras from 1875. The result was an appeal by the conference to all missionary societies to pay more attention to this important aspect of missionary effort and brought to their notice the claims of mission work among Mohammedans in Bengal among whom there was no missionary deputed exclusively for such work.

So before Janni Alli returned from the visit to England it was decided that he should be called upon to give up his work in Bombay and go to Calcutta and devote himself exclusively to work among the Mohammedans of Bengal. The society had already a missionary in Madras and in Bombay for this special work.

We have already seen that throughout his stay in Bombay, Janni Alli had, in his domiciliary visits, concentrated on visiting educated Mohammedan gentlemen and had made a real impression on their minds, though there were actually no open conversions. His birth, upbringing and training made him particularly suitable for being a missionary to Muslims.

Janni Alli was very reluctant to leave Bombay. But he realized the great importance of the work he was being called upon to undertake and agreed to go to Calcutta. He sailed from England on 9th January 1884.

On his way to Calcutta, in January 1884, he revisited Masulipatam—the place where he had lived as a boy, been to school, converted and spent the first years of his service in the Lord's vineyard. During the few happy days he spent there, one of his former pupils in the Sunday school was ordained deacon. He was present at the service and greatly rejoiced. He also addressed all the students of the Noble College. He wrote to a friend,

"I spoke out of a full heart for nearly an hour, standing before Mr. Noble's table. I pray that words spoken in weakness were not in vain, but that God would bless them to not a few. In the afternoon I had tea with the eldest son of my Persian tutor; the first

time he saw me after my baptism, he cursed me to my face. Now he said to his friends he considered it an honour to entertain me."

9. Calcutta—1884 to 1894

Arriving in Calcutta, work soon began to open out before Janni Alli. Mohammedans, for various reasons, had long neglected western culture and had in consequence fallen far behind their Hindu fellow countrymen in the race for learning and official preferment. Writing of the then state of things, Sir W. Hunter stated his opinion that "there is now scarcely a government office in which a Mohammedan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of ink-pots, and mender of pens." There has been a great advance in this respect lately, but still very much remained to be done.

Janni Alli threw himself with characteristic energy and devotion into school work for Hindus and Mohammedans. The latter branch of his work has a special interest to him, for he ever remembered with sympathy his "kinsmen after the flesh." At the time of his conversion, he appears to have shown at first a natural and understandable reluctance to undertake personal Christian effort on behalf of Moslems. But the power of God's grace changed all that with advancing life, and made their conversion a holy desire in his heart and labour. Generous friends at Cambridge and elsewhere, the master of Corpus, Professor Cowell, J. T. Lang, J. Barton, H. C. G. Moule, C. Lea Wilson, H. L. Mallory, C. and A. Howard, W. F. T. Hamilton, and many more (who, through the Cambridge Janni Alli Fund, had been the steadfast helpers of all his manifold work) provided scholarships and other welcome aid, and blessed possibilities of usefulness continually appeared around him. Assured, he wrote to Cambridge, "the Best of friends is with me to help and cheer me in His own work." He added, "The longer I live, the more I feel my utter unworthiness, to be called

out to believe in Christ and to follow Him, and also to be made His ministering servant. He not only spares a cumbrer of the ground, but crowns him with tender mercies."

The Garden Reach School was already in existence, but the opening of the new docks at Kidderpur necessitated its demolition. The Mohammedan school at Matyaburj, which started with two pupils, "in a narrow dirty lane," was Janni Alli's new plan. Rival schools mushroomed from time to time, and the pupils were drawn away more than once from the C.M.S. schools. But they soon returned, having come to learn something of the worth of their friend, whose life's ambition was, "May I love God supremely, trust in Him confidingly, and be faithful to Him to the end. May I truly humble myself in His sight, that God my Saviour may be exalted."

The two schools prospered well. With the compensation money from the Port Commissioners, and the help of many friends, an excellent school building, quite a prominent feature on the Garden Reach Road was erected, the foundation stone being laid by Lady Bayley, April 15th, 1890. There were over 300 pupils attending. At Matyaburj there were over 150, very many being Muslim boys. The princes of Oudh took a keen interest in the school, and though the king's death had much broken up the colony of Oudh notables, pensioners of the British Government, in and near Kidderpur, educational and zenana mission work was vigorously carried on.

"Higher education had ever an ardent advocate in Mr. Alli. He owed his conversion, under God to that method of missionary labour, and he recognised the great importance of Christian missionaries doing their utmost to bring the hallowing influence of their Faith to bear on the lives of the eager, young students, left otherwise to the darkness of a Godless education." He loved "the daily contact, the regular religious instruction, and that to minds unbiassed and impressible." "This is what is wanted in India in the present day," he wrote, "the education of the whole man, head, mind, and heart, and the Christian missionary need not be at all afraid of it, but on the contrary should be in the forefront."

He permitted the Koran to be taught in the school. Many of his missionary brethren questioned the wisdom of such a course. Janni Alli's view was that, while such a concession disarmed Mohammedan prejudice, the Bible and the Koran, if taught side by side by Christian *maulvies*, enabled the scholars to see for themselves the contrast between Light and darkness, the human and the Divine. "If a Christian *maulvie* can be got," he wrote, "I shall willingly allow even the Koran to be taught in the school by him, so that the boys may compare its teaching with that of the New Testament; and with God's blessing it must tell—I am sure of it."

But nothing would induce him to lessen his Bible teaching. A good illustration of his conviction as to this was seen on his visit to Madras in 1884. The Harris School under the brothers Goldsmith, was passing through one of those periodic crises, when parents take alarm and remove their boys wholesale, fearing conversions. The numbers had fallen from 200 to 20, and the parents declared their resolve that unless Bible teaching and daily prayer were at once discontinued, no boy should return. Janni Alli was there, and he tells us how he begged the "brothers not to give in. I am thankful to find them so firm. The boys were returning to school."

