

Christianity in Ceylon in the Portuguese and the Dutch Periods

A. The Portuguese Period (1505-1658)¹

THE connexion of the Portuguese with Ceylon began when Dom Lourenzo de Almeida, the son of Dom Francisco de Almeida, Viceroy of Portuguese India, was driven to the southern coast of Ceylon by a storm about the year 1505 during the reign of King Vira Parakrama Bahu VIII of Kotte (1484-1509). Understanding the potentialities of the island for furthering Portuguese trade, Lourenzo de Almeida entered into a treaty of mutual friendship and a trade agreement with the King and thus began a relationship which steadily grew and was maintained for more than one hundred and fifty years.

The Portuguese were ardent Roman Catholics and full of missionary zeal. As the Revd. Fr. S. G. Perera points out : "Every discovery of hitherto unknown lands, every Portuguese conquest was hailed by the true sons of Portugal not merely as an opportunity of extending the Faith, but as a positive obligation so to do . . . The *Conquista temporal* was to them but the fore-runner and the guarantee of the *Conquista espiritual* for it gave access to the gentiles and freedom to preach the Gospel".² This deep sense of religious zeal has to be remembered if we are to understand the spirit and manner in which the Christian Gospel spread during the period of Portuguese rule.

As early as 1505 with Lourenzo de Almeida came Fr. Vicente one of eight Franciscan missionaries who had sailed four years earlier to India for the propagation of the Faith. And, possibly at the priests' behest, Lourenzo not only had the Cross of Christ engraved with the arms of Portugal on a boulder overlooking the harbour in Colombo but also had a little Chapel built in honour of his patron saint with the King's permission before he left the island.³ When Dom Lourenzo reported his discovery to King Manuel of Portugal the king appears to have written to Pope Julius announcing that "new nations and lands are being subjected to the Christian Faith through him and that although it might seem to aggrandise his own power it was in a greater measure a gain and glory to the Christian Commonwealth and the Holy See". Soon after on the feast day of S. Thomas the Apostle of the East (21st December

1. The present sketch is concerned only with some general trends of the history of Christianity in Ceylon in the Portuguese and Dutch Periods. Exhaustive research on the Portuguese period has been done by the Revd. Frs. S. G. Perera and S. Gnanaprakasara and to this work the present writer is greatly indebted.

2. Fr. S. G. Perera in *The Ceylon Antiquary and Literary Register*, Jan. 1917 pp. 159-16c.

3. Fr. S. Gnanaprakasara: in *A History of the Catholic Church in Ceylon I* (Colombo: 1924) pp. 19-20 points out that the boulder was discovered in 1898 by workers demolishing the old Headquarters of the Harbour Police and it was removed in 1913 to the Gordon Gardens.

1507) a solemn procession was held in Rome when the Prelate-General of the Augustinian Order, Fr. Egidio de Viterbo, afterwards the Cardinal Patriarch of Constantinople, praised the zeal of the king under whom the Gospel had been introduced to Taprobane.⁴

During these early days when ships came from Portugal to Ceylon they brought chaplains on them and they stayed back in the island not only to look after the spiritual needs of the Portuguese but also to spread the Gospel among the Ceylonese. One of these early priests appears to have been Fr. Luiz Monteiro of Setuvel who died in Ceylon in 1536. The only record of his life was a monumental stone found over his grave in the Battenberg Bastion in Colombo with an inscription the translation of which, as given by Mr. D. Ferguson in *The Colombo Observer* of 11th November 1836, reads :

“Here lies Luiz(?) Monteiro of Setuvel, the first confirmed vicar and primate in the island of Ceylon who edified (or built up) this land with churches and Christians and built S. Laurence and this house with the help of the faithful Christians and his own. Awaiting the great judgment I lie here in this abode of toilsome life resting and from the great labours (or troubles) and dishonours of Ceylon in the year 1536”.⁵

As Dr. P. E. Pieris says in his *Portuguese Era* the few priests there were did much evangelistic work in those early days. “Nor were the priests idle and it would seem that some of them, within a couple of years, penetrated as far as Jaffnapatam. A certain quantity of the cinnamon promised by the Sinhalese king was set apart to assist the conversion of the heathens, negotiations were ordered to be opened with the Sinhalese Court in order that the property of the converts should not be confiscated, and we find Dom Manuel in 1521 urging his captain of his ‘fortress of Ceilão’ to exert himself in regard to the spread of Christianity. The converts were to be treated with honour, the infants instructed, the services devoutly observed, the ministers favoured, the hospital attended to and the property left by the dead duly recovered”.⁶

A significant step in Evangelism was taken in 1542 when King Bhuvaneka Bahu VII anxious about the succession to the throne of Kotte sent an embassy to King John of Portugal as a vassal to his Lord asking him to crown his favourite grandson, Dharmapala, as heir-apparent. The embassy was

4. J.R.A.S.C.B. : No. 59 pp. 316-317 ; 343-46 ; Fr. Gnanaprakasas op. cit. pp. 20-1.

5. J.R.A.S.C.B. 56 pp. 363-6. See references given in Fr. Gnanaprakasas op. cit. pp. 27-9 cp p. 25. It is possible that the Church of S. Laurence is the same as the Chapel referred to earlier in which case if it was built by Dom Lourenzo, Fr. Monteiro repaired it or built a new church on the same site. Fr. Gnanaprakasas points out that the whereabouts of the tombstone are not known although it had been taken later to S. Lucia's Cathedral after the discovery; and that the word ‘primate’ describing Fr. Monteiro does not bear the modern sense but simply means the chief ecclesiastic or vicar of a principal church. The first Bishop in Ceylon was appointed 300 years after Fr. Monteiro's death.

6. Paul E. Pieris : *Portuguese Era* 1. p. 55 ; Fr. S. Gnanaprakasas : op. cit. p. 26.

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also asked by Bhuvaneka Bahu to request the order of St. Francis in Portugal to send Christian missionaries to Ceylon.

