

# They Kept The Faith

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# They Kept The Faith

Biographies of Gopeenath Nundi,  
Pyari Mohan Rudra and Lal Behari Day

by Rajaiah D. Paul

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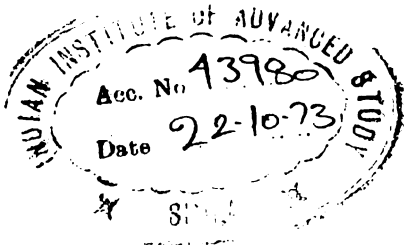


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## Author's Introductory Note

The three men whose lives are briefly sketched in this book all belonged to Bengal. All three were converts from Dr. Alexander Duff's institution in Calcutta. That institution's inestimable services to the spread of Christianity and Christian education in this country are for ever enshrined in the annals of the Church in India.

All three were born in the higher strata of Hindu society and hailed from orthodox and conservative families. All were men of high social rank, fine spiritual calibre, outstanding intellectual vigour and great moral strength. As will be seen from these sketches, all three were "chosen vessels"—especially picked out by God for his allegiance and service, and each of them was a triumph of His grace. All three became shining ornaments of the Church in India in the nineteenth century. They "kept the faith" and all "professed a good profession before many witnesses." They let the Light shine through their lives so clearly that seeing their good works men were led to accept Jesus Christ as the Light of the world, as they themselves had been led to forsake all lesser lights and accept him as their sovereign Lord and Master.

The first generation of Indian clergy were outstanding men. They were selected for ordination with very great care and after much prayer. They were all persons who had been for years in the service of the Church as lay workers. Prior to ordination they were given long and sound preliminary training, not as theologians but as "fishers of men." The ordained ministry itself had not yet become professionalized. The Church had not become an institution. It was still mainly an evangelizing agency and a movement of the Spirit. It had not become, as it has since become, a decorated coast-guard station, whose personnel, in spite of the costly training they get, never go out into the storm-tossed sea in their life-boats. They

prefer to send untrained mercenaries to save a stray life here and there amidst the thousands perishing every day.

Of the three whose lives are sketched here, the Rev. Gopeenath Nundi was a "confessor"—one who, during the "Mutiny", refused to recant even under ruthless torture and cruel treatment. He narrowly escaped martyrdom.

The Rev. Pyari Mohun Rudra was one who came to perceive the truth in Christ after prolonged examination of the precepts and the practice of Brahmoism; and lived to give distinguished service to the infant Bengal Church as a faithful pastor superintending a mission district and as the first honorary general secretary of the Bengal Church Council of the C.M.S.

The Rev. Lal Behari Day, an intellectual and a master of English prose, was successively minister, professor and author.

All three have become well-nigh immortal in Indian Church history. Their names will always be remembered with pride and thanksgiving by the Church in India. It is necessary that successive generations of young Indian Christians should have the means of knowing them more than merely by name.

This is the reason why for several years now I have been trying to delve into the history of the Protestant Church in India, since its origin in Tranquebar in 1706. In picking up the lives of some of the converts to it from Hinduism and Islam who later became pillars of the Church and shining lights of their several generations, I have tried to delineate a picture of the Indian Church as it then was.

In every one of the lives in this book, as in all the other earlier books of mine—*The Cross Over India*, *Chosen Vessels*, *Triumphs of His Grace* and *Changed Lives* (and two or three others which (D.V.) are yet to come out)—I have made an attempt to relate the story to the contemporary social, intellectual and religious background. Every one of them—as is the case also with us, lesser mortals—was a product of the circumstances that bore upon them from different directions.

Every life also contains not merely references to but actual pictures of the missionaries who had a hand in leading the convert to Christ and training him for His service; so that it may be seen where later missionaries and, after the so-called "devolution," the Indian leaders of the Church, have gone astray.

As far as I know, this is the first long-enough sketch of the lives of Gopeenath Nundi and Pyari Mohun Rudra to be called a biography. Lal Behari Day's life was written at full length by the Rev. G. Macpherson, one of his Scottish colleagues in the Presbyterian ministry in Bengal, and published in 1900. The book soon went out of print and is not now available, except in a few libraries which preserve old books and do not consider them all as out-of-date rubbish. Needless to say I have drawn most of my material from that book.

RAJAJIAH D. PAUL





# Gopeenath Nundi

## 1. Alexander Duff in Calcutta

In beginning the story of Gopeenath Nundi, we do not need to go further back than the starting of Alexander Duff's famous institution. Duff arrived in Calcutta in May 1830. Soon after his arrival, he visited every mission station, and missionary, in and around Calcutta and studied the work that was being done and the methods employed—open preaching accompanied by the distribution of tracts, and rural vernacular schools. It was not long before he became convinced that along with the usual and till then the only means of evangelization in vogue, there was need for an entirely new method. The old method had, no doubt, been successful to a limited extent, but it had produced little effect on the more intellectual section of Hindu society in towns and cities. He therefore worked out for himself a new method of getting at the intelligentsia, and decided to put it in operation without delay. This was "to lay the foundation of a system of education which might ultimately embrace all the branches ordinarily taught in the higher schools and colleges of Christian Europe; but in inseparable combination with the Christian faith and its doctrines, precepts and evidences; with a view to the practical regulation of life and conduct. Religion was to be, not merely the foundation upon which the superstructure of all useful knowledge was to be raised, but the animating spirit which was to pervade and hallow all."<sup>1</sup>

This was to be done by the daily reading and exposition of the Christian Scriptures done prayerfully, so that "the truth might be brought home, by the grace of God, and lead to the conversion to the religion of Christ of at least

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. I, p. 110.

a few of the students." If these students are from the more respectable and intellectual classes, their conversion was certain to make a profound impact on Hindu society. Direct preaching to and the conversion of a few Hindus in the villages, mostly of the lower classes, could never have more than a superficial effect on Hindu life. Hinduism can well afford to lose a few hundreds of thousands of its adherents to Christianity without being seriously affected in prestige or noticeably reduced in numbers. As Duff himself put it, without any disparagement to the simple preaching and teaching already in vogue, "While you engage in directly separating as many precious atoms from the mass as stubborn resistance to ordinary appliances can admit, we shall, with the blessing of God, devote our time and strength to the preparing of a mine, and the setting up of a train which shall one day explode and tear up the whole from the lowest depths."

And even though perhaps the explosion anticipated by Duff has not taken place yet, there has been brought about, mainly through higher education, a different kind of revolution in the religious attitudes of the country—through a process of penetration and leavening—which is still going on. The outward structure has not been broken down but the inner thinking and attitudes have been and are being changed, though not perhaps in a manner and direction which we would have preferred; and yet all the same due to the influence of Christianity and Christ.

Duff began his school in the face of the almost unanimous opposition of all the other missionaries in the country, but with the full approval and complete moral and practical support of Raja Ram Mohun Roy—the inaugurator of a reform movement in Hinduism and Hindu society which has, since then, led to a complete revolution in the country's social system.

Necessarily Duff had to begin from the very lowest instruction. He had to begin by teaching the English alphabet to the three hundred Bengali youths who had joined the institution—spending six hours a day on this, and without any assistant or assistance. In addition he spent several hours at night preparing a series of

graduated school books. He also devised a unique plan for teaching the English alphabet to a large number of pupils at the same time.

The school became so popular that several who sought admission had to be turned away and additional accommodation had continuously to be acquired. "The missionary had come to be loved with that mixture of affection and awe which his lofty enthusiasm and scorn of inefficiency ever excited in the oriental."<sup>1</sup>

In order to test publicly the results of the first year's labour, "he announced the examination of his pupils in the Freemasons' Hall. To remove the prejudice that his work was low and fanatical, he secured Archdeacon Corrie as president on the occasion." Dr. Duff was sure that "the pupils would so acquit themselves as to recommend the school and its system. In this he was not disappointed. The reading of the boys—their acquaintance with the elements of English grammar, geography and arithmetic; the manner in which they explained words and sentences and illustrated their meaning by apposite examples; the promptitude and accuracy with which they answered the questions put to them—all took the auditors by surprise and filled them with admiration, seeing that the school had been only twelve months in operation. But what astonished them most of all in those early days was the ease and freedom with which the Hindus read such portions of the Bible as were named to them, as well as the readiness and accuracy with which they answered all questions, not merely on the historical parts but on the doctrines and principles of the Christian faith and morals, to which their attention had been directed in the daily lessons."<sup>2</sup>

This public examination produced a tremendous effect on the public. The school became more popular than ever. "The elder pupils now consented to act as monitors, native assistants pressed their services upon the missionary, and the elementary teaching fell to these as the English classes passed on to collegiate studies in sacred and secular

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. I, p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Dr. G. Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. I, p. 130.

truth."<sup>1</sup>

The greatest effect on the minds and conduct of the pupils was produced by the Bible studies and the hour's preaching to the young every day. All opposition on the part of the pupils and their parents to the study of the Bible vanished.

"The older lads, impetuous with youthful ardour and fearlessness of consequences carried the new light which had arisen on their own minds to the bosom of their families, proclaimed its excellences on the house-tops and extolled its praises in the street assemblies."<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Duff organized a course of lectures and discussions with educated Hindu young men. He fitted up a lecture room in his house, which was centrally situated and, as it happened, was just opposite the Hindu College. The first series which he planned had to be stopped (on the advice of the Governor-General) after the very first lecture (delivered by the Rev. James Hill, pastor of the Union Chapel) because of the excitement which it created among Orthodox Hindu young men and the agitation which ensued. This time he "preferred to keep it in his own hands. They were delivered to earnest truth-seekers, many of whom had fairly separated from the idolatrous and caste system of their fathers. From forty to sixty seekers after God listened to each lecture, sat far into the night canvassing its statements, and either returned night after night for further inquiry or wrote out their difficulties for solution . . . As the demonstration of the existence and personality of the great First Cause called back the subtle spirit of the Bengali, steeped in pantheistic polytheism, from its initial rebound into nihilism, the closing exhortations, delivered with all that tearful fervour which was soon to summon the Churches of the West to a new crusade, led them up to the great love of Christ and the influence of the Spirit."<sup>3</sup>

Soon came the "first explosion"—the conversion and baptism of four converts within the period between 28th

<sup>1</sup> Dr. G. Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* p. 141.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid* p. 158.

August 1832 and 21st April 1833.

Four "precious atoms" were collected, indeed more precious than the average, and sooner than he or anyone else thought possible; and others followed at regular intervals, as long as Duff was connected with the institution.

The effect of this was—it need hardly be mentioned—phenomenal. The first convert was got within 23 months of the starting of the school — on August 28, 1832—Mohesh Chunder Ghose, who said soon after baptism, "A year ago I was the most miserable of the miserable, now the happiest of the happy! In spite of myself I became a Christian. Surely this must have been what the Bible calls grace, free grace, sovereign grace, and if ever there was an election of grace, surely I am one."

The next was the better-known Krishna Mohun Banerjea, baptized on October 17th of that same year. Both these converts joined the Anglican Church and became school masters in C.M.S. Schools. Mahesh died in 1837, but K. M. Banerjea was ordained and became the leading Indian Anglican clergyman in Bengal.

The third convert was baptized on December 14, 1832—Gopeenath Nundi, whose story we are now to relate, a man of great moral courage, undaunted by danger or persecution. He was later ordained by the American Presbyterian Church.

The fourth convert Anundo Chund Mozumdar was baptized on the 4th of April 1833. He went to England—it so happened—in the same ship as Dr. Duff, but in the company of an Anglican missionary. He returned to India to become a catechist of the London Missionary Society. But he died in 1841.

If similar results are not now taking place from the work of our Christian colleges, it is because there is no longer that same determination on the part of Christian professors and teachers that all their teaching, backed by their own personal Christian life, should definitely lead their students to Christ. They do not, and do not want to, saturate the young mind with divine truth; but rather

aim at helping it at the purely secular level. It must also be explained that on the other side, with growing secularism, worldliness, irreligion, and moral cowardice, on the pretext of patriotism among the intelligentsia, even students who are in a way affected by the religious and moral instruction still permitted to be given in Christian colleges are unwilling to take a definite stand for Christ, even when they are convinced of his divine saviourhood.

What the students come to Christian colleges for these days is intellectual training and nothing more. They shut their ears and minds to everything else. All their ambitions are centred round the worldly prospects which would ensue if they got a good degree from a well-known institution.

When the Christian colleges recruit their staff they do not look for eager, evangelistically-minded committed Christian young men (such men are, alas, rare these days), but for men who can be expected to teach their respective subjects competently enough to secure good results in the examinations. (The best Christian young men who secure first classes in their university do not come to teach in Christian colleges.)

But all the same, God is at work in India. In the midst of growing nationalism even in religion, men's minds and hearts are being attracted to and by Christ. Though the Banerjeas and Nundi's, Rajahgopauls and Gorehs are becoming more and more rare, Christ is receiving more and more reverence from all thinking people in Hindu society. (But they are becoming more and more contemptuous about Christians as individuals and as a community because they cannot see that they are Christians at all.) It is only a question of time, (coupled with a high standard of Christian living and self sacrifice on the part of Indian Christians, which is an indispensable factor) before many of the thoughtful among the intelligentsia accept Christ in their hearts, even if they do not openly profess him. It is very doubtful if they will agree to throw in their lot with a degenerate Christian community.

## 2. The Interview and After

Not much is known about the birth, parentage and early life of Gopeenath Nundi. He appears to have been born about 1807 in Calcutta.

We begin to know him only as a student in the General Assembly's Institution among the first batch of its more senior students and as one of the first four "inquirers" from among them.

It does not appear that Duff did anything more to or with Gopeenath than the teaching, both secular and religious, and the public lectures referred to above to which of course Gopeenath paid the greatest attention. It was the Holy Spirit which brought Gopeenath to such a state of conviction as compelled him to confess Christ.

The lecture room in Duff's house had been the scene of several conversations, discussions, agonizing heartsearchings and the soul's final abandonment to God's call. There Krishna Mohun Banerjea had asked to be baptized as it had been "the scene of all my public opposition to the true religion." (An earlier convert, Mohesh Chunder Ghose had been baptized not by Duff himself, but in the old Church of David Brown, Buchanan, Henry Martyn and Corrie, by the Rev. T. Dealtry, the then Government Chaplain). It was there also that the third convert, Gopeenath Nundi, "put on Christ," on the 14th December 1832.

"Gopeenath Nundi had sought a morning interview with Mr. Duff in his study, and there burst forth in tears with the cry, "Can I be saved?" He told (the missionary) how the last of the lectures had driven him to take counsel and sent him next morning to the missionary. At first imprisoned by his family, they cast him off for ever by advertisement in the newspaper. But nothing could shake his faith. Still, before the irrevocable step was taken, his brothers and caste fellows implored him to desist, then foully abused him, and then offered him all that wealth and pleasure could give, including even the retaining of belief in Christianity, if only he would not publicly profess it. The last appeal was in the name of his venerable mother, whose piercing

shriek none who have seen a Bengali woman in sorrow can forget. The scene has often been since repeated, must yet be again and again witnessed, before India is Christ's. Nature could not remain unmoved. Gopeenath wept, but throwing up his arms and turning hastily away, he decided, 'No, I cannot stay.' We shall meet the same true martyr's courage in him again, amid the captivity and the bloodshed of the mutiny of 1857."<sup>1</sup>

### 3. The Beginning of Life-long Service to the Church

Soon after his baptism Gopeenath Nundi was sent by Dr. Duff to open a school, mostly for orphans, which the British residents in Futtehpur intended starting.

It is extraordinary that all the first four converts from Dr. Duff's institution went to serve in other denominations. There were people who found fault with Dr. Duff for having allowed them to leave the Presbyterian faith to which he belonged and which naturally he had taught them, and go and work under other missions. There was quite a bit of controversy about this at the time and Dr. Duff thought it fit to explain the circumstances. In a note dated March 20, 1835, replying the people who considered that these were defections, Dr. Duff said:—

"If these had not been so specifically referred to by Mr. Mackay, I should be silent." (The Rev. W. S. Mackay came out in the autumn of 1831 and joined Duff in the institution and ever afterwards worked with him in loving harmony. He did not intend to criticize or find fault with Duff; but as the matter was exercising other peoples' minds he thought Duff might explain matters for their satisfaction.)

"Many in Calcutta know, and none more than my dear colleague how much I was called on to do for these, and how much to bear from them during the time of their infidelity and the progress of their inquiries after truth; God only is witness of all I had to do and endure, how I had to toil and struggle and travail in soul for them. It may easily be imagined then how peculiar must my feelings towards them be. When the two first joined the English Church, I was not much surprised, owing to

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. 1, p. 160 ff.



the very satisfactory reasons stated by Mr. Mackay. And if the ground of their reasons had not been removed (as it happily now is) I should not have expected any talented young man who burned with zeal to be employed in arousing his countrymen, to remain with us—indeed I could not ask any. If the Church of England offered to ordain and support them as missionaries, and we could not, then for the good of India would I say, 'Rather than remain unemployed, or betake yourselves exclusively to secular professions, by all means join the Church of England or any other church of Christ that will engage to send you forth as effective labourers into the missionary field.'

"While therefore I do not feel surprised at the two first converts separating themselves from me, I do confess that there was an apparent want of consideration to my feelings in the mode of separation. But while others blamed them for the act as well as the mode, and charged them with ingratitude, I really could not blame them so much as their instigators and advisers. They did not consult me, as I think they were in gratitude bound to do. The former were young and inexperienced; the latter, I fear, were actuated more by the spirit of proselyting to a party than by the love of Christ and the love of the brethren: the latter, therefore, in my estimation, must bear the main burden of the blame, if there be. My mind is satisfied, nay, my very soul kindles into joy at the thought that these my spiritual children continue steadfast in the faith, full of zeal for their Master, and conscientiously endeavour to serve him.

"The obvious remedy for such defections from our Church, though not from the Church of Christ, is (i) the power of ordaining and supporting qualified labourers: (ii) the supporting of promising young men when cast off by their friends on account of their especially devoting themselves to the work of preparation for the Christian ministry: (iii) the erection of a higher institution for the communication of the more advanced branches of knowledge, literary, scientific and theological. The first of these is now granted; the two last are yet wanting, and till these be granted too it is utterly impossible for the Assembly's missionaries in India to be responsible for the continued adherence of well-educated pious young men to the communion of the Church of Scotland.

"In the case of the first two that were baptized, if they did not consult me, as they should have done, it

was a matter altogether personal to myself, and no one perhaps could feel for them as I did, or make for them, in the peculiar circumstances of their situation, the same allowances. And seeing that the matter was personal to myself and that I had long forgiven them before God, and that in all other respects, so far as I could observe, they continued to walk worthy of their high calling, yea, to labour without ceasing in their Master's service, I could not feel myself for a moment justified in the attempt to lower their general high character or impede their usefulness by dwelling on circumstances to me of so personal a nature.

"When Gopeenath Nundi was appointed at my own recommendation to the school at Futtehpur, it was not in connection with any society. The surgeon of the station, in his application to me, expressly stated that the school was founded and would be supported by the British residents of the place. Its being taken under the patronage of the Church of England Missionary Society was altogether a subsequent event. We could not obviate this, as we had no disposable funds to offer which might secure the permanency of the institution.

"In June or July 1833, Archdeacon Corrie was about to proceed to the Upper Provinces on his ministerial visitation. This was thought a favourable opportunity for Gopee, as the Archdeacon kindly offered to take him along with himself. On his return to Calcutta the Archdeacon spoke of Gopee in the very highest terms, and so also did Messrs. Hill and Paterson, missionaries of the London Missionary Society at Berhampore, and others whom Gopee had visited in his passage up the river. From himself I have never had the slightest intimation of an intention to join the English Church, though for my own part I scarcely see how he can avoid it. He is, I presume, supported to a certain extent (though I never heard any particulars) by the Church of England Missionary Society. Out of Calcutta (thanks to the supineness of our church and her friends) he cannot enjoy the benefit of Christian ordinances but in connection with the Church of England. How in these circumstances Gopee can avoid joining the Church of England I cannot well see. . . ."

As Dr. George Smith has said,

"Whatever may have been the motives which actuated those who induced Duff's first converts to leave their

spiritual father, all must rejoice in the fine catholicity, in the rare self-abnegation which marked his own action and have ever since made his college the nursery of evangelists for all the Protestant agencies of Northern and Eastern India. He at least never grudged the Church of God what his own Committee were unwilling or unable to utilize."

It is remarkable, and it must be said here, that none of these four converts who "defected" did so out of any differences of opinion between them and Dr. Duff, or because they had argued themselves out of the Presbyterian faith. Nor did those who left Calcutta deliberately give up opportunities of serving the Church of Scotland. There were no such opportunities at that time. Nor yet did they leave with anything but the most cordial feelings. Between all of them and the Church of Scotland Mission and Duff in particular there continued to exist warmest feelings of mutual affection.

In the case of Gopeenath Nundi, he retained till the very end his regard and affection for Duff, which as Dr. Duff himself said, "did appear to me strong as death." Letters like the following which Gopeenath wrote to Duff two years after his baptism, from Futtehpur, gave Duff "solace and joy of the rarest kind."

"After I was separated from you in July 1833, I was almost thrown alone into the world. Often I was tempted to be hopeless and felt the need of your society. When I feel my lonesomeness, or want of a friend to open my heart to, I go to Him who is ever kind to me, and disclose my secrets. He is the only searcher of all those that are lost. He is the only friend of all the broken-hearted. He is the true leader, who leads out of the world and temptation, particularly the new and inexperienced. Jesus is sweet to all those that call upon Him in faith. Did He not promise that He shall be with me even unto the end of the world—then what fear? 'Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning. Such are my expressions in the hour of temptation. Oh what a comfort to have Christ always, and have fellowship with Him! Is it not a great blessing to have Christ, a friend, a companion, and conductor in

all things? Then let these lines be my continual expression:—

If on my face, for Thy dear name  
 Shame and reproaches be;  
 All hail reproach, and welcome shame,  
 If thou remember me.

“Oh what a great mistake of them that are still wandering, not knowing where to labour at! Did not our Lord pronounce peace on all that are His? ‘Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you: Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.’ Is this peace pronounced not for all? I say it is for all, whoever he may be, whatever nation or country he belongeth to; so I am sure His peace resteth on me so long as I have sufficient faith, even unto the end of my life.

“Although we are separated by sight, still our hearts are combined in the Lord. As for my part, I find that hearts which are once in the fellowship of Jesus cannot on any account be separated by earthly boundaries; but our Christian love grows stronger and stronger as the day of salvation approaches. Only a few thousand miles are between you and me; but I have you always in my heart, and make mention of you in my prayers: you are scarcely gone out of my sight. But oh, remember me sometimes in your prayers. Pray not only for my sinful soul, that I may be kept faithful unto death; but also and especially, for the souls of the poor heathens around me, that they may soon be freed from the chains of Satan and be blessed in the name of Jesus. Whether I live or die, let Christ be glorified by the ingathering of sinners to Him. I have many more trials and temptations yet to meet; but oh, may I cut short all of them through Him who is ever gracious to me. Those days are gone when we need to converse on religious topics; more especially on Christ’s condescension to save poor sinners. But we have a sure hope, that they will be renewed in a better place, and at a better time; when we come to dwell in the mansions of our heavenly Father. Oh may we soon come to that place; and greet each other with a brotherly embrace,—singing praises to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Amen.

Yours affectionately,  
 Gopeenath Nundi.

"These lines," wrote Duff when publishing them long after, "in their touching simplicity require no comment. It sure is not possible for any experienced Christian to peruse them without being sensible that he is holding converse with a mind not only generically but specifically the same as his own; that he is in union and communion with a perfectly congenial spirit—a spirit new-moulded and fashioned after the similitude of Christ—a spirit whose heavenward breathing would, with talismanic effect, mark out its possessor from amid the countless throng of his turbaned countrymen as belonging to the spiritual confederacy and brotherhood of the faithful."

High praise from one who was accustomed to measuring his words. There is no doubt that Gopeenath Nundi was an outstanding young man, of deep spirituality if, within two years after his baptism, he could earn such appreciation from his own spiritual father.

The friendship and mutual affection between *guru* and *sisya* which began in the institution subsisted throughout life. Later on, after Gopeenath had married and had a family, Dr. Duff administered the rite of baptism to Nundi's first son (his second child, the first being a girl). He left a note about it which reads:

"The Christian Hindu father stood forth in the presence of his countrymen, some of whom had formerly been either his pupils or companions, holding in his arms the infant whom he desired solemnly to consecrate to his God and Saviour. Beside him stood the Christian Hindu mother, holding by the right hand her first born, a little girl of three years. And there in the presence of God and man, did both parents unite in taking upon themselves the most sacred vows and obligations to bring up their little one in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

### *Futtehpur*

We can now revert to Gopeenath's first period of Christian service in Futtehpur. Duff has already mentioned the fact that he was sent along with the Ven. Daniel Corrie as he went up the Ganges in a boat on one of his official tours as Archdeacon. It was a very wise arrangement. For the first time in his life the young Bengali con-

vert was thrown into intimate contact with a mature Christian leader and a European, outside the circle within which he had been moving during his student days. And the Archdeacon had a chance to see at close quarters one of the products of Duff's institution in which from the first he had taken an interest and was no doubt watching to see what its results would be as the years went by.