In April 1886, a Persian was baptized, and an Indian Muslim woman with her two children—as the result of his work.

His school-work, though it took up most of his time, was only a part of his manifold labours. He had other methods, of which much can be said—house-to-house visits to cold and proud Muslims of high rank or official position—a most unattractive duty in many cases; bazaar preaching; public discussions, when his courteous patience and ability in the give-and-take of eager debate were remarkable, when often as a Shiah he had at the very outset to calm the opposition of the Sunnis, and overcome their reluctance even to listen to his arguments and appeals, and the regular ministry to the Hindustani-speaking Christians connected with the Old Church, Calcutta. These claims on time and strength made large demands on

a single labourer, with a staff of Indian fellow workers never too numerous.

"But amidst all this he had thoughts for others, and a fairly large correspondence, and never flagging interest in the life and work of friends. For example, we read: 'Noel Hodges, of Masulipatam, was breakfasting with me this morning. Poor Hodges! Poor Masulipatam! As his wife's health would not allow her to return to India, he goes to England for good. Noble College, is without a Principal. How sad I feel to think of it.' And now in the Providence of God the Noble College has three graduates and Travancore has Bishop Noel Hodges and Mrs. Hodges."¹ In a later letter he speaks of his joy at the tidings of Mr. Aitken's mission services for undergraduates. In another, he tells of his interest in the progress of the new and growing district around St. Barnabas, Cambridge, where so many of the G.E.R. employees now live. (In 1886, his private letters were printed by Mrs. Babington, Treasurer of the 'Cambridge Rev. Janni Alli Fund'.)

"Mr. Wigram's visit to Calcutta in 1887 gave him much cheer and encouragement.² Father and son spoke to the boys in the schools and were present at the Holy Communion at the Hindustani Service at the Old Church. Mr. Alli wrote: 'It is very encouraging and consoling to know that Mr. W. approved every arrangement for the work. His visits have been very helpful. This is what we want in the midst of our trials and difficulties. True we have one above, who knows all, enters into our feelings, understands our motives; still, we are flesh and blood as well as spirit; so when one comes, as Mr. W. into our midst, and speaks sympathetically and encouragingly, it is a real help and solace.'

¹ F. Noel Hodges, an alumnus of Queen's College, Oxford, came out in 1877 as principal of Noble College, Masulipatam accompanied by his friend Arthur W. Polle of Worcester College as rugby master. He became bishop of Travancore-Cochin in 1890.

² The Rev. F. E. Wigram, a Southampton clergyman, a leader among the evangelical clergy in the Diocese of Winchester and a man also of private fortune, agreed to become general secretary at the C.M.S. headquarters in London in an honorary capacity and was appointed as such and entered on his new duties, soon after Christmas, 1880. A man of unbounded enthusiasm and generosity, he and Mrs. Wigram, in order to prevent retrenchments in expenditure which would seriously injure the work, guaranteed the society against any excess of expenditure above the fixed limit of £ 185,000 to the extent of £ 10,000. Needless to say he became a very efficient secretary and did much to help the society in its work. In September, 1866 he set off on a world tour, with his eldest son, to visit the missions. His purpose was to increase his own efficiency as secretary. Father and son returned to England after 11 months' incessant touring after visiting the great majority of stations in Ceylon, India, China and Japan.

"It was about the same time that a son of Lord Polwarth, whom he had met in Cambridge, during his furlough, was in Calcutta, and Mr. Alli was glad to show him all his work. The news of the death of Professor Keith-Falconer at Aden,¹ on the threshold of work of bright promise, much distressed him. He rejoiced over Bishop Westcott's three sons being missionaries to India.² 'His interest in and advocacy of Mission work is real.'

"It was in this same year that Mr. Alli had a merciful deliverance, in the violent cyclone which raged in the Bay of Bengal in May 1887, when the *Sir John Lawrence* a crowded pilgrimage, and the *Retriever* floundered near the Sandheads. Mr. Alli was returning on a sea-trip from Rangoon and for many hours they were in great peril. The passengers were kept below; many times it seemed impossible for the ship to recover herself; but the God whose he was, and Whom he served, delivered them in their distress. The old captain made his way at once to Janni Alli's cabin, when hope returned, exclaiming "Thank God, the worst is over."

"And thus the years passed on with patient continuance in well doing, the daily round of school-work, which gave much encouragement, visits, Old Church services. Baptisms were occasional. Young converts from Islam and others sometimes resided with him in Elliott Road. He took an active part in the Diocesan Boards, specially as a member of the Board of Missions and was also a regular attender at the monthly meetings of the Calcutta Missionary Conference, and at the weekly Bible reading at 10, Mission Row. The lady missionaries of the C.E.Z.M.S. connected with the Mohammedan Mission, Miss S. Mulvany, Miss Harding, and others, ever found in Mr. Alli wise and sympathetic counsellor and friend. More detailed records would be interesting did space permit. We can quote only one sentence to illustrate the spirit of his work. He had received letters from Dr. Westcott and Sir Charles Elliott, the latter regretting not seeing him during the

¹ The Hon. Low Keith Falconer, was a brilliant young Cambridge man, son of Lord Kintore. His profound scholarship in Semitic studies procured for him, at the age of thirty, the Lord Almoner's Professorship of Arabic at Cambridge. Happening to read an article by General Haig about the need for an Arabic mission, the call of God came to him then and there to give his life to Arabia. The foreign missions committee of the Free Church of Scotland adopted him as their missionary and sent him out to Aden in 1885. But, unfortunately he died in 1887.