Fr. Fernão de Queyroz writes on this incident as follows :

“ This embassy was no less a good fortune to the religious of S. Francis to whom Boneca Bahu wrote, on the advice of Friar Henrique of the same order, asking them to be pleased to cultivate that land hitherto instilled for lack of ministers of the gospel ; (and) he ordered his Ambassadors to ask King João for them, besides some other matters to the credit of the Portuguese. And either because it was understood that these were devices for his preservation, because he saw in the Portuguese a general desire to see them converted or because the pagan king was really of that desire, the king granted everything he asked for, the Ambassadors negotiating with great facility on account of the good dispositions of the king.⁷

According to De Queyroz six Franciscan missionaries with Fr. João de Vila Conde as Superior arrived in Ceylon in 1543 in response to Bhuvaneka Bahu's request.⁸ And De Couto points out that they “ were directed to distribute themselves over the island of Ceilão in these untilled lands the doctrine of the gospel (because the kings of Portugal always claimed in this conquest of the East so to unite the two powers, spiritual and temporal, that at no time should the one be exercised without the other). These apostolic men having arrived in Ceilão in company with the ambassadors were very well received by the king of Cota who gave them leave to preach the law of Christ throughout the whole of his realms”.⁹ But while the king entrusted Fr. João de Vila Conde with the education of Dharmapala, it is a moot point whether there was any real desire on the part of the king to see either himself or his people converted to the Christian religion. What the missionaries desired was to preach the Gospel to the king as Mahinda preached the religion of Buddhism to Devanampiya Tissa so that the king's conversion would be followed by the conversion of his people. But certainly they did not succeed with Bhuvaneka Bahu and they turned their attention to the non-political element among the people.¹⁰ De Queyroz points out “ Though some desired to receive baptism,

7. Fr. Fernão de Queyroz, S.J.: *The Temporal and Spiritual Conquest of Ceylon*. Translated by Fr. S. G. Perera, S.J. (Colombo : Government Press 1930) Vol. I p. 235.

8. De Queyroz : p. 235-6 cp. however Fr. Gnanaprakasara op. cit. pp. 36-37 who says there were seven missionaries and quotes P. Courtenay (Mgr. L. M. Zaleski) as saying in his “ *Le Christianisme à Ceylan*”. (Lille 1900) p. 120-1 that the names of some of the missionaries were : Fr. João da Vila do Conde, Antonio de Pedrao, Francisco de Oriente, and Edouard Chanoça. According to De Couto not Fr. João da Vila do Conde but Fr. Antonio do Pedrao was the Superior.

9. Da Asia de João de Barros e Diogo da Couto : 24 vols. Lisbon, 1778. Translation of parts referring to Ceylon by Donald Ferguson in J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. XX No. 60. p. 124.

10. De Queyroz : Bk. II pp. 235-236 and pp. 238-242 cp. P. E. Pieris and M. A. H. Fitzler : Part I. *Kings and Christians 1539-1552*. From the original documents at Lisbon (Leipzig 1927) pp. 1-6; Fr. Gnanaprakasara pp. 36-37. De Queyroz's detailed account of Fr. João's efforts to convert the king is interesting. See Book 2, pp. 258 ff.

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as the king remained unmoved, they continued in their obstinacy ; and only some of the common people who were less influenced by political considerations became converted ; and many even of the principal persons, who were illumined by God when they were unprejudiced afterwards closed their eyes through wordly considerations".¹¹

About the same time as the new missionaries arrived in Ceylon, however, some people in the island of Mannar had asked Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit to come out East who was later canonised and with whose labours and miracles in the Fishery coast in South India they had been greatly impressed, to come over and work among them. Being unable to leave India, Xavier sent a priest, also called Francis Xavier, to go over to Mannar on his behalf and to preach the Gospel to the people until he was able to go there himself. There were many converts in Mannar as a result of the work of this priest but these successes provoked the local non-Christian religious leaders to complain to the king of Jaffna, Sankily or Chekaraja Sekeran (1519-1561) and to set him up against the Christians. De Queyroz points out how these leaders went to Nallore to represent to the king " in darkest colours the outrage of a minister of another religion going about his territory perverting the people and setting them against him. (They said) that unless he took prompt action, he would soon find himself without a kingdom, without lieges and without pagodas, that a great many of the existing pagodas were already razed and an unknown God was worshipped in their place. And they represented these dangers and what would result therefrom with such exaggerations, that the king forthwith determined to avenge it. He mustered 5,000 men-at-arms partly from the coast of the mainland and partly from Jafanapatão, and set out for Manâr, where he met with no other resistance than that of tears which some shed out of consolation and joy at seeing the constancy with which others died, the smallest children crying out, when their Mothers tried to hide them, for seeing their companions beheaded, they offered their throats to the executioners with the wonderful power of Faith. The tyrant king himself was their Captain and spared neither sex nor age, whereby he earned such hatred, over and above his other tyrannies, that his own minions often times tried to kill him by poison, for as these tyrannies were manifest offences against nature, they were abhorred even by those who were not affected thereby . . ." ¹²

What is now known as the martyrdom of the early Christians of Mannar ultimately became a great source of strength to the Church and doubtless contributed to many parts of the Northern Peninsula becoming strongholds of the Christian Religion. Fr. Gnanaprakasas points out how Sankily's brother, his son and a nephew as well as a large number of others became

11. De Queyroz : Bk. II, p. 242.

12. De Queyroz : Book II, p. 243. See also Fr. Gnanaprakasas for an exhaustive account of the Martyrs of Jaffna in op. cit. pp. 39-46.