Corrie was glad to have a co-passenger with him—in the absence of his own family who could not accompany him on such a lengthy tour. He was also happy over the opportunity which it gave him to give the young convert further instruction in the Christian Scriptures and a deeper insight into Christian truth than what he as a student was likely to have had. He makes frequent references to the young babu in the letters which he wrote during the voyage. These are very interesting and give some details about Gopeenath himself, while at the same time revealing the attitude of a high-placed Church dignitary towards a young Indian Christian who was inexperienced in the ways of the British gentry.

In a letter to his wife dated the 1st August 1833, Corrie writes,

“Now for my companion. He is a baptized Hindu, of respectable though not wealthy connection; was educated at Mr. Hare's school; attended first Mr. Derosario, and afterwards Mr. Duff: became a teacher in Mr. Duff's school, and was finally baptized in the Scotch congregation. He is now on the way to Futtehpur; R. is judge, and a pious young doctor M. with him have established a school, and wish for a native Christian teacher. Well, this youth, by name, Gopeenath Nundi, was recommended as a schoolmaster; and to go with me, was thought by pious friends in Calcutta, a favourable opportunity. A place in the baggage boat was assigned him, together with a learned Mohammedan inquirer, who will thus, I conclude, get a free passage to the Upper Provinces. He is reputed wealthy, and asks nothing but a passage from me. The other youth finds the pinnacle more comfortable than the baggage boat, (i.e. the boat laden with Scriptures and tracts, for I have no baggage) and the second night he coolly proposed sleeping on my couch in the outer cabin. This I told him would be inconvenient to me, but that he might sleep

in my *palkee* on the top; and there ever since has been his domicile. He is up as soon as I am, and at first his want of acquaintance with the peculiarities of our habits was trying to me, but I had to deal with a Christian, and must not offend him. By degrees we became intimate, and I began to explain to him the ideas of propriety. He is, I have reason to believe, a Christian; has taken my observation in good part, and now I find little to interrupt my comfort, beside what the constant presence of any except my beloved family would occasion.

"I find him specially deficient in Scripture knowledge and in doctrinal divinity. Hence, of late, every morning exercise is a lecture on some point of Scripture. We, today, commence for morning worship the Psalms. . . . About ten the *maulvie* comes when he can; and he has also found out the comfort of the pinnacle. So that he now comes daily. He reads the Scripture in Hindustani with me first, then he and the babu mutually instruct each other. The babu learns Hindustani from the *maulvie*, and the latter English from the former; but here I am often appealed to by both. I must add that the babu (his age is twenty) has begun in consequence of previous conversations, to read the Scriptures in Bengali to the dandies. He offered to instruct Ameer, but he said tauntingly, 'O, no: I failed once, and I'll have no more to do with it.' Today we entered the troublous Ganges. A squall came on soon after we entered; then a lull, which left us on a sand-bank in the middle of the river."

In another letter to Mrs. Corrie, he writes:

"I had an interesting conversation after breakfast with the babu, explaining to him the subject of the annual atonement and year of Jubilee of the Israelites. We read the XVIth and XXVth of Leveticus, and the corresponding passages in the Hebrews. It is gratifying to observe the pleasure these discourses give him, and truly,

Israel in ancient days  
Not only had a view  
Of Sinai in a blaze,  
But saw the Gospel too.

I have these few days been studying the Levitical Institutions with renewed interest and benefit.

<sup>1</sup> Memoirs of the Right Rev. Daniel Corrie Lc. D., p. 536-37.

"August 9. Yesterday evening, about ten of the dandies were led to sit down by us on the top of the pinnacle, and by keeping the babu to interpret what I said to them, they were detained for an hour, conversing on the subject of a mediator. By degrees they were led to see that Jesus was more worthy than their prophet, and they appeared very serious in their manner.

"I have been engaged with the *maulvie* and babu in new-arranging the words in the Persian Litany, which is nearly accomplished."<sup>1</sup>

"Futtehpur, October 3rd. At this station there are only four government servants; and only one of them married. The judge and doctor are old acquaintances of mine, and I am staying a day to break the journey to Cawnpore, where I hope to arrive tomorrow morning. A school is maintained by these few residents here, the medical man giving a good deal of his time to it, and also a hospital where many sick poor are attended to: the expense of this is also maintained by friends on the spot. The population being to a considerable extent Moham-medan, the school is not so well attended as is desirable. I visited it this morning: there were thirty boys present; of these six have made some proficiency in English under a native, educated in the school at Cawnpore. His proficiency is very moderate, and his scholars accordingly come on slowly. They were reading the 3rd Chapter of St. Matthew, having with much patience and good management been brought to read our Scriptures. At first much opposition was made to their introduction. They are aware, they say, that from reading these books people become Christians. Here as everywhere the field is open for missionary labour."<sup>2</sup>

"I leave here the young babu who accompanied me, and whose conduct has been uniformly Christian and correct."<sup>3</sup>

On arrival at Futtehpur, Gopeenath was welcomed by the European residents of the place and especially by the government surgeon, Dr. Madden, who had been instrumental in getting him to come to Futtehpur in order to assist in running the school which was intended primarily for the orphans in the place.

The school was successfully run for some time, wholly financed by the contributions of the local European offi-

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid p. 538. <sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 553. <sup>3</sup> Ibid p. 554.



cial. But when they were transferred from the place, one after another, as always happens to officials, it became more and more difficult to keep the school going. Dr. Madden persuaded the Church Missionary Society to take over the school and they did so. But Futtehpur was not one of their mission stations and they found it difficult to find funds for running a school in a place where they had no other work going on. The fate of the school was hanging by a very precarious thread; and when Dr. Madden himself was transferred from the place, the school was in danger of being closed down and the pupils, mostly orphans, being disbanded.

Fortunately for them the missionaries of the American Presbyterian Mission had by then come into the neighbourhood, and had started a mission station in Farrukkabad and Futtehpur was within the area of that mission. At Dr. Madden's request, the Rev. H. R. Wilson, the missionary at Farrukkabad, agreed to take over the pupils and the school to his charge. From that time a new form of service opened up before Gopeenath, as we shall see.

In the meanwhile an interesting note about that orphan school may be inserted here. Orphan schools can do much good. One of the orphans taken over by the Rev. H. R. Wilson from Dr. Madden was named Ishwari Das. He became later a well-known clergyman in North India. He proved to be a very intelligent boy and a diligent student and made good use of the education which the missionaries gave him. He also received some theological education and was appointed evangelist in Futtehpur and the surrounding villages, where he did splendid work. Later he accompanied Mr. Wilson to America, and spent some time in that country. He was the author of several books, for one of which, his "Lectures on Theology," he received the prize offered by a learned Bengal civilian for the best work on Theology. He also took the prize offered for the best essay on female education.

"In every way Ishwari Das sought to be useful to his own people, and was in consequence greatly loved and respected by his countrymen. At the close of 1865, when the station of Futtehpur was left vacant by the transfer

of the Rev. Edward Sayre and wife to Etawah, upon the departure to England of Rev. J. F. and Mrs. Ullmann, Ishwari Das was selected to fill this responsible post. A solemn ordination service was accordingly held, in the presence of a large and deeply interested congregation, and with bright hopes, this evangelist was sent forth to his new field; but at the expiration of a year he returned to Futtehgurh with seriously impaired health, and after months of suffering passed peacefully away on the 2nd of May 1867."

#### 4. Minister of the American Presbyterian Church

The other form of Christian service—the one which was to become his life work and in which he was destined so outstandingly to glorify his Master and to make a good confession—like the heroes of old—came when he was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Farrukkabad of the American Presbyterian Church as a candidate for the Gospel ministry, and was invited by the Rev. James Wilson to accompany him to Futtehgurh.

The American Presbyterian Mission, sent to India by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States, began its work in the year 1833. Its first missionary, the Rev. John C. Lowrie, reached Calcutta on the 15th October, 1833. After consulting experienced missionaries who were in Calcutta and as advised by them, Mr. Lowrie decided to proceed to the Punjab which was then not occupied by any other mission. He chose Ludhiana, then the frontier station of British territory, as his mission station. He travelled by boat on the Ganges from Calcutta to Cawnpore and from Cawnpore to Ludhiana by palanquin. He reached Ludhiana on the evening of 5th November, 1834. He was warmly welcomed by the Political Agent, Capt. (afterwards Sir) C. M. Wade, who promised him all necessary assistance in his work.

The next batch of missionaries of the mission reached Calcutta on 25th February 1835. They were the Rev. John Newton and the Rev. James Wilson and their wives

and a single lady, Miss Davies who hoped to work among the women of India. She was told at Calcutta that the way was not open for work among women. Mr. John Goadsby, a Baptist missionary in Cuttack invited Miss Davies to come and work with the women of Cuttack as Mrs. Goadsby. So, on the 1st of April, the two were united in marriage and she accompanied her husband to Cuttack.

The Rev. John Newton and James Wilson and their wives left Calcutta on 24th June and reached Futtehgurh about the end of October. On the 80th of October (Saturday) they left for Ludhiana and spent Sunday outside Furrukkabad. On the afternoon of the Sabbath the two brethren went into the city to distribute the tracts which they had brought from Calcutta. These were received with great eagerness by the people. The missionaries were much pleased with Furrukkabad and its neighbourhood and were persuaded that it would be a favourable place for the establishment of a mission station.

In January 1836, Lowrie had to return to America owing to ill health.

The next batch of missionaries from the United States reached Calcutta in April 1836 and they occupied Saharanpur and Sabbathu. Further batches of missionaries came and they pushed on through the recently annexed frontier district of the Punjab, first in a south-easterly direction into the United Provinces, founding stations in Allahabad in 1836, Futtehgurh in 1838 and Mainpuri in 1843. Allahabad became the chief station of the mission. Soon afterwards, when the remaining districts of the Punjab were opened up, they established themselves in Jullundur (1846), Amballa (1848), Lahore (1849), Dehra Dun (1853) and Rawalpindi (1856). Theirs was the first missionary society to enter these parts, and through their distinguished missionaries, Newton, Forman and the German Ullman and others, they were for a long time, with the C.M.S., the leading society.

Until 1840, Futtehgurh had been connected with the Allahabad mission, but it was then decided to put it on

an independent footing. In 1841 two mission houses were erected in Futtehghurh, and also a building for an orphanage, the latter at the expense of the European residents in India.

About this time a church was organized, comprising of ten members, four of whom were Indians.

Another important event was that in May 1841 the General Assembly of the United States constituted the missionary brethren connected with the Presbyterian Church in India into three Presbyteries—Ludhiana, Allahabad, and Furrukkabad, with provision for their meeting together as the Synod of North India.

Gopeenath Nundi was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Furrukkabad, as a candidate for the ministry. He was licensed to preach the Gospel in December 1843, and the following year was ordained to the work of an evangelist by the Presbytery of Furrukkabad.

In October 1844 the seat of Government was transferred from Allahabad to Agra. This transfer removed many English friends who had rendered most efficient aid to the work of the mission in Allahabad. A year after the transfer of the Government to Agra, it was decided to begin mission work at the new capital. The Rev. James Wilson of Allahabad and the Rev. J. C. Rankin of Futtehghurh were appointed by the mission to begin work at the new station.

The year 1845 is memorable as the year in which the first Synod was held in India. The place of meeting was Futtehghurh and the first session was held on the 15th of November in the chapel of the orphanage. The sermon was preached by the Rev. James Wilson, who was later elected Moderator. The Lord's Supper was celebrated on the Sabbath, the Rev. J. Freeman administering the ordinance, assisted by the Rev. Gopeenath Nundi.

The Rev. Gopeenath Nundi was in Futtehghurh till 1853 when mission work was begun in the station of Futtehghurh and he was placed in charge of it.

Nundi had worked in Futtehghurh ever since he had come under the aegis of the American Presbyterian

Mission, for a period of sixteen years. He had been largely instrumental in building up the native church. But he was happy to be sent to Futtehpur, where he had begun his Christian service.

#### *Nundi at Futtehpur*

The European officials whom he had known when he first came there to help in founding a school had of course all gone away from the place in the exigencies of public service. But among the others who had taken their places there were, as always, a few, a very few, who had not given themselves wholly to the service of mammon and who were not ashamed to be known among their colleagues and among the people as Christians.

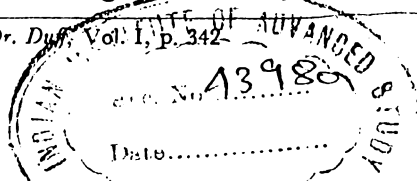
Along with active evangelistic work and preaching to the Hindus and Mohammedans in the town and in the villages all around, Nundi conducted Sunday services for the Europeans and the few Indian Christians who were there, there being no chaplain in the place.

He was greatly encouraged and helped in his work by Robert Tucker, the Judge of the District. As Dr. George Smith says in referring to this, "In no part of India, where all Christians are catholic-minded, did those who named the name of Christ, of every sect and colour, meet and work together with greater harmony and zeal, and the Bengali convert of Dr. Duff was their minister."<sup>1</sup>

That he did his work in this place with his wonted enthusiasm and intense devotion to his Master goes without saying. Here for the first time he was free to develop the work according to his own plans. No doubt he was anxious to show the missionaries what consecrated Indian devotion and intelligence could achieve for the Kingdom. The work produced not only results but also provoked opposition and malicious persecution, as we shall see.

We have a first-hand report of his activities in Futtehpur given by himself to the Rev. M. A. Sherring who asked him for an account of the happenings at Futtehpur before and during the Mutiny, including his

<sup>1</sup>Dr. George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. I, p. 342



escape from Futtehpur and of his falling into the hands of the rebels at Allahabad and his eventual rescue.

"In March 1853, I was sent from Futtehgurh where I had laboured (from the commencement of the mission) for sixteen years to take charge of Futtehpur. From that time up to the day of our escape, which took place a few days before the mutiny actually broke out, we have had many marks of our heavenly Father's love. He blessed and prospered our feeble efforts, and crowned our labours with some success. We had an English school in the town for heathen boys, and another for girls, besides three vernacular schools in three villages, about eight or ten miles from the station. The prisoners in the jail were also daily instructed in Christianity and general knowledge by a Christian teacher and every Sabbath morning the gospel was preached by me. This privilege was granted by our pious magistrate; but no compulsion was ever used. Preaching in the bazaar and the neighbouring villages was carried on, more or less, every day; and in the cold season, for three months, the catechists and myself used to go into the interior to proclaim the gospel news and to distribute books. The towns-people especially the Mohammedans, often raised objections, as at other places; but the villagers heard the gospel with greater readiness and attention. Often our catechists were detained for some time, and often they were fed by them.

"We had built a small neat bungalow chapel in the mission premises, where the few European residents, though they were of different denominations, together with the native Christians, met every Sabbath for divine worship. The judge and the magistrate, as well as other gentlemen, took a deep interest in the mission, and helped us with their prayers, good advice and pecuniary aid. When the number of native converts began to increase, six of them, at the suggestion of the late Honourable Mr. Colvin, became small farmers, taking some land, at the usual rate of revenue, from Zamindars, on their own responsibility; and I am happy to say, they were doing well.

"Everything looked encouraging and flourishing, when this unexpected mutiny, like the sudden blast of a hurricane, broke up all. The deputy collector, Hikmat-oollah Khan, who betrayed our pious judge, Mr. Tucker; bore a strong animosity against the mission. Futtehpur being a small place, every conversion we had was known

to every individual in the town; and the Mohammedans, instigated by the deputy collector, tried several times to injure our work, but were unsuccessful. Once, when the Government order came for all the *putwarees* (village record-keepers) to be instructed in Nagari-Hindi, he tried his best to stop their being taught in our school, but failed; and I am happy to say, upwards of three hundred grownup men not only read the Gospel and attended prayers, but each of them was furnished with a copy of the New Testament to carry home. In this way we circulated the gospel news, through these men, in the whole district.

“Another time, when the baptism of six individuals took place, the Mohammedans, like the Jews of old, said amongst themselves, ‘What are we doing? At this rate the whole of Futtehpur will soon become Christians.’ They contrived a plan which they felt quite sure would end in breaking up the mission; but He whose work we were doing protected it. They gave out that my catechists, with my permission, took cartfuls of pigs’ and cows’ bones, and threw them into all the wells of the town. This was noised abroad, not only in the town but also in the villages around. Some of the office people brought the report to the notice of our good magistrate; but he laughed at them and told them that the Christian religion did not permit us to force anyone to embrace it, and that no Christian *padre* could be guilty of such a crime. Their scheme, therefore, proved a complete failure.”<sup>1</sup>

It is very interesting to note that, quoting portions of this very report from Gopeenath Nundi, Dr. Sen in his book on the mutiny (commissioned by the Government of India) comments as follows:—

“So the magistrate and the judge of Futtehpur allowed proselytization of prisoners, and the Lt. Governor of the North-Western Provinces interested himself in the welfare of the new converts. Naturally the common man ran away with the idea that the Government were intent on making Christians of their subjects.

“With the missionary colonels and *padre* Lieutenants preaching Christianity to the sepoys under their command, with the magistrate and judge permitting native clergymen (renegades in the eyes of their countrymen)

<sup>1</sup>The Rev. A. M. Sherring, *The Indian Church in the Great Rebellion*, p. 184-186.

to pay daily visits to the prisoners and to instruct them in the Gospel, with grown-up *patwarees* returning home with the Christian Holy Book, was it unnatural that unfair motives should be attributed to the Government by the common people?

"It is against this background that we must view Act XXI of 1850, which enabled converts to inherit their ancestral property. In principle, there could be no objection to this law, for no man should suffer for his honest conviction so long as he does nothing contrary to the laws of the land. Both the Hindu and the Muslim, however, regarded it as a concession to the Christian convert. Hinduism is a non-proselytizing religion and derived no benefit from the new Act; to the Muslim convert it offered no advantage either, for his religion forbade him to inherit the property of an infidel. The law was therefore regarded as a blow against both the communities. To the Hindu the Act was particularly offensive, as an apostate was thereby invested with a right without its inherent obligations. It enabled him to inherit the ancestral acres without rendering to the deceased father the religious services required of him. The Hindu therefore felt that the law inflicted on him a double loss, the loss of a son in this life and the loss of his religious services hereafter. To the Muslim it appeared as an incentive to apostasy, for his community was not immune from the missionary peril. No less than ten of Gopeenath's twenty-four converts were Muslims by birth."<sup>1</sup>

All of which is a wonderful testimony to Gopeenath's splendid work in Futtehpur.

Then came the flood; and wiped out all of it.

## 5. The Mutiny Reaches Futtehpur and Allahabad

It is unnecessary for our purpose to enter into the causes of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 or to trace the course of the rebellion as it spread from Meerut south-eastwards. The great convulsion, breaking out on the 10th May, 1857 and in Delhi the next day, extended itself

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. S. N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 10-12.



over the whole of North India, from the mouths of the Ganges to the Indus; and southward so as to affect considerable portions of Central India and the Bombay Presidency. "The outbreaks, although capricious as to locality, yet, in point of time followed so close to each other as to evidence the existence of a deep-laid and extensive conspiracy, designed to be simultaneous in explosion, but which from various providential interferences became broken and interrupted in its action."<sup>1</sup>

The background has nowhere been better sketched than by Dr. George Smith.

"The leafy station, of Dum Dum, almost a suburb of Calcutta, and the scene of Clive's first victory in Bengal, was the headquarters of the Artillery in the east, as Meerut is still of the same arm in the north-west of India. At Dum Dum there is the Magazine for the manufacture of ammunition, and there, in 1857, was a musketry school for practice with the Enfield rifle, then recently introduced but long since superseded. One of the Magazine workmen, of low caste, having been refused a drink from the *lotah* of a sepoy who was a Brahmin, revenged himself by the taunt that all castes would soon be alike, for cartridges smeared with the fat of kine and the lard of swine would have to be bitten by the whole army, Hindu and Mohammedan. That remark became the opportunity of the political plotters. The horror, in a wildly exaggerated form, was whispered in every cantonment from Dum Dum to Peshawur. In the infantry and cavalry lines of Barrackpore, a few miles further up the Hooghly and the Governor-General's summer seat, the alarm was only increased when the General, who knew the sepoys and their language well, assured them that not one of the dreaded cartridges had then been issued, and that the troops might lubricate them for the Enfield groves with bees-wax. It happened—a fact which we now publish for the first time—that several of them had occasionally lounged into the famous manufactory of paper at Serampore on the opposite side of the river, where the cartridge paper was prepared, and there had witnessed the boiling of animal size for other varieties. The Barrackpore, then the Berhampore, then the Meerut, and finally all the Sepoys of the Bengal army, ignorant and pampered as spoiled children,

<sup>1</sup>Church Missionary Intelligencer, 1858, p. 104.

honestly believed that the Enfield cartridge was meant to destroy their caste, and that the new Lord Saheb had been sent out thus to make them Christians, for had not his first order been that all recruits must be enlisted for service across the sea?

"Thus opened January 1857. All the evidence points to the last Sabbath in May, when the Christians should be in church, as the time fixed by the leaders for a general rising, from Calcutta on to the east to Maratha Satara on the west and over the whole land thence to the Himalayas. But the cartridge panic precipitated the catastrophe, broke it into detached attempts, and enabled the Christian civilization of a handful of white men—not forty thousand at the crisis—to save the millions of Southern and Eastern Asia.

"The weakness with which the Government treated the attempts at Berhampore and Barrackpore emboldened eighty-five Mussulmans of the 3rd Cavalry at Meerut to refuse even to tear off the end of the suspected cartridges with their hands. On Saturday the 9th of May, they were marched to jail in fetters before the rest of the troops; on Sabbath evening the sepoys of all arms rose, freed them and all the convicts, and proceeded to massacre the Europeans, young and old, as they came out of church or were found in the comparatively isolated house of an Indian station. Military incompetence in the north-west completed what the imbecility of the Calcutta authorities had begun under their own eyes. General Hewitt allowed the maddened sepoys to rage unchecked, and then to march to Delhi to repeat the work. The Commander-in-Chief, who had hurried down from the Capua of Simla, refused to take possession of Delhi while it was still possible to do so. Old Bahadur Shah, the king, had his temporary revenge for the just refusal of Lord Canning to allow his son to become his titular successor, and for the order which had warned him to transfer his court from the fortress of the city to a rural palace."<sup>1</sup>

It is from Delhi that the storm spread. We must resist the temptation to try to describe the whole course of the conflagration. Two places are however connected with Gopeenath Nundi's sufferings during the mutiny and a few words must be said about each.

So far as mission work was concerned, the year 1857 opened auspiciously. None of the missionaries at any

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. II, p. 313-14.

place dreamed how darkly it would end. In the area within which the mission stations of the American Presbyterian Mission were scattered, everything looked bright and the prospects of gradually growing success were clear. The schools were prosperous. The press was doing a noble work, translation work was being vigorously prosecuted. During the cold season of 1856-57, the missionaries who toured in their districts found unusual encouragement in their work. Books were eagerly sought and there seemed unwonted interest in the Gospel message. But this did not last long. By the beginning of May came the startling news of the mutiny among the troops in Meerut and of the increasing disaffection in Indian regiments in other cities in North India.

At the time of the outbreak, Gopeenath was in Futtehpur. This town is the capital or headquarters of the district of the same name; and lies on the main road about midway between Allahabad and Cawnpore. The town had no European troops stationed in it, though there was a sepoy force. The sepoys heard rumours of the mutiny in Benares and what had happened there, and became restless.

The magistrate therefore took the wise precaution of sending away the wives and children of Christians to Allahabad which was deemed to be a safer place. "Soon the conflagration burst out on every side of them—on May 30th at Lucknow, on June 4th at Cawnpore, the heavy firing there the next day being distinctly heard. Up to the 6th the station was quiet. Then the natives in the bazaar received a garbled account of the Benares mutiny. It was said that the Europeans had fired on the Poorbeas and the Sikhs, while they were standing quite passive on the parade ground."<sup>1</sup>

"On the sixth, the Allahabad sepoys rose. Hearing this the deputy collector in Futtehpur Hikmut-oolla Khan, a Mohammedan, and all his subordinates, turned against the European residents. On the 9th, the situation became critical. They were every hour expecting to be attacked.

<sup>1</sup>Macnaughton's Report, p. 5, quoted by Dr. S. N. Sen in his book *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 157-58.

