

The Missionary Activity
of the
Ancient Nestorian Church.

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Introduction.

"Their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world" (Rom.X.18). Where can we find a more accurate description of the missionary activity of the 'church of the east' - the so called Nestorian Church. It is frequently assumed that until the nineteenth century the gospel had not been carried to many parts of Asia, and countries such as Afghanistan, Tibet and Nepaul are spoken of as lands still closed to the gospel message, the assumption being that this has always been so.

Sometimes it has been asked what would have happened had St. Paul, instead of turning his attention to Macedonia and Europe, gone to the east, implying that Europe was specially favoured as compared with the continent of Asia. Most people are aware that a strong Christian church existed in North Africa in the early centuries, but that there was a church in the east in no way inferior to the churches of the west, a church that carried its witness to the furthest confines of Asia, is not so generally known.

This may be due partly to the mistaken impression that the empire of Rome dominated the whole ^{world} and that outside the range of its operations there was nothing of any importance to record.

The territory of the Roman empire lay mainly in Europe and in that part of Asia to the west of the Euphratus. But to the east of the Euphratus, at the very time when Rome was at the zenith of its power, there existed an empire, first under the Parthian Arsacids and later under the Persian Sassanians - the sixth and seventh of Rawlinson's great Oriental monarchies - which rivalled that of Rome both in extent and power. It extended to and included a considerable part of, modern India

and was the only empire able successfully to withstand Roman aggression.

A second reason why so little is known of the 'church of the east' is that when the Mohammedan deluge swept over Asia, especially in its latest form under Tamerlane, the records of countless Christian monasteries throughout the whole continent were ruthlessly destroyed, scarcely a vestige being left.

The nerve centre of this marvellous church was first in Edessa and then in the Persian province of Adiabene. With its ecclesiastical headquarters at Ctesiphon-Seleucia on the Tigris it spread west and south to the Red Sea and east and north east throughout the whole of Persia, including, as Persia then did, Afghanistan and the northern part of India. Then stimulated by persecutions surpassing anything ever experienced by the churches of the west, and nourished by its wonderful missionary monastic schools, which poured forth a constant stream of missionary volunteer ascetics, its energies overtook the boundaries of empire and reached out to the regions beyond.

Through the whole of Central Asia, Turkestan, Mongolia, China and Japan its messengers wended their way. They were checked neither by Siberian snows nor by the tropical heat of Java and the adjoining islands.

There is evidence that there were Christians in Japan before the close of the eighth century. That there were not only strong Christian communities, but Christian kings and Christian generals in China and in the countries adjoining, before the middle of the seventh century is equally well authenticated. The same is true of Mongolia, Siberia in the neighbourhood of Lake Baikal, India north as well as south, Ceylon, Burmah and the straits of Malacca. Indeed the difficulty is to find a place in all Asia where Nestorian Christians or

missionaries have not been. They occupied positions of influence and importance, and one at least of the Mongol emperors is known to have been a Christian while the wives of several were ~~also~~ Christians and exerted a wholesome Christian influence. From about the end of the second century until the beginning of the fourteenth this church was noted for its missionary zeal, and then came the tragedy of its eclipse and practical disappearance from the greater part of the area in which it once held sway.

This was due to various causes. In India the so called Asokan rock and pillar inscriptions dating from A.D. 200 to A.D. 300 and the invention of the Krishna and other avatars of Vishnu not earlier than A.D. 600, were, it is claimed, meant to check the progress that Christianity was then making, but the chief factor in the eclipse and final ~~extermination~~ extermination of Christianity from Northern and Central India and the whole of Central Asia was the rise of Mohammedanism dating from A.D. 622. The last emperor of the Sassanian dynasty was defeated by the Mohammedans about the middle of the seventh century. With the fall of the Persian empire the way was opened for the spread of Islam ~~over~~^{to} the whole of Persia and although not all ~~the~~ Moslem rulers were anti-Christian, most of them were, and the disqualifications under which Christians were placed, ~~led~~ led, either to wholesale secessions to Mohammedanism on the part of nominal Christians, or to the emigration to other lands of many of the more genuine followers of Christ.

Beyond the borders of Persia the progress of Islam was much slower and it was many years before it secured a footing in Transoxania and further east. The accession of Seljuk and other Turks to Mohammedanism at the end of the tenth century

not only saved Islam from extinction, but brought new life to the Abbasid ~~Khal~~ifate. At the same time it led to increased persecution of the Christians - the new converts to Islam proving more antagonistic to Christianity than the Abbasides themselves. This experience was repeated two centuries later when the Mongol viceroys and Il-khans of Persia were won over to ^{the} Mohammedan faith; but of all others the most bitter persecutor was Tamerlane, obsessed, as he was, by the determination to extirpate Christianity from his dominions.

To give a connected account of the missionary enterprise of this most missionary of all churches and at the same time to indicate reasons for its almost total disappearance from a large part of the area where it once flourished is the object of this treatise.



Chapter I.

Its Missionary Centre - The Church in Persia.

The Missionary propaganda of the 'Church of the East' is a subject of absorbing interest. It will help us to understand the enthusiasm that characterized it and the rapidity with which it spread throughout Asia if we look first at its home base - the church in Persia in the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. This was the centre from which the evangel was carried to the furthest limits of China, Mongolia, Siberia, Japan and India.

During the first two centuries of the present era the Parthians were the dominant race in Persia, but in 225 A.D. the Sassanid Persian dynasty overthrew the Arsacids and succeeded the Parthians in the possession of Iran.

The religion of the Persians was dualism or Mazdaeism, another name for Zoroastrianism. They were fire worshippers. Their modern representatives are the Parsees, one of the most progressive and enterprising races in India. They had a hierarchy of priests called Mobeds under a chief called the Mobedan Mobed, and observed very "elaborate principles of ritual cleanness, and defilement". "The Mobed wore a mouth covering when tending the holy fire lest his breath defile it. Especially were death and a dead body unclean. A corpse may not defile earth, fire or water". Hence their method of exposing their dead on "Towers of Silence" to be eaten by vultures.

It is not to Persia proper however, but to Edessa, (Modern Urfa) in northern Mesopotamia, seventy eight miles south west of Diarbekir, the capital of the small state of Osrhoene, that we must look for the beginning of that great missionary movement which had such marvellous results. Osrhoene, a sort of buffer

state between Parthia and Rome, maintained a semi independence under the suzerainty of Parthia until 216 A.D. when the Romans took possession and made it a Roman colony.

There is much that is traditional in the happenings of those early days. The Assyrian Christians believe that Christianity was brought to Edessa in the first century by Addai or Thaddens who is supposed to have been either Thaddeus the apostle or one of the seventy. Rawlinson refers to Christianity as spreading in Parthia as early as 114 A.D. and ^{it} is certain that before the close of the second century Edessa had become a strong Christian centre. This is proved by the fact that when the first Sassanian king gained a decisive victory over Artaban the last monarch of the Parthian dynasty in 225 A.D. and the Sassanians succeeded the Arsacids as rulers of the 'East', they found strong Christian communities already existing, and recognised them as a 'melet' or subject race of the empire. // Another tradition bearing on the spread of the gospel into Persia tells of Mari, the disciple of Thaddeus, as having been sent as a missionary to Seleucia by his fellow workers at Edessa. He found the soil there very hard and the people so unresponsive that he wished to return. He wrote to those who had sent him saying "the inhabitants are worthless heathen. I am not able to do any good I shall return to you or go elsewhere". His fellow Christians however would not agree and wrote ~~him~~ to him that he must sow and till "those hills and mountains so that they might bring fruit for an offering to the Lord". He continued at his post, working also in Adiabene, and his efforts were crowned with such success that large numbers of the people of the province of Adiabene, between the Greater and the Lesser Zab rivers, became followers

Yohanan:
The death
of a
Nation p.36.

Rawlinson:
Sixth
Oriental
Monarchy
p.500.

Yohanan:
p.38.

of Christ. Adiabene, with its capital Arbela, ~~and~~ shares with Edessa the glory of being ^{one of} the nerve centres from which the gospel spread throughout the whole of Persia and thence to the regions beyond. In the reign of Marcus Aurelius 161 - 180 A.D. Christianity is referred to as spreading not only in Parthia but in Media, Persia and Bactria and as "steadily increasing among all ranks". And by the time of Abd-Mshikha (190-225), the last Bishop of Arbela prior to the advent of the Sassanian dynasty, the church is reported as extending from the mountains of Kurdistan to the Persian Gulf. In that area there were said to be no less than twenty five bishops. Mshikha-Zkha a writer of the sixth century mentions the names of seventeen of their sees, One of which was among the Dailams in the vicinity of the Caspian Sea.

Yohanan
p.39.

Mingana:
Sources
Syriaque
quoted by
Yohanan
p.39.

Mingana is of opinion that "the city of Arbela played for the countries extending east, north, and south of the Tigris a role no less important (if somewhat less known) than that played by Edessa in the Trans-euphratic provinces of the Roman and Persian empires in particular, and in Syria and Palestine in general". He quotes Sozomen as saying "that the majority of the inhabitants of Adiabene were Christians". The immense majority of these and of the Christians in Persia generally" were of Persian and not Semitic or Aramean birth and extraction. Many were born of Christian parents who originally belonged to ~~the~~ Zoroastrianism." "Middle Persian or Pahlawi was in constant use among Persian Christian doctors".

Mingana A:
Early Spread
of Chris-
tianity:
Bulletin of
John Rylands
Library
Vol.9 No.2
p.300.

The ordination of Pkidha first bishop of Arbela dates back to the end of the first century.

In the early days there was probably very little organization. The bishops, or presbyters as they were frequently

designated, were somewhat like pilgrim preachers, passing from place to place and looking after their people as best they could. They probably proceeded on much the same lines as those recorded of St. Paul in the Acts of the Apostles. In all probability also they supported themselves as he did. Many of them were traders. Others were craftsmen, such as carpenters, smiths, and weavers. One of the complaints brought against them by sacerdotalists in connection with their missionary work in later times was that the merchant could so easily lay aside his calling and become a monk or Presbyter, and vice versa.

By the end of the second century the church of Edessa possessed the four gospels in the native Syriac, and we may be sure that each of its missionary preachers would carry with him a gospel at least, if not Tatian's harmony of the four, the so called Diatessaron. The Syriac Old Testament, probably the work of Jews, may be older than the Gospels. It is possible that even then there existed a school of the prophets in Edessa and that from it a constant succession of itinerant missionaries went forth to the remotest provinces of the Persian empire, Arabia and other neighbouring countries. One thing is certain, that in the following century (363 A.D.) when Nisibis the great military fort on the frontier, and five provinces were ceded by the Romans to Persia, the theological school then at Nisibis was transferred to Edessa. It was re-opened under the presidency of Ephraim, the friend of James, the well known bishop of Nisibis, and in a short time became a centre of theological instruction and of western culture for all the Christians of the east. This was during the great persecution under Sapor II, referred to later, which made it

Wigram:
p.148.

impossible to continue the school at Nisibis. "There were in Persia, as far as we know, no Christian schools at that time, though Magian schools abounded, and the 'teacher' was a recognised and honoured grade in their hierarchy. The Christian who desired learning (and the Assyrian thirst for it is keener than even his thirst for money) must cross the frontier to where Christianity ruled".

From Edessa then as from Arbela and Adiabene flowed streams of blessing to all parts of the Persian empire. In the next century when the eastern Roman empire had become Monophysite, the school at Edessa was suppressed, and Ibas, who was then at the head of it, removed to Nisibis and opened a school there which soon began to exercise a widespread and far reaching influence. The ban on Christian schools in Persia had by that time been removed.

One element which must have tended to strengthen the missionary activity of the Church of the East was the stream of refugees which turned towards Persia to escape the persecutions in the eastern Roman empire. We read that during the reign of Decius A.D.249 a great multitude of Christians in all the Roman provinces were cut off by various punishments and sufferings in a persecution "more cruel and terrific than any that had preceded it". "Immense numbers, being dismayed not so much by the fear of death as by dread of long continued tortures, professed to renounce Christianity".

In the time of Diocletian 303-304 there were insurrections in Syria and Armenia, the blame for which was laid upon the Christians and "a great number of excellent men were either capitally punished or condemned to the mines". In those days the persecution of Christians in Persia had not

yet begun, Christianity, as already stated, being recognised by the state as a subject 'melet'. It was not until Christianity became the official religion of the Roman empire that trouble arose in Persia. We cannot doubt, therefore, that as happened in France consequent on the revocation of the edict of Nantes, numbers of ^{the} very finest Christians, especially those in the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, must have saved themselves by crossing the border into Persia where they were sure of a welcome by those of their own faith. This was even more so after the rise of the Nestorian controversy. Some of those who had supported Nestorius at Ephesus were won over to the side of Cyril by tardy concessions, and they or their successors subscribed, even if reluctantly, to the decrees of Chalcedon. Those who dissented were crushed by penal laws and driven from the empire. By the time of Justinian it was difficult to find a church sharing the views of Nestorius within the whole Roman empire. Outside of those limits and carrying their faith with them, those who had crossed the borders rather than deny their faith "discovered a new world in which they might hope for liberty" and met congenial companions animated by the same devotion to Christ that they themselves had.

Gibbon:
Vol. VIII
p. 339
(12 Vol.
edition)

"The bigotry of Justinian was punished by the emigration of his most pious and industrious subjects. They transported into Persia the arts both of peace and war". "Like the Huguenots who after the revocation of the edict of Nantes brought the silk trade to England, like ^{the} Pilgrim Fathers who carried the best of Puritan energy out of England to found a new world, the Nestorians came to Mesopotamia with the arts and crafts of life - carpenters, smiths, weavers, - the best of the artisan class. They came to start industries and lay the foundations

Gibbon:
Vol. VIII
p. 340.

Adeney:
pp. 479, 480.

of manufacturing prosperity in the land of their adoption". "Nor did they go merely as exiles. Their very troubles converted them into missionaries". "At home they were denounced as heretics; abroad, where no rumours of miserable doctrinal disputes were heard, they simply journeyed as enthusiastic missionaries of the gospel". They were remarkably successful in winning converts in one place after another as they penetrated further and further into the unknown lands of Asia. Such an influx of fresh life must have given a great impetus to the cause of Christ in Persia. The result was two fold: "The increase in numbers and the zeal and devotion of men who were exiles for their faith stimulated the churches", and made them still more than they already were, centres of missionary propaganda, and secondly, their advent led to a change of policy on the part of the Persian government towards the Christians. In former times this had been adverse, especially during the period 339 A.D. to 379 A.D. when multitudes suffered martyrdom under Sapor II. The fires of persecution tended to purge the church, and deepened its spirituality but the price paid was heavy.

When the Magi, another name for the Zoroastrian priesthood, stirred up opposition against the Christians on religious grounds, and in the interest of Zoroastrianism, the Sassanian kings, suspicious of the emissaries of the gospel, were inclined to look upon the latter as allies of their hereditary foes. Those who had embraced the faith, might also favour the cause of these same foes. The influx of Nestorians, however, and the fact that they were no longer in communion with either Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, or Alexandria, meant that they were no

longer a political danger to Persia and when, according to Gibbon, one prelate represented Nestorius as the friend of Persia, Piroz (457-484) was won over and ready to comply with the prelate's request that in order to secure the fidelity of his Christian subjects he would give preference to the victims and enemies of the Roman tyrant.

Gibbon:
Vol.VIII
p.348.

The Persian kings and the Nestorians now tended to draw together in self defence against attacks from the Roman foe. The original Christians too, joined hands with the new comers. Houses of charity were endowed for the education of orphans and foundlings, with the result that crowds of fugitives were attracted from all parts of the empire. The Nestorians and the Magi by mutual concessions softened the antagonism due to other than political grounds, existing between them. Part of the concession on the part of the Nestorians was ^{the} toning down of the rigor of their Asceticism in the matter of the celibacy of the clergy which the Magi especially objected to, and in the year 499 A.D. at a synod presided over by Babaeus the patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, they abolished all clerical celibacy, permitting even bishops to marry.

Gibbon:
Vol.VIII
pp.340,342.

Although the relaxation was regarded with horror by the bishops of the west it seems to have worked well in the 'Church of the East', which continued to flourish and expand. Liberty to marry was later again withdrawn and the Nestorian Church assimilated its custom to that of the Greek church in requiring its bishops to be celibate. Just when the restriction as regards marriage in the case of the higher clergy was re-introduced, is not known. They were still permitted to marry in the 7th century, and one writer speaks of the metropolitan of Nisibis, himself a married man, as having in the

12th century convened a synod which decreed that bishops should be allowed to marry.

The first to recognise the importance of a regular organisation was Papa, metropolitan of Seleucia from about 280 A.D. He was a man of considerable learning and ability but somewhat hasty in temper. He wished to make Seleucia the head of the 'Church of the East', and though at first unsuccessful he ultimately succeeded and with the consent of the other metropolitans, assumed the title of Catholicos.

In 424 A.D. at a Council held in Seleucia it was decided that the Catholicos should be called by the title of Patriarch and should be entirely independent of Antioch or any western see. This was emphasised again at another council held in 498 A.D. Antioch at that time was strongly Monophysite, and anathematised the 'Church of the East'. The two had nothing therefore in common and entire separation was the natural outcome.

Persia was to a great extent immune from the heresies that troubled the church of the west. Christianity had been recognised as a 'melet' but it was a Nestorian 'melet' and, to begin with, no other sect was tolerated. During the wars with Rome however it sometimes happened that whole districts of the invaded territories were depopulated and the inhabitants transported to Persia. Many of these were Christians, and during the time of the Monophysite domination in Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople, those thus transported were mostly if not entirely Monophysite or Jacobite Christians. Their bishops were transported with them and settled in different parts of the country. In 540 A.D. Chosroes I. carried a huge train of captives, mostly Monophysite, from Antioch to

right:
p.241.

Seleucia and built a town called New Antioch for their reception. In 573 A.D. the experiment was repeated and 2,90,000 captives, brought from Roman to Persian territory, were settled in various towns, and formed a welcome addition to the hitherto numerically weak Monophysite body.

The wide and continuous expansion of Christianity as the result of the labours of Nestorian missionaries, added an immense extent of territory to the jurisdiction of the Patriarch, all the converts in the new districts being taught to look upon him as their ecclesiastical head. The seat of the patriarchate was in the twin cities of Seleucia² Ctesiphon, one on either bank of the Tigris, the centre of trade and travel between Europe and Western Asia on the one hand and India and China on the other. "It was a magnificent centre for the missionary church that was entering on its great task of carrying the gospel to the far east".

Wiltch:
Geography
Statistics
of the
Church
pp.226-238.

Wiltch quotes Assemani as stating that Manes or M'ana the 18th Metropolitan of Seleucia was the first to become a spontaneous convert to Nestorianism and that he was deposed on that account in 431 A.D. Assemani, however, has overlooked the fact that Nestorius himself was only condemned in 431 A.D. Further, Manes was Metropolitan or Catholicos not in 431 but in 420 A.D. long before ever Nestorianism had been heard of. He was deposed by the king not on account of his doctrines but because he was supposed to have been cognisant as Catholicos of the action of two men Abda and Narses (who afterwards suffered martyrdom) who had extinguished the sacred fire in one of the temples.

By the end of the 5th century and the middle of the

6th the area occupied by the Nestorians for which the patriarch of Seleucia was responsible, included all the countries to the east and those immediately to the west of *the* Euphratus. These were Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Socotra, Mesopotamia, Chaldaea, Persia, Media, Bactria, Hyrcania and India. Cosmas Indicopleustes, in his Christian Topography, adds Calliana, Male, and Sieldiva (Ceylon). This would seem to indicate that the India referred to was north rather than south India. Subordinate to the patriarch were nine metropolitans and there were clergy in Bactria, among the Huns, in Persarmenia, Media, Elamis and throughout Persia, and in the island of Dioscoris in the Indian Ocean.

The province of Patriarchalis had Cascara or Cascar in northern Mesopotamia not far from The Euphratus as the seat of its metropolitan. Abdas the 3rd metropolitan fell a martyr in the 36th year of the persecution by Sapor II.

There were bishoprics at Anbara, ~~Anbar~~ or Enbar, a city of Chaldaea belonging to the territory of Bagdad, at Sena and Elsen at the mouth of the Lesser Zab on the Tigris, and at Badraia near Seleucia. One writer says the number of churches "from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea was almost infinite and their faith was conspicuous in the number and sanctity of their monks and martyrs".

NOTE: B.J. Kidd holds that the title of Catholicos was adopted at the council of Seleucia in 410 A.D. and that it was originally a civil title applied to imperial ministers of finance, whether for the Diocese or Empire, and came to mean Procurator General, some one's deputy, like the Vice Chancellor of Oxford University. He claims too that the Catholicos of Seleucia was subordinate to the Patriarch of Antioch. Kidd is obviously wrong both as to the date of the title Catholicos and as to Seleucia being in any sense subordinate to Antioch. The first to be called by that name was Papa, metropolitan of Seleucia from 280 to 328 A.D. The

Assemani:
III ii pp
81,91.

Wiltch:pp.
226-238.

Assemani:
III ii
p.708.

Kidd:
History of
the Church
461 A.D.
p.269.

Wigram:
p.34 ff.

Assemani
III ii
415.

title was conceded to Papa by the Council held in 315 A.D. ~~and~~ Assemani speaks of him as primate of Seleucia at the time of the Nicene Council. The title of Patriarch as already stated dates officially from the council held in 424 A.D., but had been in use for some time prior to that. Nowhere do we find any indication of the subordination of any one patriarchate to another. G. Bartoli in his book "The Primitive Church and the Primacy of Rome" has conclusively disproved this as regards Rome. What applies to Rome applies equally to the other patriarchates. Not only so but the 'Church of the East' at the council referred to (424 A.D.) definitely repudiated any such claim. As a matter of fact even the western patriarchates in their fully developed form only date from the time of the Council of Constantinople. Fisher writing regarding this says "about that time (381 A.D.) the name of patriarch which had previously been a name (or title) of respect applied to every bishop, was appropriated exclusively to the bishops of the great sees of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch". To these, later on Jerusalem was added because of ~~Antioch's~~ its historic importance. Had Seleucia been in any way subordinate to Antioch the fact would certainly have been noted.

F.P.Fisher
The History
of the Church
pp.104-105.

Kidd:p.272
Neale:Vol.I
pp.151,152.

Kidd is also wrong in speaking of the church in Persia as schismatic. Neale says that though heretical the Nestorians can hardly be called schismatical because they have constantly retained their (apostolic) succession and for centuries had no branch of the true church co-existent with them in their territories.

Kidd:III
p.413.

The schismatics were really those of Constantinople, Antioch and Alexandria when they became Monophysites, as they did officially in 482 A.D., when the emperor Zeno addressed his 'Henoticon' or instrument of union to the Byzantine bishops: The Church of the East and the Patriarchate of Rome alone remained Dyophysite.

Chapter II

Contributing Factors in Nestorian Missionary Activity (a) Persecution (b) Monasticism.

Reference was made in ^{the} previous chapter to the added vigour that came to the 'Church of the East', with the great influx of Christians, as a result of the persecutions under Decius and Diocletian, and later, from the persecution, by the Monophysites of the Eastern Roman empire, of those who either sympathised with Nestorius or remained orthodox instead of becoming Monophysite. The former preceded and the latter followed the Persian persecutions under Sapor II 339-379 A.D., Bahram V. 420 A.D., and Yezd'gerd II in 438 A.D.

The importance of ^{the} Persian persecutions can scarcely be overestimated as a contributing factor in the marvellous expansion of Nestorian Missions that took place in the 5th and subsequent centuries. They were much more severe, and extended over a much wider area than any of those which took place under the Roman emperors. It was a repetition but on a very much larger scale of Acts VIII, i, "At that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word". The persecution under Sapor continued for a much longer period but those under Bahram and Yezd'gerd were much more severe. Countless numbers suffered death rather than deny their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Many apostatised, but hosts of others crossed the frontier into Roman territory on the north, (reversing what had taken place under the Roman persecutions) into Arabia on the South and West, to the furthest extremes of the Persian empire, in the east and north east, and into the territories beyond, such as Transoxania and Turkistan.

Wherever they went, whether^{as} merchants or artisans, clergy or laity, they carried the gospel with them. Supporting themselves by the labour of their own hands, or filling appointments as secretaries, physicians or stewards in the households of the nobles and princes of those lands to which they went, they were one and all missionaries of the cross.

By the time of Sapor II the Roman empire had become officially Christian. Constantine even claimed a sort of protectorate over all Christians and wrote to Sapor on the subject, asking protection and favour for the Christians residing in Persia. The two empires being almost constantly at war, it was only natural, as has already been indicated, that the Persians should be suspicious of those holding the Roman faith lest they should be in the pay of the latter and play the part of spies. And all the more because the Christians, even those who spoke Persian, used Syriac in their church services. Add to this the jealousy of the Mazdean hierarchy with which the king was surrounded, and one can easily understand how when Sapor began a war with the Romans he naturally began to persecute the Christians at the same time. The Jews (also were) suspected of helping to further the aims of the Magians by adding to the flame of hatred against the Christians whom they also hated. They were in favour with the queen, and were supposed to have used their influence with her to injure the Christians. At all events, it is certain that the Jews ^{no less than} as well as the heathen rejoiced in the distress that the cruelty of Sapor brought on the Christians. Noeldeke quoted by Labourt thinks that the accusation against the Jews was justified. Duval reserves his judgement.

O'Leary:
p.74.

Labourt:
Le Christianisme
dans
l'empire
perse
p.58.

Labourt:
p.58.

Tigram:
p.61.

The first 'Firman' of persecution ordered all Christians to pay double tax as a contribution to the cost of the war, and the Catholicos or Patriarch, as representing the church, was ordered to collect the amount. This, Mar Shimun, the then Catholicos, refused to do, on the ground that his people were too poor to pay, and further, that he was not a tax collector. Immediately his arrest and the destruction of all Christian churches were ordered. He was arrested at Seleucia and taken to Karka d'Ledan where the king then was. His farewell blessing to his flock has been handed down to us "May the cross of our Lord" he says "be the protection of the people of Jesus. May the peace of God be with the servants of God and stablish your hearts in the faith of Christ, in tribulation and in ease, in life and in death, now and for evermore".

Labourt:
p.64.

He was offered freedom, not only for himself but for his 'melet' or people, if he would worship the sun only once. "The sun went into mourning when its creator died" said Shimun. The king begged him by the memory of their personal friendship to yield, but the Catholicos remained firm, and on the morning of the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, in the year 339 A.D., he, five bishops and 100 minor clergy, probably Rabbans, sealed their testimony with their blood, Mar Shimun being the last to suffer. He died for two of the noblest causes for which it is possible for man to suffer - his faith in God and his duty to his people. The persecution thus begun, lasted for forty years. It is not easy, nor is it necessary, to give a connected account of all that took place. All that we need do is to illustrate

by a few incidents the steadfastness and courage with which it was borne. When the martyrdom of Mar Shimun and his companions was taking place, of those under condemnation, one Hanania, seemed to hesitate. At the sight of the sword which was about to strike he trembled and appeared as if about to yield. Then a high official in the palace, a prefect by the name of Pusaik or Pusak, called out from the midst of the crowd of onlookers, "Do not be afraid, Hanania. Shut your eyes a little that you may open them on the light of Christ". Hardly had he said these words when Pusak was seized by the guards and dragged to the palace before the king. Sapor, annoyed by the intervention of this nobleman and afraid perhaps of finding himself surrounded by officers won over to this new doctrine who might avenge the death of their co-religionists on his own person, angrily asked Pushak "Have I not given you work to do? Why then do you ignore my orders and stay to look at the punishment of these 'good for nothings?" Pusak replied "Would to God that my work might increase through their idleness and that my life might be changed by their death. As for the work you have given me to do: I esteem it not because it is full of cares and, I value the punishment to which you have condemned them because it is full of joy". Incensed, the king replied: "You ask death in place of your work? you wish to be treated like them?". The happy man answered "I am a Christian, I believe in their God. That is why I envy their punishment and despise your dignity". The king greatly angered by this, cried out "May he not die like the others, but because he has despised my majesty, and has spoken with me as an equal, seize his tongue and tear it out by the roots

through his throat so that those who are living may fear me because of him". The orders of the king were immediately carried out and Pusak put to death most cruelly. // A 'Firman' is not so much a command as a permission to act. It meant the releasing of that race hatred and fanaticism which had hitherto been held in check. We have had illustrations of what that may mean in our own day in connection with the massacres of Armenians in Turkey and the Boxer rebellion in China. One cause of offence was that the Christians differed from the Zoroastrians in their habits and customs, as for example, in the burial of the dead and the tendency to look upon celibacy as a superior form of living, both customs being very repugnant to the Magian hierarchy.

The persecution proper began with an indiscriminate massacre of Christians around Susa. It lasted for a fortnight and was probably reproduced in other Christian centres. Generally it was officials of every kind who took the initiative. Satraps, or Mazbans, Rads, or simple heads of villages, could at their pleasure arrest or imprison the followers of Christ. Any man of position, or at least a provincial governor or Mobed, could examine the Christians and put them to death. This they did, sometimes without examination. Some governors however did not act on the 'Firman'.

Bishops, or Presbyters, were especially the objects of persecution. Two successors of Mar Shinun were put to death within six years and the office of Catholicos then remained vacant for twenty years. Some were stoned by renegade Christians as the price of their lives. When the war with Julian came to an end, as a condition of peace, the Romans handed

over to Sapor five provinces containing six bishoprics and a population largely Christian. The Christians were immediately deported to distant provinces of Persia and orders given to deal severely with all the leaders who would not abandon the religion of Caesar. One detachment of Christians with a bishop and several clergy were given the choice of apostacy or death, but out of 300 only 25 accepted their lives on the terms offered. Other companies were dealt with in the same way.

Labourt:
p.79.

Women also were numbered among the martyrs. Tarbo the sister of Mar Shimun, a Rabbanyati or deaconess, was arrested in Seleucia. The queen had fallen ill and the Jews persuaded her that her illness was due to the sorceries of the Christians and particularly of the sister of Shimun who thus avenged the death of her brother. The queen, believing the insinuations of the Jews, had Tarbo, her sister, and their servant, arrested and brought to the capital. The trial was conducted by the chief Mobed. Notwithstanding their protests they were condemned to death, and on the advice of the accusers were cut in pieces. The queen was then carried in a litter in the midst of their dead bodies so as to ward off their so called malpractices. Chief among the persecutors were, Ardasir, governor of Adiabene, the Mobed Adargusnasp, and Adarsabur, the Mobedan Mobed or chief of the Mobeds.

Labourt:
pp.69,70.

In 345 A.D., a layman by the name of Hanania arrested at Arbela by the order of the Mobed, Adursag, was subjected to the torture of the iron combs, and having been left for dead, was rescued by fellow Christians and carried to his house

Dr. Neale:
The Pat-
riarchate
of Antioch
p.129.

where he recovered sufficiently to express anew his faith in Christ and then died. Many of the martyrs were natives of Adiabene. The greater number of the inhabitants of this province seem at that time to have been Christians. Daniel, a Presbyter, and Warda or Rose, a consecrated virgin, after suffering torments for a period of three months and having had their feet bored with sharp irons, were placed in freezing water for five days and then beheaded.

From the same province, 120 Christians, nine being consecrated virgins and the rest ecclesiastics of different ranks, were imprisoned in a filthy dungeon at Seleucia. Here they were succoured by a noble Christian lady named Jardundoeta, a native of Arbela. On the morning of their martyrdom she commended herself to their prayers, arranged for their honourable interment and was privileged to see them enter victorious into glory.

Dr. Neale:
The Pat-
riarchate
of Antioch
p.130.

In 346 A.D. a fresh edict against the Christians was issued and vast numbers suffered throughout the various provinces but their names have been lost. One James and his sister Mary "a daughter of the covenant" were arrested by Narses Tamaspur, a violent persecutor, who commanded them to feed on some preparation of blood. Rather than do this the brother and sister 'submitted their necks to the axe'. An apostate noble named Mahdades was entrusted with their execution and beheaded them with his own hands.

When the persecution began, modern Kurdistan, Khuzistan and Louristan must have been almost entirely Christian.

Idem p.130. Bishops were plentiful, presbyters were stationed in almost every village of importance, and consecrated virgins were

numerous. One Paul, a rich presbyter in the little town of Casciaz, was accused by Narses Tanaspur, the persecutor already referred to. When planning to seize the presbyter, the police arrested five "daughters of ^{the} covenant, named Thecla, Mary, Martha, a second Mary, and Anna". The wretched presbyter in the hope of saving his property abjured Christ. Tanaspur, disappointed at the thought of losing Paul's money and wishing to prevent ~~ing~~ his persisting in his apostacy, appointed him executioner of the "consecrated virgins", hoping that a task of such awful disgrace would compel him to retract his abjuration. ~~and~~ ^{But} just as Iscariot betrayed Christ for the pieces of silver, Paul stooped even to this for gain. The virgins having received 100 stripes were handed over to their late presbyter to be slain. "Are we, they said, to be made a sacrifice by those very hands from which so recently we received that holy thing, the sacrifice and propitiation of the whole world?". But so it was. They were beheaded by him. But this did not save him. That very night the guards of Narses entered the prison and slew the miserable apostate. ~~Many~~ Many other instances of those who suffered in this long drawn out persecution under Sapor II might be given. It is, however, sufficient to say that according to the ecclesiastical historian Sozomen (ii 14) the martyrs whose names are known numbered 16,000, while there were countless unrecorded sufferers. Most of those whose names are known belonged to the town of Leda where the persecution was most severe. The records of other provinces or cities have either not been so fully kept or have been lost. Sapor II died in 379 A.D. and was succeeded by his brother Ardasher II who reigned four years and under whom the persecution continued in a modified form.

Labourt:
p.84

For thirty-seven years after the death of Ardasher in 383 A.D., the Christians in the Persian empire were left in comparative peace. In 410 A.D. an agreement was come to between the council, which met at Seleucia in that year, and Yezd'gerd I, under which certain privileges and rights were secured to the Christians. This very fact, however, was a cause of offence to the Mazdean priesthood and to the Iranian nobles. So great was the power of these two bodies that even the king could not ignore them without danger to his throne as well as to his life. The antagonism of the two parties to the Christian religion was aggravated by the growth in the Christian community that had taken place during the years of quiet when there seemed to be no longer any danger of martyrdom. New bishops had been appointed and new metropolitan sees formed, and worst of all, a great number of high officials of the state had indicated their adherence to the new religion. Yezd'gerd himself was troubled by this state of affairs and tried to compel those of the nobles who had been converted to apostatise but without success. Still, with the exception of a few cases, brought about partly by the imprudence of some of the Christians at Hormizdardasir, a town of Huzistan, which led to the martyrdom of Mar Abda and a few others, peace was on the whole maintained and the pledges given by Yezd'gerd to the council of 410 observed, although Hoffmann asserts that he became a persecutor before his death and mentions several martyrdoms as having taken place during his reign.

Labourt:
p.110.

Yezd'gerd I. died in 420 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Bahram V. surnamed Gor. Under this emperor a most terrible persecution broke out all over the Persian empire. Theodoret bishop of Cyr, writing about it says: "it is not easy to

Hist. Eccl.
V. 38.

describe the new kinds of punishment that the Persians invented to torment the Christians. They flayed the hands of some and the backs of others. In the case of others again, they stripped the skin of the face from the forehead down to the chin. They tore their bodies with broken reeds causing them excruciating pain. Having dug great pits, they filled them with rats and mice and then cast the Christians into the pits, first tying their hands and feet so that they could neither chase the animals away nor place themselves beyond their reach. The animals ~~themselves~~ having been kept without food, devoured these Christian confessors in the most cruel way".

Bahram is also reported as having driven many of the followers of Christ out of the kingdom altogether, pillaging their houses and depriving them of everything that they possessed. Others of them he banished to distant provinces so that they might not only be overwhelmed with troubles but might suffer on account of the war then raging in those parts.

In this way all who professed the Christian religion were persecuted so that they might deny the Lord Jesus Christ and return to the worship of other gods and to other religions. The property of the churches was seized (including even the furniture they contained). The building materials were used for the construction of bridges, canals &c. Precious metals were confiscated and sent to the royal treasury. Three martyrs named Hormizdas, Suenas and Benjamin are specially mentioned. The first two were of noble birth. The king divested Hormizdas of all his dignities and made him an ordinary army camel driver. Some days later he ordered him to be brought before him and had him clothed in linen garments. Then thinking he would be softened not only by the troubles which he had

endured but by the kind treatment now being shewn to him, the king addressed him as follows "Do not be so obstinate. Deny the son of the carpenter". Hormizdas, fired with zeal, tore the linen robe from his body in the presence of the king and said 'If you think that I will abandon piety for such a gift, keep your present with your impiety'. The king seeing this drove him from the palace quite naked. Suenas was robbed of all his wealth which was very considerable and obliged to obey the most wicked of his slaves. He had even to abandon his wife but notwithstanding, remained firm and immovable.

Labourt:
p.111*

A man known as St. James the "cut in pieces" (French L'Inter-cis), an official belonging to the court, apostatised to please the king, but his action met with such reprobation from his relatives that he returned to the king, recanted his apostacy and declared himself a true Christian. The king being angry handed him over to the executioner who killed him by cutting off his members one after the other, hence the name of "cut in pieces". Peroz, originally of Beit Lapat, a rich man of noble lineage, also suffered capital punishment during this period. He was cast into prison with other Christians and denied the faith in order to escape punishment, but when his parents and his wife turned from him in horror, he determined to return to the Christian fold and made a new profession of Christianity. Denounced by Mihrsabur the chief of the Magi and the great enemy of the Christians, he was taken to Siarzur where the king then was. On his refusing to apostatise the second time, he was decapitated.

Labourt:
p.112.

More interesting still from the historical point of view is the case of James the notary. Originally from the town of Karka d'Ersa, at twenty years of age he and fifteen fellow

servants of the king were cast into prison. They were threatened with confiscation of their goods unless they apostatised and when they refused to do so they were condemned to look after elephants the whole winter. After Easter, when the king according to custom removed to his summer quarters, they were set to repair and look after the roads on the royal route, including the cutting down of trees and the breaking of stones. From time to time the king chaffed them for their stupidity but they replied "Everything that comes to us from your majesty is an honour except apostacy". The summer being over, Bahram began his return journey to Ctesiphon, passing on the way the wild mountains of Belesfar. Mihrsabur informed the king that the constancy of the Christian captives encouraged the other Christians and prevented their denying their faith. "What more can I do to them?" said the king. "Their goods have been confiscated, their houses have been sealed up and they themselves have been tortured". "Would that your majesty would command me, without blows and without murder, to make them apostatise" answered the wicked Mihrsabur. The king delivered them up to his discretion, forbidding, however, to put them to death. Mihrsabur stripped them naked, bound their hands behind their backs and ordered them to be taken each night to a desert place in the mountains where they were laid on their backs and given only a little bread and water. After they had undergone these tortures for a whole week, Mihrsabur called the guard and asked ~~where~~ the 'miserable Nazarenes' were. "They are very near death" replied the guard. "Go and tell them" he said "that the king orders them to obey his wish and to worship the sun. If not, I shall put cords on their feet and will have them dragged all through the

mountains until their flesh shall separate from their bones so that their bodies will remain among the stones and only the tendons attached to the skin will be left". The guards carried out his instructions. Some were unconscious, others, overcome by pain, weakened. The governor loosed them without compelling them to worship the sun or the fire and led them back to Seleucia. When they had recovered from their wounds they fasted wept and prayed for their apparent defection. James being of Roman extraction had remained strong in the faith. He returned to his duties and reported to the bishops what was said in the palace, and what Bahram meditated against the Christians and their churches, at the same time encouraging and comforting them. When he learned that in the court he was considered as having apostatised with his fellow servants, he returned to the town, clothed himself with sackcloth, and covering himself with ashes, gave himself to exercises of penitence. One of the servitors betrayed him. He had seen him reading the book of the gospels. Mihrsabur assembled the 16 confessors. Questioning the first fifteen he asked if they had not recanted and carried out his wishes. They replied "We have lost the life which you asked of us once. Do you ask us to apostatise a second time?". He released them and sent them to their homes. Then addressing James he said "As for you have you not denied the faith of the Christians?" "I have not denied the faith of the Christians" said James. "nor do I intend to do so. It is the faith of my fathers". He was again brought before the king whom he reminded that his father Yezd'gerd had reigned twenty years in peace and prosperity and that all his enemies served him because he loved the Christians, but that when at the end of his life he changed

Labourt:
pp.115.116.

his policy and became a persecutor and shed innocent blood, he died abandoned by all and his body did not even receive burial. Bahram, irritated by this, condemned James to the punishment of "The nine deaths"* and thus he died.

All the Christians did not imitate the courage of these heroes. Many fled or remained hidden. The inhabitants of the territories bordering on Roman provinces and other countries crossed the frontier. The Mazdeans called in the help of the Bedouin and Nomad subjects of the Persian king, commanding them to harass the Christians, and this they did, killing them in great numbers. It is recorded, however, of one of the Arabian princes named Aspebite, that when called to this task he refused, and instead of arresting the fugitives, helped them by every means in his power. Others of whom we have no record probably acted in the same way. Acacius bishop of Amido melted down the sacred vessels of the church in order to obtain the means of relieving the misery of 7,000 Persian captives who had been taken prisoners by the Romans and re-captured. The king was so astonished at this action that he desired Acacius to visit him, which he did. Officially, the persecution ceased in the year A.D.422 when peace between the Romans and Persians was once more established. One of the terms of the treaty was that there should be liberty of conscience to the subjects of both sides. As a matter of fact, persecution continued in a modified form during a considerable portion of Bahram's reign and there were numbers of martyrdoms.

O'Leary:
p.85.

*Note: In 'the nine deaths' the members of the body were cut off one by one (1) the fingers of the hand (2) the toes (3) the wrist (4) the ankles (5) arms above elbows (6) knees (7) ears (8) nose and last the head.

about:
p.126.

In A.D. 438 Bahram V died and was succeeded by his son Yazd'gerd II. To begin with, he was favourably inclined to the Christians, but in A.D. 448 persecution broke out afresh and in a most intense form.

Wigram:
p.158.

The king seems to have meant the persecution to be carried on throughout the empire but it appears to have been most severe in the province of Beth Garmai. At all events it is with reference to Beth Garmai alone that details are available.

Wigram:
p.138.

A massacre of appalling magnitude is recorded as having taken place at Karka d'Beit Sluk, now known as Kirkuk, where, on a mound outside the city, ten bishops and 153,000 others are said to have been martyred, the slaughter lasting several days. The redness of the gravel of the hillock is said to have been caused by the blood of the martyrs. A martyrrium was built over the spot and this it is claimed, remains to this day. Wigram believes the present building to be at least on the lines of the original and adds that the fact of the massacre is quite likely correct, even if the number were less than that stated.

about:
p.127.

idem p.127.

Some were crucified, others stoned, others again beheaded, and clergy and laity alike suffered the most refined tortures. Incidents recorded as having taken place in connection with the massacre are also probably historically accurate e.g. that of the woman called Sirin, who, with her two sons, came of her own accord to seek the martyrdom which she received.

The chief instrument in the persecution, Tanasgerd, an officer of the king, was, it is said, so moved by the endurance of those who were put to death and so convinced that the faith which gave them strength to endure was from God, that

he joined himself with them and received the crown of martyrdom with the rest. The place of martyrdom and the memorial church are both still called, not by the name of any of the bishops who perished there, but by the name of this convert from the ranks of the persecutors who was baptised in his own blood.

Tigran:
p.139.

When John the metropolitan of Karka was being taken to his death, a youth called to him to be of good cheer. John turning to him declared that he was fit to be bishop in his room, and there, in their prison or at the place of execution, this youth called Dindui was ordained metropolitan but exercised the office only for one or two days when he too received the crown of martyrdom.

After the persecution had passed, the bishops of the two provinces gathered on the spot and "decreed a solemn annual memorial to those who had perished there", and to this day the Christians of Kirkuk gather at the little church on the red hillock on the 25th September (old style) in memory of those who sealed their testimony with their blood in the year A.D. 442.

Other martyrdoms took place but details exist only of a few of these, for example, the martyrdom of Pethiun, an evangelist in the region around the sources of the Lesser Zab. He was the son of a wealthy Magian named Gushnap, who later on became a Christian and received the name Dadishu. The brother of Gushnap, called Yazdian, was led to Christ by Jacob, a Christian dependent of the family. Jacob refused to baptise him when he applied for baptism, being afraid of his father. Yazdian accordingly left home and received baptism at the hands of the bishop of Karka d'Beit Sluk. After some years, he returned and found his brother a Christian and at

Edjan:
ii 559.