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Christians while the martyrdom also provided a fruitful ground for St. Francis Xavier when he came later to preach the Gospel in Jaffna.¹³

The Franciscans later worked and built churches in several places in Southern Ceylon and also in Kandy in 1544. De Couto records that "These evangelist conquerors, not neglectful of their obligations, began to break up in several places the untilled soil and to sow therein the gospel seed, which began to fructify like the grain of mustard in the gospel, erecting several temples, in which the most high God began to be honoured and venerated by all".¹⁴ The entry of the Evangelists to Kandy is recorded by De Queyroz who says: "In this same year Friar Pascoal Commissary and his companion Friar Gonçalo entered the kingdom of Candes, where with the permission of the king they preached the Law of Christ converting some to the Faith; and already in (15)47 they built a Church of Our Lady of the Conception, which stood for some time in Palnugare,¹⁵ the Metropolis of that kingdom, (though the Portuguese knew it by no other name than that of Candea) and in course of time the king Javira Āstana was baptized".¹⁶

De Queyroz also records that the Franciscans being the earliest to enter on Christian Missionary work in Ceylon were at first given exclusive charge of Evangelism. "In the year (15)44 there came to Columbo the Father Friar Valerio de Miranda, a Dominican, in one of the two foists which Martim Afonço sent to this Island under the charge of Gil Vasquez de Abreu and Antonio de Azevedo; and by the end of the same year there came to that port the Father Friar Marcos de St. Guilhelme a Hermit of St. Augustine, a Neapolitan by birth, who was afterwards followed by others. But as the Religious of S. Francis were the first to open the gates of Ceylon to the Gospel, Our Lords, the Kings of Portugal, considering the great zeal wherewith they laboured there, ordained that they alone should build and administer churches in Ceylon; which was afterwards confirmed by the Cardinal king;¹⁷ and during those early years they erected 54 Rectorates in which were more than 70,000

13. De Queyroz: Bk. II, pp. 242 ff; C.A. and L.R. July 1919 pp. 31 ff; H. J. Cole-ridge: *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier* (London: Burnes and Oates 1881) Vol. 1, pp. 281-3; E. A. Stewart: *The Life of St. Francis Xavier; Evangelist, Explorer, Mystic*, with Translations from his letters by David Mac donald, London: Headley Brothers 1917; Fr. Gnanaprakasara, pp. 39-69.

14. J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. XX, No. 60, p. 124. The places mentioned by De Couto are Panadura, Maggona, Beruwela, Galle and Weligama. D. Ferguson suggests that to these must be added Caletura (Kalutara).

15. On Palnugare, Fr. Perera, the Editor of De Queyroz, gives the following note: "This name probably represents 'Ingale-gal-nure' (Senkadagala Nuwara) of the Ajuda MSS. which says ff. 38-39 'The name of this Metropolis, they say, is Ingale-gal-nure, which means 'City built of stone by the Chingales.' Cf Knox 'Hingodagul-neure, as much as to say the City of the Chingulay people' p. 5. See De Queyroz Bk. I, p. 258 fn. 1.

16. De Queyroz: Bk. 2, pp. 257-258.

17. Cardinal Henry last of the House of Aviz, governed on the death of King Sebastian, 1578-1580 See. Fn. to text ref. below.

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Christians; and though many of them in the course of the risings which took place followed the call of the country, and in the persecution of Tribule, of which we shall speak later, at least outwardly abandoned the Faith, many were those who persevered in it and died for it".¹⁸

This exclusive charge of Evangelism given to the Franciscans was however abandoned later and Jesuits, Dominicans and Augustinians came to Ceylon on missionary work although the Franciscans were in a majority for a long time. The account that De Queyroz gives of the entrance of the other missions is of interest: "The Religious of S. Francis, who were the first to come to Ceylon and had endured great troubles in that Island, and had shed much blood, both in the arrayals which they accompanied as well as in the Parishes of neophytes converted by them, and which were erected by their industry as often as the numerous persecutions levelled them to the ground, losing many lives in these holy ministries, almost always in hatred of the Faith, thought that for these reasons the cultivation and increase of that Christianity should be reserved to them alone. But as the Bishop of Cochim, Friar Antonio de Santa Maria, of the same habit, a professed Capuchin, judged that one Religious Order was not sufficient for the conversion of so many lieges and for the administration of so many Parishes as were being erected, and would be erected, if the peace lasted and also because of the favour of the Captain-General D. Jeronimo de Azevedo, and the benevolence of the Citizens, anxious for the ministrations of the Society, all difficulties were overcome. And the door being open by this example, there came afterwards to Colombo the Religious of S. Dominic and the Hermits of St. Augustine, and in a few years they built convents there. And all these with holy emulation rendered many services to God, and erected new Parishes for their neophytes, the greater number of Parish priests in those two kingdoms being always Religious of S. Francis, up to the time that Ceylon was finally lost . . ." ¹⁹ Earlier in the same paragraph De Queyroz narrates how the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in Malabar came to Colombo "and at first they lodged in a hermitage of the Mother of God, where they built a Church and began a College with the aid of the alms of the inhabitants and especially of the General, who was greatly devoted to the Society, in which he had his elder Brother, D. Ignacio de Azevedo, the Provincial-elect of Brazil . . ."