That night they resolved to fly. All the British officials left, with one exception, Robert Tucker of the Civil Service, who would not leave. He knew that, under God, India could be saved only by the stern determination and self-sacrifice of the police, of whom he said, 'I am going to put myself at the head of my brave legionaries,' meaning that he would entrust himself to the police guard, by whose aid he hoped to keep off the enemy. He little suspected the horrible treachery of which he was to be the victim. He little suspected that these men would be his murderers.

"On the departure of his colleagues, he sent for his deputy collector and magistrate, the notorious Hikmat-oollah Khan, asking him to concert measures to preserve Government property. 'Tell the saheb,' was the response 'to make himself happy and when I come in the evening I will give him eternal rest.' Suspecting the purport of this insolent message, Mr. Tucker read a portion in his Bible, and commended himself to God. He then got ready his pistols, sword and all his fighting implements. In the evening the perfidious Hikmat accompanied by the police guard, and bearing a green flag, the emblem of Moslemism, made his appearance in the compound. The judge was then called upon to abjure his religion and embrace Mohammedanism, which he, of course, resolutely refused to do. The guard then advanced towards him, but he deceived them with much self-possession, and aimed his pistols at them with deadly precision. He killed, it is confidently stated, fourteen or sixteen of the traitors before he was overpowered by the rush of numbers. He was, in mockery, tried, condemned and executed in the presence of his own deputy collector, his head and foot cut off and held up for the inspection of the rabble. He died a martyr. His religion had not been a formality, but was a deep-hidden power within, displaying itself in all his words and actions. His name will long live in the memory of the godly in India. Had the civil and military services been full of such men, the rebellion would have been an impossibility. The traitors destroyed his body but beyond that there was nothing more that they could do. His soul was beyond their reach. It had gone into the safe custody of an Almighty Saviour whom he had served all through his life."<sup>1</sup>

After the European civilians and missionaries had left Futtehpur, the Indian Christians were protected by the

<sup>1</sup>*Church Missionary Intelligencer*, June 1858, p. 143.

English Commandant, Col. Smith, and several attacks of the insurgents specially directed against the Christian village, were repulsed. At length on June 18th, their dwellings were pillaged and set on fire, and plundered of everything they had, except the clothes they wore, the Christians fled into the surrounding villages. But the Nawab ordered them to be seized and put to death, promising rewards to such as should bring in their heads. They then fled in different directions. Several unequal to the fatigue of long journeys by foot died on the way.

“One month and a few days, and the time of retribution came. Havelock’s brigade approached. Occupied by 3500 armed insurgents, with twelve guns, Futtehpur constituted a position of no small strength. ‘The hard dry trunk road subdivides it and is the only convenient means of access, for the plains on both sides are covered at this season by heavy lodgments of water, to the depth of three and four feet. It is surrounded by garden enclosures of great strength, with high walls, and has within it many houses of good masonry. In front of the swamps are hillocks, villages and mango groves, which the enemy had occupied in force.’ But in ‘ten minutes the action was decided, for in that short space of time the spirit of the enemy was entirely subdued; the rifle fire, reaching them at an unexpected distance, filled them with dismay; and when Captain Maude was enabled to push his guns through flanking swamps to point-blank range, his surprisingly accurate fire demolished their little remaining confidence’ (from Havelock’s despatch of July 12). After the battle was decided, Hikmut-oolla Khan had the audacity to present himself before the General and offer his congratulations. He deemed that the sanguinary part which he had acted in Tucker’s murder was unknown; but the evidence of Indian Christians had published his guilt, and he was condemned and executed.”<sup>i</sup>

The little flock of Indian Christians at Fattehpur had also their burden of trial to sustain. The storm had come upon them in the midst of a tranquil season and they had been scattered like the leaves of the forest. The station was visited six months later by Mr. Fullerton of

<sup>i</sup>ibid p. 144.

the American Presbyterian Mission. He found a scene of desolation. The missionary bungalows, the churches, orphan institution, the Christian village, all had been involved in a common ruin. It was with some difficulty he found the Indian Christians. He gathered them in the desecrated church and enjoyed a period of happy communion with them rendered even more interesting by the public renunciation, on the part of a young Muslim of his religion and his dedication of himself to Christ and to His service. After praying with them and thanking God for their deliverance in spite of severe suffering for seven or eight months, he left for Cawnpore.

### *Allahabad*

The city of Allahabad stands at the confluence of the Jumna and the Ganges. The fort on the east and south rises directly from the banks of the confluent rivers and is, in that direction, nearly impregnable. It consists of a bastioned quadrangle, built of red stone, about 2,500 yards in circuit. The land side is quite regular, consisting of two bastions and a half bastion, with three ravelins and stands higher than any ground in face of it. It was very important as it contained one of the largest arsenals in India, having arms for 30,000 men besides 80 pieces of cannon. The garrison was a small one consisting of a company of the 6th N.I., and 400 Sikhs. The arsenal was entirely in the hands of Indian troops. On the 2nd of June, the N. Infantry Regt. volunteered to go for service against the insurgents at Delhi, and on the afternoon of the 6th was paraded for the purpose of receiving the thanks of the Governor-General. The enthusiasm appeared to be great; the men cheered; the European officers shook hands with the Indian officers in ratification of the pledge to stand by one another. But in a few hours, that very evening, the sepoys rose in arms.

Dr. Sen describes the same situation in these words:—

“The news of the mutiny at Benares reached Allahabad the next day. European women and non-combatants were at once ordered into the fort, but many of them did

not take the warning seriously. Instructions were received from Cawnpore to man the fort with every available European, but there were not many of them at hand. Sixty artillery pensioners had arrived from Chunar, there were a few sergeants and these were now reinforced by about eighty civilian volunteers. The main strength of the garrison consisted of 400 Sikhs, commanded by Captain Brasyer and 80 men of the 6th Native Infantry. The rest of that regiment had been posted in their lines, two miles away. They had volunteered to march against Delhi; and the thanks of the Governor-General for their unexpected offer and loyalty were communicated to them at the evening parade on the 6th, but before many hours passed they rose in arms. Several men from Benares had found their way to the lines and the sepoy learnt that the men of 37th N.I. had been disarmed first and then killed. The British officers had matured a plan of extirminating the entire Bengal Army. . . . As soon as the sepoy rose, a city mob, as elsewhere, joined them and the convicts were released. Europeans were hunted out and killed. Bungalows were burnt and plundered and anarchy reigned supreme. It was not Christians alone, but Hindu pilgrims also who suffered at the hands of the rowdies.

"Inside the fort the Sikhs were restive but Brasyer kept them steady. He had begun his life as a grenadier and had earned his commission by his personal prowess. He not only kept his men under control but with their help succeeded in disarming the men of the 6th N.I."<sup>1</sup>

But on the evening of the 6th, the Indian troops rose simultaneously.

"The detachment of infantry and artillery in charge of the bridge of boats at Rajghat took the initiative. As they approached Ulopibaugh the troopers of the 3rd Oude Irregular Cavalry fraternized with them, and the work of butchery commenced. Captain Alexander, the commanding-officer of the troopers, was shot dead and with him two other officers, who had been brought from the ghat, their hands and feet tied. The insurgents, then uniting, advanced towards the parade ground, putting to death any Europeans or East Indians they met with on the way. The bugle sounded. The officers, who were either at the messhouse or their private dwellings, supposing that the Benares insurgents were at hand, from whom an attack was apprehended, and without the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. S. N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 154.

least suspicion of treachery on the part of their own soldiers, hastened—some in uniform, others undressed, on their horses,—to the regiment, each eager to take the lead of his own company. They were at once fired upon, and, with the exception of Colonel Simpson, who escaped to the fort, and Captain Gordon, who was saved by some of his men, all were shot down.

“The jail was opened and 2,500 individuals of the worst character set at liberty. These men rushed towards the residences of the Europeans and set fire to the bungalows. Then commenced the conflagration and the work of plunder. When they had gorged themselves with spoil, the prisoners began to disperse, some running away towards their own homes, others to pull the wheelbarrows on which the sepoys had placed looted property, others to plunder the ryots. The Sepoys had originally determined to convey the money in the treasury to the King of Delhi, but eventually they decided to keep it themselves; and on Sunday, June 7th they proceeded to distribute it. Some Sepoys took three bags each, some four, each bag containing 1,000 rupees. When they had satisfied themselves the convicts and *budmashis* were allowed to appropriate the rest.

“Then commenced a scene of anarchy and unutterable confusion, the more powerful plundering such as were unable to resist them. For a day or two there was continual strife for the treasury money, and swords were drawn and blood shed. Many of the mutinous sepoys were thus stripped of their gains. Some of them hurrying homeward with carts and horses loaded with money, were stopped on the way by powerful landholders and despoiled of all.

“In this outbreak thirteen officers perished. The rest fled into the fort, within which the ladies and non-combatants had been providentially removed on the day before the outbreak.<sup>1</sup>

“An obscure man came forward to take charge of the administration at this crisis. Maulvie Liakat Ali, a man of humble origin, assumed leadership, stood forth at once as the champion of his faith and the old order of which the Badshah was the symbol, for he ruled in the name of the King of Delhi as his representative. He tried to restore order and establish the rule of law as he understood it. That he failed is no wonder. He had no effective control over the insurgents. It stands to his credit that many Indian Christians were permitted to

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<sup>1</sup> *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1858, p. 140



purchase their lives at the price of their religion, not a small thing, when death, at the least suspicion, was the order of the day."

But Neill was not long arriving in Allahabad.

"Neill left Benares on the 9th June and reached Allahabad on the 11th June and was thoroughly exhausted by the heat of the season. The fort had been saved but the town was still in rebel hands. He brought the situation under control, and the city was soon cleared of the insurgents. The *maulvie* had to leave his headquarters by the 17th. . . . On the 30th June, Havelock arrived at Allahabad and took over command. The news of Wheeler's capitulation reached him from Lucknow soon afterwards."<sup>1</sup>

## 6. Gopeenath Makes a Good Confession

We have already seen how the enthusiastic work of Gopeenath at Futtehpur had incited the bitter enmity of the Mohammedans of the place. The mutiny was sure to set them up to wreak their vengeance on the minister and his small band of Indian converts; and it did. We have an account of his and his congregation's sufferings in his own words. It were fatuous to try to improve upon it.

"Knowing the determined hatred of the Mohammedans, and that they would not leave anything untried to thwart our plans and to stop the progress of Christianity, we felt much alarmed. When we heard that the regiments at Meerut and Delhi had broken out in open rebellion, we did not leave the Mission immediately, but remained till the 24th of May, when we were advised by our magistrate to remove our females into some safer place, as the English residents had sent off their ladies to Allahabad for shelter. I took all the Christian women and started for Allahabad, where we arrived on the morning of the 27th. We found the place was no safer than Futtehpur. Several of the ladies and gentlemen had taken shelter in the fort. Our missionary brethren, with their families, had also gone there. We received an offer to do the same and accepted it.

"We slept there three nights, but afterwards, thinking the fort was not safe, as it was guarded by Sikhs, and a

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<sup>1</sup>Dr. S. N. Sen, *Eighteen Fifty Seven*, p. 155-56.

company of the 6th Native Infantry, we came out and hid ourselves in the house of the Rev. Mr. Owen, on the banks of the Jumna, about three miles from the fort, where we thought we should have a better chance of escape. The Christian women who accompanied me, after remaining some six or seven days, went back to their husbands at Futtehpur. On the evening of the 6th June, when the 6th N.I. mutinied, we saw (though at a great distance) the flames of the burning houses, and heard the harrowing cries of the sufferers, which alarmed us not a little. In our state of terror, we knew not what measures to adopt in order to save our lives. At last when we saw the danger was near, about two in the morning we left Allahabad, and took a boat to go to the opposite bank of the Jumna." (Nundi had with him his wife and three children, two about six years old, twins, and one a year old.)

"We arrived at daybreak and took the road to Mirzapur on foot. In the evening we reached a village about fourteen miles off, partly on foot and partly on a hackery, but not without very great difficulty, for our lives were exposed to the mercy of armed villagers; but our gracious heavenly Father saved us from their wicked hands. Here we took shelter in a Brahmin's house who professed to be a friend, but, through the whole night, sought for an opportunity to kill us. Being apprised of his wicked intention, we kept awake, without any sleep. Early next morning, when we were ready to resume our journey, we found the cart which brought us had disappeared. The driver had received his full hire for Mirzapur. Our host, affecting great sympathy, (as his wicked design of murdering us and taking everything we had was not yet accomplished) begged us to remain another day, when he promised to procure a hackery. As we were tired, and our feet swollen, we were obliged to comply with his wishes. In the middle of the day, while sitting in his house, we witnessed such cruelty and barbarity as eye has seldom seen, or ear heard, or tongue attempted to describe, perpetrated by the inhabitants of the village on the public road; and the same was no doubt done in other villages.

"Amongst many others, I will mention one case. A *syce* (groom)—not a Christian but Hindu, a *chamar* by caste,—with his wife and only child, a baby one year old, was returning home from Cawnpore to Mirzapur. He was caught by the villagers and stripped of everything he had. When the villagers came to strip the woman of her clothes, she begged hard not to take her under-

garment, but they, without any mercy or humanity, snatched the baby, a stout healthy child, from her arms, and holding it by its two little legs, dashed out its brain upon a stone. Seeing this act of atrocity, our hearts were chilled within us, and we felt greatly alarmed, as we had a baby of about the same age. We passed the remainder of the day in heaviness of heart, but trusting in our God, and thinking how to get out of their hands.

"The night approached and it was an awful night to us. We saw our host bring out his swords and clean them before our eyes. I asked him what he brought them out for. His answer was, should any of the villagers attack us, he would defend and fight for us. His plan, as we discovered, was to murder us in cold blood, when we were asleep. That thereby he might obtain possession of all that we had. We passed a most miserable night, expecting every moment to have our heads cut off; but our ever-blessed Father assured us that our lives should not be injured. Only our property taken away. We kept up the whole night, praying and singing praises to God, and did not even lie down for a moment. The Brahmin, too, did not sleep, but continued watching for the moment when we should fall asleep, that he might execute his wicked design; but he was unsuccessful.

"When the morning light began to be visible, we prepared to start, not for Mirzapur, as the road was unknown and hazardous, but back to Allahabad, of course, on foot; but before we left, I told my wife to give up everything, knowing well that we should be attacked. We left the Brahmin's roof and the moment we came out, a crowd of men, our host among the number, fell upon us. We gave up everything, even the very clothes on our bodies; they did not leave us the single Bible we had. Our shoes were also taken: in mine I had hid a rupee and a few pice. While they were engaged in dividing the booty among themselves, each one tried to secure the lion's share to himself, in doing which many were no doubt killed and wounded. We made our escape, running as fast as we could. After proceeding about a mile, we looked back and saw a number of villains pursuing, evidently with a view to kill us, but we ran and came within the boundary of another village. The villains, seeing us gone beyond the limits of their village, turned back.

"We went up to a well and the people gave us water to drink. We then came to a potter's house and begged him to give us a *ghurra*, which he did. I filled it with

water, that we might have a supply; for water in that part of the country, especially in the months of May and June, is very scarce and only found in deep wells. We travelled till 9 a.m. when both ourselves and our dear children (two of them six years and the baby one year old) felt fatigued and tired, and sat down under the shade of a tree. The poor children cried most bitterly from hunger, but we had nothing to give them. We laid our petition before that God who fed His people the Jews, with manna in the wilderness; and indeed He heard our prayer. We saw from a distance a marriage procession coming towards us. I went up to them and they gave us five pice which enabled me to buy *suttu* and *gur*, (flour made of gram, a legume much used in India for feeding cattle, and treacle). With this we fed the children and resumed our journey.

“We travelled till 11 a.m. when we found that our three children, having been struck by the sun, were on the point of death; for the sun was very powerful and the hot wind blew most fearfully. Any who have lived in the Upper Provinces, can well sympathize with us. Seeing no village near (and indeed if there had been any, we should not have gone to it, for fear of losing our lives), we took shelter under a bridge and having gathered some sand, made our poor children lie down. But they seemed dying and we had no medicine to give them. We raised our hearts to our Great Physician, who is always more ready to hear than we are to apply to Him. He heard our supplications. We saw a small green mango hanging on a tree, though the season was nearly over. I brought it down, and having procured a little fire from a gang of robbers, who were proceeding to Allahabad to plunder, I roasted it and made some sherbet and gave it to the children to drink. People of the poorer classes, when struck by the sun, always administer this as a medicine. It acted like a charm and revived the children. From inability to proceed further, we made up our minds to remain there till next morning; but towards sunset the zamindar of the nearest village, a Hindu by caste, came, with the assurance that no injury should be done to us, took us to his house, and comfortably kept us through the night, supplying all our urgent wants. We partook of his hospitality, and slept very soundly, as we had been deprived of rest for three days and three nights.

“Early on the following morning we left our kind host’s house and started off for Allahabad, which was only three miles off. We arrived at the ghat about 9 a.m. and, while crossing the river Jumna, we saw, with heart-

felt sorrow, that the mission bungalow was burnt to ashes and the beautiful church totally disfigured. On our arrival, swarms of Mohammedans, fell upon us; but our gracious Father again saved us, by raising up a friend from among the foes. This was a goldsmith, a Hindu by caste, who took us into his house and kept us safe throughout the day. At sunset when we left his protection, we fell into the hands of some other Mohammedans, who were roaming about like ferocious animals thirsting for blood. When we saw there was no way of escape, and the villains ready to kill us, we begged them hard to take us to their head, the *maulvie*, who for some days usurped the supreme authority there. With great difficulty we induced them to comply with our wishes. When we were brought before him, we found him seated on a chair, surrounded by men with drawn swords. We made our salaams: upon which he ordered us to sit down and put the following questions:

Q. Who are you?

A. Christians

Q. What places do you come from?

A. Futtehpur

Q. What was your occupation?

A. Preaching and teaching the Christian religion.

Q. Are you a padre?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. Was it not you who used to go about reading and distributing tracts in the streets and villages?

A. Yes, Sir; it was I and my catechists.

Q. How many Christians have you made?

A. I did not make any Christian, for no human being can change the heart of another; but God, through my instrumentality brought to the belief of His true religion about a couple of dozens.

“On this the man exclaimed in a great rage and said Tobah! Tobah! (repent). What downright blasphemy! God never makes anyone a Christian, but you kafirs pervert the people. He always makes people Mussulmans: for the religion which we follow is the only true one.

Q. How many Mahammedans have you perverted to your religion?

A. I have not perverted anyone, but by the grace of God, ten were turned from darkness to the glorious light of the Gospel.

“Hearing this the man’s countenance became as red as a poker and he exclaimed. ‘You are a great *haramzadah!*—you have renounced your forefathers’ faith and become

a child of *shoytan* (Satan), and now use your every effort to bring others into the same road of destruction. You deserve a cruel death. Your nose, ears and hands should be cut off at different times so as to make your sufferings continue for some time; and your children ought to be taken into slavery.'

"Upon this Mrs. Nundi, folding her hands, said to the *maulvie*; you will confer a very great favour by ordering us all to be killed at once and not to be tortured by a lingering death.

"After keeping silent for a while, he exclaimed, 'Subhan Allah! you appear to be a respectable man. I pity you and your family, and, as a friend, I advise you to become Mohammedans. By doing so you will not only save your lives, but will be raised to a high rank.'

"My answer was, 'We prefer death to any inducement you can hold out.'

"The man then appealed to my wife, and asked her what she would do. Her answer was, thank God, as firm as mine. She said she was ready to submit to any punishment he could inflict but she would not renounce her faith. The *maulvie* then asked if I had read the Koran. My answer was 'yes, Sir.' He then said, 'you could not have read it with a view to be profited, but simply to pick out passages in order to argue with Mohammedans.' Moreover, he said; 'I will allow you three days to consider, and then I will send for you and read a portion of the Koran to you. If you believe and become Mohammedans, well and good, but if not your noses shall be cut off. We again begged and said to him that what he intended to do had better be done at once for as long as God continued His grace, we would never change our faith. He then ordered his men to take us into custody.

"While on the way to the prison, I raised my heart in praise and adoration to the Lord Jesus, for giving us grace to stand firm, and to acknowledge Him before the world. When we reached the place of our imprisonment, which was a part of the *serai* where travellers put up for the night, and where his soldiers were quartered, we found a European family and some native Christians. We felt extremely sorry, seeing them in the same difficulty with ourselves. After conversing and relating each other's distress, I asked them to join me in prayer, to which they readily consented.

"While we knelt down and prayed, one of the guards came and giving me a kick on the back, ordered me either to pray after the Mohammedan form or to hold my

tongue. The next day, Ensign Cheek, an officer of the late 6th Native Infantry, was brought in as a prisoner. (Ensign Cheek had arrived from England only a few weeks or rather days before and had paid a brief visit to his relatives at Bancurah, near Burdwan, whilst going up to join his regiment).<sup>1</sup> He was severely wounded that he was hardly able to stand on his legs but was on the point of fainting. I made some gruel of the *suttu* and *gur* which we brought with us and some of which was still left and gave him to drink; also a potful of water. Drinking this, he felt refreshed and opened his eyes. Seeing me a fellow prisoner, and a minister of the Gospel, he related the history of his sufferings and asked me, if I escaped safe, to write to his mother in England and to his aunt in Bancurah, which I have since done. As the poor man was unable to lie down on the bare hard ground, for that was all allotted to us, I begged the *daroga* (constable) to give him a *charpoy* (a string bed). With great difficulty he consented to supply one and that was a broken one.

"Finding me so kindly disposed to poor Cheek, the *daroga* fastened my feet in the stocks, and thus caused a separation not only from him but also from my poor family. While this was going on, a large body of armed men fell upon me, holding forth the promise of immediate release if I became a Mohammedan. At that time Ensign Cheek cried with a loud voice, and said, 'Padre, Padre, be firm; do not give way!' My poor wife not willing to be separated was dragged away by her hair and received a severe wound in her forehead. The third day, the day appointed for our final execution, now came; and we expected every moment to be sent for to finish our earthly course but the *maulvie* did not do so. Every ten or fifteen minutes some one of his people would come and try to convert us, threatening in case of refusal to cut off our noses. It appeared that the cutting off of noses was a favourite pastime with them.

"On the sixth day, the *maulvie* himself came over into the prison and inquired where the padre prisoner was. When I was pointed out, he asked me if I were comfortable. My answer was, 'How can I be comfortable, whilst my feet are fastened to the stocks? However I am not sorry, because such has been the will of my heavenly Father.' I then asked him how he could be so cruel as not to allow a drop of milk to a poor innocent baby, for

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<sup>1</sup>See also supplemental note at the end of this section.

our little one lived principally upon water those six days.

"The same day the European and Sikh soldiers came out under Major Brazier, and, after a desperate fight, completely routed the enemy. Several dead and wounded were brought where we were, as that was his head-quarter. The sight of these convinced us that the enemies would take to their heels. They gradually began to disperse and by the following morning not one remained. We then broke the stocks, liberated ourselves and came into the fort to our friends, who were rejoiced to see us once more in the land of the living. Ensign Cheek died the same day, after reaching the fort. His wounds were so severe and so numerous that it was a wonder how he lived so many days, without any food, or even a sufficient quantity of water to quench his burning thirst. It must be a great consolation to his friends to hear that he died in the fort and received Christian burial. I had not sufficient conversation with him to know the real state of his mind; but the few words he expressed at the time when the villains fastened my feet in the stocks, led me to believe that he died a Christian and is now in the enjoyment of everlasting rest in heaven.

"The saving of our unprofitable lives, I may say, is a perfect miracle; for it was not once or twice, but no less than ten times that our lives were exposed to imminent danger; but our gracious heavenly Father not only saved us, but gave us grace to stand firm and to make a public profession of our faith before the enemy. Thanks, thanks be to His great name!"

In a letter which Gopeenath Nundi wrote to the Church Missionary Society, dated March 2, 1858, he said:

"The *maulvie*, when he failed in his endeavours by argument to bring us to renounce the Christian faith, brought forward all the threats which a wicked heart could invent. He threatened to take off the different limbs of our body and thus torture us to death; but when he saw that this had no effect, he then promised to give us riches, land free of rent, and other worldly grandeur, but thanks be to God! he still received a negative answer. His next attack was on my poor wife, who, although naturally timid, yet at that moment was astonishingly bold in declaring her faith. Well may I insert the sweet words of our blessed Lord, 'And ye



shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.'

"Surrounded as she was by no less than one hundred infuriated and savage-looking men, with drawn swords, ready to inflict torture, yet she defended her faith most gloriously. When the *maulvie* appealed to her and inquired what she would do, thinking no doubt that her natural weakness would yield to his proposals, but not knowing that a greater power than his was directing and supporting her, she humbly and with a loud voice declared that she was ready to undergo any punishment he would inflict, but would not deny her Master and Saviour. While the man was arguing with her, she felt certain that we should be called upon to seal our faith with our blood. She began to teach the little boys in the presence and hearing of all: 'You, my sweet children, will be taken and kept as slaves, when we shall be killed; but do not forget to say your prayers every day; and when the English power is re-established, fly over to them for refuge and relate the circumstances of our end.' While instructing them she was kissing them all the time. This pitiful scene no doubt touched their hard and aching hearts. The *maulvie* ordered us to be taken into the prison and kept for a further occasion. Thus came we out through our fiery trial, praising and glorifying Jesus for giving us grace to confess Him before men.