² Revs. A. Westcott, G. K. Westcott and Foss Westcott.

Calcutta season, and his comment was, 'What am I that these great people should take notice of a poor Native missionary? It is my Heavenly Father, who knows my special circumstances, and sends me special help when He knows I stand in need of it. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards me?'"¹

On November 12th, 1887, the first prize-giving in the school which Janni Alli had opened a year and a half earlier in the quarter of the city where the late ex-king of Oudh and his retainers lived, took place—an unprecedented event in that quarter. Several Mohammedan princes and nobles were present, including the late King's son and nephew, and the ex-prime-minister. The chair was taken by Colonel Prideaux, who, as government agent, was then arranging the affairs of the late King of Oudh. A congratulatory speech was made by the ex-prime-minister. The boys recited in Persian, Arabic, Hindustani and English. The Rev. Janni Alli read the report. There were seventy-seven boys (seventy-six Moslems and one Christian) in the school.

The work which Janni Alli was enabled to do in Calcutta was thus most valuable. His obedience to God's call was richly blessed.

Sir Charles Bernard, writing to Mr. Alli in 1892, said:

"Calcutta has the largest Moslem population of any city in Asia; indeed so far as I know, Constantinople and Cairo are the only cities in the world that contain more Mohammedans than Calcutta. Your work among the Calcutta Moslems is therefore of the greatest importance, and its effects will radiate into Bengal with its 33,000,000 of Mohammedans."

We are thankful to learn from his letters, looking back in 1892, his conviction that his transfer to Calcutta was wholly according to God's Providence. "After my experience of eight and a half years in Calcutta, I can truly say that God led me there, and it was God's will that I should go there."

¹ These paragraphs are quoted from the Rev. P. Ireland Jones's *In Memoriam of Janni Alli*.

10. Last Visit to England

In 1892, Janni Alli again visited England. He left Calcutta on March 10 and arrived in London on April 11. The main purpose of this visit was raising funds for new buildings at Matyaburj which were sorely needed. He was also planning to establish a hostel, similar to the one he had begun and run for five years in Bombay, "where the boys may be brought under Christian influence day and night and, by God's blessing, be led to Christ." Some £900 was gathered with much effort. He also wanted to see if he could get a graduate from one of the British universities to come out to Calcutta and work with him among the Mohammedans of Bengal.

While in England, he was asked to be one of the speakers at the Annual Meeting of the Church Missionary Society. It was held on May 3rd (1892) with the president of the society, Sir John Kennaway in the chair.

The other speakers at the meeting were the Bishop of Exeter, Samuel Hoare Esq., M.P., the Rev. Mubert Brooke, Canon Taylor Smith (West Africa), the Rev. W. H. Ball of the Divinity School in Calcutta, and the Rev. C. W. A. Clarke, principal of the Noble College, Masulipatam.

Space forbids a long description of the meeting or long excerpts from the speeches.

The Rev. C. W. A. Clarke who seconded a resolution proposed by the Rev. Canon Taylor Smith, calling upon the people of God "to seek a spirit of truer and deeper conviction which shall be manifested in augmented sympathy, more believing supplication, increased support and self-denying personal service," appealed for a man to come out and help him to start the B.A. classes in the Noble College (which was only a second-grade college), began by saying:

"I am—thank God I can claim the honour—an educational Missionary—with the emphasis on 'missionary.' If you want a proof that ours is the least popular branch of missionary service, I can give you a very clear one. For three years we have been waiting for one single man to start the B.A. classes in the Noble College. Three

years ago your Committee promised that they would send us a man as soon as they could get one. And now I am here, two years before I am due, mainly for the reason that no man can be found to come to the Noble College."

He went on to compare the coming of spring in Nature to what is happening in India in men's minds.

"Long, long, the winter has been—thousands of years—but the spring is coming, praise God for it. I would call your attention to one other point we notice now, in the coming of the spring, and it is this—it was the little bushes that get green first. It is the great oaks and ashes that are still brown and black and without verdure. But their time is coming; and oh! dear friends, we are gathering the *pariahs*, the outcastes and the low castes rapidly into the kingdom of Christ, while the Brahmins and the high castes seem to hold back. But the spring is coming and we see the buds opening from time to time—here a bud and there a bud. There is a real bud from the higher education on the platform this morning—Mr. Janni Alli—who will speak to you very shortly. He is one of the very first results of the Christian education of the Noble College from which I come.

"We are just on the threshold of the jubilee of the Noble College. That saint of God, Robert Noble, went from his fellowship at Cambridge to start a school at Masulipatam fifty years ago and by the grace of God, we want to put the crowning stone of this edifice of his in the jubilee year. Can we believe that there is not one qualified man in England ready to come out and start these B.A. classes?"

Thus had Janni Alli been already introduced to the audience when he rose to second the resolution which had been proposed by Mr. Samuel Hoare, M.P., a vice-president of the society. The resolution was to the effect that the meeting pledged itself to be instant in prayer to the Lord of the harvest that He will raise up and send forth a vastly increased supply of duly qualified labourers.

Mr. Hoare had just returned from a brief visit to India. He had seen there some of the work going on. He spoke of educational work in India—he had visited St. John's

College in Agra, of the work among Mohammedans done by the Cambridge mission in Delhi and the keen desire of Hindus and Mohammedans in India to read the Bible, and said, "When you see all this work going on, you must realize that it is a great time for Missions in India." He ended up by saying, "The one great lesson I learnt in India respecting the Mission work there is this—we must have patience. If you all present have faith in the power of the Gospel, I ask you also to be patient; and then, with the utmost confidence, you may look forward to most blessed results."