Fr. Gnanaprakasara's comments on the pioneer history of this period is worth noting: "Jesuit missionaries were introduced into Colombo in 1602, and into Jaffna in 1623. The Augustinians came to India in 1572, and six years later we find them established in Colombo. The Dominicans, said to have reached India as early as 1500, had, in 1627, houses in Colombo, Jaffna and Galle. The Recollects or Capuchins, a branch of the great Francis-

18. De Queyroz : Bk. 2, p. 257.

19. De Queyroz : Bk. III, pp. 576-577 ; cp. Bk. 4 : pp. 691-6.

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can Order, have also had their representatives in the Island in later years. The majority of the clergy in Ceylon during the Portuguese period were, of course, Europeans and members of Religious Orders. Natives of India seem to have also worked, but chiefly in the ranks of the secular clergy".²⁰

Although Fr. João de Vila Conde was disappointed at the response of King Bhuvaneka Bahu VII there are instances of other rulers in the island being converted to the Christian religion. And these conversions were followed by the conversion of their courtiers and subjects. In 1591 one of the rulers transferred all the temples in his realm with their revenues to the Franciscans. There were cases of entire areas becoming Christian.²¹ In 1590 the Portuguese overlordship of Jaffna resulted in the conversion of whole villages and the erection of a large number of churches within a short period. De Queyroz points out that before the overlordship of Jaffna about 12,000 converts had been made; afterwards: "the conversions at once increased so much that in the space of two years they baptized 50,000; and after making the decision with the Fathers of the Society of Jesus, they (the Religious of S. Francis) cultivated on their part 70,000 souls, and the baptisms were much more . . ."²² The Jesuits converted many in the Chilaw, Madampe and surrounding districts. De Queyroz records that in Jaffna they had ten churches and in Mannar five and other churches on the Fishery Coast. Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo founded a House for them in Colombo and Captain Domingos Carnalho Caõ founded another for them in Galle in 1614. The Dominicans had twelve churches in the Sabaragamuwa district and another in San Sebastian 'outside Colombo'. A House was built for them in Galle by Captain Pero Velozo. The Augustinians had four parishes and a hermitage on the plain of Mapane which Fr. Perera identifies with Milagiriya being a corruption of Milagres, i.e. Miracles.²³

While it is true that there were many conversions in the Portuguese period, there is no doubt that some of these conversions were due to political and other "worldly" reasons. Bhuvaneka Bahu's request for Franciscan

20. Fr. Gnanaprakasas : p. 128. De Queyroz : Bk. 4, p. 720 notes that Father Friar Antonio Velozo was a Dominican who was 'a native of Ceylon'. And Fr. Gnanaprakasas quotes the Catalogus S.J. as giving four Ceylonese—one native of Malacca and three Indians as having belonged to the Order of the Jesuits and worked in Ceylon under the Portuguese.

21. De Queyroz : pp. 330-1; Fr. Gnanaprakasas pp. 70-80; 89-90; 114-119; The Rajavaliya or a Historical Narrative of Sinhalese kings from Vijaya to Vimala Dharma Suriya II. ed. by B. Gunasekera (Colombo Govt. Printer 1900) p. 80.

22. De Queyroz : Bk. 4, pp. 685 ff; see sp. Bk. 4, p. 714 where De Queyroz points out that at the time of general Constantine de Sa at least 71,074 Christians had been baptized by the Franciscans according to a certificate of the General sworn by anticipation and dated Colombo, 23 November 1628. The Churches in which the Christians were distributed are given on pp. 714-719 and include, inter alia, the churches of S. Anne 'on the banks of the Calane', churches in Wattala, Dondra, Weligama, Panadura, Lunawa, Rambukkana, etc., see also Fr. Gnanaprakasas pp. 219-222.

23. De Queyroz : Bk. 4, pp. 719-720. see fn.

missionaries appears to have been due to a sense of tolerance, to religious curiosity or to political expediency. When a king of Kandy once asked for baptism it was manifest that he wanted Portuguese help. After the conversion of Don Juan Dharmapala, the ruler of Kotte, the *Rājāvaliya* records that "the leading men of the city of Kotte, coveting the wealth of the Portuguese, and many low-caste people unmindful of their low-birth, intermarried with the Portuguese and became proselytes".^{23a} Antonio Ferreira writing to his governor on 5th October 1545 said that the King of Kandy was "asking for the friendship of the king our Lord and he now says that he is willing to become a Christian", but he added: "I do not believe, Senhor, that he will do what he says, but I do believe that if your Lordship will help Camdiaa, these kings, the brothers, will be caught in the middle, and constrained of necessity to do what your Lordship desires".²⁴ A Ceylonese ruler complained that his Christian subjects did not pay their taxes and some of his people had become Christians in the hope of being exempted from land-laws; and others in order to escape punishment for criminal offences.²⁵

Such superficial conversions for ulterior motives have occurred in every country and in every age; and not only to Christianity. But if there were many baptised who were nominal Christians, there were many others who sought baptism as they were genuinely convinced of the truth of the Christian Gospel. And among them were a large number of those who adhered to their Faith even when it became politically expedient to give up some of their religious beliefs when the Dutch succeeded the Portuguese in Ceylon.

The work of the missionaries and the expansion of Evangelistic endeavour meant the necessity for a closer organisation of the Church. From 1515 to 1534 Ceylon as well as the other eastern possessions of the Portuguese were supervised by the Bishop of Funchel, D. Diego Pinheiro, in Madeira. From 1534 Ceylon was placed under the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Goa until the creation of the Diocese of Cochin when the Bishop of Cochin was appointed to administer the Church in Ceylon through a local Vicar-General.²⁶

B. The Dutch Period (1658-1796)

When the Portuguese settlements fell to the Dutch in 1658 there was thus a Christian Community in the island owing allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. The Dutch whose territory was administered by the Dutch

23 a. The *Rājāvaliya* op. cit. p. 80.

24. Pieris and Fitzler: pp. 61-3.

25. Pieris and Fitzler: pp. 1-30; 86-7 cp. Fr. Gnanaprakasara op. cit. pp. 70 ff. regarding the tactics of Ceylonese rulers in their efforts to get Portuguese support. Cp. De Queyroz Bk. 4 p. 99.

26. Fr. Gnanaprakasara: p.129; Fr. S. G. Perera: "The Aloysian 1937-1938" p. 421; T. P. Sampayo: Article on "Ceylon" in "The Catholic Encyclopaedia".

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East India Company were members of the Reformed Church. And just as the Portuguese had been zealous for the propagation of Christianity according to the Roman Catholic tradition so the Dutch were eager to spread Christianity according to the tenets of the Reformed Church.

