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KALI CHARAN BANERJI

KALI CHARAN BANURJI

Brahmin, Christian, Saint

BY

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General Secretary, Young Men's Christian Association, Calcutta

WITH A PREFACE

BY

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His Life was gentle; and the elements
So mix'd in him, that Nature might stand up,
And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'

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PREFACE

By SIR ANDREW H. L. FRASER, LL.D., K.C.S.I.,
Late Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

I AM glad indeed that this attempt is being made by my friend, Mr. Barber, to give some idea of the character, capacity and consecration of the late Kali Charan Banurji. It may be wondered that such an attempt has not been made before. But I know that it cannot have been an easy task; for Kali Charan was so modest that he has left practically nothing behind him to represent the many valuable activities of his public career, and so unobtrusive that even his personal friends knew comparatively little of the beneficence of his private life.

Yet he was a man who made his mark in many departments of work in Bengal: a distinguished graduate and servant of the University, a successful advocate and able teacher, a valuable member of the Corporation of Calcutta and of the Bengal Council, a keen though not extreme politician, deeply interested in the cause of Purity, Temperance, Education and Social Reform, a strong supporter of the Young Men's Christian Association, and a beloved and trusted leader in the Church of Christ. Every one who came into

contact with him in any good work felt his power ; yet his gentleness and modesty made even a deeper impression.

I first made Kali Charan's acquaintance during an unofficial and casual visit to Calcutta many years ago. I went with that fine old Christian gentleman, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Macdonald, to Beadon Square one Sunday afternoon, and heard Kali Charan preach the gospel. Later years gave me the privilege of his friendship. I learned to love him for his deep spirituality, his personal loyalty to God in Christ, his earnest desire for the spread of the gospel, and his unselfish interest in all good work. It was specially delightful to see how thoroughly he remained identified in interest with his own fellow-countrymen, for whom, despite the persecution which followed his conversion, he ever retained undiminished the passionate love that St. Paul showed for his brethren, his ' kinsmen according to the flesh '.

Kali Charan was led into the short-lived ' Christo Somaj ' by his strong desire to see the Church in India become an Indian Church not a western institution. Later on, he saw that this must come from within the Church, not by founding another sect. Even in his own day, he saw the beginning of a strong movement in this direction ; and that movement has greatly developed since his death. He would have rejoiced to see much that is now stirring in all the branches of the Church of Christ

in every part of India. Just because he was not denationalized either by his education or by his religion, he was a great power among his fellow-countrymen, and was beloved by men of all races, classes and creeds. Yet he was most devoted in his loyalty to Christ and in his defence and propagation of the gospel. His life has great lessons for all who are interested in the progress of Christianity in India.

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CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

The childhood shows the man

As morning shows the day.

MILTON

AFTER several sons of an old Brahmin priest had died, he besought the goddess Kali for some charm which would divert the displeasure of the gods, and preserve the lives of other sons born to him in the future. According to the story, the goddess answered the prayer by giving the priest some wonderful powder, which, placed in an amulet and worn by his wife, produced the desired result. Years afterwards the priest gave the amulet to the mother of Kali Charan Banurji, who had also lost a number of children. This amulet was worn by her until the birth of her son Kali; then it was hung about his neck, and as he grew up he came to have great faith in its power. Upon important occasions, such as examinations, a long journey, or some new undertaking, he would pronounce incantations over the amulet, and drink the water in which it had been dipped. Thus the lad, born and trained in superstition, grew up, as the Hindus say, under the favour

of the gods; but we shall see that his course of life was wonderfully marked out by the true God.

Once his father, Hara Chandra Bandopadhyaya,¹ chastised him. That night, the goddess Kali, so the story goes, appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Why did you beat my son, Kali? If you do so again I will take him away from you.' The father was so frightened at this that orders were given that no one should lay hands on the boy, for his parents felt that he bore a charmed life.

Though both the lad's parents were Bengalis, they were not, at the time of his birth, living in their old home at Khanyan in the Hooghly District, Bengal, but at Jubbulpore, 700 miles west of Calcutta, where the father had secured employment. Here, on February 9, 1847, Kali Charan, the eighth son, was born. To be the eighth son is considered a very good omen.

As the name Banurji indicates, the family belonged to the Brahmin, or priestly caste. The four main castes of Hinduism are Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras—priests, warriors, farmers, servants. Mr. Sherring in his *Hindu Tribes and Castes* describes the appearance of the Brahmin thus: 'Light of complexion, his forehead ample, his countenance of striking significance, his lips thin, and mouth expressive, his eyes quick and

¹ Bandopadhyaya is the true full form of the name, whether in Sanskrit or Bengali, but Banurji is the form used in ordinary conversation.

sharp, his fingers long, his carriage noble and almost sublime, the true Brahmin, uncontaminated by European influence and manners, with his intense self-consciousness, with the proud conviction of superiority depicted in every muscle of his face, and manifest in every movement of his body, is a wonderful specimen of humanity.'

But Kali Charan's parents were not merely Brahmins. They were Kulin Brahmins, that is they belonged to the highest sub-caste among the Brahmins of Bengal. For a long time the Kulins practised a gross form of polygamy which happily is now dying out. A man would marry scores of wives and merely visit them from time to time. Kali Charan's father had two wives, and his grandfather, Madan Mohun Banurji, who was not merely by birth but by profession a priest, had fifty-four. As the grandfather went from village to village performing his priestly functions, fathers and mothers besought him to accept a daughter in marriage. As there was a dowry with each wife, his marriages were a source of considerable income to him. After the marriage the priest passed on, leaving his new bride with her parents. He had to keep a list of his wives, lest he should forget them. One of these wives, Kali Charan's grandmother, was named Jagadamba Devi. She is described by Kali Charan's youngest brother as, 'both in beauty and character, a goddess Durga or Sarasvati'. She was a kind hostess, and no guest ever went hungry

from her door. She would share her noonday meal with any she found hungry, even with the beasts and birds. The neighbours sought her help and counsel when in difficulty. Although she was married to a husband having fifty-four wives, this did not prevent her from urging her own son, Kali Charan's father, to marry his daughters to men already having eight, ten and twelve wives each. Two of these daughters are still living as widows, one in Calcutta, the other a woman of seventy-six years of age, in Benares, waiting to die upon the banks of the sacred Ganges.

While Kali Charan was yet young his father died, and the elder brothers, upon whom the responsibility for the family fell, returned with their mother to the old home at Khanyan. Here the brothers built a comfortable house, and being orthodox Hindus they erected in it a shrine to the goddess Kali, and there also for some years celebrated the Durga Puja. The poorer neighbours who had no such household shrine, came to worship and to lay their gifts upon the altar of this Kali—rice, vegetables, clothing, money, and sometimes a goat. These gifts to the gods are often distributed among the poor, but in most cases they go to enrich the priests or the owners of the shrine.

One day a fortune-teller came to the house to examine the palms of all the children. But after one glance at Kali Charan's hand, he drew back and refused to look again, which very much alarmed

the others. He said: 'This boy will some day be a great man; but do not let him learn English, for, if you do, he will become a renegade.' From the Hindu standpoint this prophecy, if prophecy it might be called, was literally fulfilled by his becoming a Christian.

As a lad those traits of character displayed themselves which afterward marked him out as a great man. He was kind and gentle to all. He was obedient to his parents and courteous to his elders. He was wholly unselfish and was always helping some one. He excelled in his lessons but gave the credit to the amulet. After returning from school at night, or in vacation time, he would gather the poor boys of his village around him and teach them what he himself had learned. He was beloved by all who knew him, both Christian and Hindu. Even as a lad, what he believed he followed; to feel was to act. This was a prominent characteristic of his whole life.

He was invested with the sacred thread at the age of eight in the holy temple of Kalighat, Calcutta. This cord differs in material according to the condition or standing of the wearer, and is ordinarily worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm. In initiating a boy (there is no such rite for girls) the priest or spiritual teacher utters many mantras or incantations over the cord, sprinkles it with holy water and then places it upon the initiate. He is now 'twice-born' and

possesses the right to study the Vedas, to light the sacred fire, and to perform certain other ceremonies. For this sacred ceremony he went to Kalighat in a boat, and since there were passengers of every caste, and the boatmen were of low caste, he, being a strict Brahmin, would neither eat nor drink in their presence, and hence he had to abstain from food for the whole day. But owing to his devotion to his religion he did not feel it to be a hardship. This deeply religious spirit, inculcated at an early age, remained with him through life, and manifested itself in a quiet, modest, humble, loving attitude toward all. Some Christians once came to see him, and were so delighted with him that, upon their return home, they described him as one of heaven's messengers. An old servant of the family named Boidyanath attended Kali Charan from his birth; and the devotion of the boy to this servant was very great. He called him 'elder brother'; this was probably because of the fact that in the early days servants had a higher place in the family and were never called by name by the younger members.

STUDENT DAYS

These lessons thou dost give
To teach me how to live,
To do, to hear, to get and share,
To work and play, and trust alway.

MALTBIE BABCOCK

WHILE the family were still in Jubbulpore, the elder brothers attended a mission school, and occasionally Kali Charan would go as a visitor and listen. It was here that he first saw a copy of the Bible and heard it read. Upon their return to Bengal, the brothers used to attend a school at Chinsurah, and Kali Charan for a while was sent to the Hughli Collegiate School, but as soon as it could be arranged he entered the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta. The sons of wealthy Hindus attended this school. Two of them, Asutosh Mullick and his brother, Girindra Lal Mullick, became close friends of Kali Charan and loved him for his sincerity, love of right and truth, and his earnest desire for education. But hard times were in store for him. There was a large family to support and the eldest brother unfortunately lost his post, so that they suffered many hardships. Kali Charan, however, was willing to sacrifice much for his education, and he

and his stepbrother, Nobogopal, and some relatives rented a small room in a house in Calcutta, where they all lived together. For lack of cots they slept upon the damp floor. The two Mullick brothers, seeing the miserable plight of Kali Charan, took pity upon him and helped him privately with eight rupees a month until he secured a scholarship. He had now entered the Free Church Institution, the principal of which was the famous Dr. Duff.

He was ready for the university entrance examination when only twelve years old, which is much below the ordinary age. Being so very young the authorities would not let him appear. However, they did allow him to sit for the examination the next year, in 1860, when he passed, and got a scholarship of ten rupees a month and a silver medal. What might have been a temptation to pride for many another youth, proved for him but a chance of showing his modest and loving nature, for after receiving his medal he went home and presented it to his old servant Boidyanath.

Two years later, in 1862, he passed the first arts¹ examination in the first division and received a monthly scholarship of thirty-two rupees. This

¹ The F.A. examination, now called the Intermediate Arts, which is held at the end of the second college year, might be termed the half way house in the collegiate career. Many stop here, because they are anxious to get into service, or from lack of means to prosecute their studies further. A man's ability and salary are often gauged by the letters he puts after his name. Some are even proud to possess F.F.A. (Failed First Arts) to show that they have at least read up to that standard and taken the examination.

enabled him not only to pursue his studies unhindered, but also to help his family, who were still in financial difficulties. About this time, after a hard competition with some B.A. candidates for the post, Kali Charan was selected as tutor to the son-in-law and grandson of Prosonno Kumar Tagore, a member of one of the more prominent families of Calcutta. For this service he received sixteen rupees a month, which amount brought still further relief to his family.

