PAPACY

Its Doctrine and History

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Sita Ram Goel

Voice of India
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CONTENTS

I. The Pope 1

II. The Dogma of Christianity 4

III. The Doctrine of Papacy 11
- i. His Holiness the Pope 16
- ii. Successor of St. Peter 18
- iii. Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church 23
- iv. Vicar of Jesus Christ 28
- v. Sovereign of the State of Vatican City 39
- vi Vehicle of Western Imperialism 44

IV. Pope's Empire in India 53
- i. St. Thomas Christians 53
- ii. Catholic Church Imposed on India 58
- iii. The Mission Multiplies 65
- iv. A State within the State 82
- v. Superintendent of the Pope's Empire in India 97

V. Why the West Props up the Pope 104
- i. Components of the Roman Catholic Church 105
- ii. The Roman Curia 107
- iii. Western Imperialism Multidimensional 112
- iv. Profits per Missionary 116
- v. A Warning 118

THE POPE

The Pope resides in Rome, which is far away from India.

He does not share even a shred of India's spiritual or cultural heritage, which is very vast.

In fact, he frowns upon the whole of that heritage as a "degrading falsehood fostered by the devil." This is more than evident from the voluminous literature produced by his Catholic Church over a period of nearly four hundred years.

Yet the Pope presides over an extensive empire in India. It constitutes the biggest bloc inside the sprawling Christian enclave in this country. It is also his largest domain in Asia, excluding the Philippines.

The contours as well as the contents of the Pope's empire in India are spelled out, year after year, in the *Catholic Directory of India*. A comparison of the different dimensions of the Catholic Church relating to successive decades, leaves little doubt that the empire has been constantly expanding, particularly after India became politically independent.

But because we are not conversant with the doctrine of papacy, we have come to regard this State within the State as a religious dispensation.

But because we do not know the history of papacy, we have come to prize this expansion of the Pope's political pocket as that of a social service institution.

But because we have not envisaged the long-term implications of this imperialist enterprise, we are easily taken in by the talk about indigenisation of the Catholic Church.

Claims of the Pope

The *Catholic Directory of India,* 1984 provides a list of the appellations with which "His Holiness the Pope" loves to adorn himself. We are told that he is Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of St. Peter, Prince of Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West

Primate of Italy, Archbishopa and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the State of Vatican City." (p. xii).

That is quite a mouthful and reminds us of the erstwhile Nizam of Hyderabad who also had adorned himself with an array of equally high-sounding appellations. Most people had felt amused at his pretensions till the time when he started invoking some of his appellations for claiming powers and privileges which, he felt convinced, they conferred upon him. He did succeed in becoming a headache for us before Sardar Patel called his bluff and consigned him to the dustbin of history.

Who can say for sure that some Pope will not start invoking, some day, some of his appellations and direct his flock in India to follow a course contrary to our national interests and aspirations? The history of the Pope abounds in instances when he has blessed or contrived for the armed conquest or cultural subversion of non-Christian nations in several parts of the world. Given an opportunity, the Pope has seldom failed to mobilize his Catholic cohorts for coercing established national governments. Even as we are writing, a large number of Catholic mandarins and missionaries are preaching and practising Liberation Theology, which is only a thinly disguised name for war on the weaker societies of Asia and Africa. In any case, it would be wise to know the sort of crises the Pope can create for us and be prepared for the exigencies.

Let us keep in mind that the Pope has already collected in his fold nearly 12 million Indian citizens. He will continue to collect many more in years to come unless we understand clearly what he stands for and stop him in his tracks.

Of course, we need not bother about his being the bishop of Rome, archbishop and metropolitan of the Roman province, primate of Italy and patriarch of the West. These are appellations which concern Italy and other countries of Europe and America. They have dealt with the Pope in the past and should know best how to handle him in future.

But his strutting around as the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Successor of St. Peter and the Supreme pontiff of the Universal

Church can cause mischief for us in this country. These are appellations which were evolved and appropriated by the Pope in his continuous conflicts with kings and emperors ruling over sovereign states in medieval and modern Europe. They embody a whole theology and a long history.

The theology has been thriving in this country for quite some time without being seriously questioned. For all we know, some of the history may get repeated. And we may not have another Sardar Patel around to manage matters.

There is no evidence that we care for knowledge about Christian intentions in general and Catholic intentions in particular.

The utmost we know about the Pope is that he is the head of the Catholic Church, the major Christian denomination.

The utmost we know about the Catholic Church is that it is one of the oldest sects which arose at the dawn of Christianity.

The utmost we know about Christianity is that it is a religion founded by Jesus Christ, some two thousand years ago.

The utmost we know about Jesus Christ is that he was a holy man murdered by the Jews for saying things which, though true and wholesome, were not relished by the established but baneful priesthood in Jerusalem.

But this knowledge is no better than ignorance. These are tales told by the hawkers of Christianity in different disguises. We have not cared to find out if they tally with the truth.

We have to know first-hand how Jesus Christ figures in the Christian scriptures. We have to know what Christian theology has made him mean for the non-Christian world.

We have to know how Christianity defines itself in terms of its dogma. We have to know how Christianity has put its principles into practice in the course of its long history.

We have to know what place the Catholic Church claims for itself in Christian theology. We have to know what role

Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular has played in the promotion of Western imperialism.

We have to know how the Pope looks at himself while presiding over the Catholic Church. We have to know how the Pope is looked upon by those who honour him as a hallowed hierarch.

This is not the place to point out how Jesus Christ has stood for the spread of abysmal superstitions and symbolised subversion for non-Christian societies, ever since he was smuggled into the Roman Empire, dressed up in borrowed clothing and speaking a deceptive language. That is a subject which needs a separate study. The dogma of Christianity, however, has to be presented here because the place and role of the Pope cannot be defined properly without a background of that dogma. The doctrine of papacy is derived from the dogma of Christianity. It is, therefore, to that dogma that we must turn in the first instance.

II
THE DOGMA OF CHRISTIANITY

The Christian Church has suffered many splits in the course of its checkered history, particularly since the Reformation in the 16th century. Today we have thousands of Christian denominations, each equipped with its own peculiar pronouncements and prescriptions. At first sight, it looks like a veritable pandemonium.

But stripped of sectarian semantics and hair-splitting exercises about Trinity, Immaculate Conception, Virgin Birth, Transubstantiation, Purgatory, Heaven and Hell, the basic Christian dogma is simplicity itself. Its fundamental tenets, shared in common by all Christian denominations, can be summarised as follows:

1. The Word of Jehovah: The Old and the New Testaments are the very Word of Jehovah. In the Old Testament, Jehovah spoke to his chosen people, the Jews, through the

mouth of many prophets. In the New Testament, he spoke to all mankind and for all time to come through the mouth of his Only Son and the Apostles chosen by the Son. These writings are thus verbally inspired in all parts and, therefore, wholly without error. They are sufficient in themselves as the infallible rule of faith and practice for all human beings.

2. The Original Sin: The Old Testament tells us that the very first human pair, Adam and Eve, became the progenitors of a fallen race when, tempted by Satan, they wilfully desobeyed Jehovah and invited his wrath by eating the fruit of the Forbidden Tree in the Garden of Eden. Ever since, all human beings have been born and have lived in a state of sin, both in their nature and practice. They have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation.

3. The Redemption: The New Testament tells us that moved by his infinite mercy, Jehovah sent his only Begotten Son, Jesus, to atone for the sins of mankind by dying on the Cross and thus suffering the full penalty of Jehovah's wrath on behalf of all mankind.

4. Resurrection: On the third day after his Crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead in the same body in which he had suffered and died. He appeared before his Apostles in Jerusalem and showed them many signs that he was the Christ, come to redeem mankind by means of his blood.

5. Ascension: After some time, Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, again in the same body and appeared before the face of Jehovah as the advocate and intercessor for all those who would believe in him as the Only Saviour.

6. Salvation: Since that time, Salvation has been the free gift of Jehovah to all human beings, but received only by those who have personal faith in Jesus Christ as the Only Saviour and who believe in his birth, death, resurrection and ascension as happenings in history. Apart from faith in Jesus Christ, there is no Salvation, howsoever meritorious a human being may be otherwise.

7. The Church: All those who believe in Jesus Christ as the Only Saviour constitute the Church—the mystical body and bride of Christ—for worship, prayer, fellowship, united testimony to the Only True Faith, teaching, evangelisation and conversion of all unbelievers.

8. The Mandate: Jesus Christ has bequeathed to his Church all unbelievers as its inheritance and all parts of the earth as its possession. At the same time, he has forefeited the life, liberty, honour and property of all unbelievers in favour of the faithful.

9. The Mission: It is obligatory on the Church to convert all unbelievers, by all means at its disposal at any time and place. The world should thus be prepared for the Second Coming of Christ which is always imminent, though the exact time is unrevealed. Christ will finally conquer all unbelievers and establish his Kingdom over all nations for a thousand years.

10. The Last Judgement: At the end of the millenium ushered in by the Second Coming of Christ, the world will come to an end. All those who have died since creation will be raised in the same bodies in which they had lived. They will stand before Jehovah for the Last Judgement. On that day, Jesus Christ will intercede in favour of those who believed in him as the Only Saviour, so that they get admitted to heaven where they will live happily ever after. On the other hand, those who failed to believe in Jesus Christ as the Only Saviour, for whatever reason, will be thrown into hell for ever-lasting punishment.

This, in brief, is the dogma of Christianity, retailed with many details by Christian churches and missions. Most of them add a word of warning. The faithful are asked to believe *literally* in all these events, past and future, and avoid the temptation of interpreting any of them allegorically or symbolically. Allegorical and symbolical interpretations, it is pointed out, reduce the historical Jesus Christ to a mythological figure and rob Christianity of its unique character as a concise and concrete doctrine of Universal Salvation.

Jehovah Masquerading As God

In defining the dogma of Christianity, we have deliberately used the word "Jehovah" and not the word "God" for the power which Christianity invokes in its own favour and against the unbelievers. Jehovah has nothing in common with God, the Supreme Being or the Universal and Perennial Presence, worshipped by pagan religions or expounded by pagan philosophies. Jehovah was originally an exclusive and vengeful being feared and adored by the Jews who had become his chosen people after their ancient forefather, Abraham, entered into a covenant with him. He had promised to the Jews victory over every other people, provided the Jews worshipped him with specific rites and led a particular mode of life. Jesus who was a believing Jew, had spoken to his people in Palestine in the name of Jehovah and harangued them, like earlier Jewish prophets, to return to the prescribed path. When the desciples of Jesus converted him into Christ, they borrowed Jehovah from the Jews and made him enter into a new covenant with the Christian Church. Jehovah remained as exclusive and vengeful as before, except that now his role was to see the Christians prevail over non-Christians. The Christians, on their part, vowed to impose Jehovah and his Only Son on the rest of mankind. They have succeeded so far partly because their victims have confused Jehovah with God.

What Christianity Means For Non-Christians

The dogma of Christianity starts by inculcating in its adherents a sanctimonious attitude of pity towards all non-Christians. The pious Christian is perturbed by the thought of so many heathens heading towards hell-fire when they can easily save themselves by being baptised into the Only True Faith. He is always ready to contribute his share towards the saving of souls at the call of his Church.

Christian theologians have been busy for nearly two thousand years in working out the full implications of the dogma of Christianity. They have evolved detailed strategies for subverting every non-Christian society and culture. The

exercise is continuing in our own times and on an unprecedented scale in a large number of seminaries spread all over the world.

The language which Christian scholarship employs is quite tortuous and tongue-twisting, most of the time, besides being deliberately deceptive. Stated in straight terms it means that the Christian nations of the West have an inalienable right to train and employ whole armies of men and women in order to manipulate non-Christian people everywhere for political subjugation, economic exploitation and cultural domination. That is the plain and simple meaning of the Christian Mission trumpeted abroad in any number of tracts and treatises and by any number of priests, monks and nuns.

Conversion By Force

One feature of the dogma of Christianity, namely, the justification for the use of force, deserves particular attention. The use of force is prescribed by the last book of the New Testament. The heathens are to be broken as the potter breaks his vessels (Rev. 2.26-27). The very first Church Fathers, particularly St. Augustine (354-430), have seen in the use of force the best method of bringing round the unbelievers. Apart from vindicating the rights of the faithful, force is supposed to do good to the unbelievers by compelling them to examine truth and renounce error.

It was, therefore, not fortuitous that the Christian emperors of the Roman Empire, starting with Constantine (312-337), used force on a large scale for the destruction of paganism. Later on, the Christian kings of Europe were invited by the Church to impose Christianity on their people. The Germans, the Celts, the Scandinavians, the Slavs and other pagan people of Europe were converted mostly by fire and sword. These Christian nations, in turn, sent out wave after wave of pirates. plunderers. conquerors and slave-merchants to all corners of tbe world from the end of the 15th century onwards. Forcing Christianity on the enslaved peoples of Asia, Africa, the Americas and elsewhere was a part of their enterprise. Some of

these pirates and pillagers had donned the robes of priests and friars. St. Francis Xavier, hailed by the Catholic Church as the Patron Saint of the East, was an excellent example of such wolves in sheep's clothing.

The results of this Christian enterprise have been summed by Pitirim Sorokin in the following words: "During the past few centuries, the most belligerent. the most aggressive, the most rapacious, the most power-drunk section of humanity has been precisely the Christian Western world. During these centuries, Western Christendom has invaded all continents, its armies followed by its priests and merchants have subjugated, robbed or pillaged most of the non-Christian nations. Native American, Australian and Asiatic populations have been subjected to this peculiar brand of Christian 'love' which has generally manifested itself in pitiless extermination, enslavement, coercion, destruction of the cultural values, institutions, the way of life of the victims and the spread of alcoholism, venereal diseases, commercial cynicism and the like." The non-Christian people of the world have suffered no end of death, destruction and misery as a consequence of the Christian conviction that the use of force is fully justified in the service of the Only Saviour.

Fraud Supplements Force

Force had to be abandoned wherever Christianity found that its target was tough and in a position to hit back, as in the case of sixteenth-century Japan and nineteenth-century India. But only to be replaced by fraud. "The end justifies the means" is after all a maxim made current by Christianity. St. Paul had put it more diplomatically when he advised the Christian missionaries "to be all things to all people." It has never strained the scruples of Christian crusaders to come out in any number of disguises and simulate any manner of speech. No wonder that a small-time crook like Robert Di Nobili, a seventeenth-century Jesuit of the Madurai Mission in South India, is praised by the Catholic Church as a pioneer of Christian progress.

Of late, due to the retreat of overt Western imperialism from

Asia and Africa and the resultant re-alignment of forces, the language of Christianity has undergone a change. Force has been replaced by fraud in the far-flung mission stations. But there has been no change in the basic Christian conviction, which remains intact. The vast wealth and superior technology of the West is being used to coerce all non-Christian cultures into Christian moulds and subjugate all non-White nations. The name of the new strategy is social, medical and educational service.

The leadership in this Christian crusade is being provided by specialised saboteurs trained in Western Europe and North America. But a large number of native mercenaries are being marshalled from those very lands which have been chosen as the victims of this wanton aggression. For instance, according to the *World Christian Encyclopaedia* published in 1982, the Christian missions in India employ a personnel of "about 120,479 (114,500 national, 5979 foreign)." The pattern is the same as was perfected by the British East India Company which had trained and employed native troops for conquering and consolidating its empire in this country. Other European companies had used the same pattern elsewhere.

Imperialism : The Core of Christianity

It is not unoften now a days that we hear many Christian apologists advancing the argument that Christianity in Asia and Africa has "unfortunately" acquired some unsavoury associations due to getting mixed up with Western imperialism during the past several centuries. This, they bemoan, is coming in the way of Christianity spreading as fast as it should on the strength of its "intrinsic merits." To say the least, this is an unwarranted tempering with the historical record, besides being a gross misrepresentation of the Christian dogma. Western imperialism was not an accidental accomplice of the Christian Mission. On the contrary, Western imperialism acquired its self-righteousness and the strength of conviction from Christianity while doing its dirty work. Christianity gave a good conscience to the pirates, plunderers and slave-merchants while they pillaged, murdered and engaged in genocide. The mask of the "White man's

burden" which Western imperialism wore in its later stages was only a new version of the age-old Christian Mission. Christianity at its core has always been an ideology of imperialism, embedded inside thick peels of pious language.

III

THE DOCTRINE OF PAPACY

There was no provision for a Pope or a Successor of St. Peter or a Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church or a Vicar of Jesus Christ, in the basic dogma of Christianity as expounded by the Apostles and the Founding Fathers of the Church. These appellations were concocted and conferred upon himself by the Bishop of Rome in progressive stages, spread over several centuries. The Protestant theologians in the 16th century were very much in the right when they tore to pieces the whole fabric of fictions fostered by the Bishop of Rome and went back to the Founding Fathers. But, meanwhile, the Bishop of Rome had managed to build a strong and solid edifice which has survived all storms, though with considerable damage.

A starting point, however, had been provided by the first Christian theologians when they hailed Jesus Christ as *Rex et Pontifex,* the sole monarch and supreme pontiff, presiding over the whole world. Jesus Christ was supposed to combine in his single person the two powers or, as the theologians were fond of saying, the "two swords"—secular and spiritual. The doctrine of papacy took shape in a prolonged struggle between the princes of Europe, on the one hand, and the Bishop of Rome on the other, as to who was the Vicar or Viceregent of Christ, succeeding to his twofold powers—the head of the Christian State or the head of the Christian Church.

Muhammad was to occupy the same position in Islamic lore as Jesus Christ had come to hold in early Christian theology. Muhammad, too, was hailed as the *Mir,* sole monarch, and *Pir,* supreme pontiff, in permanent charge of the material and spiritual welfare of mankind. But Islam was able to escape a debate between the State and the Church because, in its history,

the State took shape quite some time before a theological fraternity could emerge or get consolidated. Secondly, Muhammad had become the sole monarch of Arabia before he died, besides having been the sole source of Islamic dogma. The very first *Khalifa* who succeeded Muhammad inherited not only the Prophet's spiritual authority but also his political might. The Vicar of Muhammad was not only the Leader of the Faithful but also the Head of the Islamic State. In the history of Islam, therefore, it was the sword of the prince and not the scholastics of the scribe which came to decide as to which interpretation of the Word of Allah was to prevail at a particular time and place.

Jesus Christ, on the other hand, had died a pauper. His spiritual prescriptions had been repudiated by his own people. Christianity could prosper only in the Roman Empire outside Palestine due to a concomitance of circumstances. It took more than 300 years for Christianity to conquer state power in the Roman Empire. By that time, it had become organised in a wide-spread and wealthy Church, with a hierarchy of priests, bishops and metropolitans. It had come to have at its command a whole army of monks and friars living in monasteries or loafing around on the roads all over the Roman Empire. This State within the State was bound to make a bid for supremacy, sooner or later, depending upon the balance of power between the princes and the priests.

Early Church Vis-a-Vis the State

To start with, the Church had kowtowed before a succession of Christian emperors, from Constantine onwards. It had interpreted the dogma in a way so that Constantine and his successors could do away with whatever had survived of Rome's republican traditions, and rule as absolute despots by divine right. During this period, the Church had enthroned the Roman Emperor as the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Besides being the head of the Christian State, he was the Supreme Pontiff of the Christian Church. He alone could summon Church Councils, decide disputes over dogma, invest bishops and metropolitans. name primates and patriarchs, enact ecclesiasti-

cal legislation, deal with heretics and enforce discipline in the Church.

In exchange, the Christian emperors had allowed and assisted the Church to destroy paganism, despoil the properties of pagan shrines and usurp the privileges of the pagan priesthood. The Church was able to augment its wealth, landed and otherwise, to a vast extent and get it exempted from all manner of taxation and state scrutiny. Small wonder that the State and the Church continued to co-exist and function in active co-operation for quite some time.

How the Doctrine of Papacy Developed

The crisis in the relationship between the State and the Church came when the Roman Empire in the West started crumbling under the impact of Germanic and other invasions, from the close of the 5th century. It became acute when the Roman Empire lost large territories in Asia Minor, North Africa and elsewhere, in course of the 7th and the 8th centuries. The Christian churches in Asia Minor and North Africa, which had enjoyed parity with the Church of Rome, went down one after another before the Islamic onslaught. On the other hand, the Church of Rome escaped more or less unscathed because the Germanic tribes who invaded Italy had already become Christianized. It was not long before the bishop of Rome started bandying words with the Roman Emperor and assuming airs of a parallel authority.

The doctrine of papacy as it stands at present was developed slowly and over a span of several centuries. A large number of theologians and specialists in Canon Law, patronised by the Bishop of Rome, had to labour hard and for a long time before the hallowed framework was hammered out and the brickwork put in place. Quite a few forgeries and pious frauds had to be foisted on the princes and people of Europe before they would buy the doctrine. Some strategic interpolations had to be introduced in the Word of Jehovah in order to make the doctrine sound streamlined.

Nor did the appellations of the Pope flow to him in the order in which he flaunts them at present. He did not become the Vicar of Jesus Christ in one single jump. That apex appellation came to him at the culmination of his campaign for ascendancy. In fact, the chronology of his appellations reverses the logical order in which they were subsequently arranged.

The Bishop of Rome had become the archbishop and metropolitan of the Roman province, primate of Italy and patriarch of the West in the normal process, as Christianity spread and the Church hierarchy rose upwards after the pattern of the Roman administration. The appellation of "His Holiness the Pope" was the next to be extended to him by his patron, the Roman Emperor, without any endeavour on his part.

The first claim staked by the Pope himself was that he was Successor of St. Peter. His next claim that he was Supreme Pontiff of the Church was a logical conclusion. It was the Supreme Pontiff who ended by claiming to be Vicar of Jesus Christ. The appellations were evolved in this order and adopted successively by the Pope.

The logical order sounds somewhat ludicrous. Once he has claimed to be Vicar of Jesus Christ, the other appellations do not add anything to his position or power. Vicar of Christ, according to Catholic theology, is the highest manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the terrestrial sphere till the Second Coming of the Only Saviour. Soon after the Pope put on that plumage, Bishop Alvarez Pelayo had proclaimed that "The Pope is not simply a man but almost a God on Earth (1335)." Many more encomiums in a similar vein and from far more august authorities of the Catholic Church have followed in subsequent centuries. There is no evidence that any Pope ever repudiated any of these encomiums as inappropriate or even exaggerated. Therefore, a Vicar of Christ introducing himself as a bishop, archbishop, metropolitan, primate, patriarch and the rest, looks like a person dishing out his school degrees after stating that he is a Master of Arts.

In one way, however, the presentation of his subsidiary appellations by the Pope serves a useful purpose. They embody

the history of how the Bishop of Rome scaled tbe ladder to reach the lofty heights where he is perched at present. We can trace back his steps and reach the point from where he started. We cannot help if the exercise looks like following the foot-prints of a thief and catching him where he had holed up while planning his plundering mission. The doctrine of the papacy can be understood best by being presented in a historical perspective. That is what we propose to do, stage by stage.

Bishop of Rome

The Catholic Church believes that the Church of Rome was founded by St. Peter who had been preceded to that city by St. Paul. Both these apostles are supposed to have been "martyred" in 64 or 67 A.D. during the "first anti-Christian persecution" in the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68). But none of the two has been named as the Bishop of Rome. That honour goes for the first time to St. Linus who functioned from 67 to 76 A.D. He was followed by 30 other Bishops till the time of Melchiades who died in 314 A.D. All except two of these 31 Bishops of Rome are supposed to have been "martyred" in one anti-Christian persecution or the other. All of them have been canonised as saints by the Catholic Church.