The religious policy of this period, however, was influenced by a combination of factors which has always been a danger to human progress. The Europe of that day was in the grip of a deep-rooted religious intolerance and Roman Catholics and Protestants, forgetting their common loyalty to Jesus Christ, hated each other. And since such religious intolerance in Ceylon, just as in Europe, had its roots not only in differing religious convictions but also in conflicting political interests, the relationships between the Portuguese Roman Catholics and Dutch Reformed Churchmen became particularly bitter. Many of the Roman Catholic clergy being Portuguese had made the mistake of identifying the Catholic faith with the Portuguese dominion and had assisted their government during the wars with the Dutch. And so the Dutch looked with suspicion on every Roman Catholic priest and identified Roman Catholicism with their defeated and hated political rivals.²⁷

As early as in 1638 when the Dutch made a Treaty of Joint Alliance against the Portuguese with the King of Kandy, one clause had stipulated that "His Majesty will not tolerate any papists, monks or other ecclesiastics (who alone are the cause of all commotion, dissension and disturbance, and are the destruction of kingdoms and countries wherever they happen to be) but will exterminate them as far as possible, because they are always the characters who set the inhabitants of a country against their king, with a view of their helping the Portuguese to conquer and master the Country".²⁸ De Queyroz records that after the struggles of the Dutch with the Portuguese the Roman Catholics were persecuted and a large number of their clergy were expelled from the territory under the Dutch.²⁹ Tennent points out that "their resistance to its priesthood was even more distinct and emphatic than their condemnation of the Buddhists and Brahmans. In 1658 a proclamation was issued, forbidding, on pain of death, the harbouring or concealing of a Roman Catholic priest; but such a threat was too iniquitous to be carried into execution; and the priests continued their ministrations in defiance of the law. In 1715 a proclamation was issued prohibiting public assemblies or private conventicles of the Roman Catholics under heavy fines for the first and second offence, and chastisement, at the discretion of the magistrate, for the third. In the same year

27. De Queyroz: Bk. 4, p. 720; Bk. 5, pp. 811-12, 647, 1169, 1170, 1172, 1197.

28. Memoir of Joan Maatsuyker, 1650: Appendix A. pp. 43-46. "Treaty between Adam Wester Wold on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, and Raja Singha, King of Kandy 1638; see also Appendix C. pp. 57-58 in Memoirs and Instructions of Dutch Governors, Commanders, etc. being selections from the Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government (Colombo: Ceylon Government Press 1905 onwards).

29. De Queyroz: Bk. 5, pp. 812, 821; Bk. 6, pp. 1169, 1170, 1172, 1197. For burning a church, Bk. 5, p. 925.

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by a plakaat, which was afterwards renewed from time to time, it was forbidden for a Catholic clergyman to administer baptism under any circumstances; and in 1733, the proclamation of 1658 was republished against entertaining or giving lodging to a priest, but with no better success; for twelve years later, the same sanguinary order had to be repeated by a fresh plakaat of the governor. In 1748 it was forbidden to educate a Roman Catholic for the ministry; but within three years it was found necessary to repeat the same prohibition, as well as to renew the proclamation for putting down the celebration of the mass".³⁰ "Roman Catholic marriages were at first heavily taxed, then ordered to be solemnized only by ministers of the Reformed Church, or by the officers of the Court of Justice; and all these proving ineffectual, their celebration by a Roman Catholic priest was at last absolutely prohibited and their registration declared void. Their burials were forbidden in cemeteries of their own and extravagant fees were exacted in their interment in those attached to the Protestant churches. Roman Catholics were declared equally with heathens to be ineligible to office; and freedom was conferred upon the children of all slaves born of Protestant parents, while those of Roman Catholics were condemned to perpetual servitude".³¹

The prejudices which provoked the policy of religious intolerance in Europe at this time were so deep-rooted that it is difficult to say whether things would have been different if the Portuguese were in power and the Dutch were the defeated rivals.³² The Dutch fell in with the spirit of the

30. Sir James Emerson Tennent: "*Christianity in Ceylon*" (London: John Murray: 1850) pp. 40-42. Tennent cites the proclamations issued. Anthonisz: R. G.: *Report on the Dutch Records of the Government Archives at Colombo* (Colombo Government Press 1907) pp. 78-9.

31. Tennent: *op. cit.* pp. 53-54. Note however later these laws and other repressive laws relaxed *vide infra*.

32. Cp. Fr. Gnanaprakasara who writes regarding the Portuguese period: "The liberty of conscience with respect to one's choice of religion indeed was scrupulously safe-guarded, while it was considered the bounden duty of a Christian Sovereign to see to it that his subjects are made fully to understand the claims of the one true religion. Furthermore, it was felt that in lands belonging as his absolute possession to a Christian King, the public and solemn worship of false gods and rites contrary to good morals ought not to be tolerated. This feeling was one akin to that of a good Christian who acquires a property on which there is a village fane or a sacred grove to a tutelary deity. The Christian proprietor would consider it his duty to lose no time in destroying the fane completely and putting a stop to the acts of worship which used to be performed there. To allow, in his own property, any worship contrary to the worship of the one true God would appear to him as personally taking part in idolatry. Such was the Portuguese mentality with regard to the territories they owned". Fr. Gnanaprakasara: p. 135. ff See also Selections from the Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government No. 2, Constantine de Sa's Maps and Plans of Ceylon 1624-1628 with an Introduction, Transcripts, Notes and Translations by E. Reimers, Government Archivist (Colombo: *Government Printer*, 1929) pp. v, 30, 58. where a dagoba, destroyed by the Portuguese in Dondra, about 1588 is mentioned. Here the Franciscans had built a church. The dagoba is described as "one of the most magnificent works". See also De Queyroz Bk. 6, p. 1053-54; 1055-6.