Bedjan: ii
583-603.

the head of the family. The brother Dad Ishu, entrusted his son Pethiun to the care of his Rabban brother. When the great persecution took place Pethiun was put to death not in Karka d'Beit Sluk, but in the modern Sulimanthiah (ancient Kholwan) and with him, his disciple and companion in 'Rabban-ship', Anahid the beautiful daughter of the Moked Adur-Hormizd, who, however, as was usual in the case of Rabbanyathi was offered life if "she would marry as a women ought". When she refused ^{she was} subjected to severe tortures.

Great as were the massacres in Persia proper they can scarcely have been greater than those inflicted on the Armenians during the same period, aggravated as the latter were by a rebellion on the part of the people against an attempt by Yezd'gerd to compel them to become Zoroastrians. Monks and nuns were as much the ~~subject~~ object of persecution as the clergy, partly because they were Christian leaders, partly on account of the horror with which the Zoroastrians regarded ~~the~~ celibate life. Rabbanyathi were usually offered their life if they would consent to marry, in which case renunciation of Christianity was not always insisted on.

Monasticism: A ^{second} ~~second~~, and most effective agency in the spreading of the gospel, and a contributing factor to the missionary activity of the Nestorian church, was the monastic system, combined as it was with schools for the education of the children of the Christian~~s~~ community on the one hand, and for the training of the youth of the church, especially such of them as had devoted themselves to the ascetic life, on the other. Parents were instructed to bring their children to school even if they were unwilling.

This practice they ^{Nestorians} evidently carried with them wherever

they went, introducing letters and learning among peoples who were previously illiterate, such as Turks, Uigurs, Mongols, and Manchus, all of whom are said to have derived their alphabets from the Syriac.

Education, even to-day, is one of the things that appeals to the Nestorian more than money itself, and the excellence of their schools has always been a strong feature of their church life.

During the persecution under Sapor, teachers were specially sought for, indicating that even in those days i.e. the fourth century, there must have been at least elementary schools. For higher education, students had to cross the frontier and go to the school of Edessa, and when in A.D. 489 it was suppressed by the Monophysite party of Constantinople, Nisibis took its place.

The Patriarch, Mar Babowai, A.D. 457-484 opened in Seleucia a school which later on was transferred to Bagdad. Others known to us existed at Dor Koni and Makhozi d'Arimu. Amr speaks of colleges for Tartars at Merv, and for Arabs at Hirta, and Prat d'Maishan. Every bishop maintained a school of greater or less importance, for the running of which the chorepiscopus was responsible. The course was mainly theological, the text book being the scriptures, and more particularly the Psalms. Many of the pupils knew the whole Psalter by heart and candidates for ordination were expected to be able to repeat the whole. The schools were primarily for Christians. For non-Christians there were government schools but these were under Magian control. The Christian schools as a rule formed part of the monastery, the teachers being Rabbans or monks and the pupils being under monastic rule. Education was free although parents were expected to

Egran:
p.238.

Egran:
p.238.

Ms: III ii
7.932.

contribute towards the support of the teachers, and during the long summer vacation the students were ^{supposedly} expected to maintain themselves by labour or in other ways. Begging, however, was not allowed, but the steward had a certain number of bursaries at his disposal. The students lived in groups of five or six in a cell. In Sabr Ishu's day the college at Nisibis had no less than eight hundred pupils. The accommodation was humble and the fare meagre. Sabr Ishu himself is said to have partaken of a meal only once a week. The church services formed part of the course and doubtless all the approved theological works of the church, of which there were quite a number, were to be found in the library of the monastery.

For information regarding the monastic system proper, we are indebted to Mar Thomas of Marga who gives a very full account of it in his *Historia Monastica* which dates from about the ninth century. It deals mainly although not exclusively with the rabbans or monks and Abbots of Beth Abhe with which Mar Thomas was himself directly connected. The trustworthiness of the record is evidenced by the fact that while praising the rabbans and their profession of asceticism, Mar Thomas does not hesitate to point out what he considers their faults; for example, in his account of the events which led to the expulsion of certain monks living in the outer cells of the monastery of Mount Izla who had married, contrary to the practice of the monastery. (There is no evidence to show that those who had married were an exception to the celibate rule but rather that they were a survival of that class of married monks which was fast dying out under such zealous reformers as Babhai.)

According to Assemani, with a view to ensuring a sufficient supply of candidates male and female for monastic

requirements, it was the duty of the bishop or presbyter when visiting the different congregations, to impress upon the parents the importance of encouraging their sons and daughters to devote themselves to the ascetic life, to distribute those offering themselves to the different monasteries, and to see that they were properly instructed in the work of the ministry.

Ass:p.934.

The Deaconesses were to be taught by understanding and honest teachers so that they might be thoroughly grounded in the scriptures, especially in the ministry of the Psalms. Where there was no teacher it was the duty of the chief Presbyter to see that one was appointed.

Ass:III ii
p.939.

Those who wished to study medicine had to attend a hospital for the purpose. The sons of Christians were expected to study the Psalms, the New Testament, and ^{the} lectures which they had attended, before entering on a business career. Older members of the community were recommended to study such ascetic books as the book of Paradise, those of Mar Abba, Mar Isaiah, Mar Sergius and the writings of other monastic fathers.

Gen 941.

The monastery of Beth Abhe with which the record of Mar Thomas is specially concerned, consisted of a church with a number of buildings round it, including rooms set apart for kitchen, and other domestic offices, the refectory, the brothers common room, the library and a room for entertaining strangers. About A.D.600 it lodged eighty men, but fifty years later the number had increased to 300 necessitating the rebuilding and extension of the church. The rebuilding was carried through with considerable difficulty owing to the exactions of the Moham^medan ruler of Bagdad who enforced a tax of 15,000 pieces of silver (= £.375) on the monastery. The money required was miraculously provided and the building completed. The daily

Judge:
Introduction
to his edition
of Thomas
p. Marga.
Historia
Monastica
I.XLVII.

Eudge's
Thomas of
Kargas
Historia
Monastica
p.IV.

services were seven in number, the Rabbans seeking to imitate the Psalmist when he said "Seven times a day do I praise Thee because of Thy righteous judgments" Ps.119:164. The principal services were just before sunset, at dusk, at midnight, at day break, and in the morning. Extracts from the Old and New Testaments were read, collects said, and hymns, anthems, and responses sung. A certain number of Psalms were sung each day, great attention being paid to the singing.

When Ishu Yahbh II A.D. 650-660 was metropolitan of Arbela, he and Anan Isho of Beth Abhe re-arranged the canons of the Mudhra or service book and instituted a cycle of services for every day in the year and also for special occasions. This arrangement is still observed.

In the early part of the eighth century Mar Babhai succeeded to the metropolitan see of Marga and immediately set about improving the service of praise so that the same tunes might be sung in all different churches and in the same way. He founded twenty four schools where pupils were given musical instruction and taught to sing carefully and accurately. Every six months these schools were examined. This method of teaching became so famous that it was known as the musical system of Mar Babhai. All students aspiring to an ascetic vocation had to serve a probationary period of three years, and the voices chosen for the choir were usually the probationers connected with the monastery. There was a considerable library containing not only Old and New Testaments, Psalters and service books of other kinds, but also translations from the Greek. The monastery of Beth Abhe was supported by endowments made by pious benefactors and not by collecting alms. Some of the Rabbans were related to noble Persian families

and probably handed over their lands, or vineyards, or cattle, to the common fund. The monastery attained the zenith of its prosperity about the middle of the seventh century but under the Mohammedans evil times ensued and it dwindled. Although an ancient monastery might be left unmolested, the Mohammedans would not supply funds for its maintenance and taxed it heavily. Rabbans might be teachers before they became ascetics as for example in the case of Mar John the 2nd Abbot. He was a teacher for thirty years and then a 'solitary' for another thirty and then Abbot. Monks or Rabbans were divided into two classes, viz: the 'solitaries' or anchorites who lived by themselves, and those who lived in communities. These latter were again divided. Where a number of monks lived under one roof the place was called a 'coenobium', when they lived in a cluster of separate cells it was called a 'laura'. The monks in the 'laura' joined the members of the 'coenobium' in church on Saturdays, Sundays and festivals.

Budge's
Hist.Mon.
p.LXXX.

O'Leary:
Syrian
Church &
Fathers p.65.

The starting place of Christian monasticism was in Egypt. ~~XXXXXX~~ One of the most noted of the early recluses there was Antony, who, as a young man of considerable wealth, gave up all to follow Christ. He died A.D.356. The founding of the first coenobium is attributed to Pachomius who lived during the persecution of Diocletian. His sister Mary was the founder of an order of deaconesses or Rabbanyathi. Pachomius after his conversion, spent his whole life till his death in A.D.351 in founding monasteries, in confirming the brethren, healing the sick and working miracles.

Rainy:
Ancient
Catholic
Church p.293.

Budge's
Thomas of
Marga's Hist.
Mon.II p.397.

In the monastery of Pachomius in the Thebaid, there were 1,400 monks, in that at Oxyrhynchus, where in recent years a large number of Papyri have been found, there were 20,000

Budge's
Thomas of
Marga's
Hist.Mon.
p.CXXIII.

monks and 10,000 nuns. Rufinus who visited Egypt about A.D. 372 said there were almost as many monks living in the desert as people in the towns. Would-be monks had to spend some time as novices and their final admission into the monastery depended on their conduct during that period. They subjected themselves to severe penances, one of them, Simon Stylites, A.D. 413 going so far as to build his cell on a pillar sixty feet high so as to be beyond the reach of visitors. The 'solitary' usually had his cell near running water. The ascetics lived on grass or fruits and ate neither bread nor meat. They drank no wine and to begin with might have neither hut nor house. During the persecution under Sapor monks were put to death in thousands.

Monasticism was introduced into Mesopotamia by Mar Awgin also an Egyptian who died A.D. 362. When he came from Egypt he brought with him seventy monks. They settled to begin with at Nisibis but afterwards removed to mount Izla where they lived in a cavern for thirty years. Soon their number increased to three hundred and fifty. During the reign of Sapor II the king sent for Awgin and gave him a warrant with the king's seal which permitted the monks to build churches and monasteries wherever and whenever they pleased. A few days later seventy two Rabbans, with two Rabbanyathi were blessed by Awgin and each holding his cross in his hand, set out to found monasteries in any place to which divine grace might lead them. The names of the seventy two may be found in Mar Thomas's account, with the names of the two noble women, Mart Thecla and Stratonice, sisters of Awgin. The names of some of the monasteries founded are also given.

Hist. Mon.
CXX.

In the 5th century the spread of the monastic system all through Persia was very rapid and the number of monasteries

founded was very great, so much so, that it is said that the country of the east was filled with monasteries and convents and habitations of monks seeking to spread abroad the knowledge of Christ as Saviour and King. A copy of rules of the monastery at Mount Izla laid down by Mar Abraham, the founder of it, has come down to us. In it he is careful to quote scripture for every statement made. Canon 1 emphasises the importance of tranquility and 1 Thess.4,11; 2 Thess.3,12 and Isaiah 32,17 are referred to. The passage continues as follows:

"Therefore let us be constant in our cells in quietness, and let us flee from idleness which is a thing that causeth loss".

Canon 2 deals with fasting; Canon 3 refers to prayer and reading of God's word with copious scripture references. The other Canons deal with such subjects as silence, meekness, gentle and not angry speech, slander, church services, the three years probationary period etc.

The strict ascetic slept very little. Of one, Arsenius, it is said that "on Saturday evening he used to turn his back on the sun setting in the west behind him, and stretching out his hands heavenward, he prayed until the sun rose in front of him when he refreshed his eyes with a little sleep. On the other nights of the week he slept standing".

The power of weeping while praying was greatly coveted by the monks, and the fathers speak of it as a salutary influence. The Rabban was enjoined to read books diligently but he was bound to pray always, whether eating or drinking, or journeying or working. Of Rabban Hormizd of the monastery of Sylvanus, who was martyred in the sixty ninth year of Sapor, it is said that he fasted ten days at a time and during these periods never lay down to sleep but prayed with tears the whole

Hist.Mon.
I.CCCV.

Hist.Mon.I
CLI

Hist.Mon.
CLIX.

day and night watching vigilantly the while. When sleep overcame him he leant against one of the walls of his cell and snatched just enough for his pressing bodily needs. Reference has been made to the fact that Rabban Babhai founded twenty four schools for the teaching of music. Others say that he founded altogether sixty schools and had sixty disciples who were teachers. The names of many places where he established schools are given. He also wrote many treatises and religious works.

Hist.Mon II
p.297.

There is much more that might be gleaned from the lives of the Rabbans of the province of Marga. Enough has been said however to give us some idea of the kind of man they were and to indicate the nature of the propaganda carried on by them. From hundreds of monasteries all over Persia and in Central and Eastern Asia, there poured forth a constant stream of ascetics, men and women, who had completed their three years probationary training and now went forth in obedience to our Lord's command, seeking to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth or to found new monasteries which in turn would be training schools for future generations of devotees. Some of them became 'solitaries' and 'anchorites', giving themselves largely to prayer and intercession. Others remained for a time in the 'coenobium' or 'laura' of the monastery continuing their studies, or training those who flocked to them for instruction. Others again taking their lives in their hands went forth not knowing whither they went, but content to follow where God might lead. They were men of great faith, mighty in the scriptures, large portions of which they knew by heart, fervent in prayer, gentle and humble in manner and full of love to God on the one hand and love to their neighbour and all mankind on the other, that love which "beareth all things". Supporting themselves by the labour of their hands or subsisting on roots and fruits or on the grass of the field, they

counted no trouble too great, no hardship too severe so long as they might share in the spreading abroad of the message of full salvation for all mankind. They followed in the footsteps of Him who for their sakes "endured the cross despising the shame". They "held their lives cheap and did not shrink from death" (Rev. 10:11. Weymouth) and like those who "saw the king invisible and never flinched" (Heb. 11:27. Moffatt) "dared beyond their strength, ventured beyond their judgment and in the utmost extremity were of unquenchable hope". Such were the ~~xxx~~ men who went forth with "feverish activity" to carry the gospel to those who knew it not.

Nowhere in the history of the Christian church is there any body to whom may more fittingly be applied the words of Hebrews ii, 33-38 "who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured not accepting deliverance that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings yea of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins being destitute afflicted, tormented, . . . they wandered in deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth".

Should anyone feel disposed to question the description here given we would refer him to the fuller account of the "Acts of the Martyrs" as given by Labourt or Bedjan to which only a very brief reference is made in the first part of this chapter, and to the latter half of Volume II of the translation by Wallis Budge of Thomas of Marga's *Historia Monastica*.

These are the men whom the arrogance of Rome has branded as heretics all down the centuries. Would to God that the churches and missions of to-day might be inoculated with the same brand of heresy if it ^{but} led to such a mighty work of grace as was wrought through these missionaries of the 'Church of the East', the Nestorian Church, of the sixth, seventh and subsequent centuries of the Christian era.

MacAwen:
History of
the Church
in Scotland
Vol. I
pp.39-43

Note: The nearest parallel to the monastic system in Syria and Persia is that of the Scoto-Irish Culdee Church. As regards the latter we are told that in the sixth century monasticism spread to the church in Ireland which became wholly monastic. In Latin countries there was sometimes rivalry, sometimes alliance between the clerics and the monks, but in the church of the Scots in Ireland, rivalry and alliance were alike impossible. The monks were clergy and all the clergy were monks. Scoto-Irish monastic life had little resemblance to the monasticism of St. Basil and St. Martin nor was it introduced from the British church of Wales as is sometimes claimed. It was more akin to that of Egypt and Syria. "Identification with the whole life of the church was an essential of the monasticism of the Scots". It was at the ~~time~~ same time a healthy spiritual movement, a period marked by intelligent and devout enthusiasm and great missionary activity. The church flourished and brought forth fruit abundantly. In the monasteries of Ireland, the home of the Scots, Christian minds occupied themselves with sacred learning and a standard of education was reached which surpassed that of Rome itself. The culture and attainments of those monastic settlements is quite outside the region of legend. Many of them were founded during the early part of the sixth century. Clonard in A.D. 520, Moville A.D. 540, Clonmacnoire in A.D. 541 or 544 Clonfert A.D. 556, Bangor A.D. 554.

~~Ident.~~

~~Ident.~~

"These were notable and productive centres of scholarship, the centre of interest being the study ~~and~~ transcribing of scriptures". The smallest of them had usually fifty scholars each and the largest, Clonard, had as many as 3,000. They were "springs or fountains of an eager and exuberant missionary activity". "Through them the influence of Scotie Christianity permeated many pagan districts of western Europe and converted tribes which were untouched by the contemporary propagandism of Rome. They went forth in bands of twelve under an abbot. Of one such band under Columbanus we are told that they "settled in Burgundy at a time when savage license flourished there under the misgovernment of the sons of Clovis". They "made their home in a wild forest amidst a population only nominally Christian". "Their rule was far sterner than that of St. Benedict. The fare was meagre; unquestioning obedience was imperative (and flogging was inflicted for the slightest breach of discipline)". Such was the type of missionary produced by these wonderful monastic missionary schools in the sixth and seventh centuries in Ireland and

P-43

Scotland. Very similar must they have been to the missionaries in Persia described by Thomas of Marga.

Principal Rainy in his 'Ancient Catholic Church' in the chapter on monasticism says:-

Rainy:
p.299.

"The ascetic life as placed under rule in the monastery was accepted and accredited by the church and both as a fact and as a force it became an element of first rate importance in practical Christianity. It agreed with the asceticism of Antony and his followers in prescribing the sacrifice of all positions It added to mere asceticism the advantage of rules and especially it restored something of the social tie".

Idem p.300.

Its significance lay after all in this "It embodied an effort to give effect to one of the most fundamental rules of Christianity. Genuine Christianity includes the surrender to a new principle, the recognition of a new master, the response to a new motive and the acceptance of all sacrifice which so great a change implies". "An effort in favour of more thorough and strenuous Christianity was the spring of the movement."

Idem p.301.

Chapter III

Nestorianism in Arabia.

As already stated one of the places to which refugees, seeking to escape from the persecutions in Persia, fled, was the peninsula of Arabia with its separate independent kingdoms. Along with these was the semi independent Arab state of Hirtha in southern Mesopotamia which lay on the direct route from Persia to South Arabia and served at least as a resting place for those proceeding further.

Northern Arabia doubtless shared with the South in the exodus that took place but it is with the south and the centre that we are chiefly concerned as being the part that looked upon the 'Church of the East' as its mother church and the patriarch of Seleucia as its ecclesiastical head. The individual kingdoms referred to are those of Najran and Yemen the latter including also the provinces of Hadramaut and Oman. Contrary to the usual impression, these countries are or were very fertile and had a very salubrious climate. In the centre of the peninsula is the table land of Nejd with an average elevation of 3000 feet. Nejd is now the headquarters of the puritanical Wahabi sect which but recently did not hesitate to lay hands on Mecca itself.

From Nejd there is a gradual ascent towards the south and south east until in the highlands of Yemen and Oman we reach mountain peaks of from 8000 to 10000 feet high. The temperature even in July seldom rises above 85° and at Sanā the capital of Yemen there is frost for three months in the year.

One of the characteristics of Arabia is its wadys. These, although dry in summer, are full to the brim in winter, and

Zwemer:
Arabia the
Cradle of
Islam pp.19-
20.

water can always be found by digging in the wady bed. With such a refuge within reach, it would have been strange if it had not been taken advantage of. According to Sale, this is what actually happened, but he makes the mistake of thinking that the refugees were mostly Jacobites, overlooking the fact that Jacobitism was unknown in Persia at the time of the persecutions there.

Sale:
The Koran
p.17.

In fleeing from Persia they would either go by sea, to the coasts of Oman and Hadramaut, or travel by land by way of Hirtha. There was fairly constant intercourse between Yemen and Hirtha and, via Hirtha, with Persia, as may be gathered from references in the "Book of the Himyarites" and other books mentioned there. Hayyan referred to later, who is credited with having been the first to carry the gospel to Najran, is spoken of as going from Najran to Persia via Hirtha and, in another place, reference is made to an incident that happened at a much later date, when Jacobites from Hirtha fled to Najran. Further, among the martyrdoms that took place at Najran were not only presbyters from Hirtha, but two Greeks, and a presbyter from Persia.

Koberg:
Book of the
Himyarites
p.LXI

Hirtha plays such an important part in the history of Christianity in Arabia that it seems desirable to explain how it came into being as an Arab state. As told by Sale, the story is to the effect, that, soon after the time of Alexander the Great, a huge dam in the province of Aram burst and the surrounding country was inundated to such an extent that a number of tribes were compelled to find a place elsewhere. Some of them went north and settled near the waters of Ghassan in Syria Damascena, and were called Ghassan. Others settled in

Sale:
The Koran
P.8.

Hirtha and founded the kingdom of that name. Although Hirtha was nearer Persia than Yemen, it had the disadvantage of not being absolutely independent and was not therefore such a safe refuge as Yemen was.

The rulers of Yemen were descended from the house of Hamyar from which the people are known as Himyarites. Tradition says that the first to preach the gospel in south Arabia was St. Bartholomew and that one of the tribes evangelized by him was these same Himyarites.

In the reign of Constantine, Theophilus a deacon of Nicomedia, a zealous Arian, was asked by the emperor to accompany an embassy which he was sending to the coast of Himyar. Theophilus went and was successful in persuading the king of the Himyarites who was a non-Christian to accept his teaching. In this the king was followed by some of his Christian subjects. He built churches at Zafar (or Dhafar) Aden the gateway to Yemen where there was a Roman colony, Sanā the capital and Hormaz in the Persian Gulf. Four bishoprics were also established. The fact that Hormuz is mentioned indicates how extensive the kingdom of Yemen then was.

After the departure of Theophilus, those who had followed the king in accepting Arian doctrines, and presumably the king himself, gradually returned to the true faith. Hoberg gives Socotra as the place from which Theophilus originally came. Assemani on the other hand says he belonged to the island of Divu at the mouth of the river Indus and that he returned there.

Sale mentions the following as the principal tribes that embraced Christianity: Hamyar, Ghassan, Rabia, Taghlib of Mesopotamia, Bahra, Tonuch, part of the tribes of Tay and

Weners:
Islam p.19.

Hoberg:
p.Li

Ass:III ii
p.600.

Sale:
The Koran
p.17.

Kodaa, the Arabs of Hirtha, and the inhabitants of Nejd. Nejd was the Arabia of the poets of whom some were Christian. Zwemer adds the Beni Harith of Najran and other tribes between Medina and Kufa.

An Arabian queen, Mavia by name, is said to have been a Christian and to have invited a bishop named Moses to live among her people. There were Christians at Hirtha and Kufa as early as A.D. 380. One of the early converts Noman Abu Kamas is said to have proved the sincerity of his faith by melting down a golden statue of the Arabian Venus, worshipped by his tribe, and to have distributed the proceeds to the poor. Many, following his example, broke their idols and were baptised.

Probably the most authentic, as it is one of the most recent, authorities regarding Christianity in Central and South Arabia is "The Book of the Himyarites" made up of fragments of a hitherto unknown Syriac work, Edited with introduction, and translation, by Axel Moberg, and published at Lund, Sweden, in 1924. It deals chiefly with the persecutions in Najran and Yemen in the first quarter of the sixth century but makes important references to other places and events as well. It is written in a regular old Jacobite script and the date of writing is given as A.D. 932 but the date of the original, which it reproduces, as arrived at by internal evidence, is found to be A.D. 525, the year of the second Abyssinian expedition against the Himyarites, or very soon after. It is here that we find the account of the first introduction into Najran of Christianity quoted by Moberg from an ancient Nestorian chronicle. We are told that in the land of Najran of Yemen, in the days of Yezd'gerd, there was a well known tradesman called Hayyan. He had been to Constantinople on business. When he returned he

Zwemer:
Islam
pp. 18, 19.

Moberg: p.
II & LVIII
ff.

Moberg:
p. IX

determined to visit Persia, and set out, going via Hirtha. While in Hirtha he frequented the company of Christians and learned their doctrines. He was then baptised and continued with them for some time. When he returned to Najran, he urged his fellow country men to adopt his faith, and his family, and a number of people in that part of the country, became Christians and were baptised. Some of them attached themselves to him, and helped in winning to Christ not only the Hinyarites (Najranites) but the people in the adjacent tracts of Abyssinia.

Moberg assumes that this took place during the reign of Yezd'gerd I (A.D.399-420). It might equally have been under Yezd'gerd II (A.D.438-457). The result in either case was the same. ~~Al-Mundhar king of the Arabs of Hirtha became a Christian,~~

Al-Mundhar king of ^{the} Arabs of Hirtha became a Christian, we are told, in A.D.512 and was baptised by Simon, metropolitan of Hirtha. Henda, a sister of Mundhar, was baptised at the same time and founded a coenobium in which she lived a monastic life. The metropolitan of Hirtha was subject to the Patriarch of Seleucia, as were also the episcopates of Kufa, Beth Raman, Bassora and Perath Messenes.

Ass:III ii
p.599 ff.

So far as we know, up to this time there does not seem to have been anything in the nature of a general persecution of the Christians of Najran and Yemen although there is a reference to the martyrdom of one Azquir, A.D.467, in the reign of one Sharakbial Yalckuf (a reference too vague to found anything upon it), and the relations between Jews, of whom there were considerable numbers scattered all over Arabia, and Christians must have frequently been very strained. In the year A.D.523 however a violent persecution of Christians

broke out. The prime mover in it was Dhu Nanas or Dunaas the Jewish king of the Himyarites. Throughout the ^{book} the name by which he is generally called is Masruq. Probably both are correct that of Dhu Nanas being a sort ^{of} surname and Masruq the personal name. Several apparently conflicting statements are made about him. He is said to have been the son of a Jewish mother whose faith he followed but to have succeeded his father as king of the Himyarites. But in another place we read of a delegation of Christian Himyarites who were staying in Hirtha having been sent thither by the Christian king of the Himyarites whose death, just then, gave Masruq the opportunity of usurping power, which he did. If he succeeded his father on the throne where was the necessity for his forcibly usurping power. One of his predecessors is referred to as Ma'dikarim who was king before him and to whom when he was in straits the Martyr Ruhm had lent 12,000 dinars. Was Ma'dikarim the father of Masruq? He may have been, and may it not be that there is no real contradiction in the apparently contradictory statements but that two different kings and two distinct countries are referred to, those of Najran and Yemen. In Najran the Christians were in the ascendancy and it was ruled by a Christian king. In Yemen the Jews apparently predominated and the king was either a pagan or a Jew. Whether Masruq's father was a Jew or no, we know that his mother was.

The date of the persecution initiated by Masruq was A.D. 523 but from the titles of some of the chapters, which are missing in the 'Book of Himyarites' ^(the table of contents and titles alone remaining) we learn that even prior to that date there had been a certain amount of persecution and we are probably not far wrong if we assume that the Jews were at the bottom of it. Not that the

Hoberg:
p. LXXII.



others were necessarily blameless. We find for example a martyr in one of the martyrologies glorying in the fact that her father had set fire to one of the Jewish synagogues, so that there may very likely have been some provocation given.

Be that as it may, there was persecution of some sort which led to the sending by the Christians of an appeal for help to Elesbaan, otherwise called Kaleb, king of the Abyssinians. He responded by sending, what is known as, the first Abyssinian expedition against the Himyarites. That was in A.D. 519. The Jews were defeated and the Jewish king took refuge in the mountains. After the main body of the Abyssinians had returned to their own country the conflict seems to have been renewed, the leader of the Christians being as before the king of Najran while the leader on the other side was Masruq king of Yemen. It was apparently just then that the legation already referred to was dispatched to the king of Hirtha, probably for the purpose of forming an alliance or of obtaining help from that quarter. The death of the king of Najran soon after gave Masruq the opportunity of, at least, attempting to annex Najran to his own dominions. The withdrawal of the Abyssinians made this practicable. He therefore usurped the control of Najran and set about subjugating the province.

The Abyssinians had apparently left a garrison, consisting of five hundred and eighty men, in the town of Zafar (or Dhafar) or it may be that they intended to retain possession of Zafar and accordingly kept a garrison permanently there. From the fact that Zafar had at least one church, it is evident that it contained a number of Christians. Possibly it may have been almost entirely Christian.

The first task confronting Masruq, therefore, was the

Koberg:
p. XXVII.



subjugation of Zafar and the expulsion, or destruction, of the garrison. He seems to have failed in his first attempt to capture the town and recognising that he could not accomplish this by force he determined to do it by guile. He accordingly sent messengers, consisting of Jewish priests who had come from Tiberias, accompanied by one man belonging to the town itself, and another from Hirtha both of whom are spoken of as 'Christians in name' only. They carried a letter from Masruq in which he pledged himself by the most solemn and terrible oaths that if they would but come out to him willingly and surrender the town no harm would befall them and he would send them back to their king and country in peace.

Joberg:
p. CV.

When the Abyssinians received Masruq's letter, confirmed, as it was, by the messengers who brought it, they believed his words and the general and ~~the~~ three hundred of his men left the city and went out to where he was. He dissembled before them, but secretly commanded the Jews who were with him to slay every one of them during the night and to cast their bodies in one place. This having been done he sent men to take the town. They entered in, and finding the remaining two hundred and eighty Abyssinians gathered together in the church, set it on fire and burnt to death all who were in it.

Masruq now determined to exterminate the Christians throughout his dominions and sent messengers, with letters, to all the provinces of the Himyarites, giving instructions that all Christians should either deny Christ and become Jews or be put to death and that anyone found concealing a Christian should have his house burnt to the ground and all his property destroyed. And thus the sword was unsheathed throughout the whole land of the Himyarites.

oberg:
VI.

Masruq next turned his attention to the town of Najran, the capital of the country. He accordingly devised a scheme whereby he might get the place into his power. To begin with, he wrote a letter to one Harith a Christian of Najran evidently either the governor or the leading man in the town. Giving as an excuse that war was about to break out, and their services were urgently required, *he* instructed Harith to gather together all the Christian men of the town and send them to him leaving not one behind. Harith gathered the men together and spoke with them as Masruq had commanded. In the innocence of their hearts they believed his words and set out for the camp where Masruq was. Fortunately before they reached the ~~place~~ place they heard of his treachery, and what he had done to the men of Zafar. They immediately turned back and returned whence they had come.

Masruq having failed in this attempt sent his armies to besiege Najran but for some time not only without success, but at ~~the~~ cost of heavy loss to the besiegers. Hearing this, Masruq himself went to the place and took over the command. He suffered an even greater defeat than his generals had and resolved to accomplish by craft what he had failed to do by force. He accordingly sent a letter to the Najranites in which he made many promises and assured them that if they would but submit themselves to him justice would be done. Afraid lest the town might not be able to hold out much longer, and deceived by his promises there went out to him notables of the town to the number of one hundred and fifty. Masruq received them *with apparent kindness* without reserve and the first day shewed no perfidy but commanded that each of them should send and bring to him all the silver and gold that they had in their possession while

the rest of their property should remain theirs, but 'woe to anyone who attempted to keep anything back'. In this too they did as ~~they~~ he commanded. After further demands and some delay he ordered a cross to be brought and thrown on the ground in front of him. Then addressing those who had come out to him he commanded them to deny Christ, the son of Mary, to spit on His cross, and to become Jews, and their lives would be spared; otherwise he would cause them to suffer torments by fire, and their lives would be consumed. They not only refused to obey his behest in this matter but anew affirmed their faith in Christ "Who had saved them from the second death which" said they, addressing Masruq, "is reserved for you that you may die for ever by it together with Satan your father". "Therefore as thou hast seen our faith, do all that you wish and do not delay us from our way to the Lord".

Loberg:
CLX.

Masruq however had privately learned that some subjects of foreign countries were among the "blessed ones" who were before him and he delayed taking action until he had satisfied himself regarding them. He enquired ^{of} each ~~of~~ his name, who he was, and where his family came from. In this way he learned that the presbyters Moses and Eliya were from Hirtha, the presbyter Sergius and the deacon Hananya, Romans (or Greeks), the presbyter Abraham a Persian, and the deacon Jonah an Abyssinian. Repeating what he had already said he threatened them saying "if you will not deny Christ and say that He is not God but a man" you will suffer with others. The presbyter Moses answered "I will not deny Christ but confess Him that He is God, the son of God, indeed". As the others approved, Masruq was exceedingly angry and sentenced them all to be put to death. Another account adds the information that an immense

Moberg:
p.XVIII.

pyre was prepared, apparently in the church itself, on which the presbyters and other members of the clergy of the town, described as the pure brethren of the holy order, to the number of four hundred and twenty seven, were burnt. ~~and that~~ The notables, with Arethas (or Harith) at their head, were imprisoned and commanded to deny their faith and when they refused to do so they too were put to death, evidently at the same time and place. Fresh fuel was added to the fire before the martyrs were thrown into the flames.

Moberg:
p.CIII.

The account in the 'Book of the Himyarites' gives further details and tells how the believing men of Najran were put to death on one day, the freeborn women and their young children on another day and again another company of freeborn women on a third day, besides numbers of individual men and women, who suffered at different times. A similar persecution took place also it is said at the town of Hadramaut when the church there was also used as pyre. There is however no town of that name known. The chief town of the province of Hadramaut was Sabota (Shabwa). The ruins of a Himyarite town have been discovered at Shabwa but there is nothing to shew that this town is meant by the name Hadramaut. Moberg thinks that possibly a Syrian author had heard of a town in Hadramaut which suffered during the persecutions by Masruq but had forgotten the name. As regards the town of Najran the major part, of the persecutions there, seem^{to have been} ~~executed~~ ^{executed} in the space of a week - November 20th - 28th A.D. 523 during which time Masruq appears to have been in camp in the neighbourhood of the town..

Moberg:
p.LVIII.

Mohammedan historians give two somewhat different versions of the outbreak of the persecution. In one the king, whose capital was Sanā, marched with his army against Najran and

called upon the inhabitants to accept Judaism. When they refused he dug a trench and slew them with the sword and burnt them to the number of 20,000. Another version adds the information that the attack on Najran was not merely out of zeal for Judaism but to avenge an outrage by Christians on a Jew. One writer is of opinion that the Mohammedans did not have first hand information but that they only learned about the persecution in Najran from Najranites who were exiled to Iraq in the days of Khalif Omar.

Hoberg:
p. LXXI.

The constancy and steadfastness of the martyrs under trial, ~~and~~ subjected as they were to tortures of various kinds, was such that even Masruq himself wondered.

One of the first to suffer was a native of Najran who was met on the road by some of Masruq's myrmidons. "Are you a Christian?" he was asked. "Yes I am a Christian he replied." Then "hold up your right hand." He held it up and at once it was cut off. "Are you a Christian?" Again he was asked. "Yes." Then "hold up your left hand." It too was immediately cut off. "Are you still a Christian?" they asked. "Yes," he replied, "in life and in death I am a Christian." Enraged at his obstinacy they cut off both his feet, and thus he died.

Hoberg:
p. CVI

When the women of Najran whose husbands had been slain the previous day were brought before Dhu Yazan, Masruq's general and co-persecutor, and commanded to deny Christ as otherwise they would be put to death as their husbands had been, they answered: "God forbid that we should deny our Lord and our God Jesus Christ, for He is God and the maker of all things and He has saved us from eternal death. And God forbid that we should spit on His cross or that we should treat it with contempt for by it He has prepared for us redemption from all

Hoberg:
p. CXVIII

errors. And we abjure thy king and thyself and all who agree with you, ye Jews, crucifiers of our Lord. And we pray that as our husbands died we may be deemed worthy to die, we also, for the sake of Christ, God".

A woman called Habsa, grieving that she was not amongst the number of those who were first arrested, prayed and said "Our Lord Jesus Christ regard not my sins and exclude me not from the rank of martyrdom for Thy sake but deem me worthy, oh my Lord, me also, to be added to the number of those who have loved Thee and been put to death for the sake of Thy worshipped name". When, later, she was brought before Masruq and was asked who she was, she answered "I am the daughter of Hayyan, of the family of Hayyan, the teacher, him by whom our Lord sowed Christianity in our Land. But Hayyan my father once burned your synagogue". She and two others with her ^{were} then tied as camels are tied and beaten with rods till nearly dead. They were then tied to wild camels and sent forth into the desert. Thus they yielded up their spirits to their Lord and were crowned by this glorious confession.

Many other similar cases could be mentioned. While the persecution was still going on the Christians prepared a petition and sent it by the hands of a Ninyarite Christian named Umayyah to the holy bishop Euprepios and to 'Kaleb the believing king of Abyssinia' telling them what Masruq the crucifier had done to the Christians. Immediately ~~King~~ Kaleb, alias Mesbaan, sent an army against Masruq. By an artifice the latter seems to have inflicted a defeat on those who first landed but a fresh army under two generals was despatched. A decisive battle was fought apparently on the shores or in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea. The forces of Masruq were

Loberg:
p. CXII.

Loberg:
p. CIV.

completely defeated and Masruq threw himself into the sea and was drowned.

King Mesbaan described as 'the Christ loving King Kaleb' remained in the land of the Himyarites for seven months, during which time his soldiers roamed the country and did whatever they pleased. The Jews especially suffered much at their hands. The Christians also suffered to some extent, as owing to their ignorance of one another's language they were not able to say to the Abyssinians 'we are Christians'. Finally however they adopted the artifice of tattooing on their ~~hands~~ hands the sign of the cross. When the Abyssinians saw these signs on their hands they did them no harm.

Hoberg:
p. CXL.

King Kaleb, before his departure, took one of the Himyarite nobles who was of royal blood and having seen in him good will towards faith, and knowing that he had greatly desired for a long time to be baptised and be a Christian, he instructed the priests to baptise him, he himself acting as sponsor. Then looking upon him as his spiritual son he appointed him king over all the land of the Himyarites.

Prior to the persecution, there were probably churches, not only in Najran and Zafar, but in Marib and Hajaren and other places where there were Christians.

Hoberg:
p. LII.

During the persecution ~~the~~ most of these must have been destroyed, but under the Abyssinian regime they were rebuilt and Christianity apparently emerged from the crisis stronger and with a larger community than ever.

It has been thought that the king appointed by Mesbaan was Abraha Ashram, famous in Arabian history for his unsuccessful attack on Mecca shortly before Mohammed was born. He was also supposed to be one of the two generals sent with ^{the} second

Abyssinian expedition. This however is obviously not the case for several reasons. First: The narrative just referred to tells^{us} that the king appointed by Elesbaan was one of the Himyarite nobles and that he was connected with ^{the} Himyarite royal house, while the generals in charge of the troops were almost certainly not only Abyssinians, but already Christians when they landed. Secondly: The date of Abraha's unsuccessful attack on Mecca is given as A.D. 568 while the date of the Abyssinian expedition was A.D. 525, a difference of forty three years. Thirdly: The name of the king appointed is given in the "Book of the Himyarites". It is unfortunately partly illegible but enough remains to shew conclusively that it is not Abraha, whatever it may have been.

As already indicated, it is not till more than forty years after king Elesbaan's visit that Abraha first appears on the scene. The king reigning in Sanā in the year mentioned is called by that name, and the word Ashram (or split nosed) is added. Nothing is said as to where he came from but the probability is that he was either the successor of the king appointed in A.D. 525 or in the direct line of succession.

"In the year A.D. 567" we read, "Abraha the Christian king of Yemen built a new cathedral at Sanā with the intention of making it ^{the} rival of Mecca for the Arab pilgrimage". On the very night prior to its intended dedication, "the church was defiled by pagan Arabs from the north" supposed to be members of the Meccan tribe of Koreish. Then followed the famous expedition of Abraha against Mecca and his defeat by the Koreish, forever celebrated in chapter ^{CV} of the Koran ⁺ on the elephant. A more detailed account of the incident is to be found in Zwemer's 'Arabia the Cradle of Islam' (p.308) but the year mentioned ^{there}

is A.D.568.

Two years after Abraha's unsuccessful attempt there was born in Mecca one destined to change the whole history, not only ^{of} Arabia but of ^a considerable part of the continent of Asia. Mohammed, the prophet of Islam. There is not any very connected account of events in Arabia from the birth of Mohammed until the date of the Hegira. The Jewish element in Yemen would doubtless continue to be a source of potential trouble ^{but} under the aegis of the Abyssinians the Christian dynasty represented by Abraha and his son Yeksoin, who succeeded him, continued to exist. How it was finally overthrown and the way prepared, for the advent of Mohammed is told in the 'Annales' of Tabari referred to by Moberg. One of the persons prominent in the persecution of A.D.523 was Dhu Yazan, Masruq's willing servant and companion in wickedness. What happened to him after the arrival of the Abyssinians is not told but in the 'Annales' there is a reference to a certain Saif C. Dhu Yazan, perhaps his son, or at least a member of the same family, who helped to bring about the expulsion of the Abyssinians. He left his own country, went to Hirtha, and was introduced by the king of Hirtha to the Persian court. He succeeded in persuading the Persians to send an army under one of their generals against the Abyssinians in Yemen. With the help of the Persians the Abyssinians were driven out. The Jews probably regained a certain amount of ascendancy in Yemen, but the Christians evidently continued to be in the majority in Najran. Neither party however was strong enough to gather around them the elements making for national well being. Zwemer says: "The defeat of the Yemen hosts brought anarchy to the whole of central Arabia. The idolators of the north overran the south

Moberg:
p.LXX.

Zwemer:
Arabia p.313.

and the weak reign of Yeksonin could not stay the decay of Christianity". The country was ripe for a great national movement which should be independent entirely of foreign control, whether Abyssinian or Persian. All that was needed was a leader who would be able to bring about a fusion of the different national parties and lead the way in the formation of a homogeneous state. The rise of Mohammed therefore coincided with a great national opportunity.

It may be asked, however, what all this has to do with ~~it~~ Nestorianism. It has everything to do with it in as much as prior to A.D. 547, when the great Jacobite revival began, the only form of Christian faith known in the whole of ~~the~~ independent Arabia and Hirtha was that held by the "Church of the East", the so called Nestorians, and it is practically certain that every presbyter and bishop in the whole of that area recognised and acknowledged allegiance to the Patriarch of Seleucia. When therefore we read, as we do, of Christians in Mecca and Medina and even in the tribe of Koreish, we are warranted in assuming that all such, prior, at least, to the middle of the sixth century, were in communion with the same patriarchate. And when the sudden rise of Islam took place it was the Nestorians who suffered most from the impact.

Mohammed was born in A.D. 570 or 571, but the Mohammedan era dates only from A.D. 622. He claimed to have received his call to the prophetic office when in retirement in the cave of Hira, about ten or twelve years ^{previously.} ~~before~~. He immediately began to preach the new religion and to receive revelations which later went to form the Koran - the Bible of the Mohammedans. In the preparation of the Koran he is said to have made use not only of Nestorians, but of Jacobites and Jews.

As: p. 609.

Mat:
p. 214-5.

One of those who assisted him was a Nestorian or Jacobite monk named **Sergius**, surnamed Bahira, the experienced. Whether Sergius and Bahira were two different persons, as maintained by Hoffman, or one and the same as claimed by Nau, is immaterial.

Mohammed tried to persuade the people of Mecca to acknowledge his claims and to accept his leadership, but without success, and he had to flee to Medina where he found a more responsive hearing. Some of the Arabs there were ready to acknowledge his prophetic claims and to follow him in the new religious and national movement which he was endeavouring to bring about. Whether prior to his flight to Medina, Mohammed had intended to make his religious teaching the central feature of his propaganda or not we do not know. Certain it is that from that time forward schemes for temporal power occupied an important part in it.

He was hostile, we are told, to the Jews but friendly to Christians. Whether he was this as a matter of policy or from conviction does not appear. The defeat of the Yemen, and Abyssinian hosts by the Persians had so weakened the Christian forces, and correspondingly encouraged the Jews, that we can easily understand how ready the former would be to enter into an alliance which promised to be to their advantage, and which would enable them to withstand more easily the aggression of their old time opponents. Mohammed stood to benefit by any such arrangement. It was largely due to the help afforded by various Christian communities that he secured the submission of non-Christian tribes in other parts of Arabia. This was equally true of his immediate successor - Abu Bekr the first Khalif.

Among the people who came to the assistance of Mothanna,

one of Abu Bekr's generals, in a critical engagement with the Persians two years after Mohammed's death, were the Beni Namr, a Christian tribe from the north. It was chiefly owing to the valour of the Beni Namr contingent that victory was secured, and the most gallant feat of the day's fighting was performed by a man belonging to another Christian tribe, the Beni Taghlib.

Mir:Annals
of Early
Caliphate
p.137.

Notwithstanding the help thus given and received, it is quite possible that even in the early days of the new era, Mohammed had it in mind to make Islam predominant in the whole of Arabia. Even Christian tribes were to be permitted to continue only on sufferance and subject to the payment of an annual tribute. "Throughout the peninsula there shall be no second creed" was, it is said, his dying command. Whether he actually said so or not, his successors certainly acted on that principle and no matter how willing they might be to benefit by the help of Christians in times of need, they kept the objective referred to ever before them. How it worked out in actual practice may be seen from two examples.