St. Peter's presence in Rome, however, has been a matter of controversy since the earliest days. His trail in the oldest records does not travel west of Antioch in Asia Minor. The Catholic tradition about his coming to Rome also does not go beyond the 4th century and looks quite suspicious. It is dated during the period when the Pope started staking his claim as the Successor of St. Peter. The Catholic Church has made herculean efforts to prove that its tradition is based on historical truth. But it has not been able to convince anyone except those who are already convinced. Its latest endeavour in that direction has been archaeological excavations. The 1977 edition of the *Encyclo-paedia Britannica* dismisses that evidence when it states that "Few scholars would endorse the claim that the excavations (1940s-1960s) under St. Peter's Basilica have culminated in the discovery of Peter's tomb." (p. 955).

The case of the 31 canonised Bishops is no better. They have

remained shadowy figures despite the best efforts of the Catholic Church to prop them up as historical personalities. Nor does the "martyrdom" of so many Bishops stand a serious scrutiny. Historians now doubt that anti-Christian persecution in the Roman Empire can be dated as early as the reign of Nero. The referenc to such a persecution in Tacitus (55-120), the Roman historian, looks very much like a later-day interpolation. Gibbon has quoted chapter and verse from the earliest records to prove that anti-Christian persecution in the Roman Empire had erupted at long intervals and was never very wide-spread except towards the end. It was never so persistent as to have engulfed as many as 29 Bishops of Rome in a row. We can conclude quite safely that the roster of these "martyrs" was compiled at a time when martyrology had become a major industry in the Church.

The Catholic Church has built such a hallow round the Bishop of Rome that even the most non-descript Bishops of the early period have started looming larger than life. Historical evidence proves it to be a matter of hindsight. The Bishop of Rome came into the limelight only when unprecedented upheavals in the Roman Empire thrust the bishops elsewhere into oblivion.

His Holiness the Pope

In the first three centuries of the Christian era, the term *papa* which became *pope* in the English language, could be applied to any bishop. It was only in the 4th century, after the conversion of Constantine, that the term started getting reserved for the Bishop of Rome. He was the bishop nearest to the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire. He remained the most prominent citizen of Rome when the capital of the Empire was moved to Constantinople in 330 A.D.

But no Roman Emperor ever treated any Bishop of Rome as more than a bishop and a subordinate state functionary. No Roman Emperor ever hesitated to punish a recalcitrant Pope with deposition or imprisonment or exile. Every Roman Emperor remained extremely jealous about his own position as

Supreme Pontiff of the Church.

Nor was the Pope the only "His Holiness" in the hierarchy of the early Church. The patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem were as much entitled to be addressed as "His Holiness" as the patriarch of Rome. It was only a polite form in the prevailing protocol. It became an exclusive appellation of the Pope when the other patriarchs disappeared or lost their earlier prestige.

The less said about the substance of holiness in the lives of the Popes, the better. As one reads the history of papacy, one wonders whether one is reading about the heads of a religious organisation or about Mafia dons. We are reminded why Machiavelli had drawn not a little material from the lives of the Popes while writing his *Prince.* The papacy has been a cesspool of cynicism, sordidness, crime, corruption and mendacity all through its history. There are only a few Popes in the long list who may pass as holy in the limited sense that they practised certain Christian pieties in their private lives. A majority of them do not come even upto that minimum standard. The public lives of even the pious Popes are full of conspiracies hatched, forgeries made, frauds practised, wars waged, bloodsheds contrived, and superstitions sold without batting an eye.

Some of the Popes stand out as hardened criminals instigating secret assassinations and hair-raising cruelties. Some others are imbeciles, pressed into service by powerful political factions or wealthy families. There are some abominable fanatics who institute inquisitions, order the burning of numerous "heretics" and "witches", and incite mobs for committing massacres and pogroms.

There are plenty of profligates who lead a life of luxury and lust after taking vows of poverty and chastity. They sire any number of illegitimate children with a clean conscience. They specialise in milking rich maidens, sponsoring wills which leave vast amounts of wealth to them, and poisoning cardinals in order to inherit the latter's estates. They can be "credited" with every conceivable crime, even if we do not take into account such deeds as have been declared cardinal sins by the Catholic

Church.

The Church has tried hard to smother the stink by adding the words "Saint"* and "Blessed" before some of the names and glorifying others as "Great." There have been repeated pleas that the person of the Pope should be divorced from the august office he holds and the important functions he performs. Catholic apologists have come out with the pathetic appeal that each Pope should be judged by the standards of his age and not in terms of universal moral standards.

Successor of St. Peter

It was Pope Damsus I (366-385) who had pointed out for the first time that the Church of Rome was no ordinary church but an Apostolic See as it had been founded by St. Peter. Pope Leo I (440-461) had gone ahead and drawn the conclusion, namely, that just as St. Peter had primacy over all other Apostles, the Bishop of Rome was entitled to primacy over all other bishops. In support of this claim, papacy had started circulating two significant documents towards the close of the 5th century. The first was a passage (16:18) from St. Matthew's Gospel according to which Jesus Christ had bestowed upon St. Peter an exclusive power to bind and loose on earth as well as in heaven. The second was a letter from Clement I (88-97) to James, the brother of Jesus Christ and the head of the Church at Jerusalem. The letter quoted St. Peter as saying, in the presence of the Christian community of Rome, that he was imparting his exclusive power to Clement in the latter's capacity as the Bishop of Rome.

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* Some of these "Saints" were like St. Cyril of Alexandria (380-440) who became Bishop of Alexandria in 412. Soon after, he let loose a mob of Christian monks on Hypatia, a woman of Neo-Platonic persuasion whose discourses were dominated by the age-old spiritual theme, "What am I? Where am I ? What can I Know?" The monks stripped her naked, dragged her inside a church where she was clubbed to death by Peter the Reader. Her corpse was cut into pieces, the flesh was scrapped from the bones with shells and the remnants were flung into fire. All these facts were well-known when Cyril was canonised by Pope Leo XIII in 1882. The election of Pope St. Damsus in 366 A.D. left as many as 131 persons dead in one church.

As has been pointed out earlier, St. Peter's presence in Rome was far from proved. Regarding the Matthew passage, E.M. Robertson writes: "Already, presumably, there existed the gospel text, 'Thou are Petros, and upon this rock (petra) I will build my Church'—an interpolation probably made in Roman interest. But as late as the fifth century, some codices seem to have read simply, 'Thou hast said'." *(A Short History of Christianity,* London, 1937, p. 131). This opinion is shared by some other scholars. The letter from Clement to James was, of course, a blatant forgery. Clement became Bishop of Rome in 88 A D., while St. Peter is supposed to have died in 67 AD. at the latest and James in 68 A.D. None of them was a contemporary of Clement, not at least during Clement's tenor as the Bishop of Rome.

In any case, no Roman Emperor at Constantinople was convinced by this "evidence." No Roman Emperor showed the slightest inclination to compromise with his own position as the Supreme Pontiff of the Church. The precedents so far were all in the Emperor's favour. The Pope had to cut a sorry figure, again and again. He was trying to look too big for his boots.

The Pope Turns to the West

Having failed in the East, the Pope started looking towards the West. He was now in search of some prince who knew no Church history, who did not dabble in dogma, and who could quote no concrete precedents regarding relationship between the State and the Church. Such a prince came in sight in the second quarter of the 8th century when the Carolingian clan of Charles Martel, the powerful Mayor of the Palace, started emerging as a formidable force in France. The letters which the Pope started addressing to the Roman Emperor at Constantinople became extremely rude, even downright abusive. The Pope dared the Emperor to "come and test the Western people's veneration for St. Peter," that is, the Pope. He also warned that the Emperor alone would be responsible for the resultant bloodshed. A breach started developing between the Church at Rome and the Church in the East. It ended in the separation of the Roman Catholic Church from the mother Church which subsequently became known as the Greek Orthodox Church.

The decisive turn in the fortunes of the Pope came in 751 when Pepin the Short, the son and successor of Charles Martel, consulted Pope Zacharias (741-752) whether he could depose the decrepit Merovingian monarch and seize the French throne for himself, without incurring any sin. The Pope lost no time in blessing the enterprise from his death-bed. Next year, his successor, Pope Stephen II (753-772), travelled to Paris to anoint Pepin with holy oil and crown him "king by the grace of God." Pepin was badly in need of such a sacrament. He had to impress his rebellious barons that his becoming a monarch was a divine dispensation.

Pepin paid back handsomely in 754 when he had to rush towards Rome in order to rescue Pope Stephen from a Lombard invasion. As soon as he saw the Pope, he prostrated himself on the ground in an humble homage. Then he rose to hold the bridle of the papal horse for a few steps. He made a public promise that he would restore to St. Peter, that is, the Pope, whatever rights and territories the latter had lost. A document described as the Donation of Pepin was drawn up and deposited in the tomb of St. Peter. The Pope, in his turn, created Pepin a Patrician of the Romans, a prerogative which had been exercised so far only by the Roman Emperor.

The Donation of Pepin was confirmed by Charlemagne (767-814), the son and successor of Pepin. He also had to rush towards Rome in 774 to rescue another Pope, Hadrian I (772-795), form a renewed Lombard incursion. The Lombard power was destroyed by Charlemagne and, out of the territories recovered, he bestowed upon the Pope the Exarchate of Revenna as the first instalment of territorial transfers under the Donation of Pepin. The Duchy of Rome was a part of this Exarchate, Charlemagne also was created a Patrician of the Romans by the Pope, thus proving that his first usurpation of the Roman Emperor's prerogative was a calculated move and did not flow from a fit of forgetfulness.

The Pope Becomes An Emperor-Maker

The climax, however, came in 800 when Charlemagne returned to Rome in order to restore Pope Leo III (795-816)

whom an irate populace of the city had deposed for his many misdeeds. On Christmas Day that year, as Charlemagne knelt in prayer before the altar of St. Peter, the Pope suddenly produced a jewelled crown and placed it on the king's head. A captive audience, well-rehearsed before-hand, hailed him as "Charles the Augustus crowned by God the great" and "Emperor of the Romans." The Pope anointed him with holy oil and offered him homage so far reserved for the Roman Emperors. He had conveyed to Constantinople that the Roman Empire in the East had ceased to be Roman by falling foul of the Roman Church. Henceforward, no prince in West Europe would be accepted as Emperor unless anointed and crowned by the Pope.

This new position of the Pope received a confirmation when Charlemagne's son and successor, Louis I, who had already been crowned by his father, invited Pope Stephen IV (816-817) to come to Paris for a fresh crowning ceremony in 816. The Pope agreed to accept the invitation provided king Louis prostrated himself thrice after dismounting from the royal horse. This time the Pope brought a new and more glittering crown which, he proclaimed, had been worn by Constantine himself. The prayer offered by the Pope after the crowning ceremony was still more significant. He said: "O Christ! Ruler of the empire of the world and Master of Ages ! You have willed that Rome be the head of the earthly globe." The Pope forgot to pay to king Louis the homage which his predecessor had paid to Charlemagne, only sixteen years earlier.

The Pope Plants A Formidable Forgery

The different pieces of the drama staged by the Popes since the middle of the 8th century fell into a pattern when the notorious Donation of Constantine was made public in the middle of the 9th. It was the most formidable forgery ever fabricated by the Popes. The Popes had every reason to be audacious, once they discovered that their pretensions were being accepted promptly by the princes and people of West Europe, without suspicion or protest.

The Donation of Constantine depicted the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire prostrating himself before Pope

Sylvester I (314-335) and holding the bridle of the papal horse for a few steps. Next, the Emperor was made to take off his imperial robes and surrender them to the Pope along with other imperial insignia and symbols, including the crown, the sceptre, the globe and the lance. The Pope on his part was shown as returning the crown to Constantine who had to content himself with the Pope's condescending acceptance of the Imperial Palace, the City of Rome, the Province of Italy and the rest of the Roman Empire in the West. Finally, the Emperor was made to express a wish for removing his own seat to Constantinople because he thought himself to be too small to reside in the same city as the Successor of St. Peter.

So the ceremony performed by Pepin in the presence of Pope Stephen II was no new precedent. Pepin was only following in the footsteps of the first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire. So the promises made by Pepin about restoring St. Peter's rights and territories were no new proclamations. Pepin was only re-affirming promises made long ago by a mightier prince. So the transfer of some territory to the Pope by Charlemagne was no new transaction. Charlemagne was restoring to the Pope only a part of what rightfully belonged to the Pope. So the conferring of the imperial crown upon Charlemagne by the Pope was no innovation. That crown had been in the custody of the Pope since the conversion of Constantine, and the Pope could confer it upon whomsoever he pleased. So the Pope's claim to be the Successor of St. Peter was no new pretension. That claim had been accepted in ancient times by no less a person than Constantine.

The Forgery Exposed Too Late

The forgery was exposed for the first time in 1440 by an Italian humanist, Lorenzo Valla. He was intrigued by the mention of Constantinople in the Donation of Constantine. That city did not exist even as a future project in the year in which the document was supposed to have been deposited by the Emperor at the tomb of St. Peter.

The Donation of Pepin, however, escaped a similar scrutiny because it was never made public. The Pope had refused to show

the original document to Charlemagne who wanted to examine it before making further transfers of territory. It was to remain a dark secret for all time to come. But the ceremonies performed and public promises made by Pepin have led some historians to infer that Pope Stephen II must have shown to him some document which, if not the same, was very much similar to the Donation of Constantine.

Few people in West Europe knew in the 9th century that Constantine had never regarded the Bishop of Rome as more than a convenient minion. The Donation of Constantine was accepted as an authentic deed by all those who were concerned with Canon Law and jurisdictional claims of the Pope. The Bishop of Rome became recognised as the Successor of St. Peter, except by some sceptics who were silenced summarily as "heretics" whenever they ventilated their views.

Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church

The Roman Church in the 9th century was confined to some parts of Southern and Western Europe. Large sections of the European population in the North and the East were outside its pale. But since the scriptures described all heathens as its inheritance and all parts of the earth as its possession, the Church was fond of proclaiming itself as Catholic or Universal. The next stage which the Pope set for himself was to become the Supreme Pontiff of this "Universal" Church.

Secular sovereignty over West Europe had also been conferred upon the Pope by tbe Donation of Constantine. But there was a flaw in the argument as advanced in the document. Secular sovereignty had been surrendered to the Pope by an earthly emperor who was dead and gone. Any prince in Europe could question Constantine's right to commit successive generations of secular rulers. Perpetual sovereignty could be conferred only by Jesus Christ, the Master of the whole world and all ages.

No such fault could be found with the Pope's claim to be the Successor of St. Peter. Constantine had not conferred this position on the Pope. He had only acknowledge a pre-established

position. Moreover, that position was guaranteed by the scriptures and acclaimed only recently by powerful princes such as Pepin, Charlemagne and Louis I of France when they prostrated themselves before the Pope. It was difficult to pick holes in this part of the Pope's claim.

In any case, the Donation of Constantine in its entirety was too big a bite for the Pope to be gulped down at a single dinner session. The princes and prelates in various countries of West Europe were too powerful to surrender their age-old prerogatives simply because the Pope had published a paper proclaiming his jurisdiation. They were bound to offer a stiff resistance whenever and wherever the Pope tried to tread on their toes.

So, for the time being, the Pope had to put in cold storage his claim to secular sovereignty. In the given situation, he could press only his claim to supremacy over the Church by virtue of his being the Successor of St. Peter. Here also, he had to prepare himself more thoroughly before starting his probe for power. The abstract principles propounded so far had to be turned into concrete canons.

The False Decretals

The Pope made public another set of documents soon after the Donation of Constantine. They are now known as False or Psuedo-Isidorian Decretals because at the time of their publication they were ascribed to Isidore of Seville (560-636), a widely known and esteemed Spanish scholar and theologian. They were also to be exposed in 1440 by the same Lorenzo Valla who made short work of the Donation of Constantine. He found the Decretals interspersed with passages from St. Jerome's Latin translation of the Bible which did not exist during the period to which they were dated. The last date cited in the Decretals was 314. St. Jerome was born 26 years later and finished his translation only a few years before his death in 420. The fabricators had made a fatal mistake. But the mistake was not noticed for the next six centuries and the forgeries passed as authentic.

The collection consisted of decrees ascribed to various Popes from Clement I (88-97) to Melchiades (311- 314). Taken toge-

ther, it propounded that according to the oldest traditions and practice of the Church, the Pope alone had the power to pronounce the dogma, summon Church Councils, invest bishops, decide theological disputes, declare heresy, discipline the faithful, enact ecclesiastical legislation and entertain appeals from the clergy and the laity at all levels and in all matters which the Pope regarded as falling within the "spiritual" sphere. In short, the Decretals were designed to prop up the Pope's position as the Supreme Pontiff of the Church.

The Pope on A Probing Mission

Thus Pope Nicholas I (858-867) was fully equipped when an opportunity came his way in 862 to practise the new principles. King Lothaire II of Lorrain had divorced his queen and wished to espouse a mistress. As usual, the archbishops of his realm endorsed the royal decision. But in this case the queen appealed to the Pope. He excommunicated the archbishops. He also ordered the king to dismiss the mistress and take back the queen. The king felt outraged at this unprecedented impudence on the part of a mere priest, however eminent. He marched on Rome in order to teach a lesson to the Pope.

But the Pope refused to be cowed down by this show of force and stood the siege sitting inside his palace for several days. The king developed cold feet and made a hasty retreat. Back home, he dismissed his mistress and re-instated his queen. Superstition had prevailed over princely pride.

Next year, Pope Nicholas took on a prelate. Hincmar, the Archbishop of Reims, ranked after the Pope in the hierarchy of the Church. He dismissed a bishop who appealed to the Pope. Hincmar caved in after making some protests when Nicholas threatened to place his province under an interdict—a suspension of all Church services. He quietly re-instated the bishop. The Pope had won a second round.

This probing mission of the Pope could not proceed further after the passing away of Pope Nicholas I. From then onwards and uptil the middle of the 11th century, papacy was plagued by a long succession of degenerate Popes. But some precedents

had been established. Some weapons had been tested. The next powerful Pope could pick up the threads and make further progress.

Showdown With the Emperor

The next and the decisive showdown came in 1075. Hildebrand, a German monk who had served papacy in various capacities for 33 years, had become the Pope in 1073. He was a man of much experience and consciously in search of power. So was Emperor Henry IV, the German king of the Franconian or Salian dynasty which had taken over the imperial title from the Carolingians of France.

In February 1075, Pope Gregory led a Synod of Italian bishops to issue a decree against lay investiture. It was a message conveyed to the secular rulers in West Europe that thenceforward they were debarred from investing any bishop with ring and staff, the episcopal symbols of spiritual authority. Henry picked up the gauntlet immediately. He started by investing three bishops and ended by leading a Council of German bishops to depose the Pope on the count that the Pope had failed to obtain the consent of the Emperor before assuming his office. This had been the establisbed practice so far. The Pope hit back by excommunicating the German bishops who had attended the Council called by the Emperor. He placed the Emperor himself under a triple sentence of anathema, excommunication and deposition. It was an all-out war.

Henry was confident that the German bishops and barons would support him against the Pope. He summoned them twice to meet in a new Council and put the Pope in his place. But both times, the German aristocracy ignored his call. The barons and bishops did come together next year but only to issue an ultimatum to the Emperor that unless he obtained a pardon from the Pope, they would name his successor to the German throne. Meanwhile, the Saxons whom Henry had suppressed recently rose in revolt. The earth slipped from under the Emperor's feet. He had failed to learn the simple political lesson that feudal barons were always on the look-out for an

opportunity to defy their overlord. Most of the bishops were barons as well.

Henry had no alternative but to request the Pope for a reconciliation and start for Rome. He had been isolated in his own realm. Gregory feared perfidy and took refuge in the strong castle at Canossa in North Italy. He was convinced of the Emperor's earnest intentions only after the Emperor had waited for three days at the gates of the castle, clad only in worn-out woolen clothes and standing barefoot in the snow. The winter in the January of 1077 was one of the coldest on record. The Pope was persuaded by his counsellors to absolve the Emperor.

The Pope Wins His First Victory

But the contest between the Pope and the Emperor did not end with the humiliation of Henry IV. It was renewed immediately after. The German aristoracy had dethroned Henry and elected a new king while Henry was kowtowing to the Pope at Canossa. After watching the scene for some time, the Pope extended his support to the new king and excommunicated Henry for the second time. Henry hit back by collecting some bishops in a new Council and deposing Gregory once again.

In the civil war that broke out, the new king was killed. Henry invaded Italy, seized a large part of Rome and installed a new Pope as Clement III. Gregory took refuge in a neighbouring castle and invited the Norman king of Southern Italy for help. Henry had to leave Rome as the Norman army approached. The storm had raged for eight years when Gregory died in 1085. The only satisfaction he could have was that he had excommunicated Henry a third time.

Henry outlived Gregory by twenty years. But he did not have a moment of peace for the rest of his life. The German barons had tasted blood. They staged a wide-spread revolt till Henry was imprisoned and forced to abdicate by his son who crowned himself Henry V. Gregory's successor, Pope Paschal II (1099-1188) refused to crown Henry V as Roman Emperor unless the right to lay investiture was surrendered. The German king imprisoned the Pope but could not subdue him because

the German aristocracy continued to be recalcitrant. The conflict ended only when Henry V signed in 1122 the Concordat of Worms with Pope Callistus II (1119-1124), conceding that the Church alone had the right to invest bishops with ring and staff.

The Pope had arrived at a new stage in his theological-cum-political journey. He had become the Supreme Pontiff of the Church.

Vicar of Jesus Christ

The Concordat of Worms had conceded the right of investiture to the Church. But, at the same time, it had confirmed that wherever a bishop happened to be a baron as well, he was subordinate to his suzerain in respect of his feudal obligations. The balance between the Pope and the Emperor would have stabilised in this position if the claims of the Pope had remained confined to being Successor of St. Peter and, consequently, the Supreme Pontiff of the Church. Secular rulers in other countries of West Europe would have made a similar concession to the Pope, sooner or later.

But the Pope did not regard the Concordat as more than a tactical compromise. His strategic goal was much more ambitious. He was looking forward to reducing every state to a mere secular arm of the Church. In such a dispensation, the kings and emperors could occupy no place better than that of vassals vis-a-vis the Pope.

Pope Gregory VII had got the Donation of Constantine depicted in a series of paintings on the walls of the Secret Council Chamber in the Lateran Palace at Rome. They showed various Popes including Gregory himself sitting triumphantly with their feet resting on the prostrate bodies of secular princes. He had also reinterpreted the Donation of Constantine by dictating a statement to his secretary quite early in his reign. "The Pontiff is able," he said, "to bind and loose, to give and take away, according to the merits of each man, empires, kingdoms, duchies, countships and possession of all men."

(S.P. Cadman, *Christianity and the State,* New York, 1924, p.213).

The Pope Prepares For the Next Round

The balance of power continued to tilt in favour of the Pope throughout the 12th and the 13th centuries. Firstly, there was a succession of strong Popes who sought secular power, consciously, consistently and tenaciously. Secondly, the Crusades launched in 1095 by Pope Urban II (1088-1099) placed the Pope in the centre of the political stage. Thirdly, the volume of landed property and taxes collected by the Church, particularly the Pope, kept on increasing till the Church came to own from one-third to one-half of the land in every country. The Pope pocketed revenues which were more than the combined revenues of all secular rulers. Fourthly, the stranglehold of the Church over the common people tended to become more and more tight due to the percolation of dogma, spread of superstitions, heresy-hunting and the establishment of the Inquisition. Fifthly, the aristocracy in every country continued to grow stronger as feudal conventions became fossilized and the Pope succeeded quite often in mobilizing it against the kings. Finally, the emergence of several powerful states created mutual strife among the kings with the result that the Pope could always pit one power against the other and make all of them play his game, by turn.

The Canon Law promoted by the Pope had been competing for a long time with the civil and criminal laws enacted by the State. Pope Eugene III (1145-1153) completed the process in 1148 by publishing the *Concordia* compiled by Gratian, a monk who brought within the purview of the Church every segment of human behaviour, from birth to death. He gave a handle to the Church for interfering in every civil and criminal case. He not only made the Pope the final court of appeal in all disputes but also placed the Pope's judgement beyond scrutiny when he propounded that "Were the Pope so lost to the duties of his high station that, through negligence, he drew innumerable multitudes of the faithful with him to hell, he is not to be reproved by any man, for he is to judge mankind and not to be judged by man." *(Gratian Dectretals, P.I. Dist.* 40).