Just before he appeared for the F.A. examination, his guardians sought to arrange a marriage for him. At that time he was fifteen years of age. A timely word from Dr. Duff, 'Marry your books, my boy', so moved him that he resisted the plan, and succeeded in deferring his marriage for about two years; but even so he married before his baptism.

It must be conceded that Kali Charan was a clever student. He might, indeed, be called brilliant. He was diligent in every task he undertook, making the best possible use of his time and was very conscientious. Dr. Duff, principal of the college, was very fond of him, but although Kali Charan had become a deep and interested student of the Bible Dr. Duff never pressed him over much to become a Christian. When Kali Charan passed his first arts examination and received the scholarship, Dr. Duff brought him the news, and asked him if his father was living. On receiving a negative reply, Dr. Duff said: 'Why do you not accept God as your

Father?' In this quiet way the claims of Christ were being set before him, and he was being prepared by the great teacher for baptism.

In 1865¹ he was the honoured gold medallist in the first B.A. class to graduate from the Free Church Institution. He stood fourth in the list, being preceded only by Chandra Nath Bose, who subsequently attained to great distinction as a man of letters by his Bengali works; by Mr. Blochmanu, who became famous as an orientalist; and by Rash Behari Ghose. He often related to his friends that God helped him to pass in mathematics. On the day of the examination, before entering the hall, he was led to go through a certain difficult problem in his textbook, and was surprised to find that very problem set for the examination. He was the only candidate who solved it.

Upon securing his Bachelor of Arts degree, he was appointed Professor in the Free Church College under Dr. Duff on a salary of eighty rupees a month; and when he secured his Master of Arts degree in the following year, the salary was increased to three hundred rupees a month. He obtained his Master's degree in 1866, standing alone in the first class in Mental and Moral Philosophy. He also obtained the university gold medal and one hundred rupees worth of books.

¹ He passed his First Arts in December, 1862, and his Bachelor of Arts in March, 1865, as the examinations had been changed from December to the following March.

Upon hearing the result of the examination he wrote as follows to Mr. B. L. Chandra a convert whom he called 'father', though he was Mr. Chandra's junior by only two years.

FREE CHURCH MISSION HOUSE

February 24, 1866

DEAR FATHER,

I am extremely glad to inform you that your prayers for my success have been heard. I am passed in the first division. I am the only one in the first division in Philosophy. I shall have the university gold medal and a prize of books worth Rs 100. Further, my marks are as high as seventy-five per cent clear. Mr. Trafford has pronounced my answers to be the models of a perfect answer—to be worthy of any university. He said that he has found only one ground for complaint, and that is the Scotch use of shall and will. He sent me his kindest regards. I would not have written all this had I been writing to any other body than a very father. As I have to choose for myself the books I want for prizes, my request to you is that you will send me very soon a choice list of them. . . . I am thinking of going up in English next year. What do you say? Abhoya Charan is getting on well; he is labouring hard; probably he may have some more scholarships.

You must be sorry to hear that I am very badly off in health. . . . I will let you know other things by and by. Meantime, suggest to me with all speed the best educational course for me now. I cannot write you a long letter till I am settled.

I am,

Your dearly beloved son,

K. C. BANERJEA

He sat twice for the Premchand Roychand Studentship of ten thousand rupees tenable for five years at two thousand rupees a year, but was

unfortunate on both occasions. The first time he fainted and was carried from the hall by the Rev. K. S. Macdonald, a missionary of the Free Church of Scotland, and on the second attempt he was seized with cholera.

As a student he was a contemporary of such men as Sir Gurudas Banerjea, Kt., D.L., PH.D., retired Judge of the High Court and formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, an eminent authority on law, the late Mr. Ananda Mohun Bose, political leader and one of the founders of the Sadharan Bramho Somaj, the late Lieut.-Col. K. P. Gupta, M.A., I.M.S., Dr. K. C. Chatterji, and Rai B. L. Chandra, Bahadur.

RELIGIOUS IMPRESSIONS

To thine own self be true,
And it must follow as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

SHAKESPEARE

KALI CHARAN did not begin the study of the Bible till he entered the Free Church Institution, where he found Bible study a compulsory part of the daily curriculum. The classes used to assemble together, and Dr. Duff and others would open the college with prayer. These petitions of Dr. Duff were so frank, sincere and earnest, and so manifestly inwrought of the Spirit that Kali Charan was much moved by them. They seemed mysterious, and were incomprehensible to him, and he often discussed their strange power with his fellow students. The boldness of faith shown by Dr. Duff in demanding blessings from God struck him as strange. Later, when he became a Christian himself, he knew full well the sweetness of communion with God and the power of prayer.

Though Kali Charan had studied the Bible a great deal and had learned to love it, he remained for several years a bigoted Hindu, as is shown by an

incident which occurred while he was reading in the second year college class. One of his cousins, also a Brahmin, with whom he was living, ate rice which had been touched by a Sudra. As the Brahmins consider themselves defiled if they eat food after even the shadow of one of a lower caste has fallen upon it, Kali Charan would not allow his cousin to touch food again until he had purified himself by *Prayaschitta*, that is, making expiation by partaking of a mixture made of the five products of the cow.

In his third year in college when he was sixteen years of age he came into close contact with a devoted missionary who was always emphasizing this lesson: 'Follow in your own life what you know to be true, and you will know the teaching, whether it be of God.' Kali Charan often suffered from fever, and this missionary, Dr. W. Robson, used to visit him and pray with him, but he never failed to urge upon him to follow what he knew to be true. This importunity bore fruit and helped to develop that remarkable trait which showed itself throughout the rest of Kali Charan's life, for he was wont to follow his convictions, no matter where they led him.

The educational system of India has come in for considerable criticism from time to time. It has been alleged that it has almost no corporate life; few meetings of teacher and pupil except in the class room; very little moral or religious teaching; and a careless indifference on the part of the teacher

towards his pupils, his only anxiety being that they should pass the examination. College thus becomes a grind, a machine to turn out F.A.'s or B.A.'s; and with the strong development of the memory, the reasoning faculties are not strengthened, with the result that thinkers are not produced. There is no doubt some exaggeration in such criticisms. At any rate the mission college is not so bad. It, of course, must conform to the government and university standards, but teachers and professors care more for those under them. The Bible is taught; ethical and religious teaching is emphasized; students and professors meet and mingle in the debating club, the Sunday Bible class, the hostel, and often in the missionaries' homes. In a variety of ways the missionary exerts a wholesome and uplifting influence upon his students.

We have in Mr. Banurji's own words a brief account of his early contact with mission work, and no missionary could covet any higher encomium than that which Mr. Banurji pronounced upon the one who had come so close to his own life: 'Although as an infant I used to visit a mission school, an astrologer's warnings led to my removal from all possible missionary influence, until years after, when the repetition by a fellow-lodger of the lessons on the Sermon on the Mount received in a mission school Bible class, awakened in me a strong desire to join a mission school myself. I prevailed upon that fellow-lodger to persuade my guardians to fall in

with my desire, and I found myself in the Free Church Institution. When eventually I was led to the Saviour, I owed my conversion under God to close personal intercourse with one of my professors, a medical missionary now in glory. The missionary had endeared himself to my whole family, and was always welcome to visit me, and pray with me and for me by my bedside when suffering from illness.' No more demonstrative evidence could be given of the desire of the missionaries to accept the people of this country on a footing of equality with themselves than the fact that they brought the Bible to them and offered to share with them the greatest gift of God.

About this time, while in the third year in college, Kali Charan was greatly influenced by one of his fellow-students, Mr. B. L. Chandra¹. Mr. Chandra, though a Christian, had not then been baptized; but he and Kali Charan used to take long walks together and talk of Christ and read the Bible and pray together. They discussed such questions as the providence of God, the possibility of a revelation, and the deity of Christ. Kali Charan in later years used often to speak of the great influence of the late Mr. Radha Raman Raha upon his life. This man made it a point daily to walk home with him after college and speak to him of Jesus Christ. What a great power our present Christian students

¹ Before his retirement from Government service, Mr. Chandra was given the title of Rai Bahadur.

could become, if they, too, would be faithful to represent Christ to their non-Christian brothers! A word in season, or a conversation now and then, cannot but bear fruit.

Soon two other friends, Mr. Abinash Chunder Chatterjea, and Mr. Mathura Nath Bose, afterwards founder of the Gopalgunge Mission, joined themselves to Mr. Chandra and Mr. Banurji. They met for secret prayer in the mornings; in the afternoons they would go to Blacquire Square and sit on the grass and pray and read the Bible. On Sundays they met on the top floor of an old jute storehouse for worship when the Bible was read, prayer offered, and sometimes Mr. Chandra would preach a sermon. The text of his first sermon was Ezek. xviii. 20. Thus, after a few months of earnest seeking, under the wise guidance of his missionary friends, and the influence of the ever-blessed Spirit Kali Charan Banurji accepted Christ as Saviour.

But now came the testing time. Would he forsake all—house, parents, brethren, wife, children, for the sake of the kingdom of God?¹ He had lost faith in Brahmanism, but he clung to his sacred thread as a part of himself. For eight years it had been his constant companion day and night. It had helped him, so he had imagined, through many difficult and dark experiences. Its presence was

¹ Luke xviii. 24.

not only cause for the deepest pride, but it also proclaimed his right to minister to others. How could he part with it? After much prayer and discussion with one of his friends, however, he came to realize that as there was 'none other name under heaven', so there was no other thing whereby he must be saved.¹ He, therefore, decided to discard the sacred thread, and immediately did so, and laid it upon the table. This was his first outward conquest. As he sat meditating, he fell asleep and in a dream he saw his mother standing before him with her forehead all cut and bleeding, where, in anguish, she had wounded herself with a stone. She implored him to put on his thread again. Upon awaking he felt so miserable that he yielded to the temptation, took the thread again, and did actually put it on and wore it for six months longer.² Defeat following such short-lived victory brought most unhappy days, for he had lost his peace of heart. At last he became convinced that it was the devil he saw in his dream instead of his mother, and felt that for his disobedience he had been put back six months in his Christian life. He went to see his old teacher, who prayed with him

¹ Acts iv. 12.

² Towards the end of the six months of disobedience, his class was asked by one of his professors to write an essay on Hypocrisy, and a prize was offered for the best essay. Kali Babu won the prize, whereupon one of his friends remarked that it was natural that he should write the best essay on Hypocrisy, as he had been practising it for months. This helped him seriously toward decision.

and urged him to obey the Spirit. Thus gaining new strength he took off the thread again and this time threw it beyond recovery into a pond or tank, after which he experienced great peace.