In one of their battles the defeated force fled to the island of Darin in the Persian Gulf. Darin was the seat of a Nestorian bishop and the inhabitants must have been largely Christian. The Mohammedans succeeded in crossing to the island and put the male inhabitants to the sword so that not one escaped to tell the tale. "The spoil was prodigious and multitudes of women and children were taken captive".

Mir:p.51.

The second instance is of a different kind. Reference has been frequently made to Najran, the capital of which, called by the same name, suffered so heavily in the persecution by Masruq. The inhabitants of Najran were almost entirely Christian. Mohammed had entered into an agreement with them whereby in

return for an annual tribute they were to be permitted to continue in undisturbed observance of this ancestral faith. When however Omar succeeded Abu Bekr in the Khalifate, he deported all the Christian Najranites, who still refused to ~~embrace~~ embrace Islam, to Iraq. The name Najran of al-Kufa is believed to commemorate this deportation. Later on, when in A.D. 846 and 935 we read of bishops of Najran, it is these al-Kufa Najranites who are referred to.

berg:
IV

mir:p.223.

Even earlier than this however Mohammed had sent Ali into Yemen to propagate the Mohammedan faith. He said to have converted the whole tribe of Hamdan (probably non-Christian) in one day and it is stated that their example was quickly followed by all the other inhabitants of the province, with the exception of the Najranites referred to above, who, being Christians, chose rather to pay tribute. Najran is here spoken of, ~~as it sometimes was~~ as if it were part of Yemen.

Conversions from Christianity to Islam in large numbers are reported as having taken place in Bahrein, in Mazoun or Oman, and in Fars, in the south west, and also in the centre of Arabia. The reason for the apostacy of many ~~of them~~ was the hope of saving their property. "Where is the great people of the Mazonites" (Mazoun was the name given especially to Sohar but in general to all the region of Oman) "which has precipitated itself into the great gulf of apostacy for the love of half its goods?" "Where are the sanctuaries of Karmania and of Fars?" wrote the Nestorian patriarch about A.D. 650.

Sau:p.232.

Ali, the fourth Khalif A.D. 656-661, tried persuasive tactics but when these proved ineffectual he also resorted to force. Mohammedanism was considered the national religion and

obligatory for all Arabs.

That worldly motives played an ~~important~~ important part in the early conversions to Islam is admitted even by Mohammedan historians. "When for example the Arabs of the pathless desert 'fed on locusts and wild honey' once tasted the delicacies of civilization and revelled in the luxurious ~~pal~~aces of the Khosroes, they said, 'By Allah, even if we cared not to fight for the cause of God we could not but wish to contend for and enjoy these, leaving distress and hunger henceforth to others'".

The prospect of plunder and rapine appealed to the non-Christian Bedouin tribes and led them to enlist 'en masse' under the banner of Islam and so far as the gospel message was concerned, Arabia became and has practically continued to be, a closed land.

Wright quoted by Zwemer makes the statement that "with the death of Mohammed the last sparks of Christianity in Arabia were extinguished". This, as proved by what has just been said, is obviously incorrect but there is no doubt that as a living force Christianity in Arabia had ceased to operate by the middle of the seventh century.

Chapter IV.

Expansion in Central and Eastern Asia.

Even more important than the spread of Christianity in Arabia, is the missionary expansion of the 'Church of the East' in Central and Eastern Asia. The pioneers in this also were again Nestorian artisans, who went thither for the purposes of trade, or found employment among people less advanced educationally, and in the service of kings, princes, and noblemen, in the further provinces of Persia and beyond.

The golden age of Nestorian missions in Central Asia was from the end of the fourth till about the end of the ninth centuries. In the Mongolian, Chinese and Southern Siberian area, the period of greatest activity began later and continued during the tenth and at least part of the eleventh centuries. It is during the latter period that we find the account of the conversion of the Keraites and the story of Prester John. To this period also belong the Christian tomb stones discovered near Lake Issyk-Kul, to all of which we shall refer later.

"Eastward from the great school of Edessa" and from the monasteries and missionary schools of Persia, especially those in the province of Adiabene "the envoys of Christianity went forth". "They pitched their tents in the camps of the wandering Tartar, the ~~L~~Lama of Tibet trembled at their words, they stood in the rice fields of the Punjab, and taught fishermen by the sea of Aral, they struggled through the vast deserts of Mongolia, the memorable inscription of Hsi-an-fu attests their victories in China. In India the Zamorin (of Calicut) ~~is~~ himself, respected their spiritual and courted their temporal authority They braved alike pagan and fireworshipper, the burning suns of Tiflis

and the feverish swamps of Imeretia. They subjugated the border lands of Europe and Asia and planted a colony half way up the great (mountain of) Ararat".

We have definite instances of persons being won to Christ by the testimony of Christian merchants and physicians in the countries to which they went by land, and can safely assume that the same was true of those who travelled by sea and of the sailors who manned the vessels.

Even wars did not necessarily prevent the Syrian merchants from carrying their wares from place to place. Jerome speaks of the Huns as having learnt the Psalms taught by these same Syrian merchants 'who burn by the very warmth of their faith'. The Syrians have an innate love of commerce, and the desire for gain, Jerome says, makes them overrun the world. But was it only the desire for gain? Vambéry speaks of the 'feverish activity' of the Nestorians in spreading abroad their faith, a description which seems to be singularly appropriate. 'He loved me and gave Himself for me' therefore 'I glory in tribulation' was the language of their lives and probably also of their lips. It was this that gave them the secret of the multiplied life, and drinking of the living waters themselves, from them there flowed forth "rivers of living water".

That Christ was very real to these early Christians is evident from what we are told about them elsewhere and quite explains the marvellous results of their testimony and ministry. Bardaisan who wrote about A.D.196, describing the character and conduct of the Christians, says: "We are called Christians by the one name of the Messiah. As regards our customs; our brethren abstain from everything that is contrary to their profession, e.g. Parthian Christians do not take the

Nau:p.243.

Vambéry:
History of
Bokhara
p.16.

Burkitt:
Early
Christianity
pp.115,134.

wives. Jewish Christians are not circumcised. Our Bactrian sisters do not practice promiscuity with strangers. Persians do not take their daughters to wife. Medes do not desert their dying relations or bury them alive. Christians in Edessa do not kill their wives or sisters who commit fornication but keep them apart and commit them to the judgment of God. Christians in Hatra do not stone thieves". The change in the character and conduct of those who became followers of Christ was something that could be seen and known of all men.

Arkitt:
p.224.

To the early Christian thinkers, the life we live here seemed only valuable for that which we may take away with us when we leave it. The merchants goods were worth nothing in comparison to the pearl of great price. "We speak" said they "of God and our Lord Jesus and of Angels and watchers and holy ones, of the new world, of the incorruptible food of the tree of life, of what eye hath not seen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared from of old for those who love Him". Such were the men who helped to bring the knowledge of salvation to countless numbers all through central and further Asia.

They served as secretaries and physicians to Turks, Mongols, and others and as mentioned elsewhere, not only taught them letters, but invented alphabets for them based on the Syriac. According to Nau, the Pehlevi alphabet, perfected by Nestorian scribes, constitutes to-day the basis of the Korean alphabet.

Nigyan:
Assyrian
Church
p.184.

As an instance of the place and influence of the Nestorian laity in Christian propaganda we may refer to the following:- Mar Abha the great, who was patriarch of Seleucia from 540 to 552, was by birth and education a Zoroastrian, a member of

the great Magian clan, before he became a Christian. Like Nicodemus among the Jews he was learned in the theology and philosophy of his faith and was not only 'instructor of Magi' but secretary to ^{the} governor of the province. He was led to Christ by the courtesy and humility of a Jewish Christian. When about to cross the Tigris in a ferry boat, he had ordered this man, Joseph, out of the boat until he himself had crossed. Twice he tried to reach the other side and twice was driven back by the wind. He then invited the man to board the vessel and behold they were able to cross without further difficulty. He discovered that his fellow passenger was a Christian and not as he ^{had} thought, a Marcionite, and was so impressed by his courtesy and humility that before long he too became a Christian, gave up his official prospects and asked for baptism, intending to become an ascetic. Before doing so, however, he went to Nisibis to spend some time in study. He so distinguished himself there that he was persuaded to become a teacher, and later on became Patriarch and did noble service for Christ at the cost of constant persecution by the Magi and repeated attempts to get him put to death.

The great persecution under Sapor and others scattered abroad both clergy and laity. Of Barsabas, a bishop either in Parthia or Media, it is recorded that although he had been the means of setting free both Sapor's wife and sister from the power of a demon, he had to flee into Khorasan to escape persecution. He acted as chief bishop of Marna for a period of fifteen years. Monks and ascetics when they were not slain, were no doubt similarly forced to flee and carried the gospel with them wherever they went. In this way it spread throughout all Persia, from Adjabene and Beth-Garma, where the

Ms: III. ii.
418-424.

persecution seems to have been most severe, to Chalachenia, Elam, Persia proper and Media: to the Dailamites and the Gelae, then into Transoxania, Samarkand, Bokhara, Fergana, Balkh, Tus and other places in Bactria.

Mingana:
p.303.

The country of the Gilanians south west of ^{the} Caspian, and that of Gog and Magog, as the Turks and Tartars were called, is said to have received the gospel at the hands of Aggai, a disciple of Addai, as early as A.D. 120-140, and we find the same place^s referred to again in a Syriac book "the Doctrine of the Apostles" written in A.D. 250.

In the year A.D. 424, among the signatories present at a Council held under the presidency of the patriarch of Seleucia, we find the names of the bishops of Rai, Ispahan, Segestan, Nischabour, Herat and Merw.

Mingana:
p.303.

About A.D. 498 the Sassasian king Kawad or Kubad twice took refuge with the Hephtalite Huns and Turks because of a rebellion in Persia. He found Christians there who helped him to recover his throne and was favourably inclined to them because of this. On one of the occasions when he fled to the country of the Turks he was accompanied on his journey by the bishop of Arran, four presbyters, and two laymen, who were journeying thither as missionaries in response to a vision which had appeared to the bishop in which he was commanded to proceed to the country of ^{the} Turks and to instruct them, and also the numerous Byzantine captives there, in the truths of the gospel. The daily food of this band of missionaries was a loaf of bread each and a jar of water. They were very successful in their mission and a large number of Turks were baptised.

The presbyters remained with them for seven years and taught the Turks the art of writing in their own language. The laymen settled down there, married and had children and only returned to their own country in A.D.530 after an absence of thirty years.

King Kavad himself was touched by the grace of God and gave up eating unclean meat. He had a Christian physician named Joseph, who afterwards became patriarch, whom he greatly honoured.

Probus, a messenger of the Roman emperor Justinian, who was sent on a special mission to the Turks about that time, was astonished at what he saw and at what God had accomplished through his servants.

In A.D.781 Timothy, the Nestorian patriarch of that period, wrote that another king of the Turks had "become Christian with all his people". The king requested Timothy to appoint a metropolitan for his country, and this was done. In a letter to a certain Rabban Sergius, the same patriarch says that having ordained a metropolitan for the Turks, he was about to do the same for Tibet. In still another letter to Sergius, Timothy writes that in his time many monks crossed the sea and went with only a staff and scrip to the Indians and the Chinese. In the same letter he refers to the death of the metropolitan of China.

Kingana:
p.306.

Thomas of Marga tells how this indefatigable patriarch selected more than fourscore monks, some of whom he ordained bishops, and sent them forth to preach the gospel to the heathen in the far east.

Idem p.307.

Others, we are told, preached in the countries of the Dailanites, the Gilanians, and other savage races and "planted in them the light of the truth of the gospel of our Lord". They evangelized and baptised them, worked miracles, and showed signs,

and the fame of their exploits reached the furthest points of the east. Information regarding the work thus carried on was brought to Timothy by letters, from merchants who had gone to these regions for purposes of trade, from secretaries employed by the kings of those parts, and others. One of those ordained by Timothy was Shabhalisho who was specially fitted by his linguistic gifts and in other ways for the work to which he had been called. Of him it is said - He taught and baptised many in towns and villages and "brought them to the teaching of divine life". He built churches and appointed priests and deacons to care for them. He penetrated to the furthest extremes of the east and evangelized pagans, Marcionites and Manicheans, sowing the "sublime light of the gospel, the source of life and peace".

Mingana:
p.308.

Timothy is credited with having been the means of the conversion of the Kaghan of the Turks, and of other kings with whom he had been in correspondence.

Idem;
pp.318-20.

Mingana gives a list of no fewer than twenty one towns, districts, and provinces to the west of the river Oxus alone (those on the eastern side are referred to separately) which had episcopal sees and regarding which, bishops, one or more, are mentioned as having been appointed in the fifth and sixth centuries. These include, amongst others, Herat, a town in Khurasan north west of modern Afghanistan, No less than four bishops are mentioned in connection with it in the centuries referred to; Gilan, a province on the south west coast of the Caspian, famous for its eighteen martyrs who suffered martyrdom on April 12th A.D.351 under Sapor II; Merw a celebrated town north of Khurasan referred to in the accounts of no less than six synods in the same period; Ray or Rai a very important

town situated north east of Jibal province, and thirty miles south east of modern Teheran; Sijistan, a well known province, now part of modern Afghanistan, and many others.

We have so far scarcely referred to India, but that there were strong Christian communities there and also in Ceylon in the fourth and fifth and subsequent centuries, is beyond doubt. Whether their beginnings were due to the preaching of St Thomas as tradition asserts, or some one else whose name is not known, the missionary activity of the Nestorian merchants, artisans, and clergy, must have helped very considerably in their development and growth.

The Syrian Christians of Travancore and Cochin - the one community which has been able to maintain its ~~substantive~~ identity unbroken down through the centuries - will be referred to later, but there were numerous bodies of Christians in other parts of India as well.

There is first the statement made by Prof. Herzfeld, the great authority on Babylonia, in a recent lecture before the royal Asiatic Society, ~~and~~ confirmed from other sources, that "the whole of north west India was a vast province of ^{the} Persian empire in the third century governed by Persian Officials". There is no evidence that any great change in that respect took place until the rise of Mohammedanism.

If refugees from the persecutions of the fourth and fifth centuries, and bands of earnest missionaries from the monastery of Beth-Abe and other centres penetrated other provinces of the empire, it is scarcely likely that India would be left untouched.

Secondly - Metropolitans of India are referred to ^{with} ~~then~~ ~~once~~ ~~occasionally~~. On one occasion we find the metropolitan of

Hingana:
pp. 322, 330.

India grouped together with those of Samarkand and China, and on another, (A.D. 1503) we are told that the patriarch Elijah V ordained three metropolitans and sent them to India, China and Dabag (=Java). Java was fifteenth in rank among the metropolitans. It is practically certain that the India to which the metropolitans were appointed was north and north west India rather than the south. Not only does Prof. Herzfelds statement about north west India being a vast province of the Persian empire confirm this, but as a general rule when the Christians of south west or western India are spoken of their country is referred to, as Male, Kalliana, or Sielidiva the names by which those countries were then known. The east coast ~~was~~ known as Maabar.

Now the fact of a metropolitan being appointed at all to India presupposes from six to twelve suffragan bishops and a very large number of Christians. But we do not need to depend on mere inference. We are able to fall back on the testimony of independent witnesses in corroboration of this.

Assemanus:
Vol. III. ii.
p. 521.

Assemanus quotes Cosmas as having in the year A.D. 525 found Christians not only in Socotra and Ceylon but in the Ganges valley, Pegu, Cochinchina, Siam and Tonquin, and Cosmas himself, writing about A.D. 525, says that among the Bactrians, Huns, 'and the rest of the Indians', Persamenians, Medes and Elamites, and throughout the whole land of Persia, there is no limit to the number of churches, bishops and large Christian communities, adding that there were many martyrs, and numbers of monks living as hermits.

Cosmas:
Christian
Topography
Hakluyt
Edition
p. 120.

In view of these facts, confirmed as they are from other sources, it is rather surprising to find such a careful writer

~~...~~

Kidd:
History of
the Church
to A.D. 461
p. 426.

as B.J. Kidd in his history of the church, speaking as if no such wide spread missionary activity had ever existed. "From the shores of the Persian Gulf (and the Red Sea) onwards" he says "lay the districts vaguely called India by the ancients. None of the tribes offered much of a field to Christian Missions". In an attempt to explain away the Christians found by Cosmas on the shores of India, in Socotra, and on the Persian Gulf, Kidd adds, "they were colonists from the church of Persia and a remnant of them still survives in the Christians of St. Thomas on the Malabar coast" although Cosmas speaks of Socotra as having a multitude of Christians, and says that there was no limit to the number of churches, and large Christian communities in the places referred to.

Kidd:
p. 429.

Cosmas:
pp. 118-119.

Kidd himself later on in the same book refers to "Theophilus, the Indian, who came from Ceylon in the days of Constantine and was consecrated bishop in A.D. 356". That Theophilus, according to Kidd, was an Arian, does not alter the fact that he was a native of India. As already stated, Assemani believes that Theophilus came not from Ceylon but from the island of Divu at the mouth of the Indus. A bishop of India is also said to have been present at the council of Nicea in A.D. 325, but as the name India was sometimes applied to southern Arabia and other parts of the Mekran coast, we cannot build very much upon that. If he came from India proper it must have been the Persian province of that name, viz: north west India.

Bordiers
Marco Polo
Vol. II
p. 427.

Marco Polo^{who} visited India about the end of the 13th century states that at that time there were in middle (central) India six great kings and kingdoms and that three of these were Christian and three Saracen. The Christians branded themselves on either cheek and on the forehead, St. Thomas,

he says, preached in this region and after he had converted the people went to the province of Maabar (the former name of the east coast of South India of which Mylapore seems to have been the capital or one of the chief towns) where he died.

Hakluyt
Library 1st
Series
Vol. 22
.41:

Abd-er-Razzak who visited India in 1442 said that the vizier of Vijanagar in the Deccan was a Christian, his name being Nimeh-pezir, Abd-er-Razzak did not think much of him because when he came into power he stopped the daily allowance which Razzak and his party had been receiving from the state.

Travels of
Nicolo Conti
p.7.

Nicolo Conti, who visited India in the same century as Abd-er-Razzak, states that in the city of Malepur (Madras) he found 1,000 Nestorians and adds that Nestorians "are scattered all over India as the Jews are among us".

Item p.33.

Further on he speaks of these same Nestorians "who are spread over all India", as being the only exceptions in the matter of polygamy. They "confine themselves to one solitary mate". Conti met a person from North India who said that there was a kingdom twenty days' journey from Cathay of which the king and all the inhabitants were Christians but heretics, being, it was said, Nestorians. This man had visited India to obtain information about the Christians who were reported to exist towards the western sun. The churches of the Christians from where he had come were, he said, larger and more beautiful than those in India.

At Tana also and at Kalayan near Bombay, there were Christian families, and in an old map (called the Catalan map) dated 1375, we find a note referring apparently to a place in the province of Orissa, as follows:- 'Here reigns K. Stephen, a Christian. Look for the city Butifilis', Butifilis

is near the modern Cuttack but Yule calls it Mutifilis and places it much further south near Vizagapatam or between it and Masulipatan, towns several hundred miles north of Madras.

There were ^{also} Christians at a place called Gandispur in the neighbourhood of the present Peshawar. Whether this is the same as the 'Gundeshapur' referred to by Barthold as the seat of a famous medical school is not quite clear. Assemani says Gandispur was eight parasangs distant from Sustra which was situated in long. 74.5 and lat. 31.30. One of the traditions regarding St. Thomas is connected with Gandispur.

As late as 1506 A.D. a certain Louis of Varthema met in Bengal, Nestorian merchants who came from Sarnam or Ayoutha the ancient capital of Sian. They conducted him to Pegu (in Burmah) where the king had 1,000 Christians in his service, and took him with them when they went to trade at Borneo, at Java, and even to the Malacca islands.

There is a remark which is at least suggestive in the story of 'the jackal and the deer' taken from Book I Fable 3 of the Hitopadeca (Sanskrit) where the jackal uses the words "The snares are made of sinew: how can I today on the Lord's Day touch these with my teeth". The Hitopadeca is not an original work but rather an excellent compilation of original material. In its present form it is supposed to be not less than five hundred years old. The original from which it was copied may probably be five hundred years older still. If the words 'the Lord's Day' reflect Christian influence and teaching, as they probably do, the inference is that one thousand years ago or more, the writer of the fable referred to had such knowledge of Christian teaching and practice as led him to ~~make~~ the remark quoted.

Barthold
Geschichte
des Christ-
entums in
mittel Asien
p.27.

Ass:p.781.

Lau: Expan-
sion Nesto-
rienne en
Asie p.278.

Samon's
Sanskrit
Reader
p.25.

W. Hunters:
Indian
Empire
p.240.

A reference of a more definite kind is found in the Gazetteer of the Kanara district of the Bombay Presidency (Vol.XV p.397) where there is an account of a forest tribe of Maratha Sidis, now Hindus, whose family names bear witness to a time when they were Christians. Sir W.W. Hunter is of opinion that there were probably many similar reversion to paganism.

History of
R.C.Telugu
Christians
p.236.

That there were many Christian Marathas two hundred years ago is confirmed from the following source: About fifteen years ago a certain Roman Catholic father published a book giving an account of early Roman Catholic Missions in the Telugu country. The book consists chiefly of ~~the~~ extracts from letters sent by the missionaries of that time to their superiors in Paris, and published there under the title of "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses". One of the letters tells how the armies of the Mahrattas who swept over the Carnatic every year to collect a certain portion of the revenue called Chout* which had been assigned to them as tribute by Hussain Ali in 1714 in return for help rendered, had, among them, a numerous and devoted Christian community which was the cause of many conversions and baptisms. In each of their armies there were considerable numbers of Christian families who were in the habit of appointing one of themselves to act as catechist. They had a large tent for their religious services which on Sundays they decorated as they would a church. All the Christians were expected to assemble there for prayer and instruction and absentees were severely punished.

Note: Morari Rao a famous Mahratta chief had his headquarters in Gooty Fort in A.D.1746.

*Chout: for particulars re this form of tribute see North Arcot District Manuel of 1895 Vol.I p.47.

History of
S.C. Telugu
Christians
p. 258.

In another place we are told that the Nabob of Arcot held the Christians in great esteem and had a company of twenty five Christians who were always on duty as sentinels at the palace. Besides this there were a great many Christians among his troops who never failed to meet for worship on Sundays, even in war time. Later we read of a whole battalion of four hundred Christian soldiers in the service of the Nabob.

idem p. 294.

Still another letter speaks of an important Sudra caste called the ill'ellani Kamavarus, numbers of whom were Christian. Originally from the Cuddapah district, they were at that time found chiefly in the Guntur, Nellore, and Chingleput districts, and were called Gandikota Kamma. Where and when these Kamma Christians entered the fold was not known, but they prided themselves on the prestige of their ancestors and said that their forefathers occupied honourable positions in the service of Nabobs and Rajahs of bygone days.

The ^{only other} proof of the existence of large Christian communities in different parts of India as the result of Nestorian Missionary activity in the early centuries, to which we shall at present refer, is the fact that such communities exist even today, especially in that part of India which to a large extent escaped the domination of Islam. The area referred to extends, roughly speaking, from the latitude of Madras to the extreme south of the peninsula. It includes also the island of Ceylon. Omitting for the present the Christians in the native states of Travancore and Cochin, there are, all over the southern part of the Presidency, large Roman Catholic communities totalling, including Ceylon, upwards of a million people and constituting

the protestant Christian community by about four to one. In some districts the ratio is as high as ten or twelve to one. The existence of these large communities cannot be explained in any other way than that they are the descendants of those won to Christ by the Nestorian missionaries of more than a thousand years ago. Just how they came to be classed as Roman Catholics will be referred to later. For the present it is sufficient to note that ~~they~~ they exist even if they have long since ceased to be either a ^ggressive or numerically progressive. That they are not originally the outcome of Roman Catholic missionary enterprise may be gathered from the writings of Roman Catholic historians and in other ways.

J.F. Hunter
The Indian
Empire
p.244.

The first regularly equipped Catholic mission to begin work in India was that of the Franciscan brethren who arrived from Portugal in A.D.1500. The Jesuits under Francis Xavier came next in A.D.1542. Others came later. Xavier himself spent only seven or eight years in the country and never learned the vernacular. His work was mainly among the fisher people in the neighbourhood of Tuticorin and the already nominal Christians of Travancore. With one exception he never visited the interior. The exception referred to was a journey lasting about a week into the Madura district. When he returned he said the people there were not yet fit for the kingdom of God. Nothing further regarding his visit was ever known.

Strickland
& Marshall
Catholic
Missions
in South
India p.36.

Not till a hundred and fifty years after Xavier do we find the first reference to Roman Catholic missions in Madura. The *most* noted of the missionaries was Robert de Nobili who sought to win the Brahmins and those of higher castes by passing himself off as a Roman rajah and Sanniyasi. He and a few others are said to have baptised 100,000 persons in forty five years.

Idem p141.

Trickland
Marshall
Catholic
missions
in South
India p.46.

The total number of Christians in South India at that time (including Travancore) is given as one million two hundred thousand. Whether this is correct or not we have no means of verifying. That, even then, they were not all classed as Roman Catholics is clear from the statement of the Roman Catholic ~~ie~~ writer of 'Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses' that the "Indian mission viz. Madura, Mysore, the Carnatic, on the coast, and in the neighbouring provinces of Travancore and Comorin, was the most flourishing in the world and that notwithstanding famine and war it numbered then (about A.D.1736) more than 300,000 Christians". Ceylon, which today has a Catholic community of 380,000, was said to be so completely Christian (meaning Roman Catholic) when the Dutch Protestants took possession in A.D. 1650 that "all their efforts and cruel persecutions could not eradicate it". Where did all these large communities come from? There is no evidence, nor is it anywhere claimed that they were all the result of Roman Catholic missionary effort, but rather the reverse. But it is not only in Roman Catholic communities that we necessarily find the representatives of those early Christians. How many of them have found their way, via Roman Catholicism, into Protestant missions it is impossible to tell, but of the first, one hundred mission agents of the American Madura Mission, we are told, that while twenty four were from ~~Roman Catholic~~ Protestant, thirty six were from Roman Catholic families, the remainder being of Hindu origin. The same was probably true of other South Indian Missions as well.

Chandler:
Seventy five
years in
the Madura
Mission
p.98.

But Nestorian missionary enterprise did not content itself with having carried the gospel message to Central Asia,

the different provinces of Persian empire, and the rest of India and Ceylon. It reached out even to the Malayasian islands.

Regarding these we have very little information but history tells us of at least two metropolitans who were sent to Java by the Patriarch of Babylon the last being in A.D.1503. How many were appointed locally we have no means of knowing but as metropolitans usually had from six to twelve suffragan bishops associated with them the fact that there were metropolitans there at all suggests the existence of a very numerous and widespread Christian community in the Malay Peninsula and adjoining islands, and tends to confirm the statement already made that the difficulty is not so much to find a place to which these indefatigable missionaries had gone as one where they had not been.

Chapter V

Syrian Christians of South West India.

As already mentioned with the exception of the small remnant in the neighbourhood of Qudshanis in Kurdistan the only section of the Nestorian Church that has been able to maintain its distinctive identity down through the centuries to the present time is the Syrian Christian community of South West India.

The territory where this important body is to be found includes the two native protected states of Cochin and Travancore in their entirety, and a small portion of the adjoining British District of Malabar.

It is, roughly, 250 miles long by 50 miles wide and has to-day a population of nearly five millions, the proportion of Christians being rather more than one in four.

The great majority of these are Syrian or St. Thomas Christians, who claim to have received the gospel, in the first instance, at the hands of St. Thomas. Until the time of the Portugese supremacy in the sixteenth century they were classed as Nestorians.

Sometimes they were called the 'Christians of ^{the} Serra' the Portugese word for mountains, because they lived on, and at foot of, the Western Ghauts - a range of hills, rising to 9,000 feet in height and forming the eastern boundary of the two states. They were known as St. Thomas Christians because of their claim to be the spiritual children of St. Thomas. The name Syrian is given to them, not only because their liturgies and scriptures are in Syriac or Aramaic, but also because they received reinforcements from Syria and Mesopotamia in the

Richards:
Indian
Christians
of St. Thomas
pp.1,2.

early centuries.

Finally, they were known as Nestorians because they held the doctrines subscribed to by the 'Church of the East,' and ecclesiastically were subject to the Patriarch of Babylon as the Nestorian patriarch is called, whose headquarters were at Seleucia-Ctesiphon till A.D.762 when they were removed to Bagdad. They continued there until A.D.1258 and were then transferred to Mosul where they remained until A.D.1400 when they were moved ~~to~~ to Qudshanis in the mountains of Kurdistan where they still are.

Menev:
p.511.

Local tradition claims St. Thomas as the founder of the church. He ^{is} said to have landed in A.D.52 at Malankara an island in the lagoon near Cranganore in Cochin, "a place that is now an obscure hamlet, but was in those days a flourishing sea port called by ancient geographers Mouziri".

Catholic
Directory
(1925)
p.242.

Philipose
p.9.

The tradition is to the effect that many were won for Christ from all classes of society by his preaching. Seven churches were planted by him and clergy ordained to supervise them. He then proceeded to Mylapore (now part of the city of Madras) where he won the king and all his people for Christ.

Hough:
Christianity
in India
Vol.I.p.32.

From there he went to China and spent some time at the city of Camballe from which he returned to Mylapore, where the Brahmans being jealous of him, instigated the people to kill him by stoning, after which one of them pierced him with a lance. He was buried at Mylapore, a few miles from St. Thomas Mount where the actual martyrdom is said to have taken place. His alleged grave now occupies a place in the nave of the Roman Catholic cathedral at Mylapore, (The cathedral was rebuilt about thirty years ago.) It is visited by large numbers

of pilgrims from different parts of South India, particularly from the Malabar Coast.

The tradition, on the face of it, is purely legendary as is evident from the reference to Camballe or Khanbaliq in China. The meaning of Khanbaliq is the emperor's city. It is now known by the modern name of Peking. Khanbaliq, however, did not become the capital of China until the time of Kublai Khan in the 13th century. That St. Thomas was martyred at or near St. Thomas Mount is equally open to question. Heracleon a Sicilian Gnostic who lived about A.D. 170 asserts that St. Thomas ended his days in peace and it was not till the latter half of the fourth century that the legend of his martyrdom began to grow up.

Kennedy in
East & West
April 1907
p.194.

Although the story in its present form is thus seen to be unreliable, there is nothing inherently impossible in the claim that either St. Thomas or some other of the apostles or one of the early disciples visited both the Malabar and the Coromandel coasts in the latter half of the first century.

It was in the year A.D. 47 that Hippalus, an Egyptian mariner discovered the periodicity of the monsoon currents, thus making possible direct communication between the Red Sea and the Malabar Coast, across the Indian Ocean, instead of having to hug the coast as had hitherto been the case.

Phillipose
p.11.

A new trade route was thus opened up between West and East. That it was made use of even then is proved by the discovery of Roman coins of the first century in the bed of the Beypore river in Malabar, and in the Coimbatore district of the Madras Presidency. From other sources, we know that the early Christians traders and others made use of the ordinary trade routes in the spreading abroad of the gospel message.

It is not, however, till towards the close of the second century A.D. that we find the first definite information about the sending of the gospel message to India. We are told that in response to a request preferred by certain Indians to Demetrius, the then bishop of Alexandria, that some one might be sent to instruct them in the doctrine of Christ, Pantaenus, (flor.c A.D.185) a Stoic philosopher who had been converted and who afterwards became head of the theological school in Alexandria, offered himself for the task. How far he went and how long he remained we are not told. It has even been questioned whether the India to which we went was the country that we know by that name. But as to that, there is very little doubt, as is proved by writings of Clement of Alexandria (A.D.160-220) a favourite pupil of Pantaenus. Clement speaks not only of the Yogis of India but also of the Brahmans. The latter he said were those "who obeyed the commandments of Buddha whom they honour as a god because of the holiness of his life". The reference by Clement is conclusive that Pantaenus visited India although it does not prove that he went as far as Travancore. Still, if he went by sea as he probably did, it is more likely that he arrived at Travancore than that he landed anywhere else.

As regards those early centuries however while there is abundance of legend there is not much else to go upon. It is not till the time of the great wave of Nestorian missionary activity in the fourth century, which spread through Central ~~India~~ Asia, India and Ceylon and even China, that we come into the region of definite certainty.

Rich:
bl.I.p.47.

Richards:
p.6.ff.

Although it seems practically certain that Christianity

had obtained a foothold in South India at a very early date, it is extremely probable that the flame of evangelical fervour had died down considerably prior to the year/345 when as one of the results of the great persecution under Sapor II, there came that new influx of Christian life and activity which changed the whole situation. The Christians in South India became such a force that later on kings and rulers were ready to confer special privileges on them in order to secure the favour and support of such an influential body.

The story goes that in the year A.D.345 a Syrian merchant named Thomas of Cana, or Knai Thomas (whether one and the same or two different persons at two different times is not clear) visited Malabar, and being struck by the waning condition of the church there, returned to his own country and represented the matter to the patriarch of Seleucia who sent with him to Malabar Mar Joseph, metropolitan of Orfu, and certain other clergy and a colony of 400 Syrians who landed at Cranganore.

Milne Rae doubts both the visit of Pantaenus to India and the influx of new blood into the Syrian church under the leadership of Knai Thomas. He says that "as a matter of fact there was at the date in question no church in Malabar at all". His assumption is entirely without foundation. Apart altogether from other considerations already referred to which

Rae:Syrian
Church
p.336.

Note:The Travancore Census report for 1891 p.384 ff. refers to the tradition that St.Thomas, after founding seven churches, ordained two converts as ministers to look after them. It then proceeds: "After the death of those ministers the church had a set back owing to the lack of ministers to look after its welfare."

indicate a very strong probability that whether planted originally by St. Thomas the apostle or by some one else, Christianity had as a matter of fact reached South India in the very early centuries, there are two additional arguments both of which tend to support the view that in A.D.345 there were numbers of Christians resident there.

There is first the fact that at that time the Christians in Persia were being scattered abroad as the result of the great persecution which began in A.D.339 under Sapor II and lasted for forty years. It does not require very much imagination to assume that some of the refugees were as likely as not to find their way to South India by the various trade routes. This would explain why Knai Thomas brought with him not only clergy but other settlers as well. Even to-day there is a considerable section of the Syro Malabar Christians known as 'Suddists' who claim to be the decendants of these emigrant Syrians of the fourth century.

Secondly, there is the fact that in A.D.523 nearly 180 years later, Cosmas found a strong community of Nestorian Christians already in South India. If they were not there in A.D.345 and did not arrive in that year, when did they arrive, and how is it that we have not even a suggestion of any infusion of new blood between A.D.345 and A.D.522? Was there any other circumstance equally, or more likely to cause such an inflow than the persecution referred to?

Cosmas Indicopleustes in his 'Christian topography' refers to strong Christian communities as existing in his time not only in South West India but in other parts as well. Cosmas, himself a Nestorian, speaks of these Indian Christians as having

Catholic
Directory
(1925)
p.246.

Cosmas
Christian
Topography
MacCrie
Edition
(Hakluyt
Society)
Intro.
p. IX

Cosmas:
p.119.
p.365.

a bishop appointed from Persia. This shews their close connection with the church in Persia and justifies us in assuming that they had inherited much of their spiritual fervour from the Christians of that country. Incidentally it indicates that doctrinally they held by the decrees of the Council of Nicea which were accepted by the Nestorians generally. It was scarcely likely that any report of the Nestorian controversy which began eighty six years later than A.D.345 had even reached them when Cosmas first saw them.

Hugh:
Vol. I.
pp.61,62.

The Syrian Christians of Travancore themselves claim that they were in possession of the Syriac version of the scriptures even prior to the Council of Nicea, and Buchanan in his 'Christian Researches' is inclined to think that ~~that~~ may be so as some of their MSS are certainly very ancient. The character used is Estrangelo Syriac and the words of every book are numbered.

In addition to the inflow from Persia, others also may have helped in the proclamation of the gospel in these distant regions. The story of one such contribution has come down to us. The inhabitants of the interior of India are said to have been won to Christ during the reign of Constantine the Great, or soon after, and a story explaining how this was brought about is told by Rufinus A.D. 330-410 and repeated by various other writers.

A Christian named Meropius having heard about India ~~about~~ ^{was} fired with ^{the} desire to visit it. He accordingly set out taking with him two youths related to him, named Frumentius and Oedesius. When about to return, he was attacked by the natives of the place to which he had gone, and all on board

the vessel with the exception of the two youths, were put to death. They were taken and presented to the king of the country who was so pleased with them that he made Frumentius his secretary and Oedesius his cup-bearer. Just before his death he gave them their liberty but the queen entreated them to undertake the government of the country during the minority of the young prince. This they did. At the same time they enquired from merchants whether there were any other Christians there, and being told there were, they sent for them and counselled and encouraged them in every way. Many of those who heard their message and saw their example became Christians and the number continued to increase during the whole of the time that Frumentius was at the head of affairs. When the young king attained his majority, Frumentius and his brother Oedesius, much to the grief of the queen and those associated with her, sailed for home.

Oedesius hastened to Tyre where their parents lived, but Frumentius proceeded to Alexandria and reported the whole matter to Athanasius who was then bishop. The latter thereupon begged Frumentius to return to India to minister to those who were already Christians as well as to others who might be gathered into the Christian fold. He was accordingly ordained and returned to India for this purpose in A.D. 356 and was a successful minister of the gospel winning many to Christ.

Rufinus claims to have received the story from Oedesius the brother of Frumentius. Here again doubts have been thrown on the place since it is known that one named Frumentius was bishop of Axum, the capital of Abyssinia, but as to this, Baronius, the Martyrologist, holds that there were two bishops

named Frumentius, one of whom had his see in Abyssinia, and the other in India proper, an explanation which is at least conceivable.

Hough: Vol. I.
p. 94.

After the visit of Cosmas to India in 522, the next event of importance in the history of the Syrian church, of which we have any record, is the arrival, sometime during the eighth century, of a wealthy Armenian merchant called Thomas of Cana, but usually spoken of as Mar Thomas. The fact that Thomas of Cana was one of the names of the merchant who arrived in 345 has already been referred to. It is likely that Thomas was the name in both cases and that one of them had the name 'Cana' added in error. At all events there seems no reason to doubt that the Syrian church received reinforcements on both occasions. The testimony of Cosmas, as already stated, furnishes all the confirmatory proofs required of the first influx, the ~~first~~ evidence of the second is no less definite.

Travancore
Census
1901.

The census report for 1901 gives the year A.D. 745 as the year of arrival of the second recorded reinforcement. The authority quoted is a record kept by the Syrian Kattanars or priests.

Hough:
Vol. I. p. 94.

Hough says the arrival took place some years after A.D. 780. But according to Burnell, the writer of an article on Pehlevi inscriptions in South India, king Vira Raghava Chakravarthi, presumably of the Perumal dynasty, granted in A.D. 774 certain privileges which were recorded on a copper tablet, to one Iravi Cortan of Cranganore, as representing the Christian community, making over to him the ^{little principality of Manigramam, and} ~~position of sovereign merchant~~ raising him to the position of sovereign merchant of Kerala (i.e. Travancore). Manigramam probably means 'the gem village'

Rae: p. 165.

and not as Dr. Burnell thought 'the village of Manes'.

Neale:
Eastern
Church Vol.
I, p. 146, 7.

This is probably the explanation of the tradition referred to by Neale, that the Christians finally threw off the yoke of the pagan government and elected a king from among themselves.

Burnell thinks the charter may have been given because of the commercial prosperity of Thomas.

The concensus of opinion appears to be that in the second half of the eighth century a considerable reinforcement to the Christian community of South West India arrived from Bagdad, Nineveh and Jerusalem, under the leadership of one Mar Thomas.

A second colony is also said to have arrived at Quilon in A.D. 822 under the leadership of Mar Sapor and Mar Peroz. It is possible that, just as the earlier influx in A.D. 345 was in some measure the result of the persecution under Sapor II, these later additions may have been partly due to the persecution by the Mohammedans, who, by this time, had attained complete ascendancy in Persia, but as to that we have no definite information. We know that such a persecution actually did take place in Mesopotamia in the year A.D. 849 and the same was probably true of the earlier date as well.

Hiltch:
p. 482.

Hugh:
Vol. I, p. 94.

Mar Thomas, as has been remarked, was wealthy, and had a very extensive business. He was twice married. During his first marriage he resided in the south near Cranganore. His second wife was a Nair woman, and during this period he lived in the north in or near Angamali. He had a large family by each of his wives. On his death his property was divided among them, those in the south getting such of it as was situated there and those in the north falling heir to what lay in that district. Both families increased rapidly, and later

on combined with other Christians so that soon the whole community came to regard Mar Thomas as their common ancestor. The two sections, however, continued quite distinct and for long there was no intermarriage between them, those in the south considering themselves somewhat superior to those in the north.

Some think that the name 'Christians of St. Thomas' is due to the confusing of this leader of the later additions to the church with the apostle Thomas.

Cheram Perumal, the last and perhaps the greatest of the Perumals, is supposed to be the ruler referred to as king Ravi Gupta, who, in a charter on copper plates still preserved, granted a piece of land to Muravan Sapor Iso - the Mar Sapor already referred to - and the Tarasin Church in A.D.824.

Cheram Perumal is said to have founded Calicut in the year A.D.825 and then to have gone on a visit to Zafar in Arabia, where he died in A.D.827.

During his reign, 'the division of the inhabitants of Malabar into castes is said to have been made'. These were (1) Namburi Brahmins, (2) Nairs - the military tribe - (3) Teers - cultivators, goldsmiths, fishermen etc. - all freemen, (4) Maleres - muscians and conjurers, also free, and (5) Polerbs or Poliards - bondmen attached to the soil.

Perumal is alleged to have been subordinate to the king of Chaldesh named Raja Kishen Rao, but to have rebelled against the king just prior to the division into castes referred to, and having defeated him in battle to have declared himself independent. At that time, it is said, the Perumals were also threatened by the Rashtrakutas, who

Hough:
Vol.I.p.101.

Hough:Vol.I.
p.102.

Rae's Syrian
Church p.161.

had just subjugated the Pallava dynasty of Kanchi (Conjeeveram).

It is said that, prior to his death, Cheram Perumal became a Mohammedan, but this is doubtful. So high, however, was the esteem in which he was held, that after his death his heathen subjects counted him among the gods. He was devoid of bigotry and granted the Christians many important privileges. Neale states that the Christians ranked next to the Royal family, and were allowed to ride on elephants, a privilege otherwise reserved exclusively for royalty. Further, any pagan who struck a Christian was liable to be put to death. Neale gives no authority for these extraordinary statements however, and the fact that he appears to be wrong in some other respects, for example, in dating the founding of Calicut by Perumal as A.D.907, whereas according to Rae, Perumal died in A.D.827, rather detracts from the credence that would otherwise be given to them. Still, after due allowance has been made, there is no doubt that the Christians were treated as a very privileged caste, a circumstance which probably did not conduce to spiritual growth.

Attracted, no doubt, by the treatment meted out to the Christians of Travancore, numbers of Christians from the Coromandel coast left the hills, where they had fled to escape persecution from the reigning sovereign, and settled in Travancore and Cochin.

Perumal may not have been altogether disinterested in what he did. If the story of his conflict with Kishen Rao is true, he may have been only too glad to have the assistance of such a powerful clan as the Christians by this time had become. They, as well as the Jews, were given the same rank

Neale:
Eastern
Church
Vol.I.p.146.

Hough:Vol.I.
p.102.

and placed on terms of equality with the Nairs. They were even independent of heathen officials, being governed by their bishops in civil as well as in ecclesiastical affairs.

Hough:Vol.I.
p.103.

The charter of their privileges was engraved on five copper plates in Malayalam, Canarese and Tamil, and apparently given, in the first instance, to Mar Sapor, who was at the same time given permission to preach anywhere throughout the state, no restriction being laid on anyone who wished to embrace the doctrines taught.

Hough:Vol.I.
p.109.

The plates were lost for a time but have since been recovered and are still preserved. They were written on both sides and consist of five pages of Tamil and Malayalam, two pages of Pehlevi and Arabic in the Cufic characters, and four Hebrew signatures. The date, as already stated, is A.D.824. A charter of a still earlier date A.D.700 was given to the Jews, 10,000 of whom are said to have arrived on the Malabar coast in A.D.70, but the two later charters were given to the Christians.

See;Syrian
Church
p.153 ff.