Then it was Janni Alli's turn. His whole speech must be given in full, describing as it does the work he was doing in Calcutta and ending up with a bold appeal for a helper and for help in money.

"As you have heard from Mr. Clarke, I am a result of the educational work of this great Society. My only claim to second the resolution is that I may show you, what has been described more than once this morning, the power of the Gospel—that, whether addressed to the Hindu or the Mohammedan, or, as it was of old, to the Greek or the Gentile, its power is the same. Mr. Clarke has alluded to those great and devoted missionaries who went out to Southern India to establish that great College in which I was brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and I am thankful that I am here this morning to testify that the educational work of the Society in India has not been carried on in vain. The Resolution which I have the honour to second embraces three points. First, we thank God for the tokens of good; secondly, we recognize 'the urgent call both to strengthen existing Missions and to face the well-nigh boundless possibilities of extension and expansion;' and, thirdly, we pledge ourselves to be instant in prayer for duly qualified labourers.

"I should like just to say a word or two on each of these points. Let me say, first of all, that, of course, this meeting recognizes God's providence in all that has been done. This meeting has to recognize God's providence. the Society has to acknowledge it, the Committee has to recognize it, the missionaries have to recognize it, each one of us has to recognize it in the blessings which have rested upon past labourers. And let me

here say that when I was first sent out to India, fifteen years ago, by the Church Missionary Society, to labour in a particular part, and when nine years ago I came back to England the Committee appointed me to work in Calcutta, I see the hand of God's over-ruling providence in sending me from one part of India to another to labour for Him. When I went to Calcutta I had for a College friend Henry Parker, who has found an early grave in East Africa. In God's providence he was called away, while I am left alive. There, too, I see God's hand. I was not to rest on an arm of flesh, but on the omnipotent power of the grace of God, which has sustained me ever since I left my home and people, more than thirty years ago.

"And now I come to the work—not my work, but God's. It has always seemed to me a sort of blasphemy for any one to speak of 'our Society' or of 'my work,' 'my school,' 'my teacher,' or 'my catechist.' All such expressions must appear blasphemous to one who has been a Mohammedan, and who knows how religion is regarded by Mohammedans. I say 'the work of God committed to me through the instrumentality of this great and noble Society. The work chosen for me was work amongst the Mohammedans of Calcutta. But what is one man among the 200,000 Mohammedans of that city? Before the Decennial Conference of 1882-83 there was no missionary appointed to work exclusively among the Mohammedans of Calcutta. When an appeal for one came to the Committee of the Church Missionary Society they chose me—I don't know exactly why, unless it were that I, having been one of the Mohammedans, it seemed likely that I should sympathize with them, and know how best to deal with them.

"When I went there I found that they had been almost entirely neglected, and I think we may take shame to ourselves for having left the work among Mohammedans almost solely to ladies who visited the zenanas. When I commenced my labours I found it very difficult to work among Mohammedans. Let me here read one or two passages from a book recently sent forth by a very learned Mohammedan gentleman—an acquaintance of mine—who holds one of the highest official positions in India that the government can confer on a Native. This gentleman says: 'A corrupt Zoroastrianism, battling for centuries with a still more corrupt Christianity, had stifled the voice of humanity and converted some of the happiest portions of the globe into a veritable Aceldama.' Here, Christian friends, you see

how a Mohammedan gentleman, a man of culture, holding the high position of judge of the High Court of Calcutta, speaks of *nominal Christianity*. That sentence occurs in a passage in which he speaks of the origin and growth of Mohammedanism.

"A corrupt Christianity brought into existence Mohammedanism, and it is the duty of a pure, reformed, Scriptural Christianity to show Mohammedans—I will not say Christianity,—but what the religion of Jesus has been and will be to all eternity.

"Then, again, the same author in another place says: 'In its higher phases the religion of Jesus appealed to the nobler instincts of mankind. It brought solace and comfort to the downtrodden. And whilst the dogmatism of its preachers silenced questioning minds, it satisfied the yearnings of those who, fleeing from the indecencies of the older cults, hungered for a purer life.' Here, again, you see that Mohammedans, those among them who are educated, know what Christianity—I mean the Christianity of the Gospel and the Apostles—was. The form of Christianity has been corrupted, and it is the work of us missionaries, when we go among Mohammedans, first of all to try and undo the work which has been done, and then to begin to work afresh. What I mean by 'undoing the work which has been done' is showing Mohammedans by our lives, by our teaching, by our worship, by our intercourse, by our constant coming in contact with them what the religion of Jesus is, what the Gospel teaches, what Christianity has done for others, though Mohammedans may only know a corrupt form of it.

"A *moonshee* once said to me, 'You were a Mohammedan, you have now become a Christian teacher; what do you think of Mohammed?' Well, the question was a startling one, and I did not at first know exactly how to answer it, but God gave me words to reply. I said, 'If Mohammed had known Christianity as you do in its present simplest and noblest form, he would, I think, have been a Christian.' He hung down his head and said, 'Yes, I see now what you mean.' When I went to Calcutta to labour among the Mohammedans there, my first effort was to try and cultivate their friendship, to know them, and to make them feel that although I was a Christian and was educated at the University of Cambridge, yet I was one of themselves.

"I did a great deal of calling, and I made it a point to call on the leading Mohammedan gentlemen—judges,

magistrates, and others. Some persons seemed startled at my visit. They said in effect, 'Why do you come to me? what is your business?' 'My business,' I replied, 'is simply this—I want to show you that, though I am a Christian, I am one of yourselves. I was brought up in your religion, and I want to try and show you what induced me to become a Christian.'