Thus, once again, the Pope was thoroughly equipped for another round with secular powers. This time it was going to be a fight to the finish, The stakes were very high.

Humiliation of the Holy Roman Emperor

Pope Hadrian IV (1154-1159) forced Frederick I Barbarossa, the second king of the Hohenstaufen dynasty of Germany, to kiss his feet before being crowned the Roman Emperor in the West. Frederick's only gain was that he added the word "Holy" to his imperial title. He was excommunicated by Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) in 1160 for trying to support his own candidate for papacy after the death of Pope Hadrian IV. The Lombard League, patronised by the Pope, organised a wide-spread revolt against the Emperor all over North Italy. Frederick suffered defeat and had to kiss the feet of Alexander's successor, Pope Lucius III (1181-1185), in 1183 in token of his second surrender.

Henry II of England Cowed Down

Meanwhile, Pope Alexander had fought a skirmish with king Henry II of England who had been blessed earlier by Pope Hadrian IV to conquer and take possession of Ireland. Thomas Beckct, the Archbishop Canterbury, had been refusing to hand over to the secular arm even hardened criminals if they happened to be priests or monks. Many a murderer had gone scot-free. Finally, the king put his foot down, which made Becket flee to France in 1164. The Pope waited till he won over the king of France to his side and then threatened king Henry with an interdict. Henry surrendered and Becket returned to England. He became more high and mighty than before and was murdered by some knights who misunderstood the king's loss of temper at the misdeeds of the Archbishop. The king was horrified. He hurried some emissaries to the Pope to plead his innocence and promised to do whatever penance was prescribed. Becket was pronounced a saint by the Pope. Henry had to walk to Becket's tomb on bare and bleeding feet and submit to flogging by the monks in attendance.

Pope Innocent III Proclaims His Intentions

Fiercer battles were fought by Pope Innocent III (1198-1216)

who is regarded by the Church as one of the greatest of medieval Popes. He started by delivering a significant sermon on the occasion of his own coronation: "Now you may see who is the servant who is placed over the family of the Lord; truly is he the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the successor of St. Peter, the Christ of the Lord; placed in the middle between God and man, on this side of God, but beyond man; less than God, but greater than man; who judges all but is judged by none." (*Innocent P. P. III, Sermon iii in Consecration.).* When he was reminded that the Pope was only the Successor of St. Peter, he said: "We are the successors of the Prince of Apostles, but we are not his vicar; nor the vicar of any man or apostle, but the Vicar of Jesus Christ himself." (Quoted by Paul Johnson in *A History of Christianity,* London, 1978, p. 197). The phrase "Vicar of Jesus Christ" which had been used by stray theologians so far with reference to the Pope had now surfaced in the public pronouncements of the Pope. He was soon to start projecting this new image of the Successor of St. Peter.

Innocent's First Encounter

Innocent had inherited a quarrel with king Philip II Augustus of France who had prevailed upon his bishops to grant him a divorce from queen Ingeborg in 1194. Pope Celestine III (1191-1198) had refused to confirm the divorce. But Philip had ignored the Pope and married his mistress Agnes in 1196. Celestine had excommunicated the king who had remained unrepentant. As soon as Innocent got installed, he commanded the king to dismiss Agnes and take back Ingeborg. The king remained adamant and threatened to embrace Islam if he was pressed further. The Pope placed France under an interdict. When the emissaries of the king arrived in Rome in 1202, seeking a settlement after four years of strife, the Pope acquainted them with his unlimited powers. "Single rulers", said the Pope, "have single provinces and single kings have single kingdoms but the Pope, as in the plenitude, so in the extent of his power, is pre-eminent over all, since he is the Vicar of Him whose is the earth and the fullness thereof, the whole world and all that dwell threin." (*Encyclopaedia Britannica,* Article on Pope Innocent III). What chance had a mere king in the face of

such a mighty monarch? He dropped Agnes and re-instated Ingeborg.

Innocent's Second Encounter

Innocent's second encounter was with king John (1199-1216) of England. Stephen Langton, though an Englishman, had lived in France for twenty-five years when the Pope commanded him to proceed to England and be sworn in as the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the meanwhile, king John had chosen another bishop for this office. He ordered Langton not to enter the country. Innocent placed England under an interdict in 1208. John replied by confiscating Church properties. Innocent excommunicated the king. John ignored the decree. Finally, in 1213, Innocent deposed the king, absolved his subjects from the oath of allegiance, and invited Philip Augustus of France to invade England. As a big French army assembled across the channel, John's barons rose in rebellion. The king caved in. He surrendered England to the Pope and received it back as a papal fife. Innocent could now claim that the king of England was his vassal. Stephen Langton was sworn in as the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Innocent Denounces Magna Carta

The sequel was equally profitable for the Pope. When the barons of England forced king John to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, Innocent declared it null and void. The barons ignored the Pope. Innocent excommunicated them. Stephen Langton refused to publish the Pope's pronouncement. Innocent suspended the Archbishop. Papal legates in England and France raised an army from Flanders and inflicted death and devastation on the barons. The barons in their plight invited Louis, the son of Philip Augustus, to come and ascend the English throne. Papal legates forbade Louis to cross the channel and excommunicated him when he disobeyed. Louis did reach London but only to face a formidable king John who had regrouped his forces in the meanwhile. John suppressed the barons with a heavy hand before he died in 1216. The Pope had proved that his vassal could seek and survive under his protection. In due course, Portugal, Aragon, Hungary and Bulgaria acknowledged them-

selves as feudal fiefs of the Pope.

Emperor's Minority, Innocent's Opportunity

The papal politics which finally destroyed the mighty Hohenstaufen dynasty of Germany was also initiated by Pope Innocent III. On the eve of Innocent's accession, the most powerful state in Europe was that of Henry VI who had succeeded Frederick Barbarossa as the Holy Roman Emperor in 1190. Henry had conquered Sicily and Southern Italy from the Normans and thus brought the whole of Italy except the Papal States under his sceptre. Austria, Bohemia, Holland, Poland, Switzerland and six provinces of France had been united to Germany under his rule. But he had died suddenly in 1197.

Henry's widow, Constance, requested Pope Innocent to become the guardian of the four-year-old Frederick II. Innocent "obliged" her in exchange for papal overlordship over Sicily and Southern Italy. Constance died soon after. Innocent made use of Frederick's minority to drive away the German prefect from Rome and German feudatories from North Italy. A member of the council of regency, appointed by Constance, protested against this violation of German rights. Innocent excommunicated him "in the name of God the almighty Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by the authority of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own." (Quoted by Paul Johnson, *Op. Cit,* p. 199). In a secret address—*Deliberatio de facto Imperii*—delivered in 1200 before the Cardinals, Innocent proclaimed that the empire belonged to the Pope who had transferred it from the Greeks to the Germans in 800.

A civil war broke out in Germany over the question of succession to Henry VI. It could have been avoided if Innocent had preferred Frederick's claim to the German throne. But he kept Frederick's claim confined to the kingship of Sicily and Southern Italy. He was out to fish in troubled waters. He supported, by turn, two other candidates and tried to extort from each the maximum advantage for the Pope. Finally, Otto IV promised to surrender to the Pope large territories in Northern and Central Italy. The promise, however, was not

fulfilled by Otto after he won with the Pope's support and was crowned after defeating his rival. Innocent excommunicated the German king. Next, the Pope made the minor Frederick sign a similar pledge as that of Otto. Frederick was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 1215 and undertook to go on a crusade. This was the scene when Pope Innocent died in 1216.

Pope Gregory IX Continues the Conspiracy

Frederick fulfilled his pledge and lived in peace with Pope Honorious III (1216-1227). He also assembled a large army and prepared to proceed to Palestine. But he fell seriously ill. Meanwhile, Pope Honorius passed away and was succeeded by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241). Frederick requested Gregory to permit a postponment of the crusade. The Pope's reply was a sentence of excommunication. Nevertheless, Frederick left for Palestine after a few months and made good progress. But that did not mollify the Pope. He absolved Frederick's subjects from the oath of allegiance and cal1ed for a general revolt against Frederick, not only in the latter's European dominions but also in places occupied by Roman Christians in the East. Papal armies overran a large part of Sicily and Southern Italy. A rumour was spread by the monks under the Pope's patronage that Frederick was dead. The Emperor had no alternative but to rush back. He recovered his lost territories and appealed to the Pope for peace as soon as he approached the frontiers of the Papal States. The Pope discovered that discretion was the better part of valour. He signed a treaty with Frederick in 1230 and withdrew the excommunication, without making any fuss.

Soon after, Pope Gregory started preparing for another showdown and promoting the Second Lombard League in North Italy. But when Frederick defeated the League in 1237, the Pope feigned neutrality and offered to mediate between the Emperor and the League. Frederick refused the offer. The Pope came out into the open and joined forces with the Emperor's enemies. In 1238, the Pope proclaimed in an encyclical that Frederick was an atheist, blasphemer and despot, out to destroy the Holy Church. He had already accused Frederick of sodomy when Frederick was in the East. Finally, the Pope

excommunicated the Emperor for the second time in 1239. Frederick was again forced to fight back. Gregory was in a precarious position when he died in 1241.

Pope Innocent IV Frustrated by Frederick II

The next Pope, Innocent IV (1243-1254), fled away from Rome. Calling a Church Council at Lyons in France in 1245, he proclaimed: "The Popes have received sovereignty not only of Heaven but of Earth. Outside the Church there is no building save Hell, and exists no power ordained by God." He warned: "Secular rulers, exercising their authority, are only using a power which has been transferred to them, and which remains latent and potential in the bosom of the Church." In this formulation, he had reduced the state to a mere secular arm of the Church.

He also excommunicated and deposed Frederick. A crusade was proclaimed against the "infidel emperor." The Pope described Frederick as "a beast filled with blasphamous words... with the feet of a bear, the mouth of an outraged lion, the rest of the body shaped like a panther... a scorpion with a sting in its tail...a dragon formed to deceive us... a poisonous serpent... the fourth beast in the book of Daniel, whose teeth are of iron and whose nails are of brass." (Quoted in Paul Johnson, *Op. Cit.,* p. 201). Crusaders were to earn the same merit by fighting against Frederick as by fighting against Muslim Turks.

Frederick also made up his mind at last. He fought back with no holds barred. The Pope took resort to treachery. He bribed Frederick's premier to betray the Emperor. The conspiracy failed and the premier paid the penalty. Next. the Pope tried to poison Frederick through the latter's trusted doctor. The plan misfired. Meanwhile, Frederick's generals had won many victories for the Emperor. The Pope was prepared to sue for peace when Frederick died in 1250, sick and exhausted. He was the greatest and most illustrious scion of the Hohenstaufen dyansty.

Frederick's death was followed by uprisings in Italy in favour of the Pope. Frederick's son and successor, Conard IV,

invaded Italy and put down the rebellion. But he died of malaria in the middle of 1254. The command now passed to Frederick's second son, Manfred, who defeated and dispersed papal armies. Pope Innocent IV died broken-hearted at the end of 1254. Manfred marched from victory to victory till he was the master of all Italy by 1260.

Pope Alexander IV (1254-1261) who succeeded Innocent IV spent his tenure in committing horrible cruelties against minor allies of Manfred who fell into his hands. He also died in despair. Finally, Pope Urban IV (1261-1264) invited Louis IX of France to accept Sicily and Southern Italy as fiefs in exchange for armed help against Manfred. Urban raised a huge loan from Florence to finance the French invasion. The French marched in with a massive force. Manfred was defeated and died fighting in 1266.

Destruction of the Hohenstaufen Dynasty

Pope Clement IV (1265-1272) who succeeded Urban IV ordered Manfred's grave dug up and got "the putrid corpse of that pestilential man" buried outside the precincts of papal territories. In 1268, Conradin, the 16-year old son of Conrad IV, fell into the hands of the Pope. He was beheaded in a public square at Naples. Manfred's daughter, Beatrice, was kept in the papal prison for eighteen years. Manfred's three sons never came out of prison. One of them was still there in 1309, having lived in a dark dungeon for forty-five years. As many as ten of Frederick's children and grandchildren died by papal violence or in papal prisons. The Hohenstaufen dynasty had been stamped out.

Pope Gregory X (1272-1276) secured the German throne for Rudolf of Hapsburg in 1273. Six years later, Pope Nicholas III (1277-1280) made Rudolf sign a declaration subordinating his royal power completely to the Pope. The Hapspurg dynasty which later on added Spain to its wide-spread domain was to remain a close ally of the Catholic Church till it was dethroned after the First World War of 1914-1918.

The Doctrine of the Two Swords

Meanwhile, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) whom the Catholic Church cherishes as its greatest theologian, had laid down his doctrine of the two swords. "The highest aim of mankind," he wrote, "is eternal happiness. To this chief aim of mankind, all earthly aims must be subordinated. This chief aim cannot be realised through human direction alone but must obtain divine assistance which is only to be obtained through the Church. Therefore, the State, through which earthly aims are obtained, must be subordinate to the Church. Church and State are as two swords which God has given to Christendom for protection; both of these are, however, given by him to the Pope and the temporal sword handed by him [the Pope] to the rulers of the State." (W.W. Willoughby, *The Nature of the State,* New York, 1928, p. 47).

The Climax and the Anti-climax

Thereafter, it was only a short step to the pronouncements of Pope Boniface VIII (1293-1303). Congratulating king Ladislas of Hungary on the latter's coronation, he conveyed: "The Roman Pontiff constituted by God above Kings and Kingdoms is the supreme hierarch of the Church militant, and has obtained principality over all mortal men." He had an opportunity very soon to exhibit his militant spirit towards Philip IV Fair of France. The French king had started taxing the properties of the Church which owned one-fourth of the land in France. In 1296, the Pope threatened in a bull to excommunicate all those who taxed Church properties without the Pope's permission. The French king ignored him. The Pope sent another bull to Philip describing himself as the Vicar of Christ and demanding submission. Philip flung the bull into fire in the presence of tbe Pope's emissary. The Pope collected a Council at Rome in 1302 and proclaimed his next and most pompous bull—*Unam sanctum*: "Both are in the power of the Church, the spiritual sword and the material. But the latter is to be used for the Church, the former by her; the former by the priest, the latter by kings and captains but at the will and by the permission of the priest. The one sword, therefore,

should be under the other and temporal authority subject to spiritual... If, therefore, the earthly power err, it shall be judged by the spiritual...But if the spiritual power err, it can only be judged by God, not by man... For this authority, though given to a man and exercised by a man, is not human but rather divine... Furthermore, we declare, define and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman Pontiff." (Quoted in Paul Johnshn, *Op. Cit.,* p. 191). Boniface loved to be preceded by two swords held aloft as symbols of his two-fold power, whenever he stirred out of his private residence.

It is a different story that two sessions of the French Parliament called by Philip in quick succession, denounced the Pope as a tyrant, sorcerer, murderer, embezzler, adulterer, sodomite, simoniac, idolator and infidel; that Philip's emissary who demanded the resignation of the Pope struck him full in the face when he showed reluctance; and that the Pope was imprisoned and starved to death. That story is a part, not of the doctrine but of the history of papacy. The Popes became puppets in the hands of Western powers after passing over the peak at the end of the 13th century. But the doctrine which they had perfected during the days of their ascendancy has remained intact down to our own days.

Pope's Pretensions Persist

It was as the Vicar of Jesus Christ that a king of criminals, Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503), pretended to be the king of the whole world and divided the earth between Portugal and Spain by drawing a line across the globe. Portugal and Spain were not in need of the Pope's sanction for claiming what their sailors had sighted and what their pirates were preparing to grab by the strength of the sword. But the Vicar of Jesus Christ could not permit human history to proceed without putting his own stamp on every event. He had to pontificate in his bulls to the kings of Portugal and Spain that "We, of our own motion, and by the fulness of Apostolical powers, do give, grant and assign to you, your heirs, and successors, all the firm lands

and Islands found or to be found, discovered or to be discovered... drawing a line from the Pole Arctic to the Pole Antarctic, from the North to the South."

It was as the Vicar of Jesus Christ that Pope Paul IV (1555-1559) issued the following bull: 'Since, by reason of the Apostolate to us divinely entrusted, the general care of the flock of the Lord devolves on us,... the Roman Pontiff, who is the vice-regent of God the Lord Jesus Christ upon earth, having plenitude of powers over nations and kingdoms, judging all and being judged by none, we decree that all persons whatsoever...be they Counts, Barons, Marquis, Dukes, Kings and Emperors, who hitherto shall be found deviating from faith. shall *ipso facto,* without any process of law or proof of fact, be deprived of the dignities as Counts, Barons, Marquis, Dukes, Kings and Emperors, altogether and absolutely, and shall be in future held to be disqualified." Never mind, if as a result of the revolt led by the Reformers, half of Europe was cocking a snook at the "Son of Satan sitting in Rome."

It was as the Vicar of Jesus Christ that Pope Pius V (l566-1572) turned his formidable face towards Queen Elizabeth of England in 1570. "He that reigneth on high," wrote the Pope, "to whom is given all the power in Heaven and in Earth hath committed the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, out of which there is no salvation, to one alone, namely to Peter, Prince of Apostles, and to the Roman Pontiff, Successor of Peter, to be governed with a plenitude of power; this one he hath constituted Prince over all nations, and all kingdoms, that he might pluck up, destroy, dissipate, ruin, plant and build." The Spanish Armada of the Hapsburgs had sailed towards the shores of England with the Roman Pontiff sitting symbolically on the mastheads. History tells us who had the last laugh.

Sovereign of the State of Vatican City

The Pope's power as the Vicar of Christ prevailed only for a brief period in the second half of the 13th century and that, too, with serious questioning from several quarters. His temporal rule over a large territory in Italy, on the other hand, had a

longer tenure. There was a time when the Papal States spread over one-third of Italy. His present status as the Sovereign of the State of Vactican city tells the story of a colossal climb-down. The Pope seeks to hide his misfortunes behind a smoke-screen of high-sounding words. There are not many people who know that according to the *World Christian Encyclopaedia* the State of the Vatican City covers no more than 0.17 square mile or 108, repeat 108, acres and that its Sovereign is no more than a stuffed museum piece.

We have seen how Pope Stephen II had tricked Pepin the Short into promising some territories to St. Peter and how Charlemagne had transferred to the Pope the Exarchate of Revenna which included the Duchy of Rome. Matilda of Tuscany had donated her domain to Pope Gregory VII in 1075. But it never became a part of the Papal States due to local resistance. Avignon in France was bought by Pope Clement VI in 1348 from Joanna, Queen of Naples and Countess of Provence. Pope Julius II acquired Bologna in 1513 and Ancona in 1532. Ferara was taken from Modena in 1598 and Urbino was bequeathed to the Pope by its last Duke. Tbe Papal States now spread from sea to sea in Central Italy. It was an area of 17,218 square miles and a population of 31,24,668 citizens.

The Pope's principility started shrinking in 1797 when Avignon had to be ceded to France and Bologna, Romagna and Ferrara to the Cis-Alpine Republic by the Treaty of Tolentio. Napoleon Bonaparte seized in 1807 sizable territories of the Pope for creating the Kingdom of Italy as a part of the French Empire. In 1808, he occupied Rome itself and pensioned off the Pope on an annuity of two million French Francs. The Pope, however, got back these territories in 1814 after the fall of Napoleon. It was the Austro- Italian war of 1859 which reduced the Papal States to an areas of 4,891 square miles with a population of 6,92,106.

Garibaldi, the great Italian revolutionary, moved into Rome in 1867. He would have thrown the Pope into the Tiber, had not Napoleon III of France sent his troops to rescue "His Holiness."

After the decline of Spain and Portugal, France had been the main prop of the Catholic Church. In turn, the Catholic Church had been a willing accomplice of French imperialism in Africa, India, Indo-China and the Chinese mainland.

But the Pope's recovery was short-lived. Victor Immanuel of Savoy, who finally united Italy into one kingdom, took over the Papal States in 1870. Next year, he made Rome the seat of the Italian government and the Quirinal Palace of the Pope became the royal residence. The Pope shut himself in the Vatican and made pathetic protests. He was rescued 58 year later by Benito Mussolini who signed a Concordat with the Pope in 1929 and recognised the small area of the Vatican as a separate state. The Duce had found the Catholic Church quite helpful in consolidating his fascist hold over Italy.

The Pope's prestige had suffered in medieval times when he mainfested his greed for more and more pieces of land as his exclusive possessions. But in his own eyes which wore theological glasses, each territorial gain represented a step towards his temporal sovereignty over the whole world in his capacity as the Vicar of Christ. History has moved forward without caring for the Pope's pretensions. There is one chance in a trillion that the Pope will ever acquire a global empire. But he is not prepared to give up his claims.

Voltaire had said that the Holy Roman Empire was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire. The same can be said with far more justification about the Sovereign of the State of Vatican City. The Pope is no sovereign and the Vatican is neither a city, nor a state.

The Vatican is No City

The Vatican can be described as a city if we stretch the definition to cover every villa with a patio, a terrace, a tennis court, a kennel, a lawn, a swimming pool and some servant quarters, enclosed within high walls and guarded by some liveried gunmen. The country-houses owned by many millionaires

around the world, particularly in the United States of America, are much bigger and brighter places.

Nor A State

Again, the "city" can be called a State only in the sense in which every multinational corporation with a sprawling head-office, staff, transport, communications, broadcasting and TV facilities, etc., is a State. In fact, some of the multinational corporations occupy more floor-space for their head-offices, have larger staffs and control wider commuuication networks.

The Pope is No Sovereign

Finally, the Pope can be accepted as a "sovereign" of this "state" in the same way as the chief executive of a business empire which maintains branch office in various countries and sends out its salesmen trotting all over the globe. They have certainly shown at least as much skill in selling spurious drugs and soaps as the Pope in palming off his superstitions on simple-minded folks.

It is reported that Stalin was requested by someone at the Potsdam Conference in 1945 to take the Pope's interests into consideration at the forthcoming post-war settlement. He had quipped: "How many divisions does the Pope have?" The Pope would not have invited that roaring ridicule if he had dropped in good time his masquerade as Sovereign of the State of Vatican City.

The masquerade could not and cannot be dropped because it is an integral part of the Christian dogma as developed by the Catholic Church in its doctrine of papacy. The Pope must continue to pretend that he is the temporal sovereign, besides being the supreme pontiff of the world. The present-day rulers are only wielding subordinate swords transferred to them by the Pope in the "plenitude of his powers" as the Vicar of Jesus Christ. The fact that the rulers care a damn about this pretentious priest does not detract from the "spiritual truth."

Summing Up

It is the funniest phenomenon of human history that though the Catholic Church has come to admit the truth about forgeries made and frauds practised by the Popes, it is not prepared to renounce the claims advanced on the basis of those forgeries and frauds. The Bishop of Rome who is successor to a long line of counterfeiters, pretenders and plain liars, continues to flaunt lables which have no relation to the facts of life. No exposure, no ridicule has helped this high-priest of falsehood to come down to earth and behave like a normal human being.

The Silly Scribes

Nor have the scribes of the Catholic Church shown any signs of sanity. They have continued not only to maintain but also to inflate the most fantastic myths about their totem. Cardinal Bellarmine lived and breathed in the late seventeenth century when the winds of humanism and rationalism had started sweeping away the superstition that is Christianity from the salons of the enlightened elite of Europe. But he used his prolific pen only in the service of puerilities. "The Catholic faith," he wrote, "teaches that every virtue is good, that every vice is bad. But if the Pope could err in commending vice and forbidding virtue, the Church would be bound to believe that vices are good and that virtues are bad." Modesty, it seems, was not a Christian virtue in the days of the great cardinal. Or had modesty become a vice because the Popes had consistently failed to practise it?