Next came the struggle with his family. He went to his old home and told his mother and brothers of his decision to accept Christ. When they found he had discarded his sacred thread, as Brahmjns they could no longer eat with him. They implored him to reconsider his decision and appealed both to his affection and to his duty, but all in vain. Then they tried threats, and his mother made a fruitless attempt to lock him up to prevent his return to his friends, but even this did not deter him. He remained firm.

His college friend, Mr. Chandra, on finding that Kali Charan had gone to his home about forty miles from Calcutta, feared lest some bodily harm should come to him and determined to follow him. He arrived at eight o'clock in the evening. The family heaped abuse upon Mr. Chandra, and, as he had to remain outside the house, being a Christian, the neighbours also abused him. Kali Charan finally came out and told him that there was a dreadful plot on hand against his (Mr. Chandra's) life, and that the faithful old servant who loved Kali Charan so well, and had cared for him since his childhood, had been chosen to do the deed. However, as it was now night and there was no train to take Mr. Chandra back to Calcutta,

nothing could be done but stay there, sleep on the verandah and depend upon God for protection. They gave him some food, and he and Kali Charan lay down together, within sight of the old servant. After the lights were put out they noisily changed places in order to frustrate the servant's foul purposes, knowing well that he would not harm a hair of his master's head. Finally the long, sleepless, anxious night wore away, and in the morning they were both safe. The mother and brothers finding Kali Charan so resolute, were compelled to let him go, and he and his friend returned to Calcutta.

After a few days, on February 28, 1864, at the age of seventeen, while reading in the third year class, he was baptized by the Rev. W. C. Fyfe, Principal of the Free Church Institution. Though he had now been cut off by his family he continued to send them money from the scholarship he was receiving. When he graduated and became a professor in the Free Church Institution, he used to send a large part of his salary for the support of his family, and to aid on such occasions as marriages, just as he would have done had he remained a Hindu and lived under the joint-family system.

Like any other young Christian, Kali Charan had to fight for his spiritual life; and we see him struggling for the light and beating back the waves of temptation which threatened to engulf him. His state of mind is clearly revealed in a boyish letter he wrote to Mr. Chandra at the age of seventeen, only four months after his baptism.

CALCUTTA

June 19, 1864

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FATHER IN THE SPIRIT,

I cannot describe the benefits which you have, through the blessing of God conferred upon me, for my pen must needs fail herein. I owe to you a 'debt immense of endless gratitude', which I will never be able to repay. I earnestly request you, however, not to take away your helping hand from me. For the sake of the very love which you bear toward me, continue, I beseech you, to look after my spiritual concerns. I believe you have come to see, that I have been perfidious, treacherous and cruel to one, who, as an instrument in Providence has paved my way to heaven, if heaven I am ever to reach; that I have been a hardened promise-breaker, and such in connexion with a person, who, in a secondary sense, is the salvation of my soul; and that I have been acting against the life of my father. Under these circumstances you must have come to see that there is some danger of my falling away. Indeed, I have, if guilty of such crimes, become unworthy of the name of a Christian. Father, have pity upon me; do not laugh at my follies but rather adopt measures for my amendment; correct me, punish me, reform me, but do not kill me by perishing jokes.

Your undutiful and disobedient
and faithless first-born,
KALI CHARAN BANURJI

After he was baptized he made several attempts to claim his wife, Elokasi, but in vain; for her parents would not allow her to come to him. In 1866 a law was passed called the Converts' Re-Marriage Act. By this law, if a man became a Christian, and the wife refused to join him, he could petition the court to call for the wife and ask her to join her husband. If, after repeated requests, she still

refused, the court had power to grant a separation. Mr. Banurji implored his wife to come, but she and her father still persisted in their refusal. When at last a petition was filed in the court, and she was about to become a legal widow, they yielded and she came to her husband. They took a house in Chinsurah near her old home and there the husband taught the young wife the principles of the faith for which he had suffered so much, and she too came to know the joy of salvation in Christ and was baptized. Mr. Banurji continued to visit his old home, and though no other members of the family ever became Christians¹ they welcomed him among them. 'God hid his face but held him by the hand,' as he passed through these days of trial.

¹Two nephews did become Christians, one of them a Roman Catholic, but he was no ornament to the Christian faith, for in his enthusiasm for the national movement, he again became a Hindu and remained one till his death.

CHOICE OF A LIFE WORK

Let me live in a house by the side of the road,
 Where the race of men go by—
 The men who are good, and the men who are bad,
 As good and as bad as I.
 I would not sit in the scorner's seat,
 Or hurl the cynic's ban ;
 Let me live in a house by the side of the road
 And be a friend to man.

FOSS.

WHEN Mr. Banurji received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1865 he was appointed professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy in the Free Church Institution, but he continued his studies for the Master of Arts degree which he received the following year. For his services as professor, a post he continued to hold for fourteen years, he received an excellent salary. He shone as a teacher and had a masterly way of presenting things to his pupils. He had a very strong personality which drew his students to him and made them love him. When he retired from this post, the college students gave him a farewell address in which they said among other things, 'we ask not proud philosophy to teach us what thou art'. He had won a warm place in their hearts, and exerted a very strong influence over them.

But it was very early evident in his Christian life that he had a leaning toward the ministry. Christ who had come to him so clearly and convincingly was making a strong call for his whole life service. Within six months of his baptism he wrote the following letter to the Rev. W. C. Fyfe, Chairman of the Bengal Free Church Mission Council. The letter is given entire that one may see the working of his mind concerning the claims of the Christian ministry. At the time of writing this letter he was just over seventeen years of age:—

DEAR SIR,

I beg to intimate to you that I have firmly resolved to dedicate myself, both body and mind, entirely to the service of our Lord Jesus Christ. I may state here that I have arrived at this conclusion after serious thought and earnest prayer. Not to mention the motive powers that should actuate every follower of Christ, be his immediate employment what it may, to undertake, so far as practicable, the glorious task of a preacher of the gospel—to wit, love and gratitude to God, an affectionate regard for the souls of unconverted fellow-brethren, and the like—a potential experience of the blessed happiness inseparably associated with the work of a devoted missionary, a confident anticipation of comparatively greater good most likely to be effected, through the grace of God, by an exclusive participation in the ministerial office—an inward persuasion that a prayerful and diligent application to labour in the vineyard of our Saviour is calculated to act as a strong preservative from surrenders to earthly temptations of all kinds—and a craving impatience at the painful sight of absolute servitude of the millions of my countrymen to the oppressive sway of the wicked one—compel me to

choose this vocation. In order to a successful prosecution of this end, I intend most heartily to become a student for the ministry in connexion with your mission.¹

I remain, yours, etc.

KALI CHARAN BANURJI

In pursuance of this resolution, he accepted a scholarship or stipend of thirty rupees a month from a fund in Edinburgh belonging to the Free Church Mission, and for a time pursued his theological studies and passed some of the examinations, at the same time continuing his professorial duties. But Kali Charan Banurji was not destined to become a minister. A misunderstanding arose with Dr. Duff and some of the other missionaries over what his status was to be, and concerning the care of his family in case of his death. Another deciding factor was that the Rev. Lal Behari Day, pastor of the Manicktollah Free Church, had been compelled to resign the pastorate because he felt the pay was insufficient to support and educate his family. He also felt that Indians were not given sufficient rights as ministers and missionaries. Upon this Mr. Banurji gave up his scholarship, and the theological classes and began to study law. It will be noted from the above letter that he laid emphasis upon the preaching of the gospel, and upon the spiritual

¹ A copy of this letter as it appeared in the *Free Church Monthly* of 1865 is now in the possession of Mr. B. L. Chandra, who also has one of Mr. Banurji's medals and several letters written by him when he was a young man.

welfare of one's fellowmen, no matter what his vocation may be; but notice also the still stronger emphasis upon 'an exclusive participation in the ministerial office'.

Let it be said here once and for all, that though Mr. Banurji gave up his idea of the Christian ministry, he never got away from the dedication of himself to God at this time, and through the long years of his life, he was ever ready to preach and teach, and to win his fellowmen by personal effort to Jesus Christ. Perhaps few laymen ever accomplished more, nor were more incessantly busy in the Master's work than was Mr. Banurji, even though the duties of his public life pressed heavily upon him. In addition to his professorial career, he did almost as much Christian work as many missionaries. Though he was never ordained, yet to the end of his life he was known by his Hindu and Muhammadan friends as the Rev. Kali Charan Banurji. The Indian Christian community had a very strong feeling of affection for him, and among them he was called Kali Babu, or 'Our Kali Babu'.

HOME AND FRIENDS

Measure thy life by loss instead of gain ;
Not by wine drunk, but the wine poured forth ;
For love's strength standeth in love's sacrifice ;
And whoso suffers most has most to give.

THE DISCIPLES.

IN appearance Mr. Banurji was small of stature—so small that men were surprised when they saw him for the first time. They were again surprised when they realized his strength of mind and character. The charm and magnetism of his personality immediately laid hold of one coming into his presence. There was always a savour of Christ about his life. This perfection of character, however, came through suffering ; for he was not without his enemies and he endured severe persecution.

He came to be known everywhere for his modesty and his meekness, as well as for his kindness and gentleness. He was never obtrusive, but was ever present where there was a need that he could meet. He never sought place or promotion, but was ever in a place of power. He never pressed his opinions unduly, but when he spoke, men felt his words were

those of a wise and sane counsellor. He reserved his judgement until it was sought, and then gave it with all kindness and love.

Mr. Banurji had a large family, in all eleven children, and in his home he was a loving father. He was quiet and reserved, sometimes stern, and yet there was free intercourse between him and his children who were devoted to him. He was a man of plain and simple habits, living in Indian style. He had family prayers sitting upon mats spread upon the floor, and usually took his meals in the same way. He had one room arranged with a table, chairs and other furniture, which was his study ; here also he received his European visitors.

He was much concerned about the progress of his sons, but was ambitious for them, only that they might be honourable. One felt sometimes that he was too slow to take advantage of the offers of his friends in high positions to provide his sons with good posts. He wanted them to stand entirely upon their own merits and not upon any name for integrity which he himself had made.

One son, Hridoy Gopal, was appointed as teacher in a mission school at Rawalpindi, a distance of nearly 1,500 miles from Calcutta. The father wrote daily to him for a year, sending some Scripture message, both a morning and an evening thought, and then a bit of news. These messages indicate that he meditated much upon the Scriptures, and that he was a constant student of the Word of God.

They are indeed choice bits of devotion and are full of 'joy', 'love', 'spirituality', and such like, as witness the following: 'Were only Paul and Augustine saints? Is it denied to the rank and file of Christians to be saints? Oh no! every Christian is a saint, a holy man, a man set apart for Christ, bearing Christ's label, the exclusive property of Christ, amenable to no other claim than Christ.' Or again: 'Spiritual discernment is as necessary an auxiliary to love as knowledge. If love should be intelligent, it ought also to be discriminating. If it should be exercised with full knowledge, its exercise should likewise be compatible with right judgement.'

His birthday, February 9, was always an auspicious day in his home. It was a day of rejoicing, and there was usually a gathering of his friends, both Indian and European. The guests were bountifully fed; then came the speeches and felicitations, and afterward an early departure for home according to the Indian custom, when guests leave soon after dinner.