"Other dear English and native Christians were in similar dangers and trials, but many if not all were massacred; yet we are still in the land of the living. The manifestation of God's grace to us at the time we needed it most was infinite. It was nothing but His grace alone that kept us firm. The enemy tried his utmost to throw us down. He put forth, on one hand all the worldly inducements a person can conceive, if we renounced our faith; on the other hand, he brought before us a sure death, with all the cruelties a barbarous man could think of, if we did not become Mohammedans. But, thank God, we chose the latter . . . when the *maulvie* failed by arguments, threats etc. in bringing me to renounce my faith, he appealed to my wife; but she too, thank God, was ready to give up her life rather than become a follower of the false prophet. When she saw the *maulvie* was in a great rage and was ready to order us to be tortured, by taking off our noses or ears, she began to instruct the twin boys—'You my children, will be taken and kept as slaves, while we shall be killed but remember my last words, do not for-

get to say your prayers both morning and evening, and as soon as you see the English power re-established, which will be before long, fly over to them and relate to them everything that has befallen us'.<sup>11</sup>

### Supplementary Note on Ensign Cheek

"At the time of the massacre of their officers by the mutinous regiment, there were six lads, just arrived from England, who were doing duty with the corps until opportunity offered itself to them to join their regiments. On the night of the 6th June, when the officers were murdered on the parade, these lads, who ought to have been in the Fort, were left in the Mess House, and there barbarously murdered; their screams were heard at some distance by those who escaped from the parade ground. Poor boys, they perished from the folly of their commanding officers!

"One of them, mortally wounded, crept down to a neighbouring ravine, and there prepared to make his solitary moan and meet his Creator. He was found there by some peasants, who conveyed him to the Mohammedan fanatics in the town. In the place where he was confined was a native Christian minister and his wife, converted Hindus, the former a good excellent Christian, whom we have long loved and honoured. But human flesh is weak. The Mohammedans were urging him with threats and tempting him with promises, to deny his Saviour; indignities offered to his wife were added to threats of mutilation to himself. He might have fallen but God was watching over him; as an angel from heaven the dying youth was brought in, and hearing and seeing the good man's struggles, he exhorted him not to buy his life at the price of his soul. Past all hopes of earthly honour, past also all dishonour and pierced to the heart by the missiles of the enemies, dying among pitiless strangers this young St. Sebastian made before them a Christian confession."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>This account has been reproduced from the *Church Missionary Intelligencer* for August 1858, p. 182-85.

It is also found in the Rev. M. A. Sherring's *The Indian Church in the Great Rebellion* (London, James Nisbet and Company) 1859, p. 186-20.

Parts of it have been quoted in Dr. George Smith's *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. II, p. 342 ff.

<sup>12</sup>*Calcutta Review*, September 1858, p. 62.

## 7. The Last Years

It has already been indicated that in every place where the rebellion brought out hooliganism, looting and arson, Christians suffered to the utmost, Christian buildings were burnt and razed to the ground and despoiled. Christian work was handicapped greatly for quite some time from this point of view (and fortunately, no other).

"In a communication dated June 11, 1858, and written after a recent visit to Futtehpur, Gopeenath Nundi gives the following information respecting the state of the mission premises when he returned to them, and the trials of the native Christians at the time of the insurrection. He says—'Mr. Owen and myself went to Futtehpur, where we found the mission premises a heap of ruins. Looking at the bare walls, my heart broke and I wept for more than half an hour. Last year about this time, the mission was in a smiling state. And I humbly trust that He will again enable us to carry on His blessed work, and by our feeble instrumentality will yet bring many sinners to the knowledge and belief in His gospel. As the whole mission premises are a heap of ruin, with the exception of a couple of houses for catechists, which since have been repaired, so there is no suitable place for us to live in.

"The Christians have suffered more or less. Some of them were sheltered by villagers and came out without much actual suffering. Others, again, wandering from village to village and enduring innumerable hardships, at last came to take shelter at Allahabad. The only native Christian who is missing is Babu Ram Chandra Mitter, headmaster of the Futtehpur English school who is supposed to have been murdered at or near Futtehpur. He was a nice man and a zealous Christian. He was educated in the General Assembly School, Calcutta. Just a short time before the mutiny broke out, he joined us. He was a very faithful and good man, and a sincere Christian. I have many hopes that he is in the enjoyment of his eternal rest in the kingdom of heaven."

Gopeenath Nundi and his wife lived after thus witnessing a good confession, to reorganize the church of Futtehpur, but not for very long.

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<sup>1</sup>The Rev. M. A. Sherring's *The Indian Church in the Great Rebellion*, p. 191-200.

In March 1861 it became necessary that Gopeenath Nundi should submit to a severe surgical operation, as the only possible means of saving his life.

"I am not afraid to die," he said, when the hour of trial came, "I can trust that Jesus whom I have so often preached to others."

The operation proved fatal and Gopeenath Nundi passed away, on the morning of 16th March 1861 (at Futtehpur) to receive from the Master whom he had served faithfully for thirty years, a confessor's reward.

Dr. Duff was then in the country and was rejoicing over the induction of the Rev. Lal Behari Day who had been called by the Bengali congregation to be their minister, when he heard the news of the death of his third convert at Futtehpur. He was overwhelmed by grief, and hastened to write to the bereaved family left behind his sympathy and offer his consolation.

"Little did I dream when parting with him then, that it was the last time I was to gaze on that mild but earnest countenance. Little did I dream when we knelt down together, hand-in-hand, in my study to commend each other to the Father of spirits, it was the last time we should meet till we hail each other before the throne on high as redeemed by the blood of the Lamb! But so it has proved. I mourn over him as I would over an only son, till, at times, my eyes are sore with weeping. It is not the sorrow of repining at the dispensation of a gracious God and loving Father! Oh no; but the outburst and overflow of affectionate grief for one whom I loved as my own soul, but he has gone to his rest, ay, and to his glorious reward. His works do follow him. There are spiritual children in Northern India, not a few, to mourn over his loss. The American Presbyterian Mission, which he so faithfully served, will sorely feel his loss. Oh, when shall we have scores and hundreds, clothed with his mantle and imbued with his spirit? Will any of our young ministers, animated by like faith and hope, at once come out and fill up the gap—or, if raised up here in greater numbers, both able and willing to mount the breach? Some day the Lord will take the work into His own hands and then rebuke the languid zeal of those who will not come forward now to His help against the mighty. . . . Long have all

churches and societies laboured by all manner of imaginable plans, methods, and enginery to drive out the monster demon of Hinduism, and hitherto with very partial success. Perhaps it may be to teach us all that 'this kind will not go out but by prayer and fasting,' by real self-emptying, self-denial, and humiliation before God, accompanied by fervent, importunate, persevering prayer."

## 8. The First Martyr Roll of the Church of India

How, then, did the Indian Church of 1857, some 150,000 strong, pass through the year of blood and persecution? Mr. Sherring compiled an authentic narrative of the facts which, as published in 1859, was admitted by friend and foe to be within the truth. This is the first martyr roll of the Church of India.

### *Missionaries and Chaplains*

Rev. M. J. Jennings, Chaplain of Delhi, and Miss Jennings. Both killed in their own house on the gate of the palace.

Rev. A. R. Hubbard, of the Propagation of the Gospel Society, Delhi, killed by the mutineers in the Delhi Bank.

Rev. John Mackay, of the Baptist Missionary Society, Delhi. Defended himself with several friends in Col. Skinner's house for three or four days, when the roof of the cellar in which they had taken shelter was dug up by the order of the king and they were all killed.

Rev. David Corrie Sandys of the Propagation Society, Delhi and son of the Rev. T. Sandys, of the Church

### *Indian Christians*

Wilayat Ali, Catechist of the Baptist Mission, Delhi. Killed by a party of Moham-medans in the streets of Delhi, at the time of the outbreak.

Thakoor, Catechist of the Propagation Society's Mission, Delhi. Killed by troopers in the streets of Delhi.

Dhokul Parashad, head-teacher of the Futtehgur Mission Schools, his wife and four children. All killed in company with the Europeans in the parade at Futtehgurh. The sepoy first fired grape at the party and then despatched the survivors with their swords.

Society, Calcutta. Killed by the mutineers near the magazine, in attempting to return to the mission school to his own house.

Mr. Cocks and Mr. Louis Koch, both of the Propagation Society. Killed by the mutineers in the Delhi Bank.

Mrs. Thompson, widow of the Rev. J. T. Thompson, formerly Baptist missionary in Delhi, and his two adult daughters. All three killed in their own house in Delhi.

Rev. Thomas Hunter, missionary of the Church of Scotland, Sialkot, Mrs. Hunter and their infant child. Killed in their buggy while fleeing to the Fort. A ball passing through the face of Mr. Hunter, entered the neck of his wife; a gaol warder completed the murder with a sword killing the child also.

Rev. John M'Callum, Officiating Chaplain of Shahajpore. Rushing from the church where the residents had assembled for divine worship, on its being surrounded by the mutinous sepoys, he escaped with the loss of one of his hands; but in the evening of the same day he was attacked by labourers in a field and was finally decapitated by a pathan.

Rev. J. E. Freeman and Mrs. Freeman; Rev. D. E. Campbell, Mrs. Campbell

Paramanad, Catechist of the Baptist Mission, Muttra. Killed by the rebels.

Solomon, Catechist of the Propagation Society's Mission, Cawnpore. Cruelly put to death by the Hindus during the occupation of Cawnpore by the Gwalior contingent.

Ram Chandra Mitter, Headmaster of the American Presbyterian Mission school, been murdered at or near Futtehpur.

Jiwan Masih, Catechist. Supposed to have been killed near Delamow.

and their two children, Rev. A. O. John, and Mrs. John; Rev. R. M'Mullen and Mrs. M'Mullen, of the American Presbyterian Board of Missions, Futtehgur. All killed by the Nana at Bithoor.

Sri Nath Bhoose, formerly Catechist and Teacher, his wife and children. All supposed to have been murdered in Oudh.

Rev. F. Fisher, Chaplain of Futtehgur, Mrs. Fisher and their infant child. Escaping from Futtehgur in boats, they were attacked by sepoys, and on jumping into the river, Mr. Fisher swam with his wife and child towards the bank but they were both drowned in his arms on the way. Mr. Fisher was afterwards captured by the Nana's party and slain at or near Cawnpore. Rev. E. T. R. Moncrieff, Chaplain of Cawnpore, Mrs. Moncrieff and their child. Mrs. Moncrieff was killed in the intrenchments on the ninth day siege.

Raphael, Catechist of the Church Mission, Goruckpore. Died from wounds inflicted by the rebels, and from anxiety and sickness, during the troubles in Goruckpore.

Rev. W. H. Heycock, of the Propagation Society, Cawnpore and Mrs. Heycock his mother, both killed at Cawnpore. Mr. Heycock was shot just as he was entering the intrenchments.

There is a name left which should live in the memories of God's people. Chaman Lal, Sub-Assistant Surgeon of Delhi; was massacred by the mutineers in his own house in Delhi. He was a man of exemplary piety and was thoroughly in earnest in his Christian life and profession. The native church has lost in him one of its brightest ornaments.

Rev. H. E. Cockey of the Propagation Society, Cawnpore. Wounded in the thigh by a musket ball and afterwards shot on the parade ground at Cawnpore, together with other Europeans in the presence of the Nana. Rev. G. W. Copeland,

Chaplain of Gwalior. Killed on occasion of the mutiny of the Gwalior contingent.

Rev. H. I. Polohampton, Chaplain of Lucknow. Shot by a musket ball, while attending on the sick in one of the hospitals in the Residency; but partially recovering from his wound eventually sank from an attack of cholera.

Rev. W. Glen, Agra, son of the late Dr. Glen of Persia, and formerly missionary of the London Missionary Society, Mirzapore, and his infant child. Both died in the fort of Agra from privations.

Mrs. Buyers, wife of the Rev. W. Buyers, missionary of the London Miss. Soc., Benares. Died from dysentery, brought on chiefly by anxiety of mind induced by the disturbances in Benares.

To these must be added the names as confessors, or others such as the Rev. Gopeenath Nundi, his wife and children, Allahabad.

This list compiled by the Rev. M. A. Sherring is printed on p. 17-22 of *The Indian Church in the Great Rebellion*. It has been reprinted in Dr. George Smith's *Life of Dr. Duff*, p. 340-42.

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The story of Professor Ramchundra who also escaped with his life but after enduring much hardship during the Mutiny and that of Wilayat Ali, who died as a martyr may be read in the author's *Triumphs of His Grace* (C.L.S., Madras.)



# Pyari Mohan Rudra

## 1. An "Ecumenical" Approach

The more one studies the life and work of Dr. Alexander Duff, the more one is impressed with the magnitude of the contribution which he made to the Christian enterprise in India. In North India, especially, it was he who produced the first generation of Indian leaders in the several missions. Never before in India, or after, has there been such a galaxy of distinguished converts as came out of his institution—all of them men of high social rank, fine spiritual calibre, outstanding intellectual vigour and great moral strength.

Soon after his arrival in the country, he made a personal survey of the Christian work then being carried on by his own church and by other missions which had by then chosen different parts of India for their effort. He also made a first-hand study of the intellectual and social revolution that was taking place all around. He was convinced that young India's great need was a new direction, a new foundation for thought and action—a change from atheism and nihilism to a true knowledge of the one God.

While others were still hesitating about what methods to adopt in their evangelistic work, he made up his mind once for all and steadily pressed forward, throwing the whole force of his own spiritual strength into bringing about such a "movement of the Spirit" which would lift the country to new heights of spiritual and intellectual achievement. It was his own intense faith, coupled with the courage of his convictions and his ardent enthusiasm that held fast those who came under his influence, and was able to stir up their intellect and guide their spiritual longings. One by one they came out from earthbound

ambitions for themselves and their country and each entered a sphere in which he could find the fullest scope for self-expression and the greatest opportunities for service to his newly-found Master.

With commendable generosity Duff sent them to work in different spheres and used them to build up the Christian enterprise in different parts of North India. Ungrudgingly he gave his converts to other missions wherever leaders were needed.

Pyari Mohun was one such. He had been led by Dr. Duff to give his allegiance to Christ. Looking for an opportunity to serve Him to the best of his ability, he found it outside the auspices of the Free Church of Scotland in India and offered his services to the Church Missionary Society.

Pyari Mohun came from one of the old aristocratic families of Bengal. He was ordained to the priesthood in the Anglican Church in India. He held charge of very important pastoral and educational work; and later became superintending missionary of a mission of the C.M.S., when his career came to an end with his death in 1889.

He was a man of high spiritual stature. The first generation of Indian clergy were, almost without exception, outstanding men. The ordained ministry had not yet become professionalized. The Church had not become an institution. It was still mainly an evangelistic agency and a movement of the spirit. It had not yet become a decorated coast-guard station. It was still a training ground for men and women who would undertake rescue work by manning the life-boats and going out into the storm-tossed ocean. Men felt that they were not ordained to the service of a church—and what is worse—of their own denomination, but to the service of Christ. They considered themselves not administrators and bosses but evangelists and servants, not interior decorators but outdoor fighters. They felt concerned not so much with their tiny congregations or their petty schools; but with the people outside—the vast populace who had not yet heard of, or been shown, Christ. They felt called and commissioned to be heralds of the King, not Sunday school teachers. They were consumed with a passion for souls.

They were not bothered about supervising a number of school masters and catechists and sextons.

And among such a select group of ordained men, Pyari Mohun Rudra was an outstanding person, characterized by utter devotion to Christ; and exercising himself in different directions, he rendered varied service to the church.

## 2. From the Aristocracy

Pyari Mohun Rudra, son of Babu Chandrakanta Rudra of Bansberiah, in the district of Hooghly, Bengal, was born in 1839.

Though that particular nook in rural Bengal where Pyari Mohun was born had not been touched yet by Christian forces, missionary work in India had become widespread. The evangelization of India had been accepted by many churches in the West as their main missionary obligation. Several of them had sent their missionaries to India ever since it became possible for Christian missionaries to enter the country for the purpose of preaching the Christian gospel to the Indian people. The Anglican Church had already, through its two missionary societies, achieved some notable successes in Tanjore and Tinnevely in South India and in Krishnagar in Bengal. The London Missionary Society was active both in Bengal and in South India. The Baptists had extended widely in North India and Wesleyans in the South. The Scottish educational missionaries were gaining sensational successes in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. The Basle Mission in Malabar and the American Board Mission in Madura began work in 1834; the American Telugu Baptist Mission in 1835, and the American Presbyterian Mission in the North-west Province in 1836. Christianity was gradually gaining ground in the country. Though the actual number of converts was small, Hindu society was being perceptibly affected.

The decade which ended with the year 1839 had been an eventful one. In 1829, *suttee* was abolished by Lord William Bentinck; a bold action which was the precursor

to a great revolution in Hindu thinking and social practice. Alexander Duff arrived in Calcutta the next year. In 1832, Daniel Wilson became Bishop of Calcutta. It was also the year of the first conversions from Duff's College. In 1835, the Bishopric of Madras was established; and in 1837 the Bishopric of Bombay. In 1838 a religious awakening began in the Krishnagar district of Bengal.

The Brahma Sabha, the progenitor of the Brahma Samaj, was founded by Ram Mohan Roy in 1814. But during the first twenty-five years it did not make much progress. In the year 1830, it may be said to have changed from a movement into an organization, when the society erected and opened, on 23rd January 1830, a building for the "worship and adoration of the Eternal, Unsearchable and Immutable being," open to "all sorts and descriptions of people without distinction." Ram Mohan Roy helped Duff to open his famous school in 1830 and then left on a visit to England from which however he did not return to India. His death in England in 1833 meant an almost fatal blow which the organization might not have survived had not "a rich young ruler," Prince Dwarka Nath Tagore, come to its rescue. The prince had passed through a spiritual crisis in 1838 which had profoundly affected his way of life. He joined the Brahma Samaj and gave it all the financial and moral support at his command and of which it was then in dire need. Later, in 1842, he himself became the head of the society and carried it forward in the paths of theism and religious reform.

This was the religious background in Bengal at the time Pyari Mohun was born. During the whole period of his youth and early adulthood there was much religious ferment the effects of which, in his own life, we shall notice later.

Pyari Mohun's family was one of the oldest among the old landed aristocracy of Bengal and had lived in Bansberiah for over 200 years. At one time the Rudras were the zamindars of the village and wielded great influence in the neighbourhood. They were connected by marriage with many of the aristocratic families of Lower Bengal. They added to their prestige by taking up import-

ant posts under the Government or holding lucrative positions in private employment.

Pyari Mohun was the only surviving son of his parents. His father died when he was only four years of age. The duty of bringing him up thus wholly devolved upon his mother. She was a lady of a pious disposition and had much practical wisdom. Her devotion to her religion amounted to a passion. The first impressions of religion were implanted in young Pyari Mohun's mind by the sincerity and fervency of his mother's private devotions. On rising from her bed each morning she never attended her domestic duties without calling on the names of her tutelary deities and offering a prayer for her son. Before retiring she would again pray earnestly to them for protection during the night. She craved from them learning, riches and fame for her son. In this way there was instilled into the boy's mind from early youth the fear of unseen and higher powers who were in control of men's lives and all human affairs and who could be prayed to and worshipped.

His mother loved him with an ardent affection combined with wise discipline. Her life was wholly centred on him and she lived solely for his welfare. She did not however pamper or spoil him. Her religious disposition and her ideas about right and wrong came to her aid in exercising judicious control over him where necessary and in deciding what was best for him. She underwent great sacrifices in order to keep him in comfort and provide for him a good education, making judicious use of her limited means. She lived to see her son study for the junior scholarship examination in the government school at Hooghly. Her health was however affected by her habits of abstinence. Her intense anxiety for his welfare wore her out, in the absence of a faith which could entrust the loved one to the care of one whose love surpasseth a mother's love. She died before her son was able to earn his livelihood or to keep her in comfort in return for all the care she had lavished on him and all the privations she had endured for his sake.

Two years before her death she married him to a girl

whose beauty had attracted her attention and whose charms had captivated her heart. Pyari Mohun made no objection to this early marriage, because that was the custom in those days among their people. Instead of supporting only her son, the mother had now to keep the couple in the house and look after them. This meant more physical strain and a more rapid drain on her limited financial resources. She was not able to help her son to continue his education in the Hooghly College. This early marriage was perhaps the only mistake she made in regard to her son; but it was mainly due to the prevailing social customs.

She died when Pyari Mohun was only nineteen years of age. The loss of his best friend and only benefactor in the world, on whom he had been depending for everything, affected him greatly. He now set about looking for some means of supporting himself and his young wife.

As is not infrequent among wealthy and aristocratic families, the Rudras were a numerous family. The family lived under the joint family system which was the rule in India at that time. There were a hundred inmates living under the same roof, maintained by the joint family income. But it so happened that this large and influential family gradually dwindled both in size and in influence. Several of the male members died one after another, so that in the course of a few years the female members of the family outnumbered the males and most of them were widows. As the male members died off, the rivalry, the jealousies, and the petty-mindedness of the womenfolk led to a gradual disruption of the harmony and ultimately to disunity. The happiness of the family and its reputation rapidly declined.

Pyari Mohun, during whose boyhood a large number of the deaths in the family occurred, was greatly affected by these sorrowful happenings. He began to think seriously about the transitoriness of human life. What was the purpose of it all? What was man's ultimate destiny? What was man intended to achieve with his life which was liable to be cut off so suddenly and when least expected? How can one plan and prepare oneself to do

anything in the world if at any moment he might be whisked away from the earthly scene? He not only kept revolving these questions in his own mind but he also put the questions to the *gurus* of the family, who came from time to time to perform religious rites and ceremonies for the family and the religious mendicants who came also now and then on the pretext of teaching people, pretending to superior knowledge. But none of them was able to give him intelligible and satisfactory answers to his questions. It was obviously impossible for the intellect to explain everything. He took temporary refuge in not thinking about such matters at all. He continued to be an orthodox Hindu, worshipping the gods, revering the Brahmins, performing all the prescribed ceremonies and strictly following traditional social customs.

After his mother died he felt that it was time he began to earn his own livelihood. He left his village and came to Calcutta where he had an uncle living. He expected that the uncle would help him to continue his studies in a college or in the alternative help him to get some employment. He did not however get much help in either direction.

An educated member of the Brahma Samaj however helped him a little to study English. Getting to know in this way about the Samaj, he himself began to pay visits to the society. His first visit made a great impression upon him. Attendance at its meetings and worship gave him considerable help in thinking about religion. He also took up work as a teacher in a private school and later in a government-aided school and was thus able to maintain himself. At the same time he prepared himself by private study for the matriculation examination of the Calcutta University and subsequently passed it.

### 3. To Christianity Through Brahmaism

His religious ideas also began at this time to change, at first almost imperceptibly but later by persistent thinking. No serious-minded Hindu in Calcutta at this

time, with any concern for his soul, could fail to be influenced by the Brahmo Samaj. It had by this time become sufficiently widespread and influential so that religiously minded Hindu young men could not help noticing it and be impressed by the difference between the intelligent worship practiced by the followers of the Samaj and the crude worship of the orthodox Hinduism of the day.

The year Pyari Mohun came to Calcutta, another thoughtful young man, Babu Keshub Chander Sen, also came attracted by the Brahmo Samaj and joined the society, and soon came into prominence.

The Brahmo Samaj was a development within Hinduism brought about chiefly by the impact of Christianity on minds which had been stirred into activity by contact with western science and religious thought. The way of life pictured in the Bible and the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as described in the Gospels made thoughtful Hindus realize the need to abandon much of the crudities in belief and practice which constituted popular Hinduism.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy, by the publication of the *Precepts of Jesus*, plainly indicated that he looked upon the teachings of Jesus as being the supreme guide to life eternal. But Babu Debendra Nath Tagore does not appear to have advanced beyond the national scriptures of the Hindus, and his followers still wished to identify themselves with conservative Hinduism. Babu Keshub Chander Sen, some time after he came into the movement, proclaimed eclecticism to be the principle of his search after truth, professing his willingness to accept truth from whatever source it could be obtained. He and the other young men in the Samaj were not satisfied that the amount of separation which, as a body, they had effected from orthodox Hinduism was enough or that sufficient progress had been made towards a higher level of thought and action. The older men, naturally more conservative, thought that enough had been done for the present and that time should be allowed to accomplish these changes which they foresaw must ultimately take place but which the younger members of the Samaj wished to bring about at once. Matters did not however reach a crisis till 1865.