The Christians of South West India were now an important community both socially and politically, but in proportion to their progress in worldly prosperity, their spiritual and missionary fervour suffered diminution. Recognised practically as a separate but superior closed caste, it is scarcely to be wondered at that in course of time they came to imitate their Hindu neighbours in caste regulations, with regard to such matters as diet, avoidance of pollution etc.

Richards:
Indian
Christians
of St.Thomas
p.6.ff.

Their spiritual decadence, according to native tradition, was accelerated by the revival of the worship of Siva, through the preaching of the celebrated Hindu ascetic Manicavasakar,

who lived somewhere about the tenth century, and under whose influence numbers of so-called Christians relapsed into Hinduism. Even prior to this, however, the church had become torpid and as a missionary force had ceased to exist.

For the next five hundred years the history of the Syrians of South West India is practically a blank.

In the thirteenth century, John de Monte Corvino visited India and baptised a number of people. In the fourteenth century or later Jordanus a Dominican arrived and remained for some time. In his book 'Mirabilia' he describes his mission and the hardships they endured not from the Nestorian Christians who received them kindly, but from the Saracens who opposed and killed some of them, though the Nestorians were unmolested.

The fact that the Christians of those early days were not merely tolerated, but encouraged and honoured by their heathen rulers, while dangerous to their spiritual wellbeing, is, at the same time, testimony to the fact that they were neither vicious nor disaffected characters, and Neale's description of the state of the church on the arrival of the Portugese probably applies with equal truth to the ninth century. 'The Christians', he says, 'were easily distinguished from the others by their superior grace'.

Although divided into Northern and Southern sections, they were on terms of the ^{ut}most goodwill with one another. They were noted for their industry, natural ability, the elegance of their diction and their respect for parents, elders and clergy. The men were always armed but quarrels were few and murders never heard of. As a general rule, they were rich and possessed a considerable number of slaves whom they treated

with the utmost kindness and consideration. They were much employed as merchants and their honour and liberality were acknowledged by all. They were very abstemious, seldom tasted either meat or wine, and lived almost entirely on rice and milk. They did not use images but held the cross in great veneration. They were particular and devout in their Sabbath attendance and at communion, but not as a matter of obligation. The priests were allowed to marry and their wives were distinguished by a silver or golden cross worn round the neck.

The Portugese arrived in India in A.D.1500. During the time they were in Malabar they ignorantly burnt all the records of the St. Thomas congregations as heretical. But for this, it would have been easier for us to fill up the blanks in the history of a church that has existed so long, and incidentally, to have learned much that would have been both interesting and instructive.

With the Portugese came the Franciscan brothers the first Roman Catholics to begin regular mission work in India. When they reached Malabar they found ^athe church there already in existence and under the care of Nestorian bishops of whom there were four. The last of the four Mar Jacob died in A.D.1549.

The Franciscans do not seem to have caused much trouble to the church then existing and for fifty years there is no record of any difficulty having arisen between the two bodies.

It was different however when the Jesuits under Francis Xavier came. They arrived in A.D.1542 but it was not until A.D.1551 that the Portugese governors began to bring pressure to bear on the Syrian Christians with a view to their accepting Roman Catholic doctrine and practice. They compelled the

Sir.W.W.
Hunter
Indian
Empire
p.240.
Neale:
Eastern
Church Vol.I
p.148.

Sir.W.W.
Hunter:
Indian
Empire
p.242.

native princes to persecute the Christians and by means of confiscations, imprisonments and other hardships to force them to seek reconciliation with Rome. The harshness of the Portugese however failed to accomplish entirely the end in view and reacted against the sometimes unwise zeal of the Jesuit missionaries. To still further carry out their purpose they sought to cut off the supply of bishops from Persia either by compassing their death while still on the way, or by imprisoning them for life after their arrival. To some extent they succeeded in this, but, notwithstanding all their efforts to prevent them, three Nestorian bishops managed to reach the Malabar coast. These were Mar Jacob, ordained by Ebed Jesu the successor of Sulaka, referred to later, whose term of office began in A.D.1563, Mar Abraham, ordained by the Patriarch Mar Simon, who was metropolitan from sometime in A.D.1565-67 until A.D.1597, and third, Mar Simon, ordained also probably by the Patriarch of that name, who exercised the duties of his office for a short period in A.D.1578. The first two being afraid of the Portugese dissembled and appeared outwardly as Roman Catholics. Historians agree however that this was not real and that secretly they remained true Nestorians. Mar Joseph was twice taken prisoner and sent to Rome and although he managed to escape and return to Malabar after his first imprisonment he died at Rome during his second.

Mar Abraham was taken prisoner once and sent to Rome but he escaped and after his return was Nestorian metropolitan in Malabar until his death in A.D.1597. Mar Simon also was taken prisoner soon after his ordination but failed to escape and died in captivity.

Hough
Vol.I
p.250.

Hough:
Vol.I
p.283.

Before Mar Abraham died he appointed one George, as archdeacon and the latter governed the church from the time of Mar Abraham's death until A.D.1599. In that year archbishop Menezes determined to carry through the conversion of the whole Syrian church to Rome and called a Synod at Diamper east of Cochin. He filled it with his own nominees and succeeded in securing its submission nominally to the headship of Rome. How many persons the majority represented we are not told but "thirty thousand refused to abandon the errors of Nestorius or to submit to the one catholic apostolic church". These probably consisted mainly of those who dwelt in the hills and were thus less accessible to Portugese methods of persuasion and able the more easily to assert their independence.

Those who submitted continued to be reckoned as Roman Catholics until A.D.1653. They found the rule of the Jesuits very harsh and grew more and more restless under it. Not until the advent of the Dutch however were they in a position to give expression to their feelings in the matter. The expulsion of the Portugese from Malabar gave them the opportunity they desired and at a great gathering held at Coonen Cross in the year mentioned they renounced their allegiance to the Portugese and pledged themselves never again to "acknowledge Portugese bishops". The immediate cause of the revolt is stated to have been the murder by the Portugese of a Nestorian bishop named Abatala, Mar Ignatius, who was sent to Cochin ~~but~~ never arrived. "The Jesuits were incapable of defending the power which they had abused. The arms of forty thousand Christians were pointed against their falling tyrants and the Indian Archdeacon assumed the character of a bishop till a fresh supply

Strickland
& Marshall
Catholic
Missions in
South India
1865
p 34

Hibbon
Vol. 180
quoted in
judgment
in Appeal
Suit of
Ch. Court
of Cochin
in Trichur
Church
case.

of episcopal gifts and Syriac missionaries could be obtained from the Patriarch of Babylon". To try to remedy the disastrous results of the Coonen Cross revolt the Pope of Rome in A.D. 1656 sent a Carmelite bishop to take the place of the Jesuits. Just how many reverted to Rome under his persuasion we are not told nor are we told how many remained in the Roman Catholic fold ~~who remained~~ at the time of the revolt. It is certain however that from 1653 until 1665 the descendants of those who acquiesced in the decrees of the synod of Diamper were divided into two sections viz. those who ~~seceded~~ ^{seceded} at Coonen Cross and those who did not. To the latter would fall to be added any who may have again reverted to ^{them} from the seceders as the result of the efforts of the Carmelites. Practically all historians are agreed that the Coonen Cross secessionists reverted to Nestorianism but nothing is said as to whether or not they united with the descendants of the thirty thousand who refused to accept the decrees of the synod of Diamper. The probability is they did not. The fact that the latter were probably hill men while the others were dwellers on the plains and on the coast was a dividing factor which was not likely to be quite overcome before the Coonen Cross section had gone over to Jacobitism. Although Cochin was taken by the Dutch in 1653 the Portugese still retained Goa and, with it as their headquarters, they were able pretty effecting^{ly} to prevent intercourse by sea between the non-catholic Christians of the Malabar coast and the Patriarch of Babylon. The result was that the Coonen Cross secessionists were unable to obtain bishops of their own persuasion from the west between 1653 and 1665. In the latter year Mar Gregory, Jacobite metropolitan of

Jerusalem sent, it is said, by the Patriarch of Antioch, managed to reach Malabar and was welcomed by the Christians there. Later on he was joined by other Jacobites with the result that the secessionists ere long accepted Jacobite doctrine and practice^c, and became Jacobites. We shall refer to them again in a later chapter but our concern in the meantime is with the Nestorian remnant the descendants of those who refused to approve the decrees of the synod of Diamper. That such a remnant has continued from 1599 and 1665 to the present time has been clearly shewn in very elaborate judgments by (1) the District Judge of Trichur and (2) the Chief Court of Cochin, in a dispute known as the Trichur Church Case.

The litigation connected with the case extended over a period of fully twelve years. There was thus ample time for every aspect of the matter to be gone into and all available documentary and other evidence to be produced. It has been clearly shewn, and as a matter of fact is admitted by both parties, that for more than two hundred years after A.D. 1665 in addition to the Jacobite Thomas Christians and the Romo-Syrians there existed a third section called Syro-Chaldeans who were Nestorian prior to A.D. 1599. Just where they came in originally was not very clear but it seemed to be assumed that when the majority of those who seceded from Roman Catholicism at Coonen Cross went over to Jacobitism a remnant remained true and continued to assert their independence of either Jacobitism or Roman Catholicism. The difficulty as to their origin would have been more easily solved if the fact mentioned by Strickland and Marshall that there were thirty thousand dissenters from the decrees of the Synod of Diamper

had not been lost sight of. That doctrine and dogma had ceased to weigh very heavily with the Coonen Cross secessionists is evident from the ease with which they accepted Jacobite teaching from the first Jacobite who happened to come along. That the origin of the Syro-Chaldeans the present day Nestorians goes further back than to the Coonen Cross this becomes increasingly evident.

The first Nestorian bishop to reach Malabar from the west ^{after 1653}, of whom we have any record was Mar Simon. Beyond the fact that he arrived in 1701 we are told nothing about him. The next, Mar Gabriel, dates from A.D.1705 and continued there until A.D.1730 or 1731. His influence was so great among the Uniat Syrians, as those who had accepted the headship of Rome were called, that at one time they were on the point of renouncing Rome and attaching themselves to him.

From 1731 to 1781 there is no further direct reference but in the latter year the Dutch Governor Moens wrote "the religious tenets of those Christians or more particularly of their bishops and priests are those of Nestorius and of Eutyches whence the first party are called Nestorians and the second Eutycheians or Jacobites". "These conflicting religious opinions" he adds "predominate in turn according to the arrival of new bishops who are Nestorian or Eutychean".

In A.D.1787 and again in 1815 Nestorian churches in Cochin are referred to. The Roman Catholic divine Paoli also speaks of them as existing ^{also} in A.D.1796. In the census of 1911 the Syro-Chaldeans are returned as numbering 12,155 in Cochin alone. The numbers in 1921 are less and the Roman Catholics correspondingly more, due perhaps to defective census returns

Richter
History of
Indian
Missions
p.90
quoted in
Judgment.

Galetti
The Dutch
in Malabar
p.101 ff.

Day's
Land of the
Perumals

7248

103

or it may be that some ~~may~~^{had} actually ~~have~~ gone over to Rome during that period.

The smaller number however does not affect the fact that the Syro Chaldeans were there. They are not returned separately in Travancore but in different parts of the state, more particularly in the hills there are numbers of Syro Chaldeans. Some of them, not only in Travancore, but in Cochin, have in recent years joined the Mar Thoma Christians, referred to later, but others continue to be independent and have their own churches. In some cases there may have been a certain amount of oscillation, due to pressure of circumstances, at one time inclining to Roman Catholicism, or Jacobitism, and again turning towards their ancient Nestorianism. Such cases were however, probably the exception rather than the rule.

There is a Syro Chaldean church near Tiruvella in north Travancore. Some time ago the Roman Catholics are said to have tried to persuade the congregation to join them by the promise of a new church and other material benefits. The Kattanar or priest in charge agreed and actually went over. The old church was closed and a new church erected but with one single exception the people refused to follow the Kattanar into Roman Catholicism. After a time he returned to his flock, who gladly received him back and the closed building was re-opened. The new Roman Catholic church is being used as a place of worship by a Roman Catholic fisher community some distance away who had previously no church of their own.

The Syro Chaldeans, few as they are numerically, compared with some of the other sections, are not without encouragement. They still retain their ecclesiastical connection with the Nestorian Patriarch of Babylon and their present metropolitan is seeking to introduce reforms which will tend to the spiritual well being of the community.

Note: In Yohanan's appendix to his book 'The death of a Nation' he gives the official title of the Patriarch of Babylon from A.D.1559 to 1738 as Mar Elias. This is however ~~a misleading~~. In 1551 on the death of Simon Bar Mama, there was a dispute as to the succession between his nephew Simon Denha and one Sulaka. The mountaineers supported Denha although a section of them around Urumiah preferred a distant relative. Sulaka was unable to secure the support of the requisite number of metropolitans and accordingly went to the Pope of Rome and obtained ordination from him. There were thus for a short period actually three Patriarchs contemporary and all claiming the title of Patriarch of Babylon. After some time the Patriarch preferred by the Urumians died and his followers transferred their allegiance to Mar Denha whose headquarters were in Qudshanis. He retained the title Mar Simon while Sulaka whose headquarters were at Mosul, took the title Mar Elias. Although ordained by the Pope, Mar Elias I did not become a Roman Catholic but continued a Nestorian, as did all his successors until A.D. 1778 when a dispute again took place. This time it was as to the succession to the Mosul Patriarchate. One of the candidates was again favoured by the Pope and Roman Catholic writers claim that from this date onward Mosul acknowledged his headship but this is denied by others who assert that not until 1878, when the vacancy caused by the death of Oudo was filled by a nominee of the Pope, did Mosul as a Nestorian Patriarchate cease to exist. Others again hold that although Roman supremacy was not recognised in 1778 it was in 1826 when Mar Hanna they claim acknowledged the authority of the Pope but this lacks confirmation.

The Pope, however, has all along been anxious to secure the adhesion of the eastern Patriarchates to Rome and his hope of bringing this about through Mar Elias I having failed Pope Innocent XI more than a hundred years later ordained Mar Joseph, the Nestorian metropolitan at Diarbekir, as Patriarch with his seat at Diarbekir itself. When Mar Joseph died in 1693 he was succeeded by Mar Joseph II who under the authority of Clement XI took the title Patriarch of Babylon. His successors continued to use the title until 1826 when as stated above ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ the Patriarch Hanna of Mosul is alleged to have become reconciled to Rome and the necessity for a separate Patriarchate/ceased to be.

There is however no general agreement that Mosul became consistently subservient to Rome prior to 1878, although individual Patriarchs may have had a leaning in that direction from the earlier date. The Patriarch of the Nestorians proper continued to have his headquarters at Qudshanis with the title Mar Simon. The present Patriarch Ishai Simon succeeded to the Patriarchate about 1919 as Mar Simon XXI when only twelve years of age.

Judgement of
District
Judge
p.8.

Appeal
Judgement
p.11.

Chapter VI .

Nestorian Missionary Activity in Further Asia.

Under this heading are included East and West^w Turkestan of our day, Mongolia and^{the} South Eastern parts of Siberia. — China will be dealt with separately.

The distance of these countries from the headquarters of the Nestorian Patriarch was so great, and regular communication with him was so difficult, that the metropolitans were exempted from attendance at the general synods of the church. Instead of this they were required to send a report on the state of their diocese to the Patriarch, once every six years. While the name Mongol was unknown to Syriac writers until the Mongols swept over the whole of Asia and a large part of Europe, and conquered it with a rapidity unparalleled in the annals of history, the names Turk and Tartar were frequently met with at a much earlier date. The Hephtalote Huns and Turks have already been referred to in connection with King Kawad of Persia, and in a treatise called the 'Synodicon Orientale', translated by J.B. Chabot, we find the metropolitan of the Turks placed tenth in the list of metropolitans, taking precedence over those of Razikaye, Herat, Armenia, China and Java. The last was fifteenth in the rank. In another, probably later, list the order is reversed, China is fourteenth, India fifteenth, Samarkand twenty first, the metropolitan of the Turks twenty second, Khan Balik and Falik twenty fifth, Tangut twenty sixth and Kashgar and Nuakit twenty seventh. Each metropolitan had from six to twelve suffragan bishops associated with him. The principal metropolitan sees in Further Asia were Samarkand, Kashgar, Khatai, Tangut and Khan Balik. Various dates are mentioned as the time when Samarkand was ~~xxx~~

Mingana:
John
Rylands
Bulletin
July 1925
p.320.

Mingana
p.322.

Mingana
p.367.

raised to the rank of a metropolitan see. The earliest is 410-415 but the more probable is A.D.628-643. According to Ibn-at-Tayil, who died A.D.1043, Merv was elevated to the rank of a metropolitan see by the Patriarch Isaac (A.D.399-410) and Herat, Samarkand, India and China by the Patriarch Isho Yahb (A.D.628-643).

According to Rock^hill, mention of the name Turk, as applied to the tribes of Central and Eastern Asia, is to be found in a book written about A.D.557-581, and in the Syrian Chronicle the word Turkaye = "Turks" appears as a well known name in A.D.570 and 586. In the second half of the eighth century the Christian Uigur Turks were all powerful in Eastern Asia and had their capital at Karakoram. Their king was nicknamed Idi Kut = Lord of the kingdom. The earliest known date for the use of the word Tartar is A.D.732. An inscription bearing that date found on the river Orkhon includes the phrases Tokuz Tartar = the nine tribes of Tartars, and Otuz Tartar or the thirty tribes of Tartars.

Howorths
History of
Mongols
I p.21

Mingana
p.364.

Just when the Christian message was first carried to these Turco-Tartar tribes is uncertain but it cannot have been later than the seventh century and may have been considerably earlier. Confirmation of this is found in a new MSS which ^{just} has/been translated and edited by Dr. Mingana of the John Rylands library, Manchester.

Mingana
p.352.

The MSS is in the form of a letter purporting to have been sent by Mar Philoxenus bishop of Mabbug, who lived in the early part of the sixth century, to Abu-Afr, military governor of Hirta of Numan (Incidentally Abu-Afr is the name of one of the notables who suffered martyrdom at the taking of the town

of Nejran by Masruq the Jewish king of Yemen about the same time and we are definitely told that two presbyters from Hirta, Moses and Elias by name, were also among those who suffered).

In the MSS frequent reference is made to the Christian Turks. If the whole letter were written by Philoxenus it would indicate that these large Christian communities were already in existence in his day. Mingana however questions this and inclines to the opinion for reasons given, that the letter is composite and that the second part, which deals particularly with the Christian Turks, was written later than the first, probably about A.D. 730-790. Still the fact that there were so many, at least nominal, Christians, even at the later date, is fairly conclusive that the gospel must have reached them long prior to that. Whether written by Philoxenus or not, the letter is quite evidently the production of a staunch Jacobite such as Philoxenus was. He tries to discredit Nestorianism as if these Christian Turks were not Nestorians by choice but by force of circumstances, insinuating as it were that the Jacobites might at least claim a share in the honour of having carried the gospel to those far off tribes. Mingana dismisses any such implied claim as having not a shadow of foundation. The merit of having carried the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Turco-Tartar tribes of Central and Eastern Asia belongs entirely, he says, "to the untiring zeal and the marvellous spiritual activities of the Nestorian church", the most missionary church that the world has ever seen. "We cannot but marvel" he adds "at the love of God, of man, and of duty which animated those unassuming disciples of Christ who, in utter disregard of all discomforts of the body and in

Loberg:
Book of
Mingana
p. CXVI

Mingana
.347.

the teeth of the strong opposition and terrible vengeance of the Wizards of Shamanism and the mobeds of Zoroastrianism, literally explored all the corners of the eastern globe to sow in them the seed" of true religion as it was known to them.

To render more plausible his disparagement of the Nestorians the writer of the MSS makes use of an old legend, which while erroneously affirming the subordination of Koke, as Seleucia Ctesiphon is called in the letter, to Antioch, professes to explain how the separation of the two came about. The legend appears first about the year A.D. 690, in a treatise by John of Phenek which places the incident about the first half of the fourth century. It is as follows:- "At a time preceding this the rights of the Patriarchal see of Syria were transferred to the church of Kōke (Ctesiphon) in the east, on account of the enmity existing between the empires of the east and of the west which were at war every day. Many bishops were killed when repairing from here to there and from there to here on account of the remoteness of the Patriarch. They accused them of being spies, while in reality they did it because of their thirst for the blood of the saints. And the Father Bishops, in grief for the murder of their colleagues, ordained that the Patriarch of the church of Koke, should have full jurisdiction over the bishops of the east according to the enactments of ecclesiastical canons".

The introduction of this legend into the letter is one of the reasons for doubt as to whether Philoxenus was the author of the second part or some one else who lived at a much later period. If the first mention of the legend is about A.D. 690 it stands to reason that the part of the letter

which refers to it was unlikely to have been written two hundred years earlier. It is in this part that ^{the} reference to ~~the~~ Christian Turks comes in. The time when they appear on the scene is during the Patriarchate of Acacius A.D.485-496. To him there came, we are told, men from the Christian Turks, dwelling in the countries far away, for the purpose of electing and having ordained a metropolitan for themselves, for they had been in the habit of getting their metropolitans from Ctesiphon; shewing that this was not the first time representatives had come from them on such an errand. On this occasion, however, they discovered, it is said, that Acacius was not any longer under the jurisdiction of Antioch as he had rebelled against the Patriarch there. At first they refused to proceed further with the purpose for which they had come and returned to their own country. But being unable to find any other means of accomplishing their purpose they later on came again to Ctesiphon and asked Acacius why he had ceased to recognise the authority of Antioch. He replied in the terms of the legend referred to above. Believing his words they carried out their purpose and accepted ordination at his hands for the metropolitan of their choice. "And this custom is, we are told, handed down to them to the present day because any time their bishop dies they come to the Nestorians and take another to replace him from Ctesiphon". The reference to Ctesiphon here fixes the date of the letter as certainly not later than A.D.762, the date when the seat of the Patriarch of the Nestorians was removed to Bagdad. After disposing of the matter of the ordination the letter proceeds to give a description of the Turks and their customs and habits. "These Christian Turks eat meat and drink milk". "All their habits are clear

their beliefs orthodox". They write and read the Books of the Old and New Testaments in Syriac only, although reference is made in another place to a Turkish script as well, but in their gatherings they translate the Syriac scriptures into the Turkish language "that all their congregation may understand what is read". These Christian Turks "are true believers and God fearing folk". They dwell in tents and have no towns, villages, or houses. They are very wealthy and are divided into large and strong clans who journey from place to place. And then comes the most important part of the whole in which we are told that they had four great and powerful kings, evidently contemporaries, who lived at a considerable distance from each other. Their names are given as Gawirk, Girk, Tasahz and Langu. They are all called Tartars and the name of their country is Sericon, the name by which Ptolemy designated China. Each one of these kings, we are told, ruled over four hundred thousand families. At, say, five persons for each family, this means a total community of two million people under each king, all, or practically all, subject to a rule based upon the teachings and precepts of the gospel of Christ. It is a marvellous record and one which it would be difficult to beat. The dwelling place of these Christian Turks was five days distant from Karakoram which is spoken of as "the border town" and whose king~~was~~ known by the title Idi Kut or Lord of the kingdom.

Mingana is of opinion that these four kings may have been the heads or Khakans of the four powerful Turco-Tartar Christian confederacies known as the Keraites, Uigurs, Naimans and Merkites, or if the Merkites were considered doubtful then the Uriyan-gakit tribes might be substituted. The objection to

this is that the tribes we have been dealing with are known to have been Christian and to have had Christian kings in the seventh and eighth centuries or even earlier. There may have been, and probably were, Christians among the Keraites then too, but the first reference to a Christian king of the Keraites does not occur until the beginning of the eleventh century. The incident referred to took place, we are told, in A.D. 1007. One day when out hunting in the high mountains, the king lost his way in the snow and almost despaired of finding it again, when suddenly a man appeared to him and promised to lead him to safety, which he did. He gave his name as Mar Sergius, and besought the king most earnestly to become a Christian. Another version of the same story is to the effect that the man who appeared unto him said 'If you believe in Christ I will show you the way'. The king assenting to this was directed on his way. When he reached his camp the king at once sent for certain Christian merchants who were there and asked to be instructed in the Christian faith. He received the gospel at their hands and joined with them in the worship of Christ. He then sent a messenger to the nearest metropolitan asking him either to come himself or to send preachers and teachers to baptise him and his people, adding that there were 200,000 who believed with him. Presbyters and deacons were sent who instructed and baptised the king and all his people. From this it is evident that there were Nestorian Christian merchants living among the Keraites prior to the baptism of the king and his people. This no doubt explains such a large accession as soon as the king himself was convinced.

Assemani:
III.ii p.
485.

Howorth:
Vol. I p. 543.

Kingana
p. 308.

Idem p. 486.

Howorth
Vol. I p. 542.

Howorth says that the evidence that the Keraites were Christians is most clear. He quotes Rashid-ud-din, the Moham-
medan historian of the Mongols, as saying, that "the Keraites
had their own rulers and professed the Christian faith".

Howorth
Vol. I p. 543.

Not only were the Keraites Christians, but their territory
and the neighbouring Chinese province ~~which was a country~~ of Kansu were apparently
great strongholds of Nestorian Christianity, which was a very
active faith in the North West borders of China during the
twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Marco Polo tells us that the
capital city of the Keraites, ~~was~~ Karakorum, ~~itself~~, was in the
territory of the Naimans. The Nestorians had a church there
in which Rubruck was permitted to officiate when he visited the
place.

Idem. p. 545.

About the year 1143 the name of Prester or Presbyter John,
a Christian king of the east, regarding whom many wonderful
tales and legends have grown up, first reached Europe. Some of
the stories told about him are undoubtedly legendary, but the
general concensus of opinion is that there was such a person
and that he probably exercised the office of Presbyter as well
as that of king. Probably also the name became to some extent
hereditary and while that dynasty lasted, was handed down from
father to son or successor. Yule gives several different ver-
sions of the story.

Howorth
Vol. I
p. 534.

Howorth among others, would make him out to be the king
of the Keraites about whose conversion to Christianity we have
just spoken. Oppert, on the other hand, claims that he was
the king or Gurkhan of the Kara Kitai.

Howorth:
Vol. I. p. 537.

This is the opinion held by Otto or Freidingen who states
that in 1145 he was told by the Syrian bishop of Gabala (Jibal)

south of Laodicea, that one John, king and priest from the far east, had waged war against the Samiarden and captured Echbatana their capital after a battle lasting three days. He was said to belong to the ancient race of the Magi who are mentioned in the gospels, and to rule over the same people as they did.

Otto identifies this battle with the great defeat sustained by the Sultan Sanjar at the hands of the Gurkhan of the Kara Kitai, the said Gurkhan being, he says, no other than Prester John. Howorth questions the reliability of Otto's narrative.

Gregorius Bar Hebraeus, called Abulfaradji, who wrote during the reign of Argun Khan, agrees with Howorth in speaking of Prester John as king of the Keraites. He, however, goes further than Howorth and identifies Prester John with Unc Khan, and attributes his defection from the Christian faith to his marriage with a daughter of the Khan of the Kara Kitai, who according to Oppert, was himself the Prester John of that day.

The empire of the Kara Kitai, however, is said to have been founded only in 1125 on the overthrow by the Khan, of the Kitan empire in China, while the conversion of the king of the Keraites took place more than a century previous.

As against Oppert and Otto of Freisingen and in favour of Howorth's contention, is the letter (if genuine) alleged to have been sent by Prester John to the emperor Alexis Comnenus, the date of which must have been prior to A.D.1118 (see note).

Yule is of opinion that the modern city of Koko Khotan, called in the middle ages Tsingchau, is on the site of Prester John's capital.

Rubruck says that about the year 1098 there were certain Cathayans, known as Cara or Black Cathayans, who inhabited

Howorth:
Vol. I.
p.545.

Yule: Cathay
Vol. III p.19.

mountain pasture lands and that in these same mountains there dwelt a Nestorian shepherd who was ruler of the tribe called Naimans, who themselves were Nestorian Christians. The country inhabited by these Naimans was in the neighbourhood of lake Baikal in the Siberian province, of what is now called Transbaikalia, and perhaps also in the province of Irkutsk on the opposite side of the lake. The king of the whole country was called Con Cham. On his death he was succeeded by this Nestorian shepherd. The Nestorians called him Prester John.

This John, it is said, had a brother whose name was Unc or Ung, who dwelt on the other side of the mountains at a town called Karakorum, about three weeks distant and who ruled over a people called Crit, Kerait, or Merkités. These people were Christians but Unc himself was alleged to have abandoned Christianity and become an idolater.

There does not seem to be any confirmation of this but Yule expresses the hope that the story is true since Unc Khan was scarcely a credit to the Christian profession, as in order to secure the sovereignty of the Keraites, he began his career by murdering two of his brothers and several nephews.

Beyond Prester John's territory were the pastures of the tribe known as the Moal, and of another poor tribe called Tartar. When king John died without an heir his brother Unc proclaimed himself Khan. He became so wealthy and strong that his flocks and herds spread even to the Moal where he came into conflict with a Mongol chief named Temugin. Temugin at first fled but afterwards in a great battle defeated Unc Khan and became king or khan of all the Tartars. He afterwards (in 1206) took the name of Chenghiz or Jenghiz Khan, or Khan of

Yule: III,
p.25.

Malcolm:Vol.
I.p.414.

Ass:III.ii.
p.486.

the strong. This was in the year 1203 so that it looks as if there had been at least one other Presbyter John between the first of that name and Unc Khan.

Next to the Keraits one of the most important Christian Turco-Tartar tribes was the Uigurs. They appear to have been won to Christ at an early date and to have exerted a strong Christian influence for a very long period. Even in Rubruck's day there were still Nestorians in all their towns. An instance of the relationship of the Uigurs to Christianity, and of the important part played by Nestorians from China, is given in the history of two Uigurs' Nestorians. Rabban bar Cauma, born at Khanbalik and ordained by Mar George, metropolitan of that town, and Marcus son of Bainiel born at Keshang A.D.1245. While on a visit to his friend Cauma, Marcos was in turn ordained by Mar Nestorius, the successor of Mar George. In A.D.1278 Cauma and Marcos determined to visit Jerusalem and travelled via Keshang, Tangut, Khotan, Kashgar, Talas, Khorassan, Tus, and Azerbaijan, en route to Bagdad. At Margha they met the Catholicos, Mar Denha, who gave them letters for Palestine.

They visited Bagdad, Arbela, Mosul, Nisibis, Mardin, Gozart, and finally arrived at the monastery of St. Mar Michael of Tar'el, near Arbela, where they evidently purposed staying for a time. They were, however, summoned by the Patriarch Mar Denha who wished to send them on a mission to Abaka, the Mongol sovereign of Persia. Denha had been compelled to leave Bagdad in 1268. He had retired first to Arbela and then to Ushnej in Azerbaijan, and was now anxious to obtain some favour from the king.

Rockhills
Rubruck
Hakht,
pp.161,
141 ff.

Yule:
p.119 ff.

Denha had in A.D.1279 ordained as metropolitan of China, Bar Kaliq, bishop of Tus in Khorassan. Bar Kaliq grew arrogant and was thrown into prison by Denha where he died. To replace him, Denha chose Rabban Marcos and ordained him metropolitan of Cathay under the name of Jaballaha. This was in A.D.1280, Marcos Jaballaha being then 35 years of age. His friend Rabban Cauma was appointed visitor general of the churches. Mar Denha ~~himself~~ died at Bagdad on 24th February 1281 before Jaballaha had left for his new see.

Owing to his knowledge of Mongolian, which apparently was at that time the language of the court, or, at all events, one of the court languages, Jaballaha was elected Patriarch in room of Mar Denha, his nomination being approved by Abaka, the viceroy of Persia. He was the third of the name to occupy the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Ahmed the successor of Abaka, who died 1st April 1282, was hostile to Jaballaha III, but was murdered 10th August 1284.

Arghun, eldest son of Abaka, succeeded Ahmed and bestowed great honours on the Patriarch. Arghun was a clever and ambitious man and as he wished to conquer Palestine and Syria and was desirous of obtaining the goodwill of the Christian princes of Europe, in A.D.1287 he selected Rabban Cauma as his ambassador, not only because he was a Christian but also on account of his linguistic gifts, and sent him to them.

Cauma visited Constantinople and then proceeded to Naples and Rome, where he was received by the College of Cardinals, the Pope, ^{Honorius IV,} having just died (3rd April 1287). Questions were put to him by Cardinal Jerome of Ascoli who became pope as ~~Nicholas~~ IV on 20th February 1288. Passing through Tuscany

and Genoa, Cauma reached Paris and was well received by Philip the fair, who was then king.

Going on ^{to} Gascony he met the king of England who was equally agreeable. Returning to Rome he had an audience with Nicholas IV and then proceeded to the court of Arghun at Bagdad. He died at Margha on 13th November 1317, in the reign of Abu Said, son of Oljaitu, being then 72 years of age.

Rubruck calls the Uigurs, Christians of the sect of Nestorians.

Mingana
p.316.

"From what has been said it is evident that the majority of the Uigurs and also of the Keraits were Christian". The same was true of the Naimans, a powerful confederacy of nine Turco-Tartar tribes who lived "in the mountains of Tarbagatai on the upper Irtish", and in other parts of the Chinese frontier.

Rockhills
Rubruck
pp.110,116.

Rubruck speaks of them as "a people called Naiman who were Nestorian Christians" and had a Nestorian Christian king. Persian writers apply the name Tarsa to them, an epithet which is given to Christians.

A fourth group of tribes, half of whom were probably Christian, was ^{the} Merkites, a people of Turkish origin with a mixture of Mongol blood.

Mingana
pp.317,337.

They were divided into four main sections and dwelt on the lower Selinga and its tributaries.

That there was still a fifth group called Uriyan-gakit, which were largely if not entirely Christian and had in A.D. 1298 a Christian queen, is shewn by the colophon at the end of a Syriac ~~lectionary~~ ^{lectionary} of the gospels in the library of the Chaldean (Nestorian Uniate) Bishop of Diarbekir. It is in

letters of gold on a blue background and indicates that the
lectionary was written in the year A.D.1298 for "Queen Arungal,
sister of Georges king of the Christian Turks called Ganatu Uri
-yang. Blochet in his Introduction to "Histoire des Mongols"
page 181 is of opinion that "the name represents the powerful
Turkish agglomeration of tribes called Uriyan-gakit who must
thus have been undoubtedly Christian" in the year mentioned.
King Georges is probably ~~the same as~~ the king of that name
referred to by Marco Polo and John of Monte Corvino. He was
killed in the same year leaving an infant child whom Monte
Corvino baptised.

Another Christian tribe, or at least one in which there
were a considerable number of Christians, was the Kangli which
rose to power in the district between Talas and Issyk-kul some-
time prior to the Mongol invasion. In all probability, the
Christians of Semiryechensk formed part of the Kangli but of
this we have no definite proof.

Christianity by this time was widely spread throughout
the whole of Turkestan, and had the Kanglis been an exception,
it would certainly have been noticed. Nestorians of the
thirteenth century in speaking of the advent of the Kanglis,
say nothing about their becoming Moham^{med}ans, as they would have
done if this had actually taken place.

Barthold:
p.60.

A tribe about whom there has been some discussion as to
whether they were Christians or not, is that of the Kitans or
Kitai whose sway extended from the Caspian sea to the Gobi
desert, and at one time, about the beginning of the twelfth
century or earlier, included the Karakanides, Kangli, and other
important tribes. These latter were really quite independent
but acknowledged the Kitai as their overlord. (The Karakanides

Barthold:
pp.54,55.

later on became subject to the Seljuks). They were said to be Zoroastrians or sun worshippers but Barthold says that Adrisi confounded the Kimaks who were fire worshippers and unbelievers, with the Kitans. The Kimaks may have been the half wild people who were in the army of ^{the} Kitans.

There is no definite evidence that the Kitans became Christians to any great extent although there were certainly Christians among them. They were very highly civilized and had huge castles and places for recreation. Of the inhabitants of Balasaghun, the capital, it was said "that they knew neither care nor want and were the richest and happiest men in the whole land. The city was surrounded by a strong wall with iron doors and guarded by a strong and brave army. The streets, bazaars, and greater part of the houses had a water supply".

The Gurkhan (Tasih) of the Kitans was called by the Chinese Yelu-ta-sih. He was the overlord of the rulers of both east and west Turkestan.

Barthold:
pp.52,53.

The Kitans had appropriated all the fruit of Chinese culture and Yelu-ta-sih was held in high respect by his people. He forbade robbery and violence. The Kitans destroyed no towns but founded many new ones. When they had captured a town they did not plunder the inhabitants but levied a tax of a dinar from each house. They took trouble to teach the restless nomads agriculture. The first Gurkhan never placed more than 100 riders under the command of a single person. But although they were so advanced in many ways it does not follow that they were Christians.

Barthold:
p.54.

Barthold thinks that there may have been a few Christian elements in the army of the Kitan Gurkhan and that therefore the Nestorians confounded them with the Christian rulers known

to them. If all the Kitans had been Christians it would have been mentioned by both Christian and Mohammedan writers.

Like the Chinese, the Kitans gave their protection to all religions, including Islam. Mohammedan historians praise the righteousness of the Gurkhans and this in itself proves that they were not Nestorians. Notwithstanding this, the Mohammedans did not have ^{the} predominance, nor were they allowed to exercise their fanaticism as they could in a country where Islam was in the ascendant. Christianity was, therefore, able to spread more freely among Kitans than among those who were subject to the rule of Islam - as were the Karakhanides after the rise of the Seljuks in the 11th century. One of the residences of the Kitan Gurkhan was Kashgar to which

The Patriarch Elias II, 1176-1190, appointed a metropolitan to it. This in itself is an indication that the number of Christians in that region must have been very considerable. Amr describes the metropolitan of Kashgar as of Kashgar and Nuakit.

What the influence of the Christians was on the ruling dynasty we cannot tell, but the daughter of the last Gurkhan, the wife of the usurper Kutschluk, is said to have been a Christian. It is thought that the older tomb inscriptions at Semiryechensk may belong to the period of the Kitan rulership. On one of the stones, Chwolson believes he can make out the number 1406 = A.D.1095, but if this is so the inscription would belong to the period of the Karakhanides, prior to the Mongol era.

The last, but by no means the least important, of the Turco-Tartar tribes to be influenced by Christian teaching and practice were the Moal or Mongols. Later they were known as Moguls, or Moghuls. In the person of Babar, sixth in descent

Barthold:
p.58.

Barthold:
p.58.

from Tamerlane, they founded a Mohammedan dynasty in India which continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. Rubruck divides them into Yeka or great Mongols and Su or aquatic Mongols. The latter called themselves Tartars after a certain river, which flowed through their country, called Tatar or Tartar. The area occupied by them was shared with the Merkites and Merxrits, or Keraites. (The Mongols are represented by the Khalkhas and forty nine banners. The Merkites are the modern Buriats and the Keraites, the Kalmuks). They all spoke the same language and were similar in physical appearance. The people usually designated Mongols were not all members of the particular tribe, but included Tartars, Uigurs and Turks. The Tartars became so powerful and were held in such awe that other Turkish people passed themselves off as Tartars and considered themselves honoured by the name. And thus we find Chelairs, Uriates, Unguts, Keraites, Naimans and Tanguts all described as Tartars or Mongols although the Mongols were only one of the Turkish nations.

Jenghiz Khan, it is said, used to send the Tatar section of his people to carry out his orders, and everywhere the cry was heard "The Tartars are coming". During many wars, they were nearly all killed and the way left clear for the ascendancy of the other ~~nations~~^{section,} and the exaltation of the name Mongol. It is with the latter that we have now to do.

There were many Christians among the Mongols, and more than one of the emperors, and viceroys, were known as followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The most outstanding figure among them ^{Mongols} was Jenghiz Khan referred to above.

Rockhills
Rubruck
p.113.

Howorth
I p.557.

~~Jenghiz Khan~~ already referred to. His first appearance on the scene was in A.D.1203 when after defeating Ung Khan the powerful chief of the Keraits he secured the submission of the Kerait people. He next subjugated the Naimans and conquered Tangut and from that time onward till his death in A.D.1227 his career was ~~successful~~ one of conquest and expansion. He was succeeded by his son Ogotai and he again by his son Guyuk. Neither Jenghiz nor Ogotai are known to have been Christians but they were favourably disposed towards them, granted them liberty of worship and issued orders to prevent their having any just cause of complaint by word or deed. But of Guyuk, Barhebraeus writes: He "was a true Christian, and in his days the prestige of the numerous Christian bodies in his dominions was very high. His camp was full of bishops, priests and monks". It was to Guyuk that John of Pian de Carpini in A.D.1246 brought a letter from the Pope of Rome. We have no information as to its contents but their nature may be guessed ~~at~~ from Guyuks reply. written in Persian and addressed to Pope Innocent IV. Guyuk's letter formed one of the exhibits at the recent Vatican Missionary exhibition held in Rome in A.D.1925. In it he protests against the invasion of his kingdom by missionaries (of the Romish church) and still more against the assumption that there could possibly be potentate or people not subject to the Mongol emperors. He concludes "and if thou sayest I am a Christian, I adore God and reject other religions, how dost thou know whom God absolves and in favour of whom he dispenses mercy? How art thou so sure of these things as to pronounce such words?".

Vambéry's
Bokhara
p.17.

Mingana
p.312.

Descriptive
letter from
Rome:
Madras Mail
Nov.7th
1925.

One of the sons of Jenghiz was said to have had a Christian

Assemani
III ii
p.480.

mother and one of his generals was also a Christian. Of another king it is said that he too had a Christian mother, and that on the advice and at the exhortion of Prester John and a bishop called Mallasius he was baptised and eighteen of his sons with him, also his leading men and officers.

Huluku, viceroy of Persia, a cousin of Guyuk, is described as a supporter of the Christian religion. He had as his wife Dokuz Khatun, the daughter of Tuli, brother of Ogotai. Hulaku was also a son of Tuli. Dokuz Khatun must therefore have been either his sister or his half sister. If so it explains the meaning of the phrase used in reference to his marriage that it was "according to the custom of the Mongols". Dokuz Khatun is described as "the believing and true Christian queen". She exercised a great influence for good on her husband. When Bagdad was taken by the Mongols, the Christians, as Bar Hebraeus tells us, were spared death and torture because of "the magnanimity, the wisdom and marvellously high character of Hulaku". The description here given is somewhat different from that which we are accustomed to associate with Hulaku's name. Dr. Mingana says of him "His figure has been blackened almost beyond recognition by some modern writers". "Judged by our ethical standards he was undoubtedly cruel but our standards are not those of the Mongols nor even those of the early empires of Asia and Europe" and the "testimony of a contemporary of the standing of Bar Hebraeus cannot be entirely disregarded." Hulaku died in A.D.1265. In the same year the believing queen Dokuz Khatun also died. "The Christians of the whole world greatly mourned the loss of these two great luminaries and protagonists of the Christian religion".

Mingana
p.312.

Idem:

Mangu, brother of Hulaku, who succeeded Guyuk on the throne

of the Mongols is described by Rashid as "a follower and defender of the religion of Jesus". Although he does not state definitely that he was a Christian that is what the words used are probably meant to imply.

The wife of Tuli, Sarkutti Bagi by name, mother of Mangu, Hulaku, and Kublai Khan, and also of Dokuz Khatun was "a true believer" and a very wise woman. She was niece of the Kerait king Ung Khan of Prester John fame.

Among other instances mentioned by Dr. Mingana shewing how widely Christian teaching and influence had spread among the Mongols are the following:-

The grand vizier of the emperor Guyuk, Kaddak by name was a Christian. The Secretary of the emperor Mangu called Bulgai was a Nestorian as was also Mangu's interpreter. On one occasion when there was a dispute between the Christians of Arbela and the Mohammedans, the Mongol governor of north Mesopotamia who was a Christian, took the side of his fellow believers and helped them. The envoy of Kublai Khan, a Turkish Uigurian nobleman, was a Christian and Christians were given the governorship of north Mesopotamia. The emperor Abaka was friendly to Christians and at one time ordered that the clerks in government offices were to be either Christians or Jews, - not Muslims. Sigatsy, viceroy of Samarkand, another brother of Ogotai, became a Christian, we are told. In commemoration of this the Christians of Samarkand erected a large new church and dedicated it to the memory of John the Baptist.

We have so far dealt chiefly with tribes or nations, and individuals. It only remains to refer briefly to places where Christians were numerous and influential. Assemani/s writes

Mingana
p.313.

Rockhills
Rubruck
p.159.

ules
Marco Polo
pp.169,198.
ule:
ordiers
Marco Polo
pp.182-7.