"You have heard of the King of Oudh. When he was deposed he was brought to Calcutta, where he settled down in one of the suburbs, about six miles down the river, and I made a point of calling on some of the princes. The palace-gate of the King of Oudh was barred against me. I could not enter the iron gates. The king would have nothing to do with Christians or Europeans.

"When Mr. Wigram visited Calcutta five years ago, I had only a little school for Mohammedan boys in a mud-wall-and-thatch-roofed hut, in a narrow lane, simply because the king and his agents would not allow me to enter his gates. But the king has since died; the bolts and bars have been thrown away; the gates are open, and we can go in when we like. In the providence of God, zenana ladies who had been shut up for ten or twenty years can now be visited, and can come to my house, six miles to Calcutta, and tell me about their troubles, sorrows and difficulties. God has wrought wonders. No one who has not laboured in India can imagine what difficulties there had to be encountered and the changes to which I allude are indeed triumphs of the Gospel.

"Dear friends, you have been reminded to-day that the religion of Jesus Christ is not a commercial matter in which you have to lay out money and at a certain period may demand your dividends. In the powerful sermon which was preached last night at St. Bride's Church, allusion was made to the rebuke which Christ administered to His disciples in the words, 'O ye of little faith.'

"I do trust that all those of you who have faith in the Word of God, in the Spirit of God, in the power of the Gospel, will feel that this work is one which must go on from step to step till it engrosses even the bigoted Mohammedans. 'What are the direct result?' you may ask. We have not, indeed, to tell you of many baptisms. As Mr. Ball has already told you, baptisms in large numbers have not yet taken place in India, though they may before long; but as you have learnt from the Report, there have been thirty-one baptisms in Calcutta during

as many weeks of last year, in connection with the Mission.

"I have had pleasure in baptizing three adults and three children. It may be asked 'What is that in proportion to all the labour and money expended?' In last night's sermon reference was made to Christ's words, 'Let us go over to the other side.' What was the result? Two persons possessed of a devil were brought to the feet of Jesus, were healed, and restored to their right mind. Perhaps if that had occurred in the nineteenth century, and in this city of London, newspaper writers would have said that the mission of Christ was a failure; toil, and labour, and anxiety, with scarcely any result; but our Blessed Lord has told us that there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.

"There is joy in the presence of God, and joy to Jesus Himself, whom we love to call our Saviour. These are results, however, and, as I have before remarked, we missionaries ought to take shame to ourselves for speaking of them as if they arose from our own work. We are all servants of the Lord, and let us regard ourselves as fellow servants of that great Lord and Master who said to His disciples, 'Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends.' When Jesus calls us His friends, how dare we look upon one another as servants to any one else?

"When Carey had gone out to India and his friend Andrews wrote to him from England, what did he say? 'We have gone down as colliers into the pit to dig, and you at the mouth are drawing up what we have dug.' We in Calcutta are digging in the deep mine of heathenism and Mohammedanism to bring up, not black coals, but diamonds, which are to shine for ever and ever in the diadem of our Lord and Saviour. And you have to co-operate with us as Andrews did with Carey.

"One word more and I have done. Fathers and brethren allow me to appeal to you. You may say, 'Why did you leave that work of yours to come to England?' 'What right had you to come here? You are not an Englishman.' True, I am not; but England has become a second home to me, and I am come here for refreshment of mind and spirit. But that is not all. The peculiar nature of the work in which I am engaged is such that it is impossible for me to carry it on alone, and I have come here to obtain a fellow-labourer. I am going very shortly to my beloved university to seek one, and I have to appeal to you to place funds at the disposal of the Committee of the Church Missionary Society for building a schoolroom. When I boldly ask you to give £1000 or 1200 for this pur-

pose, remember I am not asking you to give it to the Society or to me.

"We read in the *Acts of the Apostles* that the new converts sold all their possessions and laid what they obtained for them at the Apostles' feet. The Apostles are not here, but the treasury of God is here. There is a sentence in the Report to which I must here allude. It is there said that the missionaries of this Society are helping to set forth Evangelical principles; and you are binding yourselves this afternoon to pray that missionaries who are duly qualified may be sent forth by this Society; pray that the mind of Christ may be infused into those principles, and that the Spirit of God may transform them into living realities to us, that we may be a living power to a dying world."

In an article on the anniversary meeting Mr. Henry Sutton wrote:

"It would be very easy to mistake Mr. Janni Alli for an Englishman. He looks very like a man who has spent a few years in a tropical climate. Nor is his accent at all unlike that of an Englishman who has lived abroad for a considerable period. It was very interesting to hear from one who had himself been a Mohammedan of the means he uses to bring Mohammedans to the Saviour. All will join in the hope that at Cambridge, of which university Mr. Janni Alli is a graduate, he may find the fellow-labourer he so much needs for the full development of his work. His task is a trying one, but already God has given him fruit of his labour, and we are sure that this is but the beginning of a great harvest."¹

II. "To End Well"

Janni Alli returned to Calcutta early in 1893, by way of Bombay and Allahabad. At the latter place he stayed with his old friends, Bishop and Mrs. Clifford and enjoyed among other things his visit to the Cathedral and also a drive in the "episcopal brougham for the first time, it having arrived from Calcutta that morning."

On his return to Calcutta, Janni Alli was given a great welcome by his friends, both Christians and non-Christians

¹ *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, June 1892, p. 409-410.

and his European co-workers and Indian assistants. There was a large gathering of Muslims on the platform of the Howrah railway station, before dawn on February 3rd 1893, as the E. I. R. Mail train steamed in.