When his wife died, his grief was so great and the home so desolate that his eldest daughter, Mrs. P. N. Ghose, at much inconvenience to herself, came with her husband and family to live in his house. She took charge of affairs and remained with him until her death about 1904.

His close friendships were few; his love was universal, and yet when he did love individually it was with deep though quiet and undemonstrative

intensity. He had a strong affection for Keshub Chunder Sen, the leader of the Brahmo Samaj, and after the latter's death, he was wont to say that he believed him to have died a Christian, and that they would 'meet in glory'.

He was most intimately associated with Dr. K. S. Macdonald in every good work through a period of over forty years. Dr. Macdonald in writing to his daughter says this of him: 'Mr. Banurji was my pupil in his second year in College when I arrived in Calcutta in 1862, and since then we have been like two brothers. . . I trace much resemblance in him to my own brother. He deserves all I can do for him. He is a good man, a great man, an able and profound scholar, and an exceedingly kind, helpful and loving man, and most self-sacrificing.' Dr. Macdonald died on the thirtieth of July, 1903, and Mr. Banurji was present at the funeral and offered prayer in Bengali. His deep and intense grief was very manifest. As he thanked God for what Dr. Macdonald had been to them all—a dearly loved father in Christ—and expressed their anguished sense of loss, his voice faltered and broke, and it was with difficulty he could go on. In all parts of the room the loud sobs of the deeply moved Bengali Christians proved how generally the sorrow of their leader was shared.¹

Once a missionary whom he respected was about to leave India. In the evening before the departure,

¹ J. M. MACPHERAIL in *Kenneth S. Macdonald, M.A., D.D.*

Mr. Banurji called to say good-bye. He sat for a long time in silence, then he arose to go. Instead of the usual farewell greeting, he placed his hands upon the shoulders of the missionary, pronounced a blessing upon him and in oriental fashion put his cheek in turn against the cheeks of his friend. So he showed his love; so they parted.

Mr. Banurji was a welcome visitor in many houses in Calcutta. In some he had *entré* at all times, and would drop in to tea or to a meal almost as casually as if he were at home. Two years before his death he had a very serious illness and many friends called to make inquiries. After his recovery he personally visited the houses of these friends and thanked them for their kindness and affection.

Some of the younger generation of Indians, such as the Rev. B. A. Nag, Mr. S. C. Mukerji, and others, were drawn closely to him, and he made a very deep impress upon their lives. He could not meet men casually without influencing them; much less could he have their friendship, without giving bent to their character. In a sense they were his disciples; they were constantly with him, and learned of him.

Himself

He shadowed forth in every look and act Our Lord . . .

One could not live beside him and forget.

PUBLIC CAREER AND SERVICE FOR
CHRIST

An epistle of Christ, known and read of all men, written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart.

PAUL.

WE turn now to the beginning of Mr. Banurji's public life. He finished his college course at the age of nineteen, yet he continued thereafter to give a considerable portion of his time to study, reading theology and the subjects for the Master of Arts degree and later to law. The major part of his time and strength was necessarily given during those years to his work as professor. At length, in 1870, he received the degree of Bachelor of Laws and escaped from the drudgery of examinations. From this date his public life may be said to have begun. He was now able to fulfil his duties as professor, and at the same time to throw himself into other activities.

He was already doing Christian work privately, teaching Bible classes, leading prayer meetings, and with a few other friends holding preaching services for Hindus in an old hall which still stands at the

corner of Cornwallis Square. He gave some time and thought to the work of the Manicktollah Free Church and was elected a deacon. The Rev. N. L. Doss of the London Mission remembers to have heard him make a most eloquent speech shortly after he became a professor in Duff College, upon the Report of the Deacon's Court of the Free Church. He began to take great interest in young men, and went here and there throughout the city attending their meetings and taking part in debating and literary societies. He also studied questions of public interest at this time, such as the influence of Brahmoism, educational work, the general phases and trend of missions, and the agitation which began about 1872 with reference to a United Church for Bengal.

In 1870 Mr. Joy Govinda 'Shome and Mr. Banurji started a weekly newspaper, named *The Indian Christian Herald*, which was meant not only to foster a fine Christian life and an independent spirit among Indian Christians but in some degree to bring Christianity before the outside public. Mr. Banurji always laid great stress on the importance of the press as a means of influencing Hindus for Jesus Christ; and he never failed to call attention to any effective literary work done by missionaries or laymen. The *Herald* lasted for thirty-three years and during all this time Mr. Banurji wrote a considerable amount for it regularly. It must be counted as one of his permanent tasks.

In 1873 he began to combine the work of the professor in the college with occasional practice in the High Court and was associated from that date with Justice Sarada Charan Mitter, who recently retired from the High Court.

By the year 1877 Mr. Banurji had become a notable public man in India. He was already greatly trusted; and the events of that year must have given him far greater prominence than he had before. He was chosen to be one of the speakers at a large political meeting in the Town Hall, Calcutta, attended by 3,000 people, and he made a great impression by the force and eloquence of his address. The question was the further opening of the Indian Civil Service to Indians. The resolutions were, that, in order to redeem the gracious promises made by England for the admission of Indians to high offices, practical facilities ought to be given them at the competitive examinations of the covenanted Civil Service; that the test of qualifications should be the same for them as for other candidates; that the age limit should be raised from nineteen to twenty-two; and that there should be local examinations in India, held simultaneously with those in England. Mr. Banurji electrified the audience by his speech and among other things made the following reference to Lord Macaulay's accusation, that the Bengalis were ever promising but never fulfilling: 'Shade of Macaulay, how shall you meet the curt retort to your accusa-



KALI CHARAN BANURJI, PROFESSOR AND VAKIL

tion of the Bengalis? Here is a whole land of promises with not an acre of performances.'

His work as a professor and the confidence in which he was universally held led to his appointment the same year as a Fellow of Calcutta University. That such a young man should receive this appointment is a singular testimony to his capacity and honour.

Towards the end of the year he delivered a series of public lectures on Christianity in Bombay, which drew great audiences and deeply impressed those who heard them. *The Indian Spectator*, Bombay, of October 28, 1877, speaks thus of those lectures: 'Last week was one of great intellectual excitement in Bombay. Professor Banurji's two addresses, one on the true doctrine of the love of God, and the other on the true principles of social reform, have evoked an amount of intelligent appreciation, such as we hardly thought Bombay was capable of bestowing. We seldom witness such large assemblages of people, representing all ages and all stations in life. The address on the true doctrine of the love of God seems to have called forth all the best qualities of heart and head the speaker was thought to have possessed. There, we believe, Professor Banurji was in his element. He launched forth upon the subject with wonderful address, and his eloquence and earnestness, set off by the abandon of his manner and gesture, left no doubt as to his being considered a genuine orator.'

The year 1879 brought a great change in Mr. Banurji's life. He resigned his professorship and thenceforward gave his whole strength to the practice of law. The profession was overrun with young vakils struggling to get on, their aim being, if possible, to secure a footing sufficient to enable them to practise in the High Court. Mr. Banurji chose for his early law career, rather than make a name for himself, to withdraw to the mofussil or country towns and build up a paying practice. His sense of honour, truth and justice remind one of the great Lincoln, and many are the stories told of his kindness and uprightness. If two Christians went to law he would sometimes refuse to help either, saying they ought to know better, and should settle their disputes out of court. He would, however, take the part of a Christian and help him to secure justice from a Hindu oppressor, and one always found him sympathetic in cases where one was persecuted for righteousness' sake. If converts or inquirers were restrained, or seized and carried away, he was always ready to give assistance; he was equally ready to help the injured or wronged Hindu. Poor people flocked to him for legal advice which he gladly gave to them free of charge, even paying expenses from his own pocket when it seemed necessary.

From this time forward for many years Mr. Banurji spent his days in pleading in the law courts either of the city or of the small towns around.

When he spent an evening in a country town, he almost invariably lectured on a Christian subject. A favourite theme of his was 'The Plan of Salvation'. Through these meetings he became widely known among non-Christians, and he helped to create greater respect among Hindus for Indian Christians. He always took great care to return to the city on Saturday, so as to be able to attend the regular church services, meet his Bible classes, and speak at the open-air meeting in Beadon Square.

He always stood for the observance of the Sabbath. Upon one occasion in the mofussil he was appearing in a case before a European judge, in which the opposing counsel was a Hindu who wished to go on with the case on Sunday. Mr. Banurji objected to this procedure and the judge sided with him and finally presided at a religious address given on that day by Mr. Banurji.

He had a legal mind and a marvellously clear way of presenting facts, whether in proclaiming the gospel or convincing a jury. He later came to have some practice in criminal law in the High Court, Calcutta, and an extensive criminal practice in the mofussil. Mr. S. C. Mukerji, M.A., B.L., a Christian vakil and professor, says: 'It was a treat to hear Mr. Banurji arguing most difficult criminal cases before jurors in Sessions Courts. His reasoning faculty was of an exceptionally high order, and he had a strictly logical mind, which saved him from making irrelevant remarks.'

Moreover, he possessed remarkable powers of oratory, and in all India few ever surpassed him in eloquence. Some one said of him: 'His face was lovely to behold, and his voice was like a silver bell.' Whenever he was announced to speak, crowds thronged to listen, and hung upon his words. He had a fine command of English. Some even thought he spoke with a slight Scotch accent, due to his long association with Scotch missionaries. It was a great sight to see him sway an audience. It made no difference whether he spoke in Bengali or in English. His beautiful and forceful language flowed from him in a rising stream; and the depth of his own feeling, reflected vividly in his expressive face and glowing sentences, caught his audience and swept them along with him.

When he had prepared an address, his phrases and sentences were accurate and in perfect taste, and there were always a number that could not but linger in the memory. A striking one occurred in an address delivered in Chinsurah. He called the address the 'Equation of Religion'; and the equation was, The Sinner¹+The Saviour = The Saint. 'His refined, chaste and graceful English, free from all ornamental exaggeration, strong in argument, passionate in appeal, always with the intense feeling of personal conviction, carried his hearers with him, whether in a political assembly or in a religious meeting.'¹

¹ F. W. STEINTHAL in *The Student World* for October, 1908.

Open-air preaching in the bazaars or squares or even by the roadside under the shade of some friendly tree, is one of the God-appointed means of bringing the gospel to the people of India. Students and other educated men will stand hour after hour and listen to Christian hymns and the gospel message. In August, 1879, Dr. K. S. Macdonald of the Free Church Mission established regular preaching at Beadon Square in the Indian quarter. These squares are the breathing spaces of the city, and in the evening are thronged with children and educated men, young and old, who congregate 'to eat' the air and to discuss the topics of the day. Sunday after Sunday in this square for two or three hours together, addresses were given in Bengali and English and sometimes in Urdu for the benefit of educated Indians. The interest taken in these meetings by those for whom they were intended cheered the heart of every observer. Mr. Banurji from the very start was one of the moving spirits in these meetings. He never failed to be present. He prepared for them carefully. He invited missionaries and others to come and speak or sing. In later years he went early to the square with gospel pictures and scrolls and preached to the children. He says that he sometimes trembled lest those invited to help should not be in the right spiritual frame of mind and thus the message would be lost. Interested hearers would come to him afterwards and

arrange to read the Bible and pray privately with him, and some were led to Christ in this way.