Assemani
III.ii p.502.

that the growth of Christianity in the eleventh and twelfth centuries all through Turkestan and Mongolia, due to the activity of the Nestorians, was so extensive that metropolitans with bishops subordinate to them were established throughout the provinces of Kashgar, Nuakit, Turkestan, Gunda and Tangut. An important centre was Tangut the capital of the province of that name. It gave rise to a kingdom, called by the Chinese, Hsi Hsia which ruled over the present Chinese province of Kansu and ^{the} adjoining country from A.D.1004 to A.D.1226. It was then overthrown by Jenghiz Khan. That Tangut city had a large Christian population is evident from the fact that, when Rabbans Sauma and Marcos came there on their way to Jerusalem, the Christian inhabitants, men, ~~and~~ women and children turned out to meet them "because the faith of the Tangutians was very staunch and their heart pure". Isho Sabran, metropolitan of Tangut, was one of those who consecrated Yahb Alaha III. The seat of the bishop of Tibet referred to elsewhere was probably Tangut. Its elevation to the rank of a metropolitan see may probably date back to about A.D.790 and ^{it} may have included in its area the Hsi-an-fu of the Nestorian monument in China.

Mingana

Mingana
p.324.

Another important Nestorian centre was the city of Kashgar, a well known town in eastern Turkestan, the capital of the province of the same name. It was called Sin Kiang, or the new dominion, by the Chinese. It lies to the north of Kashmir from which it is separated by the Kungur Alps. It was almost completely destroyed by famine and wars and when the monks Sauma and Marcos reached it on their way to Jerusalem they found no one there. Forty years earlier in A.D.1180 two metropolitans were nominated for it, first, one John, and after his death Sabrisho. It must however have been re-occupied

Yule's
Cordier
Marco Polo
I p.182-7

Idem:
pp.212,7.

Idem
p.274:

Rockhills
Rubruck
Hakhiyt
Series
pp.116,
141 ff.

Yules Cath-
ay ii pp.
165-6.

Rockhills
Rubruck
p.100.

Idem p.107.

Mingana
p.338.

later as we find Marco Polo speaking of Nestorians there. They were very numerous, he says, and had churches of their own. Yarkand, Tangut, Chingintalas and Sukchur are also mentioned by Marco Polo. In the latter about half of the inhabitants were Nestorians. In Kanchou they had he says "three very fine churches". There were Christians and churches also in Erguil, Sinju and Calachan. In Tendue the rule of the province was in the hands of the Christians. Other places too are spoken of.

Rubruck found Nestorian Christians in nearly all the countries he visited.

Nicolo Conti speaks of "a kingdom twenty days' journey from Cathay of which the king and all the inhabitants" were "Christians, but heretics, being Nestorians"

John de Carpini speaks of the Kirghiz and the Alans "who were Christians".

In the household of Sartach, a Mongol leader, there was a certain Nestorian called Coiac, a Moal or Mongol. Thinking the word Christian was the name of a people he said 'you must not say that our Lord is a Christian. He is not a Christian but a Moal".

In the middle ages the Christian Turks and Mongols in Central Asia, Persia and Mesopotamia were so numerous that Nestorian Hymn writers were obliged to compose hymns in Mongolian for their special benefit. One such hymn beginning "the Son of Mary is born to us" is in alternate strophes, one in Syriac and the other Mongolian.

Some fragments of a lectionary of the gospels as used by the Nestorians were found near Turfan in Chinese Turkestan. These agree with the text used by the Nestorian church in

Mesopotamia and Persia. They are written in Syriac characters but in the Soghdian dialect of middle Persia with some complete sentences in Syriac.

Mingana
p.339.

In Manichean writings also we find references, Christian in character, "which could not have emanated except from Nestorians of those countries". There are coins of the Mongolian Il Khans such as Abaka and Arghun called coins of the cross which bear the Christian legend "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God".

Mingana
p.342.

"The influence which the Nestorian Christians ~~exercised~~ ^{exercised} on the Turks, even on those among them who were Mohammedan, is evidenced by the fact that about A.D.1200 one Sulaiman of Bakirghan in the Khanate of Khiva, inspired by Nestorian writings on the same subject, composed in Turki a poem on the death of the virgin".

Assemani
III. ii
pp.706-788

Assemani gives us a geographical dictionary of eighty two pages in which are a number of the less known names, 236 in all, with their locations and other information, which were centres of Nestorian activity and it is certain ~~that in later centuries~~ ^{there were multitudes} of Christians ~~were present~~ in areas that in later centuries were peopled entirely either by Mohammedans or idolators. That these Christians were Nestorian in creed, and subject to the Patriarch of Bagdad is, Assemani says, so certain as to be beyond controversy.

Idem p.502.

Mingana
p.342.

The respect in which even non-Christian kings held the Nestorians is shewn by the fact that they used to take off their head gear and bend the knee before their Patriarch.

Neale:
Eastern
Church
p.143.

At the beginning of the eleventh century the power of the Nestorian Patriarch extended from China to the Tigris, and from

lake Baikal to Cape Comorin. When Hulaku Khan led forth his hordes in A.D.1258 the metropolitan of Samarkand sent an express messenger to carry the news to the Catholicos at Bagdad. And all this, without any of the elaborate machinery that we have come to look upon as necessary for the carrying on of the missionary work of the twentieth century. When we compare the outcome of the missionary activity of the 'Church of the East with the result of the more highly developed organisations of to-day we may well ask if the missionaries of these early centuries have not, even yet, something to teach us as to the methods and conditions that are essential for the gathering out and building up of a Christian community which shall be not only self supporting and self governing but, most important of all, self propagating, ~~as well~~.

NOTE: Letter alleged to have been sent by Prester John to the Emperor Alexis Comnenus who died in 1118 A.D.

John; Priest by the power and virtue of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, Lord of Lords to the sovereign of Constantinople. May he enjoy health and prosperity by the grace of God. It has been made known to our Majesty that you esteem our excellence and that there has been speech among you of our grandeur. We have learned from our Secretary that you had intention to send us some articles of luxury and of curiosity. What we desire and wish to know is whether you have like us the true faith, whether you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. We know that you are a man and that your little people take you for a sovereign although you are but a mortal destined to corruption. Do you desire to know the grandeur and excellence of our dynasty, the extent of our power and dominion? Know and believe that I am the Presbyter John, the servant of God and that I surpass in riches, in power and in virtue all the kings of the earth. Sixty two kings are tributary to me. I am a zealous Christian and I protect and support by my alms the poor Christians who are subject to our merciful empire. We have formed a project of visiting the sepulchre of our Lord at the head of a great army as becomes the glory of our majesty and we wish to combat and to humble the enemies of the cross of Christ whose name be blessed and exalted. Our magnificence dominates the three Indies. Our domains setting out from further India, where reposes the body of St. Thomas the apostle, advance across the deserts to the place where the sun is born and return by a circuit to the ruins of Babylon not far from the tower of Babel. Sixty two provinces of which few are Christians obey us. Each has its king and all are tributary to us. One of our provinces inhabited by pagans is traversed by a river called the Indus. We believe that we have no equal either for the quantity of our riches or the number of our subjects. When we issue forth to make war upon our enemies we have borne before us upon 13 cars, 13 large and precious crosses, ornamented with gold and jewels. Each cross is followed by 10,000 horsemen and 100,000 foot soldiers, without counting the men of war charged to conduct the baggage and provisions of the army. When we go out on horseback our majesty is proceeded by a cross without either gold, jewels or any ornament in order that we may always remember the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ; then there is a golden vase filled with earth reminding us that our body must return whence it came that is to say to the earth and lastly there is a silver vase filled with gold that everyone may understand that we are Lord of Lords, our magnificence surpasses all the riches in the world. Every year we visit the body of the prophet Daniel in the province of Babylon. We rule over the Amazons and likewise over the Brahmins. The palace in which our sublimity resides is like that built by St. Thomas for Gondophorus the king of India &c. &c.

3

Chapter VII

The Nestorian Sino Syriac Monument at Hsi-an-fu and the spread of Christianity in China and Japan.

In the province of Shensi, north China - Lat.34.12 N and Long. 108.5 E. there is a city called Hsi-an-fu or Hsi-ngan-fu. It is said to be the most historical city in, and was for centuries the capital of, northern China. It became known as Hsi-an-fu during the Ming dynasty in the second half of the fourteenth century. Prior to that it was known as Ch'ang-an, a name which is now applied exclusively to the district in which the city stands. The history of Ch'ang-an gives us the history of China from the earliest time of which there is any record or tradition. The golden age of Ch'ang-an was during the T'ang dynasty which came into power A.D.618. During the seventh and the two subsequent centuries the city of Ch'ang-an occupied the position in Asia that Madrid did in Europe in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its splendour was proverbial. It was the capital of China for five out of nineteen dynasties and ten out of thirty centuries of its alleged existence. In the T'ang era, the number of postal towns in China is said to have been 1639, and of these forty seven were within one hundred miles of Hsi-an-fu to which all roads led.

One of the traditions current among the Chinese of Hsi-an-fu, a tradition referred to also in Chinese records, is to the effect that in A.D.64, the Chinese emperor Ming-ti, as the result of a dream that he had, sent messengers along one of the roads leading to the west to ascertain what great prophet was in these western lands. They met two missionaries on their way to his court and returned with them. The missionaries remained there till they died six years later. The only relic of their teaching is to be found in the scripture of forty two

Saeki
p.4.

Church
Quarterly
Review Vol.
LXXV p.319.

sections, a set of logia of New Testament character without any specific Buddhist tenet in them.

Mrs. Gordon, the authoress of a book which deals with the whole matter, reproduces from the Kurodani Jodo temple in Kyoto Japan, a picture on a rock tomb, of the resurrection and ascension, treated very much in the style of the old masters of Italy and Flanders. Dharma, one of the most familiar figures in Japanese pictorial saint lore is seen sitting at the entrance to the tomb. She identifies Dharma with one of the two missionaries who came to the court of Ming-ti.

A former Chinese missionary from Denmark, now a well known writer there, states that there are evidences of a wide spread spiritual awakening in China in the latter part of the first century of the present era. There is nothing to shew, either for or against, that it was definitely Christian but such a movement is more likely to have had a Christian origin than any other.

With the exception of a reference by Arnobius, who, in his book "adversus Gentes" written about A.D.303, speaks of the Seres or Chinese as among those who were united in the faith of Christ, there is nothing beyond tradition until we arrive at the year A.D.635, one of the dates mentioned on the Sino Syriac monument, when we enter the region of something more definite than mere legend.

The monument referred to was discovered in the year A.D. 1625 near Chang-an and furnishes conclusive evidence of the existence of considerable Christian communities in China in the seventh and eighth centuries. It is said to have been found by some Chinese when digging the foundations for a house

Wylie
Chinese
Researches
p.25.

Saeki
p.12-22.

Fritz Holm
by Nestorian
Adventure.

at a village about a mile from the western gate of the city. Emanuel Diaz, however, claims that it was discovered at a village thirty miles distant from Hsi-an-fu, and in 1623.

In the eastern part of the city of Hsi-an-fu there is a place called the 'Pei-lin' or 'forest of tablets', where the Chinese keep all the precious stone monuments of the city and also some of those belonging to other cities. This particular monument after being left standing on open ground near to where it was found for nearly three centuries, was removed in 1907 to this 'Pei-lin'. Before its removal, a fascimile of it was made by Dr. Fritz Holm, an American traveller, and taken to New York, where, after a time, casts were made and given to museums in different parts of the world, the original copy being then presented by Dr. Holm to the Lateran Museum in Rome.

Wylie says the first westerner to see the monument after exhumation was a Jesuit missionary named Alvarez Semedo. This was in the year 1628. Wall (op. cit. infra), however, questions this and believes for reasons, which he gives, that some of the Jesuit missionaries saw it immediately or very soon after it was discovered.

According to Kircher, quoted by Wall, the Jesuits began work in the province of Shensi some years previous to 1625.

There has been a very considerable amount of controversy regarding the genuineness of the monument, some holding that it is authentic, others that it is a forgery, while Dr. Wall, in a treatise on the "Ancient orthography of the Jews" Vol.II, takes the view that the monument was really found, and that the Syriac part of the inscription is genuine but that the

Chinese portion is a modern fabrication, meant to 'save the face' of the Chinese mandarins, and in which the Jesuit missionaries shared. As the Mandarins were unable to decipher the original they made a copy of the stone, substituted a new inscription for the illegible Chinese part, and then did away with the original altogether. The title as given by Saeki, is as follows:

"Eulogy on a monument commemorating the propagation of the Ta-Ch'in Luminous Religion in the middle kingdom with a preface to the same, composed by Ching-Ching a priest of the Ta-Ch'in monastery. (In Syriac) Adam priest, chorepiscopus and papas (pope) of Zhinastan". The inscription itself it is unnecessary to reproduce. It can be referred to if necessary in any good library.

It tells how one A-lo-pu arrived in Chang-an A.D.635 bringing the sacred scriptures and proceeds to eulogise the various emperors and dynasties and tells how they issued edicts and ordered their portraits to be taken and transferred to the walls of the churches, where "the dazzling splendour of the celestial visage irradiated the illustrious portals".

Dr. Legge the well known Chinese scholar, in a lecture on the monument says,- In the inscription "not a word is said about the miracles of Christ or anything specially bearing on His crucifixion, death, or resurrection. There is little in it particularly ritualistic but there is nothing at all evangelical". He further refers to a remark by another missionary, who, when asked to what he attributed the failure of Nestorianism, replied "How could it succeed? There is no gospel in it".

Saeki: The Nestorian Monument in China p.161 ff.

Wylie: p.28.

If we are to be guided by the statements in the inscription as it is at present, that is true. In that case the Nestorian missionaries must have degenerated far from the position maintained by them in the early centuries. But if the inscription is fictitious it puts an entirely different complexion on the matter.

Bury's
Gibbon Vol.V
p.551.'

Bury, in a note to Gibbon, accepts the inscription as genuine and commends Gibbon for doing so as well, but makes no reference to the admission in Kircher's 'Prodromus Coptus' (1636) and 'China Illustrata', (1667)-both of which he mentions- that a facsimile of the stone had been prepared.

Among those who question the veracity of the monument, Wylie mentions Horne, Spizelius, La Croze and Voltaire, and quotes F.E. Salizbury, Professor of Arabic and Sanscrit in Yale U.S. as saying "that the Nestorian monument is now generally regarded by the learned as a forgery".

Wylie
p.73.

Salisbury, quoted by Wylie, refers also to a statement by C.F. Neumann, Professor of Chinese, one of the leading opponents of its genuineness, to the effect "that both the Chinese and Syriac characters on the inscription are modern, not such as were in use in the eighth century". Voltaire considers that it was nothing but "a pious fraud of the Jesuits to deceive the Chinese".

Huc:
Christianity
in China
Vol.I p.81.

Huc indignantly rejects this dictum of Voltaire's and insists on the genuineness of the monument. Wylie takes the same view, and after a very exhaustive enquiry in which he quotes largely from different authors, he concludes by saying that he has not been able to discover the ~~slightest~~ slightest hint of suspicion as to its genuineness or authenticity.

Dr. Wall contends that the Chinese inscription is proved

to be fictitious, first, by the circumstances under which it was communicated to the public, secondly, the nature of its contents, and thirdly, by the characters in which it is written. As regards the first, he says that "as soon as the governor of the province heard of the discovery of this record he had it seized and got, as we are told, a most accurate copy of it taken for the inspection of the public while the original was made away with and never afterwards heard of" and the question put by Wall is, "If the second inscription was in reality an exact facsimile of the first why incur the trouble and expense of making it?". A copy, however accurately made, must ever be looked upon as of inferior value to the original.

The fact that such a substitution was made is admitted by Kircher both in his 'Prodromus Coptus' and in his 'China Illustrata' as well as in every account of the matter which has been transmitted to us. Father Martin Martini in his 'Chinese Atlas', quoted by Kircher, referring to the finding of the monument, definitely admits this. His own words are:- "De invento monumento mox certior factus loci gubernator, cum venerandae antiquitatis, cujus amantissimi sunt Sinae, vestigia proprius fuisset intuitus continuo scripto quodam in monumenti laudem edito, in altero ejusdem magnitudinis lapide totam inventi saxi parigraphen incidit, iisdem, characterum notarumque ductibus, qua par erat fide, servatis".

The reason given by Wall for this, is that the ancient writing of the Chinese is now wholly illegible, and that since the mandarins are most anxious to conceal this defect of their graphic system wherever it can be done without incurring undue suspicion, they mutilate and efface every old Chinese record on which they can lay their hands. But as in

Wall: Vol II
p.160.

Gibbings:
p.16.

the present instance public attention had been directed to the monument before they could obtain possession of it, they had to have recourse to a more indirect method of getting rid of it, under the pretext of making a copy more perfect than the original. The Jesuit fathers were able to help them in the carrying out of this plan as they had several mandarins or (as Kircher calls them) colai among their converts, and at least two of these Christian mandarins seem to have had a hand in the preparation of the stone.

The discovery of the monument caused such excitement and contributed so much to the success of the Jesuit missionaries of that period that in 1637, according to Abbe Huc, there were 40,000 Christians in seven provinces. The emperor could no longer argue against Christianity on the ground that it had not been there (a thousand years) earlier.

From statements in 'China Illustrata' it is evident that the Jesuits had ~~access~~ access to the monument almost immediately after it came into the hands of the Chinese 'officials', and saw the original in time to give their valuable assistance in the preparation of the copy.

Semedo claims that he saw the old inscription in 1628 and was "astonished that it was so complete and the letters so entire and well formed after the lapse of so many years". Where then the necessity for making a replica of it?

The second argument against its genuineness is the nature of its contents. Semedo states that neither he nor any of the other Jesuits could read the Syriac part of the inscription and that its meaning was only ascertained after he had taken a copy of it to Rome. (Wall questions the accuracy of this statement and holds that the Jesuits, or some of them,

Huc:Christ-
ianity in
China Vol.II
p.290.

Gibbings
p.16.

Wall:II
p.163.

Huc:China
Vol.I p.81.
Yule Cathay
Vol.I p.236.
Gibbings:
Moshiem p.17

were in all probability familiar with Syriac.) Nor were the Mandarins able to decipher the Chinese part but they were able to maintain credit for their learning and conceal the defect of the national system of writing, by the assistance of the Jesuits, who helped them so to frame the Chinese part of the inscription for the second stone, that it apparently derived some support from the Syriac part.

This also gave the latter the opportunity to represent the doctrines of the ancient Christians as agreeing with the modern tenets of the church of Rome.

Wall quotes from two translations of the inscription, one by Boim which is literal, and the other by Kircher which is a mere paraphrase and not a very accurate paraphrase at that, ~~He~~ gives the Latin translation of Boim in full and draws special attention to the fact that it speaks not only of a fiery place of purification but of the power exercised by the priest to give rest to the souls of the deceased. In other words, it refers to the Romish doctrine of Purgatory which has never at any time been accepted by the Nestorians, nor is it found in any of their service books.

Other references equally at variance with either the ancient or modern practise of the Nestorians are: First, the readiness shewn in the inscription to yield to the demands of pagan superstition. It is also noteworthy that not one single event connected with the life of Christ between His birth and death is referred to, and even the latter is referred to only very indirectly. Nor is the name by which He was known in His Human capacity on the earth, even mentioned.

Secondly: The flattery paid to the Chinese emperors and the exultation with which the erection of their images in the

churches, apparently for the purpose of worship, is spoken of. This alone, apart from anything else, is sufficient to rule out the genuineness of the inscription, for the Nestorians have never at any time tolerated the worship of images of any kind, whether ^{of} emperors or saints, nor will they tolerate a crucifix, although they highly reverence the cross as the symbol of their faith.

One of the most recent of Roman Catholic writers, referring to the present practice of the Nestorians in the matter of images says, "they have no holy pictures in their churches or houses and they abhor the idea of a holy picture". When a representation of the Blessed Virgin was exhibited to the Christians of Malabar by Menzes, Archbishop of Goa about A.D. 1599 he was met with the exclamation 'we are Christians we do not worship idols'.

Thirdly: The characters in which the Chinese part of the inscription dealing with the proper names incorporated in it are written. The testimony of Prof. Neumann as to the modern nature of the whole of the characters in the inscription is, that the significance of the Chinese symbols changes so constantly, that an inscription written in the symbols in use in the eighth century would be utterly unintelligible in the seventeenth.

Chinese writing is obscure and extremely vague and because of its ideographic character especially liable to become illegible. Changes in the signification of characters, entirely arbitrary in their formation, are constantly taking place and, notwithstanding the boast of the learned, in China, that the symbols which they employ have not been altered for the last

Fortescue:
Lesser
Eastern
Churches
pp.136-137.

Gibbings
Mosheim
pp.17-20.

two thousand years it is impossible to ascertain the meaning of monumental inscriptions of such alleged antiquity.

Beal:
Buddhist
Records of
Western
World p.8.

Confirmation of this is found in the notes by Beal appended to his translation of the account of the travels of Hiuen Tsiang, in 'Buddhist Records of the Western World.' In one place in the introduction to Hiuen Tsiang by Chang Yueh written about the eighth century, Beal translates a phrase by the words, "From the time of T'ang Yao (2356 B.C.) there have come down clear records of events" but adds that Julien, a French expert, gives exactly the opposite sense.

Of another passage he says "this at least appears to be the meaning", of still another passage he says "I cannot think Julien is right in translating this passage thus". Similar remarks shewing uncertainty as to the exact meaning frequently occur.

Wall:III
p.214.

In fact, writing of this nature is found to be unintelligible in proportion to its age and the time during which it has been out of use, and Mandarins who pretend to trace back national history with preciseness for four thousand years are simply impostors.

Saeki p.92.

Saeki says "the genuineness of the monument itself is one thing while the accuracy of the inscription is another". "One cannot say that all the statements in this inscription are correct simply because the stone itself is genuine".

Nau:p.253.

Nau thinks that it was probably a funereal monument and that twenty four of the names given in it were the names of persons who had died after the establishment of the mission in the town rather than the names of those who were still alive. As illustrating the uncertainty in the signification of the

various Chinese symbols, he refers to the find in 1890 among the ruins of Karabalgasun (ancient Karakorum) the capital of the Uigur empire in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries and of the Mongol empire in the middle of the thirteenth, of a number of valuable historical inscriptions, Mongolian, Persian, Tibetan and Chinese. One of the inscriptions in particular had been partly deciphered but is very obscure. It is trilingual, Chinese, Uigur and another language, supposed to be Sogdian, but in Pehlevi characters. The Uigur and Sogdian characters are so illegible that it has not been possible to decipher them. The Chinese are clearer but the difficulty in their case is to determine the exact meaning of any particular symbol "the probability being that if there were twelve translations of a single text they would all be different".

Nau:p.255.

Wall:II
p.239.

As to the Syriac part of the inscription, Wall holds that it is genuine. It consists first of all of sixty seven names, including one Bishop, twenty eight Presbyters and thirty eight others, most of whom Assemani designates as monks, and then of the following inscription in Syriac: "In the days of the Father of Fathers Mar Ananjesu, the catholicos and patriarch, when Adam, priest, was Vicar Bishop, and Pope, Viz. metropolitan of China, in the year one thousand and ninety two of the era of the Greeks, (= A.D.781) Mar Jazedbuzid, Priest and Chorepiscopus of ^uKumdan the royal city, ^{son of Milis of blessed memory,} ~~of Tachuristan, erected this~~ a priest ~~of~~ from Balkh, a city of Tachuristan, erected this marble tablet on which are inscribed the redemption of our Saviour, and of the preaching of our fathers to the kings of China. Adam, Deacon, son of Jazedbuzid the chorespiscopus; Mar ^uSe^ugius, Priest and chorepiscopus; Sabarjesu^u Priest; Gabriel, Priest and Archdeacon, church rulers of the cities of Kumdan and Sarag".

The arguments given by Wall for the authenticity of this part of the inscription are: First: two of the persons engaged in the erection of the monument were sons of clergymen and one of them was even the son of a chorepiscopus. If the Jesuits had fabricated the Syriac part of the inscription they would not have inserted in it a fact so directly opposed in ^aevery important particular (viz., the celibacy of the clergy) to the practice of their representatives. Secondly: the monument, it is stated, was erected in 1092 of the Greek era, viz: A.D.781 but the patriarch Ananjesu died in the year A.D.778 shewing that the authors of the inscription did not hear of his death for more than two years after it happened, a delay that can easily be accounted for by their distance from Bagdad. Had the story been invented, however, the inventor would have been particular to insert the name of the patriarch who actually was the head of the church at that time.

Mingana:
Early Spread
of Christ-
ianity p.333.

Dr. Mingana, for reasons which he gives, believes that A.D.779 is more likely to be ^{the} equivalent of the Selencid year 1092 than A.D.781. This rather confirms Walls' contention than otherwise. Wall gives A.D.778 as the year of Ananjesu's death. Johanan in his "Death of a Nation" prefers A.D.777.

Mingana:
p.367.

There is no definite information as to when a Nestorian metropolitan was first appointed to China. Some claim that one was sent by the Patriarch Akha (410-415) or by Silas (503-520). Mingana quotes Iba³¹ at-Tayib who died A.D.1043 as responsible for the statement that the bishoprics of Samarkand, India, and China were elevated to the rank of Metropolitan sees by the Patriarch Isho-Yahb (A.D.628-643). If this were so it implies that there were not only Christians but Christian bishops in China prior to that date. Still another metropolitan is said

to have been appointed by the Patriarch Saliba Zacha (714-728), and the Patriarch Timothy writing about the year A.D.790 mentions that the then metropolitan of China had just died.

Saeki
p.93.

Christianity, according to Saeki was well known in China ~~about~~ during at least two out of the three centuries of the T'ang dynasty and he claims that, if not nominally, China was at least practically under Christian influence during that period.

Saeki
Nestorian
Monument
in China
Intro. by
Prof.
Sayce p.V.

Prof. A.H. Sayce says that the most brilliant period in the history of China was during the T'ang dynasty A.D.618-906. When the Nestorians first arrived they were favourably received by the Chinese who at that time were singularly open to foreign influence.

Saeki
p.94.

In A.D.745 an edict was issued by the emperor Hiuén Tsang in which it is declared that "the religion of the sacred books known as Persian had originally come from Ta T'sin and that propagated by preaching and tradition, it had made its way into the middle kingdom and had been for a long time practised therein". The temples had come to be known as Persian temples, but as this was inaccurate, it was now decreed that the name should be changed to Ta T'sin temples.

Mingana
p.325.

In A.D.783 a rebellion called the Ta Chin rebellion broke out and was suppressed, but in A.D.845 an imperial edict was issued ordering the destruction of Buddhist temples and monasteries and the return of foreign monks and nuns, 3,000 in number, from Tschin (Nestorians), and Muhufu (Mohammedans) to secular life. (So far as the Nestorians are concerned the edict does not seem to have had much effect as a few years later we find that the Patriarch Theodore (852-858) still refers to the metropolitans of Samarkand, India and China.)

Another writer gives the number as 2,000 so that there were

at least that number of foreign missionaries in China at that time, the majority of them Nestorians as indicated by Ta'chin coming first. It was doubtless to preserve the monument from destruction during this time of persecution that it was buried and remained undiscovered for such a long period.

Wall:II
p.231.

It is evident that a large and influential body of Christians were resident in China in the year A.D.780 and it appears to be almost equally certain that Christianity was then, and had been for at least some generations previously either the dominant religion of the state or that it occupied a very important position therein, and yet not a word of this is found in any Chinese record.

It is admitted even by Kircher that had it not been for the discovery of the monument no trace would have remained of the previous existence of this branch of the Nestorian Church, the absence of all authentic records of the past history of China being so complete.

Wall:II
pp.243,244.

"If the framers of the boasted records which now pass for the ancient annals of China had had any conception that a Christian church once flourished in that empire, they might indeed have been expected to misrepresent the nature of the religion it taught and the conduct of its members but they could not have suppressed all mention of the important changes which must have taken place when this religion enjoyed the favour of Chinese sovereigns*, and still more so afterwards when it was wholly subverted and extirpated from their country".

Saeki
p.54.

*NOTE: Wall uses the words "became the professed creed of their sovereigns" but that is perhaps a little too strong although Saeki affirms that the famous general Kwo Tsze-yih, prince of Fen yang in Shensi who lived A.D.697-781 became a Christian. Mingana identifies Kwo Tsze-yih with one of the four Christian Turkish kings already referred to.

Mingana
p.351.

Ass:III.ii
p.413.

In the list of metropolitans given by Amr, China occupies the thirteenth place, but it does not of course follow that the names are mentioned in order of priority of founding. During the patriarchate of Timotheus 778-820, a monk named Subaljesu from the monastery of Beth Abhe was sent as a missionary to ^{the} Dailamites. He was murdered while returning to Assyria to visit the patriarch. Timotheus asked two brethren from the same monastery, Kardagas and Jaballaha by name, to take his place. They agreed and took with them fifteen monks from the monastery, of whom they afterwards ordained seven and sent them, some to China, and others to India.

Ass:II.ii
p.478.

With regard to the ordination of the seven monks referred to, Jaballaha wrote to Timotheus saying that, as many people had been converted, some of the monks who had come with them should be appointed as bishops over them. Timotheus replied; "Since the ordination of bishops requires the presence of three bishops and you are in lands in which you cannot have this number, this opportunity is given to you by the word of our Master by whom everything is established and governed. Doubtless you have chosen each of the bishops and it is right for you and Kardagus to consecrate them. For the third bishop the book of the gospels should be placed on a chair on the right hand side, and by this rite, through the grace of God, make the consecration of the first bishop. The others can then be consecrated by three bishops. I hope that the divine Spirit may be with you in your consecrating".

Nau:p.255.

Nau says that, according to the Hsi-an-fu monument, there were prior to A.D.781 Nestorian Christians in at least eight towns in China five of which were situated in the west. He

thinks that there may even have been a church in every province and refers to a statement by Rubruck five centuries later to the effect that in his (Rubruck's) time there were Nestorian Christians in at least fifteen towns in China.

Saeki:p.118

Saeki holds that the number was vastly greater than Nau indicates. According to him the Nestorians had no small share in the creation of that golden age of China, and through China these same western influences passed on to Japan. During that period the capital of China was still Hsi-an-fu. Overland communication between it and the Graeco Roman civilized countries around the Mediterranean existed long prior to A.D.635, the date given for the arrival of the contingent of Nestorian missionaries referred to on the monument. The Japanese were consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly, much influenced by the Nestorians and received Christian thoughts in Chinese garb during the whole of the T'ang period, and "whether the Nestorians were heterodox or orthodox it is certain that their ethical and practical theology and their medical knowledge were the true sources of their success in China".

Saeki:p.112.

Saeki:p.145.

During the eighth and ninth centuries there was scarcely anything good in Hsi-an-fu the great T'ang capital, that was not introduced into Japan or copied sooner or later by the Japanese in their capital at Nara. It was not until after the invasion of Japan by Kublai Khan A.D.1268-1281 that Japan began to assert her spiritual and material independence.

Saeki:Intro.
by Sayee
p.VI.

On two of the beams of the temple of Horyiyi now in the Tokyo museum, dating from seventh century, Prof. Sayee found inscriptions accompanied by crosses in an alphabet akin to the Syriac.

Saeki p.62.

In the Imperial Chronicles of Japan, of date A.D.797, reference is made to a visit in A.D.736 by a Persian who with others was granted an audience by the emperor. His name is given as Li-mi-i and he is said to have received imperial favours. No one knows who Li-mi-i was, but it is surmised that the name should be Mi-li = Mili the physician 'i' being the term used for medicine and the other parts having become transposed. In Chinese there are many Li-mi just as in Persian there are many Mi-li.

Saeki thinks that this Li-mi who visited Nara in A.D.736, may have been the priest of Royal Balkh and father of Yesbuzid the chorepiscopus who erected the Hsi-an-fu monument in A.D. 781. Elsewhere we read of a physician called Rimitsu whose presence at the court of the Japanese emperor Shomu 724-748 has been established by Japanese scholars. He may be the man referred to above as Li-mi or he may have been one of the 'others'.

Church
Quarterly
Review Vol.
LXXV p.312.

Through the teaching of this Nestorian physician the empress Komyo herself appears to have been led to Christ. She was known as a great saint and wonderful miracles of healing were attributed to her. She is believed to have been a Nestorian.

The great niece of the empress, princess Chujohima, is reported to have entered a convent at Tacmadera halfway between Aji and Yoshimo in central Japan. She had a vision of heaven and this she depicted in a large piece of embroidery which still exists.

Just how long there continued to be only one metropolitan for China we are not told but about A.D.1093 we find that the

Angana
p.328.

Patriarch Sabrisho III appointed a certain bishop George, to Seistan, and from there transferred him to Khatai in North China - the fourth metropolitan see of the far east. Marcos, already referred to, one of the members of the embassy sent by the Mongol Il Khan, Arghun to Europe, was ordained by the Patriarch Denha in A.D.1280 metropolitan of this same see of Khatai and of Ong. His see apparently included not only a considerable portion of North China and Manchuria but also some of the Turks and Mongols known as Kara Khitai.

Another metropolitan see of China mentioned in Syriac is that of the town of Kamul, called in Mongol Kamil and in Chinese Hami, which in A.D.1266 sent its bishop John to the consecration of the Patriarch Denha. A fifth see mentioned by Amr is that of Khan Balik or Falik. Sachau thinks that Khan Balik here should be Jan Balik, that it was the administrative capital of the province of Sinkiang, and situated on the great north road from China to Kuldja.

The Nestorian monument contains the name of a bishop, John, but the place where he was bishop is not mentioned. Rubruck refers to a Nestorian metropolitan seat in the city of Segin, assumed to be Hsi-an-fu itself, the great centre of Christianity in China in the eighth and ninth centuries. It was still an important centre four centuries later. John of Pian de Carpini refers to the Nestorians as Mongol scribes. In fifteen cities of Cathay he says there were Nestorians, and adds: They had an episcopal see in the city called Segin.

The northern provinces of China were under the rule of outsiders for about three centuries prior to the time of

Rockhills
Rubruck
p.150.

Cordiers
Marco Polo
I p.11.

Kublai Khan. The first were the Kitans, known in China as the Liao or iron dynasty. Their rule lasted for 200 years and gave the name Khitai or Cathay to China. The kitans were succeeded by the Charches or Niu-chen, another Tartar race, and they in turn by the Mongols under Jenghiz and his successors.

South China continued under the native dynasty of Sung until subjugated by Kublai Khan who removed the Mongol capital from Karakorum to Khan Balik or Peking and became the first ruler of a United China. During the period prior to the advent of Kublai Khan Christianity was very widely spread throughout the greater part of China.

John of Monte Corvino, one of the Minorite or Franciscan Friars, who arrived in Cambalag^c (Peking) in 1294, speaks of the Nestorians as being a powerful community in China at that time and complains that they caused him a great deal of trouble. He does not refer to the trouble that he caused them, but speaks of having been successful in winning over King George, a descendant of Prester John, and a large number of his people to the true faith (viz: Latin Christianity). He claims to have baptised 6,000 persons altogether, and adds that but for the Nestorians, it might have been 30,000. He also bought 40 boys, the children of pagan parents, with the intention of training them as choristers. When King George died his brothers and all his people reverted to Nestorianism again or as Corvino put it, 'to their original schismatic creed'.

Robinson
History of
Missions
p.170.

John of Monte Corvino was a pioneer Latin missionary. He claimed to have a knowledge of the language and characters generally used by the Tartars, and translated into that

language the whole of the New Testament and Psalter causing them to be written out in the beautiful Tartar script. From this we gather that the Tartar script was in use in Pekin.

Carpini speaks of the Nestorians, ~~as~~ people who profess the name of Christian but ~~who~~ deviate sadly from the Christian religion, having grown so powerful in these parts, (Cambalac) that they will not allow a Christian of another rite to have ever so small a chapel or to proclaim any but Nestorian doctrine. And yet in another place, speaking of an intoxicating liquor called cosmos, made from mare's milk, he says, "Christians who wish to follow their religion do not drink cosmos. If they do they are no longer considered Christians and the priests have to bring them back to the fold as if they had denied the faith of Christ". Greek priests consulted about this, say that in the 12th century that used to be a general belief of Christian Tartars. A man about to be baptised asked that he might be allowed to wait until the next day. He then said he could not possibly receive baptism as in that case he would not be able to drink cosmos as no true Christian could do so, but that without this drink it was impossible to live in these deserts.

One writer says the Nestorians in Cathay numbered more than 30,000. He does not indicate to which part of Cathay he refers. The number in the whole of China must have been much greater. This writer said that the Nestorians were rich, that they occupied various offices in the empire and were given great privileges. "If only they would agree and be at one with the Minor Friars and other good Christians who dwell in that country" he said "they might convert the whole country and the emperor likewise to the true faith."

Rockhills
Rubruck
pp.87,97.

Yules
Cathay III
p.102.

Miles Cathay
I pp.165,166.

In the great city of Iamzai (Yang-Chau-fu) there were three Nestorian churches. A Nestorian Christian called Mar Sergius was governor of the province of Kiang Su in China in the year 1278-1280 and is said to have built two churches. ~~Also,~~ A large number of Christians are reported to have been killed in a rebellion at the town of Kan-fu, (probably Canton) in south China about the year A.D.970.

Grant
Nestorian
Missions
Appendix B.

Prince Sempad, High Constable of Armenia writing from Samarkand in 1246 said, "we have found many Christians scattered all over the east and many fine churches, lofty, ancient and of good architecture, which have been spoiled by the Turks". In the town of Kinsay, the capital of the southern part of China, there was a Nestorian Church. Kinsay, now known as Hangchau, was one of the nine divisions into which Manzi - as south China was called - was divided. The city itself was of immense size and very wealthy. Each householder was under obligation to place a list of the names of all the inmates over the door. They had a regular fire brigade with night patrols, and many hospitals and charitable institutions. The streets were wide and well paved and provided with a drainage system. There were also many other amenities provided, all going to shew that civilization and culture were both very highly developed. This was during the reign of Kublai Khan - grandson of Jēghiz - who was as already stated the first emperor of a United China. According to Marco Polo, Kublai Khan was the most powerful sovereign who had ever existed. He was equal in power to all the Christian powers in the world with the Saracens added. He was a man of benevolent and kindly disposition. He caused messengers to be sent to different parts of his dominions to carry relief to those

Mile Marco
Polo Vol.I
p.172 note
also Vambéry
History of
Sokhara
p.17(note)

who suffered from bad seasons or had lost their cattle by murrain &c. The highways were planted with rows of trees so that people might not lose their way. Where trees would not grow he built pillars of stone. A large number of poor pensioners were in receipt of wheat &c, and at the public almshouses any one could daily receive a loaf of bread fresh from the oven. He supplied the poor with clothes, levying a tithe upon all wool, hemp &c, for the purpose.

Religious toleration, orderly government and equal justice, first came to the west from the far east. One of Kublai's most enduring monuments is the Grand Canal which joins the capital with the more fertile districts of China and to-day supports on its waters an incredible population.

His summer residence, now in ruins, was situated eighty li to the north west of Dolonnor. It is called the city of one hundred and eight temples but has been deserted for centuries.

The empire over which Kublai ruled was certainly not lacking either in area or in population. It extended from the China Sea, almost, if not quite, to the Mediteranean and included the greater part of the continent of Asia. Only Japan, the southern part of India, and probably Arabia, seem to have been ~~ex~~cluded. Although not a Christian he treated the Christians with great kindness and consideration and gave them many privileges. It is of Kublai Khan the story is told that he sent to the Pope of Rome in 1267 asking him to send 100 missionaries skilled in the law to instruct him and his people. Whether Kublai really made this request is very doubtful. If he did it can only have been to listen to disputations between rival sects as there is abundant evidence that he could quite easily have consulted the Nestorian Missionaries already on the

spot had he so wished. Wm. Rubruck tells of a discussion arranged between Christians, Saracens and Tuins in the presence of Mangu the brother of Kublai, Kublai probably wished for a similar discussion.

Even before the close of the eighth century the metropolitan seats established by the first Catholicos, Papa, had been more than doubled and the gospel preached throughout the whole of the vast area of the Persian empire in Turkistan, Transoxania, Tibet and India and throughout a great part of China and Japan. Whole peoples, with their rulers had become Christians and been taught, at least in a measure, the principles of Christianity, and it seems certain that there ~~were~~ were very few places in the whole of Asia that were not reached at some time or other as the outcome of the marvellous activity of that wonderful church, which extended from China to Jerusalem and Cyprus, and in the eleventh century is said to have outnumbered the Greek and Roman churches combined.

Gibbings
Mosheim
p.8.

By the end of the thirteenth century Nestorianism was so widely spread that Assemani gives a list of no less than twenty seven metropolitan seats extending over the whole of Asia and mentions two hundred bishops as connected with it.

Assemani
III ii
p.503.

The tolerant Tartar dynasty of the Mongols continued to rule in China until A.D.1369 when it was succeeded by the persecuting Ming dynasty under which Christianity once more suffered an eclipse from which it never recovered.

Chapter VIII

Semiryechensk Cemetery Inscriptions.

Although the proclamation of the gospel far and wide by these early Nestorian Missionaries had such marvellous results, it does not follow that the spiritual life of the community was always on the crest of the wave - neap tides follow spring and after every crest there is a trough.

We do not need to go further afield than our own highly favoured lands to find illustrations of this. The great awakening under Wesley took place after a period of great spiritual depression. The revival under Jonathan Edwards was preceded and followed by periods when the spiritual life of the church was at a very low ebb. The same is true of the Finney, Moody, and 1859 revivals.

It was doubtless the same in the history of the Nestorian church. There must have been times when the church was on the crest of the wave, even if these were perhaps the periods of greatest trial, when it cost something to be true to Christ. At ~~other~~ other times, love may have grown cold and there may have been a falling away, greater or less in extent. Fortunately, the Nestorians escaped the theological disputes that disturbed the peace of the west, although they had difficulties of a different kind to contend with, such as conflicts with the Manicheans and other dualistic sects. They had also to maintain a constant warfare with the Magi, and later on must have suffered considerably at the hands of the Buddhists.

It may have been the case, however, that there was a falling off both in piety and in learning in the later centuries. Rubruck, who visited China about the middle of

the thirteenth century (1253) says of some of the clergy that they were so ignorant that they could not even understand the Syriac in which their books were written, and that they were very corrupt, great usurers, and drunkards, and that some of them, following the example of the Tartars, were polygamists, and adopted also certain practices that were observed by Mohammedans. Such conduct, he said, resounded throughout Tartary and caused a great aversion to Christianity.

Fortunately we do not require to depend on the testimony of Rubruck or any other for information as to the state of some at least of the Nestorians at the time of which he wrote. We have their own testimony at first hand in the inscriptions on the tombstones which have but recently been discovered.

These are described for us by Prof. D.A. Chwolson in "Memoires de L'Academie de St. Petersburg", VII series, Volume XXXIV - 4(1886) "Vorläufige Nachricht über die in dem Gebiete § Semirjetschie aufgefundenen Syrischen Grabinschriften" and also in Volume XXXVII - 8 of the same series.

Two ancient cemeteries fifty five kilometres apart which contain tombstones with inscriptions indicating that they were those of Nestorian Christians, have been discovered in the province of Semiryechensk, Southern Siberia. The smaller of the two was discovered in the year 1885 by Dr. Porjakow. It lies fifteen versts to the south of the village of Great Tokmak, and one and a half versts from the ruins of an old burnt brick fortification, called Burana, on the Alexander road. All the first stones found had crosses though not all had inscriptions.

The second graveyard was discovered later by a surveyor

named Andrew. It is distant ten versts from Pishpek and contained altogether 611 stones. Tokmak is near the outflow of the river Chu. Pishpek is in the neighbourhood of the same river but fifty versts further to the north west. They are close to lake Issyk^lkul in the province of Semiryechensk. Lake Issyk Kul has been called the 'dead sea' of Central Asia. It is one hundred and twenty miles long and forty broad but instead of being below sea level as is the case with the 'dead sea', the valley in which it lies is 5300 feet above sea level and is surrounded by vast mountain ranges. It is known among the people of west Turkestan as Tuzkul, the salt lake, as well as Issyk Kul the hot lake. As the result of hot springs the temperature is as high as 85° to 95° Fahrenheit. Because of this, although situated in a very cold region the water never freezes. From lake Issyk Kul, washed ashore by storms, used to come the iron ore from which the famous Samarkand scimiters and daggers were made.

That the province was densely populated prior to the Mongolian period is evidenced by the ruins of many fortified places and settlements. The remains of sunken towns are also visible in the water of the lake, only a few feet under the surface, the level of the lake having been raised by geological changes that have taken place.