The first problem was securing a suitable house for his residence near enough to the locality where his work mainly lay. "He made his home with us," says the Rev. P. Ireland Jones in the *In Memoriam* of Janni Alli which he wrote,¹ "at well-loved Mission Road, for several weeks, a welcome guest. But he felt that he must be nearer to his work. The old house in Elliott Road was too far away. At length he found convenient quarters in Hastings, in the West of the City on the road to Garden Reach. There he gathered round him some of his agents and was looking forward to another term of active service. But the will of God has been otherwise."

"Looking back now, amidst so much cause for thanksgiving, it is impossible not to feel regret that in all those long and busy years of widening work and fresh opportunities, Mr. Alli laboured on single-handed. No fellow worker came to join him. He looked wistfully for aid. 'A second man for Calcutta for the Mohammedan work—that has been the burden of his appeal for many years.'

"I see several Cambridge men have been accepted by the C.M.S. I wonder if they mean to take into consideration the needs of the Calcutta Mohammedan Mission." He waited eagerly. But the response did not come; perhaps could not come. In July 1893 he wrote, "I am not alone, having the abiding presence of Him who said, 'I will never forsake you.'

"Lo! amid the press,
And close beside my work and weariness
I discern Thy gracious form, not far away,
But very near, O Lord, to help and bless."

"Like heart-moving appeals reach Salisbury Square by almost every mail from all parts of that harvest-field to which the eyes of the Lord are ever turned with compassion. May we still hear Him saying, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He may thrust

¹ *From Islam to Christ, Some memories of the late Janni Alli, C.M.S. Church Missionary Intelligencer, 1895, p. 7.*

forth labourers into His harvest.' There are others, too, overburdened as Janni Alli was. He is blessedly beyond the need of our help now. But there are many others whom we may seek to aid, and aid soon.

"It was in this past summer that Mr. and Mrs. Mylrea (who need our prayers) were at length assigned to Calcutta for his work. Mr. Alli, we thank God for it, heard of their coming here before he was stricken down. He rejoiced at the tidings of their appointment. But all this time, he had thought for others; he could look upon the things of others."

His letters are full of this. He alludes to "the death of H. Williams, Clifford's brother-in-law, and a devoted missionary, a real friend to the Natives. . . The departure of Gill from Bengal, another valued missionary, who has again broken down. 'Bengal is much weakened. Our only consolation is to realise that the work is God's and He is ordering everything, so nothing can go wrong . . . You see how the missionary candidates have been distributed. None for Calcutta Mohammedan work. I don't at all complain.' "

"We did not think of Mr. Alli an old man. He was older than we thought. A brief reference in a letter tells of his meeting a friend of Cambridge days; 'M. and I stood looking at one another for some seconds. We had altered so much and had grown so grey.' And some years later he wrote, 'I am no longer young, and am not equal to the work of Calcutta.' But his hand was on the plough, and there was no looking back. 'As long as God permits me health and strength I shall not spare myself. I have no right to do so. I am His entirely to spend and be spent in His service. My only prayer is that He will use me to the utmost.' So he wrote seven years back. But it was his purpose to the last."

For a few months after his return from England, Janni Alli was able to pick up the threads and continue the work he had been doing—supervising the schools, visiting educated Muslims and talking to them and above all praying God that all the people of this land, especially those of his ancestral faith, may feel after Him and find Him. But it was not for long. His health which had not been too good ever since he returned from England, began gradually to decline in spite of medical treatment and occasional holidays. Once he stayed in Naini Tal with Bishop

Clifford for some days. A little later, paralysis suddenly developed. He was for a time in the general hospital but was later removed to the mission house where he was under the care of Mr. and Mrs. Williamson. He was unable to speak and was unconscious for seven weeks. The end was delayed for some months.

The Rev. H. D. Williamson, a few weeks before his death, paid a visit to the Matyaburj and Garden Reach schools; after first seeing Janni Alli on his sick bed. He spoke to the staff and pupils of the school about Janni Alli's condition and his inability to send them a message himself. There was a hush of reverent awe and heart-felt sorrow. Mr. Williamson, being unaccustomed to Urdu, left the school without offering a prayer. One of the senior *maulvies* of the school came forward and desired that a prayer should be said. Therefore Mr. Williamson prayed in English and the headmaster of the school then prayed in Urdu.¹

The end came on the 15th October 1894 when he passed away peacefully. The funeral took place the same day at Maniktollah, that "God's acre" where so many faithful labourers of the C.M.S., Indian and European, now sleep, among whom are two much-beloved Indian clergymen, Pyari Mohun Rudra and Raj Kristo Bose.

The Calcutta Corresponding Committee which met on November 16th, with the Bishop of Calcutta in the chair, placed on record their "high appreciation of the late Rev. Janni Alli's character and work, his single-hearted devotion to duty, his invaluable labour among his fellow-countrymen in Calcutta, and his peculiar qualification for the work in which he was engaged realizing the great and irreparable loss which the Bengal mission had suffered by his death."²

"What can be said in a few sentences of some prevailing features of his character? He was a man of very affectionate nature, drawn strongly to friends. His humility was sincere. 'I pray to be more diligent, more humble, more dependent, less self-reliant.' He had a

¹ *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, Dec. 1894, p. 926.

² *Ibid* 1895, p. 133.

keen sense of humour; to see him merry with our young-hearted Associated Evangelists was always pleasant. There was a delightful interest in little children. He ever urged sympathy with the people of India, and looked for it as the mark of a true missionary, and was most keenly sensitive to a shadow of their disparagement in manner or tone. At times even there was over-tenderness in this respect, when in the hurry and bustle of daily life and conversation, the western sometimes forgot that his well-loved friend was after all of the East and not of the West; although, so remarkably had he caught the spirit and mode of our western ways, that it was difficult always to recall the fact that nevertheless, our brother, so closely one in Christian love, was Indian and not English.