Soon after the meetings were started, Sir Henry Harrison, the Commissioner of Police, took steps to put a stop to open-air preaching in Beadon and other squares. But Dr. Macdonald in open defiance of his ruling which he was sure was illegal continued the meetings. The Calcutta Missionary Conference took the matter up and decided to fight the case. The Commissioner of Police then prohibited preaching in the five main squares under penalty of a fine of one hundred rupees. In order to make a test case, Dr. Macdonald and others did preach, were arrested and put on trial. They chose for their counsel Mr. Monmohun Ghose, Mr. T. Palit and Mr. Sale, who afterwards became a judge. They were instructed by Messrs. Beeble and Lewis and by Kali Charan Banurji and Joy Govinda Shome, the last two of whom gave their services free. After a ten days' trial the decision was given in favour of the missionaries. It is interesting to note that many Hindus and Muhammadans favoured them in their trial. Some of the evidence given by the Hindus was very ludicrous. One man, Babu Kissors Mohun Nundy, avowed that 'the ventilation of the square was interfered with' by the meetings; another that 'the shouting of the preachers and their singing were injurious to his ears.' An opium dealer, however, who had twenty-two shops and whom the missionaries had spoken against, said

he had no objection to the preaching being continued. After the case was decided, the opposition soon ceased and the work went on uninterrupted for many years. Two or three years ago, however, the squares were made the rendezvous of political agitators and of those who wished to disseminate seditious doctrines, so that the Government was compelled to proscribe all meetings and consequently the open-air preaching had also to be given up. Recently the preaching in squares has been resumed and attentive audiences listen to the word.

About the very time when the Beadon Square services were started, Mr. Banurji threw himself with enthusiasm into the problem of higher education for Christian girls. With this in view he toiled in his leisure time teaching classes in connexion with the Free Church and other missions, struggling to prepare girls for the university examination. It was the University of Calcutta, which first received women at its examinations, and Miss Chandra Mukhi Bose (now Mrs. Mangain) was the first to appear. She passed the matriculation examination from the Dehra Dun Mission Girls' school in 1876. Mr. Banurji heard of her success and urged her father to send her to Calcutta for further study. She came in 1879, and both Mr. Banurji and Dr. K. S. Macdonald taught her as a private pupil. After this a class of four girls was formed which Mr. Banurji and others used to teach. The girls were successful in passing the F.A. examination, and

three of the number joined the Medical College. Miss Bose along with Miss K. Bose took her B.A. from Bethune College, even though there was no proper instruction in Mental Philosophy for Mr. Banurji prepared her in this subject. She then entered the M.A. class of Duff College with sixteen or seventeen young men and passed in 1884, being the first Indian woman to receive the M.A. degree. She immediately became head mistress of Bethune College, and two years later principal.

The idea of preparing girls for the University examinations was now taken up warmly by the teaching staff of Duff College. A few girls of the United Free Church Normal School which was near entered for these examinations and the classes were held in the school itself. Mr. Banurji not only taught some subjects for this class, but also for a class started in the girls' school of the Established Church of Scotland in Bow Bazaar. For some years he was a member of the Committee of Bethune College, a Government College for women. He was also a devoted helper in the girls' school of the Union Missionary Society.

Mr. Banurji was a sympathetic student of missions as well as a friendly and helpful critic of their methods. It is interesting to note his opinion as expressed in 1879 before the Bengali Christian Conference. He said in substance that the time and energies of many missionaries were swallowed up in a thousand cumbrous details and their

sworn life work was in consequence proportionately neglected; that each missionary society should not attempt every variety of Christian work, whether it had suitable men or not and that there should be a division of work in accordance with its resources; that we should Christianize but not denationalize the country, nor offend the prejudices of the people; that segregation in Christian compounds did but scanty justice to the leavening character of Christianity and that Christians should freely mix with Hindus; that special efforts should be made to reach the leaders of the country for Christ; and that apologetic and controversial lectures now largely abandoned should be resumed.

Mr. Banurji's characteristic desire to help those in distress is shown by his championing the cause of the Salvation Army, which came to India in the autumn of 1882. Immediately upon their arrival in Bombay, they began to be persecuted by the police. Commissioner Tucker was imprisoned for beating drums and singing in the streets. Mr. Banurji got up a big public meeting in Calcutta to protest against this action, and some leading Hindu gentlemen took part in the meeting. Practically none of the missionaries, however, took any part in the proceedings, as they disapproved of the methods of the army. For this act of Mr. Banurji's, which was not without its effect upon the officials, a life-long friendship was established between him and Commissioner Booth-Tucker and the Salvation

Army. Once when the army was in financial difficulties and was several hundreds of rupees in arrears for rent, Mr. Banurji paid the whole amount from his own pocket.

In 1883 the Calcutta Auxiliary Bible Society appointed a committee to prepare a new translation of the New Testament in Bengali, and Mr. Banurji became its chairman. He was so faithful to the Committee that he took care so to arrange his legal engagements in the country as to be able to be in Calcutta for the meeting of the Committee every Thursday evening. One who used to attend the meeting says: ' We met once a week the whole year round for three hours of strenuous work on a draft translation prepared by one of the members. Mr. Banurji was chairman, and there were usually half a dozen Indians and two or three Europeans present. The Europeans were of service chiefly in determining the exact meaning of the Greek text, while one Indian would excel in Bengali grammar and lexicography, another in knowledge of Sanskrit, and another in Bengali style. Mr. Banurji was king of the committee, for he knew how to use all the knowledge available; his criticism was most illuminating and discriminating; and he had an unusual faculty for creating brief, pithy phrases in the simplest Bengali. The work of the committee was very slow, and sufficient care was not taken to unify the results of their toil; yet there is no danger in prophesying that the Bengali Bible of the future

will contain scores of sentences and phrases which were hammered into shape during those hours of happy fellowship and sparring wit under Mr. Banurji's genial guidance.'

The Indian political movement, which had shown itself in various ways and at different centres for several years, took organized shape in 1885 in the formation of the Indian National Congress. Mr. Banurji shared to the full the patriotic feeling and the desire for self-government which this movement expressed, and had publicly shown his position by his Town Hall speech in 1879. He was a member of the Congress from the beginning, and indeed proved a leader of such practical judgement, reliable character and forceful eloquence that, had he not been a Christian, he would inevitably have been elected president one time or another. The Congress did not always give the equal treatment which it demanded. Mr. Banurji never encouraged extreme views, and he was often influential in maintaining a balance between the moderates and extremists. 'He thoroughly sympathized with his countrymen in their political aspirations and always fought the battle side by side with them. His firm political conviction was that no righteous and civilized Government could withhold from its subjects such privileges and liberties and a share in the management and control of public affairs as they could most fairly and legitimately demand.' At the close of the meetings of the Congress a

so-called 'omnibus resolution' was passed embodying many old resolutions which they wished to reaffirm. It often fell to Mr. Banurji's lot to propose this resolution, which he did when the Congress was held in Calcutta in 1890 in the following humorous way: 'As a driver of your omnibus (laughter) in regard to which, by the by, it may soon be necessary to legislate as to how many it should carry, I may be permitted to drive it once more.'

He was also a member of the Indian Association, a much older and a local political body. Upon the death of his old friend Mr. A. M. Bose, Mr. Banurji was elected its president in the last year of his life.

He was a member of the Scientific and Industrial Association for the education of Indians, which annually sends large numbers of students to England, America, Japan, and Europe to fit them for the promotion of native industries in India.

Mr. Banurji was a member of the United Free Church of Scotland, though he was broader than any church. Canon Ball once said that he would have been made a bishop had he been a member of the Church of England. He was for several years chairman of the Bengal Mission Council of the United Free Church of Scotland, a body composed almost entirely of European missionaries. He was President of the Bengali Christian Conference, which he and Mr. Joy Govinda Shome founded in 1877.

Like every other large-hearted Christian man Mr. Banurji deeply deplored the fact that the circumstances of the planting of Protestant Christianity in India have led to the perpetuating of the many theological and ecclesiastical differences which divide the churches at home. He believed that, while these things were significant and dear to Christians in the West, they were more or less artificial in India; and he was convinced that sooner or later a united church would have to be founded. In his eagerness to see the accomplishment of this most desirable end, he and a few other friends decided in 1887 to withdraw from the churches to which they belonged and to form a new body that should ignore the denominational differences of the West. This body was called the Christo Somaj and in the new project Mr. Banurji and Mr. Shome again worked together. The services were held in Mr. Banurji's house.

Naturally this departure displeased a large number of Mr. Banurji's missionary friends. Some believed that his action would lead only to further division. Yet nothing ever disturbed the real Christian fellowship and friendship between Mr. Banurji and the Christian leaders of the city. The Somaj was accepted as something not altogether desirable yet inevitable; and opposition soon died down. The object of this organization may be set forth in Mr. Banurji's own words at the first anniversary of the Somaj in December, 1888.

The object of the Somaj is threefold—the propagation of Christian truth, the promotion of Christian union, and the welfare of Indian Christians. Every member of the Somaj is expected accordingly to do something in furtherance of these objects. As regards matters of worship, and discipline the Somaj has no special creed; it leaves every member free, though the management of its external affairs is entrusted to a committee appointed for the purpose. The Somaj, is therefore, as jealous of order and discipline as any community of believers can possibly be. At the same time it courts fraternity and Christian fellowship with every sect and denomination, and seeks their active co-operation in the prosecution of the objects it has set before itself. In proof of this I will quote one of the rules of the Somaj: 'Any church making a monthly collection for the objects of the Somaj has the privilege of sending a delegate to the managing committee who is empowered to exercise the same rights as the members of the committee.' What the Somaj seeks and longs for is the promotion of the Master's kingdom, and it believes it can be better done in this benighted country, if Christians, leaving aside their denominational differences, can unite together in the furtherance of it. The Somaj seeks, therefore, the union of all believers based upon the sevenfold unity spoken of by the apostle: 'There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.'

The Somaj required its members to subscribe to the Apostles' Creed. They believed in lay baptism, in lay ministry and in the ministry of women. The baptism of one of Mr. Shome's daughters by a layman, at the request of Mr. Shome, and Mr. Banurji's support of it in a speech, led to their resignation as elders in the Manicktollah Free Church. They both, however, afterwards rejoined



the church. In support of his belief in a female ministry, Mr. Banurji's own daughter and the daughter of a friend used to accompany him to Beadon Square, where both of them preached before the students. For eight years these pioneers of unity struggled onward seeking to found the church of India; but denominationalism proved far too strong for them. The Somaj never grew to any proportions, and finally died out in 1895.