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age.^{32b} Tennent points out how "in 1682 the governor Lourenz Van Pyl, yielding to the entreaties of the consistory, issued a *plakaat*, imposing penalties on devil-dances and similar idolatrous ceremonies; in 1688 permission was refused to the king of Kandy to erect a Buddhist Temple within the Dutch territory; and a few years later, application was made by the Protestant clergy to have the Buddhist worship prohibited at the great temple of Kalany, within a few miles of Colombo, and for authority to build a school-room on the ruins of a heathen *madua* or preaching house, which stood in its immediate vicinity. The government were reluctant to take so bold a step as the suppression of one of the most ancient Buddhist foundations in Ceylon, apprehensive that they would draw down the vengeance of the king of Kandy, with whom it was then expedient to cultivate peace and alliance. They expressed their willingness, however, to impose a penalty on such nominal Christians as should be convicted of idolatrous practices; and they gave an authority for the establishing of the Christian school as requested. The experiment was unsuccessful; the school-house was opened, but the resort of pilgrims to the temple became more multitudinous than ever, and the clergy in their extremity appealed from the timid policy of the local authorities to the supreme authority at home, to enforce the *plakaat* of Van Pyl against the idolators of Kalany. The Dutch East India Company complied; and in 1692 they declared the Buddhist ceremonies at Kalany to be prohibited, and ordered the priests to withdraw from the temple".³³

What Tennent says here may well give us the idea that the Dutch were generally harsh and cruel. But such an impression would be far from fair. It is true that inspired by the spirit of religious intolerance which has been seen from time to time in the history of so many peoples not only then but also in our day, the Dutch too were anxious to overcome opposition by means of the political power which they temporarily enjoyed; but alongside that spirit, the Dutch had a genuine desire to promote good government and better commerce and verily believed that this policy of inspiring loyalty to their religion would assure them both. And these latter reasons account for their constructive policy both in religion and education.

The first presbyter of the Dutch Reformed Church who commenced ministrations as early as October 6th, 1642 probably came to Galle as a chaplain to the Dutch forces and commenced ministrations in the church which is used to this day by the members of the Dutch Reformed Church in

32b. The Dutch Reformed Churchmen had not very long before this been persecuted in their own country by the Roman Catholic Spaniards and this too was doubtless a provocation for anti-Roman measures in the East. See H. A. L. Fisher: "A History of Europe" London 1936 pp. 568, 580, 589.

33. Tennent: op. cit. pp. 54-55. See also instructions from the Governor-General and Council of India, p. 81; also pp. 22 ff; 63, 103; De Queyroz: Bk. p. 727.

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that city.³⁴ Other Dutch ministers followed and with their flair for organisation the Dutch soon had a very elaborate organisation designed to work together for the religious and secular education of both the Dutch and the Ceylonese people.

All the Dutch territory was divided into parishes, and churches and schools were built in many parts of the island.³⁵ The chief congregations in the Colombo district were at Colombo, Negombo, Kalpitiya, Hanwella and Kalutara; in the northern district at Jaffna and Mannar; in the eastern district at Batticaloa and Trincomalee and in the southern district at Galle, Matara and Bentota. These parishes and churches were manned by an ecclesiastical service consisting of "Predikanten" or ordained ministers who when they were European were nominated by the Classis of Holland and appointed by the Dutch East India Company. These European ministers were stationed at Colombo, Galle and Jaffna and sometimes also at Matara, Trincomalee and Negombo. They were paid a stipend of fifty rix-dollars with a free house and some provisions such as butter, wine, cheese, bacon, rice and oil were given them from the government stores. Colombo had four European ministers and the Rector of the Seminary to assist them. Jaffna and Galle too had four each except when one of the ministers in Galle was sent when needed to Matara and those in Jaffna went for periodical ministrations to Mannar, Kayts, Trincomalee and Batticaloa.

The ordained Ministers were assisted by "Proponents" (both Europeans and Ceylonese) who were lay-helpers who had gone through a theological course and were licensed to preach, to prepare catechumens, visit members, and evangelise but were not authorised to administer the sacraments. Among the Europeans were "Young men, graduates of the Universities of Leyden and Utrecht who had passed their theological course", and who "were allowed to preach and act for the regular Ministers in cases of emergency. These young men . . . were by far the most efficient in promoting the cause of Christianity among the natives. They devoted from four to five years before ordination to the study of the native languages and generally acquitted themselves as accomplished native scholars".³⁶ The native Proponents after education in the Colombo Seminary, passed an examination conducted by the clergy in

34 Tennent : p. 39 ;

35. Memoir of Joan Maatsuyker, p. 19 ; Instructions from the Governor-General and Council of India 1656-1665 p. 60 ; For details of the Ecclesiastical and Educational Systems of the Dutch see also: Palm: J.D. in J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 105-133, 134-151 ; Vol. 1 No. 3. pp. 5-70 ; Also : Leopold Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum* : being a collection of Monumental Inscriptions of the Dutch Churches and Church yards of Ceylon by Leopold Ludovici, M.R.A.S., Editor of the "*Ceylon Examiner &c.*" (Colombo: J. Maitland and Co., 1877) pp. 1-17, and Anthonisz, R. G. : Report on the Dutch Records in the Government Archives at Colombo (Colombo : *Government Press*. 1907). pp. 70-3.