The same silly stuff has been sold by the Catholic Church in subsequent centuries. In fact, the poorer the picture the Pope has presented to the outside world, the profounder the mystery the Catholic Church has seen in his office. The first General Council of the the Vatican ended in 1870 by proclaiming the Decree of Infallibility. "We teach and define," says the Decree, "that it is a dogma divinely revealed that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*... is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that the Church should

be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that, therefore, such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not from the consent of the Church." (*Encyclopaedia Americana,* 1952, p. 252). Lest the two Latin words "*ex cathedra*" foster a fresh mystery, it may be told that the dictionaries define them as "from the Pope's throne in the consistory." We thought the consistory was made of brick and mortar and the throne assembled out of wood and cloth, maybe a little more costly than elsewhere.

Living as we do in the twentieth century, we find it difficult to swallow what Pope Pius XII (1939-1958) said about himself as late as 1949. "The Pope," he proclaimed, "is invincible. He is the proclaimer of the truth." Thank God, the press which put his speech in print did not use a capital T while composing the word "truth."

Vehicle of Western Imperialism

Having failed to establish his own empire over West Europe, the Vicar of Jesus Christ became a willing accomplice and apologist of whatever European imperialism sought his "moral" support and "spiritual" sanction. The imperialist turned courtier started signing on the dotted lines. The psychology was the same. The only thing that an imperialist power had to do was to proclaim or pretend that it shared the Pope's superstitions about himself and the world. As it happened, the superstitions were quite convenient for covering up wanton aggression, vandalism, genocide, pillage and plunder with a veneer of religious verbiage.

Stephen Neill has summed up the Pope's superstitions in the service of Western imperialism in the following five points: "(1) The Pope has the right, divinely granted, to punish offences against natural law which is written in the heart of all men. Among such offences, idolatory which is repugnant to natural conscience, is included. (2) The Pope may issue orders to non-Christian rulers to admit the preachers of the Gospel into their countries. But, in this matter, there was no reciprocity since they are in error and we are in the way of truth. (3) The Pope

is the protector of Christians everywhere *sine limitatione et personarum;* he may, therefore, take any steps that may prove to be necessary for the protection of Christians anywhere in the world. (4) If non-Christian rulers oppress their Christian subjects, the Pope has the right to deprive them of rule and authority—or rather to declare publicly the forefeiture of rights which has followed automatically on their misconduct. (5) The Pope is entitled to conquer and subdue infidel countries which have always been so." (*Colonialism And Christian Missions*, London, 1937, pp. 30-31).

Thus Western imperialists could find any number of "valid" excuses for invading whatever land they found soft and inviting after initial probes. They could have a clean conscience while picking up quarrels with whatever people happened to be weak and failed to evince enthusiam for Jesus Christ and the gibberish that went in his name. They had only to approach or pressurize the Pope for a favour and he promptly came out with his pompous Bulls. He also put at their diposal his flock of friars and monks belonging to various religious or monastic orders.

"Dogs of the Lord"

The members of these orders were a mixed lot, depending upon the way one looked at them. But what was relevant for the purposes of Western imperialism, there were quite a few among these "holy men" who were born maniacs and murderers or had become mentally deranged after years of theological brain-washing. The Pope had used them in various crusades against European pagans, as also against kings and emperors in his bid to become the Vicar of Jesus Christ. It was not an accident that the Inquisition in Europe had been entrusted to the Dominicans when it was first instituted by Pope Gregory IX in 1227. People in Europe called them *Domini Canes,* "dogs of the Lord." Arnaud, the head of the Cisterican monks, was in charge when Beziers, a town in Southern France, was stormed by the Pope's crusaders against the Albigensian "heretics." The crusaders asked Arnaud if Catholics in the town were to be spared. His answer was, "Kill them all, for God knows His own." Twenty thousand men, women and children were

massacred in a day. A still more ferocious religious order, that of the Jesuits, was in the offing when Western imperialism started on its long career.

The religious orders rallied round the imperialist enterprise as soon as the Pope gave the call at the end of the 15th century. They had been waiting for such an opportunity after the Crusades in the Middle East had come to an end. The kings of Spain and Portugal agreed to transport these "dogs of the Lord" to distant destinations, and pay for their upkeep till they managed to live off the conquered lands, 'which was not difficult. Every Spanish and Portuguese man-of-war which carried the cavalry, infantry and artillery had its quota of the "dogs of the Lord," drawn from different religious orders. They were to be the missionaries. The entire Catholic Church—the Pope, the the Roman Curia, the hierarchy and the monasteries—became appendices of the governments at Lisbon and Madrid.

Submit or Die

The story of what these monks and friars did in different countries conquered or coveted by Catholic powers has been thoroughly documented by Western historians. We need not reproduce that story. It can be relished only by those who have a taste for true tales of crime and cupidity. For others, it is no less than a nightmare. We shall only cite the *Requerimento,* the demand for submission, which the missionaries read out to the natives of Central and South America, the Caribean Islands and the West Indies, before calling upon the Spanish soldiers to start a slaughter of those who refused to submit.

"The *Requerimento,"* writes Stephen Neill, "opens with a brief account of the history of the world; states in uncompromising terms the full sovereignty of the Pope; explains that the Pope has given authority in these Islands to the king of Spain. The hearers are then summoned to recognise their situation as vassals, to receive missionaries who will be sent to them and to be converted to the Christian faith." It did not concern the missionaries that their listeners did not understand Spanish language, nor the hyperboles about the Pope, the Catholic

Church and the king of Spain. They proceeded straight to the "solemn" proclamation: "I give you warning that I shall take to the use of force and make war against you in every way that I can, and will subject you to the yoke and to the obedience of the Church and his Highnesses. And I will take you captive along with your wives and children and reduce you to slavery... and I will take possession of your goods, and do you all the harm and evil that I can as to subjects who do not obey, and who do not recognise their lord, but resist and rebel against him; and I declare that the deaths and losses which will follow on your disobedience are to be laid to your account." (*Ibid.,* pp. 43-44)

The natives had learnt very soon that submission meant being herded into closed "Christian villages." Their lands at large were promptly occupied by the invaders. Those who lived in the "Christian villages" were expected to contribute "voluntary labour" in exchange for "Christian instruction." Most of them met their "Maker" before long and were "rewarded" with a "Christian burial." Their souls were saved. As regards their bodies—were they not sinful?

So the natives took to their heels as soon as they saw some missionary take out a piece of parchment. It was sure to be the *Requerimento.* Their flight, too, was very profitable for the conquerors. The lands deserted by the natives were occupied. The houses and goods of the "god-dammed heathens" were appropriated. But what the Spaniards, both secular and religious, prized above all were the women and children of the natives.

Treatment of Native Women and Children

The Spaniards had left their own women at home. The native women were heathens. They could not be taken as lawful wives without incurring the sin of bigamy or polygamy. Even the bachelors among the "blessed race" could not marry infidel women without first converting them to "God's own creed." But that was too much bother. The natives took too long to absorb even the ABC of Christianity. So the only way

was to reduce the native women to concubines. One could have a whole harem of them without inviting "holy wrath."

The missionaries were not devoid of the "natural human warmth" for females, notwithstanding their vow of chastity. They, too, had their harems. But they were particularly fond of the "orphans" who fell into their hands, following the flight of their infidel fathers. The infants and children of tender age had no knowledge of the "sinful ways" of their parents who had become "hardened by a life-time of heathenism." The "orphans", therefore, had a splendid opportunity for being initiated in "Christian virtues." In other countries, where "orphans" were not so readily available, kidnapping of children for sale to friars and nuns was to become a commercial enterprise patronized by the Catholic Church. In Goa and other Portuguese enclaves in India, the children of every Hindu father who died were to be declared "orphans" as a matter of law, even when the mother was alive or other relatives came forward to take care.*

However liberal the missionaries might have been about their own morals, they were very strict when it came to the conduct of the natives. The standard vices of which the natives were accused most often were cannibalism and sodomy. There was no evidence that the natives suffered from these vices except the reports sent by the missionaries themselves to the "civilized world" back home. So it came to be widely believed that cannibalism and sodomy were "natural to the natives of America." Quite often, these accusations needed no proof and the natives concerned were promptly punished with death. In case the primary accustations did not work, the missionaries could cook up many more.

Paul Johnson cites the typical case of a chief brought to trial in 1539: "Arms and idols were found in his house; and his

* The Christian demand for "orphans" has been persistent. It has accompanied Christian missionaries wherever they have gone. Mother Teresa's love for "orphans" springs from the same dark source, though it has taken a somewhat modified expression in the changed circumstances of today.

ten-year-old son... gave evidence against him. The chief, Ometochtzin, known as 'Don Carlos Mendoza', said in his deposition that the various orders of friars and seculars had different dress and rules; that everyone had his own way of life; so had the Indians and they should not be obliged to give it up; he also argued that many Spaniards were drunkards and scoffed at religion. He was condemned to death." (*Op. Cit.,* pp. 402-403). Ometochtzin was a spokesman of religious pluralism.

Destruction of Pagan Shrines

Religious shrines of the natives attracted immediate attention of the missionaries. The Aztecs of Mexico and Mayans of Peru had built massive temples. Every single one of them was destroyed. "From the time of Juan de Zumarraga, first Bishop of Mexico, a great destroyer of religious antiquities, a systematic attempt was made to erase all traces of pre-Christian cults. Writing in 1531, he claimed that he personally had smashed over 500 temples and 20,000 idols." (Paul Johnson, *Op. Cit.,* p.402). Nor did the secular buildings escape this vandalism. Whatever relics we have today of these two old civilizations are ruins covered with jungle.

Not So Easy in Asia

The missionaries who went with the Portuguese pirates to the various countries of Asia, could not match the performance of their brethren who were working with the Spaniards on the other side of the globe. The Asian countries were not inferior in the art of warfare on land. Nor could the guardians of great religions like Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Shintoism be easily confused by Christian casuistries. The missionaries could prescribe use of force only in small coastal pockets which passed under Portuguese control due to the latter's supremacy over the seas. Elsewhere, they could only try some tricks, which did not work well.

St. Francis Xavier Fixes His Gaze on China

The king of Portugal approached Pope Paul III (1534-1549) to commission the services of some competent missionary in

order to survey the Asian scene. The Pope chose Francis Xavier of the newly formed Society of Jesus. Francis Xavier was a Spaniard. But king Jonn III of Portugal reposed full confidence in him and appointed him Inspector of Missions in the East. This man had the eagle eyes of a born imperialist.* Paul Johnson writes that he "regarded China as the key to the Christianization of Asia." (*Op. Cit.*, p. 412). He died before he could step into the "promised" land. But it seems that he had shared his thoughts with his "comrades in Christ." Ever since, China had loomed large in Jesuit eyes.

Jesuits Plan to Invade China

Their hope of putting a grand plan into action seemed to materialise when the Spaniards conquered the Philippines in 1560. Paul Johnson proceeds: "In 1586, Father Alonso Sanches S.J. produced a prosposal for the conquest of China and its re-education into Christianity. He calculated that 10,000-12,000 men should be sent from Europe, 5,000-6,000 natives recruited in Manila, and a similar number in Japan. The main invasion force was to set out from Manila, while a concerted attack was to be launched by the Portuguese from Macao and Canton. This project, conceived almost at the same time as the Armada against England, was supported by the governor, bishop and council of Manila... The Bishop of Manila begged Philip II [of Spain] to give his approval: 'Not even Julius Caesar or Alexander the Great had an opportunity such as this. And on the spiritual plane, nothing greater was ever projected since the time of the Apostles'." (*Op. Cit.,* pp. 418-419). It is a different story that the plan could not be implemented because the Spanish Armada met a disaster on the shores of England. The minions of the Pope had revealed the way their fevered brains were functioning.

What the Christians in general and Catholics in particular did to the people of China in the 19th century is a very painful story. The Pope became a drum-beater for Nepoleon III of France and the missionaries in China did no end of mischief.

* For a fuller account of this missionary, see *St. Francis Xavier* : *The Man And His Mission* by Sita Ram Goel, Voice of India, 1985

This part of the Pope's servitude to Western imperialism has been very well documented. The late K.M. Panikkar has told it in detail in his book, *Asia and Western Dominance* (1953), and invited many invectives from the missionaries.

Wrongs Done to Viet Nam

The apologists for the Pope are in the habit of pleading that the past of the Pope should not be resurrected in order to pass judgment on him in the present. The Catholic Church, they point out, has candidly admitted its lapses in the past and expressed regrets over them. That, according to them, should be the end of the matter. We wonder what they have to say about the Pope's performance in Viet Nam as late as the second half of the twentieth century. We hope the apologists do not characterize that period as "the past." And we are not aware of any regrets expressed over that performance either by the Pope or by his Catholic Church.

The *World Christian Encyclopaedia,* 1982 reports: "On 19 August 1945 Ho Chi Minh declared independence in the prerence of 3 of the 4 Vietnamese bishops, the fourth failing to arrive only due to lack of transport. The 4 bishops sent a letter to Pope Pius XII and Catholics throughout the world, requesting support for this declaration. Bishop Le Huu Tu of Path Diem was appointed a member of the Supreme Council and Ho Chi Minh addressed a Christmas message to Catholics ...In 1946, admiral Thierry d' Argenlieu (a priest of the Discalced Carmelite order) was appointed commander of the French expeditionary forces. He bombarded Haiphong and proclaimed. the autonomy of Cochin-China (the southern third of South Viet Nam) as a separate republic. Seeking Catholic support, he presented himself as the defender of Christian civilization.. Bishop Le Huu Tu formed Catholic militias in the dioceses of Phat Diem and Buichu, who were armed by the French to fight against the Viet Minh. Appointed as force for self-defence and joining the French in the fight against Ho Chi Minh, the militias were led by a priest, Hoang Quynh, and numerous priests held the rank of commanders. At the end of 1950, general de Lattre de Tassigny was named governor general. Going first to Rome where he was received by Pope Pius XII,

he requested the appointment of an apostolic delegate to Hanoi and the condemnation of Communism by the Vietnamese episcopate. Pius XII blessed the 'French army which defends Christian civilization in Viet Nam' and the apostolic delegate in Bangkok was appointed to Hanoi. On 9 November 1951, following a plenary meeting of the episcopate in Hanoi, a declaration was issued from the espiscopate calling to mind the condemnation of Communism by the Holy Office." (pp. 744-745).

Catholic Tyranny in South Viet Nam

The French were defeated in 1954 and the Americans took over in 1955. The Catholic Church urged its flock to migrate to the South. Some 40% of the Catholic population in the North migrated—71% of all priests and 6 out of 10 bishops. The U.S.A. provided ships for the exodus and 93 million dollars for the resettlement of "refugees" in the South. The Catholics in South Viet Nam now formed 10% of the total population. Diem, a Catholic, was installed as president. By 1970, 50% of the seats in the National Assembly, 60% in the Senate, and the presidency of both the houses were held by Catholics. More than 50% senior officers in the army and police were Catholics. All the three political parties were dominated by Catholics. How the Buddhist majority in South Viet Nam was oppressed by the Catholic regime and how some Buddhist monks burnt themselves alive in order to draw world attention towards their plight, is too well-known to be retold.

IV

POPE'S EMPIRE IN INDIA

The euphemism for the Pope's empire in this country is "the Catholic Church of India."

It is divided into three communities according to the Rites, that is, Church ceremonies observed by them—Latin, Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankar.

The majority observes the Latin Rite of the Roman Church. The adherents of the other two Rites are more or less confined

to Kerala and are known as Syrian Christians. They are descendants of Christian migrants from the Middle East who settled in Malabar at different times before the arrival of the Portuguese.

St. Thomas Christians

So far as recorded history and archaeological evidence goes, the Syrian Christians came mostly from Persia after Persia's persistent rival, the Roman Empire, embraced Christianity and Christians in the Persian Empire became politically suspect. They settled down in the prosperous port towns on the Malabar Coast and took to trade, particularly in spices. Fresh waves of Christian refugees from Roman and Persian persecutions came in subsequent centuries, seeking shelter with their well-settled co-religionists.

Like their predecessors, the Jews, and their successors, the Parsis, the Christian refugees found no cause for complaint in India. The local rajas gave them land for building their places of worship. They intermarried with the local people and took to Indian habits of food and drink. Their mode of worship also absorbed some Indian forms and rituals. They became so naturalised in course of time that early European travellers found it hard to distinguish them from their heathen neighbours.

Syrian Christians Reveal Their True Character

But when Vasco da Gama arrived in Cochin on November 7, 1498, the Syrian Christians rallied round him in warm welcome. Some time earlier, Vasco da Gama had bombarded Calicut when the Samudrin (Zamorin) ruler of that place refused to be dictated by him. He had plundered the ships bringing rice to the city and cut off the ears, noses and hands of the crews. The Zamorin had sent to him a Brahmin envoy after securing Portuguese safe-conduct. Vasco da Gama had cut off the nose, ears and hands of the Brahmin and strung them round his neck together with a palm-leaf on which a message was conveyed to the Indian king that he could cook and eat a curry made from his envoy's limbs.

"The Christians of the Syrian Church," writes K.M. Panikkar, "had been treated generously by Hindu Rulers who had allowed them to live without molestation or interference. Even Gouvea, the biographer of Meneses, states that 'their privileges were most religiously guarded by native rajas.' They lived in religious matters under their own Metrans. And yet, though the Hindu Rulers had treated them like this, at the very first opportunity, they hastened to disclaim their allegiance and to accept the sovereignty of the king of Portugal .. *Kerala Pazhama* gives detailed information about their visit to Gama which account is also corroborated by Faria. They surrendered their privileges and authority to Portugal and undertook to conduct their affairs in the name of the king of Portugal. The ancient records and insignia which their chief possessed were also handed over to Gama. More than this, they suggested to him that with their help he should conquer the Hindu kingdoms and invited him to build a fortress for this purpose in Cranganore. This was the recompense which the Hindu Rajahs received for treating with liberality and kindness the Christians in their midst." (*Malabar and the Portuguese,* Bombay, 1929, pp.148-185.)

We have a saying in this country about feeding milk to a snake. The Syrian Christians provide an illustration. There is a potent poison in the core of Christianity. It divides mankind into hostile camps. The poison may become dormant under unfavourable circumstances. But it never fails to surface when conditions become congenial. The fond belief, entertained in some quarters, that Christianity can shed this poison if it borrows the outer trappings of Hindu life and worship, is a dangerous illusion.

Syrian Christians and the Jesuits

The Syrian Christians lived to regret their love for their "Christian brethren." They were disillusioned when the Jesuits asked them to accept the Pope as their Supreme Pontiff and observe Roman ceremonies in their Churches. They resisted when the Jesuits started forcing the Latin Rite and a Roman hierarchy upon them and preventing their bishops from Babylon

to come and visit them at intervals. Ahatalla who had come from Mesopotamia as the Metropolitian of the Syrian Church in India was imprisoned by the Jesuits when he refused to come round, taken to Goa for being tried by the Inquisition and burnt alive in 1653. The quarrel between the Syrian Christians and the Jesuits continued for a long time, till the Portuguese power declined in India and the Pope recognised Syro-Malabar and Syro-Malankar as separate Rites within the Catholic Church. Even then, many Syrian Christians opted to remain independent.

Mythology of St. Thomas

That is the whole story of Syrian Christians in India according to recorded facts of history. But the Catholic Church has a version of its own. We are told that the first Christian Church in India was founded by St. Thomas, one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. Some Catholic scholars have been busy for many years, marshalling literary and archaeological evidence in an effort to prove that St. Thomas came to India in 52 A.D., converted some Hindus in the South, and was killed by the Brahmins at Mylapore in Madras while giving the Good News to the local people. Most Syrian Christians, we are told, may not be the descendants of those converts of the first century. But since a Church founded by St. Thomas already existed in the country, all subsequent Christians became its members automatically. The Protestants do not agree. But they readily join the Catholics in describing the Syrian Christians as St. Thomas Christians. It is becoming rarer and rarer in books written by Christian historians in recent years to find a mention of Syrian Christians. "St. Thomas Christians" is the refrain we meet, most often.

It would be a waste of time to present the pros and cons of this controversy which tends to become more and more technical. Suffice it to say that some historians have seriously doubted the very existence of an apostle named St. Thomas. Distinguished scholars like R. Garbe, A. Harnack and L. de la Vallee Poussin have denied credibility to the *Acts of Thomas,* an apocryphal work, on which the whole story is based. Some others, who accept the fourth century Catholic tradition about the travels

of St. Thomas, point to the lack of evidence that he ever went east beyond Ethiopia and Arabia Felix. The confusion, according to them, has arisen because the ancient geographers often mistook these two countries for India.

The whole subject has been examined recently by Stephen Neill in his *History of Christianity in India: The Beginnings to 1707 A. D.* published by the Cambridge University Press, England, as late as 1984. He says: "A number of scholars, among whom are to be mentioned with respect Bishop A.E. Medlycott., J. N. Farquhar and the Jesuit J. Dahlman, have built on slender foundations what can only be called Thomas romances, such as reflect the vividness of their imaginations rather than the prudence of rigid historical critics." (p.27) Pained by the spread of this spurious history among large sections of Indian Christians, he observes: "Millions of Christians in India are certain that the the founder of their church was none other than apostle Thomas himself. The historian cannot prove it to them that they are mistaken in their belief. He may feel it right to warn them that historical research cannot pronounce on the matter with a confidence equal to that which they entertain by faith." (p.49). Stephen Neill who died recently, was a Bishop who had spent long years in India.

Motives for Floating the Myth

The manufacturers of this myth about St. Thomas may be asked a simple question: What difference does it make whether Christianity came to India in the first or the fourth century? Why raise such a squabble when no one denies that the Syrian Christians of Malabar are old immigrants to this country?

The matter, however, is not so simple as it sounds at first. Nor can the scholarly exercise be understood easily by those who have not been initiated in the intricacies of Catholic theology.

Firstly, it is one thing for some Christian refugees to come to a country and build some churches, and quite another for an apostle of Jesus Christ himself to appear in flesh and blood for spreading the Good News. If it can be established that Christian-

ity is as ancient in India as the prevailing forms of Hinduism, no one can nail it down as an imported creed brought in by Western imperialism.

Secondly, the Catholic Church in India stands badly in need of a spectacular martyr of its own. Unfortunately for it, St. Francis Xavier died a natural death and that, too, in a distant place. Hindus, too, have persistently refused to oblige the Church in this respect in spite of all provocations. The Church has to use its own resources and churn out something. St. Thomas, about whom nobody knows anything, offers a ready-made martyr.

Thirdly, the Catholic Church can malign the Brahmins more confidently. Brahmins have been the main target of its attack from the very beginning. Now it can be shown that the Brahmins have always been a vicious brood, so much so that they would not stop from murdering a holy man who was only telling God's own truth to a tormented people. At the same time, the religion of the Brahmins can be held responsible for their depravity.

Fourthly, the Catholics in India need no more feel uncomfortable when faced with historical evidence about their Church's close cooperation with the Portuguese pirates in committing abominable crimes against the Indian people. The commencement of the Church can be disentangled from the advent of the Portuguese by dating the Church to a distant past. The Church was here long before the Portuguese arrived. It was a mere coincidence that the Portuguese also called themselves Catholics. Guilt by association is groundless.

Lastly, it is quite within the ken of Catholic theology to claim that a land which has been honoured by the visit of an apostle has become a patrimony of the Catholic Church. India might have been a Hindu homeland from times immemorial. But since that auspicious moment when St. Thomas stepped on her soil, the Hindu claim stands cancelled. The country has belonged to the Catholic Church from the first century onwards, no matter how long the Church takes to conquer it completely for Christ.

There is only one note which the Catholic Church misses most in this elegy. It cannot prove that "the sacred bones of the great saint" are buried inside India. Those who have spread the myth have themselves recorded that the bones were dug up and taken to some distant destination. According to one story, the bones were taken away to Edessa in Syria by some second-century devotees of the saint. According to another, the Portuguese pilfered them in the 16th century and nobody knows where they are at present.