During the years of its existence, the Somaj was one of Mr. Banurji's most absorbing religious activities. He still kept up all his regular Christian engagements, preaching in Beadon Square, presiding over the work of the Translation Committee, teaching Bible classes, helping inquirers, and writing for *The Indian Christian Herald*, but he carried on all the while the work of the Christo Somaj.

The Hon'ble Mr. W. C. Madge, who was a lifelong friend of Mr. Banurji, speaks as follows regarding the Somaj: 'Though a wholesome and happily growing Christian instinct, inspired by the spirit of our Lord Himself, is reaching forth for closer union among all Christians, and naturally and inevitably antagonizes the creation of new sects, yet a not altogether un-Christian desire for a living and self-supporting Indian church independent of foreign leading and resources, has sometimes led some earnest Christians to see a lost opportunity in this ultimate subsidence of the Christo Somaj.'

In April, 1888, the Calcutta Missionary Conference discussed, 'The best methods of doing mission work in India.' Mr. Banurji expressed the following views on the subject at the Conference: 'The impression is abroad in India that Christianity is a foreign religion and in order to dissipate this impression (1) just as Paul became all things to all men, so missionaries without ceasing to be Christians might become Hindus in order to reach Hindus; (2) they should be associated with a life of poverty as is the idea of a religious teacher here, instead of living in ease and comfort; (3) they should recognize the germs of truth in the religions of the country; and (4) a convert should be allowed to be an Episcopalian without joining the Church of England or a Presbyterian without joining the Church of Scotland. In short, might not missionaries make it possible for converts to become members of an Indian rather than a foreign church?'

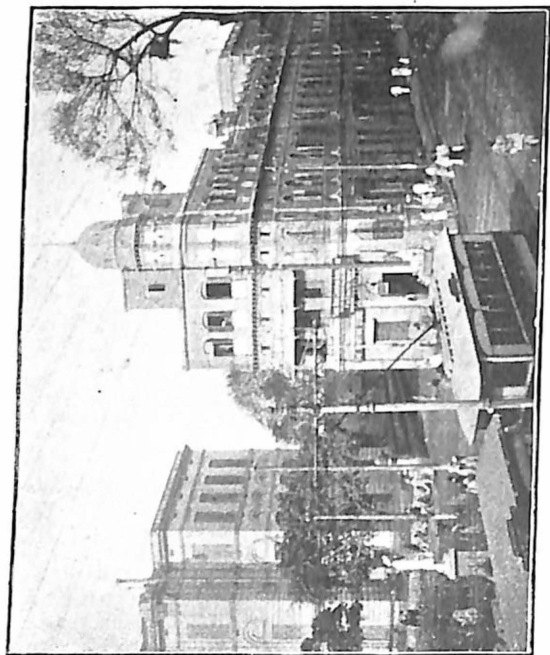
There are some who disapprove of educational missionary work. Perhaps one of the best arguments in favour of such is Mr. Banurji himself, who was the product of educational missions. If Dr. Duff and his colleagues had accomplished nothing more than the bringing of Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjea, Dr. Lal Behari Dey and Kali Charan Banurji to Christ, it would have been worth all the time and money spent on the college of which he was the principal. We find how strongly Mr.

Banurji himself felt on this matter in an address before the Bombay Decennial Conference in 1892.

As a fruit of missionary education myself, and as one who has had some experience in giving as well as in receiving it, and has taken a part in the conduct of education generally, my testimony emphatically is that it would be disastrous to retire from education work as a missionary agency. Of late expression has often been given to the opinion that no educated person is likely to become a Christian. Any step indicative of loss of confidence in educational missions will help only to crystallize the mischievous opinion. Believing as I do that the legitimate outcome of education must be Christianity I have no hesitation in pronouncing the above opinion to be absolutely false. The function of Christian colleges is to make it perfectly clear that the best mind is bound to be a Christian mind. The contact of Christian and non-Christian students in those colleges is calculated to produce most salutary results. I well remember how, when I was yet a non-Christian, a Christian fellow-student of mine used almost daily to put himself out for the purpose of accompanying me home on the classes breaking up, and instilling into my mind all the way along the truths of Christianity. As to the suggestion of a Christian University, I believe that under existing circumstances, it would defeat the very object it is expected to accomplish. It would lead to the withdrawal of non-Christian students from Christian colleges, and to the effacement of the missionary factor in the control over non-Christian education now exercised by the universities. I would also add that the missionaries who wield most influence outside the Christian colleges are just the missionaries who make their usefulness felt within the colleges.

Mr. Banurji once gave the following as reasons why more educated young men in India are not

entering Christian work : ' The fundamental reason is, and I would not co-ordinate any other reason with it, that they are lacking in that effectual yearning for souls which will allow no consideration to stand between them and the work of soul-saving in the spirit of the Master. That yearning, doubtless, comes of the Spirit, but although I dare not limit the Spirit I believe that the Spirit delights to inspire in an inspiring atmosphere. This brings me to another reason for the fact lamented. On the one hand, young Christian students are not sufficiently exhorted by their missionary teachers to enter direct Christian callings. On the other hand, the testimonies of Indian Christian missionaries are positively discouraging. The son of an Indian Christian missionary, for example, is reared in an atmosphere of discontent with mission service. The father complains of the treatment he receives ; of the inadequacy of his salary ; of his disabilities, as contrasted with the privileges of his European colleagues ; of the policy which would set at nought his age and experience, and raise the merest novice, because he happens to be a European, over his head to superintend his work. He is most reluctant that his son should risk a similar experience. One may or may not sympathize with this spirit of discontent but its effect upon his son is bound to be deterrent. I shall add a third reason. The openings in missions for educated young Christians are extremely limited, while the idea is gain-



COLLEGE BRANCH BUILDING

ing ground that it is best for Indian Christians to avoid as far as possible the appropriation of funds raised in Europe for the evangelization of their own people.'

In the year 1894, about the very time when the Christo Somaj disappeared, there came into existence in Calcutta the modern Young Men's Christian Association. It was first organized in 1856, and had rooms in Bow Bazaar, but previous to 1894 there had been a long period of inactivity. Mr. Banurji was a member of the new organization and held the position of Vice-President of the Board of Directors, from its foundation till his death, a period of thirteen years. He was Chairman of the Indian National Council, and was one of the representatives for India and Ceylon in the World's Student Christian Federation. He was elected as the delegate of the World's Federation to their conference in Europe and again to England and America, but always found it impossible to attend.

The inception of the student work of the Young Men's Christian Association in Calcutta, in 1896, and the securing of the College Branch building in the very centre of the student community were due largely to the faith and persistence of Mr. J. Campbell White, backed up by a strong group of educational missionaries and other Christian workers. In the early days there were no halls in the student quarter suitable for religious addresses, and, when this building was 'bought by the power of

prayer',¹ it was Mr. Banurji's great delight to lecture in it, and the delight of thousands of students to listen to his addresses. He loved to speak upon the fundamentals of Christianity, and he gave more than one series of addresses on such subjects as repentance, confession, faith, justification, regeneration, forgiveness of sins, prayer, the conception of God, the conception of man, Christ and sin. This new institution captured Mr. Banurji's heart. Set free from the Somaj, he flung himself into the lectures, sermons and Bible classes of the new building with all his Christian power, zeal and wisdom.

Mr. S. C. Mukerji, who was a pupil of Mr. Banurji's, says: 'He untiringly worked in the Young Men's Christian Association and delivered lectures on Christianity and all the non-Christian religions in their relation to Christianity. He had a wonderful power of adapting himself to his audience. When he had a most cultured audience to deal with, he could, if necessary, treat his subject from an

¹ The College Branch Committee, which was formed a short time before, took a few small rooms in the student quarter where the work was begun, but it was not long before they were entirely crowded out. They then sought larger quarters and found that the Lady Dufferin Hospital for Indian women at 86 College Street, was for sale. They asked for an option on the building and were given about four months, and immediately sent Mr. Campbell White to England to raise funds. He secured only a portion of what was needed, however, but upon the very day of the expiry of the option, a cable came from America announcing a gift of exactly the balance of the amount required to purchase. When the coincidence of the call to prayer and the gift by cable became known, the motto for the hall was proposed,—'Bought by the Power of Prayer'.

abstruse, philosophical standpoint, but he never displayed his learning in preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. His one ambition in life was to present his Master before his audience and not himself. He was a man of wide learning and vast information. He was a profound religious thinker, and could handle non-Christian religions with great ease, and point out wherein they lacked. He watched very carefully every phase of neo-Hinduism and whenever necessary he would expose its fallacy. He was an object lesson of what a layman could do for his Lord and Master.'

Mr. Banurji conducted regular Bible classes either for the Christian young men of the church, or for students in one of the colleges, or for the members of the Young Men's Christian Association. He also held mission study classes attended largely by missionaries, and usually chose the non-Christian religions for his subject, as he felt that Christians did not know enough about them. He was in great demand for giving public lectures on educational, political, moral and religious subjects. He often spoke in the Town Hall to large audiences. He never wrote his addresses, and they rarely ever appeared in print. If after a particularly stirring address he was asked to write it out for preservation, he would modestly say it wasn't worth while, and he could never be prevailed upon to do it. He never wrote a book, and very few of his masterly speeches have been preserved. He spoke and lived.

His words were written as were Christ's, 'not in tables of stone but in fleshy tables of the heart'.

Mr. Banurji's educational interests brought him many honours. He was a practical teacher of great ability and had a comprehensive grasp of educational problems. He sought not only to impart knowledge but to build up character. We have already seen that he was made a fellow of the University of Calcutta in 1877. His powers were fully recognized in the Senate. He was president of the Board of Studies in Philosophy in Calcutta University, and for years was the examiner in Philosophy for both the Bachelor's and the Master's degree, and later for the Premchand Roychand Studentship Examination. Up to the time of his death he was the only Indian in the annals of the Calcutta University appointed to set papers in B.A. English, in both the pass and honours division. His services to the cause of education and the boundless confidence with which his character was regarded led in 1897 to his election by the graduates to serve for two years as the representative of the University on the Legislative Council of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. In this capacity he rendered distinguished service in connexion with the new Municipal Act for Calcutta.

He was twice elected a Commissioner of the Municipality where he was a member of the Appeal Committee; he was also appointed a commissioner from July 12, 1904, to March 31, 1906, and always

took a genuine interest in the affairs of the city. He was President of the Rate Payers' Association, and of the Vigilance Association.

He was a strong supporter of the social purity and temperance movement of the city. He was Chairman of the Metropolitan Temperance and Purity Association, an organization composed largely of Hindus and Brahmos, whose object was the promotion of temperance among Indians, and securing and preserving so far as possible purity among students. This society memorialized Government and secured the expulsion of brothels from the vicinity of temples, schools, colleges and hostels.

He was interested in all kinds of philanthropic and social work. About 1905 he became the first President of The Refuge, an institution founded by Mr. A. M. Biswas as a home for invalids and incurables, the outcasts and refuse of Indian society. The work has grown from a very small beginning until now there are over one hundred inmates. Mr. Biswas is a Christian, and so valuable has the work become that the Government not only decorated him with the Kaiser-i-Hind Silver Medal, but they have made substantial grants for the maintenance of his institution.