36. Ludovici : op. cit. p. 7.

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Colombo and were appointed by the government. They were supervised by the consistories and Ludovici remarks that "Though many of these proponents were estimable members of the body to which they belonged, there were others on whom the Consistory had occasion to pass notes of censure for their indolence and lukewarmness in the great cause in which they were engaged".^{36b} The Predikantan and Proponents were assisted by "Krankbezoekers and "Ziekenstroosters" who held weekly religious meetings, visited the sick and performed other similar duties. Associated with the ecclesiastical service were the charitable institutions managed by "the Diaconate." They administered the "Weiskamer" (or Orphan Chamber) and the "Armen Huis" (or Poor House). The oversight of the ecclesiastical service was in the charge of the "Consistories" the chief of which was in Colombo while there were two others in Galle and Jaffna. Each consistory consisted of the Minister, who was the President *ex-officio* and four elders and six Deacons. The Colombo Consistory being the chief had a member of the Government Political Council on it. This Consistory decided on the stations for the various ministers while their formal appointments to the stations were handed over by the Governor in Council. Even the chief Consistory, however, had not the power to ordain "unless the candidate produced a special qualification from the Classis of Holland" and also "an act of authorisation from the East India Company to the Governor".³⁷ The Colombo Consistory had the supervision of the Church at Tuticorin and a minister was sent by the Consistory on periodical visits for the administration of the sacraments and the general supervision of the work and then to submit reports to the Consistory. Half the elders and deacons went out of office after a fixed term and other members of the congregations took their place. A power of veto which the government held over the elections in the early days was later removed. The government had then to be informed of the elections but this too was discontinued after a time in the British Period.

The Educational Establishment was managed by the Educational Commission called the "Scholarchale Vergadering". It was composed of the Disawe or Collector of Colombo, the highest officer after the governor, who was always President, the clergy of Colombo, one of whom was secretary and three or four members from the Civil and Military Services nominated by the governor. It supervised religious and secular education, appointed schoolmasters and thombo-holders (i.e., keepers of baptismal, marriage and land registers), settled matrimonial disputes and granted marriage licenses in cases where consanguinity was in question. Twice a year a clerical and lay-member of the Board were expected to go on circuit

36b. Ludovici : op. cit. p. 8.

37. Ludovici : op. cit. p. 8.

38. Ludovici : op. cit. p. 7.

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to all churches and schools to examine them and perform their various other duties in the areas. All decisions of the commission were subject to the governor's ratification.³⁹ Schools were established in many parts of the island: there were schools for European children, schools of a lower grade for children of European descendants, schools for orphans and a large number of vernacular schools, at which attendance was compulsory and education was free. Ludovici records that in 1786, there were 45 vernacular schools in the Colombo district with 28,867 pupils. In Galle and Jaffna there were 8,532 and 41,090 children respectively. And Ludovici remarks that female education though not widespread was attended to in the principal towns. The school masters acted somewhat in the role of lay church-workers, imparted both religious and secular knowledge, prepared catechumens and confirmation candidates, published banns and were thombo-holders. Many of the schools served also as places of worship for the members of the local Christian Congregation whose children were nurtured in the school. Provision for higher education was made in the seminaries which were established at Jaffna (1690) and Colombo (1696) where there was a course of teaching which included Sinhalese and Tamil, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Logic and Theology, and a number of Ceylonese youths were trained here and later appointed as Proponents, Teachers, Headmen, Mudaliyars, Interpreters and other officials. A few Ceylonese youths were sent to Holland for special training to the ministry. In 1744 Abrahams, a Sinhalese and Joachim Fybrandsz, a European descendant were sent on Government Scholarships to the University of Leyden while one who was sent later returned after seven years and became Rector of the Seminary. There was one Dutch commander of Jaffna who received his entire education in the island. And a Ceylonese of Indian descent, Peter Philip Jurian Ondaatjie (better known as Dr. Quint Ondaatjie), was sent to Holland and had a remarkable career in that country.⁴⁰

C. Methods and Results of Christian Evangelism in Portuguese and Dutch Times

Christian Evangelism all the world over shows certain common characteristics. In obedience to the call to Evangelism, Christian missionaries visit far-flung places, learn the language of the people, and preach the Gospel. They foster congregations and build churches for them. They establish schools for the education of children and in and through them impart both religious and secular knowledge. They write and publish the literature essential for the fulfilment of this programme where such literature is not already available. They establish medical missions and build hospitals and

39. See Palm: *op. cit.* passim and Ludovici. p. 9.

40. Memoir of Anthony Mooyart: Introduction p. iii; J. D. Palm: J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 136-137; Ludovici: *op. cit.* pp. 17, 18.

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generally seek to improve the moral, physical, social and economic condition of those among whom they work. And all these things form a part of their pastoral duties to the people designed to help them in their personal, family and social life.

It is very true that in certain places and at certain times some of these very necessary features of Christian Evangelism have been conspicuous by their absence that there has been much apathy among Christian missionaries and that nominal Christianity has often prevailed. But it is against the background of this characteristic policy and programme that we must evaluate the Evangelistic methods and results of this period remembering also the historical circumstances of the time and the temper of the age.

Dependable statistics are not available from contemporary documents about the number of Christians in Ceylon in the Portuguese and Dutch periods but the general impression that one gets is that the Portuguese were on the whole far more successful in Evangelism than the Dutch. There were many reasons for their success. Already reference has been made to the religious zeal of the Portuguese and how they felt that their temporal and spiritual work in Ceylon was a part of the same programme.⁴¹ In the fulfilment of this programme they had helpful leadership from their clergy. The Franciscans did devoted and self-sacrificial parish work. Both they and the Jesuits travelled widely along the coasts and even far into the interior visiting obscure villages to declare the Gospel, to build congregations and establish churches.⁴² They learnt the vernaculars diligently and their cultural interests and linguistic attainments helped their work. They made translations of Catechisms, Devotional books and other works. They opened schools and in 1605 they established a Seminary where sons of the nobility were taught reading, writing and singing, divinity, Latin and "good manners".⁴³

A noteworthy tribute to the missionary zeal and organisational efficiency of the Jesuits was paid by Philip Baldaeus, a prominent minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who wrote of their work in Jaffna: "They organised regular and systematic courses of instruction, on a very extensive scale and the neophytes were thoroughly catechised before and after baptism. Schools for similar instructions were attached to every residence and catechism classes for young and old were held in the churches". And he added "I willingly

41. See supra p. 263.

42. De Queyroz Bk. 4, pp. 714-719; and pp. 719-726 give an account of the pastoral achievements of several missions. Index pp. 1217-18 give a long list of Churches in Portuguese times; and information as to Church Centres are also available in Selections from the Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government No. 2. Constantine de Sa's Maps and Plans of Ceylon 1624-1628 by E. Reimers: *Colombo Government Press* 1929 passim: sp. see pp. 51-62.