Catholic Church Imposed upon India

The record in respect of how the Catholic Church was imposed upon India by papal Bulls and Portuguese bayonets, is equally impeccable. It can neither be wished away, nor tailored to the current needs of the Church. There was a time when the Popes and the kings of Portugal were not at all secretive about their plans and methods.

The Catholic Church of India started taking shape when Pope Nicholas V (1447-1455) proclaimed two Bulls on June 18, 1452 conferring upon the "king of Portugal and his successors full authority to invade, conquer, subdue and subject all kingdoms and territories of the unbelievers, and to reduce these peoples to perpetual subjection as a sign of the triumph of the Catholic faith over its enemies." He followed it up by another Bull on January 8, 1455 authorising "the king of Portugal and his successors to found in all these provinces conquered or yet to be conquered, churches, monasteries and other places of pious usage, and to convey thither ecclesiastical persons whether religious or secular or members of the recognised mendicant orders."

On June 21, 1481, Pope Sixtus IV (1471-1484) confirmed all the privileges given to the king of Portugal and his successors by the previous Popes. He added that "Spiritual power and authority from Cape Bojador and Nam as far as the Indies belongs to Portugal in perpetuity." Finally, Pope Alexander VI (1492-1503) issued the famous Bull, *Inter Caetera,* on June 28, 1493, dividing the world between Spain and Portugal. In this

arrangement, India fell to the share of Portugal, along with the whole of Africa, South East Asia and the Far East.

Under the Padroado or the right of patronage granted by the Pope to the king of Portugal, "Portugal would exercise control over the dioceses, and this included keeping a watch on the finances provided for this purpose by the crown." The king of Portugal was to appoint the bishops. The Pope was to confirm the appointments. In the words of K.M. Panikkar, "With the Portuguese, Christianization was a state enterprise." (*Asia and Western Dominance,* London, 1953, p.380).

The Catholic Church was *carted* into India by the eight Franciscan friars who landed at Calicut in 1500 in the company of Pedro Alvares Cabral, captain of the second Portuguese expedition. Their leader was Friar Henry of Coimbra. Cabral was cold-shouldered by the Zamorin who remembered what the first Portuguese captain had done two years earlier. He was feeling unsafe in the hostile environment. But Friar Henry was full of happiness. He had succeeded in tempting a few Hindus led by a Brahmin. The Catholic Church had been imposed on the Indian soil at last.

Character of the First Indian Catholic

It speaks volumes about the character of Christianity that the very first man among the first converts became a Portuguese spy immediately after espousing the new faith. "Among the converts of Friar Henry," writes G.M. Moraes, "was a Brahman who took at his baptism the name of Miguel de Santa Maria and wished to go to Portugal. Cabral found Miguel very useful in his critical situation because it was Miguel who initiated him into local politics. Cabral learnt from him that there was keen rivalry between the Zamorin and other coastal princes of Malabar and that his repulse at Calicut would be an inducement for these powers to entertain the Portuguese at their capitals." *(A History of Christianity in India,* Bombay, 1964, p.127). The Catholic Church of India had hoisted its own true colours.

Dregs of Hindu Society

Compared to the pace of the Portuguese territorial conquests

along the West Coast of India, the progress of the Catholic Church was not commendable, in spite of more and more missionaries being marshalled by the Pope in Portuguese-occupied ports and friendly places like Cochin. Hindus at large were showing great aversion to Christianity accompanied as it was by wanton violence, loud-mouthed outpourings of the friars against everything which the Hindus cherished, killing of Brahmins and cows wherever the newcomers had no fear of reprisals, the extremely unhygienic habits of the Portuguese including their "holy men", and the drunken revelries in which they all indulged very frequently. The only people who associated with the *paranghis* were prostitutes, pimps and similar characters living on the fringes of Hindu society.

The quality of the converts also tended to become poorer and poorer. The Portuguese had put pressure on the local rajas to sign treaties which placed all Christians under Portuguese jurisdiction. Many criminals embraced Christianity to escape punishment. The lewd women who lived with the Portuguese sailors and soldiers did not mind being baptised when the friars promised that they could marry their paramours if they became Christians. Beggars and vagrants in search of material gain became Christians, only to desert it after a short duration. Portuguese prisoners of war got converted in order to secure their freedom and join their own folk out of reach for the foreigners. The fishermen along the Portuguese-dominated coast were forced to pay lip service to the Only Saviour when the Portuguese threatened to confiscate or destroy their catamarans and otherwise prevent them from going out to the sea.

Christians of Convenience

The Portuguese Viceroy had put ample finances at the disposal of the friars. They used some of it to purchase orphans. But the trade did not pick up. Next, they tried the temptation on the Panikkars of Cochin who were teachers of the art of warfare. It was hoped that the Panikkars would bring their Nair pupils along with them into the Christian fold. Some Panikkars agreed to be baptised in exchange for half a *fanam* per day, which was their usual salary in those days. But it was soon discovered

that the Panikkars were believers only so long as they lived in the Portuguese quarters. Back home, they "lapsed into heathenism."

Portuguese Pressure on a Prince

Albuquerque, the Portuguese Viceory, was commanded by the king of Portugal to put pressure on the raja of Cochin to become a Christian. The raja had mounted the throne with Portuguese help against a rival supported by the Zamorin of Calicut. It was expected that the raja will be followed into the fold by his subjects.

"Albuquerque told the prince," writes G.M. Moraes, "that the king of Portugal bore him great love and affection, and having secured for him the throne, was now desirous of providing for his future salvation. The rajah quickly grasped Albuquerque's meaning and said in reply that Our Lord had agreed that in that strip of land below the mountains—Malabar—the Hindus should live undisturbed according to their customs. If that were the case, answered Albuquerque, it could have been impossible to come across the name of Jesus Christ in Malabar or His Cross or the Christian settlements and Churches—knowing that He had suffered to redeem mankind in Jerusalem at long distance from Hindusthan. The rajah agreed that it was so, and Albuquerque, continuing, asserted that the customs which the people followed in Malabar were both erroneous and vicious and were fraught with dangers to life here and the salvation of the soul hereafter... After a great deal of reflection, the king replied that the issue did not admit of a quick decision, and had to be considered at leisure. He then asked Albuquerque if he had broached the subject to the rajahs of Calicut and Cranganore as well. Albuquerque answered that on account of his great love for him, the king of Portugal wished to honour him first... The interview concluded with Albuquerque telling the rajah that in the event of his not coming to a decision, he should leave the Portuguese free to select a prince who would be more agreeable to the king's proposal." (G.M. Moraes, *Op. Cit.,* pp. 140-141). Albuquerque could not carry out the

threat because he died soon after. But he had demonstrated how, given an opportunity, Christianity could bare its fangs.

"Rigour of Mercy"

Furstrated on all sides, the missionaries advised their masters, the Pope and the king of Portugal, that the only way left for imposing Christianity firmly on Indian soil was the Rigour of Mercy to be employed wherever the Portuguese exercised absolute power over their subjects. This was a euphemism for the use of force for the spread of Christianity. The Pope agreed and the king of Portugal issued orders accordingly. Once again, it is a very well-documented story. Hundreds of Hindu temples in Portuguese possessions were demolished and churches were built out of the debris. The lands and other incomes attached to temples were transferred to the churches. It was made a crime punishable with consfiscation of property and imprisonment to make images of Hindu Gods and Goddesses or to worship them even in private homes. Hindus were prohibited to celebrate their religious and social ceremonies. Hindu sannyasins and yogis were forbidden to enter Portuguese territories. Brahmins were forced to attend church services compulsorily on Sundays. It was made increasingly difficult for Hindus to live in their ancestral homes by depriving them of the means of livelihood. Their places in trade and services were reserved for converts who were provided with many other incentives. Hindu laws of inheritance were altered so that a convert could claim a share of the parents' properties during their life-time. Hindu women who married Christians and got converted were offered rich dowries. Those who deserted their husbands for the new faith could get a share in the family property. Every Hindu child whose father died was declared an orphan and taken away forcibly by the friars. Mothers and relatives refusing to part with the infants or hiding them away were severely punished. Hindus who removed their images to neighbouring kingdoms or went to worship them outside Portuguese possessions were liable to lose their civic rights and properties. There were many other ways in which Hindus were humiliated and converts enabled to strut around as lords of all they surveyed.

The Inquisition

Most Hindus resisted the onslaught and suffered the consequences. Portuguese possessions started losing their Hindu population rapidly. But some Hindus agreed to become baptised in a bid to protect their lives and properties. The missionaries who had created a spying network found out very soon that these were conversions of convenience and that the converts continued to practise their ancestral faith in secrecy. The only remedy known to the missionaries for such renegades was the Inquisition which had been functioning in Spain and Portugal for quite some time. The Dominicans who had joined the Franciscans in some strength in 1548 were invited to man this dreadful institution at Goa. The toll it took in terms of torture, torn limbs, burning at the stake and languishing in jails for a life-time, was terrible. This part of the story has also been documented, particularly by A.K. Priolkar in *The Goa Inquisition* (1961).

St. Francis Xavier, the Star Performer

And the star performer in this devil dance staged by the Catholic Church, in the very first phase of its arrival in India, was St. Francis Xavier. The Catholic Church cherishes him as the most outstanding missionary who ever came to the East. He was born in a rich feudal family of Spain. He was the second most important member, after Ignatius Loyola, of the newly founded Society of Jesus (l534). He was close to the Pope who appointed him "Apostolic Nuncio to the islands of the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean as well as to the provinces and places of India this side of the Ganges and beyond the promontory called the Cape of Good Hope." The king of Portugal appointed him the Royal Inspector of Missions with the privilege to write directly to the king. The Portuguese Viceroy at Goa welcomed him as if he was a scion of some royal dynasty. Small wonder that to the Portuguese in India, friars and all, he looked like a colossus striding over the earth. They invested him with a monopoly of wisdom and accepted his dictates with servile deference.

St. Xavier surveyed and confirmed the policies which the Portuguese had pursued for the destruction of Hinduism, prior to his arrival in 1542. He laid down the new and more drastic policies which were to be pursued towards the same end thereafter. It was he who proposed to the king of Portugal that the Inquisition should he set up at Goa. It was he who urged upon the king to use the secular arm more decisively in the service of the Church, Persecution of Hindus in Portuguese possessions became more ferocious after the brief stay of this "saint" in South India.

Pioneer of Anti–Brahmin Campaign.

The missionaries had sensed from the very first that it was the Brahmin who stood in their way of breaking the barriers of Hindu society. But it was St. Xavier who made anti-Brahminism the central theme of his missionary thrust. "These are," he wrote, "the most perverse people in the world... they never tell the truth, but think of nothing but how to tell subtle lies and to deceive the simple and ignorant people...the poor simple people do exactly what the Brahmins tell them...If there were no Brahmins in the area, all Hindus would accept conversion to our faith." (Quoted by Stephen Neill, in his *History of Christianity in India, p.146*). After that, the killing and persecuting of Brahmins became the principal programme of the Portuguese. It became such a scandal as to be noticed specifically in the treaty which the Nayakas of Keladi in Karnatak signed with the Portuguese in 1671. The treaty laid down that the Portuguese shall not force conversions, nor take orphans, nor kill Brahmins.

Legacy of St. Xavier

Brahmin-baiting did not die with the death of St. Xavier, nor did it disappear with the decline of Portuguese power. It became a part of missionary mumbo-jumbo, Catholic as well as Protestant, for all time to come. The tune has been picked up in course of time by the Hindu intelligentsia in general and Hindu scholars in particular. Succeeding generations of the Hindu educated elite have lapped up the missionary lore about what goes in the name of Brahminism. In fact, "Brahminism" has

become a synonym for all that is primitive, puerile, crafty, cruel and oppressive. Partial expressions of the vast vision of *Sanatana Dharma* such as Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism have been presented as progressive rebellions against the "caste-ridden, ritualistic and exploitative social system prescribed by Brahminism." One does not have to read any Hindu scriptures or history to learn what the Brahmins really thought and did. One has only to denounce "Brahminism" and one passes with flying colours as an embodiment of enlightenment and progressivism. "Anti-Brahminism" has become a weapon in the hands of every Hindu-baiter, thanks to the legacy left by St. Francis Xavier.

A Horror Becomes a Holy Relic

It is a measure of the Catholic Church's "dissociation" from Portuguese misdeeds that a plaster cast of this pirate dressed as a priest is being presented as a holy relic in a basilica at Goa, and pious people are being invited to it as a place of pilgrimage. The Pope has proclaimed this blood-thirsty fanatic as the Patron Saint of the Indies. The Pope's definition of moral delinquency is obviously quite different from that entertained by the "ignorant and simple people."

The Mission Multiplies

As the stories of India's riches reached European ears, all sorts of adventurers became eager to visit the land and share in the loot. But the Portuguese held a monopoly of sailing on the Eastern seas. The only way some of the adventurers could sail for India was by joining the religious orders and presenting themselves in Lisbon as missionaries.

The Portuguese were pretty jealous about their Padroado. They were also paying for the Mission in the East. Every candidate had to get clearance from them. The Pope could play only a recommendatory role. The Portuguese saw to it that no one embarked for the East except from the port of Lisbon.

The missionaries in the 16th century were recruited from four religious orders—Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinians. Their field of activity was confined to Portuguese possessions or pockets of Portuguese influence on the Malabar and

Coromandel coasts. They worked hand in glove with Portuguese governors.

But as the number of missionaries multiplied over the years, some of them started looking for fresh pastures, farther afield. There were only 16 Franciscans in 1525. Their number increased to 600 in 1635. The Jesuits were 349 in 1584. Their number rose to 400 in 1639. The number of Augustinians who sailed from Lisbon in 1572 was 129.

The Franciscans and Dominicans did not move out of Malabar. They were more interested in demolishing Hindu temples, building churches and burning heretics and renegades than in winning converts in inconvenient places where the Portuguese could provide no protection. The Augustinians chose Bengal as the principal field of their work. Here the Portuguese pirates dominated the sea and the river waters from then bases in Chittagong in Bengal and Arakan in Burma.

It was the Jesuits who showed a great spirit of enterprise. They were fired with the zeal of new entrants into holy orders. They established a mission at Alleppey in Malabar in 1570. They sent their first mission to Akbar at Agra in 1580. Two more Jesuit missions reached the Mughal court at intervels upto 1597. By the beginning of the 17th century, the Jesuits had started their Madurai and Mysore missions.

Their repeated attempts to convert first Akbar and then Jahangir were their boldest bids. Each time, the mission reported imminent success with bursting optimism. Each time, their hopes ended in bitter disappointment. The Jesuits were under the impression that they had only to convert the Great Mughal and he would do the rest with his sword. This was what had happened in country after country of Europe. The Jesuits had scant acquaintance with Indian history. They did not know that a succession of bigoted and belligerant sultans since 1206 had failed to convert India into an Islamic country.

Failure of Early Missionary Methods

The earlier missionaries in India had no knowledge of Hindu religion or culture. They were completely blinded by their zeal

for their own creed. They were full of confidence that once they retailed to the "ignorant Ghentoos" the stories of Christ's miraculous birth, death and resurrection, the "heathens" would be hell-bent upon getting baptised. To them, the "truths" of Christianity were self-evident. They could not understand why those "truths" should not satisfy one and all. Having lived all their lives in their private world of make-believe, they had no notion of the world outside.

So they took their stand in public places and unburdened themselves of their enthusiasm. Some Hindus who were not in a hurry enjoyed the show, particularly the funny dress, the hybrid language and the quaint accent. Then they went away without asking a single question. The missionaries thought the Hindus were a pretty dull-witted people.

Some of the missionaries felt infuriated at what they deemed to be the Hindu's amused indifference. They denounced Hindu religion, culture, society, mores and manners in an increasingly foul language. The "sinners" were threatened with hell-fire unless they "repented." Hell has been the stock-in-trade of Christianity. The missionary minds were running riot in depicting the horrors of their pet place.

But though the Fathers foamed at the mouth and veered towards the verge of madness, the Hindu continued to smile indulgently. To an average Hindu, saintliness signified a calm self-possession and contemplative silence. The paroxysms of these strangers could only amuse him, whenever they did not leave him dead cold.

In due course, the missionaries drew the only conclusion their closed minds were capable of. Valignano was a great organiser of Jesuit missions in the East. In a letter written by him in 1582 to his Father General at Rome, he observed that "the native needed to be treated with a stick and the use of force in order to make something out of him." (*Indian Church History Review,* June 1985, p.13).

Two Strategies Discussed

The more realistic missionaries, however, were trying to evolve some suitable strategy to meet the situation. There was a

debate among them as to which class of Hindus should be tackled first and in what manner so as to gain quick results.

The experience from Europe pointed to the princes. If the rulers could be caught in the net, the subjects were bound to follow suit. A few princes in Malabar had manifested some hopeful interest in Christianity. The missionaries did not want to believe that the interest was entirely a result of Portuguese pressure. Left to themselves, the princes did not care a fig for the new, strange creed. Nor did the missionaries understand that Hindu society was not divided into high and mighty lords on the one hand, and helpless and cringing serfs on the other, even though several princes had emphasized it again and again that they by themselves could not commit their people to a change of faith.

Another school of missionaries had its eyes fixed on the poorer class of Hindus. They thought it easy to lead them into the fold by the lure of material gains. Their success with some fishermen confirmed them in their belief. But as they tried their tricks in places where the fishermen had no fear of Portuguese reprisals, they found that the poor were even less inclined towards this creed. The poor had self-respect and an abiding faith in their own religion. Of course, there were some clever guys among the poor people who turned back the game of deception on the missionaries themselves. They pitted one missionary against another, making them bid a better and better price for baptism. Then they walked away with whatever they could get. But what bothered the missionaries most was the unsatisfactory "spiritual condition" of the few converts they gained among the poorer classes. Whenever the Fathers visited their newly-found "sons" they saw the latter worshipping Hindu Gods and Goddesses !

Robert Di Nobili Tries Fraud

It was in the midst of this mounting frustration that Robert Di Nobili embarked on a new experiment. He was a Jesuit from Italy who had joined the Madurai Mission in 1606. He could see that the key to the fortress of Hindu society was neither the prince nor the pauper, but the Brahmin. Here he was in

complete agreement with St. Francis Xavier regarding the central place the Brahmin held in Hindu society. The only difference between the two was that while St. Xavicr wanted to destroy the Brahmin, Di Nobili tried to use the Brahmin as a door.

Di Nobili planned to convert the Brahmins as a first step to converting the other castes. He thought that the Brahmin's abhorrence of the missionary did not reflect the Brahmin's rejection of the Christian doctrine. That abhorrence, he concluded, denoted only a deep prejudice against the European style of life in which the missionary lived.

The missionary did not cleanse his bottom with water after visiting the lavatory. He did not brush his teeth. He seldom took a bath. He did not wash his hands before taking his meals. He ate beef, fowl and flesh of every animal. He drank wine. He did not rinse his mouth after finishing his food. His breath was foul. His dress was funny as well as uncomfortable in the Indian climate. It left a bad smell in the area wherever the missionary visited. His language lacked elegance. His manners were uncouth.

Di Nobili took permission from his superior in the Madurai Mission to masquerade as a Brahmin. He learnt Sanskrit and Tamil and studied some Hindu scriptures. He started doing his ablutions in the Brahmin way and taking several baths a day. He became a vegetarian. Finally, he donned the dress of a Hindu *sannyasin* and built an *ashrama* on the outskirts of the city. He had made meticulous preparations to meet the Brahmins.

But what Di Nobili had not taken into account was the colour of his skin. The few people who visited his *ashrama* suspected and very rightly that he was a *paranghi.* This was a term which the people in those days used indistinguishably for the Portuguese as well as for the Christians coming from abroad. Di Nobili was a *paranghi* alright according to common parlance meaning of the term. But he cut it fine and pretended as if the term meant only the Portuguese and not the Christians. He did not reveal that he was a Christian. Instead,

he declared that he was not a Portuguese but an Italian of noble descent hailing from Rome.

The second fraud practised by Di Nobili was even bolder. The man wrote down the Christian mumbo-jumbo in a book and proclaimed it to be the *Yajurveda.* He said he had started as a *raja-rishi* and become a Brahmin in due course because of his learning and spiritual exercises. A few Brahmin boys walked into his trap. Washing them with well water with his own hands, he confided to himself that he had baptised them into the Church.

His deception was discovered before long. Missionaries belonging to other religious orders let it out that though not a Portuguese, Di Nobili was a devout Christian. His converts melted away. Di Nobili tried to elbow out of his embarrassment by the lame excuse that he had named his handiwork not *Yajurveda* but *Yasurveda,* that is, the Veda of Yesu or Jesus. By the end of his enterprise, he had converted 120 Hindus. Among his 12 Brahmin converts, 2 were women, 2 children and the rest only young boys.

Why other Missionaries Exposed Di Nobili

The missionaries who had exposed Di Nobili had not done it out of jealousy. They were genuinely concerned that his methods would lead to mischief for the Mission in India. They sincerely believed that they had brought to India not only a superior religion but also a superior culture represented by the European mode of life. Di Nobili was spoiling the natives by making them believe that their own culture was as good, if not better, as that of their would-be masters. Moreover, the natives could be of no use unless they were pulled out of their roots permanently and made into pliable instruments of Portuguese imperialism.

The Fraud Revived in Recent Years

The Di Nobili experiment in fraud has been revived in India in recent years. Some missionaries have started living in *ashramas* and putting on ochre robes in order to pass as Hindu

sannyasins. Churches are being built to look like Hindu temples. Church services are being patterned after Hindu *puja.* Converts are being encouraged to retain their Hindu names and Christian wives to wear the *mangalasutra.* Indian languages are being made the medium of Christian sacraments and cermonies. Scenes of Christ's nativity are being painted and presented otherwise making him out a scion of every Indian tribe and caste. There is, in fact, no end to the deceptions being designed by the Mission to pass off Christianity as a native creed, while more and more Hindus are being alienated from their ancestral faith and society and turned into instruments of Western imperialism.

The Pope Takes over the Mission

To return to the 17th century, the Pope was regretting that he had conferred upon Portugal the right of patronage in the East in perpetuity. Portugal had made the Pope superfluous except as a figurehead, so far as the Mission in the East was concerned. Moreover, Portugal was no more in a position to provide the money and the manpower for meeting the need of the vast field that was opening up in Asia, particularly in India and China. Something had to be done to salvage the Mission.

Pope Gregory XV (1621-1623) made a new start by setting up in 1622 the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of Faith. The Pope could not proclaim immediately that he was planning to take over the missions all over the world. Spain and Portugal were bound to protest and make things difficult for him. The new Congregation was supposed to supervise the missions and coordinate their activities. In due course, it came to be known as Propaganda from its Latin name—*Propaganda di Fide.* An otherwise innocent word was to acquire a bad odour in succeeding centuries because of its association with Popery. Though this department is still an integral part of the Pope's establishment at Rome, it has been renamed the Sacred Congregation for Evangelisation of Peoples. The shame which this set-up has brought upon the Pope by its close cooperation with Western imperialism for four-and-a-half centuries, is being sought to be hidden by a bit of linguistic surgery.

Frustration in the Eighteenth Century

Portugal's power declined steeply towards the end of the 17th century. The Pope switched his "patronage" to France which was the only Catholic power making a bid for an empire in the East. The Paris Missionary Society became busy equipping new missions and taking over old ones, from its base at Pondicherry. French Jesuits founded a Telegu Mission at Vishakhapatnam in 1700. French Capuchins made sorties towards the north, right upto Kathmandu and Lhasa. Things were looking bright when the French enterprise in India collapsed in the middle of the 18th century, in a contest with British imperialism. The British were Protestants.

All told, the 18th century was the worst period for the Catholic Mission, not only in India but everywhere else. The French were humbled everywhere by the British. Finally, the fate of the Pope himself hung in the balance when Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Rome and pensioned off the Pope.