"Later years in the work of grace were manifestly softening and hallowing. His early associations made him scrupulously careful in his expression of some Christian doctrines, specially as to the Unity of God, and the Holy Trinity of the Divine Persons. The blessing in the name of 'God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,' he always carefully uttered in that form. He pressed on Moslem hearers the attribute of the Love of God, so unknown to them, as he said.

"Letters have reached us from several bearing witness to the high esteem felt for our friend. We can quote only one, from an English clergyman, who, on tour in India visited Mr. Alli in Calcutta. He writes of their parting:

"Before I started by the night mail for my journey across the continent, he chose and read Ps. 91. We knelt together and he commended me and my journeying to God's care. Presently he went with me to Howrah, and saw me comfortable settled in my carriage. I have often thought of that commendatory impromptu 'service of Janni Alli's in Calcutta; it has happened by the Lord's will to be our last converse on this side of Jordan. There will be universal regret among those who knew him.'

"He was the last friend we saw in India. We, Mr. Bradburn and ourselves, had moved over from the Calcutta jetties at dawn, in the good ship *Clyde*, March 17th 1893, and an hour later were lying at anchor in Garden Reach, opposite his Matyaburj school. We were busy trying to put our cabin in some sort of order, when to our surprise he ran in to say once more 'Farewell,' and wish us, 'God speed.' 'As I approached,' he wrote to mutual friends, 'the officer of the watch gave

orders to lift the ladder. I begged of him to stop a minute, and rushed up, and then down to the saloon, and shook hands with them and left.' It was like Janni Alli, ever thoughtful for others. It was our last meeting here."

Here we must interpose a note explaining the reference above to associated evangelists.

The (C.M.S.) scheme for associated evangelists was matured in the year 1888, mainly on the initiative of General Haig, who urged "the importance of sending forth men in bands, unmarried and willing to endure hardness and live together on a small common allowance—but not necessarily of superior education—for village itineration in India." The scheme which was not at first warmly welcomed by the corresponding committees and missionary conferences in India, met with cordial approval from the Rev. A. Clifford, then the Calcutta secretary and later Bishop of Lucknow and the Rev. Philip Ireland Jones. The home committee thereupon decided to make a tentative experiment in the Nadiya district of Bengal. The three men who volunteered to go out under this scheme—Mr. Donne, a well educated businessman, two other students under theological training, Mr. Le Feuvre and Mr. Shaul—sailed for Calcutta in January 1889. The arrangement was that they were to serve for five years at least. It proved a great success. Space forbids giving more information.

General Haig himself was a most remarkable person—a very devoted missionary-minded layman in the service of the Government of India. While in India he not only liberally supported Christian work in India with his money, but also actively engaged himself in evangelistic work. As Capt. F. T. Haig in 1860, he was at Dummagudem in the Koi area as an engineer working under Col. (later, Sir) Arthur Cotton who was then engaged in developing irrigation in the Godavari district in the upper reaches of the Godavari river.

At Dummagudem Capt. Haig gathered together a group from among his colleagues and subordinates and prayed

for the active Christian work among them. One of the first Indians to be converted to Christianity was a young Hindu rajput named Venkatrama Raju, then head of the local commissariat department. Capt. Haig had given him a Bible. Within a week, he happened to notice Matthew 6 and was impressed by it. He began to pray to the "Father who seeth in secret," and then asked to be accepted as a Christian. He was given a month's leave to go to Masulipatam and receive further Christian instruction and be baptized. He and his wife did so and were baptized in August 1860 by Rev. Mr. Sharkey. He came back and soon resigned his government job and became an evangelist. He was later ordained in the C.M.S. Telugu Mission in 1872.

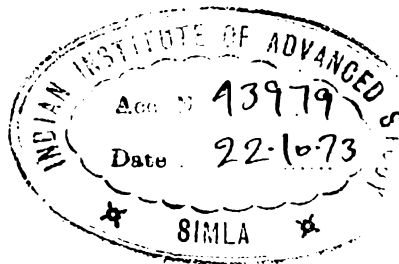
The first missionary to Dummagudem came in 1873. He was the Rev. John Cain. He had come out in 1869 as rugby-fox master in Noble High School. In 1881, during Mr. Cain's furlough, General Haig (who had retired from India and was in England,) volunteered to go out and take charge of the Godavari mission during Mr. Cain's absence. He stayed in Dummagudem for a year and a half, helping Rev. I. V. Raju who was then the only missionary there.

General Haig became a valuable and much valued member of the society's committee at headquarters and was responsible for several schemes for the expansion of the society's work—the scheme for associated evangelists being one. Another was the scheme for sending out a special mission to India. It actually came out in 1887—1888 and brought what was called a "spiritual monsoon" to India and led to a great revival of interest in all the C.M.S. missions in India.

In concluding the narrative, the Rev. P. Ireland Jones's last paragraph in his *In Memoriam* of Janni Alli is quoted:

"Let us pray fervently that many like Janni Alli, Pyari Mohun Rudra, Raj Kristo Bose and William Thomas Sathianathan may be raised from among their own people. Janni Alli in a way differs from the rest of his brethren in some of the incidents of his life-story, now thus briefly told; his remarkable energy in acquiring western education, so unusual for a Moslem by birth;

his being the only English University graduate in the ranks of the C.M.S. Indian clergy; his life-work since his conversion, full with manifold labours in the Gospel of Christ, on behalf of his own people. We are thankful to have among the living still many true and able ministers of the Gospel, of Indian birth in the various provinces. May their number be multiplied and may the example of their fellow-labourers called to their rest ever inspire those who remain to follow in their steps, to share their faith, and to labour as they did. The Committee, in placing on record their thankfulness for the life and work of their brother Janni Alli, added these words which our readers will remember in their prayers on behalf of India; "They pray fervently that the seed of Eternal Life sown by their brother, in season and out of season, in word and life, may bring forth fruit abundantly in the hearts of many of his Mohammedan countrymen by the Divine blessing on his labours and prayers, and that many like him from among India's own sons may be raised up by God to be evangelists, pastors and teachers in the wide-spreading field of Indian Missions.'"