The details of that controversy do not however concern us in the present narrative.

When Pyari Mohun's contacts with the Samaj began, Debendra Nath Tagore was still the undisputed leader. From 1841 to 1850, Debendra Nath had been maintaining that he had found pure monotheism in the Vedas and that the prevailing idolatry, the worship of many gods, were later accretions which must be abrogated. This led to a controversy with Dr. Duff who challenged the Brahmo Samaj to make a further and complete investigation and abandon this thesis which, according to him, was totally untenable. Tagore himself entered upon a long and intense research in connection with this challenge. He was honourable enough to admit his error later, and therewith to relinquish the tenet of the divine authority of the Vedas. He then shifted his position and declared that the foundations of his society are based on intuitive perception, that is, perception through religious thinking and understanding. He studied the works of European philosophers as well as the religious writings of the Hindus and the Sufis. The only book he neglected was the Bible.

It was at this juncture that Pyari Mohun began to attend Brahmo worship. His contact with Brahmo Samaj continued for three years. He had already given up worship through idols and abandoned all Hindu observances, rites and ceremonies. He preferred the more exalted and pure worship of the Samaj. But still it did not give him such satisfaction as his spiritual instincts demanded. Mere philosophy and the worship of an impersonal Supreme Being could not satisfy the soul and did not satisfy the spiritual longings of Pyari Mohun. The spiritual worship of the One living and true God commended itself to him as being far more rational and elevating. Three years had however to elapse before he changed his opinions further and saw in Christian worship what his spirit was longing for.

He was now thinking seriously of joining the ranks of the Brahmos and becoming a regular member of the Samaj. About this time he read the late Raja Ram Mohan

Roy's *Precepts of Jesus*. He was struck by the sublimity of the teachings of Jesus and the perfection of His character. By what he read in the book, he was led to go direct to the original Gospel record and see for himself, through his own eyes and not through those of Ram Mohan Roy, what Jesus had taught and what impression that teaching had made on the people who heard Him. He was soon convinced from what he read in the Gospels that Jesus, the earthly son of Mary, could not be other than divine and the son of God, an Incarnation of the Divine Being, the second Person of the Most Holy and Blessed Trinity. All these of course came in gradual stages. How he reasoned himself into this conviction and how he overcame whatever intellectual doubts there were in the way, we have no means of knowing as he has left no record of the state of his mind at this time. As a Hindu he was quite aware of the need for divine intervention when man's sorrow needed to be mitigated and when man's sin had to be expiated. God coming into this world as an *avatar* was a fully developed conception in his ancestral religion.

But he might not have gone further to accept Jesus as the Christ and as his own Redeemer and might not have committed his life into His hands had it not been for the providential dealing of God Himself with him (as with all His chosen vessels). At this time he came into contact with Babu Shyama Charan Ghosh, who was not himself a Christian yet. Babu Shyama Charan Ghosh had been in the Church of Scotland Institution in Calcutta from the lowest to the highest class and had been a student of Dr. Alexander Duff and had come under his influence. After finishing his college career, he had become an assistant master in the Free Church of Scotland Mission School in Bansberiah. He was a gentle and thoughtful person, of great earnestness of purpose and a sincere seeker after Truth. Dr. Duff's influence on him while in the institution was not lost after he had left it, though, during his stay in the institution it had not been strong enough, as in many other cases, to compel him to take a final decision in favour of Christianity.

His mind could not throw off all that he had come to know about Christ, while he was a student; and his thoughts persisted in that same direction. At Bansberiah he used to hold discussions, with other educated persons in the place with a view to arrive at the Truth. Among these was Pyari Mohun Rudra, whose mind was also undecided and whose will had not yet been screwed to the pitch necessary to take a final decision. There were besides two old students of Duff's College, Babus Ishan Chander Singh and Ishan Chander Ghosh, who had also not made up their minds to receive baptism.

As the discussions went on, these two were able to come to a decision and decided to accept baptism. They did so soon and were sent by Dr. Duff to work in the Punjab. Shyama Charan himself found his faith growing stronger and more rapidly than did Pyari Mohun's. He began vigorously to attack Pyari Mohun's wavering and directed his energies to getting him to accept the Truth in Christ Jesus.

Frank discussions between friendly and like-minded souls, keen on discovering the truth and willing to follow the gleam wherever it led, help to make things clearer to the intellect and to strengthen the will. Public discussions and arranged controversies, where arguing takes place for arguing's sake, do not ordinarily help the mass mind towards truth. Even there a few individuals may be helped towards a better understanding, though not the audience as a whole; as did happen at the public discussions in Agra between Muslim *maulvies* and theologians and European missionaries, through which ultimately Safdar Ali and Imad-ud-din were won over.

While public disputations are of comparatively little use and must be avoided, private discussions between eager seekers after truth must be encouraged. Hence the need to make person to person contacts in any evangelistic effort. But dealing personally with interested inquirers is perhaps the most neglected part of evangelism today. Most "evangelists"—those employed to take the Gospel to outsiders—even if they are theologically trained men, are not these days competent

enough to carry on private discussions with intelligent Hindus and Muslims and to convince them of the truth. One of our greatest needs is to produce competent, spiritually and intellectually well-equipped evangelists to the intelligentsia.

It was not long before Pyari Mohun gave in. Both Shyama Charan and Pyari Mohun received baptism in 1860 at the hands of Dr. Duff.

That this decision led to severe persecution is not to be wondered at. It was inevitable under the social conditions in India. It took the usual form of separation from the family, social ostracism, obloquy, physical violence and intense efforts to persuade the intending convert to stop short of the final, irrevocable step. The most learned and necessarily the most orthodox of the pundits in the place were used in the attempt to dissuade Pyari Mohun from making an open avowal of his change of faith. Private, even though total, disbelief in his ancestral religion and secret allegiance to the God of the Christians will not only be permitted but even encouraged. But that is the limit of our vaunted toleration. The moment a man comes out openly and announces his renunciation of Hinduism and avows belief in Christ and receives the rite of baptism, he is to be condemned, reviled, ridiculed and as far as possible punished for his disloyalty to the faith of his fathers. It is to be hoped that the days of persecuting individuals who for the sake of conscience and out of intellectual conviction and spiritual compulsion change their faith, are over.

As was only to be expected, Pyari Mohun had great difficulty in bringing his wife over. The lady herself was willing and in fact eager to come. She had long known the direction towards which her husband's religious feelings were tending and she did not wholly disapprove. But his Hindu relatives vehemently objected to her living with her husband and even began to persecute her, in the usual way, taunting and teasing her for her want of influence on her husband and cursing her for her misfortune in having been married to one who preferred becoming a *mlecha* to being within the orthodox fold of Hinduism. While she

tamely submitted herself to all the persecution, her heart was being drawn closer to her husband's position. She was ultimately won over and was received into the Church the following year.

#### 4. Christian Service

Pyari Mohun now went to live in Calcutta and was accommodated in the Free Church Mission barracks. He began work as a teacher in the Free Church Institution and continued to do so till he was appointed headmaster of the C.M.S. School at Garden Reach, about 1864. He continued at Garden Reach till 1868, when he was appointed Assistant Professor of History in the Cathedral Mission College. He was then transferred again to Garden Reach School, and presided over the school till 1874, when he was ordained by Bishop Milman, and placed in charge of the Trinity Church parish at Amherst Street where he succeeded that remarkable missionary, James Vaughan, the author of that remarkable book *The Trident, the Crescent and the Cross*.

While still at Garden Reach he deliberately refused to enter the subordinate executive service of the Government when once an opportunity offered itself to him.

He was an active member of the Calcutta Free Church Presbytery till he joined the Church of England, being one of the ruling elders. Before he joined the Church of England he wrote to the Rev. Dr. Duff about it and obtained his approval for the contemplated step. It was with the hope of serving the Master better and of promoting the cause of Christianity by more direct work that he consented to become a deacon of the Church of England. It was much later, after he had read more of Church history and dogmatic theology, that he became a zealous supporter of the Anglican Church from conviction. He was always on the side of order; and in view of the diversity of opinions and practice prevailing in the Indian Christian community, he thought it very necessary to adhere to the well-tried principles of the

Anglican Church in order to preserve the true spirit of Christ's religion.

While at Amherst Street he was superintendent of the Higher Class English School for Hindus. He also acted as Secretary to the Christian Vernacular Education Society. He had oversight of the Indian Christians in the alms-house. He also worked in the leper asylum, from where candidates came forward from time to time for baptism. It was a touching testimony of their regard for their pastor when, amongst others, the lepers made him a present of a nicely-bound Bengali Testament on the occasion of his taking leave of the Trinity Church congregation.

In 1882, he left Amherst Street parish and became C.M.S. missionary in Burdwan and took charge of the mission hitherto presided over by European missionaries, among whom were such eminent ones like the Revs. J. J. Weitbrecht and R. P. Greaves.

Burdwan is one of the earliest mission stations of the C.M.S. in North India. The beginnings were made in 1816 when a Captain Stewart who was stationed there, a devout Christian who could not see the conditions prevailing in the villages and sit with folded hands, started several village schools in communication with the corresponding committee of the C.M.S. in Calcutta and with funds provided by them. A little later he started a central school in Burdwan in which English would be taught and to which would be drafted the most promising of the pupils in the village schools. Here we see the embryo of the anglo-vernacular schools which, like the one Robert Noble started in Masulipatam and the Robert Money School in Bombay, became in course of time numerous and popular. And because the scholars could not come in daily from their villages, Capt. Stewart provided lodging and food for the five working days in the week, thus paving the way for the mission boarding schools which for two or three generations gave splendid help to the growing church in this country by providing the greater part of its whole-time workers and their wives.

Very soon Burdwan became ripe for stationing a

missionary and one was sent. It was a successful mission station for several decades.

After a succession of European missionaries, Pyari Mchun was sent there as the first Indian missionary. Here, besides carrying on evangelistic work by preaching, distributing tracts, visiting Indian gentlemen in their houses, holding conversations or reading the Scripture with them, and making a tour in the winter months through the Burdwan Division, and also occasionally organizing a series of lectures in the town of Burdwan, he used to look after the little congregation of Bengali Christians and minister to the English congregation of European residents as well. He also used to work the Christian Vernacular Education Society's primary schools in the division. He was on terms of friendship with all the leading men of Burdwan, Raneeganj and Bankurah, and the civil officers who came there from time to time. And for the town of Burdwan, he acted as a municipal commissioner for a short time. A new little mission was started amongst the Bouries—agriculturists of a little village near Asansol.

While at Burdwan he suffered from malarial fever very often. This undermined his health, but the weakness was not very apparent. He often felt as though old age was creeping upon him. His appearance did not show his increasing physical debility.

## 5. The Church in Bengal

We must now interrupt the course of our narrative in order to give an idea of the condition of the church in Bengal at this time. It is in such a church that men like P. M. Rudra when he went to Burdwan in 1882 and later to Nuddea in 1887, and the Rev. Lal Behari Day when he was sent to Culna in 1851 had to work. The church had no doubt been served by many missionaries notable for their evangelistic zeal as well as for their intellectual and spiritual eminence. They had done their very best; and yet the church was weak and ineffective and was facing grave spiritual problems.

The Rev. James Vaughan of the C.M.S. was one such outstanding missionary. He had been trained in Islington College, ordained in 1854 and sent out by the C.M.S. to work in Bengal. He laboured with exemplary zeal in Calcutta, among all classes of people, from educated Brahmans to lepers and scavengers, continuously for nineteen years without going home on furlough. He was greatly respected for his intellectual powers, the depth of his spirituality and above all for his love of the people among whom he had come to work. No one knew better than he did the problems of the Church in Bengal of that time. In a paper on *The Native Church in Bengal* which he read at the General Missionary Conference at Allahabad in 1872-73 he gave a realistic picture of the state of that Church. The extracts from that paper given below will enable us to visualize the conditions at that time in Bengal. Also, to see how, at the present time, we are now throughout the Indian Church, practically in the same condition of spiritual immaturity and emaciation because the faults then pointed out were not attended to and the suggestions for improving the spiritual condition of the people were not carried out. This was the case not only in Bengal but everywhere else in India where the same type of weak Christianity was to be seen for the very same reasons.

"The church in Bengal comprises in round numbers, 19000 native Christians, of whom 5,500 are in full communion.

"This is a matter of great thankfulness and joy. There is additional and very special ground for joy and gratitude when we look at the proportion of those who may be described as inner court worshippers, those who avow a desire for something more than an external union with Christ but who profess a longing for closer communion with him. That more than thirty per cent of the native Christians are in full communion is in itself a hopeful feature.

"*Tone of piety*: The tone of piety among our native communicants is not what we should be satisfied with, very far from it. I do not think that it is generally of an exalted character. There are indeed amongst our native brethren, instances not a few, of a piety so deep, so



earnest, so real, that they may well compare with those recorded on the brightest pages of the church's annals—but all are not stars of the first, or even of the second or third magnitude. Yet, viewing our communicants as a whole, their piety and devotion is much the same level as that of the Christians in England. As regards the moral standard of the whole Christian community, the native Christians of Bengal are upon the whole as moral, as regular, or if you like it better, as little irregular, in their conduct as is the great mass of nominal Christians at home.

*“Aggressive zeal:* There are two other aspects in which it may be well to extend the comparison. There is, for instance, the question of aggressive zeal. No one feels more strongly than I do the absolute necessity of this feature to the soundness and prosperity of the church; I am convinced that the total absence of this principle is a certain sign of death, and that the measure in which it exists constitutes a tolerably safe gauge as to the amount of spiritual life prevailing in the church.

*“The native church in Bengal is decidedly not distinguished by this feature. I believe this characteristic is at a serious discount, that is, I consider that the great majority of our Christians are practically destitute of any zeal at all for the spread of the Gospel. I fear there are multitudes who, during the whole of their Christian life, never spoke one earnest word for Christ. Hardly one in a hundred ever thinks of putting forth active personal effort for the glory of God and the extension of His Kingdom. There are, no doubt, native brethren who, in a most laudable way, by their pen, or by their purse, or by their preaching, strive to further the glorious end we have in view. I could tell of persons (not paid agents, mind you) who speak of Christ in the shop, in the office, when walking by the way; who, when weary with their day's work, stand up in some chapel, or at the corner of some street, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. I could point to one and another, who, instead of devoting their vacations to rest and recreation, have elected to devote the time to arduous tours of preaching in the country towns and villages. These belong to the more educated class of our people but refreshing instances of a similar spirit among our poorer and less educated members are not wanting. (He gives three such instances.)*

*“Many of our native brethren do, in ways and modes of their own, commend the truth to their countrymen. on occasions of which we hear nothing. Such quiet and*

unobtrusive efforts are precious in the sight of the Lord, though unseen and unpraised by man. Viewing the comparative paucity of earnest witnesses for Christ, one is led to cry, 'Would that all the Lord's people did prophesy!' Still there is hope—good hope of a church which can show even a minority of such burning and shining lights. It is my firm conviction that there is in hundreds of our people a considerable amount of latent zeal and energy. But these need to be drawn out and developed. Preaching at our people, scolding them for their fruitlessness, will not do this. The people need to be trained to do good, each of them according to his respective ability. I believe any missionary who sets himself carefully and perseveringly thus to draw out the practical zeal of his people, will admit that he has found real gold where he imagined there was nothing but dross.

"The subject before us is to be discussed under the following aspects: 'The state of the native church, and the best means of making it self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating.' The foregoing remarks have not been altogether beside the mark. But I will now try to deal with it according to the order prescribed.

"For this purpose the 'church in Bengal' must be divided into two distinct portions or classes. These are the native congregations in Calcutta and those in the *mufassal*. Though a considerable amount of sympathy exists between the native brethren in the city and in the country, yet their origin, their history, their circumstances, and to a great extent their tone, widely differ.

"We will deal with the country congregations first. These comprise the vast majority of the Christian community of Bengal. Their numerical preponderance over the city congregations is in the proportion of about nine to one.

"The state of the Christian communities scattered over the country districts of Bengal is one of weakness, imperfection and dependence. There may be here and there a pleasing exception; yet as a general rule, in respect of knowledge, devotion and self-reliance, the condition of the *mufassal* Christians is decidedly low. As regards the great majority, it may be questioned whether they have any perception at all of the need and value of self-government, self-support and self-propagation. They would, I suspect, be quite satisfied for matters to go on as they are to the end of the chapter. To them the missionary is the *ma-bap* and the society is

the ecclesiastical Company Bahadur. It is their business, those simple-minded brethren think, to look after the church; to pay its pastors; and to support an army of preachers to spread the Gospel; the bare idea that a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to themselves has probably never once crossed their minds. They have listened to the missionary's appeals, but they have been little impressed by them. The uppermost feeling has been—'What can we do? What can we give? and why should the padre ask *us* to *do* and to *give*?' This is a new doctrine which never fell upon the ears of our fathers; why should it be urged upon us?"

"That this is not satisfactory, we must all agree; but when we come to investigate the cause of this state of things, we shall find more ground to reflect upon ourselves than upon the people. The key of the whole anomaly—for an anomaly it is—is to be found in the above plaint: 'This is a new doctrine which never fell upon the ears of our fathers; why should it be urged upon us?'

"It cannot be denied that the way in which the principal mufassal missions were founded and for many years administered, goes far to account for the above undesirable feeling of the people. Looking at the past state of things, one is compelled to feel that the present exists as a matter of course. It would have been marvellous if the standard had been much higher than it is.

"*Krishnagar Mission*: The history of the C.M.S. missions in the district of Krishnagar will illustrate what I mean. Some 35 years ago, the Pentecostal showers—as they were then and long after thought—visited the district. Whole families, yea, whole villages, came over to the truth, hundreds upon hundreds flocked to the missionaries demanding admission to the fold of Christ. Station after station sprung into being, churches pointed their spires heavenward where only idol temples had been seen before; schools with hundreds of bright young faces began to abound. Gradually a Christian population of some 5,000 was scattered over the district, ministered to by five or six European missionaries. Churches filled with Bengali ryots, schools filled with well-fed, cleanly children were features which could not but evoke feelings of joy and thankfulness in any Christian heart. But most truly it be said in missionary as well as other matters, 'All is not gold that glitters.' Pleasing as was the scene to behold, there was unsoundness within. Almost every worshipper

looked to the hand of the missionary as well as to his lips, that the prevailing cry was that of the horse-leach 'Give! Give!' Each mission station resembled an almshouse and the missionary was the almoner.

"Such a system could only eventuate in disappointment and failure. Such has been the case. The Christianity of the people trained under that system has necessarily been dwarfed and deformed. It has no backbone even where it is more than nominal. The mistake began with the beginning. The error was committed at the first of teaching the people to receive than to give. Had the apostolic method been pursued, we might have had fewer converts, but we should have had better Christians; and instead of a host of overgrown babies, we should have seen our people steadily growing up into the fulness of the stature of men in Christ Jesus.

"I believe the system deplored reached its fullest development in the Krishnagar district; yet a similar principle has characterized the commencement and working of most of our mufassal mission stations. The people were not from the first for self-help and self-government. Let us eschew the enfeebling system hitherto pursued. Let us now get the conviction that to do for the people that which they might do for themselves, or to expend upon them money which they could furnish themselves, or which they could do without is sure not only to enfeeble them but demoralize them. Man generally is a selfish and lazy animal; native Christians are no exception to the general rule. They naturally prefer others to work and give for them, to working and giving themselves. We must now begin to do the right thing, to brave the consequences and to leave the result with God. The future of the Church depends, for generations to come, on the line we now adopt.

"*City Congregations in Calcutta:* There are twelve of them. As a rule, the native Christians of the metropolis have been all along much less dependent and far less grasping than their brethren in the mufassal. This is accounted for by the fact that the city Christians are generally better off and occupy a higher social status than those in the country districts. Then again, all the world over, the denizens of a large city acquire habits of self-reliance and have a sense of self-respect to which the inhabitants of villages are almost strangers. The city Christians who are shoulder to shoulder with Europeans every day of their lives and do not consider

the missionary a demi-god who can do everything and therefore whom they leave to do everything. The city Christians are therefore less inclined to cringe and less disposed to surrender their own individuality.

"But it does not follow that the city congregations have made a decided advance towards the kind of independence we long to see. With two or three honourable exceptions, the Calcutta congregations have yet to learn that it is their duty to support their own minister and meet the incidental charges of their religious ordinances. All the while they claim independence. Foreign money has to pay their pastor and supply the sinews of their ecclesiastical organization; and, strange to say, they love to have it so.

"It is a real and not a pseudo independence we wish to see; it is the thing itself and not the name we long for; we do not want to see our native brethren impatient of European control whilst they rely upon European funds; we wish to see them nobly independent of both.

"*Self-support*: It is high time that I said something as to the best means of making the native church self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. But I have time merely to throw out a few remarks.

"In the first place it must be mentioned with thankfulness that things are improving. The description which I gave before of the state of our rural congregations is in many instances no longer fully applicable. In Krishnagar for instance, the miserable boarding school system and other accessories of Christian pauperism have, within the last few years, been swept away. This was not done with the will and consent of the native Christians; sorely against their will and in the teeth of their protest, the Society Bahadur sent forth the *hukum* and the thing was done. Great was the bitterness and ill-feeling which this step occasioned. Following close upon that proceeding, measures were set on foot for evoking the liberality of the people; they were taught that having ceased to receive, it was clearly their duty to give. Certain rules were laid down and standards fixed. After a fashion the giving system commenced and is going on. Its life, however, so far as it has any life, is precarious in the extreme. Our good brethren who have to work the scheme feel this most painfully; they are sadly aware that where there is *one* who gives cheerfully, on principle, knowing that he ought to give, there are a *hundred* who give simply because they feel they must.

“But the whole question of self-support is as difficult as it is important. This is especially so when one looks at the extreme poverty of some of our rural congregations. There are cases in which, with the best will imaginable, it would at present be impossible for them adequately to pay their pastors. With regard to all such cases it is well worth considering whether the primitive and apostolic method ought not to be resorted to. Make the best man among them their pastor; let his temporalities remain what they are, let him follow his plough and store his grain for his own support. In the meantime let the people bear the incidental charges of their religious ordinances, and let them carry any little surplus which may remain to a church fund, which slowly growing year by year and, perhaps, aided by extraneous contributions, will serve to keep before their minds a better future, when they will have a paid pastor released from secular cares and wholly devoted to the Lord’s work.

“I have long felt that even under the most favourable circumstances, the support of native pastors by the voluntary contributions of the people is unsatisfactory, because it is so precarious and uncertain. I cannot help thinking that an endowment by which either a portion or the whole of the native pastor’s salary shall be secured to him is a most desirable thing. The thing is possible for any congregation; faith and patient perseverance alone are required.”

(He gave the instance of one congregation where not only financial independence from the mission but voluntary giving has been achieved enough to make the pastor entirely free of any obligations to the congregation.)

This excellent paper was followed by another paper on *The Native Church in Bengal* by the Rev. Surju Coomar Ghosh. There is space only for the shortest possible summary of what this Indian pastor said.

*The Spiritual Condition of the Bengali Church:* “The spiritual life of the native church in Bengal is at a very low ebb. We are lamentably deficient in living faith, in earnest love, in self-sacrificing zeal, and in Christian activity and usefulness. There is all too little of that self-constraining love of Christ amongst us, which gives rise, in a believer’s soul lofty thoughts and holy

aspirations and manifests itself as well in earnest, eloquent and burning words as in self-sacrificing, benevolent and noble deeds."

He mentioned three reasons for this low level of the spiritual life of the people: indiscriminate baptism, the early training and habits of Bengali Christians before their conversion, and want of pastoral supervision.

"Most of the Bengali readers, catechists and pastors are by their mental incapacity and moral feebleness quite unfit to treat or lead the people. This is due to bad selection. These were never called to the ministry by the Spirit of God, but by the European missionaries of the different societies. The majority are mere hirelings.

"Why have not the native churches of Bengal become, as yet, entirely self-supporting?"

"Because 1. it is so very deficient in spiritual life and energy. If a fair proportion of the 21,454 professing Christians in Bengal had been Christians in deed and in truth, the state of things would have been very different. . . We do not read of dependent churches in the New Testament.

"2. The duty of giving for the support of religious ordinances was scarcely ever taught, inculcated or enforced.

"3. The Spirit of dependence was largely fostered by the earlier missionaries.

"4. The administrative system was wrong.

"The system of paying the preachers in charge of the village churches a monthly salary in rupees, annas and pies, was a most ill-advised measure. The erection of brick buildings to serve as churches also a mistake. The villagers cannot maintain them in good repairs. He referred to a case where a congregation whose chapel had become dilapidated asked for Rs. 800 for repairing the building. The total amount of contributions paid by the congregation worshipping in that place in 1871 was Rs. 28-5-9.

"The church of Bengal to be self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating needs only the full baptism of the Holy Spirit, a general revival of earnest piety and active zeal among its members."