Fortunes of the Pope Revive

The Pope's fortunes, however, revived after the defeat of Napoleon. The Treaty of Versailles signed in 1815 brought him out of oblivion into which he had been increasingly sinking since the Peace of Westphalia signed in 1648, after the Thirty Years' War in Europe caused by Christian casuistries. The Pope now sat down to evolve a new strategy. He had discovered that dependence on this or that Catholic power was not workable in the long run.

The darkness of Christianity had started receding in Europe. The Pope now prepared a plan for spreading that darkness in Asia and Africa with the help of the Catholic communities in the Western world, including the United States of America. He promoted the formation of many religious orders and missionary societies. The notorious Jesuit order, which had been suppressed in 1773 because of mounting complaints from all Catholic countries against its cloak-and-dagger methods, was revived. It had not distintegrated entirely during the period of

its suppression. It had only gone underground. It sprang into life with a new vigour, ready to be let loose on whatever people the Pope chose as his victims. Its Superior General set up his headquarters in Rome. Superior Generals of many other religious orders followed suit.

New Pattern of Missionary Network

In the new pattern of the Catholic missionary network, the prominent religious orders drew their money and manpower from more than one Western country. Similarly, most Catholic communities in the West sponsored more than one religious order. The scene became quite confusing. When one heard the name Jesuit or Capuchin or Carmelite, one did not know that it could mean Austrians or Belgians or Irishmen or nationals of some other Western country. Similarly, when one heard of a French or a German or a Spanish mission, one wondered whether it was Jesuit or Capuchin or Carmelite. The cards had been thoroughly shuffled.

The Propaganda provided the necessary supervision over this world-wide missionary network. The ugly competition which had characterized the religious orders earlier, gave way to close coordination. The Pope could now sit back and survey his missions marching in many heathen lands. He could calculate more meticulously what services he could render to which imperialist power from the West for a *quid pro quo,* which meant recognition of his office, his moral authority and, of course, money for running his missionary enterprise.

Revival Reflected in India

This increase and consolidation of the Catholic missionary power was reflected in India also. The Catholic Mission in this country started multiplying as never before. More and more religious orders started settling down to work all over India. Some of them had Mission Stations, major and minor, in many places. The British who controlled the country were more inclined towards Protestant missions. But they had to accept the principle of reciprocity because Protestant missions also wanted to work in Asian and African countries controlled by Catholic powers from Europe. The 19th century has been

called the Great Century for Christian missions by Latourette, the famous historian of Christian expansion. It was so because it was the Great Century for Western imperialism.

The Catholic Mission in India had a share in the harvest of converts which the recurring famines brought to Christianity in the 19th century. The British government saw to it that famine relief in most places was handled by the missionaries. The famines also provided a lot of orphans for whom all Christian missions have been looking always and everywhere. There were also considerable gains among the forest-dwellers. Christians of all hues were spreading the yarn that the tribal people were not a part of Hindu society, and that if Christianity came to their rescue from "ignorance and poverty," the Hindus could have no legitimate objection. The British government lent support to this lie and provided facilities to the missionaries for monopolising the tribal tracts. There were repeated resistance movements among the tribal people. All of them were put down by Bristish military intervention.

The Mission Takes to Social Service

But the Catholic Mission along with its Prostestant counterparts faced a serious problem. Christianity had failed to register as a religion with the masses as well as the classes of Hindu society. They continued to look at this imported creed as an imposition with the help of British bayonets. The missionaries were no more than accomplices of British imperialism. The native converts shared the odium. Most of them became lackeys of the British Raj. They came to be known as Rice Christians—a term which had travelled all the way from China.

It was in this atmosphere of rejection as a religion that Christianity made a bid for being recognised as an ideology of compassion. The Catholic as well as the Protestant missions started setting up schools and colleges, hospitals and dispensaries, homes for the aged and the handicapped, and social welfare agencies of all sorts. At the same time, missionary press and publications started claiming for Christianity the credit for

whatever progress the modern West had made in the spheres of education, public health and social justice.

Christianity was Never Known for its Social Concern

Christianity in its heyday had shown little concern for the illiterate or the sick or the socially handicapped. On the contrary, it had opposed all education except in its own superstitions, ignored the sick as sufferers for their sins, and disapproved of every single demand for social justice. "Even Gibbon had said," writes Joseph McCabe, "that 'the banners of the Church had never been seen on the side of the people.' Finlay had caustically remarked that if our modern civilization was the outcome of Christianity, the length of time between the appearance of the cause and the effect had no parallel in history." (*Social Record of Christianity,* London, 1937, p.viii).

When the missionaries working in Japan started making tall claims for the moral and social influence of Christianity, the statesmen of that country sent a large delegation to Europe and America to find out the truth. The delegation reported that as compared to the ethical influence of Buddhism in the East, the ethical influence of Christianity in the West had been far less efficacious.

Another Form of Fraud

Basically, the new strategy of the Mission in India was a variation of the fraud practised by Robert Di Nobili. Christianity which had been found out as a religion was to be sold in another disguise. But it worked better. Hindus who had not been impressed by the biblical miracles, started admiring the "Christian spirit of service." There was no dearth of finances. Money came flowing from all Western countries who saw immediately the commercial advantages following from the cultural subversion of a populous country. Western education and medicine meant imports from the West. The British government also evolved standards which qualified only the missionary organisations for rendering these "services." Whatever state subsidies were made available for education, public health and social

welfare, from time to time, were more or less monopolised by the missionaries. The Catholic Mission, too, had a share in the patronage.

Missionary schools and colleges were springing up in different parts of the country. They catered to the educational needs of the Hindu elite and, in the process, alienated them from their ancestral religion and culture. Hospitals and dispensaries took care of some people's health but started the age-old system of Indian medicine on a course of decline, while earning profits for the pharmaceutical industry in the West. Homes for orphans, widows, the aged and the handicapped mushroomed in the far-flung mission stations where baptism was dangled as a bait for admission. The "services" spread to many other fields as will be related slightly later. Here it may be pointed out that apart from making a favourable impression on the unbelievers, they created avenues of employment for the converts.

Behind the Fancy Facade.

And at the back of this fancy facade stood the Mission which continued non-stop the saving of souls by every available means and every conceivable method. The Niyogi Enquiry Committee Report (1956) has blue-printed the pattern in Madhya Pradesh. The pattern has been the same everywhere, with slight variations due to local conditions. The Mission in its pristine purity could always be met in the Seminaries which trained team after team of native converts and turned them into saboteurs for Western imperialism. The brainwashed fanatics fanned out to every nook and corner of the country, manning mission stations and directing the task force behind the smoke-screen of services. They exploited every weakness in Hindu society and probed every soft spot in the Hindu psyche for promoting the Mission.

The coming of Independence has made no difference. In fact, the pace of conversions has made considerable progress. Reporting about Assam, F. S. Downs writes: "At the beginning of the war there were about 50,000 Catholics in this region; by 1977 there were 3,60,681. In part, this was due to an extraordinary

expenditure of resources, both in terms of money and missionary personnel, including personnel brought in from other parts of India. But it was also due to the removal, after independence, of the restrictions the British had placed upon the Catholic mission." (*Christianity in North East India,* Delhi, 1983, pp.152-153). Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal tell the same story. The Protestant missions have not stopped prospering. Only some shackles placed on the Catholic Mission have been removed. Ever since, the Mission has been making heavier and heavier inroads into Hindu society.

Congregations of Priests, Brothers and Sisters

The *Catholic Directory of India,* 1984 devotes 108 large-sized pages to the Mission in India at present. It gives details of various Religious Congregations of Priests, Brothers and Sisters, together with the location of their Headquarters and Houses, their Personnel and the Institutions they run. The figures relate to 1981. In that year, there were 17,228 Mission Stations in India manned by 4,943 Religious Priests, 2,801 Religious Men other than Priests, 49,956 Religious Women and 26,541 Catechists. Another 3,528 were Candidates for religious priesthood. Adding 7,058 Diocesan Priests to 4,943 Religious Priests, the 1981 population of India works out to 56,000 non-Catholics per priest for purposes of evangelisation. If we add Religious Men other than Priests and Religious Women, the average for evangelisation is less than 10,000 non-Catholics per activist. The average comes down to some 7,500 non-Catholics if we take into account the Catechists.

Of the 39 Congregations of Priests, 25 have their Headquarters abroad. The largest number, as many as 16, have their Headquarters at Rome. France accounts for the Headquarters of 2 Congregations, while Australia, Belgium, England, Holland, Sri Lanka, Switzerland and West Germany for 1 each. Taken together, the 39 Congregations have 744 Houses spread over different parts of India, and a Personnel of 13,635.

The Congregation of Brothers are 19 of which 8 have their Headquarters abroad—6 in Rome and 1 each in England and Ireland. They function from 189 Houses with a Personnel of 2,308.

It is the Congregations of Sisters which present the most impressive picture. The details of the 167 Congregations are spread over 56 pages of the *Directory.* The Sisters are almost 10 times as many as Fathers and Brothers taken together. The Headquarters of 97 Congregations out of 167 are outside India —49 in Rome, 15 in France, 9 in West Germany, 8 in Spain, 4 each in Belgium and Switzerland, 2 in England, and 1 each in Australia, Holland, Ireland, Malta, Sri Lanka and the USA. They operate from 4,004 Houses with a Personnel of 56,273.

There are 14 Secular Institutes listed along with the Religious Congregations. Of them, 7 have their Headquarters abroad —2 each in Rome and West Germany, and 1 each in Austria, Canada and Switzerland. They have 29 Houses and a Personnel of 370. From the description given in the *Directory* it is difficult to understand why they have been classified as Secular Institutes. They pretend to be as pious and perform the same functions as the Religious Congregations.

Manpower and Control

It may be clarified that having Headquarters in Rome does not mean that the Congregations concerned draw their manpower from Italy. Rome is only the place from where their Superiors General function. Their manpower comes from many countries where they have their Provinces or Chapters.

Again, a Congregation operating in India but having its Headquarters abroad, does not mean that its manpower also comes from abroad. It recruits the bulk of its manpower from India. Only a few of its top functionaries are foreigners.

Nor does having Headquarters in India imply that a Congregation is controlled by Indian citizens or confines its work to this country. The control over every Congregation, wherever its

Headquarters may be, is exercised by the Propaganda at Rome. Headquarters in India means only that its manpower is drawn entirely from India unless it has its Provinces abroad. Most often it is a device for training missionaries, only a part of whom work within the country. Others are sent for missionary work in foreign countreis. Some of the trainees may come from other countries of Asia and Africa.

Mushrooming of Missionary Institutions

The Religious Congregations are responsible for running the educational, medical and social service institutions of the Catholic Mission. According to the *Directory,* the Church maintains 2,550 Kindergartens with 2,68,309 students, 6,183 Primary Schools with 19,52,274 students and 2,986 Secondary Schools with 16,49,610 students. The number of Colleges, Institutes for Other Studies and Seminaries is not given. But it is stated that the Colleges account for 1,41,787 students, Institutes for Other Studies for 35,519 students and Seminaries for 2,125 students. Of course, the number of these institutions can be arrived at by adding the figures given in the *Directory* at the end of every chapter describing a Diocese. Besides, the Mission maintains 615 Hospitals, 1,529 Dispensaries, 221 Leprosaria, 309 Homes for the Aged and the Handicapped, 1,233 Orphanages and 1,272 Training Centres for various crafts and skills.

A Closely Guarded Secret

This is the broad description. There are many other types of institutions, details of which can be found in the description of individual Congregations. Taken together, they make a long list. There is only one detail which is missing from the *Directory.* The budget of the Mission as well as the sources from which its finances flow remains a closely guarded secret. There is not even a hint in the *Directory* regarding how much the Mission collects and from where. The cost of maintaining and running the network with its Houses, Personnel, press, publications, means of communication and transport, and "service institutions" must be running into billions. Most of its monasteries, convents,

Seminaries and Mission Stations are sumptuous places by Indian standards. The vow of poverty has never prevented the Mission from leading a luxurious life.

It is obvious that only a fraction of the financial resources required can be raised from a poor country which India has been for some time and remains at present. The state subsidies which the British started and which the Government of India has continued, do not amount to much in the total outlay of the Mission. Nor can the Catholics of India be regarded as financial benefactors of the Mission. The Catholic Church is never tired of parading its flock as one of the weaker sections of Indian society. The Church has left no stone unturned to secure for its flock the financial and other benefits reserved for the Hindu Harijans.

An Irony

The Catholic Mission competed with its Protestant counterparts in helping Western imperialism to the hilt in disrupting India's economy and social organisation, and reducing India's millions to penury and destitution. It did its utmost to blacken India's spirituality and damage all institutions which sustained India's ancient culture. It strived its best to infuse a deep sense of inferiority in the psyche of India's elite. The same Mission coming forward to take care of India's education, public health and social welfare would have looked like an irony, had it not been a colossal fraud.

A Word to our Educated Elite

A section of India's educated elite waxes eloquent about the Mission's "splendid and selfless services" in fields where, it is pointed out, India's own "initiative has failed to emerge." Anyone who questions the Mission's motives and produces evidence regarding machinations behind the Mission's fancy facade, is frowned upon by these spokesmen for India's secularism and liberalism, if not denounced outright as a communalist and a chauvinist. The elite owes the nation an explanation.

It was not so long ago that our school children were compelled to cram a lesson about "Benefits of the British Raj"—the roads, railways, telegraph, telephone, canals, schools, colleges, hospitals, English language, civil service, army, navy, airforce and what not. Why did the Founding Fathers of our Freedom Struggle fail to acknowledge our debt to Pax Britannia? Why did they give first priority to freedom from foreign rule, even if it meant going without the "benefits" for some time? Was it because they were small-minded people, guided only by narrow nationalism? Or had they looked deeper and discovered that the British Raj had destroyed far more and things of greater value than what it had built on the surface for its own use? Were they wrong when they affirmed that restoring our people's self-respect, initiative and resourcefulness was the key to our future greatness?

Moreover, whom is our "educated elite" blaming when it bemoans the lack of initiative and enterprise in the national society? Are not the members of this "elite" the leaders and rulers of the country? Has not the national society placed them in privileged positions so that they may work for the restoration of national self-confidence? Why do they behave like visitors from outer space who watch with amused indifference the "worthlessness" of a whole people? The only answer can be mental lethargy and moral apathy among those who pass for our educated elite.

The Hierarchy Reaps the Harvest

And while our "educated elite" sleeps and scowls at every effort to awaken it to its own responsibility. the Mission continues to make more and more converts who are fitted into the framework of the Catholic Church, controlled by the Pope. The Mission Stations become Parishes as converts multiply. The Parishes are grouped into Dioceses. The Dioceses are brought together into Ecclesiastical Provinces. The edifice of the Catholic Episcopate or Hierarchy becomes more and more powerful as it herds more and more of our people into its stranglehold and sprawls over larger and larger territory.

A State within the State

Christianity had learnt the art of creating a State within the State, quite early in its career. The administrative structure of the Roman Empire had provided a ready-made model. By the time the Roman Emperors took serious notice of this parallel system of power, towards the end of the second century, the Church had already become a far-flung and formidable organisation. It had split every society in the Roman Empire and created conditions of civil war in the Roman provinces of North Africa and Asia Minor.

The persecutions that followed were half-hearted and spasmodic. No ideological effort was made to wean away the converts from the superstitions which gave strength to the Church. The persecutions, therefore, not only failed to curb the growth of the cancer, but also paralysed important sections of the Roman ruling class, particularly the influential matrons, with pity for the "poor devils."

Finally, Constantine found it very profitable to keep the Church on his right side in his struggle for power. It is debatable whether he ever became a believing Christian. But the Church was in search of political power rather than sincerity of belief. What followed is recorded history.

Ever since, Christianity has repeated the experiment in many countries in the service of this or that imperialism. The organisational weapon forged by Christianity in the very process of its propagation is eulogised as the "body and bride of Christ." The theological euphemism for its tantacles is "the episcopate or the hierarchy." The mundane and mendacious methods used for crystallising a cancer in the heart of a society, are glorified as "march of the Holy Spirit."

The Portuguese Plant a Catholic Hierarchy in India

The proliferation of a Catholic Hierarchy in India started with the advent of the Portuguese pirates at the end of the 15th century. As soon as Vasco da Gama returned from his first

voyage to India, the king of Portugal crowned himself "Lord of the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, Arabia, Persia and India," even though Portugal possessed not a patch of territory east of the Cape of Good Hope. His appellations were an early indication of what use he was going to make of the Padroado which the Pope had conferred on him.

The first foundations of a Hierarchy in India were laid when a Vicar General was sent to live in Cochin and look after the Mission. He moved to Goa when it was captured by the Portuguese in 1510. Goa, together with all other Portuguese possessions in the East, were placed under the Diocese of Funchal in Medeira, created in 1514. The first bishop of Funchal belonged to the Order of Christ, a religious congregation in Portugal, which had undertaken to finance the Portuguese enterprise in the East. Its patron was Prince Henry the Navigator, a scion of the royal house at Lisbon.

The next stage commenced in 1532 with the appointment of Miguel Vaz, a Franciscan friar, as the Vicar General at Goa. He pleaded with the king of Portugal for enforcing in Portuguese possessions the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*—whoever possesses the region, proclaims the religion. The new policy needed for its implementation a Bishop "inspired by the Holy Spirit." Goa was made a Diocese in 1534. The whole East, from the Cape of Good Hope at the southernmost tip of Africa to China, was placed under the jurisdiction of Goa. The Hierarchy had moved up to a pestigious point.

As the Portuguese enterprise in China and Japan failed for all practical purposes after the visit of St. Xavier, Goa became the most important Portuguese possession in the East. It was proclaimed an Archdiocese or Metropolitan See in 1557 with Cochin in Malabar and Malacca in the Straits as its suffragans. In 1572, the Archdiocese of Goa was proclaimed the Primate for the entire East. Two more Dioceses were created under it in 1576—Cranganore in Malabar and Macau in China. The Diocese of Funay in Japan was added in 1588. Finally, Mylapore (Madras) was made a Diocese in 1606. In every case, a mission had preceded the hierarchy.

The Pope Takes over the Hierarchy

Portugal, however, was a small nation of some two million souls. It was not rich in spite of the plunder collected from the East. It became increasingly difficult for Portugal to finance and man the Mission as well as the Hierarchy. The income of the authorities at Goa had also declined because the Jesuits had purchased most of the land around and were pocketing the revenues for private lending at high rates of interest. The Pope started finding faults with Portugal for vacancies in the Church not being filled for long intervals, and for the "the poor quality" of the clergy sent. He ended by establishing the Propaganda in 1622, as already mentioned, and making a bid to take over the Hierarchy in the East, along with the Mission.

In the controversy that arose between Portugal and the Pope, the latter came out with a new interpretation of the Padroado. He made it clear that Portugal had a right to appoint Bishops in Portuguese colonies *alone* and that the rest of the vast area in the East fell under the ecclesisastical jurisdiction of Rome. He also tried a linguistic camouflage. The new Dioceses created by him were to be called Vicariates Apostolic and the Bishops named Vicars Apostolic.

Portugal was not convinced. But there was not much that it could do. The Dutch had already arrived at Cochin in 1633 after successfully challenging the maritime monopoly of Portugal. They were soon to deliver blows that made Protuguese power crumble everywhere, from the middle of the 17th century onwards. The Dutch were Protestants who detested Popery.

Meanwhile, the Pope had created a Vicariate Apostolic at Bijapur in 1637, though a Vicar Apostolic could be sent there only in 1658. The Vicariate Apostolic of Malabar was created by the Pope in 1657 and that of Canara in 1671. The Portuguese protested and refused to recognise the Pope's appointees. But the Pope paid no need and proceeded further. The Vicariate Apostolic of Bijapur was renamed the Vicariate Apostolic of the Grand Mughal and its Vicar Apostolic sent from Rome

landed at Surat in 1699. The new Vicariate covered the whole of North India. Its headquarters were moved to Bombay in 1720 and to Agra in 1784.

The controversy with Portugal over the right of patronage was to continue for more than three hundred years. The first Concordat signed in 1860 proved unworkable. The second Concordat signed in 1886 produced double jurisdiction which could not be sorted out smoothly. The third Concordat signed in 1928 improved the Pope's position immensely because Portugal renounced the right of patronage outside her colonies. Finally, the Padroado was swept away altogether in 1950, three years after India attained independence.

A Hundred Years of Catholic Hierarchy in India

But for all practical purposes, the Pope took over the Hierarchy in India in the year 1886. He also dropped the linguistic camouflage and restored the traditional names for Church territories and Church dignitaries. The 20 or so Vicariates Apostolic he had created by that time were sorted out into 10 Dioceses and 6 Archdioceses, apart from the Archdiocese of Goa and its suffragans which remained under the Portuguese Padroado. Goa was, however, made Patriarchate of the East in order to assuage Portuguese pride.

The Hierarchy grew apace in the next 61 years. When the British left in 1947, there were 10 Archdioceses and 35 Dioceses in the India that remained after partition. The most rapid advance of the Hierarchy, however, was witnessed after India became independent. By 1984, a period of 37 years, the number of Archdioceses has almost doubled to 19, and the number of Dioceses more than trebled to 110. In every case, the Pope had created the Ecclesiastical Units and appointed Bishops on the recommendation of his Nuncio in New Delhi, without any cosultation whatsover with the Government of India.

It is a very strange situation, to say the least. There is no other country in the world which permits the Pope to appoint a Bishop without a Pre-Notification about the person to be

appointed. The understanding has been formalised into written agreements with 30 countries. In case of some other countries, where a Catholic hierarchy exists, the understanding is informal but firm. India alone has no agreement with the Pope, formal or informal.

Some people have pointed out jocularly that the Government of India could not initiate negotiations with the Pope in this regard because the British had left no file on the subject. Someone had to draw the Government's attention so that a brand new file could he opened by some lower division clerk and made to move upwards through the bureaucratic network till it reached the Hon. Minister of External Affairs.

The matter was brought before the Government of India for the first time in 1974 by some patriotic priests of the Catholic Church who had an inside knowledge of how the Pope had tried to line up the Church in India with Portuguese imperialism during the prolonged struggle for the liberation of Goa, The Ministry of External affairs took it up with the Pope in 1975. The Pope played for time and kept the matter pending. Meanwhile, he got away with creating 4 new Dioceses in 1976. The Catholic press in India raised a howl that the Government was trying to interfere in the "religious affairs of a minority."

A Mysterious Manipulation

There was a change of Government in India in March 1977. It is not known to this author how things happened. Negotiations with the Pope were not renewed by the new Government. And in a period of less than three years—March 1977 to December 1977—as many as 18 new Dioceses were created by the Pope without seeking any clearance form the Government of India. Six of them were in the sensitive areas of Madhya Pradesh where the State Government seemed to be vigilant after the Niyogi Committee Enquiry Report on Christian Missionary Activities was published in 1956.

Dimensions of the Hierarchy

The *Catholic Directory of India,* 1984 provides the Latin names of most of the Bulls and Decrees proclaimed by the Pope

while creating new Dioceses and Archdioceses, and appointing Bishops and Archbishops. It does not give the slightest hint that the Government of India or the State Governments concerned have any say in the matter.

We have 1090 pages of 24x18 cm. size in the *Directory,* providing a detailed description of 110 Ecclesiastical Units—19 Archdioceses, 89 Dioceses and 2 Prefectures Apostolic manned by 125 Bishops. What strikes at the very outset in every case is the name of the Patron Saint. The name of St. Francis Xavier, whom we have met earlier, occurs several times. Space does not permit a discussion of some other "saints."

The 110 Ecclesiastical Territories have 5,159 Parishes and Quasi-Parishes. The number of Diocesan Priests who run the show has been constantly increasing. It was 6,274 in 1976, 6,453 in 1977, 6,840 in 1979 and 7,058 in 1981. Figures for subsequent years are not given. The 1981 population worked out to 976 Catholics per priest for pastoral care. In the same year, 3,945 persons were candidates for Diocesan priesthood.