The greater part of the large graveyard has been cultivated, the stones having been removed to higher ground. In some graves more than one body has been interred and on some gravestones more than one name is inscribed. The Kirghiz who inhabit that part say that there are other large stones with crosses and the remains of many old settlements to be found in the valley of the Chu to the north west

Howlson
Vol. XXXIV
p.2.

of Pishpek. Specimen stones, and copies of the inscriptions on others, were sent to different societies in Paris, St. Petersburg and other places, in the hope that the members might be able to assist in the work of deciphering. This was in some cases very difficult on account of the mixed nature of the characters in which the inscriptions were written, some of the names appearing both in Syriac and in Turkish. One large inscription of eleven lines had a number of peculiarly Turkish names.

Inscriptions dealing with Nestorians are in Syrian Nestorian script. The older form of this is comparatively easy, the later is more difficult. Another difficulty, to begin with, was that the years were in cycles of twelve and were called by the names of animals, i.e. rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, hen, dog, pig, ~~etc.~~ The dates of the inscriptions are spread over a period of one hundred years, from 1249 to 1345, and include Christians from the neighbouring town of Almalig as well as from the immediate neighbourhood.

Chwolson
Vol. XXXVII
p.106.

There were two stones which Chwolson at first thought belonged to an earlier date, going back to the ninth century, but of this he is now a little doubtful. The majority of the inscriptions indicate that they not only refer to Nestorian Christians, but that these were of Turkish descent. "Grave-stones in the form of a cross have also been discovered in Manchuria and Nayan king of that country was a Christian and had ~~inscribed~~ the sign of the cross on his banners".

Kingana:
John
Bylands
Library
Bulletin
p.334.

The fact has already been referred to, that in the fifth century when multitudes of those who held by the teaching of Nestorius were driven from their homes in Roman

Syria and

Syria and Mesopotamia, great numbers of them crossed over into Persia. Having secured a home in that country "they thence rapidly propagated their religion, and with it the Syrian system of letters through the wide extended regions of Tartary so that by this route at a very early period, they reached even China".

Wall:Vol.II
p.246.

The Nestorian priesthood were held in high esteem, as scholars, secretaries and physicians at the court of the Sassanides and of the Caliphs in Bagdad. Learned Nestorians were sent to Byzantium to collect Grecian writings that had not yet been translated, and to bring writings already translated into Syriac, so that they might be translated into Arabic. There is a long list of such scholars who made known Greek learning through translation and commentaries, to the Mohammedans first, but indirectly also to mediaeval Europe.

Chwolson
Vol.XXXIV
p.27.

As the result of the conquest of China by the Mongols Christianity again entered on a period of expansion in that empire in the thirteenth century after a time of comparative depression. The Mongolian princes were tolerant towards other religions. Chwolson confirms what has already been said that several Mongolian princes had Christian wives. The princes often attended service in the churches with their wives, but they were hindered, Chwolson says, from making an open profession of faith in Christ by the strife which arose as the result of the coming of Roman Catholic missionaries to China in the middle of the thirteenth century.

Chwolson
Vol.XXXVII
p.108.

Chwolson
Vol.XXXVII
p.110.

Beginning with the Ming dynasty in the third quarter of the fourteenth century (1369) a change took place in the attitude of the Chinese towards foreigners and Christians. This resulted in a short time, in the almost complete

extinction of Christianity in China. Chwolson however confirms what has already been said regarding the wide range of Nestorian missionary activity. Among the Turkish tribes alone, he claims that the area, inhabited chiefly by Turks or Tatars, over which the gospel had been preached, extended from longitude 60° to longitude 120° and from latitude 30° to latitude 55° and that without exaggeration there must have been 'millions' of Christians in these areas of which the only remaining traces are these genuine Christian grave inscriptions.

From them, however, we can learn much, not only about the Christian and church life of that great community, but also about other things that are well worth knowing. The documents that we have in these inscriptions are authentic and trustworthy and there need be no hesitation in accepting what they tell us.

The crosses of different kinds engraved on all the stones are so formed that the head of the cross is easily distinguished from the foot, from which we can determine whether the writing was horizontal or vertical. Most people are agreed that the west Syrians at a certain period wrote in vertical lines and that then, turning the book, they read horizontally. The inscriptions on the monuments confirm this. The Uigurs, who got their alphabet from the Nestorians about the eighth or ninth centuries, also wrote vertically, and from left to right as did the Mongolians and the Manchus, differing in this respect from the Chinese who wrote from right to left.

To-day there are four or five different kinds of Syrian writing which are easily distinguished. It is doubtful, however, if there was the same clear difference in olden times.

Chwolson
Vol. XXXVII
pp. 111, 113,
116.

The language of the inscriptions is mainly Syriac but some are in Turkish or perhaps include a Turkish phrase.

These Christians had good schools and good teachers. They had earnest preachers and spiritual leaders distinguished by their learning as well as their piety. The laymen looked upon it as an honour to act as church officials, to serve the church and to attend to the nurture and Christian growth of its members.

'This is the grave of Pasak - The aim of life is Jesus, our Redeemer', runs one inscription. Pious wishes for the future life of the dead, for their everlasting remembrance, and for the rest of their souls in the company of the pious and the righteous, are frequently found on tombs. Many of them are described as wise and learned. Reference is also made on some ~~of~~^{to} the part played by the person referred to in the political life of the community. One of those commemorated is described as the renowned Emir, and the title of General or Commander in Chief had evidently been in his family for two generations.

No bishop's name occurs in the inscriptions, probably because these were connected with some other centre such as Almalik and ~~that~~ the headquarters of the church were there. Almalik was the capital of the Chagaton Khanate or middle empire of the Tartars. Clergy of other grades, however, some of them from Almalik, are included. In thirteen years, from 1287 to 1300, six people were classified as from Almalik. One a chorepiscopus and another a woman. Two archdeacons, one named Isch'u whose daughter was also buried there, the other named Agusak whose son Tasch Arslan found a resting

Howlson
p.124.

Yule: I
p.152.

place in that spot.

Four chorepiscopi are referred to, a Periodeuta or Church-visitor,^{and} eight persons with the title Sa'ara, making altogether fifteen of the higher ranks of the clergy. According to Ebedjesu the three titles, Chorepiscopus, Periodeuta, and Sa'ara, referred to one and the same office. The duty of the bearer of this title was to visit the churches and see that all was well and to build up churches that had fallen off. It was also part of his duty to visit villages and smaller congregations, to gather the elders around him to admonish them, and remind them of their duties, to read the scriptures, to gather the children together, pray with them and arrange about their education. The person appointed to this office was chosen because of his piety, his uprightness and his incorruptibility. From the names one can easily gather the nationality of the bearers.

Of the different clergy of various grades, eight had children. One almost certainly was betrothed while of another it is said that he had a wife. From this it is clear that the higher Nestorian clergy were permitted to marry and indeed if they became widowers after their ordination, they could marry a second time. Several of them either had genuine Turkish names themselves or they gave their children Turkish names, from which we may conclude that they were genuine Turks.

Chwolson
p.125.

Kingana
John Rylands
Bulletin
p.335.

A woman is described as "Terim the Chinese", a priest figures as 'Banūs the Uigurian', a layman as 'Sazik the Indian'. Then we have 'Kiamta of Kashgar', 'Tatta the Mongol' and 'Shah Malik a son of a George of Tus'. "All these names imply a constant intercourse between the different Christian peoples

of Central Asia and the Far East" which enables us to understand how in a single cemetery we have side by side people from China, India, East and West Turkestan, Mongolia, Manchuria, Siberia and Persia.

It would be easy to mention names gathered from these inscriptions of men who were distinguished for their pious zeal, who were teachers, or who devoted themselves to the studies of the cloister and all of whom were genuine Turks.

Taking into consideration the rawness, wildness and barbarity of the Eastern Turks, one cannot but be impressed with the change that the gospel message had brought about in their lives. Some of them had double names, one Syrian or Christian and the other Turkish. We are quite justified, therefore, in speaking of the Turkish population who lived in the neighbourhood of the graveyards, as Christian, for although there were a few Syrian Christians amongst them the mass of the population was Turkish.

Chwolson
p.127.

There were public schools, but these schools, as was customary with the Nestorians, were church schools and were often connected with the monasteries. There were evidently cloisters there also, as it is said of two of the clergy that 'they enlightened all cloisters with their light'.

Ass:III.ii
p.934.

In the Catalan map of 1375 we find a cloister, or monastery, indicated as lying to the south of Lake Issyk Kul. It is called the Armenian monastery of St. Matthew. It is more probable, however, that it was Nestorian as it is unlikely that the Armenians had any cloisters in that neighbourhood.

The subjects taught in these schools have already been indicated, but in addition to those mentioned, Syriac must

have been taught as a language subject. It was evidently not an easy language to these Turks for some of the inscriptions are most inaccurately written. One of these Uigur Turks, as has been shewn elsewhere, actually became in A.D.1281 Patriarch of the whole Nestorian church. Huc claims that this same man Jaballaha afterwards acknowledged the headship of Rome and submitted to the Pope of Rome. Of this however there is no indication or confirmation in any quarter whatever. The rumour probably arose from the fact that Jaballaha's great friend Cauma was sent as an ambassador from the Persian king to some of the European princes, and, amongst other places, Rome.

Different persons are described in the inscriptions as church administrators, one as a renowned church administrator. Of others it is said that they zealously sought the welfare of the church. One is spoken of as a renowned exegetist and preacher. Their wisdom is extolled. Of another it is said that ~~his~~ voice in preaching was lifted up like a trumpet.

The inscriptions indicate also that the people knew how to value such men. 'With hope of the life hereafter and with pious wishes for their eternal rest' were they laid in their graves. In one inscription comes the phrase 'The soul (of the dead) is made whole'. Students are also referred to. Frequently the word 'believer' is added at the end of the inscription and parental tenderness is shewn by the words 'a beloved youth or maiden'. One already referred to is spoken of as 'the blessed old man'. He evidently occupied a high official position, due probably to the fact that the mother of Hulagu, who then reigned,

was a Christian princess and was said to have been zealous and pious and to have exercised a noble influence on her son.

Belonging to the years 1338-1339 are three inscriptions in which it is stated that the persons referred to died of plague, and the number of inscriptions during these years is exceptionally large. Plague is said to have originated in Eastern Asia just about that time. It spread rapidly to Asia Minor, North Africa and Europe and reached the Crimea in 1346. The loss of life in Europe alone in this pandemic is estimated at twenty five millions or a quarter of the whole population. What must it have been in Asia with its much greater area and population.

An inscription numbered as '44' is important as introducing a new element. It reads thus:- 'In the year 1333, that is the cock year. This is the grave of scholar Sandajok, the boy Pazak Tekin, and the young girl Marian'. Then come the words, 'These three have died in Mohammedanism'. This might mean that they went over to Islam and died as Mohammedans, but if so how were the Mohammedans so tolerant, Chwolson asks, that they allowed those of their faith to be buried in a Christian graveyard, and still more, to have a cross on the grave stone? How were the Christians so tolerant as to allow apostates a resting place in their cemeteries and to erect a grave stone with a cross on it over the graves? These three might have been compelled to become Mohammedans and in that case since force had been used their fellow believers might continue to look upon them as Christians. Or they may have been compulsorily

compelled to accept Islam and then put to death. It is difficult to tell, but the last alternative seems at least quite possible.

The Tokmak inscriptions are fewer in number but here also there is evidence of spiritual life. 'The house of rest' is a phrase very frequently used. And we can well believe that the picture of the spiritual and religious life of the Turkish Christians in the neighbourhood of Pishpek which these inscriptions give us had its counterpart in many other Turkish Christian congregations in that and other districts.

The fight against Buddhism which was all around and the growing conflict with Mohammedanism may have helped to raise the tone of the Turkish Christian life and in places where a metropolitan had his headquarters it may have been more developed than in other places. But all quite evidently continued to give a definite testimony to the genuineness of their Christian profession which may well act as a stimulus to Christians more favourably situated to-day.

It has already been mentioned that no inscriptions have been found in the cemetery at Pishpek of an earlier date than 1249. It is possible that this is a mere chance and that ^{all the} stones have ^{not yet} been properly examined. But the same is not true with reference to the final date of 1345. It seems more than possible that Christianity in East and West Turkestan, as in China, ceased to exist soon after that date.

All the good accomplished by Nestorian Missionaries during seven centuries among this wild and barbaric people was swept away and vanished leaving scarcely a trace. Only in the grave stones from Semiryechensk do we find evidence

of the rich and varied Christian life which prevailed in one tiny corner of these extensive areas filled as they once were with Christian communities.

The following are a few of the inscriptions that have so far been deciphered. Others also are given by Chwolson in the 'Memoires' from which we have quoted. Others again are given by Nau in 'L'Expansion Nestorienne en Asie' and there are still others that have not yet been deciphered.

No.66 (138) "This is the grave of Chorepiscopus, Ama.

Chwolson
p.14.

In the year 1566 (= A.D.1255) he departed from this world in the month of July on Sabbath. May our Lord unite his spirit with those of the pious and upright. Amen".

Note: Chwolson says this inscription differs from others in that it does not begin with the date as is usually done and states not only the month but the day of the week. A part of it is not quite clear.

Idem p.24.

No.83 (127). "In the year 1583 (= 1272) that is the ape year. This is the grave of the priest and general, Zuma - a blessed old man, a famous Emir, the son of General Giwargis. May our Lord unite his spirit with the spirits of the fathers and saints in eternity".

Note: Chwolson remarks. This inscription has a special historical interest. It is otherwise known that Nestorian Christians acted as teachers, tutors, and especially as Secretaries to the Mongolian princes but we can see by this that the Nestorian Christians in two successive generations had commanded troops and that one of them is described as a famous Emir.

Chwolson
p.25.

No.84. (218) "In the year 1584 (= A.D.1273). This is the grave of the church visitor Pag-Mangku, the humble believer".

Idem p.46.

No.123 (155) "In the year one thousand six hundred and twelve (= A.D.1301) the bull year. This is the grave of the priest Taki who was very zealous for the church".

Idem 51.

No.18 "In the year one thousand six hundred and eighteen (= 1307) that is the sheep year. Turkish - koi = sheep.

This is the grave of the charming maiden Julia, the betrothed of the chorepiscopus Johanan".

Chwolson
Vol. XXXIV.
p.69.

No.39 (192) "In the year one thousand six hundred and thirty nine (= A.D.1338) that is the dragon year. This is the grave of Pes̄ha the renowned exegetist and preacher who enlightened all cloisters through the light - Extolled for wisdom and may our Lord unite his spirit with the saints."

No.50¹⁶ (30). "In the year one thousand six hundred and fifty (= A.D.1339) The hare year. Turkish, Tabischkau = Hare. This is the grave of Kutluk. He died of plague with his wife Mangu - Kelka".

Chwolson
Vol. XXXIV.
p.14.
Kigana
p.335.

"In the year one thousand six hundred and twenty seven (1326) which is the year of the dragon, in Turkish "Lowū". This is the grave of Shlīha the celebrated commentator and teacher, who illuminated all the monasteries with light; son of Peter the august commentator of wisdom. His voice rang as high as the sound of a trumpet. May our Lord mix his pure soul with the just men and the Fathers. May he participate in all heavenly joys".

Chwolson
Vol. III
16 No.52.
Kigana
p.335

"In the year 1616 (A.D.1315) which is that of the Turkish snake. This is the grave of Sabrishō, the archdeacon, the blessed old man and the perfect priest. He worked much in the interests of the church".

Chapter IX.

Factors in the decadence of Nestorian Missionary Activity.

Persecution - Deception - Compromise.

Persecution: The decadence of the Nestorian Church was due to a variety of causes which were largely a repetition of the

One of the reasons, and that not the least in importance, was the spread of, and persecution by, Mohammedanism. Reference has already been made to the measures taken by the successors of Mohammed to give effect to the alleged dictum of the prophet that Arabia was to be reserved for Islam and that there should be only one creed there, a policy which was only too successfully carried out.

Assemanus:
III ii p.95.

Ishoyabh II, Patriarch of Seleucia 628-643, is said to have entered into an agreement first with Mohammed and later with the Caliph Omar by which he obtained important concessions for Christians of his persuasion, and Mohammed is said to have given a document in which he promised safety to all Christians living in his dominions.

In it there were mutual obligations recognised as binding on Mohammed on the one hand and on the Nestorian and Monophysite Christians on the other. ~~He~~ He promised to protect them and they promised him loyalty and obedience. He guaranteed them entire religious freedom and they undertook to support him against the attacks of his enemies.

The successors of Mohammed employed the Nestorians in the most important affairs of business, alike in the court and in the administration of the Persian provinces. And only to the

Patriarch of the Nestorians was permission given to dwell within the limits of the kingdom of Babylon.

When the last emperor of the Sassanian dynasty was defeated by the Mohammedans about the middle of the seventh century, the way was opened up for a further extension of the Mohammedan power. The armies of Caliph Omar speedily overran the whole of Persia from the Euphratas to the Oxus, destroying with bigoted fury "all that was useful, grand, or sacred, in that unhappy country".

There was not the same antagonism on the part of the Mohammedan Arabs towards Christianity in Persia, as towards their fellow countrymen in Arabia, and yet, as already indicated, the disqualifications under which Christians laboured, and the confiscation of whole or part of their property that ~~at~~ almost invariably took place, all tended to discourge the profession of Christianity, and resulted in many instances, either in wholesale secessions to Mohammedanism, or emigration to other lands.

A large proportion of the conquered inhabitants, including, as we know from other sources, numbers of nominal Christians, adopted the faith of their new masters, while others fled into more distant places. The ruins of the many cities scattered abroad indicate the existence at one time of a dense population in regions which are now inhabited by a few wandering tribes. According to Malcolm, even a catalogue of these ruins, and of the bridges which once ornamented the Tigris alone, would fill many pages.

Some of the ruins are no doubt the work of the Turks and Mongols to whom we shall refer later, but in the earlier centuries, the desolation was the result of the influx of

Malcolm
History of
Persia Vol.
I p.259.

Mosul Arabia, and ^{of} other Bedouin tribes that flocked to their standard.

Malcolm
History of
Persia Vol.
I p.260.

In the North Western parts of Persia, there are few traces left of the ancient splendour of that once wonderful land. Tabriz, the capital of Media, rivalling at one time the glory of Ecbatana (the modern Hamadan) has only the tombs of Mordecai and Esther to satisfy curiosity, while the site of Rhe (ancient Rhages) can hardly be traced.

Idem p.262.

Persia under the Caliphs included Kerman, Balkh, Bokhara, Seistan, Khorasan, and Afghanistan. Under the Sassanian dynasty it had been even more extensive and included the Pamirs, Kafiristan, Kashgar and Scind, and extended to the Oxus and the Indus in the east and to the Caspian sea and mount Caucasus on the north.

Malcolm
p.2.

It embraced numerous mountain chains and large tracts of arid desert interspersed with beautiful valleys and rich pasture lands. Some of the valleys, although narrow, were one hundred miles long and extremely fertile, and in those early days must have been very densely populated. A recent writer has said that it was the rise of Islam that enabled the Nestorians to enter "upon that amazing career of missionary enterprise which must make the patriarchate of the east for ever glorious". And as if to lend colour to this extraordinary statement Dr. Mingana of John Rylands Library Manchester has unearthed a document which is supposed to prove that the Caliphs were protectors of the Christians. It is a translation of a charter of protection given by Muktafi one of the later Abbasid Caliphs. In it Muktafi states that in granting the charter he was but following in the steps of all

H.C.Luke
Mosul and
its
Minorities.

previous Caliphs. A document such as this may reflect the attitude of the particular ruler who issued it but that it correctly describes that of Mohammedans generally will not be claimed by any one who is at all familiar with the history of Muslim expansion. Reference has just been made to a somewhat similar pledge given both by Mohammed and by the Caliph Omar but that did not prevent the atrocities and persecutions of which some of their successors were guilty. As time went on the attitude of the Caliphs towards the Christians became more and more harsh. Hārūm (786-809) ordered Jews and Christians alike to adopt customs different from those of the Mohammedans, but this seems to have been enforced only in the capital, and then only for a short time.

A more serious persecution broke out under Mustawakkil 847-861. He persecuted all sects, including even the Shias. The Christians were ordered to wear a distinctive dress, were dismissed from government employment, and forbidden to ride on horseback. The churches that had been built after the Arab conquest were pulled down, and the houses of some of the wealthy Christians turned into mosques. The government, however, could not get on without the Christians and after each outburst the latter returned to their posts in government offices.

In A.D. 710 the Mohammedans or Saracens as they were also called, having overrun the kingdom of Persia, crossed the Oxus into Transoxania. To begin with, their progress in Transoxania was very slow. The rich were strongly opposed to Islam but the poor were won over by gifts and in a few years the whole of the territory between the Oxus, the Jaxartes, and the Caspian sea, was brought under the rule of

Cambridge
Medieval
History IV
pp.285,288.

~~Book~~
Bury's Gibbon
Vol.V.pp.
439-441.

Barthold
p.20.

the Caliph and the Turkish hordes were driven back to the desert.

Before the invasion of the Saracens, Kharizm, Bokhara and Samarkand, were rich and populous under the rule of the shepherds of the North (Tartars). They were surrounded by a double wall. The outer one, which was of ^{much} larger circumference, enclosed the fields and gardens of the adjacent district.

The first mosque in Bokhara was built in A.D.712 but it was not until A.D.771 that a second one was required, and even then the majority of the people were still unbelievers, that is, they were opposed to Islam.

In Transoxania, there was a mixed population of Iranians and White Huns who had been subdued by the Turks and acknowledged allegiance to the Chagan, but were under the immediate government of the local princes. At the time of the Mohammedan invasion, there was an insurrectionary movement of the poor against the rich. The Saracens took advantage of this and their success under Kutaiba one of the Saracen generals, was due as much to intrigue as to force. Further, the Nestorian Christians there objected less to Islam founded on the ancient Jewish scriptures, than they did to the fire worship of the Zoroastrians. They were therefore less likely to oppose Islam than they might otherwise have been.

Kutaiba finally completed the conquest of Sogdiana and then proceeded against ~~Rarghans~~ Farghana. Here the Saracens came into contact with Tibetan Buddhists who had revolted against the emperor of China but the Turkish Chagan interfered and compelled the Tibetans to return to their allegiance, and

the death of the then Caliph prevented anything further being done.

In 724 another Turkish army was sent to Sogdiana and defeated 20,000 Moslems near Samarkand. This event is commemorated in an inscription in Turkish and Chinese, on a monument (found near lake Koshu Tsaidam) erected by the Chagan in memory of his brother having won the victory.

Skirine' & Ross
p.72.

Ashras Ibn Abdullah, commander in chief of the eastern army of the Caliph, in A.D.723 made great efforts to induce the Christians of Central Asia to embrace Islam, promising them exemption from the capitation tax. Later on he re-imposed the tax and as a result, many of the more recent converts to Islam rose in rebellion and seceded to ^{the} Chagan of the Turks.

It was not until the ninth century that Mohammedanism was fully established in Transoxania. The Arabs rather favoured the Nestorians as against the Jacobites but treated both with great severity.

Barthold
p.24.

From A.D.987 onwards, the Catholicos or Nestorian Patriarch of Bagdad was nominated and supported by the Caliph, and this whether the metropolitans approved of the appointment or not. From 1062-72 onwards, the Jacobite and Melchite bishops were made subordinate to the Nestorians.

When Ismail succeeded to the throne of the Samanides in A.D.892 with Bokhara as his capital, he at once embarked on a holy war against the Christian settlement of Taraz south of Aulie-ata, and when the Amir and many of the leading men of the place embraced Islam, Ismail converted the church into a mosque, and returned to Bokhara laden with booty.

The period of the Abbasides was a time of great literary activity, not only as regards the number of individuals

authors, not only as regards the number of works issued by them. An index of Arabic books in every branch of knowledge was prepared in A.D.988. It was about this time that Arabic began to attain to the position of a world literature. Even the Nestorian and Jacobite Christians began to use Arabic in preference to Syriac as a literary language. Scientific and philosophic works were translated from Greek to Arabic, especially in the ninth century. Poetic literature, also grammar and history, were much in evidence. One of the most prolific writers on medical subjects was one Razi who died in the early part of the tenth century. He was a skilled clinical observer and made ~~distinctly~~ original contributions to medical science. A vast medical literature in Persian began with an Encyclopedia by a physician named Zain-ud-Din.

The Abbasid dynasty came into power largely through the assistance of troops from Khorassan who formed a complete division of the army. They may probably have been Moslems but in 833-842 Mutassim added another separate corps made up entirely of Turks. He built enormous barracks for them and encouraged Turkish chieftains to come and live under his protection.

Gradually the Turks outnumbered every section of the army and grew in wealth and influence until the power passed entirely into their hands and the Caliph was at the mercy of his Turkish guard. Fresh ~~accessions to their~~ accessions to their number were continually coming from the east as the Turkish troops learned of the wealth and power that their fellow tribesmen could gain by service in the empire of the Caliph.

Many of the soldiers of the Caliph were slaves, the

Caliphs thinking that as they were without ties and kindred they could be more thoroughly depended upon. The more obstreperous the free Turks became, the more was the number of slaves increased as a set off against them. There may have been Turks also among the slaves but the majority of the latter were probably Africans.

Barthold
p.50.'

In A.D.1043 there was something in the nature of a mass movement on the part of the Turks towards Islam, 10,000 (some say 5,000) of the inhabitants of Safer seceding to Mohammedanism. Prior to this, Seljuk and his tribe had separated themselves from the rest of the Ghuzz, and having gone over to Islam, had become ^{the} champion of those who were his comrades in faith against those who had hitherto been his comrades by race.

The Mohammedans, who lived in the town of Gend, not far from Syr Dariya, had been in the habit of paying tribute to the Khan of the Ghuzz. Seljuk, however, drove out the Ghuzz representatives and relieved the town of further payments.

Cambridge
History
Vol. IV
p.302.

The Seljuks were the first Tartar tribes of importance to become Mohammedan. They derived their name from Seljuk the founder of the tribe, a man of great reputation. By the end of the tenth century, the unity of Islam, both politically and as a religious force, had been considerably weakened and the position of the Caliphate seemed hopeless. The rise of the Seljuks brought fresh support to the Caliphate, gave it a new lease of life, and saved Islam from destruction at the hands of the crusaders.

The Seljuks had been employed as mercenaries under Sabaktagin as early as 976-997, but from 998 onwards when Mahmood succeeded his father Sabaktagin, and was recognised

by the Caliph as ruler of Korassan and Ghizni, they (the Seljuks) began to play an important part in the political life of the different Moslem states. More so indeed than Mahmood wished. The latter, we are told, became alarmed at the growing power of the Seljuks, and threw Israel, one of Seljuk's sons, into prison where he died.

Seljuk was originally subject to the Khan of the Turks at Kipchack. Leaving there with his tribe about the end of the tenth century, he settled on the plains of Bokhara where he died. The son who succeeded him was called Michael, a name so evidently Christian, as is that of Israel, that we are warranted in concluding that Christianity had been known there prior to the time of Seljuk, and that some of the tribe had become followers of Christ and had made use of Christian names. It is said of Michael that he was able to provide 200,000 horsemen if required, for the army of Mahmood.

After the death of Mahmood, the Seljuks asserted their independence and gradually extended their dominions further and further west. Togrul Bey, the third in succession, became master of Khorassan and in 1055 captured Bagdad. He caused himself to be appointed lieutenant to the Caliph, and soon thereafter completed the subjugation of Persia and invaded Georgia and Iberia. He became a zealous advocate of Islam and erected numerous mosques.

He was succeeded by his nephew Alp Arselan (meaning a conquering lion) who was a bigoted Mohammedan and a violent persecutor of those who held the Christian faith. He is said to have caused a large iron collar to be fixed on the neck of every Christian who refused to change his religion as a mark of ignominy. He inflicted other cruelties on them too.

In 1156, the dynasty of Seljuk, after having ravaged and destroyed extensive territories, began to break up. Generals who had conquered different countries began to assert their own independence. Amongst others, Salladin, the son of the commander of the fort of Tukreet, succeeded to the throne of Egypt, and soon all Syria submitted to his rule.

In Turkestan, Islam soon became widely spread. This may have been due, partly to the conquests of the Sammanides, and partly to trade connections. The Sammanides colonized a part of their province with 1,000 families of Ghozz and Karlukians who had gone over to Islam. These they placed near the frontier to guard it against attacks.

Among the merchants, Mohammedans were in the majority and lived along the trade routes. There were mosques in nearly all the towns on these routes, and in some places, Mohammedans occupied all the positions of authority, even although the population as a whole was non-Moslem. Where the Christians were in the ascendancy on the other hand, the Mohammedan merchants had to pay taxes.

By the end of the tenth century under the dynasty of Ilik Khan, the ruler of the Kara Khanides, the ascendancy of the Mohammedans had increased considerably both in east and west Turkestan. Whether the Kara Khanides were Uigurs as some think, or Karluks as claimed by others, is not at all certain. The capital was Balasaghun in the province of Semiryechensk. Balasaghun lay on the way from Almalik to Talas via Wjering. The city of Farab or Otrar, famous as the place ~~where~~ three centuries later Tamerlane breathed his last, was also in the neighbourhood of Balasaghun.

According to Barthold, Vambery is of opinion that after

Barthold
p.46.

Idem p.47.

Barthold
p.5.

the eleventh century Christianity had to take a subordinate position in relation to Mohammedanism, and that they had much to suffer from Bogra Khan and his successors in the religious wars that took place, but there is nothing to shew that the Christians in the kingdom of the Karakhanides were oppressed, and certainly, Samarkand still continued to be the seat of a metropolitan.

The statement of Ibn-al-atier, that after 1043 only the Tartars and the Chinese Kitans continued unbelievers, is undoubtedly exaggerated, as not once up to that time had all the Turks in west Turkestan accepted Islam.

A significant comment, however, on the decadence of Nestorianism in Central Asia under the Moslems, is found in such remarks as the following which occur not infrequently in Wiltsch:-

Wiltsch
p.482 ff.

"The metropolis of Maru Alsciahegian in Chorasania had its last metropolitan at the end of this period". "The last metropolitan of Dailam lived in the time of the patriarch Mares II" (987-999). "The last metropolitan in the province of Bardaa lived at the time of the patriarch Ebedjesu III.

Wiltsch
pp.163-168.

At the same time lived the last metropolitan of Raia and Tabrestania". In 1073 "there was no longer either a metropolitan or a bishop in the two bishoprics of Achlat (on the western shore of lake Arsissa) and Marga".

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, before the arrival of the Mo³gols, the Sultan Sandchar of the Seljuk dynasty appointed and deposed the Khans of the Kara Khanides in Sammarkand. In 1141 the Keraites defeated Sandchars army and overthrew the Kara Khanides.

Bartholds
p.59.

The relations of Turkan Chatun of the Kangli tribe, who

were settled in Khorazim, accepted Islam and were appointed by the Shah Mohāmed to various posts of honour, as seen in the military titles which some of them held prior to the advent of Jenghiz Khan.

The Turks of Transoxania and Turkestan were a warlike people, and many of them, crossing the Oxus, had entered the service of the Caliph, attracted no doubt by the prospect of the plunder and booty which that service offered. Indifferent to Islam or even hostile to it in their own land, they looked upon it in Persia as merely part of their military discipline and soon submitted to its religious rule. When they returned to their own country they carried their religion with them, and this in process of time led to two different sections in the tribe or district - those who had become Moslems and those who continued pagan or were already Christian.

So far as the Turks or Mongols were concerned, the fact of a man becoming a Christian did not weaken his sense of nationality. The nation was put first, and Christian and Pagan alike were united in common loyalty to their country.

With ^{the} Mohammedans, however, religion was first, and gradually the Turkish rulers came to look upon the combining of the religious and political elements as one way by which their power might be increased and acted accordingly.

As Moslems, they were no longer neutral in religious matters, especially when it fitted in with their political aims. Convinced too, not only that it was their duty, but that the larger the number of Christians they could by force or persuasion turn from Christianity to Mohammedanism, the greater the reward they might expect from God, We can easily understand how these perverts to Islam became its most fanatical supporters

and proved an important factor in the decay of Nestorianism in those regions where they exercised a controlling power.

This applies to India equally with Transoxania and other parts of Central Asia. With the accession in 1325 of Muhammed Tughlaq of Dehli everything seemed to be leading up to the ruin and devastation of the Hindu provinces. All that the dwellers in the south held most dear seemed tottering to its fall when "suddenly, about the year A.D.1344, there was a check to this wave of foreign invasion - a stop - a halt - and then a solid wall of opposition and for two hundred and fifty years Southern India was saved. The check was caused by a combination of three small Hindu states" Warangal, Doarasamudra and Anegundi. "The solid wall consisted of Anegundi grown into the great empire of Vijayanagar" which extended from the neighbourhood of Honavur on the Indian Ocean to the mouth of the Godaveri, on the Bay of Bengal, and was bounded on the north by the Tungabadra and Kistna rivers. "To the kings of this house all the nations of the south submitted including the Pandiyans at Madura, the Cholas at Tanjore and others".

Sewell:
The Forgotten
Empire
Vijayanagar
p.5.

The first inroad of the Mohammedans into India was in A.D.1001 under Mahmood of Ghazni. Raid after raid followed and two centuries later they were firmly established in Dehli. Lower Bengal was conquered in 1203. At the end of the thirteenth century they began to press southwards into the Deccan. In 1293 Devagiri was captured and in 1297 Gujaret was attacked. Warangal was captured in 1309 (and finally fell in 1323) and Doarasamudra in 1310. By 1330 the whole of India down to the Vindhya mountains had been overrun and the south was being

threatened with the same fate although the whole country south of ^{the} Kistna was still under Hindu domination. The bloodshed in these invasions was enormous. Sewell tells of 100,000, 200,000 and even 500,000 persons slaughtered in a single campaign.

The probability is that not later than 1344 as the result of these Mohammedan conquests, Christianity had practically disappeared from the whole of India north of ^{the} Vindhya mountains, the Christian kingdoms mentioned by Marco Polo as existing at the end of the thirteenth century being amongst the number of those submerged by the Muslem deluge. That South India escaped the same fate is no doubt largely due to the stemming of the tide by the empire of Vijayanagar. When Vijayanagar fell the Mohammedan scourge resumed its course under Akbar and later Aurungzeb, but only to a limited extent, as new forces which acted as a check on Islam were by that time beginning to operate, first the Dutch, followed as they were, by the French and English.

Babar, the founder of the Moghul dynasty in India was noted for his religious tolerance which contributed to the place won by the dynasty in the temple of fame. Akbar also and his son Jehanghir were both tolerant towards all religions, including Christianity. One of Akbar's wives is said to have been a Christian, and he ordered his son Prince Murad when a child to take lessons in Christianity. As regards Jehanghir, the Jesuits had great hopes that he would become a Christian but the fact that he had a plurality of wives was a hindrance. Under Shah Jehan, the son of Jehanghir, on the other hand, a fierce persecution of both Christians and Hindus took place and continued for several years. Aurungzeb who succeeded

Ronaldshay
Birds Eye
View of
India p.225.

Sir W.W.Hunter
The Indian
Empire
p.295.

Vincent
Smith
History
of India
pp.369,
378,396.

him was an equally bigoted persecutor.

That the decay of Christianity in Central and Northern India was due largely to persecution by the Mohammedans is confirmed by the fact that as late as 1784, Tippu Sultan the Mohammedan ruler of Mysore, forcibly circumcised thirty thousand Christians and removed them, and presumably their families with them, to the country above the western ghauts. These were Christians from the district of Canara. How many of the forbears of the ~~the~~ more than a million ~~the~~ Mappilla and other Muslims in the Malabar and South Canara districts of the west coast of India to-day were originally Christians, who similarly became Mohammedans under compulsion, we have no means of knowing, but they are now among the most fanatical and turbulent supporters of Islam. But for the bulwark raised by the empire of Vijayanagar and the coming in of the new factors mentioned, the fate of the remaining Christian communities in South India would probably have been in no wise different from that of those just referred to.

Deception: A contributing factor in the decline of Nestorian missionary activity, especially in India, is the deception which is alleged to have been practised by the Brahmins in the matter of the so called Asoka pillar and rock inscriptions, and the invention of the Vishnu avatars, especially that of Krishna. Chronologically these precede ^{the Muslim invasion,} but as they apply only to India it has been found more convenient to deal with them here.

It has been represented that Hinduism, suffered a temporary eclipse during the period when Buddhism was in the ascendant in India, but that it ultimately re-asserted

itself and drove out Buddhism; but if the claim made by Wall, Bentley, Hunter and others is correct, Hinduism, as known in later years e.g. in the matter of Krishna worship and the caste system, dates only from about the eighth century A.D. or even later, Buddhism itself having been countenanced and made use of by the Brahminical party in the earlier centuries.

Macphails:
Asoka p.62.

This is confirmed by the fact that in the year A.D.413 a Chinese traveller named Fa Hien found the Brahmins and Buddhists working together in friendly co-operation, but in A.D.629 Hiuen Tsang, also from China, found Brahminism in the ascendant in some places such as Varanasi (modern Benares) although the Buddhists were still the more numerous in others. The two parties were however beginning to draw apart and to be at variance with one another.

Seal:
Buddhist
Records of
the Western
World Vol.
II pp.45,
105,229.

One of the outstanding legendary personages in connection with the spread of Buddhism is Asoka, whose edicts inscribed on pillars and rocks, are found scattered over an area extending from Peshawar in the north to Mysore in the south, and from Kathiawar in the west to Orissa in the east. The date assigned to the edicts is 257 B.C. to 232 B.C. Asoka, who is said to have belonged to the Maurya dynasty, is on the strength of the edicts alone, alleged to have ruled over the greater part of India during the time mentioned, and, having ultimately become a member of the Buddhist priesthood, to have carried the Buddhist doctrines in person to countries far distant from his own. It is admitted, however, that very little is known about him personally except what can be gathered from the rock and pillar inscriptions, nor is anything

Idem
pp.43,72.

D.
Idem/62.

Macphail:
p.19.

known of the Maurya dynasty after his death.

He is supposed to have been the grandson of Chandragupta who was known to the Greeks as Sandrokottos.

(Chandragupta is thought to have begun his reign in 321 B.C.).

That there was ever such a person as Asoka or such a kingdom as he is said to have ruled over, is disputed by Wall, who claims that the edicts originated with the Brahmins of Ujain in the third century A.D. and were promulgated by them for the purpose of checking the progress of Christianity which was then spreading rapidly.

Wall:
Ancient
Orthography
of Jews Vol.
II pp.409,
411.

Wall mentions several reasons why he questions the truth of the claim made to an earlier date than the end of third century A.D. for the publication of the edicts. To begin with, statements made in the inscriptions are themselves inaccurate and contradictory - e.g. - Tablet 2, of Girnar inscription reads: "The dominions of Antiochus the Greek Raja of which Antiochus's generals are the rulers". Tablet 13 reads: "The Greek King by whom the Chaptia kings Ptolemaios and Antigonous and Magas (have been induced to permit) that every where the people may follow the doctrines of Devanampiya". That is these kings and Antiochus were contemporary with one another. But the only Antiochus, who had to do with India, was Antiochus the great.

He invaded India in 205 B.C. one hundred years after the time assigned to Asoka by the Buddhists of Ceylon, twenty seven years after Asoka's death according to Vincent Smith, and ninety six years after the death of the only Antigonous who had any connection with India. Not only so but the date of Antiochus's invasion was fifty two years after the death of Magas and forty one years after the death of Ptolemy.

Other reasons adduced by Wall are:-

The fact that the alphabet employed in writing the edicts - (the earliest form of Sanskrit) - could not have been in use until after the Christian era as proved by its Roman ingredients. From the testimony of Greek historians we gather that alphabetic writing was not introduced into India until the end of the second century A.D. at the earliest ^{This} and ~~second~~, the state of preservation of the vowel marks in the Dehli inscriptions, and the separation of the words into distinct groups of letters, to a degree not at all observable in any ancient writing, are all so many arguments in favour of a much later date for the inscriptions than that usually claimed for them.

For these and other reasons Wall holds that the age of the inscriptions cannot be more than three fourths the age of the inscription on the Rosetta stone. This gives the beginning of the fourth century A.D. as the extreme limit of their antiquity.

All the longer inscriptions purport to be edicts by "The beloved of the gods king Piyadasi". They contain phrases manifestly of Christian origin. For example, "I pray for those who differ from me in creed that they may with me attain unto eternal salvation". "Through the conversion of the humbly born shall religion increase". "I acknowledge and confess the faults that have been cherished in my heart". "This is true religious devotion that it shall increase the mercy and charity, the truth and purity, the kindness and honesty of the world". "Good and proper is dutiful service to mother and father, towards friends and kinsfolk, towards Brahmans and Sramans. Excellent is charity. Prodigality and malicious slander are not good".

Wall pp.420,
426.

The confession of faults, strict scrutiny of sin, self

denial, repentance, faith, veracity, purity, chastity, honesty, benevolence, mercy, charity and condescension to those ~~who~~ of low degree, are all recommended either by precept ^{the} or/example of Piyadasi, while hard heartedness, malice, anger, pride, envy, slander &c are all condemned.

The inscriptions might have been written by an Indian Christian who still retained part of his Pagan superstitions.

Wall is of opinion that the edicts are "not the edicts of a sovereign but the compositions of a set of designing priests" as is evident from the following additional considerations.

So far as they are sermons or religious discourses, they are suitable subjects, not for royal decrees, but for priestly exhortations.

They promulgated nothing that has to do with the interests of the sovereign or the kingdom, but much that is for the benefit of the priesthood.

They are not in the style that would be used by an eastern monarch. He would not be in the least likely to condescend to tell the public his reasons for a tax, ^{the} the edict in which he commanded its payment. The edicts are spread over an immense area and are nearly all in the same language, but no such monarch or kingdom as is indicated in them existed in India in or about the times to which these inscriptions are supposed to refer. Megasthenes says that India in his days was made up of 113 independent kingdoms, and Arrian, writing 450 years later, speaks of the Indian states as numerous. Vincent Smith says complete political unity of India under the control of a paramount power is a thing of yesterday. If the inscriptions were written in the life time of the persons referred to, can we imagine a Graeco-Syrian king being spoken of in the way that

Wall:II
p.432.

Vincent
Smith
History of
India p.5

"Antiochus the Greek Raja" is referred to? This is evident if we compare the corresponding expressions in the Greek part of the Rosetta record where the most fulsome adulation is paid to crowned heads.

Confirmation of the view that the Asoka pillar and rock inscriptions probably date from a much later period than has ~~formerly~~ usually been assigned to them is to be found in the modification of opinion that has taken place as regards the date of ~~the~~ Buddhistic and Brahminical structures. An illustration of this is to be found in the cave temples at Ellora in the Nizam of Hyderabad's dominions. In an article dealing with them Mr. Watts, M.B.B.S., refers to the tendency which formerly existed to believe that the excavation of these temples extended over a long period, one religious faith succeeding another in regular sequence and only one set of temples being in use at one time. Ferguson, he says, is inclined to think that the different religious bodies, Buddhist, Brahminical and Jain were all contemporaneous and worshipped together. According to Watts the different temples, Buddhistic and Brahman, probably date from A.D. 600 (the date assigned to the Vishwakarma the most famous of the Buddhist group) ~~to~~ to the beginning of the eighth century A.D. (the date assigned to the Tin Tal cave). ~~The~~ Most of the cave temples of the Mahayana Buddhist sect at Ajanta were excavated between A.D. 500 and A.D. 650.

In the same period the Brahmans began the excavation of caves which rival those of the Buddhists. The Mahavallipur Rathas and caves which are Brahminical were excavated probably between A.D. 650 & A.D. 700. The Brahmanical age of cave excavation probably came to an end in the eighth century.

Watts:
Article,
Ellora Caves,
'Hindu' of
10/2/25 p.5.

Ferguson
Cave Temples
of India.

Ferguson &
Burgess Cave
Temples pp.
298-9.

Idem, pp.
399, 402.

Deal: Budd-
nist Western
Record Vol.
II p. 137.

According to General Cunningham the great temple of Buddha Gaya was built between A.D. 400 & A.D. 600. It is conceivable therefore that even the beginning of the fourth century A.D. suggested by Wall may be too early for the Asoka inscriptions and that they may really belong to a somewhat later period*.

The Krishna Legend:

Not content with the fabrication of these edicts or perhaps because they had failed to accomplish the end aimed at and something more was required, the various avatars of Vishnu and particularly the Krishna legend were next invented.

For the exposure of this deception we are indebted to Bentley in his "Historical View of Hindu Astronomy". This book was published in 1825, but there has just been published as No. 18 "Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India (1924)" a treatise by G.R. Kaye on Hindu Astronomy, in which he refers more than once to Bentley's researches and speaks of his "Historical View of Hindu Astronomy" as a valuable book though marred by intemperate language and impatience of opposition. Kaye does not challenge any of Bentley's findings but on the contrary confirms such of them as he specially refers to.

*Note: How legends such as that of Asoka originated and grow may be illustrated by the case of Abraham Lincoln referred to by Leon Guerard in his book the 'Napoleonic Legend'.