From the very beginning of the student department of the Young Men's Christian Association in 1896 Mr. Banurji was its chairman and one of its guiding forces. He steered the branch through many difficulties and was ever ready with his

wonderful insight and sane advice to make the work as efficient as possible. Frequently the large hall, provided by the generosity of Lord Overtoun, would be hired to Hindus and other non-Christians for public meetings, but Mr. Banurji always insisted on making sure that the character of the meeting gave no opportunity for an attack upon Christ, or the Christian religion, or upon the Government that so generously aids the work of the Association. He expressed his opinion of the Young Men's Christian Association in these words:—

DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

In response to the request of one of the secretaries, it gives me very great pleasure to write to you in the interests of the work the College Branch of the Association is carrying on.

While I yield to none in my appreciation of the services rendered to the cause of the kingdom by the educational and evangelistic missions labouring in Calcutta, and I have had the privilege of well nigh forty years' identification with the work organized by the prince of Calcutta missionaries,¹ I feel bound to testify that the Association has supplied *a want, nay many a want*. What is being done by it would have been, humanly speaking, left for the most part undone but for its inauguration.

The Association building, with the conspicuous marks it bears of its consecration, is itself a witness for the Master, right in the immediate vicinity of *eight* non-Christian—Dr. Duff would have denounced the greater part of them as godless—institutions. It constrains students of these colleges and schools daily to think of Christ, while only a few years back they might have gone on from year's end to year's end without even a passing thought of the Christian enterprise.

¹ Dr. Duff.

The Association has pioneered a *system* of evangelization that comprehends within its scope the enormous student population in this city, outside of the classes in the missionary colleges. It has proved to be the great missionary college for students of non-missionary institutions. What the bugbear of religious neutrality, deterred the Government from facing; what the hopelessness of formulating the religious instruction to be imparted prevented private non-Christian institutions from attempting what the want of a machinery to bring them into touch with students not their own, drove missionary professors to consign to abeyance; the Association has faced, has attempted, has pushed to a successful issue.

The Association has with the co-operation of the missionaries, developed the *method* of evangelization to a *whole*, long desiderated by all workers. Picture to yourselves a preparatory meeting in the adjacent educational public square; adjourn to a Bible class in the Association rooms; pass on to the lecture hall for a gospel service; overhear the engagements made for personal talk; witness the literature handed on for leisurely study; and you will have some idea of how the Association's three-hour evenings are generally spent. The missionary dream of such a concatenated succession making for a whole has at length been realized. The cry for 'follow up' is on a fair way to be met.

Space forbids details, which I reserve for another occasion. One other general feature, however, I must note, before I close. The Lord has enabled the Association to draw, in proportions heretofore unrealized, elderly men of education, who as a class had for all intents and purposes stood aloof, unreached and untouched. Is further evidence needed to prove that, in giving of your substance for the support of the Association, you have *given to the Lord*? Indeed, the Lord has had *need* of it to develop towards completion the human equipment for the war in the metropolis. The Lord has need of yet more, and is waiting.

Yours gratefully in the work,

K. C. BANURJI,

Chairman, College Branch.

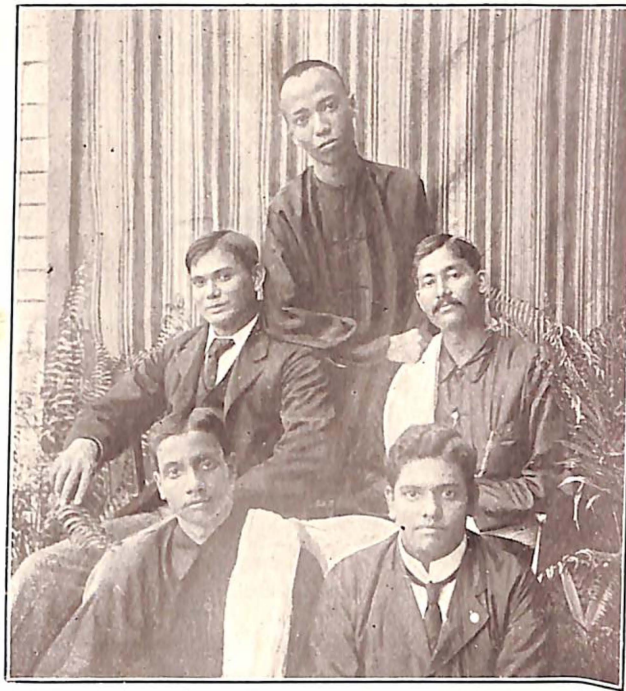
October 21, 1902.

The Overtoun Hall had now become recognized as the centre of religious work for students, and times without number has it been filled to its utmost capacity. Mr. Banurji was always foremost in helping to organize such meetings, and his presence and the inspiration of his personality insured success. When Mr. John R. Mott, visited Calcutta in 1902, on several evenings the hall holding 800 men was crowded to the doors by students who were desirous of hearing him. His addresses were very successful in stimulating thought upon the religious life, and in the development of Bible study among Hindus. Many became inquirers after the true faith. Mr. Banurji organized a drawing-room meeting to enable Mr. Mott to meet educated Hindu gentlemen, at which some remarkable discussions took place upon religious topics.

Upon two occasions Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall visited India as the Barrows-Haskell lecturer. In Calcutta his lectures were delivered in the Overtoun Hall. Mr. Banurji here again threw in his great strength to make the meetings a success. And they were a success, judged by the number that heard them, and by the cordiality with which they were received. Dr. Hall proved a sympathetic friend of the Indians and won their hearts completely.

Mr. Banurji was ever solicitous lest speakers should not truly represent Christ both by word and by life. Especially was this so when it affected the educated Hindus, many of whom were inquiring





GROUP OF STUDENTS, CALCUTTA



the way of truth. Upon one occasion a scholar from abroad lecturing upon philosophical subjects, gave several addresses in the Overtoun Hall. He was asked to speak to the students on a Sunday night upon a religious subject, but did scant justice to the claims of Christ, and actually left some erroneous impressions. Mr. Banurji, who was presiding felt it his duty to clear away any doubts which might have been left, and announced that he would speak upon the same subject on a subsequent evening.

At the beginning and close of such lectures students and other young men would flock around him. He would take each one by the hand and speak a few words of encouragement or offer a timely warning about the seriousness of life. Young men felt this was not done in a perfunctory way but through genuine interest.

In February, 1902, an evangelistic campaign was organized by the Christian forces of Calcutta to proclaim the gospel throughout the whole city. It consisted of preaching in the bazaars, squares, and halls, in personal work, in holding Bible classes, and in the distribution of tracts. Its workers included missionaries, ministers, and Christian laymen. Mr. Banurji threw himself into the work with great enthusiasm and at its close, he had this to say of the results:—

‘I thank God for the campaign. It has done good. As regards the Christian community, it has

stimulated the spirit of prayer ; it has deepened the interest in missions ; it has shown how with a little organization, the active force in the field may be multiplied ; it has brought into relief the almost unlimited possibilities of co-operation between missions ; it has dispelled the illusion that a Hindu audience would not stand the preaching of " Christ crucified " pure and simple ; it has illustrated what faith and patience can accomplish.'

On Christmas Day 1905, seventeen delegates from the seven great provinces of India and the Island of Ceylon came together in Carey's historic library at Serampore and organized 'The National Missionary Society of India'. The object was 'to evangelize unoccupied fields in India and adjacent countries, and to lay on Indian Christians the burden of responsibility for the evangelization of their own country and neighbouring lands.' It was further declared: 'founding no new denomination, but preserving the strongest loyalty to the churches ; soliciting no funds outside of India, but laying the burden for India's evangelization upon her own sons, we believe the society is organized on a sound and safe basis.'

Kali Charan Banurji was one of the delegates to this conference and was one of the vice-presidents elected at the first meeting. Rajah Sir Harnam Singh, K.C.I.E., was chosen president.

Among the cultured Hindu gentlemen with whom Mr. Banurji was thrown in educational and politi-

cal circles, he never assumed an apologetic attitude for being a Christian. It was as natural for him to be a Christian as for them to be Hindus, but becoming a Christian made him none the less an Indian. He was by no means denationalized. His friends honoured him for his frankness and sincerity. Hindus acknowledged that he was a Christian, but a 'Hindu Christian'. They were glad to claim him as their son and brother, although they may have failed to realize that it was Jesus Christ who made him what he was. A public meeting was convened in Overtoun Hall to congratulate Mr. Banurji upon his elevation to the Legislative Council in 1897. Dr. Macdonald remarked that Mr. Banurji was a representative of the Christian community. Sir Gurudas Banerjea, an orthodox Hindu, springing to his feet said: 'It is a mistake to think so. Mr. Banurji is a representative of all communities' (cheers)!

Mr. Banurji seemed to have an extraordinary capacity for work. He performed many kinds of duties daily, and turned from one to another with alacrity. He was never too busy to do things, and was faithful to every trust he undertook. For this reason he was much sought after for his counsels upon committees of various kinds. Often has he attended five or six committee meetings in an afternoon and evening, but he rarely ever attended late meetings, as he needed the hours for rest. Some one said that he lived a very long life, if it is to be

measured by the amount of work he got through. It was a rare gift he possessed in a remarkable degree which enabled him to keep many irons in the fire without irritation or disturbance to his mental equilibrium. His was 'a heart at leisure from itself to soothe and sympathize'.

In addition to his many other duties both public and private, Mr. Banurji taught law classes for many years in the Ripon and City Colleges, two of the largest colleges in Calcutta. His income has been variously estimated. When he was in the High Court he paid tax on an annual income of not less than Rs 25,000, and even to the end of his life he was receiving nearly Rs 1,000 a month; yet he saved scarcely a pice, for his charities and philanthropies, though secret, were very great, so that he died a poor man. Sometime before his death, missionaries and other friends, as a token of esteem, gave him a present of Rs 3,000. With a portion of this, a plot of land was leased at Girideh and a bungalow built. He gave considerable sums of money to support Indian widows and to educate poor Indian boys. These were in the form of monthly allowances, and members of his family kept the accounts and administered the funds when once he had decided on the merits of the case. His giving was without ostentation, and many wondered where his money had gone. Just as he himself had been helped as a student, so he helped others.

He loved men and helped them to be better.

When he talked with them, they felt in a peculiar way that he was their friend. Often have Hindus said in speaking of his influence upon them, 'He truly loved me.' He had compassion upon the weak and the poor. His heart was moved for them, and he was always accessible to them. It is not to be wondered that he had many opportunities to give of his substance to those who were in immediate need.

In 1903 *The Indian Christian Herald* ceased to appear. Mr. Banurji felt it necessary through failing health to give up a number of his other activities at this time. His friends were glad, therefore, when he was offered the Registrarship of Calcutta University in 1904, because they felt he would not only be in a position to do excellent work, but could support his family without overstraining himself. However, owing to the radical changes in the university system, instituted by Lord Curzon that very year, Mr. Banurji found the work exceedingly arduous. He performed his duties with conspicuous ability and faithfulness, but the work was too heavy and led to the undermining of his health and really hastened his death.