The overall establishment for each Territory is quite impressive. To start with, we have a number of Officials who run the Secretariat. Next, there are a number of Councils and Commissions which supervise specific areas of activity and evaluate results. The *Directory* lists 143 printing presses owned by the Hierarchy. Some of them may be quite big like the one at Ranchi. The Hierarchy also publishes 203 periodicals in English and Indian languages. But the most impressive number is that of the Seminaries. The Hierarchy runs as many as 350 for turning out more and more priests.*

It is difficult to say where the Mission stops and the Hierarchy takes over. Each Territory has assigned to it a number of Missionaries from a number of Religious Congregations. The Fathers and Brothers and Sisters are in charge of running the

* The numbers of presses, publications and seminaries are as given in the *Directory* which is not always exact in its descriptions,

Mission Stations and the complex of "service" institutions. In every case, the Sisters outnumber the others, several times.

Finally, each Territory has a number of Associations for keeping the Catholic community united and active on many fronts. There are associations for children, youngmen, women, workers, nurses, teachers, seamen, students and for persons engaged in professions. There are art academies, recreation clubs, mutual benefit societies and societies for the propagation of faith. Once again, the number of these Associations is quiet impressive.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

At the top of this edifice stands the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India with its headquarters in New Delhi. It is affiliated to the South Asia Region Bishops' Conference which is affiliated to the Asian Bishops' Conference which is affiliated to an international Bishops' Conference with headquarters in Rome. The Hierarchy in India keeps in contact with the world-wide Hierarchy at many points, besides being in contact with the Pope himself.

The Bishops' Conference in India, as elsewhere, maintains an elaborate Secretariat. But what is of particular significance to this country, it has an Assistant Secretary "dealing with what concerns the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes." The Government of India also maintains a permanent Commissioner for Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes. From all we know, he often turns to the Assistant Secretary of the Bishops' Conference for experts as well as expertise in an area where the Catholic Mission has been active for many years.

But the more important part of the Bishops' Conference is its five Commissions. We shall discuss them in two combinations —the first and the fifth which deal with the regimentation of the flock; and the second, third and fourth which provide a study in the art of seducing unbelievers and brainwashing the believers before they are sent out into the wide world for head-hunting on behalf of the Church. These Commissions work at the level of the Diocese as well, in one way or the other.

Close Watch Kept on the Victims

In the first combination, the *Areas* of the Commission for Christian Life are "spirituality of the Christian community in general, Sacraments and divine worship, Catechetics and Christian Formation, Study of and Meditation on the Holy Scriptures, Pastoral Care of Professional and other special groups such as migrants and itinerants, prisoners and defence personnel, Prayer life in general and Indian forms of spirituality." The Hierarchy is very vigilant against its victims wandering out into the fresh air of fellow-feeling for their countrymen who do not share Christian superstitions. The hirelings of the Hierarchy keep a close watch on the victims at all hours and in all places, making them believe at the same time that they are the "chosen people."

The sentence about "prayer life in general" and "Indian forms of spirituality" is, of course, a sop thrown to the votaries of *sarvadharma-samabhava* in Hindu society. They demand very little from the followers of other faiths and feel fully satisfied with small gestures. They will never ask that if prayer outside the Church is possible, what about Jesus Christ being the Only God? They will never enquire that if spirituality can be found in India in forms other than that sold by Christianity, what about the Church's monopoly of Salvation? The Hierarchy knows that Hindus are too polite to ask inconvenient questions.

The Church Knows all the Answers

The *Areas* of the Commission for the Laity are "Marriage preparation and Family Education Training and animation for adequate preparation and coresponsibility in the life and work of the Church, Special guidance and animation of professional groups." The key word in this long list is "animation." Lest the victims start looking at the world with their own eyes and making their own decisions in mundane matters, the Hierarchy keeps lending them theological glasses and saves them from the pains of personal responsibility in their private as well as public lives. The Masters of Divinity who man the Hierarchy know all the answers. Naturally, they take all the decisions for their flock,

New Words in Christian Vocabulary

Coming to the second combination, the *Areas* of the Commission for Proclamation, Ecuminism and Dialogue are "Evangelisation of the people in general and defence of freedom of religion, Promotion of missionary service to new areas and peoples, Ecuminical activities in relation to the various Christian communities, Dialogue and collaboration with non-Christian religions, contacts with non-believers, Promotion of the various communication media as a means of proclamation." The programme for conversion on every side, including the non-Catholic Christians, is very comprehensive. Only the language has been deliberately designed to deceive and create confusion.

Proclamation, Dialogue, Freedom of Religion, etc., are very recent imports in the vocabulary of Christianity. They have appeared on the lips of Christian mandarins not as a result of introspection, but from a need for circumspection. All that we know from the Seminaries and the secret sessions of mission strategists, shows that the heart of Christianity remains as hard as ever. The softening of language has been forced upon it by change in its outer circumstances.

Compulsion Becomes Propagation

Take Proclamation, for instance. There was a time when Christianity cried from the house-tops, "Compel them to come in." The "truths" about original Sin and the Only Savior could be "taught" later, and at leisure. That is what Christianity did in medieval Europe and, later on, in the Americas and the Philippines. Compulsion started becoming Propagation only when the rise of rationalism and humanism in Europe threw Christianity on the defensive by ridiculing and rejecting the superstitions retailed by it in the name of religion.

Propagation Becomes Proclamation

The colonies in Asia and Africa offered another chance to Christianity for reverting to compulsion. It would have re-enacted in these continents also its well-rehearsed drama of fire and sword, had it not met with local resistance. The imperialist

powers concerned cared more for their colonies than for Christianity. They had also to face protests from humanists in the press and parliaments at home. Finally, the retreat of Western imperialism after the Second World War forced Christianity to further dilute its language. Propagation became Proclamation. But the message remains the same—"there is no building save Hell outside the Church."

From Monologue to Dialogue

Or take Dialogue, for which every Christian missionary has become all too eager in recent years. In the good old days when Christianity could use compulsion, all it knew and practised was Monologue. The Christian missionary or priest talked, and everyone else listened. The only response expected from the audience was an enthusiastic "Yes, Sir!" The "truths" of Christianity and the "falsehoods" of every other faith, were self-evident. A dialogue between the "Divine" and the "Devil" was inconceivable.

The missionary woke up from his monologue only when he discovered that the days of his bluster had departed with the disappearance of Western bayonets from the scene. The only thing which could sustain him in the new situation was the awe which Western civilization still inspired in the mind of the newly freed native. But at the same time, the native had acquired some funny notions about his own capability. He thought he had something to say on deep subjects like religion and spirituality ! The only way he could be prevented from becoming positively hostile was to invite him inside the parlour and let him blow some hot air.

Provided, of course, that he concedes the unique character of Christianity and the divinity of Christ. Provided, of course, that he does not question the missionary's right to convert other natives to Christianity. Provided, of course, that he is prepared to process his own religion and culture in terms of Christian theological categories. The missionary has only to look grave and pretend that he is appreciating the argument. The dialogue can always be terminated if the rative starts raising fundamental

questions about the character of Christianity and the worth of its Mission.

Christianity and Freedom of Religion

The less said about the Christian call for Freedom of Religion the better. The record of Christianity in this respect exists in cold print and need not be reproduced here. Christianity has been and remains one of the greatest and most persistent enemies of every freedom, let alone religious freedom. Some of the most unrelenting crusaders against freedom in every form are still being hailed as saints by the Church. We have yet to hear of a Christian theologian who has betrayed anything but awe towards men like St. Augustine, St.Thomas Aquinas and St. Francis Xavier.

As recently as 1984, Mother Teresa gave an interview to *India Today* which had come out with a cover story on her in one of its issues. One of the questions put to her was: "With whom would you have sided between Galileo and the Church ?" It did not take her even a split second to say, "With the Church." Galileo was not propounding any theology opposed to Christianity. In fact. he was a believing Christian. He had only reported a physical phenomenon which he had seen with his own eyes and which he was prepared to show to the inquisitors appointed by the Pope. His dicovery has since been accepted by the whole world, including the Catholic Church. But Mother Teresa finds it difficult to forgive the man simply because he differed with the Church, even though he was right and the Church was wholly in the wrong.

What the Church really means by Freedom of Religion is that it should have an unbridled opportunity to spread its superstitions and extend its hierarchy with the help of mammoth finances from the West. What it does not endorse as Freedom of Religion is a non-Christian's right to lead his own life without its ministrations. It insists that it has an inalienable right to inflict its missionaries and its rnumbo-jumbo on everyone, everywhere. If anyone objects to this uncalled-for and aggressive interference, he is violating the Freedom of Religion.

Nature of Indian Secularism

In India, the Freedom of Religion advocated by the Church has another dimension. The Church has the freedom to proclaim that it alone is in possession of the keys of heaven. But no one has the freedom to question that proclamation. That would mean showing disrespect to a religion, which is barred by India's secular constitution and is contrary to the Hindu spirit of *sarva-dharma samabhava*—equal respect for all religions.

The game has succeeded so far because the votaries of secularism in India have not cared to examine the concept and explore the historical context in which it took shape. They do not seem to know that secularism was essentially a revolt against the superstitions as well as the totalitarian tyrannies which were being sold as religion by the Church. Secularism in the West had sounded the death-knell of Christianity. The Church started on a course of decline which is still continuing. It is the height of irony that the same closed creed is being protected and promoted in India in the name of secularism, and permitted to lecture on Freedom of Religion to a society which has never known religious strife.

Sarvadharma-Samabhava should Not be a Slogan

The Church has also succeeded in putting Hindu society to sleep under the soporific of *sarvadharma-samabhava*. As soon as a Hindu opens his mouth to ask a few questions about Christianity, he is reminded by his own co-religionists that *sarvadharma-samabhava* does not permit such curiosities. Hindu scholars and saints have stopped examining Christianity's claim as a religion, which they were doing till only the other day. They have become so preoccupied with contemplating the beauties of *sarvadharma-samabhava* that they have no time or inclination left to find out what is *dharma,* and what it is not. They remember no more that this concept, too, took birth in a context and is not a slogan to be shouted without discrimination.

Christianity in Borrowed Plumage

The *Areas* of the Commission of Justice, Development and Peace are "Teaching and Promotion of justice in general and

social justice in particular, Catholic education from early childhood to advanced research, Socio-economic development of the people by means of education, training and animation, Health services of all kinds with special attention to community health and prevention of diseases, Care of the physically disabled and socially handicapped, Welfare of workers and the unemployed, Promotion of peace within and between peoples and nations, Welfare of the backward communities, State legislation in the field affecting individuals and institutions." Once again, we have the programme of the Mission in another disguise. We have already commented on it. Here it should suffice to make a passing observation.

It is significant that the Church uses its own theological jargon when it claims to be a saviour of souls but borrows the jargon of modern humanism when it comes out as a social service institution. There is only one explanation for this anomaly. Social service, it means, is not an integral part of Christianity. The Church is trying to present itself in a plumage which is not its own. The purpose of putting on that plumage is obvious.

How a Church Mission Became a Missionary Church

Finally, the *Areas* of the Commission for Clergy and Religious are "Promotion of priestly and religious vocations, Training of Seminary staff, novice masters and others involved in formation, Inspiration and orientation of seminaries and other formation houses, Promotion of theological research and preservation of orthodoxy in the teaching of the faith, Assistance in providing personnel to needy areas within and without the country." Here we find the methods by which a Church Mission has been made to grow into a Missionary Church. Historians of Christianity in India take considerable pride in this accomplishment.

There was a time when calls went out repeatedly from pulpits and platforms all over the West that the Mission in India was crying for more and more manpower. Now a time has arrived when the Church in India is marshalling that manpower on some scale. Indian missionaries can now be seen not only in

every nook and corner of India but also all over Asia, Africa, Europe and America. The *World Christian Encyclopaedia* reports that in 1973 India sent out 3,420 Roman Catholics to 47 countries, including 34 Jesuits in the USA and "2000 Kerala nuns recruited to fill vacancies in monasteries in France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, U.K." (p.380). That was 12 years ago. At present the number must be much bigger.

Exploitation of India's Poverty

People in the West where Christianity is declining and standards of living rising, are no more attracted by the Mission. Not many people in the West are prepared to take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in the midst of plenty, permissiveness and individualism. On the other hand, the Indian converts, who come from poor families, are happy to find that poverty in the Mission means more than plenty for them.

This is all the more true in the case of nuns. The number of Western women joining religious orders is declining fast. Those that do, like to leave to nuns from poor countries the unpleasant work of nursing and cleaning in hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, etc. On the other hand, nuns in India come from families who have too many mouths to feed on slender resources. They welcome an opportunity to escape to the prosperous West even when they are offered lowly work. The living conditions are much better over there. The Catholic Church of Kerala in particular has exploited the poverty of the people to the fullest extent and has become notorious for nun-running.

Cost-Estimate Missing Again

The Hierarchy with the Bishops' Conference at its apex is the steel-frame of the Catholic Church. Scrap away the thick coat of theological polish and what we obtain is a highly trained bureaucracy running the Pope's empire in India. It carries on the traditions of the Indian Civil Service which the British had created to sustain their empire. Only the pomp and paraphernalia which surrounds the Pope's hirelings puts the ICS sahibs to shame. The Houses in which the Archbishops and Bishops live,

the salaries which they draw and the highly paid secretariats which surround them, have to be seen to be believed. The perquisites percolate down to the parish priest.

Again, the *Directory* gives no clue to the cost of maintaining and running this bureaucracy. It must be a staggering sum, of which only a small fraction can be collected from the Catholic community in India. The big balance comes from foreign countries which control and use the Hierarchy for their own purposes. The Pope provides only the channel through which the wires are pulled.

A Poor Community Shoulders a Colossal Responsibility

The Sunday Review of the Times of India dated December 15, 1985 carries a review of Dr. Louis D'Silva's recent book, *The Christian Community And the National Mainstream.* The reviewer, Mr. Rainier Rego, observes: "Another fact that has escaped the attention of critics of the Christian contribution to society is that the minuscule minority, constituting barely 2.4 per cent of the nation's population, does at least 40 per cent of the humanitarian work of all voluntary agencies and at least 25 per cent of all social work in the country. If this is acknowledged then the Christian community certainly is engaged, and in a very large measure, in the nation's urgent and authentic task. And significantly, this contribution is out of all proportion to the numerical size of the community: seldom have so few done so much for so many."

He has not a word to say about the wherewithal which enables the "minuscule minority" to shoulder such a stupendous "responsibility." Humanitarian and social work of such vast proportions cannot be carried out simply because the Christian community is "inspired by the spirit of service." It needs money, manpower and so many other mundane means which cannot materialise out of thin air simply because a community swears by a particular saviour. We are sure that Mr. Rego will be the first to protest very vigorously if we draw the logical inference and state that the Christian community in India is so opulent as

to serve 97.6 per cent of its countrymen with its philanthropy. The myth about the Indian Christians being poor has also to be maintained.

The Contradiction Resolved

The other day, as Mother Teresa headed towards a famine-stricken Ethopia, President Ronald Reagan of the United States of America placed 64 million dollars at her disposal. Shall we say that this instance is one of the many which, taken together, help us to resolve the contradiction with which we are faced? Leave alone the substerranean and surreptitious methods by which the Mission and the Hierarchy receive colossal amounts of finance from Western countries. The "donations" which the Church receives publicly every year add up to something which the 97.6 per cent of the Indian people find it impossible to match in any measure, even with the best will for philanthropy.

Superintendent of the Pope's Empire in India

The *Directory* informs us that "with the establishment of diplomatic relations between *the Holy See and the Government of India,* the Apostolic Delegation was raised to the rank of Apostolic Internunciature on June 12, 1948 and on August 22, 1967 the Apostolic Internunciature was raised to the level of Apostolic Nunciature." (p.xxii, Italics added)

There is no mention of the State of Vatican City. The 1984 Delhi Telephone Directory which lists "Holy See Apostolic Nunciature" among the foreign embassies, also does not mention any State or country (p.235). The "Holy See" is neither a State nor a country. The *World Christian Encyclopaedia,* says that "The Holy See is the supreme organ of the Roman Catholic Church." (p.351)

The ambassador of the "Holy See" in India is the designated as Apostolic Pro-Nuncio. The *Encyclopaedia* explains : "There are 3 types of pontifical representatives: nuncios (for nations with a Catholic majority) and pro-nuncios (for nations with a Catholic minority) are accredited to countries which have

diplomatic relations with the Holy See; permanent observers or delegates are appointed to certain international organizations, and apostolic delegates, *with no diplomatic status,* represent the Holy See to bishops in countries which have no diplomatic relations with the Holy See. A nuncio, according to customary law, is dean of the diplomatic corps in the country to which he is appointed as stated in the Treaty of Vienna of 1815 and confirmed by the convention on diplomatic relations of Vienna in 1961. The development of diplomatic relations with non-Catholic countries led Paul VI in 1965 to adopt the term pro-nuncio to describe a representative with the powers of a nuncio but not given the honour by a country of being dean of its diplomatic corps." (p.353 Italics added)

The leading Western countries, the U.S.A. and U.K. refuse to receive a nuncio. It is only in the Third World countries that the Pope has succeeded in palming off his pretensions. The *Encyclopaedia* reports: "Western countries having apostolic delegations and not nunciatures include the USA (although there is a personal representative of the US president at the Vatican), U.K., Mexico and the Scandinavian countries with the exception of Finland. There was no representative of the Holy See in Greece until 1977. Recent years have witnessed a significant increase in the number of nunciatures and apostolic delegations in Third-World countries." (*Ibid.*) The repesentative the of Pope in U.K. and U.S.A. and several other Western countries has no diplomatic status.

The word "Apostolic" has been used very profusely by the Pope for all that pertains to the Church of Rome, ever since he first proclaimed his pretensions as the Successor of St. Peter. Dictionaries define the word "apostle" as "one sent to preach the gospel", or a first introducer of "Christianity in a country." The word "Nuncio" also carries the same theological nuance. It is derived from the Latin word *nuntius* and means "news." The Pope's representative in India is the bearer of "news," namely, that Jehovah has already sent his Only Son for redeeming mankind by dying on the Cross and that all those who want to be saved should apply to the Only Son's vicar on earth!

This is a very curious situation. It leaves us wondering why a State which professes to be secular should recognise the representative of a religious sect as an ambassador and extend to him the requisite protocol. The anomaly becomes curiouser when we find that the specific purpose of that representative is to propagate a particular creed.

India is not a Catholic country. The overwhelming majority of the Indian people do not regard the Church of Rome as a holy place, nor the Bishop of Rome as a holy person. Moreover, it is nothing short of a scandal that the people of India should play host to the representative of an institution which has caused them so much suffering in the past, and which still looks at them as "desciples of the Devil."

Herr Felix Alfred Plattner, an awfully self-righteous and smug Catholic scribe from Germany, tells us how the scandal started. "This process began," he writes, "with the appointment of a Delegate Apostolic to India in 1884. From 1919 to 1948, the Delegates Apostolic resided at Bangalore, the geographic centre of South India, with its important missions. It was here that the first Delegate promulgated the establishment of the Indian Hierarchy in 1887...The Delegates Mooney (1926-1931) and Kierkals (1931-1952) did much to break up the far too large ecclesiastical provinces." (*The Catholic Church in India: Yesterday and Today,* English version of the German original, Mainz 1963, published from Allahabad in 1964, p.110).

There is no indication that the British Government of India ever recognised the Delegate Apostolic as a plenipotentiary of the Pope. He was only permitted to reside in India like so many other foreign missionaries and bishops sent by the Pope to multiply and look after his Catholic flock.

The *Directory* hides this fact and simply states that "The Apostolic Delegation of the East Indies was established in 1881 for India and Ceylon, was extended to Malacca in 1889, to Burma in 1920 and to Goa in 1923." It follows this passage immediately by what we have quoted above regarding

"establishment of diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Government of India." The suggestion is obvious that the relations between the British Government of India and the Holy See were of a diplomatic character.

How this fraud was palmed off on the Government of India has to be explored. But if what Plattner writes in his book is true, this much is clear that the Government of India in 1948 was suffering from a tremendous awe towards Christ and his vicar.

"This took place," writes Plattner exactly one year after Independence Day, on August 15, 1941. On this occasion, Mr. Dhirajlal Desai, the first Indian Ambassador to the Holy See *testified India's great reverence for Christ.* On presenting his credentials, he stated that India was a new State, 'created by the sacrifices of the people, *guided by one* (*Mahatma Gandhi*) *who sought to mould his life according to the message of Christ.* He (Gandhi) was the source of India's strength; *he affirmed the oneness of God and the greatness of the religious ideal proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount.* Hence we have set ourselves the ideal of a secular State, in which all men of goodwill may, in peace and harmony, enjoy perfect liberty'." (*The Catholic Church in India,* p. 8, Italics added)

Poor Mahatma Gandhi was dead by that time. He could not stop the "Indian ambassador" from crawling before a sworn enemy of what he had stood for, all his life. But the "Indian ambassador" or the scribes of the External Affairs Ministry who most probably composed his hymn to Christ, could have easily consulted the Mahatma's speeches and writings. The Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad had published in 1941, seven years before Desai left for Rome, a whole collection of what the Mahatma had said on the subject of Christ and Christianity. The price of the book, *Christian Missions: Their Place in India,* pages 311, was only Rs. 2.00.

Addressing some Christian missionaries in Calcutta on 21 July 1915, Mahatma Gandhi had said: "Today my position is that though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to

identify myself with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism, as I know it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being and *I find a solace in the Bhagvadgita and Upanishads that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount."* (*Christian Missions,* p.51, Italics added)

Regarding Jesus Christ, he had already expressed his opinion in his *Autobiography:* "I was then re-reading Arnold's *Light of Asia.* Once we began to compare the life of Jesus with that of Buddha. 'Look at Gautama's compassion!' said I. It was not confined to mankind, it was extended to all living beings. Does not one's heart overflow with love to think of the lamb joyously perched on his shoulders? *One fails to notice this love for all living being in the life of Jesus."* (*Ibid.,* p.29, Italics added).

The Pope whose condescension the "ambassador of India" was trying to curry, had no use even for this diminutive Christ. The Pope stood for what the Mahatma had described and disowned as an imperialist faith. "But today," wrote the Mahatma, "I rebel against orthodox Christianity as I am convinced that it has distorted the message of Jesus. He was an Asiatic whose message was delivered through many media and when it had the backing of a Roman Emperor *it became an imperialist faith as it remains to this day."* (*Ibid.,* p.152, Italics added)

There is no evidence that Mahatma Gandhi had changed his opiruon about Christ or Christianity before he died. Moreover, the Mahatma had spent a life-time teaching his countrymen to shed all servility towards the West and hold their heads high as the inheritors of great spiritual and cultural traditions.

But here was an "ambassador of India," invoking the Mahatma's name in order to please the foremost salesman of an imperialist faith. The Pope could have very well sent him back to India as the papal nuncio.

The shame and the sin cannot be explained except in terms of the deep-seated sense of inferiority from which the new

rulers had continued to suffer in spite of the Mahatma's labours. The situation is much worse today than it was in 1948.

Meanwhile, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio strides over the length and breadth of India, supervising the Pope's empire. The character of that empire may be read in the words of Agnel Fathers whose sense of justice has prevailed over their Catholic faith:

"The Roman Catholic Church is the most cohesive and well organised religious institution in our country. Its power and potential is far in excess of 2% of the population that adheres to the Catholic Faith....

"A unique feature of the Catholic Church is that it is organically linked, in a subordinate role, to the Vatican which is not only the ultimate religious Authority but also an international political and legal entity. Subordination of a highly organised and efficient component of our Society and Nation to a foreign religious and political Authority, contains seeds of serious problems. In the present situation there are two specially noteworthy features : a) all Bishops in India are appointed by the Vatican on the recommendation of the Papal Nuncio who thus exercises control over the entire Catholic Hierarchy in India; b) *foreign countries notably West German and USA transfer vast amounts of money to the Church in India and are thus in a position to wield significant if not decisive influence over the Institutions of the Church and its Hierarchy.* Western powers particularly USA and West Germany are thus in a position to mould the policies and activities of the Church in India.