Abraham Lincoln, he says, is becoming the centre of a legendary cycle. "Leave Lincoln entirely to literature, art and folk lore for a few generations and you may be sure that all the proverbial wisdom of his age will be ascribed to him and miracles and portents will be recorded. Lincoln is no longer Lincoln. He is democracy, emancipation, national unity". Here we have an "actuality of American history unfolding under the observation of the present age".

In some such way the legend of Asoka may have grown up, fostered by Brahmans and Sramans (Buddhists) alike, working together, as they did in the first few centuries of the present era.

Daye:
Hindu Astro-
nomy (1924)
pp. 3-5.

Of one such he says, Bentley's "Main conclusion is undoubtedly correct", and again, "his main thesis was fully established". He supports Bentley in his contention that Hindu Astronomy, so far from having any claim to great antiquity, is of comparatively recent origin, and holds that from A.D. 400 onwards it was dominated by the Greek system of astronomy introduced into India about that date, while the Surya Siddhanta dates only from A.D. 1000. "Most scholars" he says "Indian and European" unless influenced by sentiment "accept the judgement of the expert in this matter".

Daye p. 39.

Bentley
Historical
View of
Hindu
Astronomy
p. 83.

According to Bentley, modern Hindu astronomy with its wonderfully ancient dates was invented by the Brahmins of Ujain in A.D. 538, the initial date being the 21st March of that year. They were in possession of all the learning in the country and their influence was so great that they had no difficulty in carrying out their plans.

Idem p. 108.

The greatest blow of all "levelled by the Brahmins against Christianity, and the 'ne plus ultra' of their schemes, was the invention of the avatars or descents of the deity and others in various shapes, and under various names, particularly that of Krishna".

Bentley
p. 109.

"Seeing that the Christians acknowledged that Christ was an incarnation of the deity, and that God the Father had sent Him down to earth to shew special favours to them, and to redeem them from sin, the Brahmins invented not one but several incarnations and descents of the deity as having taken place among them at various times, thereby

Daye:
"The Bible"
p. 109.

making it appear that their system of Hinduism was older than Christianity. Bentley's "Main conclusion is undoubtedly correct", and again, "his main thesis was fully established". He supports Bentley in his contention that Hindu Astronomy, so far from having any claim to great antiquity, is of comparatively recent origin, and holds that from A.D. 400 onwards it was dominated by the Greek system of astronomy introduced into India about that date, while the Surya Siddhanta dates only from A.D. 1000. "Most scholars" he says "Indian and European" unless influenced by sentiment "accept the judgement of the expert in this matter".

Bentley
pp.110,111.

In confirmation of this conclusion, Bentley succeeded in obtaining the janampatra (or horoscope) of Krishna from which it^{is} made to appear that Krishna was born on the 23rd day of the moon of Sravana, in the Lunar Mansion Rohini, at midnight on the meridian of Ujain, at which instant the Moon, Mars, Mercury and Saturn, were in their respective houses of exaltation. The Moon in Taurus, Mars in Aries, Mercury in Virgo and Saturn in Libra, that the sign Taurus was then rising, Jupiter in Pisces, the Sun in Leo, Venus and the Moons ascending node in Libra. This fixes the date of the fiction as 7th August A.D.600.

Bentley
p.112.

The fabrication of the incarnation and birth of Krishna was no doubt meant to answer a particular purpose of the Brahmins who were sorely vexed at the progress that Christianity was still making and were afraid that if it were not checked they would lose both their influence and emoluments.

They probably concluded that by inventing the incarnation of a deity nearly similar in name to Christ, and making parts of his history and precepts agree with those in the gospels used by eastern Christians, they would be able to represent to such of the people as might be disposed to become Christians that Christ and Krishna were one and the same deity. In proof of this they would point to the fact that the Christians retained in their books some of the precepts of Krishna, ~~or Christ~~ but were wrong in the time they assigned to him, as Krishna, or Christ as the Christians call him, lived as far back as the time of Yudhisthira and not at the time set forth by the Christians.

"Therefore, as Christ and Krishna were one and the same

deity, it would be ridiculous in them, being already of the true faith, to follow the imperfect doctrines of a set of outcastes who had not only forgotten the religion of their forefathers but the country from which they originally sprang". And further, that Krishna himself in the 'Gita' had said "that a man's own religion, though contrary to, is better than the faith of another, let it be ever so well followed".

Bentley
p.113.

Bentley is of opinion that the whole of the incarnations were invented at the same time, and that the Brahmins then destroyed all records that would contradict or expose the falsity of the statements made, and set about the forging of new books to give currency to the new ideas which they wished to circulate. The Hindu caste system probably dates from the same period.

He affirms that he personally knew the astrologer who forged some of the books to which he refers. This man offered his services to Bentley, telling him that his profession was book making and that he could forge any book to answer any purpose that might be required. Bentley refused to employ him saying that there were already too many forged books. The man then went to a Mr. Colebrooke and was engaged by him and soon after a book (the Brahma Siddhanta) of which Mr. Colebrooke had had no previous knowledge was found in his (Mr. Colebrooke's) library. This book Bentley believes to have been forged. From authorities quoted by Kaye, however, it would appear that the imposture was not the work of Mr. Colebrooke's munshi but of Brahmagupta himself. According to Mohammedan writers the Brahma Siddhanta was composed by Brahmagupta at Ujain in the year A.D.628 when he was only

Kaye:pp.
48,49.

thirty years of age. Of him, Albiruni, quoted by Kaye, writes:- "Look for instance at Brahmagupta who is certainly the most distinguished of their astronomers he shirks the truth and lends his support to imposture". Further on, Albiruni says the words used by Brahmagupta "involved a sin against conscience".

Bentley believes the Ramayana by Valmiki to have been written not earlier than A.D.295 and the Mahabarata certainly not earlier than A.D.786 and probably not until A.D.1157. He points out also that some of the Vedas* speak of Krishna, which militates against their antiquity.

By the system of Brahma (Gupta) invented in A.D.538, real Hindu history and chronology have been completely destroyed.

Nau:p.210.

Indian astronomy, according to Nau, in spite of the fabulous antiquity which it claims, has nothing of importance which has not been borrowed from the Greeks. The image of Buddha, Nau claims, was created a long time after the death of Gautama on the pattern of Greek models and many of the ideas and practices current in Buddhism were borrowed from both Greeks and Nestorians.

*Note: Although Hiuen Tsiang (A.D.629) travelled all over India and refers to various Hindu heretical sects, as he calls them, he does not once mention Krishna. The Vedas described by Hiuen Tsiang were evidently very different as to content from those that are in existence to-day. The Brahmans he says study the four Veda Sastras. The first called Shau (longevity) relates to preservation of life and the regulation of the natural condition. The second ~~rukhet~~ is called Sse (Sacrifice) and has some similarity to the Yajur Veda. It relates to the (rules of) sacrifice and prayer. The third is called Ping (peace or regulation). It relates to decorum, casting of lots, military affairs and army regulations. The fourth is called Shu (secret mysteries). It relates to various branches of science, incantations and medicines. The Vedas of to-day are very differently described. The Rig Veda is a so called historical collection of ancient songs and the other three borrow very largely from it.

Beal:
Buddhist
Records
of the
Western
Countries
p.79.

Farquhar:
Growth of
Hinduism
pp.36,37.

As explaining the ease with which such inventions are accepted and believed, we find in the Modern Review for 1912, an Indian writer, Prof. Har Dayal, quoted by Dr. Farquhar, saying, "Indian graduates seem to suffer from a kind of mania for what is effete and antiquated"; while, Kunnikanam another Indian, writing in the Christian College Magazine for April 1912, is quoted as saying - "Probably few nations in the world, ancient or modern, have been more superstitious, more credulous, more gullible than the Hindu".

Whatever may be said about that, it at all events seems fairly clear that as regards India the introduction of ^{the} Krishna cult and ^{the} development of the caste system in the centuries subsequent to A.D.600 must be reckoned as one of the reasons for the decay in the virility of Nestorian Missions.

Compromise: Another factor in the decline of the missionary activity of the Church of the East was the growth of the spirit of compromise.

Barthold:
p.13.

Adherents of different dualistic sects who were compelled to withdraw themselves from the Roman and Persian empires, began to settle in Transoxania as early as the end of the third century. Of these, the most numerous as well as the most highly organised were the Manicheans*. The next in numerical importance were

R.C. Burkitt
The Religion
of the
Manicheans
p.3 ff.

*Note - Manicheans were so called from one Mani who on 20th March A.D.242 began in the streets of Ctesiphon to proclaim a new religion of which he claimed to be the prophet - the paraclete foretold by Christ. The message which he proclaimed was that "there are two eternal sources or principles, Light and Dark; that by regrettable mixture of Dark with Light this visible and tangible universe has come into being". The object of the children of light is the gradual extinction of the world "by the separation of the Light particles from the dark substance with which it has been mixed".

R.C. Burkitt:
p.74.

Eu:p.203.

the Mazdakites who were split up into several sections. others were Bardesanites, Marcionites &c.

All these systems were dualistic in philosophy and both Bardesanites and Marcionites have been classed generally as Manicheans. The Manicheans in common with the Christians were severely persecuted in the early centuries by Romans and Persians alike. The Christians found a refuge in Khorassan, but the Manicheans had to go beyond the boundaries of the kingdom of the Sassanides into Transoxania and even as far as China.

Each of the different sects, including Christians, had their own alphabetic script which they carried with them, the foundation of each being Syriac. The alphabet used by the Christians had originally twenty two letters but a few others were added. That of the Manicheans was somewhat larger. Suli, the script used in Transoxania, had thirty two letters.

Barthold:
p.29.

Under the dynasty of the Samanides the dualistic sects had a great number of adherents. After the decline of the Sassanides the Manicheans sought to return to Western Asia, but the Caliph Muktedir 908-932 compelled them to go back whence they came where they suffered considerable persecution at the hands of the Samanides. Their headquarters after that were at Samarkand. That Manicheism exerted a wide spread influence in China in the early centuries, is confirmed by the discovery in 1908 of a large number of MSS in a cave in Tunhuang in the province of Kansu. One of these is a Chinese translation of two short Manichean treatises. Another, a hymn consisting of 309 words, includes a list of persons and books venerated by Christians.

Robinson's
History of
Christian
Missions
p.163.

In the sixth century, Jacobus Baradaeus began his labours

in Syria and Arabia Petra, bringing new life to the cause of Monophysitism which was then at a low ebb. Those who held Monophysite views were henceforth called Jacobites after Jacobus. In the subsequent centuries they spread throughout the whole of Persia and Central Asia and were a source of trouble to the Nestorians. The latter were violently opposed to them, and not until the middle of the twelfth century did the antagonism disappear.

Barthold:
p.25.

In the year A.D.1142 a reconciliation took place between Ebedjesu III, Patriarch of the Nestorians, and Dionysius, primate of the Jacobites. From that time the two bodies mutually recognised each other at every opportunity. In Mongolia also from that time onward the Nestorians shewed themselves much more tolerant of other sects.

This date probably marks a definite stage in the falling away from the high ideals which had previously distinguished them, with a corresponding diminution in missionary activity and a lessened ability to resist ^{the} persecution of the later Mongol rulers after they had been won over to Islam, and the still more terrible devastation wrought by Tamerlane. Yule holds that even by the end of the tenth century, owing to the growth of Manichean and other dualistic sects, Christianity had become much reduced.

Yule Cathay
pp.113-115.

The Chinese confounded Christianity with Fo. The cult of Fo was founded on the teachings of Pythagoras mixed up with the teachings of Christianity. When Rubruck visited the camp of the Mongol emperor, he found on the way, as well as ^{at} the place itself, Lamas who were priests of the religion of Fo and a number of Nestorians who were, however, only nominal Christians. They were so ignorant, he said, that they did not even understand Syriac, the language in which their sacred books were

Quignes
Vol. II
p.240.

Quignes
Vol. IV
p.26.

written. Not only so, but they were very corrupt. Some were even polygamists and the Lamas and Mongols surpassed them in the regularity of their life.

While contact with these dualistic sects had a liberalising tendency on Nestorianism, and while it on the other hand exerted a very definite influence on the various systems with which it came into contact, it meant the sacrifice of much that was vital in the Nestorian presentation of the gospel message.

Not perhaps that there was any formal departure from or denial of fundamental doctrines, but less emphasis was probably laid on these than their importance demanded, and the influence of the Nestorians on the non-Christians among whom they lived, and their power to exert a restraining force on the Mongol storm, about to burst on Asia, was correspondingly decreased.

Note: To appreciate how this spirit of compromise must have affected the spiritual life of the Nestorian Church we need only look at some of the happenings in the mission field of to-day where the same spirit is again at work.

The Japan advertiser published in Tokio had a leading article recently on "The Religious Fellowship Society" a federation, it is said, of members of Christian, Buddhist, and Shinto faiths. The purpose of the Fellowship is to make common cause "for the realization of righteousness and the good of humanity". It is purely an ethical movement with the 'Cross of Christ' and all that is implied in it left out. "Leaders in Christian, Buddhist and Shinto faiths" are said to be "enthusiastic over the future of this new co-operative move".

A British professor in an Indian Missionary College is advertised as the author of a book of "Religious Instruction". The book is in three parts. Part I comprises almost the whole of Dr. Annie Besant's translation of the Bhagavad Gita (Hindu). Part II consists of extracts from the gospels of Matthew and Luke, and Part III is made up of selections from the Quran (Mohammedan).

"One of the foremost leaders among missionaries in India" addressing a Y.M.C.A. gathering of non-Christian students is reported to have impressed upon his audience that he was in full sympathy with all religions and had worshipped with Jews,

Mohammedans, Unitarians, Theosophists, Brahma Samajists and others and would have done so with Hindus also if their ceremonial customs had permitted it. Missionaries were not in India he said "to convert the people to Christianity but to make them better Hindus, better Mohammedans and better Buddhists". (Indian Thinker of April 15th 1925 quoting the Nottingham Guardian).

Dnyanodaya
January
28th 1926.

The Student Movement, April 1925, refers to an International Fellowship Retreat held in Bombay, with a Mohammedan as Chairman when addresses were given by a Polish Jew, a Parsee Professor, a Hindu lecturer and a Scotch Presbyterian. It was claimed that barriers of race and creed had been surmounted and that there was no Hindu, Mohammedan, Parsee or Christian but that all alike were one family of God's children. A report of the first Retreat of the Fellowship has since been issued and is warmly commended by the editor of a Christian weekly published in Bombay under the auspices of six of the leading missionary societies at work there - English, Scotch and American. He invites his readers to attend the monthly meetings of the Fellowship - preferably as members. A specimen of the morning devotions of the Fellowship is also given. In the 'outline' there is first a passage from the Quran, to help the associated worshippers "to realize the presence of God, seeing His beauty in land and sea and sky". Then a verse from one of ~~the~~ Tukaram's hymns, addressed to a heathen deity, is referred to. These are followed by extracts from the Psalms, the sermon on the mount, the Bhagavad Gita, a passage from the Christian poet N.V. Tilak, and a few lines from Tagore's Gitanjali. The name "Jesus" is omitted as is also the name "Christ". (The word 'Lord' is used by Christians and non-Christians alike).

A writer in a recent magazine speaks of having attended a Sunday morning service at a Christian College in the East where a thousand students, young men and women and several professors were present. The name of Jesus Christ was not once mentioned during the whole service and the preacher in pronouncing the benediction at the end closed with the words "In the name of the great Leader". (Life of Faith 20th May 1925.)

Other instances might be given but in view of what has been said is it to be wondered at that an article should appear in a recent leading missionary magazine with the ominous title. "Are Foreign Missions at a standstill?".

Chapter XII

Additional factors in Nestorian decadence

Extermination by Mongols and Tamerlane - Absorption by Roman Catholicism.

An important factor in the decay and final disappearance of Nestorian Christianity from Central and Northern Asia, including Turkestan and Mongolia, was the rise to power of Jenghiz Khan and the spread of Mongol domination in the first half of the thirteenth century. Not that the Mongols, so long as they remained unaffected by Mohammedanism, were in any sense antagonistic to Christianity - rather the reverse. As has been shewn elsewhere, there were many Christians among them. Some of their rulers were professedly followers of Christ and others were favourably disposed towards Christianity. But in the devastation wrought by the Mongols, and in particular by Jenghiz Khan, Christians must have suffered in common with others. And when, as not infrequently happened, all the inhabitants of a city, in which there was a considerable Christian community were put to death, as for example in the case of Bokhara or Herat, numbers of Christians must have shared the same fate. It is not unlikely however that in some cases, as happened at the fall of Bagdad, Christians may have been spared and given an opportunity to escape.

Reference has already been made to the tribes that combined to form the Mongol confederacy, all usually designated by the comprehensive term Mongol. They owned great numbers of cattle and horses, lived in tents and wagons, engaged in hunting and fishing and moved from place to place with their flocks and herds. Their predecessors were known to the people of the west as Scythians and Huns. They

eight hundred chapels on wheels in one camp alone. He had a standing army of 600,000 men which was never idle.

Cambridge
Medieval
History
Vol. IV
p. 632.

From 1206 until his death in 1227 his career was one of expansion and conquest. First he conquered the northern part of China, then Tangut to the west of the Yellow River. This was followed by the subjugation in 1214 of the Kin and Kara Khitai tribes of East Turkestan. He then turned his attention to the Shah of Khwarizm whose dominions extended from Kurdistan, Khuzistan and the Persian Gulf on the west to the Indus on the east, and included Azarbaijan, Irak, Fars, Kirman, Seistan, Khorassan and Afghanistan.

Piles of corpses, huge piles of bleached human bones and blackened ruins of cities marked the track of his armies. Pity was unknown to the non-Christian Mongols. The most atrocious treachery, and disregard of oaths and promises of quarter were employed in their endeavour to hunt out and extirpate the scattered survivors of their barbarity.

Herat, having submitted to the forces of Jenghiz, was treated with great consideration, but the neighbouring fortress of Kaliouss, jealous of it, plotted to make it appear that the Heratians had been guilty of treachery towards Jenghiz. In this they were only too successful, and Jenghiz returned to Herat determined to exact a terrible vengeance. He besieged the city and took it at the end of six months. He put to death all the inhabitants, male and female, old and young. This occupied his army for seven days, at the end of which more than 1,600,000 had been slain. When he had gone sixteen survivors made their appearance from drains and other places where they had been hidden. They were afterwards joined by twenty four more from the surrounding districts and for

Price:
p.531.

fifteen years the population of this once magnificent city numbered only forty persons. At the end of that time it was rebuilt by Ogatai, the son and successor of Jenghiz.

J.G.Browne:
Literary
History of
Persia Vol.
II pp.427,
433.

The Mongol invasion (of Khaurizm) "in its suddenness, its devastating destruction, its appalling ferocity, its passionless and purposeless cruelty, its irresistable through short lived violence resembles rather some brute cataclysm of the blind forces of nature than a phenomenon of human history".

"The details of massacre, outrage, spoliation, and destruction wrought by these hateful hordes of barbarians who in the space of a few years swept the world from Japan to Germany, would be incredible were they not confirmed from so many different quarters". Ibn u'l-Athir, a Moharmedan historian writing in the year A.D.1220-21, says that the account was so horrible that he shrank from recording it but at last consented to do so on the entreaty of his friends.

Never in all history had there been a calamity which approached or came nigh unto it. Those whom the Mongols massacred in a single city exceeded in number, it is said, the whole of the children of Israel who went out from Egypt. City after city fell into their hands, Kashgar, Balasaghun, Samarkand, Bokhara and the like, the inhabitants being slain and the cities plundered and destroyed.

In ^{the} short space of a few years these Tartars had conquered a quarter of the habitable globe including the most flourishing and populous part of it and the part where the inhabitants were most advanced in character and conduct. Nor was there any country which had escaped their attentions "which did not fearfully expect them and dread their arrival".

So great was the terror inspired by them that a single horseman, entering a village or street in which there were many people, would go on slaying them one after the other, none daring to stretch forth a hand against him. One of them, it is said, took a man captive, and not having a weapon with which to kill him, ordered his prisoner to lay his head on the ground and not to move, and the man actually obeyed and lay quiet till the Tartar brought his sword and slew him.

One man reported that he and seventeen others were going along a road and met a Tartar horseman who ordered them to bind one another's arms. His companions proceeded to do as they were told. He said to them 'he is but one why then should we not kill him and flee' but they answered that they were afraid. Then he said 'this man intends to kill you immediately, let us therefore kill him'. Still not one of them dared to lift his hand and he himself took a knife and slew their captor. They then fled and escaped. There were many such incidents.

The Mongols, "surpassing in cruelty the most barbarious people were animated neither by hate nor vengeance, for indeed, they hardly knew the names of the people whom they exterminated". Their only virtue was discipline. Subordination and obedience to their superior officers were carried to the highest degree.

Browne:
p.434.

"Droves of wretched and outraged captives accompanied the advancing hordes, and when the next point of resistance was reached, were first employed to erect the engines of the besiegers then driven forward at the point of the sword to the breaches effected in the city wall to fill with their bodies moat and trench and finally, if they escaped death were

Browne:
p.437.

put to the sword to give place to a new batch of victims drawn from the prisoners yielded by the fresh conquest".

On Transoxania the storm burst in 1219. "Otrar fell after a siege of five or six months. Its governor was taken alive and put to death by having molten silver poured into his eyes and ears". The survivors of the massacre which ensued were driven to Bokhara "there to be employed in the manner already described".

Various other cities were taken and sacked on the way, and in the beginning of 1220, Bokhara was taken, plundered and burned. Samarkand came next, surrendering on the fourth day of the siege, and shared the same fate. The next of importance was Khwarizm. With reference to it one writer states that the besieging army numbered 50,000 and that each man was given twenty four prisoners to kill, 1,200,000 in all.

Tashkent, Balkh, Nusrat-kih, Nasa, Nishapur and Merv all followed in quick succession, the same atrocious measures invariably following the capture or surrender of the town.

At the massacre of Nishapur (April 1221) 1,747,000 it is said were put to death. The destruction of the city occupied fifteen days. It was razed to the ground and its site sown with barley. One writer gives the number slain at Merv as 700,000 but another asserts that the total numbered 1,300,000, "not counting those whose corpses remained hidden in obscure retreats". Bamiyan was so utterly destroyed that "for a hundred years it remained a desert, void of inhabitants".

The figures given are so enormous as to be almost incredible, but, even after every allowance has been made the numbers slain must have been simply appalling.

All the towns mentioned were centres of strong Christian

Howorth
p.78.

communities some of them being metropolitan seats, and in the general slaughter many of the Christians must have perished with the others. The immensity of the populations of those cities enables us to form some idea of how thickly populated the country must have been before those devastating scourges passed through it.

Juwayui is quoted as saying that in the Mussalman lands devastated by the Mongols "not one in a thousand of the inhabitants survived", and adds, that even if nothing happened until the resurrection to check the increase of population in Khorassan and Iraq-i-ajam, the population of these provinces could never attain the tenth part of what it was before the Mongol invasion. The land was everywhere covered with bones. The Moslems, who under some of the Caliphs had attempted to extirpate Christianity from their territory, shared in the devastation caused by the Mongols. Under Jenghiz and his immediate successors they suffered terrible retribution. Jenghiz called himself the scourge of God. As a matter of principle he favoured all religions equally but gave his adhesion to none. He died in 1227 near the Sale river in Mongolia just as he was setting out to reduce the southern part of China. The funeral escort that bore his body homeward slaughtered every person they met to prevent the news of his death becoming known.

Although he ruled with an iron hand he died at the height of his popularity. He excelled as an administrator, organised a regular system of posts and couriers, and rendered the highways safe for travellers.

Clergy, physicians and learned men were exempt from taxes.

He introduced the Uigur alphabet and caused his subjects to acquire the art of writing, codified the laws and customs of the tribes and gave them legal authority. The laws were written in the Mongol language and in Uigur characters.

Jenghiz was succeeded by his son Ogotai under whom the expansion of the empire continued and soon it extended from the China Sea to the river Dneiper.

One of Ogotai's armies in A.D.1235 invaded Korea. Another attacked the Sung dynasty in South China, while a third under Batu, invaded Europe.

The first irruption of the Mongols into Western Asia and Europe took place in A.D.1222 when they destroyed the Khorazim empire, ravaged Transoxania, broke through the Caucasus and spread ruin and terror over Southern Russia, (known then as Kipchak), and the valley of the Volga as far north as Kazan. No words can describe the barbarities suffered by the wretched captives.

Princes, bishops, nuns, children, all alike were slain with the utmost cruelty. The town of Novgorod was saved by a thaw which melted the ice and turned the country into a swamp. Koselsk was treated so severely that the Mongols themselves called the place 'Mobalig', the town of woe.

In 1240 Kiev and other towns were destroyed, and the army then divided. One part marched through Poland. The other invaded Hungary which suffered overwhelming defeat at Liegnitz near Breslau. In all Hungary only three cities and fortresses escaped destruction.

It was not, however, until the arrival of a mission to the kings of France and England from the Ismaelians (a Mohammedan sect known also as the Assassins) who asked for aid

against the Tartars, that the first reliable information about them was obtained.

Rubruck quotes the following description of these irresistible hordes from Matthew Paris's 'Chronica Majora' published about A.D. "That the choice of mortal men be not enduring nor worldly happiness long lasting without lamentations, in this year (1240) a detestable nation of Satan, to wit the countless army of the Tartars broke loose from its mountain environed home and piercing the solid rocks (of Caucasus) poured forth like devils from the Tartarus, so that they are rightly called Tartari or Tartarians".

Swarming like locusts over the face of the earth, they have brought terrible devastation to the eastern part (of Europe) laying it waste with fire and carnage. After having passed through the land of the Saracens they have razed cities, cut down forests, overthrown fortresses, pulled up vines, destroyed gardens, killed townspeople and peasants. If perchance they have spared any suppliants, they have forced them, reduced to ^{the} lowest condition of slavery, to fight in the foremost ranks against their own neighbours.

They know no other language than their own which no one else knows..... They wander about with their flocks and their wives, who are taught to fight like men, and so they came with the swiftness of lightning to the confines of Christendom, ravaging and slaughtering, and striking every one with terror and incomparable horror &c. &c. &c.

The emperor Frederick II, writing to the kings of Christendom, frankly admitted that no one knew whence they had come. He hoped that by the combined forces of Christendom they might be driven down into their Tartarus.

Rockhills
Rubruck
p. XX.

In 1241 they invaded Hungary, Moravia &c., devastated Poland, Bohemia and the marches of Austria, but in December of the same year their emperor, Ogotai, died and Batu and all ^{other} the/leaders left for the great council at Karakorum, which was to elect a successor. Although their armies remained in Hungary until 1243 and even sent divisions into Austria and Dalmatia, their great westward movement was stopped, and Europe, weak and divided as it was, was saved, "although it knew it not but stood helplessly waiting the fatal blow".

Burys
Eibon
Vol. VII
p. 342.

Only recently have European historians begun to understand that the successes of the Mongol army which overran Poland and occupied Hungary in the spring of A.D. 1241 were won by consummate strategy and were not due to a mere overwhelming superiority of numbers.

Rockhills
Rubruck
p. XXI.

"The Mongol claim to universal dominion was well known over Europe" and no one doubted their ability to enforce it. The Pope of Rome proclaimed a crusade exhorting the Germans to go to the help of the Hungarians. He also despatched Franciscan and Dominican missionaries to the far east to preach Christianity to the Mongols in the hope of "averting their onslaughts on Christendom through fear of divine wrath". At the same time he hoped to find out what their plans as regards Europe were.

He was encouraged in this by the conviction that there existed somewhere in the far east, a great Nestorian Christian realm under the rulership of Prester John, and by the report that the "Mongols themselves worshipped one God and were not without some religious belief". The Council of Lyons which met about that time, convinced that the Tartars "will surely

come back", advised, and entreated, all Christian people to block with ditches, walls, buildings, or such other contrivances as might seem best, "every road or passage by which the enemy could pass".

Ogotai was succeeded by his son Guyuk, who, as we have already seen was a professing Christian. It is worthy of note that under Guyuk the massacres and devastation which characterised the reigns of Jenghiz and Ogotai, neither of whom made any public profession of Christianity although they granted liberty of conscience to all their subjects, seem to have come to an immediate end and it is a question whether the salvation of Europe from the Mongol menace referred to in the previous pages was not due to the fact that the death of Ogotai in A.D.1241 was followed by the election of a Christian king to the throne of the Mongol empire rather than to any other cause.

Two of Guyuk's ministers were also Christians and no doubt strengthened and encouraged their imperial master, if encouragement were needed, in his efforts to introduce Christian principles and practices into the government of the empire.

Guyuk died in April 1248 and was in turn succeeded by his cousin Mangu, son of Tulu who was a brother of Ogotai, Hulaku a brother of Mangu was appointed viceroy of Persia and sent on an expedition against that country, and Kublai, another brother who later succeeded Mangu as emperor was despatched on a similar expedition against China.

Hulaku Khan, after conquering the whole of Persia, proceeded westward and destroyed all that remained of the once celebrated empire of Caliphs. At the capture of Bagdad

February 13th, 1258, from 700,000 to 800,000 were put to death, including the Caliph Mustasim and his only son, and treasures & materials, (literary and scientific,) accumulated during the centuries when Bagdad was the Metropolis of the Abbasid Caliphs, were destroyed. Persian writers say that the Tigris was swollen with waves of blood. Nothing could exceed the barbarity with which those who held out against the Mongols were treated.

Horror and woe spread to the utmost confines of Islam as the result of the sack of Bagdad. No such catastrophe had ever before befallen it. It meant a complete rearrangement of boundaries and centres of government and was the prelude to the invasion of Syria. Aleppo was razed to the ground, death or captivity being the lot of the inhabitants. Damascus submitted and was spared, but Antioch, although it surrendered was destroyed. A terrible famine and pestilence broke out and completed the devastation of Syria.

Hulaku, as shewn elsewhere, had a Christian queen and was favourably disposed towards Christians, but a grandson of his, Neekondar by name, turned Mohammedan when he succeeded to the throne, took the name of Ahmed Khan and to prove the sincerity of his new profession became a violent persecutor of Christianity. Not content with destroying all the churches in the empire he issued orders that every Christian should be banished from his dominions. How far he was able to carry out this policy of extermination we are not told.

The non-Christian Mongols of that place had for long been friendly with their Christian neighbours and opposed to the Mohammedans. They accordingly complained to Kublai Khan who had by that time succeeded to the throne of the Mongols and

E.G. Browne
Literary
History
of Persia
Vol. II
p. 423.

Malcolm
p. 423.

Cambridge
History
p. 638 ff.

was thus Ahmed Khan's superior. Kublai threatened him with vengeance but this does not seem to have had much effect as Ahmed actually seized and put to death his own brother through whom the complaint had been made.

Skrine &
Ross p.171
et seq.

Skrine & Ross name Barka, son of Juji another grandson of Jenghiz, who had his headquarters at Sarac on the banks of the Volga, as the first ruling prince of the house of Jenghiz to become Mohammedan, but Browne claims Neekoudar or Taqudar Ahmed Khan (1282-84) mentioned above and Ghazan Khan (1295-1304) as the first.

Browne
Vol. II
p.440.

The first period of Mongol ascendancy, extending from 1206-57, was the period of the great Khans, Jenghiz, Ogotai, Kuyuk and Mangu, when the empire was governed from Karakorum by lieutenants sent out from there. The second period was that of the heathen Il-Khans or viceroys of Persia and Western Asia, beginning with Hulaku, 1256, and ending with the murder of Baidu, A.D.1295, and the accession to power of Ghazan Khan a bigoted Muslim.

The death of Baidu was largely due to his dislike of Islam and his liking for Christianity, while the first act of his successor ^{was} to make public profession of the Mohammedan faith and to destroy the Christian churches and Buddhist temples throughout Persia, and in ten years, Islam, which had been suppressed by the earlier Mongol rulers, had again become the dominant religion in Persia.

The successors of Ghazan Khan continued Mohammedan, disappointing the expectations of the Christians who had had great hopes of winning the Mongols to their faith and thus checking the progress of Islam. Two of the Il-Khans of Persia,

Taqudar Ahmed and Uljaytu Khudu-bandu, who in later years were both strong supporters of Mohammedanism, seem to have been baptised in infancy and in each case under the name Nicolas.

One of the results of the Mongol invasion was an extraordinary intermixture of remote peoples. Another was the breaking down of a hundred frontiers and the absorption of dozens of states so that travellers like Marco Polo were able to make known to Europe the wonders of the whole of Asia.

Mangu the successor of Guyuk, died in 1259 and was succeeded by his brother Kublai, who, next to Jenghiz Khan was the most famous of all the Mongols and the first ruler of a united China. He aspired also to the conquest of Japan but his fleet was twice shipwrecked with a total loss of 100,000 men and he desisted. He, however, secured the allegiance of Korea, Tonquin, Cochin China, Pegu, Bengal, Tibet, and even Ceylon.

Kublai Khan was ^{of} a very different disposition to some of his predecessors. He sought to conciliate and govern by peaceful means, being averse to bloodshed. The splendour of his court and the magnificence of his 'entourage' easily surpassed that of any western ruler. He was a patron of literature and became a Buddhist. The Buddhist priests were given the name Lama. It is also said that it was he who introduced ancestor worship into China and he is said to have built a large temple in which Jenghiz, Ogotai, and other Khans were honoured and worshipped. In 1264 he decreed that the Uigur alphabet should be discarded and a new national mode of writing invented because "he deemed it beneath the dignity of the Mongols to use a script borrowed from foreigners".

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Just what form the new script ~~was~~ took is not clear but it is scarcely likely that it was at that time a reversion to the old ideographic method. That is more likely to have taken place under the reactionary Ming dynasty a century later.

Kublai, further, with the help of a Persian Astronomer, drew up a Calendar and founded an academy and schools. The Chinese classics were translated and a history of the Mongols drawn up. An administrative council of twelve was set up and the empire divided into twelve provinces with a view to decentralisation. A postal service was maintained and hostelries, horses, couriers and vehicles provided throughout the empire. A new capital called Khanbalik (modern Pekin) to which Kublai removed from Karakorum, was built. The currency was reformed, block printing being utilized for paper coinage.

The army was reorganized, and a system of roads and canals introduced, and trees were planted in many places for the benefit of the people. These things indicate how far the Mongols had advanced. The nomads ^{had} become civilized but at the sacrifice of their military power. They lost their hardihood with their brutality. This was the beginning of the disintegration of the empire, and as Howorth put it - "The process was hastened by their migration from the desert to the luxurious south, from Karakorum to Tatu and Shangtung, which Kublai effected and which speedily converted a royal race of warriors into a race of decrepit sensualists".

Kublai died in 1294 at the age of eighty after a reign of thirty five years. The Mongol dynasty continued in China until 1369 when the revolution, which resulted in the expulsion of

Cambridge
History
Vol. IV
p.646.

Idem
p.647.

Howorth
quoted in
Cambridge
History
Vol. IV
p.648.

the Mongols and the complete suppression or extirpation of the Christians in China, Nestorian, as well as Catholic, by the Ming dynasty, took place.

Tamerlane: The final cause of the disappearance of Christianity from Central and Northern Asia and Mongolia is to be found in the devastation wrought by the Ameer Timur, known as Tamerlane. The name is a corruption of Timour Lung or Timour the Lame. He was so called owing to a physical defect. Born at Subz a city of Kesch, in the year A.D.1336. Timour was the son of the chief of a tribe subject to the Khans of Tartary.

By a series of incidents, and while still under thirty years of age, he secured his elevation to the throne of Transoxania where he made Samarkand his capital. Eleven years were spent in settling Transoxania and in conquering Kashgar and Kharizm. Then came the conquest of Khorassan. He spared the life of the chief who cast himself on his mercy, but levied such a fine on Herat and other cities that the people were reduced to beggary. Kandahar and Cabul followed, but it took him four years to complete the subjugation of Khorassan, Seistan and Mazenderan.

All these provinces were turned into deserts by the ravages of his troops. "Even submission did not exempt their unfortunate inhabitants from pillage and massacre". In 1390 Timour invaded Persia with a large army, overthrowing the 'degenerate descendants' of Hulaku and destroying their capital.

Crossing the Araxes, he overran Georgia, received the

submission of the Khan of Lesghees, and the ruler of Shirwan, and subdued the chief of Laristan who had plundered a caravan of pilgrims going to Mecca. He then attacked the Turkomans of Asia Minor and took and pillaged the city of Van.

Ispahan submitted the moment he appeared before it and he ordered the city to be spared but a heavy fine exacted. This had been almost collected, when, owing to a misunderstanding, the inhabitants rose against the garrison and put three thousand of them to death. Timour took a terrible vengeance. The inhabitants were doomed to destruction, and when the city was taken each soldier was commanded to bring a certain number of heads. The total number slain is not known, but 70,000 heads were piled up in pyramids as a monument of savage revenge. Shiraz, Fars, Yedz and Kerman all submitted immediately to his authority.

One of Timour's armies went as far as the borders of China, penetrated to Irtysh in the district of Tomsk, Western Siberia, while a third reached the Volga, spreading dismay and devastation wherever they went. In 1392 he again invaded Persia, spreading ruin everywhere. He captured the mountain fort of Killah Suffeed previously considered impregnable.

All the princes of the race of Muzaffer, even when they submitted at once, were put to death. Officers of Timour's army were appointed to the charge of the different provinces and cities. On their commissions, instead of a seal, the impression of a red hand was stamped, symbol of the manner in which the territories taken were to be governed.

On the ruins of Bagdad, he erected a pyramid of 90,000 heads. Having secured the submission of the city, he marched against the fortress of Tukreet, between Bagdad and Mosul.

72,000 of his soldiers were engaged for several weeks in undermining the foundations of the fortress. When it was taken the whole of the garrison was put to death and their heads piled up in pyramids.

Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Kurdistan and Georgia next received Timours attention, and entering Russia, he took and plundered Moscow. The year following he destroyed Astrakan and again pillaged Georgia and Circassia. Then returning to Samarkand he prepared for the invasion of India.

He overran Afghanistan and the greater part of Mooltan. Before beginning the seige of Delhi, he put to death in cold blood 100,000 Indian prisoners whom he had in his train, threatening terrible vengeance against any of his soldiers who failed to carry out his orders. When the city was taken immense numbers were slain. When he took the city of Meerut he flayed all the men alive and carried the women and children into captivity.

The sack of Delhi in 1398, and the massacre of its inhabitants by Timour, spread ruin far and wide. It is said that for the next fifty years the country was so impoverished that the mints ceased to issue gold and silver coin; copper currency was sufficient for the needs of the miserable survivors.

A tribe of Turks, under Otman, profiting by the break up of the Seljuk dynasty, had established themselves in Asia Minor and declared themselves independent. Bajazet I, the then Sultan, a conqueror second in renown only to Timpur, was about to attack Constantinople. He was himself attacked and defeated by Timour who is said to have put him in an iron cage, against which, later on, Bajazet is alleged to have

Cambridge
History
Vol. IV
p.651.

knocked out his brains.

The story of the imprisonment of Bajazet in an iron cage is discredited by Hammer, quoted by Bury. Hammer says that the story arose out of a misconception of what two of the oldest historians write on the subject. He points out that they state that a "litter furnished with bars like a cage was provided for Bajazet. Such litters were the kind of vehicle regularly used for conveying a prince's harem".

Timour next took the city of Smyrna, the inhabitants of which were all put to the sword with the exception of a few who escaped by swimming to vessels in the harbour. Every city that offered any resistance was laid in ashes and the inhabitants massacred.

The next expedition planned by Timour was the conquest of China. "I am resolved" he said "to perform a good and great action which will be an expiation of all my sins. I mean to exterminate the idolators of China. We will proceed to this holy war. We will slay the infidels, and mosques shall everywhere rise on the ruins of their vile temples".

He started out on his expedition and crossed the river Jaxartes when it was frozen, but fortunately for China, before he had proceeded far on his way he was seized with serious illness and died at the town of Otrar, seventy six leagues distant from Samarkand, on 1st April A.D. 1405.

*May the rumour of this intended invasion by Tamerlane or the fear of a similar invasion by some of his immediate successors, not have furnished the occasion for the erection, by the Ming dynasty, of the great Wall of China.

Gury's
Fibron
Vol. VII
p. 44.

Timour^{aimed}/at the conquest and monarchy of the world. His great ambition was fame as a conqueror, and noble cities were laid in ashes and the inhabitants of provinces massacred, simply to make an impression.

Skirine &
Ross p. 172.

He was a man of great stature with a very large head. open forehead, beautiful red and white complexion, and long hair, white from his birth. In his ears he wore two diamonds of great value. He was of a serious and gloomy expression of countenance, an enemy to every kind of joke or jest but especially to falsehood. He never relinquished his purpose or

Wall Vol.
III pp.
340, 375.

Deal
Buddhist
Records
of the
Western
World.

*Note: That the 'Great Wall' dates from a much more recent period than that usually claimed for it is proved not only by positive but by negative evidence. Dr. Wall claims that the date of its erection was not earlier than the fifteenth century and refers to evidence in support of his contention. Hiuen Tsiang the Chinese traveller (A.D. 629-645) who must have journeyed parallel to the present site of the wall on his way from Chang-an to the western world and have actually crossed the site at the Kia-ji^{Hiuen} barrier at its western end, makes no reference to it. The same is true of Marco Polo, who acted as secretary to Kublai Khan for a period of eighteen years. In his journeys to and from Kublai's summer capital he must have crossed the site of the wall at least twice every year during that period, and yet makes not the slightest reference to the existence of any such bulwark, although he was always careful to describe anything unusual or out of the common that he saw. Nowhere else, than in the threatened invasion by Tamerlane, can we find such an incentive to the erection of a structure of this nature, or such an inducement to so speed up its construction that it would be completed in the short space of one year, as claimed in the Chinese account.

countermanded an order; never regretted the past or rejoiced in anticipation of the future. "He considered the happiness of every human being as but a feather in the scale when weighed against the advancement of what he deemed his personal glory". One of his great characteristics was his perseverance. In explanation of this he himself tells an anecdote of his early life. "I once" he said "was forced to take shelter from my enemies in a ruined building where I sat for many hours. Desiring to divert my mind from my hopeless condition I fixed my attention on an ant that was carrying a grain of corn larger than itself up a high wall. Sixty nine times the grain fell to the ground but the insect persevered and the seventieth time it reached the top of the wall". "This sight" said Timour "gave me courage at the moment and I have never forgotten the lesson it conveyed".

Tamerlane was a fanatical Mohammedan who was bitterly opposed to everything Christian. He was of the Sunnite sect of Islam and persecuted the Shiahs. Under his reign, Christianity was almost, if not entirely, destroyed from the greater part of Asia.

Not only in the far east but wherever he penetrated with his barbarous legions, he pitilessly harassed Christians who would not renounce their faith. When he invaded Georgia, he compelled the Christian prince Isocrates, to declare himself a Mohammedan and the great majority of his subjects to do the same. The Christians who resisted were slaughtered, their churches destroyed and all sacred vessels and furniture given to the flames. In Anatolia the Christians were reduced to slavery. At the taking of Azoph or Tana, at the mouth of the Don, all the Christians who had not fled to their ships were

Mac:
Christianity
in China
pp.418,420.

Gibbon
VII p.53.

condemned to death or slavery.

When he attacked the fortress and territory of Semseem in the Caucasus, as a service peculiarly acceptable to God, he is said to have demolished or destroyed both the church of the Christians and the temples of the heathen.

As indicating his hatred towards Christians, we read that "When the enemies of the faith, the obnoxious Christians" had sought refuge in the caverns of the mountains it was immediately determined to hunt them from their dens and to destroy them.

At the taking of Sevauss in A.D.1401 'Christian and other infidels' were handed over to the rapacious soldiery to be plundered and driven into captivity and 4,000 of the garrison were buried alive. In another place we are told, that when proceeding to Tiflis in 1403 he did not omit to perpetuate the recollection of his 'irmitigable hatred' of Christianity by the destruction of every monastery and every church in the districts on the line of march.

Seven hundred towns, hamlets, and monasteries, and every church built of stone and probably those built of other materials as well, were levelled to the ground in another province. The wretched inhabitants were hunted to their retreats, dislodged and finally slaughtered.

Sven Hedin, in his book "Through Asia", gives us a graphic account of the countless buried and ruined towns to be found in the region of the Gobi desert in Central Asia. The desert is called Dekken-dekka because a thousand and one towns and vast stores of silver and gold are said to be buried under its sandy wastes.

At the foot and on the slopes of Mount Tamshuk are the ruins of an old city, although the region is now sterile and

Price:
Vol. III
pp.201,205.

Price:Vol.
III p.318,
446.

Price Vol.
~~III~~ II
p.444.

Sven Hedin
Vol. I p.452.