What an accurate picture of the state of the Indian churches today! Plenty of piety without devotion,

regular church-going without effective living, want of "aggressive zeal," failure to realize that a dispensation of the Gospel has been committed to them, lack of self-reliance, the beggar mentality, but all the same a craze for exercising power; impatience of foreign control whilst relying on foreign funds; and at the bottom of it all basic deficiency in spiritual life and energy, too little of the self-constraining love of Christ.

Let our leaders ponder over this picture and examine their consciences as to how far they are responsible for this state of affairs.

In one thing the Bengali Christians of that day appear to have been better than we are. There does not appear to have been so much dishonesty among them as there is at the present time. Was it because the handling of funds was not in their hands, unlike today?

## 6. The Poison of Caste

In 1874, Vaughan went home for much needed rest and recoupment. But men of Vaughan's intellectual calibre and spiritual stature get the greatest amount of recoupment by undertaking more work when in a more congenial atmosphere. Vaughan used his furlough for spreading information about the Church in Bengal, touring the country and making speeches. He also wrote a remarkable book, *The Trident, the Crescent and the Cross*, a book which must be made prescribed reading for our pastors today.

On his return from furlough, instead of going back to the congregation of Trinity Church, Calcutta, which he had built up by his personal service but which was now in charge of Pyari Mohun Rudra as pastor, Vaughan was sent to take charge of Nuddea district as superintending district missionary, with a young missionary, Henry Williams to assist him and to open up new and systematic evangelistic itineration.

As he went round the district, Vaughan was shocked to hear some people referred to as "Hindu Christians;" some others as "Mussalman Christians" and a large



number as "*mochi* Christians." This clearly indicated that the Christian community had not become one brotherhood in Christ. The old caste distinctions were being perpetuated, not only in nomenclature but in actual practice. The *mochis* in particular who had been skimmers and leather workers when they were Hindus and who naturally continued to practice those trades for earning their living even after they had changed their religious allegiance, were being looked down upon; and, horror of horrors, they were being excluded from the churches. Their children were not baptized because the pastors were afraid of the anger of the so-called higher castes in the congregation.

He rightly saw in this sin the secret of the failure of Christianity in that area and in Krishnagar in particular. Caste was the boll worm which not only prevented growth but was sapping away all religion from these so-called Christians. He decided that this should be put an end to and that firm action was called for. He knew that unless all caste feeling was destroyed and done away with, the congregation would never become Christian in any sense and effective even in the least degree.

He resolved to bring together delegates from all the congregations for a conference, which would enable him to observe their conduct towards each other, and also be an informal preliminary to the formation of a regular church council. The meeting was at Bollobhpur, in the heart of the district, in October 1877. The *mochi* Christians sent their delegates, and an outbreak of bitter feeling immediately ensued. The rest would neither sit down to eat if they ate at the same time, nor join the conference if they were present, nor receive the Lord's Supper with them. They said to Vaughan, "Does our salvation depend on our eating with these unclean folk?" "No," replied Vaughan, "but the point is, why won't you eat with them?" "Because we hate them." "Exactly so, and that is why it is contrary to the spirit of Christ." He declined to send the *mochis* away; and "that night," he wrote, "witnessed the disruption of the mission. The churches were deserted; the children were removed from

the schools; and as we passed from village to village, scowls and revilings were our portion."

Then, in Vaughan's words still, "the vultures of Rome scented the prey." Several Roman Catholic priests suddenly appeared, and said to the people, "Your *sahibs* wish to destroy your caste; join us, and you may keep it. Your *sahibs* tell you not to work on Sundays; join us, and you may work Sundays as well as week days. Your *sahibs* won't marry your girls till they are twelve years old; join us, and you shall do as you like!" Money also was poured out freely; and many hundreds joined the Romanists. The priests, however, insisted on re-baptizing them; and this they resented and presently nearly all came back again. Some Baptist Indian agents also appeared, and began "sheep stealing," but this was soon stopped. The Baptist Missionary Society at home, on being appealed to, sent out strict orders that the C.M.S. districts were not to be entered. On the other hand, the Romanists, on being expostulated with for disturbing the professing Christians instead of preaching to the non-believer, replied in these words; "We do not go to the heathen, because they may possibly be saved by the light of reason; but we are sure that you Protestants must perish, and so we come to you."

Meanwhile, Vaughan appealed to the leaders of the church in Calcutta to go down and exercise their persuasive powers. Three men went, the Rev. Pyari Mohun Rudra, the Rev. Raj Kristo Bose and that remarkable man Jadu Bindu Ghose. God blessed their visit. Jadu Bindu especially impressed the people by his intense earnestness and his patent joy in Christ. At one place the old patriarch encountered a Roman priest, who was enticing and bribing some of the Christians to join him. "In burning words he called upon him to repent of his sins, to forsake his refuge of lies, and to lay hold on the only hope of sinners."

Six months later, another conference was held, and again at Bollobhpur. Though some held aloof, the great majority came. The church was crammed; there were 133 communicants, including several *mochis*; and at the

great common meal, spread in the open air, all partook together—a veritable love-feast. The day's discussions and services were closed with a fervent spiritual address by that aged disciple, Jadu Bindu Ghose.

And now occurred a striking proof of the genuine Christianity of the *mochis*. Having had their position in the church vindicated, they met together, and resolved to remove all occasion of offence by giving up their trade and becoming simple cultivators. Their worldly loss by this step was not small. But the evil in the Church was only scotched, not killed; and even this generous act did not conciliate the more bitter and bigoted of the objectors. When the bishop of Calcutta visited the district in January, 1879, seventy confirmation candidates at Chupra absented themselves because *mochis* were to be confirmed at the same time. The bishop, however, strongly supported Vaughan in his decided policy. This was all the more welcome because some at Calcutta, and some in England, had severely criticized it.

In May, 1880, a preliminary meeting of the new Bengal Church Council was held, at the very station, Chupra, where the confirmation candidates had revolted. All was now peace and love. The Chupra Christians themselves "washed the feet" of the delegates from a distance on their arrival, including the *mochis*. "It was a sight worth seeing," wrote Vaughan, "to behold those who had so lately loathed and abhorred them to stoop down to wash their feet." Altogether, the meeting was a complete success; and so was the first regular meeting of the fully organized council at Calcutta in the following year, when Vaughan presided, and the bishop was present as patron and gave valuable addresses. In February, 1882, Bishop Johnson again visited the district, and confirmed candidates at all the chief stations. "I was," he wrote, "impressed everywhere with the marked signs of improvement since my last visit." But there was one great blank. James Vaughan was not there. He had died of cholera a fortnight before, on January 22nd (1882). He was exactly five years at work among the

Nuddea people, Christians and Hindus. His work had revolutionized the ideas of the people. The stamp of his influence the Bengal church bears even today.

The inauguration of the Bengal Christian Council in 1881 needs to be noticed somewhat in detail, because it was the beginning of a new era in self-government in the Bengali church.

## 7. Bengal Church Council

Though it was in Calcutta and its neighbourhood that the Gospel was first preached by various Christian societies, and the first converts in North India were gathered in, yet Bengal was the last province to develop self-government in the church.

Though other missionary societies had laboured there from twenty years earlier, it was in 1819-20 that the Church Missionary Society began its work in Calcutta. In 1822, a dozen converts became communicants. The liturgical service of the Church of England was for the first time read in the Trinity Church in Amherst Street.

Subsequently, mission stations connected with the C.M.S. were opened in various places, such as Krishnagar, Burdwan and Barripur, and a continuous stream of missionaries of the society came to Bengal and contributed in a great measure to the building up of the Church there. There was considerable progress, but it was not rapid; a few thousand converts were made and added to the Church but in proportion to the millions from whom these few thousands were gathered the numbers were small.

At the same time, however, missionary work created a great change in the thinking and the way of life of the people which cannot be measured in statistical terms. The spread of education and closer contact with European civilization caused more ferment in the minds of the people in Lower Bengal than in any other part of India.

While there was a growth—as yet very slight—in the minds of the Christians of a feeling of responsibility for managing their affairs, there were also evils which had

insinuated themselves into the life of the community which needed to be exposed, criticized and dealt with drastically and on a community-wide basis. Hence the need for a Bengal Church Council of the C.M.S. on the model of the ones set up in Madras in 1868 and in the Punjab in 1877.

The Rev. James Vaughan was elected chairman of the Council and the Rev. P. M. Rudra the honorary general secretary. The inauguration and the first meeting of the council took place in 1881.

In his presidential address, Vaughan gave a remarkable survey of the situation in Bengal at that time. He said that during the past year he had been unable to do more than go about among the Christians in Krishnagar district. The condition of things in those churches are still very far from what one would wish to be. He used a striking figure to describe it—"just that of a man who has been well-nigh sick unto death, but has taken a turn, and is, though very slowly and with strange fluctuations, on his way to convalescence." For forty long years the mission had been sick. What was the sickness? Caste. It has been so far vanquished that Christians now "meet together in social harmony, and partake as one family in their different churches of the Holy Supper of Love." Instead of "utter want of reverence at divine service, the bearing of the congregations is now quiet and becoming.

In most churches the people now come in good time. Numbers who formerly hardly ever entered a church now make a point of attending. There is increased observance of the Sabbath day. Some too, out of multitudes who neglected daily prayer, now try to pray. Some again, who had never been communicants have for the first time approached the Lord's Table. Conversions from heathenism, which for a long series of years had been practically unknown, have now re-commenced, while a spirit of inquiry is springing up through the district. It must not be supposed that we have no opposition to encounter in our work. An expression of St. Paul's seems accurately to depict our caste, "A great door of utterance is opened to me and there are many adversaries."

Mr. Vaughan's address was followed by a paper read by the Rev. P. M. Rudra on "*The Practical Lessons Arising from a Comparison of the Church of Bengal with the Churches of Apostolic Times.*" After giving a historical account of the rise and progress of the Bengal church and dwelling on the evils which had resulted to the church from the reception of those who from interested motives had joined it, Rudra proceeded to show that there was, as contrasted with primitive times, "a want of living faith manifested in self-denial and zeal and also a want of Christian love." Among the causes of the decline of religion in the church of Bengal, Mr. Rudra did not hesitate to put in the front "the low spiritual condition of European Christians residing in India." Another reason which he gave was the policy of "nationality" which separates between even the missionary and the convert in certain cases, as also the fact that they have so long stood to the native church in the character of pay-masters, whereby misunderstandings have arisen."

To these extraneous causes he added "the ignorance, the covetousness, the spiritual blindness and selfishness of a very large portion of the Christian community." As a remedy for these evils he suggested looking to Christ and not to man, and aiming at financial independence. The obstacles to the latter were the expensive habits of the people, combined with much poverty and indebtedness; also the "costliness of keeping up services," with the expense of churches and church furniture beyond the means of the people. "Western methods of maintaining religion" ought to be abandoned, and native methods in erecting places of worship substituted. Foolish expenditure on churches is a most fatal clog on the independence of the Indian church. Those who have erected them to make a show and please themselves have thought far too little of the true interests of those for whom they have been professedly erected.

Such plain speaking was characteristic of Pyari Mohun Rudra. He was not one who believed in mincing matters, in being tactful, when dealing with the evils in the church.

The very evils which he described as then existing in the Bengali church and denounced in vehement terms, are even today widely prevalent in every section of the Church in India and in every province.

The same lack of real faith, nominal adherence to the Christian religion, want of self-denial; absence in various degrees of real Christian love, the love which places the good of others higher than one's own; the same hypocrisy, desire to make a show, the same introversion; the same indifference to and the incapacity to witness for Christ in life and word; caste faction and litigation—these are not only still prevalent in the Church in India today, but have so deeply corroded into the spiritual life of the Christian community that the community is almost dead.

During the last eighty years there has been a large growth in numbers—thanks to the so-called mass movements. But this has been accompanied by a sad deterioration in the average level of the spiritual life of the community as a whole. And, alas, we do not have officials of the church, who, like the Rev. P. M. Rudra, have the courage to expose the evils in the life of the church, condemn the sins of the rich and the high placed, as well as those of the poor and the low placed. That is why things are going from bad to worse.

## 8. A Deathless Face

In 1887, when P. M. Rudra was forty-eight years of age, he was appointed to act as superintending missionary of the C.M.S. Mission in Nuddea. Nuddea itself was once a flourishing centre of oriental learning and a stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy. But the town as well as its intellectual eminence gradually declined. Krishnagar is in the Nuddea District. The mission which the C.M.S. commenced there was always called the Krishnagar mission.

This mission had a variegated history. Work was begun in 1821 on the usual small scale and on the usual pattern. In 1832 a school was opened in Krishnagar town.

Five students were baptized in twelve months. Six years later came a sudden and almost inexplicable inflow of a large number of Hindus and Mohammedans into the church—upward of five thousand; whole villages became inquirers. On the surface their motives appeared to be nothing less than the highest, the concern for their souls. The Krishnagar Mission had a meteoric rise to fame in the missionary world.

In 1838 another act of Providence brought in thousands more. Unprecedented floods in the Jellinghi, one of the three streams into which the mighty Ganges spills over so as to form the united Hooghly, inundated the district and swept away the rice harvest. The result was a local famine. The government officials were quite unprepared to meet the emergency. It fell to the lot of the few German and English missionaries in the district to go round in boats over the whole inundated area, distributing food and money and making advances in selected cases for raising the next crop. The sympathy and the generosity of the missionaries resulted in a few thousands entering the church, with the most inadequate preparation for a Christian life.

And then the movement stopped as suddenly as it had begun. The missionaries were left with thousands of nominal Christians on their hands. They faced the almost impossible task of raising this mass of uninstructed and ignorant folk, who had but the vaguest notions of what Christianity was, to a reasonable level of spiritual understanding. In spite of the best efforts of some distinguished and devoted missionaries, the congregations declined in numbers due to large scale relapse into Hinduism and deteriorated in their spiritual life. The missionaries became more and more discouraged and wrote more and more dismal reports year after year. All their devoted work, their ardent prayers and all the money they spent seemed to have gone waste in the desert sands of a spiritually lifeless community. Unwarranted optimism gave place to overwhelming dejection.

The real reason was a failure not in missionary efficiency but wrong methods—the failure to consolidate



the infant congregations and to help them to produce their own leaders and pastors. There was no call upon the Christians to take up responsibilities or to make sacrifices. The missionary found all the money and did all the work.

In course of time, into this nominally Christian community crept, as was almost inevitable, the poison of caste, which we have already seen described by James Vaughan.

It is exactly the story of the Indian Church of the present day, where almost everywhere the church is being killed by the same poison of unspirituality, caste, factions, and dishonesty induced by the large foreign subsidies which the Church receives from the West.

It took fifty years and more for this spiritual setback to be checked and some more decades before the third generation of Krishnagar Christians could, through re-evangelization and a proper insistence on self-sacrifice and taking of responsibility, be brought up to a reasonable level of Christian life and practice.

It is to this area and at this juncture that P. M. Rudra came in 1887. He was then by no means an old man, but his body had become weak through malarial fever. He had also some other deep seated malady, not yet located. He had barely laboured there for about eighteen months when he fell seriously ill, and had to undergo prolonged medical treatment. The disease which had been secretly working ruin was discovered. Pyari Mohun had to be relieved of his work and sent to Calcutta for treatment. It was decided that he should have rest for at least six months before he could be expected to be able to take up his duties again. He went to Hazaribagh, about 150 miles north-west from Krishnagar, where he resided for six months. There was no missionary stationed there and Rudra, eager to make himself useful, tried to do what he could, writing and delivering lectures to educated Hindus, speaking privately to Hindu gentlemen and taking a service every Sunday for the European congregation. The Bengali headmaster of the government school in the place and another gentleman, both Brah-

mins, visited him often in order to hear from him about the life of our Lord.

He came away from Hazaribagh at the end of six months and was sent to Chinsurah—working again as much as his strength would permit him to do. At Easter-tide he took three services for the congregation at Chinsurah—two for the Indian and one for the European congregation.

A little over three weeks before his death he went to a fair to preach, and returned home about midday. Very soon after that he got pneumonia. He appeared to recover from it, but latterly suffered from enlargement of the heart and congestion of the lungs. He went to Calcutta with Mrs. Rudra on the 1st of June, and stayed in the house of the Rev. A. Clifford. He was afterwards, by the doctor's advice, removed to the general hospital, where he expired on the 4th of June 1889. He was aged fifty years. He left a widow and three sons and three daughters to mourn his loss.

His work in connection with the Bengal Church Council (C.M.S.) was perhaps the most important of all that he did. He was secretary of the council from the time it was started. He went to Madras with the Rev. Henry (later Bishop) Parker, then the C.M.S. secretary, in order to observe the methods of the Madras Church Council.

The bishop of Calcutta was pleased to appoint him one of his honorary chaplains in 1864.

From time to time he composed Bengali hymns set to Bengali tunes for purposes of bazaar preaching. When at Amherst Street, he edited a Bengali journal for a time. He helped in Christian literary work in Bengali as much as time and leisure permitted him.

The Rev. A. Clifford, C.M.S. secretary at Calcutta, wrote the following *In Memoriam* which was published in *The Indian Churchman* soon after the Rev. P. M. Rudra's death.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Reprinted in *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record*, Vol. XIV (new series Sept. 1889).

"In the death of the Rev. P. M. Rudra the Church of Bengal suffers a heavy loss. It is sometimes said that native Christians do not attain to a high degree of spiritual stature; Mr. Rudra's character and life was a fair reply to such an assertion. There was a simplicity, a manliness, a loveliness, and a spirituality about him, as well as a zeal and intellectual vigour, which, in combination presented a type of Christian character which would be recognized as a noble one anywhere. Mr. Rudra was a convert from Hinduism. From the first he was a lover of the truth. God had given him that 'honest and good heart' upon which the divine seed falling readily takes root and springs to life. As the Truth of Christ unfolded itself to him, first in the imperfect form of Brahmoism and then in the full light of the Gospel, he yielded himself to it, and was gradually but irresistibly drawn into the fold of the Church. He was baptized at the age of twenty-one.

"Dr. Duff's influence was powerfully felt by him, and also that of two Bengali friends, who were converts of Dr. Duff. Mr. Rudra was emphatically a man who made haste to follow what he saw to be right, even though he could not at the moment see all that others saw. He once told the writer, e.g., that at the time of his baptism he had little or no emotional sense of sin. His apprehension of his need, and of the Gospel's sufficiency to meet it, was an intellectual one. Yet so loyal was he to Truth that this intellectual apprehension was sufficient to make him break from his family. Such a conscientious following of Christ's call is conversion in the strictest sense, whether the emotions be greatly stirred or not. As might be expected, the grace of tears and the joy of forgiveness followed surely, but at a later date.

"Mr. Rudra joined the C.M.S. in 1864, and was ordained (both deacon and priest) in 1874. He worked as school-master, pastor, evangelist, and superintendent of a mission in connection with the C.M.S. and always with a large measure of success. To the last he had a great zeal for work, and only two days before his death, though he was recommended a life of rest and leisure if he recovered, he spoke to the writer of his earnest desire to be in some place where he would have opportunity to do at least some little work for the Master.

"Mr. Rudra remained always a thorough Bengali in his ways of looking at things; and yet we have never met an Indian with whom one could converse and live

with such total absence of the jarring influences of race prejudice. This characteristic made his society especially agreeable to Europeans, as in it they enjoyed the distinctive savour of the oriental mind without any counteracting loss of brotherly freedom. During his residence in Burdwan it was part of Mr. Rudra's duties to act as chaplain to the English residents, and we have reason to know, not only that his ministrations were acceptable to them, but that he was held by many of them in such respect and regard as could hardly have been increased had he been a countryman of their own.

"Pyari Mohun Rudra has now fought the good fight; he has finished the course; he has kept the faith. Delivered from the snares of sin and the mazes of Hindu superstition, he has won his crown on life. Almost the last word that he gasped out as he lay dying in great pain and weariness was, "Redeemed." One such redeemed life and death is a sufficient vindication of Christian missions to India.

He has bought his eternity with a little hour,

And is not dead:

For an hour, if ye look for him, he is not found—

For one hour's space;

Then ye lift up your eyes to him and behold crowned,

A deathless face."

# Lal Behari Day

## 1. From the Church into the World

The life of Lal Behari Day is interesting from several points of view; but mostly because, after having been for twelve years in the full time ministry of the church, he gave up his official standing in the church and took up secular employment under the Government, but all the same continued to serve the church by witnessing to Christ by his life and using his intellectual and literary abilities in the service of his fellowmen. He is thus an example both to ministers of the church and to laymen. Every Christian, whether ordained or lay, is pledged to fight under Christ's banner and continue till life's end his faithful servant, in whatever situation he is placed.

Of all those promising young men who, in the first half of the last century, under the inspiration of Dr. Duff, boldly abandoned their ancestral faith and turned to Christianity as the faith which alone was able to satisfy their spiritual longings, no one, with the possible exception of the Rev. K. M. Banerjea, more completely fulfilled the hopes to which the intellectual powers which he manifested in his younger years gave rise to, than Lal Behari Day. His life demonstrates that if only Christian laymen get a vital experience of the living Christ and give Him their sole allegiance and unswerving obedience, in their daily work and life, they can be more effective witnesses to Christ than those set apart for the ministry who live and work within the confines of the church.

Lal Behari's lot was cast in what was—up to that time—the most critical period in India's long history. A new epoch in her national life was beginning. It was that moment when India was being awakened, by the impact of western thought and action, from the sleep of centuries. No one could foresee at that time to what intellectual

eminence and political influence in the world, this new life which was flowing in was going to carry her in the hundred years that were to follow. The credit of having launched India on the road to self-realization must be given to the new Government that had come to take the place of the old Moghul and native administrations. It was the East India Company's government which began the awakening of the mind and the social conscience of the people that ultimately led to momentous changes taking place in the country.

That Government abolished *suo moto*, and in spite of opposition by orthodox Hinduism, the inhuman but inexorable custom of *suttee* and by law declared the immolation of Hindu widows on the funeral pyres of their husbands and the encouragement or the abetting of the act criminal. This deliberate and initial interference on the part of the Government in Hindu religious customs, meant that "oriental ideas were to be no longer paramount in India, but that a new element, introduced from the West, was henceforth to bear a part in the formation of the national character and the development of the national history."<sup>1</sup>

Lal Behari Day was born during this momentous period in the national history, when the old and the new were contending for mastery over men's lives and their thinking. Being endowed with intellectual powers of an extraordinary kind, coupled with a spirit of independence both in thinking and in action and moral courage out of the ordinary, it would have been a wonder if Lal Behari Day had merely conformed to the normal and had implicitly followed the routine. He would then have been unknown and unremembered and would not have achieved all that he did during his life of seventy years.

As it was, solely by his energy and industry and impelled by a noble ambition to make a name for himself, and wholly by his unaided efforts, he came to the first rank among his contemporaries as a leader, teacher, thinker and writer. He left behind him a name widely known and

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<sup>1</sup>G. Macpherson, Introduction by Dr. Thomas Smith to *Life of Lal Behari Day*, (1900) p. xi.,

greatly respected in Bengal. By his upright life and his remarkable literary gifts used solely for the benefit of his people, he earned the esteem of all who knew him, Europeans and Indians alike.

If he had not had the courage to give up the ancestral religion of his family and his forefathers and to adopt Christianity as his creed, he might have led a comparatively obscure life, perhaps in his own village, in spite of the good education he had received; or at best held some petty office getting enough salary to keep him going. It was his conversion that helped to develop his personality and to imbue him with an unbounded love for his people. Having received inestimable benefits from Christ and Christianity, his ambition was that his countrymen should also come to the same knowledge as he had had and obtain like him a power to live a higher life. From his conversion his dominant passion was to improve and elevate the moral tone and the spiritual level of the lives of his countrymen and instil in their minds a nobler conception of religion and a greater willingness to accept the obligations it imposes. He was convinced that only Christ and Christianity could release his people from the narrow confines of their traditional thought and their medieval pattern of life. In order to commend his new religion to his people, he led an exemplary life such as his new faith demanded.