"While Christians, including Catholics, in their individual capacity, have made significant contributions in the struggle for freedom, the Church was traditionally allied to the colonial powers before independence and is beyond a shadow of doubt Pro-West in its basic policies....

"During the struggle for freedom in Goa, the Portuguese Partriarch of Goa actively collaborated with the colonial power in supressing freedom-fighters. He ordered the editor of the

Konkani weekly, 'V. Ixtt,' Fr. C. Rodrigues to write an article condemning the freedom movement. When Fr. C. Rodrigues refused to write and pubish an article, he was harassed and had to flee from Goa and, therefore, moved to Bombay...

"The basic issue is whether the Church in India should be allowed to be used as an instrument of the policy of Western powers, mainly USA and West Germany, or should be an autonomous institution playing its due part in the task of national integration, development and progress. The Church Hierarchy in India which is Pro-West is wedded to the former course; the Agnel Fathers are staunch supporters of national integration and progress.

"It is extremely important for the security and territorial integrity of the Country that at a time when *secessionist tendencies are rampant, particularly in those parts of the country where Christian missionaries are very active,* the foreign influence on the Church in India should be reduced as far as practicable." (*The Case of Agnel Fathers and its Relevance,* New Delhi, 1980 Italics added)

Some Momentous Questions

The Agnel Fathers have raised some momentous questions.

Can the Catholic Mission and Hierarchy in India survive without being constantly fed with huge amounts of money flowing from affluent countries of the West?

Can the Catholic Church in India use all that money in a coordinated manner if it does not remain a monolith as at present?

Can the Catholic Church in India remain a monolith if it is not controlled completely and from above, by the Pope?

Can the Pope exercise complete control on the Catholic Church in India on the strength of theology alone, without providing the bulk of its finances to the Church?

Can the Pope collect all that money from the Western countries for the promotion of Catholic theology, without promising some other *quid pro quo*?

We have tried to answer these questions in the next section.

V
WHY THE WEST PROPS UP THE POPE

The best minds of the West started rejecting Christianity as a degrading superstition, from the 17th century onwards. The rejection has spread to wider and wider segments of Western society. The *World Christian Encyclopaedia,* 1982, sums up the present situation in the following words :

"Christianity has experienced massive losses in the Western and Communist worlds over the last 60 years. In the Soviet Union, Christians have fallen from 83.6% in 1900 to 36.1% today. In Europe and North America, nett defections from Christianity—converts to other religions or to irreligion—are now running at 1,820,500 former Christians a year. This loss is much higher if we consider only church members: 2,224,800 a year (6,000 a day). It is even higher if we are speaking of only church attenders. Every year some 2,765,100 church attenders in Europe and North America cease to be practising Christians within the 12-month period, an average loss of 7,600 every day.

"At the global level, these losses from Christianity in the Western and Communist worlds slightly outweigh the gains in the Third World. This can be observed by examining the trends in percentages over the period 1900-1980. In 1900, Christians numbered 34.4% of the world (37.8% if adults only are counted). This percentage has fallen gradually over the decades until Christians in 1980 numbered 32.8% of the world (34.4 % of the world's adults). Likewise, practising Christians have fallen from 29% of the world's population in 1900 to 23.3% today. (p.7).

"A second feature is defections from the churches, yet unacknowledged by and unrecognised by the churches. We term

this the phemomenon of disaffiliation; it is restricted to Latin Europe and Latin America. The disaffiliated are batpised persons counted as members by churches long after they have abandoned their church affiliations completely and in fact any Christian profession, replacing it by agnosticism or atheism. Since 1900, such disaffiliated persons have mushroomed from 283,000 to over 15 million in 1980." (p.15)

But the same discredited doctrine is being sold on a large scale to the people of Asia and Africa. The *Encyclopeadia* says: "In Africa, Christians have mushroomed from 9.9 milllion in 1900 (0.6% of the world's population) to 203 million in 1980 (4.7%). The present nett increase on that continent is 6 million new Christians a year (16,400 a day), of which 1.5 million are nett new converts (converts minus defections or apostasies). Sizeable nett conversions are taking place in East Asia (360,000 a year), and in South Asia (447,000)." (p.7)

Are the people of Asia and Africa finding their own ancient traditions inadequate and willingly choosing a more worthwhile faith? Or are they being pushed into spiritual and cultural slavery by the sheer strength of massive propaganda mounted by Christian missions and financed by the West?

The *Encyclopaedia* provides the answer. It gives details of the missionary outfits, country by country. They add up to a formidable phalanx equipped with the most modern tools of salesmanship. Only the cost of the over-all establishment has been kept a closed secret. But it should not be difficult to work out the figures. They will add up to a colossal amount. The major part is spent by the Catholic Church which has the largest missionary network. It also employs the largest number of native mercenaries.

Components of the Catholic Church

The Catholics constitute about 18 per cent of the world population. They are spread all over the world in many ecclesiastical territories managed by 1,886 Bishops, 440 Metropolitans and 66 Archbishops. Besides, there are 1,987 titular Bishops and Archbishops, 92 relates and Abbots of religious

orders, 72 Vicars Apostolic, 56 Prefects Apostolic, 8 Exarchs and 4 Patriarchs. (*Directory,* p.vi)

Class Division in the Catholic Church

There is, however, another division inside the Catholic Church, apart from the division in ecclesiastical territories. The Catholic communities in Western countries, including Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, are a class apart as compared to the Catholic communities in Asia and Africa. The former constitute the master class. The latter serve as colonials.

It is mainly for running the Catholic empire in Asia and Africa that the Pope maintains an impressive establishment at his headquarters. The physical area which the Holy See occupies may be very small. But the influence it wields in world affairs is out of all proportions to its size.

Pope's Influence in International Organisations

The *World Christian Encyclopaedia* provides some details of its representation in important international organisations :

"Nine permanent representatives of the Holy See to international governmental organizations include: permanent observers at the UN in New York; WHO, ILO and UN in Geneva; FAO in Rome; UNESCO in Paris; one to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, delegates in Vienna to the International Agency for Atomic Energy and the UN Organization for Industrial Development, one to the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, International Committee of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, and Union of Official Organizations for Tourism; the Holy See is also represented at the International Geographical Union.

"Six permanent representatives of the Holy See are appointed to non-governmental international organizations including permanent observers or delegates to international committees concerned with the historical sciences, paleography, history of art, anthropology, and of medicine, as well as the International Study Centre for the Conservation and Restoration of Culture," (p.353).

All this influence in these political, economic, cultural and academic organisations at the international level, is exercised by the Holy See in the interests of the Western world which controls the Catholic Church.

The College of Cardinals

To start with, the Pope himself is chosen by a body which is drawn overwhelmingly from the West.

The *Directory* provides a description of the 120-strong College of Cardinals. They are known as Princes of the Church who assume supreme power whenever a Pope dies and a new one has to be elected.

The 6 Cardinal Bishop are all from Italy. Among the 96 Cardinal Priests, 72 are from Western countries, including 17 from Italy, 9 from the U.S.A., 6 each from France and Brazil and 4 each from Spain and Canada. Of the 14 Cardinal Deacons, 9 come from Italy and 1 each from Argentine, France and West Germany. (pp.xiii-xv).

The Roman Curia

The Roman Curia which forms the Pope's central government consists of a Secretary of State, a Council for the Public Affair of the Church, 9 Sacred Congregations, 3 Sacred Tribunals, 3 Secretariates, 11 Councils, Commissions and Committees, and 4 Offices

The Inquisition

It is interesting that the very first among the Sacred Congregations is that for the Doctrine of Faith. It was created in 1542 as the Congregation of the Universal Inquisition. It formally became the Congregation of the Holy Office in 1908, though this name was used for the Inquisition since the very beginning. We find reference to Holy Office in the correspondence between St. Xavier and the king of Portugal between 1542 and 1552. It acquired its present name only in 1967. Under the changed circumstance when the Supreme Pontiff has become a toothless tiger, the Holy Office has no more the power

to imprison, to exact confessions under torture and to burn at the stake. But it still has the supreme power to define the Catholic dogma, annonce anathemas and excommunicate those who do not follow the Church in matters of faith. According to the *Encyclopaedia* this Congregation still "examines and condemns books" and "administers the 'privilege of faith'... which is the right to dissolve a legitimate marriage between a Catholic and a so-called infidel if the faith of the believing spouse is considered to be in danger." (p.354).

Control of Missions

The next most important Congregation is that for Evangelisation of Peoples. As we have already mentioned, it was created in 1622 as the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith (Propaganda Fide). It acquired its present and new name only in 1967. According to the *Encyclopaedia,* "It is responsible for all foreign mission territories....Its authority also extends over the efforts of mission-sending countries in aid of mission-receiving countries." (p.354).

According to the *Directory,* "On the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples depend all the religious as far as they are missionaries, as well as entirely the institutes of men and women which have as their purpose the missionary endeavour." (p.xvii). It is this Congregation which controls and directs that army of men and women who are trained to employ all means, including force and fraud, to entice members of other faiths into the fold of the Catholic Church. It is a formidable force which puts on many faces and tries to function everywhere.

Brainwashing

The Congregation for Catholic Education, according to the *Directory,* is in charge of "the erection, direction, temporal administration of Seminaries; cultural and scholastic studies in the Seminaries, the formation of Houses of Religious and Secular Institutes as regards their education in the Sciences; the regulation of University and higher education coming under ecclesiastical authorities." (p.xviii) It is this Congregation

which brainwashes the missionaries. The brainwashing extends over several years and can last for a life-time in many cases. The "scholars" are made to meditate passionately on a number of fixed ideas till they become convinced that the Catholic Church has a monopoly of truth and virtue, and is destined to conquer the whole world for the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

Christian Unity

Among the Secretariates, the first place is given to that for Christian Unity. It was established in 1960. Earlier, the Pope could not think of unity with any other Christian denomination, unless he was recognised as the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church. But the stance had to change in view of the steep decline of Christianity in the West. Now the Pope has formed Joint Working Groups with the World Council of Churches, Anglican International Commission, Luthern International Commission, the Methodists and the Coptic Orthodox Commission. Informal talks are also held at intervals with the Russian Orthodox Church.

Jews Exonerated

But what is most surprising, an International Catholic-Jewish Liason Committee was launched in 1971 for negotiating some understanding with the various Jewish organisations. Till the Vatican II (1965), the Jews carried perpetual guilt as the killers of Jesus Christ. What the Catholic Church and other Christian Churches did to the Jews for several hundred years, is a recorded and hair-raising history. The dogma has been disowned under altered circumstances, without admitting that its earlier version was not a "divine revelation.'

Sheep-Stealing

Of course, the talk of Christian Unity does not prevent the Catholic Church from sheep-stealing. The other partners in the unity talks practise the same deception. A lot of literature is available on how different Christian denominations plan

in private parleys to undermine each other. Christian talk does not rule out double-talk. The wolf does not become a sheep by putting on the latter's clothing.

Dialogue with Islam

The other interesting Secretariate is that for Non-Christians. It was floated in 1964 when "desciples of the Devil" in Asia and Africa had freed themselves from Western imperialism and could not be subjected to missionary monologue. Its province is "dialogue" with which we have dealt earlier. Islam was not considered fit for a "dialogue" till Islamic countries demonstrated their power by using oil as a political weapon in 1973. The Pope announced a Commission for Religious Relations with Islam in October 1974 under the Secretariat for Non-Christians. The contempt which Christianity had heaped on the Prophet of Islam was replaced by praise. Recent publications of the Church have started seeing in Muhammad many virtues which were unheard of earlier, such as his uncompromising monotheism, hatred of idolatory, etc. One wonders how the two creeds accomodate one another in Africa where Christian and Islamic missionaries are locked in a combat for saving "black souls."

Coordination of Mission Finances

Coming to the Councils, Commissions and Committees, the most interesting for the unbelievers is the Pontifical Council "Cor Unam", created in 1971. The *Encyclopaedia* says that "It is a body dedicated to furthering the harmonisation and coordination of aid by various Catholic organisations to the Church in developing countries." (p.356). This coordination is necessary in order to prevent the torrent of "aid" from getting out of hand and inviting publicity. The other day, Mother Teresa had to cry a halt to further contributions "until we have used what we have." The German Section of the International Association of Friends of Mother Teresa had made 6 million German marks (nearly $2\frac{1}{2}$ crore rupees) available to her in a public gathering in Aachen without "coordinating" its activities with the Pontifical

Council concerned. The organisation was disbanded. (*The Statesman,* New Delhi, 17.8.1981)

But No Budget

Once again, neither the *Directory* nor the *Encyclopaedia* has so much as a word about the wherewithals of the Roman Curia. There is no Sacred Congregation, Council or Commission or Committee or Office in the sprawling Secretariat of the Pope which even remotely resembles a bureau of finance.

Once again, the cost has to be deduced from the dimensions of the operations involved. There is no evidence that the Holy See or the State of Vatican City has ever published a budget or made known either the sources of its income or the heads of its expenditure.

The Pope has no country from which he can collect taxes in order to meet the cost of running the Roman Curia. His budget must be a colossal deficit account. The deficit is met from resources other than his own.

Some Weighty Questions

Why does the West continue to maintain a museum piece like the Pope for whose sanctimonious postures the West itself finds it difficult to contain its contempt?

Why does the West spend such staggering sums of money on propagating in Asia and Africa, a creed for which the West itself has no use?

Why does the West let loose on the poor and unsuspecting peoples of Asia and Africa, whole platoons of priests and monks and nuns whom the West itself views as worse than a plague?

Why does the West proliferate in Asia and Africa a monolith like the Catholic Church which the West knows from its own experience as the worst repository of superstitions and totalitarian tyrannies?

These are weighty questions for which the peoples of Asia and Africa have to find adequate answers.

Western Imperialism Multidimensional

Western imperialism was a multi-dimensional drive from the very beginning. Its military power which conquered and occupied many countries was visible from afar. What remained hidden, except for those who looked deeper, were some other strands.

Political domination had no meaning for the Western imperialists unless it could be converted into hard cash through commerce.

Commerce was bound to remain limited to a few consumer goods unless the enslaved people were westernized and made to look towards Western industries for satisfying their new needs.

Christianization of conquered countries was one of the ways of their westernization. It worked both ways. Christianization promoted Western culture accompained by Western ways of consumption. On the other hand, westernization promoted Christianity by breaking down the barriers of native cultures.

Christianization Promotes Western Commerce

"Inevitably then," writes Paul Johnson, "missionary effort became involved with colonialism and commerce. In Asian and African eyes it was inextricably involved. As the century progressed, Indian intellectuals, for instance, came to see Christianity as nothing more than an epiphenomenon of western political and commercial expansion. Westerners put it a different way. Grant, in his *Observations on the State of Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain* (1797), observed : 'Those distant territories were given to us not merely that we might draw an annual profit from them, but that we might diffuse among their inhabitants...the light and benign influence of the truth, the blessing of well-regulated society, the improvement and comforts of active industry...In every progressive step of this work, we shall also serve the original design with which we visited India, that design so important to this country—the extension of our commerce.' The point was made more crudely by Holman Bentley: 'So, with the opening up of Africa,

Manchester may take heart; not only are there thousands more to wear its cloth, but thousands more to be buried in it." (*Op. Cit.,* p.446).

British Slave Trade

Profits from slave trade were quite attractive for Britain before the commerce in cotton goods opened vaster perspectives. "Slave-trading," says Paul Johnson, "had become a huge English industry by the 1780s. In four centuries, the European slave trade carried over ten million slaves from Africa, over sixty per cent of them between 1721 and 1820. Some of them went east. Thus, the East India Company had a few slaves, but left the business in 1762. By then the trade had become largely transatlantic, shipping an average of 60,000 a year, with Portuguese America the chief market, followed by the West Indies and the United States. The trade was shared out between the French, British and Portuguese, with Britain taking half. After 1792, the French dropped out, and the British took up the slack, making 1798, for instance, a record year, with 160 British slaving ships operating mostly from liverpool. Slaving was one of the largest, and certainly the most profitable, sectors of the British economy. In England, 18,000 people were employed simply on making goods to pay for slaves in Africa; this trade alone formed 4.4 per cent of British exports in the 1790s." (*Op. Cit.,* p.444).

Slave Trade Defended by Christianity

Christianity defended this trade with all its casuistries. "This trade had been traditionally tolerated by Anglican divines. It was defended even by some missionaries. One of the founders of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, Thomas Thompson, who had worked among the negroes in New Jersey, and then spent four years in Guinea, 'to make a trial with the Natives,' wrote *The African Trade for Negro Slaves shown to be Consistent with the Principles of Humanity and the Laws of Revealed Religion,* setting out the kind of case made by southern state Christians in the 1840s and 1850s. In fact, the SPG itself actually owned slaves in Barbados." Paul Johnson, *Op. Cit.,* pp.444-445).

From Slave Trade to Cotton Goods

But as soon as the traders found that the big continent of Africa would remain closed to British cotton goods as long as the British continued to catch Africans for enslavement, they turned against slave-trade. The Christian crusaders, led by William Wilberforce, followed suit. Of course, they had to disguise cotton goods under the garments of Jesus Christ. In the words of Paul Johnson, "So long as slaving continued, it was very difficult in practice for missionaries to get into the African interior. But once it was illegal, and the British Navy, consuls, and other agents and agencies instructed to enforce the law, the missionaries found themselves propelled powerfully forward on a ubiquitous secular force. For the first time, in effect, the British empire was giving practical, even if indirect, support to missionary endeavour." (*Op. Cit.,* p.445).

Livingstone : Missionary and Marauder

David Livingstone is known as a great Christian missionary. It is hardly known that his primary interest was not in saving of African soul but in the sale of British goods in Africa and the exploitation of Africa's natural resources. Once again, Paul Johnson tells the other side of the story: "Livingstone's initial motive was almost wholly spiritual: 'Can the love of Christ not carry the missionary where the slave-trade carries the trader?' His life can be quite plausibly interpreted as a sacrifice. Yet after fame came to him, he left the London Missionary Society for a consulship in East Africa, the government backing his venture with ¨5,000. He told the University of Cambridge in 1857: 'I beg to direct your attention to Africa. I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open. Do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work which I have begun. I leave it with you'—the speech ending in a shout.

"Again, the next year, he wrote to Professor Sedgwick : 'That you may have a clear idea of my objects, I may state that they have more in them than meets the eye. They are not merely

exploratory, for I go with the intention of benefiting both the African and my own countrymen. I take a practical mining geologist to tell us of the mineral resources of the country, an economic botanist to give a full report of the vegetable production, an artist to give the scenery, a naval officer to tell of the capacity of river communications, and a moral agent to lay a Christian foundation for anything that may follow. All this machinery had for its ostensible object the development of African trade and the promotion of civilization; but what I can tell to none but such as you, in whom I have confidence, is that I hope it may result in an English colony in the healthy high lands of Central Africa .. I have told it only to the Duke of Argyll'." (*Op. Cit.,* pp. 446-447).

America Sees Markets in Missions

So, "The climax of missionary expectations coincided with the climax of European imperialism, and it was very widely supposed that the entire world would be Christianized in the process of being westernized—that is, incorporated politically, economically, or at any rate culturally, in a system which was still wholly identified with Christendom... Nowhere was this conviction more strongly held than in the United States. The American Christian Republic was a gigantic success." (Paul Johnson, *Op. Cit.,* p.455).

Lala Lajpat Rai noted this close connection between Christian missions and Western commerce when he was in America in 1905. He quoted in a letter the following extract from the *Boston Advertiser* : " 'Save the world to save America' was the theme of the annual address of President Copen, He said, in part, we need to develop foreign missions to save our nation commercially... It is only as we develop missions that we shall have a market in the Orient which will demand our manufactured articles in sufficient quantities to match our increased facilities. The Christian man is our customer, The heathen has, as a rule, few wants. It is only when man is changed that there comes this desire for the manifold articles that belong to the Christian man and the Christian home. The missionary is everywhere and

always the pioneer of trade." (S. Haldar, *The Cross in the Crucible,* Ranchi, 1927, pp. 180-81.)

Profits per Missionary

Young India of Mahatma Gandhi cites a far more frank admission in its issue of 8.2.1923 : "Rev. Dr. Macarish, elected head of the Presbyterian Church synod which recently met at Orillia in Canada referred to the incidental commercial advantages of religious missions in the following words:

"One cry in this country had long been markets, wider markets, and since the introduction of the Fordney Bill, that cry has been louder and more insistent than ever. If the farmers and manufacturers desire to create a market, they would do well to get in touch with foreign missions, and we are assured that it would not be long till they received their money back with liberal interest.

"Although the missionary went to the foreign fields to win souls for Jesus, the results of his labours also meant the extension of commerce. Trade would follow the banner of the Cross, as readily as it would the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes, or any of the other national emblems, and usually it cost a good deal less.

"It cost the British Government ¨225,000,000 to make the Union Jack float over Pretoria; yet it is doubtful if the South African war did as much to promote trade, as missions there had previously done. In the past, the missionaries had been the best advertisers of heathen countries. Dr. John G. Paton did more to advertise the South Sea Islands than the sandal-wood traders ever did, and who ever did more to advertise Africa than Livingston ?

"Fifty years ago, it was said that when a missionary had been abroad for twenty years, he was worth ¨50,000 to British commerce; and it was probably not extravagant to say that one of our missionaries in India or China to-day was worth a similar sum to any great industrial centre in this country."

Catholic Missionaries Cheaper than Protestant

The commercial angle was over-riding. It was extended to the Christian missions when Catholic missionaries were given preference over their Protestat counterparts. "The Catholic missions," writes Paul Johnson, "had a number of distinct advantages in competition with Protestants. Their unmarried missionaries were much cheaper to maintain, between one-fifteenth and one-twentieth of the cost of a full-time Protestant (even in 1930, Catholic missionaries cost, on average, only ..35 a head a year; the CMS paid a married European missionary ..650 a year, and an African clergyman ..10-..25." (*Op. Cit.,* p.451).

Sappers and Miners of Commercial Imperialism

That explains the mystery of an increasingly "infidel" West investing in Christian missions in general and Catholic missions in particular.

Christianity is the thin end of a wedge wielded by the West for breaking down the cultural resistance of the East. The Christian missionaries are no more than sappers and miners for the commercial imperialism of the West.

The Pope is still the cheapest channel for spreading Western culture in the East and creating in the natives a craze for "Phoren"

Conclusion

The countries of Asia and Africa have repelled overt Western imperialism which rode roughshod over them for many years. They have to wake up to the covert Western imperialism which continues to creep in through various channels.

Christianity was for a long time a vehicle of overt Western imperialism. It continues to play the same role when Western imperialism has become covert.

The Catholic Church had a monopoly of crusading for Western imperialism before the Protestant missions appeared

on the scene in the 18th century. It still retains its lead, particularly because of its cohorts passing as monks and nuns.

The Pope symbolises Western imperialism from A to Z when he claims to be the Successor of St. Peter, the Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church and the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

A Warning

Christianity may be a discredited doctrine in the West. But it can mobilize mass fanaticism of the new converts in Asia and Africa, in the service of Western political manoeuvres.

The Catholic Church may be a tottering edifice in the West. But it has carved out cohesive structures in the countries of Asia and Africa and acts as a trojan horse of the West, whenever it hears the whip-crack.

The Pope may be a museum piece in the West. But in the countries of Asia and Africa, he is a fulcrum for moving men and matters in favour of Western policies.

The Game Should Be Defeated

The people of Asia and Africa have to be vigilant when the Pope pays his highly publicised visits to them and delivers his sanctimonius sermons to captive audiences of the Catholic Church. The words he speaks may sound sweet. The smiles he wears may seem innocent. But he stands for nothing except mischief.

The Pope is propped up by Western imperialism. He will collapse like ninepins the day the West renounces imperialism or the people of Asia and Africa make it known that they have seen through the game.

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