Sven Hedin
Vol. I
p. 455.

uninhabited. To the west of Tumshuk is another collection known as Eski Shahr. A man setting out from Aksak-Maral stumbled on a deserted town. He filled a sack with gold and silver coins which he had found but was attacked by wild cats. He threw down the bag and fled. On returning later to take it away he could not find the town. It had been swallowed up in sand.

Idem p. 782.

Sven Hedin states that a man in Khotan told him of a city which he once saw in the desert with the dead bodies of people in positions which seemed to shew that they had suddenly been overtaken by death.

Idem p. 739.

Near the oasis of Guma are the ruins of another town and in the neighbourhood are large quantities of broken clay vessels, coins, rings, articles in bronze and many fragments of glass, indicating a very ancient and highly developed civilization. The natives say they come from an old city called Hasar.

Idem p. 793.

Sven Hedin speaks of ~~another~~ other cities also and gives a detailed account of a visit he paid to the ruins of the large city of Takla-Makan. He found that the houses had all been built of poplar wood, not a trace of a stone or clay house was to be seen. They were square or oblong and divided into several rooms. There were hundreds of such houses. The ground plan of the city could not be made out but it had a diameter of from two to two and a half miles. The houses were all buried under sand dunes, except where they were on rising ground or in sheltered positions.

By means of excavations it was found that some of the buildings were decorated with paintings executed in masterly

Sven Hedin
Vol. I.
p. 798.

fashion. One house had evidently been two storied. There were also traces of gardens with what appeared to have been avenues of fruit trees. The river Keriya-daria had evidently at one time been a powerful stream and had run close to the walls of the city and there had been an extensive system of irrigation. Woods had lined the banks of the stream, mill-stones had revolved, silk had been cultivated and industries had flourished. Some distance further on, another city, Karadung on a smaller scale but otherwise similar, was found.

Idem p. 816.

An Indian newspaper (dated 7/2/25) quoting from the London Daily Chronicle, refers to discoveries just made in Mongolia by the Russian Professor Koslov, "of the lost capital of a lost empire, and of a library of 2,500 volumes in seven languages including the vocabulary of an unknown tongue. Professor Koslov, after an absence of twenty months brought with him to Leningrad fifty large cases filled with objects found in the Gobi desert. When these have been examined and the books translated what floods of light may they not shed on the period with which we have been dealing.

May it not have been that when the inhabitants of this and other cities were exterminated, either by Jenghiz or Tamerlane, or fell victims to pestilence, there was nothing to check the persistent encroachment of the sand or prevent the filling up of the irrigation channels, and soon towns and villages were overwhelmed and lost sight of?

"Tamerlane passed over like a devastating scourge, cold cruel, imperturbable; he was accessible to no sentiment of pity or commiseration, and after having laid waste thousands of towns and destroyed countless numbers of men he left a great part of Asia a desert, covered with human bones and blood-stained ruins".

Muc: Vol. I
p. 421.

"His mere nod was sufficient to cause vast multitudes to abandon Christianity".

One important result of Timour's conquests was the victory of Islam in Central Asia. From the beginning Timour acted in close co-operation with the Moslem ecclesiastics of Transoxania, and when he won supreme power he did away with the Mongolian and Turkish legislative system of Jenghiz and substituted the law of Islam. There is a great difference between the two systems. Jenghiz and his successors were subject to the law and bound by its provisions, but according to the principles of Islam, the head of the state is not bound by the law but is responsible only to God. He thus broke entirely with Mongol tradition and drew the Turks of Central Asia out of touch with the East.

Incorporation or Absorption: Moslem persecution and the ravages of the Mongols and of Tamerlane affected mainly Western, Central and Northern Asia, including Siberia and Mongolia, in all of which scarcely a vestige of Christianity was left.

The same result was attained in China by the Anti-Christian Ming dynasty which succeeded the Tartar in 1369. The Christians there then, whether Roman Catholic or Nestorian, either had to flee the country, abjure Christianity, or hide their identity in one or other of the numerous secret societies already in existence or which sprang up at that time.

As regards Japan, Burmah, India and Ceylon, in all of which probably and certainly in the two latter, there were large Christian communities, the Christians appear to have accepted Roman Catholic practice and polity and were henceforth

Bury's
Gibbons
Vol. VII
p. 72. note.

Assem:
II. ii.
p. 535.

reckoned as Roman Catholic Christians.

The process of absorption, no doubt, took some time, but Wiltsch informs us that as early as the end of the thirteenth century the Franciscans, under John de Monte Corvino, secured the adhesion of even the metropolitan of China and therefore separate accounts of Nestorian activities were after that time no longer available.

There is no confirmation of the defection of the metropolitan, but there seems no reason to doubt the truth of the claim implied, as regards Nestorianism generally in the remaining countries of the east, always excepting a section of the Syrian Christians of South West India and the Nestorian remnant in Kurdistan.

Wiltsch mentions Ochia in the island of Nippon, Japan, as the seat of a Roman Catholic bishop in the fourteenth century and it was not until about the seventeenth century that the Japanese took up an attitude of antagonism to Christianity, due to the interference of the Catholic missionaries in politics.

It is in India, however, rather than in Japan, that we find the clearest evidence of the existence of large Christian communities, now Roman Catholic, which can only be accounted for on the assumption that they are the descendants of those won to Christ by the early Nestorian missionaries.

Reference has been made elsewhere to the Christian kingdoms in Central India of which Marco Polo writes - These, however, with the Christianity of North India must have been swept away in the cataclysm resulting from the depredations of Tamerlane and other Mohammedan rulers. The Christianity ~~is~~ that we find in North and North West India to-day is largely

the result of the missionary awakening of the nineteenth century and more particularly of the mass movement of the last two or three decades. For example, in the United Provinces and in the Punjab with a total Christian population of over half a million, Protestants are to Roman Catholics in the proportion of 10 : 1. The reverse is the case in the south, more especially in Tamil and Malayalam areas. This part of India was to a large extent outside the area of Mohammedan invasion. With a Christian population of approximately three millions, more than two millions are Roman Catholic, including Syrians and those under the jurisdiction of Goa.

Confining ourselves entirely to Indian Christians:

eight districts alone in the Central Tamil area return 405,000 Roman Catholics as against 63,000 Protestants, a proportion of more than 6 : 1. The disparity varies in different districts. Tinnevely reports 103,000 Roman Catholics against 89,000 Protestants while Trichinopoly has 86,000 Catholics to 4,000 Protestants, Tanjore has 80,000 Catholics to 8,000 Protestants, Madura 54,000 and 10,000, and Salem 14,000 and 1,000 respectively.

Census of
India
Vol. XIII.

Ceylon, where Cosmas found Christians in A.D. 522 and which was the seat of a Roman Catholic bishop in the fourteenth century, has an equally large percentage of Roman Catholics. In a total population of 4½ millions 443,000 are Christians of whom 326,000 are Roman Catholics and 57,000 are Protestants.

A considerable proportion of the various figures given are no doubt to be accounted for by natural increase and other causes but when every allowance has been made there must still remain large numbers unaccounted for. Where do they all come from, if the Roman Catholics have not fallen heir to the fruits

of Nestorian missionary effort in the early centuries of the present era. There are several considerations which support this view.

The number of Roman Catholic foreign missionaries in India and Ceylon is less than half the number of Protestants and the disproportion in the number of Indian helpers is even greater. Then with the exception of the work of St. Francis Xavier in the sixteenth century there is no record of any great Roman Catholic ingathering in any part of India, and as regards Xavier, the sphere of his labours, lasting not more than six or seven years at the most, was limited almost exclusively to the Malabar and Pearl Fishery Coast, the latter including Tuticorin and neighbourhood.

Even there, the people, who were baptised wholesale without a pretence of instruction, must have been largely if not entirely already nominal Christians. This is evident from such statements as the following from Faber's life of Xavier.

Faber's
Life of
St. Francis
Xavier
p.73.

Speaking of Xavier's labours in Travancore he writes: "When Xavier entered the kingdom of Travancore he found it entirely idolatrous but when he left it after a few months residence in it he left it entirely Christian".

Now it is well known that large numbers of the people of Travancore were (as they still are) Syrian Christians tracing their origin back to the early centuries. And fifty years after Xavier, in 1599, the Synod of Diamper in Cochin was held for the express purpose of compelling those who had not been reached by Xavier's methods to accept Roman Catholic practices and teaching.

Only on the assumption that the people thus baptised were already nominal Christians can we explain their willingness to

Faber: Life of Xavier p.54.

submit to the baptismal rite, "In one single day" we read, Xavier "baptised the inhabitants of a whole parish" although, as he himself admits, all that he knew of the language of the people was a few phrases and sentences that he had learned by heart.

Fenger History of Tranquebar Mission pp.21,22.

Confirmation of this assumption is found in the history of the Tranquebar Mission. Fenger, the Danish historian of the Mission referring to the existence of a large Roman Catholic community in Tranquebar, says that prior to the time of Ziegenbalg it had been joined by many hundreds of people, but how or when it came into being no one knew nor is there any "detailed account of its rise and progress".

Catholic Directory p.1-3.

Still further confirmation is found in the designations of several of the Roman Catholic bishoprics in the Roman Catholic ecclesiastical provinces in India to-day. Included in the ecclesiastical province of Simla we find the bishopric of Kashmir and Kafirstan. We learn from Wiltisch that there were Nestorian bishops at Nahz and Dir as long ago as 1028, but it is doubtful if there are any Christians in Kafiristan to-day although the name is retained as the designation of the comparatively recently established bishopric. Patna is the name of another present day see. There was a Nestorian Metropolitan in Ulna or Patena as long ago as A.D.1222, and Ceylon is credited with being the seat of a Roman Catholic bishop in the fourteenth century.

Wiltisch pp.163-168, 358.

Indian Village Education Report (note) p.16.

Educationally the Roman Catholics are equal to and at least in one respect even surpass the Protestants. In the census report for 1911, in Bombay and Madras Presidencies with the associated States, "Syrian Christians come first educationally with percentages of 31.1 for males and 8.6 for females,

Protestants have 21.2 for males and 12 for females; while Roman Catholics have 23.3 for males and 7.3 for females". This harmonizes with what we know of the emphasis laid by the early Nestorians on education.

W. Hunter
The Indian
Empire p.240.

We may sum up by referring to the testimony of Sir W.W. Hunter. He says: "The downfall of the Nestorian Church in India" (or rather South India) "was due neither to reversion to ~~paganism~~ to paganism nor to any persecution by native princes but to the pressure of the Portuguese inquisition and the proselytizing energy of Rome".

From what has been said we are justified in assuming that the Christian communities formed in India as the result of Nestorian missionary activity prior to the thirteenth century, did not cease to exist, but were, with the exception of the Syrians, simply merged in Roman Catholicism and continued as before under their new designation.

Long ere that, however, Nestorian missionary fervour had died out, and the church as a living spiritual force had practically ceased to function. The Christians, so called, had become Christians only in name.

Rae: Syrian
Church
p.157.

Note: The decline in spiritual earnestness probably coincided with the recognition of the Christians as a superior closed caste. This evidently took place in Malabar about the eighth century when the Brahmans first came there. We have no definite information on the subject as regards the rest of South India but it is significant that caste distinctions are even now recognised by the Roman Catholic church and that a large proportion of the membership of that community still claim to be caste Christians. It is quite possible therefore that this pernicious practice may have been inherited from a decadent Nestorianism rather than introduced or permitted de novo by Roman Catholicism.

Chapter XI..

By-products of Nestorianism.

The extermination of Christianity from Central and Northern Asia as the result of Mohammedan persecution, Mongol devastation and Tamerlane's hatred, was so complete, that, apart from the tomb stones of Semirychensk and the ruins of countless cities, scarcely a trace remained.

It was different, however, with China, Japan, Burmah, etc. In these countries there are echoes of Christian teaching and relics of Christian customs which carry us back unmistakably to those early Nestorian missionaries who alone furnish us with the key to much that would be not only puzzling but otherwise inexplicable.

Christianity in China has had varied experiences. Saeki claims that the China of the T'ang era A.D.618 - A.D.845, if not actually Christian in name, was at least under strong Christian influence, and that the leaven of Nestorianism had penetrated the whole of Chinese literature.

The adverse edict of ~~845~~ A.D.845 ordering the suppression not only of Nestorianism, but also of Buddhism and Mohammedanism, checked the progress that Christianity was making and resulted in its almost total eclipse. It was not till the thirteenth century that it recovered anything like its previous proportions only to be succeeded in the fourteenth century by entire suppression by the Ming dynasty which came into power in A.D.1369.

Saeki thinks that as the result of the edict of suppression in A.D.845, many of the Chinese Nestorians may have become Mohammedans, and that the amalgamation was

completed in the fourteenth century during the time of Tamerlane. The number of Mohammedans in China he estimates at 20,000,000, although Broomhall thinks they do not exceed 10,000,000.

He considers that the presence of such a large number of Mohammedans cannot be accounted for unless the fact of this suggested amalgamation in the fourteenth century is admitted. In confirmation of this he adduces the fact that both were much alike in race and language and were fellow sufferers for their respective faiths, and that both were opposed to the perverted doctrine of the Trinity i.e. Father, Mother (Mary), and Son, and lastly, that Nestorians and Mohammedans alike were haters of idolatry.

He claims that in A.D.742 there were only 5,000 Mohammedans in China, while at the beginning of the twentieth century there were twenty millions or more, which is altogether too many to be accounted for by natural and gradual increase during ten centuries. Saeki's arguments on this point are not very convincing. For example, he thinks that not only did they suffer in common from the persecution under the emperor Wutsung in A.D.845, but that there was a similar persecution under Timour. This is quite evidently a mistake. Timour never invaded China although he purposed doing so, nor was he ever antagonistic to Mohammedans as a whole seeing he was a Mohammedan himself.

Saeki:p.48.

The second explanation given by Saeki for the disappearance of Nestorianism from China is much more probable. He thinks that the descendants of those who did not join the Mohammedans are probably to be found to-day in the membership of the secret society known as Chin-tan-chias, which numbers

eleven million adherents, and in other secret societies, of which there are ten altogether.

The Chin-tan-chiao or Pill of Immortality Society, Saeki, on both internal and external evidence, says, is decidedly Christian in character. It is to be found in Szechuan, Shensi, Honan, Shantung, in the borders of Mongolia and in Manchuria. In the last few years prior to the proclamation of a republic, most of the disaffected in Mongolia joined this society as their only hope from the oppression of the Mandarins. Every powerful combination against the latter being regarded as rebellion, the government in 1891 massacred 15,000 of these Chin-tan-Chiao on the false charge of being rebels.

The founder of the Chin-tan-chiao, Lu Yen^{or}/Tung Pin, was born in A.D. 755 in P'uchow-fu in the south of Shansi. He called himself the son of the essence of the universe, and professed not to have discovered this new truth himself but to have received it from the first and greatest of the eight immortals who lived about seven centuries before him. The real name of this greatest of the immortals is not given but he is called by such names as "the warning bell which does not trust physical force". "The quiet Logos". "The king of the sons of God". "The first teacher of the true doctrine of immortality" and "Teacher from above".

These remind us strongly of Christian truth. Nor do we know of any other teacher in the whole world who lived about that time who taught such truths other than Jesus of Nazareth. How did Lu Yen get hold of these doctrines? According to the Hsi-an-fu monument, the Nestorian missionaries were received by the Chinese emperor in Hsi-an-fu in A.D. 635. The famous general Kwo Tsze yih, who, as already stated lived A.D. 697-781

Saeki:
pp. ~~53, 54~~
53, 54.

became a Christian. Lu Yen at the latter date would be 26 years of age. He lived in the region between Hsi-an-fu and Ping Yang-fu so that he had ample opportunity to get to know these western doctrines.

reki p.55.

Temples to Shun-yang-Tsze, another name for Lu Yen, are to be found all over northern and central China and are much resorted to for healing by faith, and prayer for superhuman guidance. The doctrine is also associated with the Buddhist Mi-mi-kiao or Kuan yin, the goddess of mercy, prayers used in the worship of whom ~~xxx~~ have been found to be essentially the same as Christian prayers. Further, several of the leaders of the Chin-tan-chiao, whether later they became Christians or not, assert that the essential doctrines of the Chin-tan-chiao and Christianity are the same.

China
Mission
and Book
of 1896
p.43-45
noted by
reki pp.
6,56.

The assumption then is, that the doctrines of this strongest Buddhist sect originated in Christianity. One point to be noted is that they have no Christian scriptures, but this can easily be explained by the constant destruction of all supposedly treasonable books, as the scriptures are supposed to be, that has been going on for a thousand years. In spite of having been hunted and hounded for ages the numbers of this sect still multiply, and new martyrs are ready in every age to risk property and home and lives for the truth they profess.

reki p.56.

Saeki claims that Lu Yen was no other than Lu-Hsin-yen the Chinese scholar who wrote the Chinese ideographs on the Nestorian stone for Ching-Ching or Adam, the author of the inscription, and gives reasons for so believing. He must have been 26 years of age at the time the monument was set up and was evidently a Chinese official holding an important position somewhere in that neighbourhood.

Saeki:p.61.

Other evidences in confirmation of this theory are to be found in the writings of Lu Yen himself. In the second volume of his complete works devoted to 'miracles of master Lu Yen' we read how he changed water into wine; how he healed the sick and wounded; how he cured a poor man suffering from paralysis; and how the blind received sight by his touch. Are these mere coincidences with what we find in the gospels? Even the liturgy of the Chin-tan-chiao resembles that of the Nestorians so that we may not be very far wrong if we assume that the 15,000 Chinese Chin-tan-chiao martyrs of 1891 were really descendants of the old Chinese Nestorians.

Saeki:
p.148.

Shan-tao (Zendo) who died A.D.681 - 46 years after the reputed arrival of the Nestorian Missionaries, taught salvation by faith in Amitabba. How he got the idea of a vicarious Saviour or of "Eternal Life" by faith in Amitabba is suggested by the fact that he lived at the time when the Nestorian Mission flourished in China and that both Nestorians and Buddhists were then on friendly terms and met at the imperial court of the Tang emperors.

The teaching of Shinran, (the great successor of Shan-tao (1173-1263) may be summed up in the words "man cannot be saved by his own effort. It is by the grace and merit of Amitabba that man is saved". Nama Amitabba (we trust in thee oh Amitabba) is all we need to say to be saved and no more. (How very different this is from the Southern Buddhism of Ceylon or Burmah).

In Japan, the teaching of the Amida sects and the Pure Land School, including as they do more than half the population of the country, is also traceable to Nestorian Christian tradition and goes even beyond that of Shinran. According to them Amida

Robinson
History of
Christian
Missions
p.162.

is without beginning and without end, all love, wisdom, benevolence and power. He appeared in various forms among men, all his incarnations being with a view to bringing salvation to mankind. In his last incarnation he registered a vow that should the perfect consummation of Buddhahood be in his power he would not accept deliverance unless such deliverance should also mean the salvation of mankind.

Creed of
Half Japan
by A. Lloyd
quoted by
Robinson.

To grasp the salvation wrought out by Amida nothing is needed but faith. No works of the hand, no austerities or penances, no repentance, nothing but faith. Such doctrines can only have come either from Christianity or from some of the heretical Christian sects such as the Gnostics or Manicheans.

Saeki p.158.

There is nothing to shew that the Nestorian Christians were opposed to the Amitabba doctrine, and its development in China and Japan furnished a common meeting ground between them and the Buddhist monks. The Nestorian missionaries stood before the emperors of China as the apostles stood before the Roman governors and were the trusted advisers of the Chinese and possibly also of Japanese sovereigns. Saeki holds that they helped to create what is known as Chinese Buddhism and to confirm the belief in Amitabba - the Saviour who saves those who simply trust in and consecrate their whole being to him.

The one fatal defect in the whole system is of course the absence of any reference to the cross of Christ, to the blood of atonement or to "the resurrection of our Lord". The preaching of the cross is still foolishness to the learned of this world but to those who are being saved it is the power of God unto salvation.

Leaving the far east we come next to India. Here too, apart from the great Syrian Christian community in Travancore and the multitudes in Ceylon and other parts of South India who were won over to the Roman Catholic faith either by persuasion or force, there are references in the writings of some of the reformed Hindu sects and in the traditions existing among different tribes that suggest a Christian origin or Christian influence.

Even earlier than the writings of Hindu reformers we find evidence of Christian influence in the Bhagavad Gita itself, which as shewn elsewhere, could not have been written earlier than A.D.600 and was probably considerably later.

In it we have the first mention of what the Hindus call Bhakti. "Bhakti means 'faith', in the sense of absolute devotion to a personal God. It is defined as an affection fixed upon the Lord. It is not belief. Those who hate the Lord may believe but they have not faith. It is abiding in Him. It may not be devotion for some spiritual gain, for it must be purely unselfish" &c. &c.

"Bhakti suddenly appeared for the first time in India as a religious doctrine some centuries after the foundation of Christianity", and Grierson has no doubt but that it was borrowed from the early Christians of South India. In the Mahabharata itself, there is an account of a voyage made by three Indian sages to the 'white continent' where alone perfect bhakti existed. Later, the followers of Bhakti were divided into two sections, Krishnaites, referred to elsewhere, and Ranaites.

Bhakti was introduced into South India in the twelfth century by Ramanuja. He taught it, however, rather as a system

of philosophy than as a religion, and it was studied chiefly by Brahmins.

Govinda-
charya Life
of Rama-
nuja p.249.

Govindacharya in his life of Ramanuja, quotes Nadadur Ammal as saying that the way of salvation is not by works (Karma); not by knowledge (jnana or gnosis); not by devotion (bhakti); but by implicit trust placed in Ramanuja. It is doubtful if Ramanuja himself would have endorsed this. It is said that on his death bed he warned his followers against worshipping him. A century or two later, a follower of Ramanuja - Ramananda, from North India, visited the South and drew inspiration from the same source. A disciple of Ramananda, a Mohammedan named Kabir founded a sect "noted for their piety and morality" which now numbers thousands of the poorer classes of North India. Kabirism has much in it that is derived from Christianity.

Grierson
p.18.

Later than Kabir, in the sixteenth century, came Tulasi Dasa a great teacher of the Rama doctrine; the only great religious teacher of India who refused to found a sect. His followers at the present day number, it is said, nearly 100 millions. The root of what he too taught, was the Christian teaching learnt by Ramanuja and his followers from the Christians of the South. ~~For~~ God, he says, "became incarnate as Rama, not merely to slay a demon, but to save souls". Sin is incompatible with Rama's nature, yet no one is too great a sinner for Rama to save if only he will come to Rama. The sinner must confess his sin, and naked of all good works, throw himself before Rama, "and Rama will stretch out his hand to save him as he has done to countless others before". "Bhakti, faith, devotion, directed to Rama, is all that is necessary for salvation, and salvation is a life of pure bliss with him after death. 'Faith in his

name is a little boat. The Holy Master Himself is the steersman. Stretching out His loving arms, He cries 'Come I will ferry thee across' ". What is this but the teaching of Christianity with the name of Rama substituted for that of Christ. "Who not only (as they say of Rama) became incarnate, and lived and taught upon the earth, but "Who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification".

We shall mention only one more of these by-products of Nestorianism; seed that has been sown but the growth and development of which has been checked so that it failed to attain maturity. We refer to the Karens of Burma. Here, however, we have no written documents to fall back upon but have to be content with tradition passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth.

The Karens are a stalwart hill people, numbering nearly three millions, scattered throughout Burmah and Northern Siam. They have proved to be marvellously receptive of the gospel message carried to them by modern missionary effort and large numbers of them have been definitely won for Christ, more particularly in Burmah proper. What was it that prepared the way and made them so responsive? It was the tradition current among them of a Father God in whom they believed, and who shewed favour to them: of a people once great because of righteousness: of a time when the Father God created the first human pair, set them in a garden, and walked with them as with friends and children.

The tradition too, of the tragedy of the serpent Mukawlēe, the fall of Tha-nai, and E-en, and their consequent separation from their Father God. The assurance that, notwithstanding their turning from Him, their Father God still lives, and their

belief in the existence of a golden book which their ancestors had possessed but which through carelessness had been lost, and the expectation that the book would one day be returned to them by messengers from over the sea.

All these things prepared the way and made them ready to receive the message when it was brought to them once again. But where did the tradition come from in the first instance and where did they get their knowledge of the creation story, of the fall of man, and of the interruption in the fellowship formerly existing between man and God, if not from those early Nestorian Missionaries, who, as Cosmas in his Christian Topography tells us, had penetrated to Burmah and Siam even before the sixth century A.D., so that he was able to report Christian churches in those countries at that early date? These and other instances that might be mentioned, attest afresh the wide spread influence, even in its by-products, of that wonderful church of the east when at the zenith of its missionary activity.

Conclusion.

In our survey we have noted how, with Edessa as the starting point and Persia as its centre 'The Church of the East' popularly known by the name Nestorian, constrained as it was by persecution, and spiritually nurtured by its monastic system, extended its operations to one country after another.

Arabia being nearest and most accessible was one of the first countries to be evangelised from Persia. Then came the further provinces of that vast empire which extended as far as Scind, where but recently, discoveries have been made connecting it with the civilization of the Euphrates valley and Babylon.

India, South as well as North, and Ceylon, were also reached at a very early date. Then came Central Asia, Burma, Siam, Turkestan, China and Japan. And then, perhaps last of all, Southern Siberia and Mongolia with the modern provinces of Trans Baikal and the Amur, and China for the second time.

From West to East, from North to South, covering practically the whole of Asia, the messengers of the gospel, representatives of the most missionary church the world has ever seen, wended their way, and supporting themselves by the labour of their hands, or provided for by those among whom they laboured, carried the message of salvation to the utmost bounds of the continent. From the 4th to the beginning of the 14th century they maintained their testimony, as witnessed to by the cemetery inscriptions of Semirjetschie and other evidences.

The causes leading to their decadence and almost complete extermination have also been dealt with and it only remains for us to refer briefly to the present condition of those who still survive.

The remnant, who escaped the atrocities of Tamerlane, found a refuge in the mountains of Kurdistan where they were lost sight of for several centuries. In the year 1551 they split into two sections and a patriarch was elected by each of the different factions. ~~xx~~ One of these, unable to secure nomination by his fellow metropolitans and in order to strengthen himself against his rival, went to Rome and received ordination at the hands of the Roman pontiff. He however did not join the Roman communion, but continued Nestorian with his residence at Mosul. When more than a hundred years later, at Diarbekir and elsewhere, some of the Nestorians went over to Rome, they were called Uniate or Chaldean Christians while the others continued to be known as Nestorians. Fortescue estimated the latter as numbering 100,000 prior to A.D.1914.

Fortescue
p.159.

Yohanan however mentions 190,000 as the total but it is not clear if the larger figure does not include Uniates as well. The number to-day according to Dr. Mingana does not greatly exceed 40,000.

Yohanan
Death of a
Nation p.8.

Mingana
p.314.

They live partly in/^{Persian}and partly in Turkish territory, or what was Turkish before the war, but have long since ceased to be missionary in any sense whatever. It was only as the result of the travels of men like Rich and Layard, that the fact that there were such people was again brought to the knowledge of western Christendom. Rich published the account of his travels in 1836, while Layard gave his discoveries to the world in 1849. Their references to the existence of remnants of this ancient church awakened great interest and resulted in the attention of various missionary societies being directed towards them.

Fortescue
p.115.

Before the great war there were quite a number of Missions of different nationalities, including Anglican, American, Russian, German and Danish, seeking to influence and help them in the direction of a fuller and deeper Christian life. Most of these must have had their work interfered with by the war

but may have resumed operations since then.

Professor Yohanan, in his book 'The Death of a Nation', gives a very tragic account of a massacre of Nestorians that took place in 1842 near the river Zab, when 10,000 persons were put to death by the Turks with great cruelty, while large numbers of women and children were carried into captivity. He gives details also of the sufferings and horrors to which this persecuted church was subjected by the Turks and Kurds in more recent years, and closes his account with the words 'The Prospect of the forlorn remnant who have escaped the massacre is piteous in the extreme, and it is said that some fifty thousand men and women and children from Persia and Kurdistan were, at the time of writing, naked, hungry and homeless'. These, with perhaps a few more elsewhere, are apparently all that remain of the Central Asia section of this ancient church.

Yohanan
p.150.

South India and Ceylon did not suffer at all from the depredations of Tamerlane and the numerous Christian communities there continue to exist, but under different auspices, the majority of them ultimately being won to Roman Catholicism either by persuasion or force.

It was only after the arrival of Xavier in 1542, ~~and at his request~~, that the policy of compulsion was adopted, and knowing how this operated among the Syrians of the West Coast we can understand that the same must have applied to such Christians in other parts of South India and Ceylon as had not up till that time voluntarily submitted to Roman Catholic rule.

As already stated, only one section of the whole was able to maintain its identity and its distinctive characteristics. These are the Indian Christians of St. Thomas (Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic), known as the Syrian Christians of

South West India. According to the Government census of 1921, in the states of Travancore and Cochin, the Syrian Christians numbered 767,260. To these have to be added 24,027 from the British territory of Malabar and South Canara, giving a total of 791,287. A little over 400,000 of these are Roman Catholics, almost 250,000 are Jacobites, upwards of 12,000 are Syro-Chaldeans or Nestorians, and 114,000 are Reformed, or Mar Thoma Christians, who are strongly evangelical.

When the Dutch succeeded the Portugese in 1653 as the dominant power on the Malabar Coast, a large number of those who had under compulsion accepted Roman Catholic doctrines and polity reverted to their previous faith. They had for long resented the methods of the Jesuit fathers but the immediate occasion of their final rebellion was the capture by the Portugese of a metropolitan who was on his way to them from the Patriarch of Babylon. He was taken to Goa and dealt with there by the Inquisition. This took place in 1653, the year when the Dutch defeated the Portugese, and led to the secession at Coonen Cross, ~~formed~~ ~~to them~~. No other bishop from the west succeeded in ~~the~~ running the gauntlet of the Portugese fleet until A.D. 1665 when a Jacobite bishop named Gregorius, styled Metropolitan of Jerusalem, arrived, and as the seceders had been unable to secure a Nestorian bishop they were glad to avail themselves of his services to the extent at least of allowing him to ordain the acting metropolitan Mar Thomas. Gregorius having helped them in this way continued with them, assisting the native metropolitan. Later on other Jacobites came from the west and introduced the Jacobite liturgy and in this way the Coonen Cross seceders became Jacobite. It was a case of 'Needs must' so far as they were concerned.

Rae: The
Syrian
Church
In India
pp.259, 269.

Rae:p.305.

In 1842 a division took place in the Jacobite section, due partly to the fact that a Syrian named Mattheu having visited

Antioch had persuaded the Patriarch there to obdain him to the metropolitan see of Malabar, although there was already a metropolitan exercising the office. He took the title Mar Athanasius. He had studied for the ministry in the C.M.S. training institution in Madras but had been dismissed as unfit to continue. It was after his dismissal that he visited Antioch.

In the early days of his career as metropolitan his character and conduct do not seem to have commanded respect, but prior to his death in 1877 there seems to have been a change. His farewell letter to his people closes with the words:- "Therefore we advise and admonish you, that believing in the Lord Messiah, who died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and who by His resurrection has conquered the world and the devil and has taken away sin, you should resist these enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and heartily yield your souls and bodies with all your members wholly for His glory and service".

His successor was Mar Thomas Athanasius who introduced a number of reforms, and was in turn succeeded in 1894 by Mar Titus under whose regime a great spiritual awakening began.

The following of Mar Thomas could not have been at all large, and at the time of the ordination of Mar Titus the reformers probably did not exceed 20,000 in number. This new body discarded many of the ritualistic practices which had grown up among the Jacobites but it went further than that. An evangelistic association was formed which sent out evangelists to preach the gospel in different parts of Travancore and

Note: The headquarters of the Syro Chaldeans or Nestorians are at Trichur in Cochin state, while those of the Jacobite and Mar Thoma Christians are in Travancore; at Kottayam and Tiruvella respectively.

Richards
p.57.

Cochin, and in a short time these were able to report 1577 converts from heathenism.

The Syrian church as a whole, and the reformed party in particular, benefited much by the presence of C.M.S. missionaries among them. One of the objects kept prominently before themselves by the missionaries was the deepening and strengthening of the spiritual life of the Syrian Christian community, rather than the formation of an independent body outside the Syrian Church.


Several factors tended to help towards the accomplishment of this end. They had the benefit of a visit from several well known missionaries from England. A very earnest Tamil evangelist, a booklet by whom was the means of bringing about that change in the life of Pilkington of Uganda which resulted in the great awakening there, conducted special missions in Travancore about the year 1896. Two very devoted Englishwomen, leaving their home in England took up their residence in Travancore for the express purpose of helping the Syrians in their spiritual life. And last of all, they had an annual visit from one of the most devoted and capable of the C.M.S. missionaries in Tinnevelly, the late Rev. T. Walker, who for sixteen years, until his death in 1912, conducted great Christian conventions which have played an important part in the development of the spiritual life of the Mar Thoma or Reformed section of the Syrian Christian community.

As a result of these conventions, attended by from 20,000 to 25,000 people, the strength of the Reformed party has risen year by year from approximately 20,000 in 1894 to 35,000 in 1901, 75,366 in 1911 and 114,061 in 1921.

In addition to the home mission work carried on by Mar

Thoma Christians, they have begun foreign mission work in another language area and have now eight foreign missionaries in the field. These work in association with the National Missionary Society of India, an indigenous society which is entirely financed and controlled by Indians. The suffragan bishop, or metropolitan, Mar Abraham is a graduate of the Christian College, Madras, and has taken his theological training in Wycliffe College Toronto. He is eminently qualified to lead in the great spiritual awakening that has taken and is taking place and which, if it continues on its original lines, promises so much not only for that ancient church but for the whole of India.

With this we conclude our survey of the Missionary Activity of a church which realized in a very special manner the burden to which Paul refers when he says - "woe is me if I preach not the gospel" or that of which Jeremiah spoke when he said "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I could not stay" (Jer.20:9.) And when, weakened by persecution, lured from its position of separatedness by the bait of compromise, and exterminated in so many places by ruthless savagery, it ceased to ^{be} an aggressive spiritual force it still left behind it an imperishable memory that may well prove an incentive in the matter of loyalty to Christ and devotion to His service, to the more highly favoured churches of to-day.



Appendix A.

The Name.

The name Nestorian is that by which the church whose headquarters were originally at the twin cities of Seleucia-Ctesephon on the Tigris but are now at Qudshanis on the great Zab, a river in Kurdistan is generally, but mistakenly, known. ~~That~~ by which it is officially designated and which the Nestorians themselves prefer is 'the church of the east' or 'Easterns' to distinguish it from Jacobites, Greeks and Latins who are all classed as westerns. ~~The~~ *IT* was meant to apply to those who were beyond the boundaries of the Roman empire and especially to those who were subjects of the empire of Persia. The two empires were almost constantly at war and there was therefore very little coming and going between 'the church of the east' and the church of the Roman empire. This very reason saved the former from many of those doctrinal disputes such as the Arian and Nestorian controversies which disturbed the peace of the church of the west, but prevented ~~that~~ friendly intercourse which would have tended to remove misunderstandings, especially such as were due to ignorance.

To settle the Arian dispute was one of the chief reasons for the Council of Nicea, and one of the ultimate results of the Nestorian controversy was to brand 'the church of the east' with a name that carries with it the stigma of heresy, ^{and} which arose out of a dispute with which they had nothing whatever to do and of which they were ignorant until long after it was over. The church of the east was in existence generations before the condemnation of Nestorius. That he was wrongly condemned has been clearly shewn in two comparatively recent publications - one by Bethune-Baker entitled Nestorianism and

Maclean A.J.
The Catholics
of the
East p.6.ff.

the other by Professor Loofs under the title Nestorius - so that it is unnecessary to add anything further under that head. It may be of interest however to mention briefly some of the reasons why 'the church of the east' should have been so entirely separated from the churches of the west and why the churches of the west and especially the church of Rome call it by the name Nestorian and continue to speak of the Nestorians as heretics. One reason doubtless was the fact that the 'church of the east', holding the same views that Nestorius held - not those he was charged with holding - refused to join in condemning him when the fact that he had been excommunicated was brought to its notice. The decrees of the Council of Nicea were not known to 'the church of the east' until 410 A.D. eighty five years after they were passed, but immediately they were brought to its notice it subscribed to them. That the doctrinal position of Nestorius was also in harmony with these same decrees is practically admitted in the treatises referred to. If he were excommunicated it followed that any church refusing to endorse his excommunication must be dealt with in the same way.

There were however other causes that contributed to the separation. Of these Adeney mentions four.

First Geographical: 'The church of the east' was separated by the Syrian desert from the major part of the church of the Roman empire. Communication between the two was therefore difficult though not impossible. Second Political: 'The Church of the east' was under the domination, first of the Parthian and after 226 A.D. of the Persian empires, and from the latter part of the 4th century it was a recognised 'melet' or subject

race of Persia. Further, the Persians and Romans were almost constantly at war with one another, and although this did not necessarily affect the status or position of 'the church of the east' when the Roman emperors were still pagan, it was altogether different after the conversion of Constantine. When the emperor of Rome professed himself a Christian and Christianity became recognised as the official religion of the state, the Persian kings were naturally inclined to suspect their Christian subjects as being in some sense allies of Rome, or at all events, sympathisers who might be likely to furnish information to the enemies of the country. That this suspicion was not altogether unfounded is evident from incidents that have been recorded by historians of undoubted reliability e.g. The Catholicos or Patriarch of Seleucia, Babowai, was discovered holding treasonable correspondence with the emperor Zeno in the year 484 A.D. and was hanged by his fingers till he died. The expression 'God has delivered us up to an impious sovereign' had been used in one of his letters. The less intercourse there was therefore between the Christians in Persia and the Christians in Syria, the less likelihood would there be of bringing the wrath of the Persian king down upon them, and thus interchange of views would naturally be discouraged. Third Linguistic: The literary language of the eastern portion of the Roman empire and around the Mediteranean was Greck, while the language of the church in Persia was Aramaic with its two main dialects - East Aramaic or Syriac the dialect of Edessa, and West or Biblical Aramaic = Chaldu, the language of the Targunus and other

Wigram:
The
Assyrian
Church p.152.

writings. Fourth Doctrinal: This was perhaps the great dividing factor. As early as the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. Monophysitism had made considerable progress in both the African and Eastern portions of the empire. In the reigns of the emperors Zeno 474 - 491, and Anastasius 491-518, it had practically become the religion of the state. Rome had been taken by the Goths and Odoacer proclaimed king of Italy in the year 475, so that although the Patriarchate of Rome continued orthodox as regards Monophysitism, Italy was already lost to the empire. It was of the utmost importance that North Africa and Syria should not follow suit. As the Monophysites were in the ascendancy, not only in Alexandria but also in Antioch and Constantinople, during the reigns of the emperors mentioned, these would not run the risk of estranging those subjects who were left to them (i.e. the Monophysites of Syria and Egypt) in order to conciliate the Dyophysites of Italy who were already lost. The emperors were themselves Monophysite/ in sympathy, and consequently Monophysitism grew until it monopolised all the great patriarchates in the empire, with the exception of Rome which anathematised all the others. Monophysitism continued to be the predominant religion till the reigns of Justin I. 518 A.D. and Justinian 527 A.D. who took steps to bring the churches of the empire back to the orthodox faith. Neither Justin I. nor Justinian, however, persecuted the Monophysites, but according to Wigram, 'they depressed them and as far as possible secured that they should not consecrate any bishops'. The result was that by the year 534, excluding Armenia which remained entirely Monophysite, there was only one Monophysite bishop left in

Wigram:
The
Assyrian
Church p.18.

the east. Under Jacob Baradaeus, however, who was secretly ordained about this time, and from whom the Monophysites came to be called Jacobites, a great Monophysite revival took place. Those ordained by Jacobus penetrated into Persia and were a source of great trouble to the Nestorians there, a proceeding which was not likely to modify the opinion held by the Nestorians regarding the Church of the Roman empire. That Rome held views differing from those current in Antioch and Constantinople was scarcely likely to be understood by them. When information about the Nestorian controversy began to filter through to Persia, the religion of the empire of Rome as known to the 'church of the east' was markedly Monophysite. They were, as they had always been, ~~Dyophysite~~, in the same way that the Council of Nicea was Dyophysite. This rendered them less than ever inclined to intercourse with a church which they looked upon as heretical, and the difference between the Christians of Persia and those of Syria and Constantinople was easily emphasised. When later on they learned that Nestorius had been condemned as a heretic, and that all who held his views had been anathematised, the separation between the two churches was complete and the way was paved for the continuance of their recognition by the reigning kings as a subject 'melet' of the Persian empire with its resulting rights and privileges. // The first council of the church of the east met at Seleucia about the year 315 A.D. when, as the result of a quarrel between Papa the first Catholicos and some of the Metropolitans Papa was deposed. He appealed not to the Patriarch of Antioch, but to S'ada,

bishop of Edessa. Tradition has it that the appeal went also to the famous James of Nisibis. In other words, it was referred to the nearest bishops of eminence. A compromise was arrived at and Papa resumed his seat. Neither then nor at any other time did the church of the east regard Antioch as its mother or superior in any way. Another Council met at Seleucia in 410 A.D. when the decrees of the council of Nicea, which had just been brought to the notice of the church, were formally and unanimously accepted or adopted. In 424 A.D. still another council consisting of all six metropolitans then in office and 31 other bishops, met at the town of Markabta of the Arabs. At it the title of Patriarch was applied to the Catholicos (Dad Ishu) for the first time. It was also resolved that in future absolute obedience was to be rendered to the Patriarch, and above all, that no appeal was to be made from his decision to 'Western Patriarchs', thus emphasising the claim of the church of the east to be entirely independent. The reasons given sufficiently account for the separation of 'the church of the east' from the churches of the west but they do not explain why 'the church of the east' should have been branded with a name of such opprobrious signification. Abraham Yohanan holds that the name was first applied to 'the church of the east' by the Roman Catholic church, probably centuries after the time of Nestorius and that it was meant as already stated, to carry with it the stigma of heresy. That Yohanan is in error, at least as regards the date when the name was first given, is obvious from the fact that Cosmas speaks of the Christians whom he met in A.D. 525 as Nestorians. If, as we believe to be the case, the Nestorian church remained true to the creed of the

Wigram:
The Assyrian
Church p.124.

Yohanan:
The death of
Nestor
p.4.

of the

church as approved by the council of Nicea in 325 A.D., it may be asked why the church of Rome should also persistently describe it as heretical and continue to anathematise Nestorius and all those who hold the views he held. The explanation is to be found not so much in differences of doctrine as in the claim made by Rome to the primacy of all the churches. As regards the western Patriarchates this claim was definitely disallowed both at Nicea and Chalcedon, and Seleucia in the east had all along claimed to be quite independent of either Antioch or Rome. At the Council of Chalcedon, the decision to recognise Constantinople as of equal standing with Alexandria, Rome and Antioch, was indignantly objected by Rome, but by Rome alone. Even then, however, Monophysitism was beginning to make itself felt, and under the reign of Zeno and still more so under Anastasius it made such progress that it captured all the western Patriarchates, Rome excepted. When Justin succeeded to the throne in 518 A.D. practically the whole of the eastern empire of Rome was Monophysite in doctrine. When the sees of Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople were again filled with Patriarchs who held orthodox views, the claims of Rome, which had continued orthodox, at least as regards the particular point in dispute - the person of Christ - were not likely to be very seriously contested, and when the devastating scourge of the Saracens, followed later by the Seljuk and then the Ottoman Turks, swept the church of North Africa practically out of existence and nearly did the same with Antioch and Constantinople, there was no longer any one to contest Rome's claim to supremacy except the 'church of the

east' the so called Nestorians. One can easily understand therefore the efforts made to get it also to acknowledge the headship of Rome and the bitterness with which it continued to be spoken of as heretical when it refused to do so.

Perkins: 'Residence in Persia among the Nestorians' p.23.

Note: About the year 1830 or a little later a Jesuit is said to have offered the Nestorian patriarch £.2000 on condition that he would acknowledge allegiance to the Pope. The Patriarch replied in the emphatic language of Peter to Simon Magus 'thy money perish with thee'. About the same date emissaries of Rome are alleged to have assured the Patriarch that if he would so far become Roman Catholic as to recognise the supremacy of their master he would not only continue to be patriarch of the Nestorians but would have all the Christians of the east added to his jurisdiction.

One of the 'newest measures' according to Perkins, was an order, purporting to be fresh from the Pope to his agents in the region of Urumiah, to canonise Nestorius whose name and memory every Roman Catholic for so many centuries had been required to curse. It is perhaps doubtful whether such an order was actually issued from Rome or merely fabricated by her agents in Urumiah. Its object and effect would in either case be the same.

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