“His thorough independence of mind was a noteworthy feature of his character. He thought for himself, and adhered to his convictions. This was specially seen in his intercourse with Europeans, towards whom he acted and spoke with a manly freedom. Through his own merits he had risen to an honourable position, and, conscious of his own abilities, he refused to believe that he belonged to a race inferior to Europeans, who were at times inclined to assume superiority on very insufficient grounds. His independent and his obvious sincerity of purpose gave weight to his words, and well fitted him for the task he imposed on himself of endeavouring to encourage more of mutual respect between the governing and subject classes.<sup>1</sup>

“In solid, sound learning, in lofty morality, and in

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<sup>1</sup>G. Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, (1900) p. 146-7.

earnest piety, he presented the finest type of character moulded in the classroom of a Christian mission."<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Birth and Early Years

Lal Behari Day was born in a pretty little village, Talpur in West Bengal, some sixty miles north of Calcutta, (so called because of the abundance of the palm tree in the village). His father who originally belonged to Dacca, had lived there happily with his wife and two sons, till the untimely death of his wife and both the sons within a short time of one another compelled him to seek to forget his misfortune and sorrow by migrating to West Bengal. These sorrowful events introduced a permanent melancholy into his life, but the religious and thoughtful man that he was they did not affect his inner life. On the other hand, they made him more diligent in the observance of the rites and ceremonies prescribed by his religion. Once for all he gave up eating animal food and took to a simple vegetarian diet. He became punctilious in his daily purificatory bath followed by an hour-long devotions. Right through the day, he could be heard letting fall from his lips pious ejaculations and frequently during nights he would spend some hours in telling his beads. He belonged to the banker (suvarna-vanik) caste which, though not high in the social scale, is an influential one. They, being money lenders, the village peasantry are always indebted to them for financial accommodation. He continued to exercise his caste profession in Talpur. Some time after his arrival there, when nearly forty years of age, he married as his second wife, a girl only fifteen years old belonging of course to his own caste.

Kala Gopal De—which was Lal Behari Day's name before baptism—was the first of the two sons she bore. He was born on December 18, 1824. The father was frequently away from home, mostly in Calcutta, where he did some stock-broking. Not being much educated himself though of course well versed in his vernacular, and not knowing more than a few technical English words connected with his business, he soon came to see the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid p. 143.



value of education. He had no landed property of any kind and had to work hard at his business in order to maintain his wife and children. He was not therefore in affluent circumstances and could only just keep his dependants from want. He was determined however to give his sons, especially the elder one, as good an education as he could afford to give him.

The village of Talpur boasted of a village school of the type then usually found in most of the bigger villages all over the country,—with a single teacher, usually a Brahmin, and some twenty to thirty pupils graded according to their attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic. All the groups were taught by that one teacher. Those village teachers were good teachers, though perhaps more addicted to the use of the cane than was always good for the pupils. They were adepts in dealing with three or four different groups of pupils, all at the same time. Setting two or three of them to written work they would do actual oral teaching to the last or the other two groups. When you passed the highest grade in such a school you were literate in the vernacular, proficient in mental arithmetic and had enough general knowledge to be able to go through life tolerably well, provided you did not leave the village. Of everything in the outside world you were in blissful ignorance.

When he was about five years old Kala Gopal was put into the village school. He was admitted in the school with the usual simple but impressive ceremonies called akshara-abbyasam, invoking the blessing of the goddess of learning on the new aspirant to knowledge. The family priest began the rites at home and received gifts in money and clothes. The boy was given new clothes to wear. He was then taken to the school and entered as a pupil, after the happy and hopeful parent had given the schoolmaster the prescribed presents. The teacher initiated the boy into the mysteries of writing the alphabet, the prelude to all learning, by putting a piece of yellow ochre in the boy's hand and asking him to trace the first letter of the alphabet as already written on the ground or with his finger on the sand on the floor. The boy was expected to come to school

regularly and on time every day and to be diligent. Granting which, he was sure to learn all that the teacher had to impart.

Kala Gopal spent four very happy years in the village school. While the teacher was making his best attempts to educate the boy, in the traditional fashion, the boy was lovingly tended at home by a doting mother. He grew up a strong and healthy boy in the salubrious atmosphere of the village roaming at will among the paddy fields and the gardens of palmyra, mango and jack tree. During those four years in the village school, Kala Gopal does not appear to have exhibited any undue precocity or shown signs of an outstanding intellect. The pial school or the *patashala* does not draw out brilliance. It rather tends to keep all the boys at one dead level of mediocrity. The boy was however an observant fellow, endowed with a retentive memory. He was noticed to be far above the average of his group in every subject. He certainly learnt all that was to be learnt in that elementary school.

When he was nine years old Lal Behari's father took him to Calcutta so that he might get higher education. The mother felt the parting from her first born keenly; but had to yield to necessity. No doubt she was as keen as the father was that the boy should be well educated so that he might earn a lot of money.

At Calcutta the father had taken rooms in a big building where some five hundred business men from all parts of India lodged, apparently a forerunner of the commercial hotels of today. Calcutta had an evil reputation for unhealthiness. Mosquitoes and flies swarmed all over the place, and diseases of every kind were endemic. Within a month after arrival there, the poor village boy, accustomed to the clean air of the countryside, fell ill of diarrhoea and fever. Fortunately, he recovered. He was then ready to begin his education in the metropolis, which was to raise him to intellectual eminence and even more, in the hopes of his parents, to financial competence if not affluence.

The father had already made up his mind that he should be put into the General Assembly's Institution

which had acquired a great reputation, for not only the sound intellectual training which it imparted but also for producing men of character. The Hindu community in Calcutta was at that time greatly excited over the first conversions to Christianity from Dr. Duff's institution. Duff's system of teaching was responsible for this result. The young men in Duff's school not only acquired secular knowledge but were taught to revere God and to respect religion. Growing up under his personal influence and trained to think and act independently and courageously, such a result was only to be expected. Several of the friends of the father of Kala Gopal tried to dissuade him from sending the boy to that institution. But the father, who was a strong believer in fate, argued, "If it is written in Kala Gopal's forehead that he will not become a Christian, then he will not become a Christian, let Duff *sahib* do what he can; but if it is written on Kala Gopal's forehead that he will become a Christian, then he will become a Christian, do what I can." That clinched the matter so far as he was concerned.

It was perhaps just as well that the father was unable to read what was written on Kala Gopal's forehead.

The choice indeed lay between only two institutions. The General Assembly's Institution had been opened in 1830, three years before this time. The Hindu College had been started thirteen years earlier, as the first school for imparting education on western lines to Bengali youth. For fear of offending Indian susceptibilities or prejudices which might dissuade pupils from attending it, it was laid down by the Government that no reference to religion should be made in the school in any of the lessons in any of the classes. Dr. Duff however made it clear from the first that in his school secular instruction would go hand in hand with the teaching of religion and particularly the tenets of Christianity. The goal it was aiming at was the spread of the Christian religion, and education imparted in the institution was to be but a means to that end. In spite of this openly avowed objective, the institution became popular and crowds of Bengali lads flocked to it. Among these was Kala Gopal as his father had decided.

But perhaps what settled the matter was that the best education that was obtainable in the city was being given there gratuitously.

Kala Gopal was soon completely at home in the school. He found the atmosphere congenial to his temperament, the teaching stimulating and the treatment of the pupils by the teachers unique and different from that obtained in the other college. Kala Gopal, intellectually gifted and ambitious by nature, from the very beginning worked hard at his lessons and soon became noted among his classmates for his extraordinary powers of memory. In the second year he became the head boy in his class; and right through he kept a very high place in every class till, as he finished the course, he was adjudged the most outstanding student in the institution and was awarded (for the last three years in succession) the gold medal annually awarded for this distinction.

In December, 1837, however, Kala Gopal had the misfortune to lose his father. "On a cold December night he mournfully followed his father's bier to the Hindu place of cremation on the banks of the Hooghly, and there discharged the last office of Hindu filial affection" by setting fire to the funeral pyre.

This was a great loss and a severe blow. The affection between father and son was mutual. On the part of the son the affection was fostered by admiration of a wise and pious father who set an example of an upright life. Kala Gopal cherished his father's memory. Later he wrote, "As I was the son of his old age he loved me excessively, though he was too wise to spoil me with fond affection. He was not only anxious that I should receive a good education, but also that I should imbibe right moral principles, and he never missed an opportunity to instil into my mind the principles of virtue. Except when I was at school and both morning and evening I had the inestimable privilege of listening to his advice in all matters relating to the conduct of life. He did me infinite good by forming my character, by restraining me from the paths of vice and leading me into those of virtue."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>G. Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, (1900) p. 16.

The death of his father seriously threatened the chances of his continuing his studies in the institution. Three weeks after his father's death, at the annual prize distribution of the institution, Kala Gopal got as his prize for being the best student of his class, the last volume of Scott and Henry's *Commentary on the Bible*. He took the book with him when he went home for the long vacation. In those days the long vacation was in December-January, not as now in mid-summer. He read through the book again and again, though it was not likely he understood all of it. It stood him in good stead later.

With his father's death his pecuniary troubles began. The family had no means for continuing him in school. He would henceforth have to depend entirely on his own resources, if he were to continue his schooling; and these resources were nothing more than his strength of will and his firm resolve that nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of his getting the best education possible. At this juncture, and possibly at his request, a cousin of Kala Gopal agreed to give him food, shelter and clothing but nothing more—none of the other incidental expenses of schooling like the cost of class books. Indeed the cousin was not in a position to do more even if he wanted to as he was not himself a man of means. This help was accepted eagerly. Though it was a struggle right through, Kala Gopal worked so hard and did so well in his classes that he soon attracted the attention of his teachers and no doubt their good offices too, which eased the situation somewhat. He ultimately completed the whole course offered by the institution and was adjudged the most outstanding scholar of his year.

He read voraciously. Not having the wherewithal with which to buy books, he made friends with a dealer in second-hand books, who allowed him to exchange the second-hand book he had first bought for a small sum of money for other second-hand books one after another. "In this manner by continuing the process of exchange he became familiar with the writings of not a few of the best English authors." Buying a copy of Walker's *Pronouncing Dictionary* (he was now in the college department) he

carefully looked up and took note of and assiduously practised the pronunciation and accent of every word about which he had the least doubt. Thus he soon acquired the correct pronunciation and the correct accent of even unusual words. He also took great pains to cultivate a good style of writing. There is no other way of learning to speak and write a foreign language, if you want to do it well, except through long practice.

It may be noted here that Kala Gopal was not brought into personal touch with Dr. Duff until his last years in the college department of the institution. Dr. Duff left India for Scotland in order to recoup his health in 1834 and did not return till 1840. Kala Gopal entered the institution in the lower department in 1833 and was too small to be noticed by the head of the institution.

Dr. George Smith, the biographer of Dr. Duff, quotes the information given by the Rev. Lal Behari Day about the training given in the General Assembly's Institution in the higher classes.

"Rev. Lal Behari Day, who has now been for years a Professor of English Literature in the government college, Hooghly (1879 is the date of the book) bears this testimony to the intellectual and scientific training of a period when 'cram' was unknown, when competition had not learned at once to stimulate and to poison the higher education, and when physical science was taught as the handmaid of faith. Two things were greatly insisted on throughout the classes—a clear conception of an idea in the mind, and the expression of that conception in words. Duff did not think that a boy had thoroughly caught hold of an idea unless he could express it in his own words, however inelegantly. We therefore took no notes of explanations given by the professors; indeed no notes were given in the class, under the apprehension that they might contribute to cramming. How just that fear must appear evident to everyone who observes the mischievous consequences arising from the practice of giving notes now adopted in all Indian colleges. The students of the present day never open their mouths in the classroom—unless indeed it is to make a noise. They take down the professor's words, commit them to memory—often without understanding them—and reproduce them in the examination hall. A copying machine would do the same.

“Another feature in the educational system pursued in the General Assembly’s Institution was the judicious mixture of science with literature. At the present day the cry in India, as in Europe, is physical science. As many people think, it is a new cry. But thirty-five years ago Duff took his pupils through a course of physical science, in addition to a high literary course. Mechanics, hydrostatics, pneumatics, optics, astronomy, the principles of the steam-engine were taught in the college classes. A course of lectures on chemistry was also delivered, accompanied with experiments; the youthful and fascinating science of geology was studied on account of its bearing on theology; while we were so familiar with the use of the sextant, with Norie’s ‘Navigation,’ and with the Nautical Almanac, that some captains of ships, after examining us, declared that some of my class fellows could guide a ship safely from the Sandheads to Portsmouth. The Bengal colleges of the present day have not yet advanced so far as the General Assembly’s Institution did, under the guidance of Duff, thirty-five years ago.”<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Arduous Seeking of Truth

As in every other case of seeking after truth, in Lal Behari’s case also the process was slow and prolonged and at times painful and arduous. The first step is always a profound dissatisfaction, an inner dislocation of ideas, which is soon followed by a conviction that the course of life which one had inherited and had been following for years and many of the beliefs and practices of one’s ancestral religion are untenable and would have to be given up. After a further period of cogitation, varying in length and intensity in each case, they are finally given up. In Lal Behari’s case practices like bathing in holy rivers for washing away sins were given up as ineffective and useless. An inner purification, which was what one was longing to get, could not be achieved, he felt, merely by washing the body. What is needed is a washing of the mind and of the will—a right about turn, leaving past sins and affections behind. The washing must be given by some one who has at the same time the power to offer forgiveness, give an assurance, “Son, thy sins have been

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<sup>1</sup>George Smith, *Life of Dr. Duff*, Vol. 1, (1879) p. 455.

forgiven;" and also the power to give help to lead a new and higher life. These ideas do not come early in any spiritual pilgrimage. Belief in a "Saviour" is necessary before such inner purification is sought for. Such a belief comes only much later.

But such upsetting of old ideas began not long after he joined the institution. He has left it on record that once he went home from Calcutta at the beginning of the cold weather vacation, in the company of Ram Pal, the postman who came to Talpur from Calcutta once a month carrying letters, who also acted as a guide to travellers. The journey between Calcutta and Talpur took three days, the first part being a boat journey from Calcutta to Triveni, situated on the banks of the Hooghly some thirty miles up the river and the rest to be accomplished by foot. As soon as they alighted from the boat at Triveni, everyone took a bath in the river. "Ram Pal enjoyed it more than I," he writes, "for not only his body was refreshed, but, as he believed, his soul was cleansed from sin, as the waters of the river at Triveni are reckoned peculiarly holy. As for me, though I was refreshed in my body, my soul derived no benefit, as my English education has disburdened me of such superstitious notions."

The next stage is always a period of drifting, almost aimlessly and without any sense of direction, in a troubled sea of doubt. But this is not for long and the "Hound of Heaven" keeps watch and sees to it that the general current of thoughts is always towards the desired end. In a letter to Dr. Duff (written several years later) he speaks of his "heartless and cold skepticism and practical atheism." But he adds immediately, "the name of Jesus was ever associated in my mind with everything holy, good and virtuous, so that in point of fact, I do not remember at this moment any day in my past life when I lived without God, without Christ; without hope in this world, if any day I vilified the name of Christ."

If the teaching he received in the General Assembly's Institution had been neutral in respect of religion, he might have been tossed about for a long time. But here it was that it came to his rescue and prevented his wasting



time in aimless drifting. As he himself has written, "The course of studies pursued in the General Assembly's Institution was thoroughly saturated with the spirit of the Christian religion from the lowest to the highest class. The very first primer that was put into the hands of a boy learning the English alphabet contained some facts and doctrines of that religion, and the course of studies, from the lowest to the highest class was so arranged that the pupil's knowledge of Christianity increased in the same proportion as his secular knowledge and his acquaintance with the English language. The students were thoroughly grounded in a course of natural theology, a course on the evidences of Christianity, a short course of Ecclesiastical History, besides a course of lectures on the whole of the Holy Scriptures. In addition to these Christian appliances of the classroom, public lectures were delivered by the professors to the students on Sunday evenings."

The students were under no compulsion to attend these lectures which were closely related to the lessons in the classroom but several of the students whose spiritual curiosity had been aroused attended them regularly. Kala Gopal was a regular and deeply interested listener. He had at that time no intention of becoming a Christian, nor did he even dream that he would be led ultimately to renounce his ancestral faith. He found that the lectures did his heart good and improved his intellect. Hence he attended them.

"In my worst days," he writes in that same letter quoted above, "the days of daring impiety and godlessness, I had a respect for the religion of Jesus. This was owing, I believe, to the early saturation of my mind with its blessed principles."

His was also a nature which could not be satisfied with cold skepticism or which could ever become indifferent to truth.

In the case of every conversion—whether it be of one who is capable of thinking on spiritual matters or of one who is attracted first merely by the temporal advantages which he thinks he will get by adopting the preacher's religion—the primary cause is the divine initiative. No

one becomes Christ's disciple except he be called of God. In some cases the call is not recognized till after the formal acceptance of the new religion. But in every case where ultimately a final commitment to Christ takes place the call comes quite early. In some cases the persons deliberately turn a deaf ear, owing, it may be, to worldly considerations or to sheer conservatism and unwillingness to give up the old ways, or in order to avoid unpleasantness or a rupture in the family. But this is only for a time. Sooner or later the call becomes so insistent that it must needs be obeyed.

If today several of the children of Christian parents do not accept full and costly discipleship and commit their lives to Christ, it is because their worldly-wise parents do not train their children to listen to the voice of God, but deliberately allow their spiritual perceptions to be dulled. They think that if their children should get on in the world, they should not be allowed to hear or to heed Christ's call. Christian discipleship always involves loss and sacrifice. It does not go hand in hand with getting on well in the world.

In the case of persons who, having been called of God, become genuine and sincere seekers after truth, there are always external influences which either retard or facilitate (as the case may be) the discovery by the soul of divine truth and the soul's final surrender to the divine invitation. In Kala Gopal's case it may be said that there were four external influences which combined to lead him, without any hindrances on the way.

(1) His higher education, especially on the scientific side, had destroyed altogether his belief in Hinduism; (2) the Christian character of the teaching in the General Assembly's Institution, which familiarized him with the doctrines of Christianity; (3) the piety and learning of his missionary teachers; (4) his close association and friendly intercourse with two very estimable young men who had a few years earlier, embraced the Christian faith.

The third and the fourth influences must be looked at more closely mainly because these two have become, in recent years, unavailable to the seeker after truth.

Teachers in Christian colleges and workers in Christian institutions are now no longer in a position to give such spiritual guidance to those who come to them groping for more light and eager for help.

"Next to my father and mother," wrote Lal Behari Day, when reviewing years later his progress towards the Christian faith, "who brought me into the world, and who nourished and cherished me during the helpless years of infancy, I am indebted for the development of my mind and the foundation of my character to five missionary fathers—the Rev. Doctors Duff, Mackey, Ewart, John Macdonald and Thomas Smith." They were all highly gifted teachers as well as earnest spiritually-minded men whose deep personal devotion to Christ, and their keen enthusiasm to get their students to know him, made a great impression on the minds of the more thoughtful among them. The affection and the respect which they inspired in their students naturally drew the students slowly and steadily towards Christianity.

Early in his student days Kala Gopal was befriended by two young men, not much older than he was, who were his seniors in the college. A year before he came to the college class, they had become Christians and had been baptized in 1839. The three were often seen together engaged in serious and uplifting conversation. Kala Gopal gradually got into the habit of spending Sunday afternoons in their company. (They both died in 1845, within a few weeks of each other, at the early age of twenty-two.) In after years, when he thought of the days which he had spent in their company while he was still a Hindu and they had given themselves up to Christ while he himself was feeling more and more drawn to Christ, he wrote:

"With two converts residing on the premises of the institution, Mehendra Lal Basak and Kailas Chandra Mukerjee, I was intimate. Mehendra was decidedly the most intellectual Bengali that I have ever seen. Whatever subject he applied his mind to, he mastered. He was great in literature, great in mathematics, great in metaphysics. Mehendra was in truth, in the highest

sense of the word, an original thinker. If he had not been prematurely cut off he would have been one of India's greatest sons. The other convert, Kailas Chandra Mukerjee, had none of the intellectual greatness of his comrade but was morally and spiritually great, and the most lovable of human beings. He was the gentlest, meekest and the most unassuming of men. They were pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided, for they both went to their rest within a few weeks of each other. Such were the two Christian friends in whose company I, nominally a Hindu, spent the Sunday afternoons. Kailas was not all the time with us; but Mehendra and I sat together from two to six o'clock in the evening, talking and reading to each other. I was generally the reader and Mahendra the listener. . . . We read of course religious books as Mehendra, being a Christian and a Presbyterian, would not read anything else on Sundays. In this way he and I went through Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, Pollok's *Course of Time*, Graham's *Sabbath* and several volumes of sermons by distinguished English and Scotch divines."<sup>1</sup>

There could not have been a better preparation for the final acceptance of Christian truth. Under the influence of these two friends, Kala Gopal's warm emotional nature began to catch fire, his intellect began to perceive the moral grandeur of Christ and his soul gradually unfolded itself to His attraction.

While his veneration for his teachers, and this intellectual intimacy with these two Christian friends, helped him on the way to fully accepting Christ in his heart, the memory of a kind father and a loving mother weighed heavily, urging him to hold fast to the religious beliefs of his forefathers and to avoid the wrench from his family which would result if he openly renounced Hinduism and declared himself a disciple of Christ.

There was then the fact that though he was a Hindu he was a diligent student of the Bible for some years before he became a Christian. In 1841, about two years before he received baptism, he won two prizes in the college which were competed for by all the students in the college classes of the institution. One of them was for

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<sup>1</sup> G. Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, p. 39-40.

"the most accurate knowledge of Scripture proofs for doctrines" and the other was for an essay "on the conversion of St. Paul viewed as an argument for the Truth of the Gospel." The next year, he won a prize of Rs. 50 offered by Dr. Charles, the then senior chaplain of the Scotch Church in Calcutta, for an essay on the *Falsity of the Hindu Religion*. When Dr. Charles read Kala Gopal's essay, he was sure that it had been written by a convert. He was greatly surprised to hear that it was the work of one who was a nominal Hindu. Kala Gopal would not let himself be hurried into a profession of Christianity until he had fully made up his mind and his intellect was satisfied and his soul had begun to experience Christ within itself. He took another six months before he made his final decision.

There was also one other reason why he delayed declaring himself openly a follower of Christ. As is to be expected in Bengal at that time, Brahmoism had for a short while some attraction for him when he was groping his way towards spiritual satisfaction. "Brahmoism as a distinct advance towards a religion purer than the grosser forms" prevailing around him had much to commend it to the young inquirer. Why he finally discarded it and found no satisfaction in it for his spiritual cravings was because it offered no solution for sin. As he himself later said in one of his lectures dealing with eclectic sects:

"Brahmaism does not point the way of reconciliation with God. It hangs out no light on your path to heaven. I myself was once a Brahma, though not in name, yet in reality. I disbelieved in book revelation and believed that repentance was a sufficient expiation for sin. I conscientiously believed in those Brahmistic doctrines, and endeavoured to act in the light I then enjoyed: I became sorry for my sins. I had not His word of promise. This led me to think what consolation I should have if I could have God's word of promise. This led me again to inquire more fully than I had done before into the proofs of a positive revelation. I also endeavoured to reform my conduct, to amend my life. I tried to banish from my mind all evil thoughts, all sinful desires. The more I tried, the more signally I failed. I began to see my

moral deformity more than before. I began to feel that I was a great sinner, a vile transgressor of God's law. My good works, such as they were, seemed like filthy rags. Formerly I comforted myself with the thought that I was better than many of my neighbours and thus laid the flattering unction to my soul. But now I appeared before myself in all my naked deformity. I abhorred myself; I was in despair. Then it was that the Lord took mercy upon me.

"He opened my eyes, and showed me Christ in all the lustre of His mediatorial glory, and the charms of his ineffable love. I then saw that Christianity supplied all my wants. I was a breaker of God's law but Christ had suffered for my sins. He had vindicated the justice of God. He had upheld the majesty of the divine law. I then saw that Christ, not repentance, was the propitiation of my sins, and not of my sins only, but the sins of the whole world. It was then, also, that by the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, I found all my wants supplied by Christ; for Christ was made unto me 'Wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'"

The following extract makes it even more plain why Brahmoism did not satisfy him. In his lecture on "The Brahma Theory of Atonement," he says:

"Brahmaism represents God as a being incapable of being displeased with a sinner, let him violate all his commandments. This is the dogma of the Brahmas, and it is a dogma which is the corner stone of the edifice of the Brahma atonement. As a Christian, I believe—and I rejoice in believing—that God is infinitely merciful, and that He is love itself. And when Brahmas and others speak of God as love they borrow the idea from the Christian Scriptures—for there is nothing in creation, or in the depths of intuition either, which could generate the notion that God is absolute love; on the contrary, the testimonies of nature and conscience go the other way, and show that God is a consuming fire. I say that I rejoice in believing that God is infinitely merciful, that He is love; but I also believe that every sinner is the object of divine displeasure, that God is angry with the wicked every day, and that the wicked shall be turned into hell with the nations that forget God. Brahmaism ignores the retributive justice of God, which is the opposition of the divine nature to sin which leads to the

annexation of penalty to the breach of His law. The determination of God to punish sin is not voluntary, far less arbitrary, but necessary."

It was therefore in no great haste that he decided finally to give up the religion of his forefathers and become a Christian. Only after prolonged consideration and prayerful thought did he decide to present himself as a candidate for baptism, in July 1843, and received it at the hands of Dr. Thomas Smith. Kala Gopal became Lal Behari Day.