CHAPTER VII

CLOSING DAYS

Age sits with decent grace upon his visage,
And worthily becomes his silver locks :
He wears the marks of many years well spent,
Of virtue, truth well tried, and wise experience.

ROWE

MR. BANURJI had suffered long from diabetes, but he bore his pain and suffering with patient fortitude. His body was small and frail, and he looked as if he possessed little endurance, yet he was most active and energetic and an indefatigable worker. The dread disease gradually wore him out, but to the very last he insisted upon attending public meetings, where his presence was greeted with applause.

The Indian National Congress met in Calcutta in December, 1906, just before his death. He attended the first session, because he knew that trouble was brewing among the different factions, and he was anxious that there might not occur a split between the moderates and the extremists. He fainted, however, upon the dais and had to be carried home. The All India Temperance Federation Conference was held in Calcutta at the same time and in great weakness he came and addressed the meeting, which

was also honoured by the presence of the Right Hon. Samuel Smith, M.P., from England. Mr. Smith died suddenly while in Calcutta. That season also, Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall was visiting India for the second time as the Haskell Lecturer of the University of Chicago, and Mr. Banurji persisted in attending the meetings. He presided at all the lectures for educated Indians, which were delivered in the Overton Hall, although he had always to be carried up and down the stairs. It seemed impossible for him not to join in his usual activities. He was unwilling to lie back and take a much needed rest, and thus find recuperation for his wearied body. Shortly after this he was confined to his room and died peacefully on February 6, 1907. 'He lived the strenuous life, and his body, never equal to the pace set by his soul, wore itself out on the threshold of three score.'¹

Many public buildings were closed out of respect for the dead. The High Court, the Municipality, the University of Calcutta, the National Congress and many other bodies passed resolutions of sorrow and of respect. A brief and simple ceremony was conducted at the home by the Rev. John Watt and the Rev. A. Tomory, and then devoted friends vied with each other for the honour of helping to carry his frail body to the Scotch Cemetery to its resting place. Even his Hindu friends, to whom the touch of a dead body is pollution, asked to be allowed to

¹ *The Empire.*

assist and did help his own sons to carry the flower-covered coffin all the way from his home to the cemetery, followed by scores of carriages and hundreds of friends. Probably fifteen hundred persons attended the funeral, including Sir Andrew Fraser, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Lord Radstock, the Right Reverend Bishop Copleston, Lord Bishop of Calcutta and Metropolitan of India, Sir Gurudas Banerjea, retired Judge of the High Court, the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mukerjea, Vice-Chancellor of the University, the Hon'ble Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose of the Bengal (and later of the Imperial) Legislative Council, several Judges of the High Court, and a great concourse of people, both Christian and non-Christian, Indian and European.

It was universally recognized that, after the death of the Rev. Dr. Krishna Mohun Banerjea, Kali Charan Banurji was the most conspicuous figure in the Indian Christian community of North India. One of the most difficult tasks after his death was to fill his place in the innumerable organizations and committees of which he was a member and the virtual leader. In his deep concern for the cause of Christ in India he used to name the Christian young men who were growing up and wondered whence the leaders of the succeeding generation were to come. There was scarcely a sphere of activity in which he did not have a great share, and upon which he did not stamp his personality.

One cannot resist the temptation to quote the opinion of some of his friends, showing in what high esteem he was held by all classes.

Sir Andrew Fraser, speaking in the memorial meeting held in the Overtoun Hall, said: 'Kali Charan Banurji was always in the presence of God. He was always walking with Him in spirit, in purity, in righteousness, in truth, in sincerity, in loyalty and in love.'

An estimate of his character is thus given by Mr. S. C. Mukerjee: 'As a man, he was universally respected and universally loved. He was a remarkable personality, and, search as we might, we could not come across a man, more lovely, lovable or loving, adorned both outwardly and inwardly with God's choicest gifts. He had in him the rare combination of great learning, and strong practical common sense, firmness of character, and sweetness of temper. He was loved by everybody, because he loved everybody. Never in his life did he behave rudely to anybody or hurt another's feelings through vindictiveness or an outburst of temper. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous, and, though reserved and dignified, it was a treat to listen to his witty and humorous speeches. The great secret of his life's success was, *the elimination of self*. In the programme of life self was scarcely to be found. Here lay the greatness of this good man.'

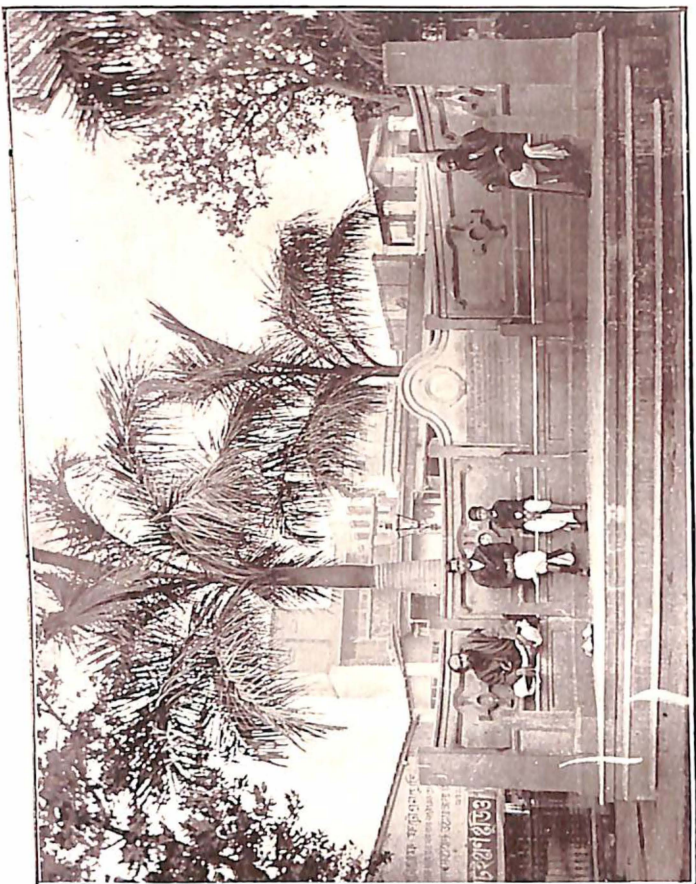
The organ of the Brahma Somaj, *The World and the New Dispensation*, thus speaks of him: 'We

love to think of him as a Brahmin who, in an age of unbelief, beheld the beauty of Christ. . . . A convert to Christianity, he did not cut himself off from the sacred circle of his nation; indeed, Indian aspirations and ideals found in him a voice fully charged with wisdom and piety.'

A staunch Hindu paper, *The Amrita Bazaar Patrika*, says: 'A profound scholar, a fervent patriot, a born orator, a man of stainless character, deep purity and sweet manners.'

Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjea, Hindu, nationalist, educationalist, and Editor of *The Bengalee*, in a speech before a large Hindu audience, said: 'I have never come across in the whole of my life a greater, higher, and a nobler soul than the soul of the late Mr. Kali Charan Banurji (cheers). He was the very personification of gentleness. He had no self-assertion, no desire to obtrude himself into places where he was not wanted. Humility—a Christian child-like humility—was incarnated in that guiltless personality.'

Dr. Rash Behary Ghose, C.S.I., C.I.E., a highly respected and influential Hindu, and a vakil of the High Court who is widely known as a very distinguished lawyer and a man of profound erudition, as well as a conspicuous former member of the Bengal and Imperial Legislative Councils, said in his presidential address before the twenty-third Indian National Congress: 'When we think of the lonely Scotch Cemetery in Koraya where the remains were laid we cannot help feeling how much learning, how



MEMORIAL, BEADON SQUARE

much modest and unassuming simplicity, how much piety, how much winsome tenderness, and how much patriotism lie buried in the grave of Kali Charan Banurji. That hand which everybody was glad to touch is vanished. That voice which everybody was glad to hear is still. But if to live in the hearts and memories of those whom we leave behind is not to die, then Kali Charan is not dead but is still alive. True, he no longer lives in his own person, but he lives in us and will live in those who succeed us, enjoying an immortality which is not given to all the sons of men.'

After his death, his many friends wished to erect a suitable memorial to his memory. What could be a better site than the spot in Beadon Square where for years he helped in the open-air preaching, labouring for his Master, and what more appropriate thing than a great semicircular seat in stone masonry with a medallion bust in bronze and an inscription as follows:—

'This seat has been erected by the Christian friends and admirers of Kali Charan Banurji, to perpetuate the memory of one, who by his high character, great qualities of head and heart, became a prominent leader in all movements intended to further the spiritual and social welfare of his country and whose teaching testified to the truth and power of Christianity.'

One might quote scores of resolutions, expressions of condolence with members of his family, and

estimates of his character, but perhaps one other will be sufficient. It comes from the missionaries, among whom he found his deepest and most abiding friendships, and among whom he had laboured all his life for the cause of truth and righteousness:—

The Calcutta Missionary Conference desire to place on record their sense of profound sorrow at the death in his sixtieth year on February 6, 1907, of Mr. Kali Charan Banurji, one of its oldest, ablest, and most devoted members. He was distinguished for his childlike humility, tenderness of affection and indefatigable zeal in every good cause. Adorned with great intellectual powers, and famed afar as scholar, orator and patriot, he was pre-eminently a man of God, a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, a humble, steadfast and devout Christian, exhibiting in both public and private life the charm of a Christ-like character.

He held for many years the honoured position of leader of the Bengal Christian community, faithful, wise and beloved, but his influence was widely felt, and by a vigorous co-operation with the good of every name, in every cause that appealed to him as good, persistently sought the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the welfare of his fellowmen, thereby promoting the glory of God. By his death the Conference cannot but feel that they have sustained an irreparable loss, but they rejoice in the faith that he now dwells in the presence and joy of his beloved Lord.

It is difficult in short compass to give a true estimate of the character of this humble man of God, and impossible to measure his influence, for it will go on for ever showing itself in the lives of men made purer and in a world made better. The more one knew of him and the closer one associated with him, the more truly did one come to appreciate

the depths of his character. It is inspiring to contemplate that God's grace can take a boy born in the superstition and idolatry of Hinduism and make of him the man that Kali Charan Banurji became. Examples like this are what give men courage to spend and be spent in the mission field, and the church the fidelity in supporting them there. Even now it is hard to realize that he is gone. We miss him still upon every side, for he was so bound up with all that was good, and was ever ready to help.

As we pay our loving tribute to the memory of one we delighted to call a friend, we remind ourselves of the magna charta of the Christians' hope on which Kali Charan Banurji rested his faith: 'Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.' He lives to-day the resurrection life, all unseen by us; that life which he had begun while still with us. He, the gentle, loving one, lives as a distinct personality; for as the Master said, 'because I live ye shall live also.'

I do believe that just the same sweet face
 But glorified, is waiting in the place
 Where we shall meet, if only I
 Am counted worthy in that by and by.

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