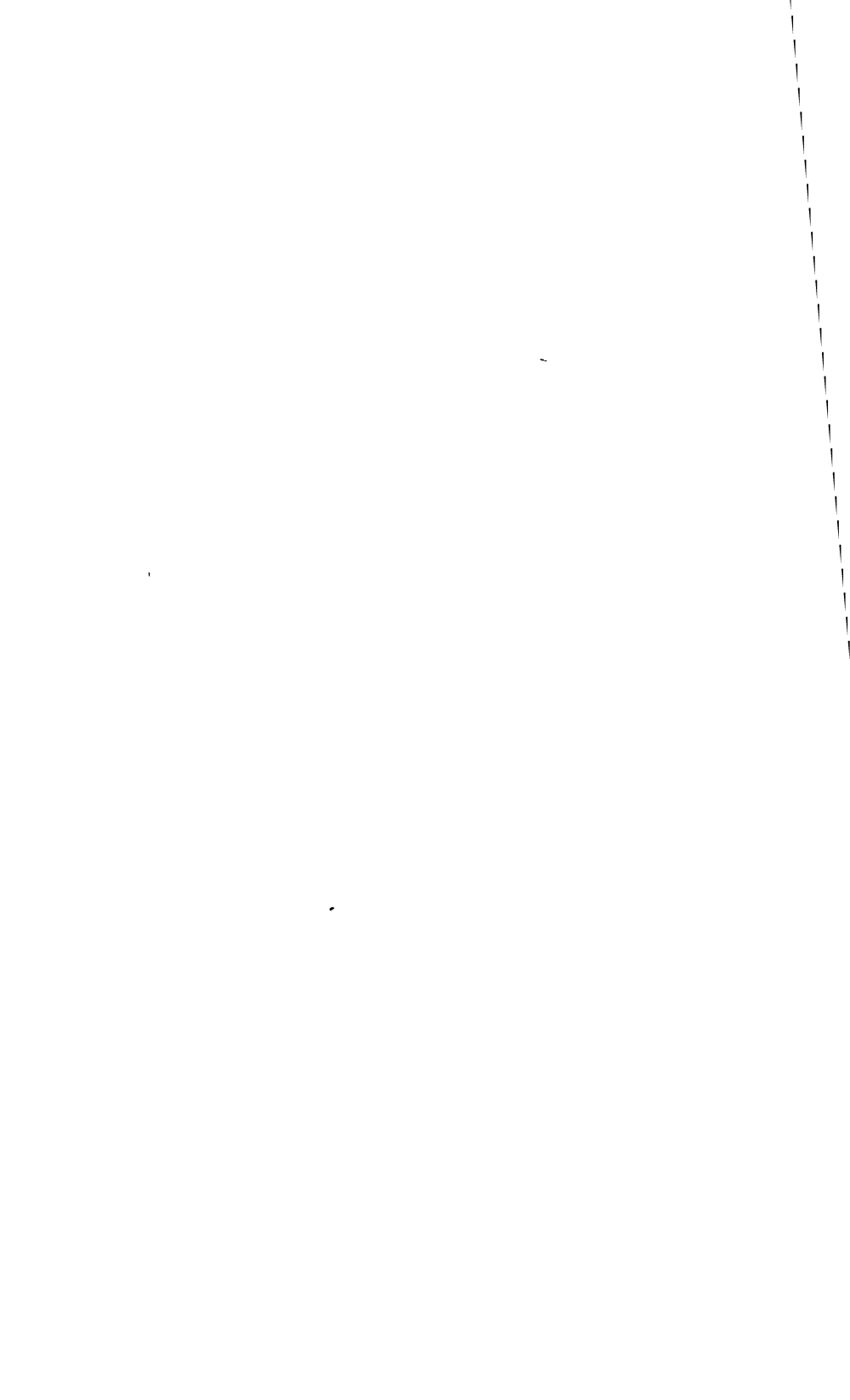


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About this book . . .

These are stirring biographies of two Muslims who became prominent leaders in the Church in India. Safdar Ali, a government official, had an orthodox upbringing and was a staunch follower of Islam, delving into its very depths, and blindly opposing Christianity. But the more zealous he became, the greater was the thirst of his soul. In his own words he relates how he came up from those dark depths to find light...Janni Ali distinguished himself academically, speaking English like an Englishman, and became a pioneer Indian missionary. He ran the school and hostel that were in his charge efficiently, without counting the cost. Just and outspoken, he was very concerned about partnership of the Church in India and missions. How he pleaded his case and whether or not he succeeded are revealed in his letters to the parent society.

Mr. Paul is a distinguished layman of the Church of South India who played a significant role in the life of that Church in its early years as honorary general secretary of the synod from 1952 to 1964. He retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1950 when he was a secretary to the Government of Madras. He is a lecturer and author, with several books to his credit. His first book *The Cross Over India* (S. C. M. Press), is an assessment of the Christian enterprise in India. Then he wrote a review of the first ten years of the Church of South India, *The First Decade*. Two volumes of Indian Christian biography followed, *Chosen Vessels* and *Triumphs of His Grace* (C. L. S. Madras). This book is one of a series of three on pioneer Christians published by the Lucknow Publishing House. It provides valuable glimpses of the Church



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