As usual this audacity on his part brought down on his head the wrath of his elderly relatives and the vituperation of the orthodox. The hesitation which he felt in asking for baptism was, we can be sure, due partly at least to the knowledge that that final irrevocable step would cause intense pain to those whom he held dearest—though in his case he was not married and he had lost both his parents—unlike the case of others like Nehemiah Goreh, Pyari Mohun Rudra and many another.

#### 4. Pastor and Missionary, 1851 to 1867

After baptism, Lal Behari Day continued for two years as a student in the highest class of the Free Church Institution. In 1846, he and two other converts were appointed catechists. This is a term used in different missions with different connotations. In the Free Church of Scotland at this period it was used to designate those who had decided to offer themselves for the whole-time ministry of the church and were being trained therefore by giving practical help in evangelism as well as studying in preparation—a position which corresponds to a student in our theological colleges of today.

It was on this occasion that he wrote to a friend giving a "statement of his reason for aspiring after the office of the Christian ministry." "To some it might seem strange," he said, "but it is nevertheless a fact that the office of the ministry had attractions for me before admission into the visible Church of Christ by the rite of baptism. As far as I can remember back, the first time that I felt a desire of becoming a Christian and serving Christ in the ministry

of his Gospel, was on the occasion of my late excellent friends, Mehendra Lal Basak and Kailas Chandra Mukerjee, forwarding themselves to be catechists, when Dr. Duff delivered, in the lecture room of the General Assembly's Institution, a most impressive address on the nature and responsibility of the office of the Christian ministry. The causes which then excited this desire in me it is impossible at this distance of time to say. However, the perusal of the sketch of that heavenly-minded man, David Brainerd, which I read shortly afterwards, strengthened this desire."

During the next three years the three catechists studied Greek, Hebrew, Church History and Systematic Theology under the supervision of the missionary professors. In 1851 all three were licensed by the Free Church Presbytery of Calcutta to preach. Four years later, in 1855, they were ordained to the office of the holy ministry by the same body.

On being licensed to preach, Lal Behari was sent to the Free Church Mission at Culna.

As catechists and while pursuing their theological study, Lal Behari and the other two made preaching tours during the winter season through the villages of West Bengal, distributing tracts and copies of the New Testament to such as could read and were willing to receive them. They also held conversations and discussions on religious topics with Hindus of all classes and occasionally with Mohammedans. In the villages they stayed with one or another of the respectable residents who invited them. Invariably they were courteously received, and were given a careful and always a respectful hearing. Many listened with attention to what they had to say about Christ and his religion but quite a few others, mainly belonging to the priestly or the *pundit* classes, attributed unworthy motives to their having become Christians. Their having come out to preach the new religion was, they said, because they were paid handsomely to do it.

Quite early in his service of the mission, Lal Behari's firmness of character and stern independence were shown when a difference of opinion arose between the newly ordained missionaries and the mission council regarding



their status in the mission. The newly ordained Indians had expected, in accordance with the principle of Presbyterian parity, to be placed, after their ordination, on a footing of equality with European missionaries so far as their status was concerned. The management of the whole mission, in Calcutta and the branch stations, was at that time under the control of the mission council, a council composed of all the missionaries. But none of the newly ordained Indian missionaries were made members. Dr. Duff was away in Scotland at that time. Dr. Mackey who was then acting for him as head of the mission preferred to wait for Dr. Duff's return. When he returned, it was found that he was opposed to the idea of admitting the Indian missionaries as members of the council.

The three Indians thereupon drew up a memorial to be transmitted to the Foreign Mission Committee in Edinburgh. Dr. Duff became indignant at this sign of independence and called Day the "ringleader of the Cabal." The two others were frightened into submission, but Lal Behari "stuck to his position and threatened to leave the mission." Eventually a compromise was agreed upon. It was arranged that Lal Behari should be placed in independent charge of the Culna mission where he would have a free hand in running it. Lal Behari agreed to go and stay there for a year. Dr. Duff, true to his word, agreed to every plan proposed by Lal Behari with regard to the Culna mission and sent him whatever monies were required to carry out the improvements suggested.

His independent spirit and his refusal to compromise on principles raised him in the estimation of Dr. Duff and the other European missionaries. A few years later when the newly married Lal Behari Day and his bride arrived in Calcutta from Bombay, Dr. Duff entertained the couple as his guests in his house for several days, "a favour that he never extended to any other native missionary."

Day, on finding his position at Culna comfortable, conducive to his doing good work and therefore of being useful to the mission, and that he was being trusted, stayed there for four years instead of the one year he had first thought of. The work of the mission was being conducted

on the lines of other mission stations, diving itself into two departments—the educational and the directly evangelistic.

He began by placing the mission school on a better footing, improving and extending the accommodation, appointing more efficient teachers and re-arranging the classes. The school began to flourish. He aimed at making the school a centre for spreading education and knowledge all round and the whole mission station an agency for the dissemination of Christianity, not a preserve for a few self-centred, introverted Christian congregations. In spite of the opposition of a few local residents who (as everywhere) were opposed to any change which would affect their vested interests, he succeeded in making several improvements and soon got the mission working efficiently.

At the end of four years he had however to leave the station though he would have liked to continue there. In 1860 the death of Dr. Ewart in Calcutta necessitated his transfer to the pastorate of the Indian Free Church Presbyterian Congregation in Cornwallis Square—a position entirely independent of the mission. Here again he planned new lines of work. Instead of confining himself to looking after only the members of the congregation, he was anxious to use the congregation itself in spreading the truth of the Gospel. He arranged for and gave some lectures on the Brahmo Samaj which made him well known in the city. The lectures attracted the attention and captured the interest of a growing number of Hindus. The congregation itself was composed of a large number of recent converts from Hinduism and could be used in spreading the Christian message among Hindus, if they were properly looked after.

Babu Keshub Chander Sen was then the leader of the Brahmo Samaj. In so far as Brahmoism sought to purify Hinduism of its grosser forms of superstition and idolatry and was an instrument for social reform and the emancipation of women from the thralldom of degrading customs and tyrannical usages and for breaking the caste system, he sympathized with it and saw the possibilities of its

paving the way towards a better religious system. But he felt bound "to declare that it is a very defective system of religion," "that it is not adapted to the condition of man, that it is incapable of giving everlasting happiness to its votaries and that, therefore, as a system of religion it is of no use."<sup>1</sup>

He had accepted pastoral charge of a city congregation with great hesitation and only because Dr. Duff had urged him to take it up. But he found the work so interesting and giving him such great opportunities of working among non-Christians that he stayed there for seven years. A large part of the membership of the congregation consisted of students. He was too much of a student himself willingly to give much time to the numerous petty matters which kept cropping up in congregational work. But in spite of the irksomeness of the position he laboured assiduously and with increasing acceptance on the part of the people.

His pastoral and missionary work came to an end when he decided to give it up and undertake secular teaching. He accepted, after long deliberation, a position in the educational service of the government, first, the head-mastership of the government school in Berhampore, from which he was a little later transferred for some time to the executive section of the cadre and later, permanently to the collegiate department of the government college in Hooghly. There was no change in his Christian convictions nor in his belief that the primary duty which Christ imposes on every one of his followers, whether ordained or lay, is to spread the Gospel with or without preaching it by word of mouth. He still believed as strongly as ever "that one who devoted his faculties and energies to teaching divine truths stood on a higher platform than the teacher of purely secular subjects."

Had he had only himself to consider, he would never have resigned the whole-time ministry of the Church. But he felt that his duty to his growing family demanded that he should seek for a better place to live and a position which would bring in more income than the poor salary

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<sup>1</sup>G. Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, p. 88.

he was getting as a pastor, on which he was unable, he felt, to keep his wife and children in adequate comfort. The death of three of his children in three consecutive years in the manse also compelled him to seek a situation and a place where his family might enjoy better health. He made this change very reluctantly and he was determined that even as a professor he would use his time and talents in the cause of Christianity. Wherever he was he was determined to be nothing but a preacher of the Gospel. He was convinced that even if one is in a secular occupation, one can be a disciple in the fullest sense of the term, a first-rate Christian and an effective witness to his Lord. Hence his decision not to drop the title "Reverend" and his determination that even when he was a professor in a government college, he would be a Christian and do his Christian duty by being actively a preacher by word and deed. All the time he was a professor in Hooghly he conducted a service in English on Sundays.

## 5. Marriage

It is worthwhile giving some space to Lal Behari's marriage. It was not exactly a romantic one in the ordinary sense but it was out of the ordinary and romantic in another sense. It was all fixed up by long distance correspondence! But none the less the marriage proved to be a very happy one.

It was in 1857, when he was thirty-three, that Lal Behari's thoughts turned towards matrimony. He had been ordained and was in independent charge of an important mission station as a superintending missionary. The presence of a suitable help-mate would be an advantage to the work. But it was obvious that he could not look for a bride inside the Bengali Christian community, as there were hardly any girls of sufficient education and culture who could be thought of as being suitable. His thoughts therefore turned to Bombay where among the Parsees, an advanced and cultured community, there had been a few converts to Christianity and where therefore there were Parsee families with educated, religious-

minded and intelligent girls. As a matter of fact he had come across in a book on missions (*The Mission Camp* by Mrs. Colin Mackenzie) the name of a young lady who, he thought, would make him a suitable wife.

He began a correspondence with her father, the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji in Bombay. Matters, however, did not progress fast enough. A Parsee gentleman in Bombay, though not averse to the idea itself, was naturally not very enthusiastic about giving the hand of his daughter to an unseen and hitherto unknown person in distant Bengal, even though the aspirant was an ordained minister of the same religious denomination as himself. Pestonji was one of the first Parsee young men who, while still students in Dr. Wilson's School in Bombay, embraced Christianity. He and Dhangibai Nauroji were baptized in May, 1839. Both were later ordained to the ministry of the Scottish Presbyterian Church. Pestonji replied Day's letter by saying that the young lady was then in Surat and suggested that Day should pay her a visit there, after which the matter could be proceeded with. But Lal Behari found that his financial circumstances would not permit the expenses of a journey to Surat, at that time rendered more difficult than usual on account of the disturbed state of the country.

He therefore thought of using an intermediary to press his suit. On the 25th September, 1857, he wrote a letter to the Rev. D. Nauroji, in Bombay.

“My dear Dhangibhai,

It is after a long—a very long—time that I take up my pen to write to you. The peculiar circumstances under which I have been placed of late, and the distraction of mind to which they gave birth—an inkling of all which you may have had from Mr. Hormazdji,—prevented me from writing to you, and even now write to you only on private business.

I suppose you know that I have been corresponding with Mr. Hormazdji Pestonji on a very interesting subject. As you must be quite intimate with him and his family, I shall thank you for giving me some information concerning them, or rather concerning a young lady of that family—Miss Hormazdji. I will put

no questions, but you will have my best thanks for giving me detailed accounts of that young lady—her religious character, mental accomplishments etc. The fuller you write the better. I hope to be pardoned for troubling you with this business, as you are the only common friend of the parties interested in the matter. It is possible you may see me at Bombay next cold weather.

Believe me, my dear Mr. Dhangibhai, yours very sincerely

Lal Behari Day."

On the 25th October 1857 Day wrote again to the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji explaining how impossible it was for him to go to Surat which would cost him Rs. 1,3000, a sum far too large for him to put together. He concluded the letter by saying:

"You have been since our correspondence exceedingly kind to me; and I had fondly hoped to go to Surat, but at present there are insuperable difficulties in my way. I cannot reasonably request the party to wait—and I don't dream of such a favour. The state of my feelings absolutely prevents me from writing any longer at present. The Lord bless you and yours,

Yours unworthily

L. B. Day

P.S.—As in consequence of the irregularity of the post office, it is impossible to say whether letters reach their destination, I shall thank you for sending me a line in acknowledgment."

The course of true love never, it is said, runs smooth. But in India it is not the course of true love but matrimonial arrangements that never proceed without encountering an obstacle or two. In Lal Behari's case it was the Indian post office that was responsible for a long interruption, which might well have led to a complete breakdown. Certain important letters passing between Lal Behari and Hormazdji Pestonji went astray, apparently because of the unsettled state of the country. It was 1857 and the country, including the post office, was fighting its first war of independence. This long interruption led the parent of the bride to presume that Lal Behari had

decided not to press his suit. Lal Behari thought that Miss Hormazdji had decided to favour another aspirant for her hand nearer home. The break extended itself to nearly two years.

In 1859, Day delivered an address entitled *Searchings of Heart* at one of the united monthly missionary prayer Meetings held in Calcutta. It was intended to help missionaries and their converts, ordained and lay, to search their hearts and see if their methods and their attitudes were good enough and Christian enough. The address gave rise to much discussion and a variety of opinion, especially in missionary circles. It was another outburst of Lal Behari's independent spirit and was in complete harmony with his whole character.

Anyway, the author deemed it of sufficient importance to be given publicity and expected that it would also greatly interest the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji. So he sent a copy of it to him. The stars being more propitious, the post office delivered the letter to the addressee. Mr. Hormazdji Pestonji was somewhat surprised at receiving it and even more because in the accompanying letter there was no reference to matrimonial affairs. He wrote to Lal Behari to thank him for sending him a copy of the excellent address and took the opportunity, as was only natural in a fond parent willing if not anxious to consider with favour the suit of this otherwise, except for the distance between Bombay and Bengal, very eligible applicant for his daughter's hand, to enquire into the cause of Mr. Day's long silence. "Explanations followed, and, pecuniary difficulties now no longer standing in the way, Mr. Day within a few months found himself in Bombay, and Miss Hormazdji favouring his suit, their marriage was duly celebrated soon after his arrival there.<sup>1</sup>

"Though some of his missionary fathers doubted the expediency of his going so far afield for a spouse, the proposal met with the hearty approval of Dr. Duff.<sup>2</sup> When the bridal couple arrived in Calcutta after a decent interval, Dr. Duff kept them with him in his house for

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<sup>1</sup>G. Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 80.

several days and nobly entertained them. He then sent the couple with his blessings to Culna, for Lal Behari to resume his work of superintending missionary there.

"The sequel fully justified Lal Behari's choice and Dr. Duff's benedictions. Miss Hormazdji proved a faithful, loving wife and was a sympathetic helpmate to him throughout his wedded life and made their home a happy one. She bore eight children three of whom died in infancy. Three sons and two daughters grew up to adulthood. They sent the eldest son, at very considerable expense which very nearly broke them, to London in order to get him to qualify for the bar. But, as Mrs. Day wrote after Behari's death to Dr. Hastie in Scotland (on 12th January 1895), 'the boy left home with a solemn promise that in the event of his being permitted to return from England, a full-fledged barrister, he would help us in his turn to educate and settle in life his junior brothers and sisters. If all that we heard was true, the Jesuits got hold of our poor infatuated son. Subsequently we heard that he was probably made to join a secret order of Jesuit priests, in doing which all earthly ties are renounced, ignored and unheeded. Since then we made many attempts to get correct and authentic information of him, but up to this date we have failed to solve the mystery.'"

"My dear husband broke down rapidly under this, and other disappointments of a pecuniary nature (during the past five years) owing to his journalistic and literary undertakings."<sup>1</sup> But the whole of the earlier period of their wedded life they were both very happy.

## 6. Professor and Man of Letters

From his earliest days Lal Behari Day entertained a secret ambition to become a polished speaker and an accomplished writer in English, and trained himself for this by assiduous study and practice. When for the first time in his life he had some spare time in which to indulge in his love of letters, he used it in composing essays on various subjects. This was when he was in charge of the mission work in Culna. These essays were the first pro-

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid, p. 137.



ductions of his pen to be printed. They were published in a small volume in 1857. When he sent a copy of that book to his friend the Rev. Hormazdji Pestonji in Bombay (and this was before the matrimonial correspondence began) he explained in a letter to him that these light essays were written mostly for his own recreation than for any serious purpose.

A little later, he got into touch with the then editor of the *Calcutta Review*, the Rev. Dr. T. Smith, his old professor and friend, and with his encouragement he became a regular, if not frequent, contributor of articles to that *Review*.

The year 1859 produced his *Searchings of Heart*, referred to earlier in this narrative. It was a vigorous plea for more Christian attitudes in missionary circles and a higher level of Christian conduct in the lives of both Indian and European laymen. It was couched in simple but forcible language. Most of what Lal Behari Day said then can be usefully read and applied to present day conditions in the Indian Church. The missionaries of today, our Indian bishops, pastors and laymen will be helped by reading it to search their hearts to see how far their attitudes and lives are Christian. There is space to quote just one sample passage, where he asks missionaries to put themselves the following questions:

“Do I look upon my converts as my sons in the faith—as brethren in Christ—and not as subordinates and servants? Am I sure that I am not aristocratic in my demeanour towards them, bearing myself loftily in their presence as a man of higher spiritual attainments and of a superior civilization? Am I sure that I am not susceptible of flattery, looking upon a timeserving, cowardly hypocrite of a convert as a perfect saint, only because he chimes in with my opinions and humours my prejudices—while denying the Christian name to one who dares have an opinion of his own, submits not to the mere *ipse dixit* of authority and boldly acts according to the dictates of his conscience and what he believes to be the injunctions of the Word of God?”

Not counting two or three attempts to run magazines in Bengali, his first long-standing venture in journalism was

his editorship of an English magazine called the *Bengal Magazine* in English. It made his name well-known among the English-educated in Bengal and he won a widespread reputation as a pleasing and effective writer in English. But in later years the magazine became a failure and caused him considerable embarrassment and personal loss. It is in this magazine that his *Recollections of My School Days*, an autobiographical account of his early life, was published.

In 1871, the year before he took on the editorship of the *Bengal Magazine*, he wrote the story *Govinda Samanta*. It was written in competition for a prize of £ 50 which was offered by a wealthy and enlightened zamindar in Bengal for the best novel (written in Bengali or in English) illustrating the social and domestic life of the rural population and working class of Bengal." His novel was adjudged the best of the efforts submitted and the prize was awarded to him. But because two of the adjudicators appointed to read through and judge the stories submitted were away in England for over two years, the result was not announced till 1874. The book came out in print in that year. As soon as it came out, it attracted widespread attention and established him as an outstanding writer of English and as an authentic portrayer of the rural life of Bengal. It won universal praise from the press in India and it was favourably reviewed by many prominent newspapers in England. It gives a vivid and convincing picture of the life of the Bengal peasantry and truthfully portrays the manners, the customs and habits of the rural people of that day. It is written in such simple but attractive style that it was clear that the writer had obtained an unusual mastery over the English language. "Not a little of the attractiveness of the book springs from the glow of kindly sympathy that everywhere infuses itself into the narrative. Written with earnest feelings it bears the stamp of truth and sincerity which carries conviction to the reader."<sup>1</sup>

His next book was a collection of the *Folk Tales of*

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<sup>1</sup> Macpherson, *Life of Lal Behari Day*, p. 118.

*Bengal*. He had such an intimate knowledge of the life of rural Bengal that he had come to know the numerous popular stories that are, in every country, handed down from mouth to mouth, and become a store-house of popular entertainment from generation to generation. In this book, he has re-written them in English. Again his style and presentation of the stories is extremely attractive. The language is characteristic of Day, simple but expressive and shows him up as a master of idiomatic English—a skill but rarely achieved by Indians who write in English. No book can better serve the purpose of arousing the interest of school boys and other beginners in learning the English language better than this collection of folk tales. The subject matter is so interesting—the folk tales of any people in their early unsophisticated stages are always of absorbing interest as stories—that the young student's attention is gripped. This makes it possible for him to dwell on the matter and begin to notice also the beauty of the language.

Fifty to sixty years ago the book was actually used for just such a purpose in many high schools in Bengal and outside. It is not seen why the book should not have been continued as a text-book for non-detailed study in the high school classes. Quite apart from this utilitarian aspect, the book is well worth reading both for the absorbing interest of the subject matter and the interesting way the stories have been retold. It will serve as a model to any one who aims at writing simple and idiomatic English.

"The period of Mr. Day's greatest literary activity was during the early seventies, when, in addition to preparing his college lectures on English Literature and on Mental and Moral Philosophy, and writing books, he also edited the *Bengal Magazine*, and for a time supplied the critical notices of books for the *Calcutta Review*. He continued, however, busy with his pen to a much later date, for both before and after his retiring from government service, he regularly contributed articles on social, moral and political topics to the *Hindu Patriot*."<sup>1</sup>

One cannot help wishing that he had taken more time to continue to write other novels of Bengali life on

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid p. 130.

the pattern of *Govinda Samanta* which would have enriched the literature produced by Indian writers in the English language.

"That his literary productions were highly appreciated by those best qualified to form an opinion of them, and commended themselves to men of different tastes and culture, Mr. Day had ample reason to believe. They had been extensively and favourably reviewed by newspapers and periodicals; from numerous quarters letters reached him, expressing the pleasure the senders had derived from the perusal of his writings."

One note in particular from one of such eminence in the scientific world, Charles Darwin, was particularly gratifying to him. It was sent to him through his publishers. It ran as follows:

"I see that the Rev. Lal Behari Day is editor of the *Bengal Magazine*, and I shall be glad if you would tell him, with my compliments, how much pleasure and instruction I derived from reading, a few years ago, his novel *Govinda Samanta*.

Charles Darwin.

13th April 1881  
Down, Beckenham, Kent."

After serving the Government for twenty-one years, he retired from the educational service in 1889. On his retirement, he went back to live in Calcutta. He again became a worshipper in St. Andrew's Church, hallowed for him through precious memories of his earliest days as a Christian.

## 7. Firm Till the End

After his retirement from the service of the Government, Lal Behari Day's health began, from various causes, to deteriorate. The grievous disappointment caused by his eldest son's conduct severely told upon his health. He also had pecuniary difficulties because his journalistic and literary ventures did not bring in much money and in a few cases had brought him personal loss. He had spent twelve thousand rupees on his son's education in England. His nerves were affected and as a consequence his eyesight gradually failed and for some years before his death he

was totally blind. He felt this very keenly even though his wife and daughter helped to allay his distress by reading to him whatever he wanted to be read.

On the 28th October, 1894, he passed away dying as he had lived, firm in his faith in Jesus Christ. His mortal remains were interred in the quiet Scotch cemetery on the outskirts of Calcutta.

Writing some time after his death to Dr. Hastie in Scotland, Mrs. Day described his last days on earth.

“A few hours before Mr. Day passed away, he seemed conscious of what was said to him, and though his eyes were shut, and his tongue and throat were becoming paralysed, he was able to answer quite sensibly in negative or affirmative monosyllables when texts of Scripture were sounded in his ears, and when we asked him whether he felt comforted by the verse ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest’ which my youngest daughter repeated to him. Throughout his whole illness, my husband’s mind and thoughts were quite abstracted from the present world, and always hovered on things spiritual and the future state. During the last two years of his life, Mr. Day used to get us to read to him works on the Life, Death, and Resurrection of our blessed Saviour besides the sermons ‘Holy Living,’ ‘Holy Dying’ etc., of Jeremy Taylor.”

His funeral was attended by a huge concourse of people most of them unknown to him but to whom he was known through his writings. His students were of course present in large numbers and also all his missionary friends and Indian Christians to whom he had ministered acceptably.

The principal of the Free Church Institution preached the funeral sermon to Lal Behari’s old congregation in Cornwallis Square, giving an appreciative and excellent summary of his life and work.

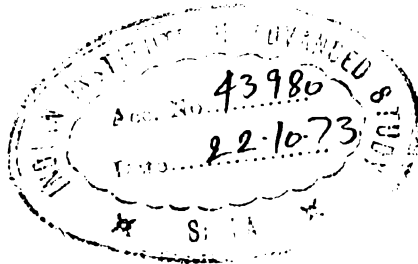
The principal of the General Assembly’s Institution started a movement for erecting a memorial to his name in that institution. This resulted in a tablet being placed on the walls of the institution bearing the following inscription:

### In Memory of the Rev. Lal Behari Day

A student of the General Assembly's Institution under Dr. Duff, 1834 to 1844; missionary and minister of the Free Church of Scotland, 1855 to 1867; professor of English Literature in the Government Colleges at Berhampore and Hooghly, 1867 to 1889; Fellow of the University of Calcutta from 1877; and well known as a journalist, and as author of "Bengal Peasant Life" and other works.

Born at Talpur, Burdwan, 18th December 1824; died at Calcutta, 28th October 1894.

Some of his surviving pupils and of his numerous admirers have erected this tablet.





### **About this book . . .**

Dr. Alexander Duff's famous institution in Calcutta produced several leaders for the Church in India in the last century. Prominent among those who found Christ in the early years of Duff's work were the three whose lives are sketched in this book. All three were of high social rank and great intellect. Gopeenath Nundi narrowly escaped martyrdom in the war of 1857. The experiences he and his family went through make a stirring story. Pyari Mohun Rudra, who came into the church from Brahmoism, became a distinguished pastor and superintendent. Lal Behari Day was a highly gifted man who became famous as pastor, professor and author.

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 Christian leaders of North India. All three provide valuable glimpses of the Church in India in its early years.

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