43. Fr. S. G. Perera: C.A. and L.R. July 1916 pp.; Oct. 1916, pp. 69-70; July 1917, p. 27; Oct. 1917, pp. 120-22; Jan. 1919, pp. 150-6; Oct. 1919, pp. 82; H.W. Codrington: *A Short History of Ceylon* (London: Macmillan 1926) pp. 128-130.

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recognise that I liked their method of procedure and I have walked in their footsteps in working at the reformation of all churches and schools of Manar and Jaffnapatam so long as their teaching did not clash with our own religion and teaching".⁴⁴

Another reason for Evangelistic success in this period was the help given by the priests to the Ceylonese in their difficulties and specially when they suffered in Courts of Law and otherwise from the oppression of corrupt Portuguese officials. It is true that in the early days the Portuguese government officials remembered the high professions of their faith and that there were persons like Dom Jeronimo de Azevedo, Captain-General of Ceylon (1594-1613) who gave a great deal of help to religious activities and even assisted in founding Jesuit Colleges in the island⁴⁵ but as time went on the type of officials who arrived in Ceylon was often not of the best. Lacking experience both of colonial administration and of human nature they failed to bring contentment to the people and often oppressed them⁴⁶ while there were others who like soldiers in temporary occupation of other lands exploited the people in order to enrich themselves. They worked against their own clergy and became thoroughly unhelpful to the missionary cause. De Queyroz points how "in all things they behaved like independent lords not excluding the ecclesiastical affairs, arrogating to themselves the power of the Nuncios. There was a General who even interfered with the allotting of sermons. 'I want this one to preach, not the other'; 'there shall be or there shall not be a sermon'; even going to the length of saying that he was King, that he would turn the Religious in a *champana* out of the Island, and sometimes saying to others that he would give slaps and whippings at the hands of Caffirs and other nonsense".⁴⁷ The

44. P. Baldaeus : *A fine and exact description of the most celebrated East India Coast of Malabar and Coromandel; as also of the Isle of Ceylon*. Translated from the High Dutch printed at Amsterdam 1672 (in *Churchill's Voyages* Vol. III, pp. 509-793 : London 1752 fol.); Also Fr. S. G. Perera : C.A. and L.R. Oct. 1917, p. 121.

45. De Queyroz : Bk. III, 577. Fr. Gnanaprakasara pp. 261-2.

46. De Queyroz : Bk. 6, pp. 1003-1059

47. De Queyroz : Bk. 6, p. 1047 ; see also pp. 1057-9 where De Queyroz accuses the Portuguese of ingratitude to the Religious. One of the reasons why De Queyroz wrote his great work was to show where the iniquities and oppressions of the Portuguese officials had led the country. Study also for both sides of the question De Queyroz Bk. 3, pp. 576-7 ; Fr. S. G. Perera : C. A. and L. R. Vol. II-IV. passim and specially C.A. and L.R. July 1916, pp. 1-28 ; Oct. 1916, pp. Jan. 1917 pp. 69-90 ; 158-168 July 1917 pp. 19-35 ; Oct. 1917 p. 116-130 ; Pieris and Fitzler : pp. 18-19. H. W. Codrington : *A Short History of Ceylon* pp. 129-130. Codrington reminds us that while "under the old government the chiefs had a wholesome fear of the king, who, if a strong ruler suffered no tyrant but himself ; under the Portuguese every lord of a village, nay every petty headman, assumed powers which would not have been tolerated before. It must be remembered", he adds, "that the worst enemies of the villager often were his own fellow-countrymen ; the Vidānēs were as bad as any Portuguese village lord, and the Lascarins in 1636 actually prayed for Portuguese instead of Sinhalese Mudaliyars and Arachchis, a prayer curiously reminiscent of a similar request by the people at Kandy in 1815"; see also H. A. Windham : *Native Education* O.U.P. 1933 pp. 15-16.

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oppressive actions of the government officials against the clergy and the people and the stand that the clergy took on behalf of the people against the government bound them together and was doubtless the basis of a firm and common loyalty to each other so great that the clergy appear to have been even accused of provoking rebellion against the government. De Queyroz says "In the rebellion against Constantine de Sa many *olas* were spread about the country by Natives complaining of the violence and injustices which the Portuguese did to them ; but never a complaint did they make of the Fathers. In the **petition** and notes they gave to the general Diogo de Melo de Castro they made the same **complaint but, none** about the Rectors". And so De Queyroz asks : "On what ground, then, do you accuse them of the rebellions in Ceylon?"⁴⁸

If the pastoral zeal of the clergy **promoted Evangelism**, the Roman Catholic manner of worship too helped towards the same-end. The **elaborate ritual** and the colourful ceremonial which have the sanction of ancient usage and **which** appeal to certain people in every land and to most people in the Orient, the use of images, of incense, of religious processions, of feasts and fasts, all these helped in winning converts from a people who professed a religion already familiar with such modes. Evangelism was also assisted by the use of dramatic representations intended to interpret church-doctrine and history in an interesting manner.⁴⁹

Then again, material "benefits and favours" given to Christian converts at certain times also assisted "conversions" although the local officials do not seem to have been very keen on granting these favours. Fr. Gnanaprakasas quotes an injunction of King Don João III given in 1546 to Don João de Castro, Governor of India, asking him to grant his subjects temporal benefits : "And in order that the heathens may be led to submit to the yoke of the Gospel not only by an intimate conviction concerning the doctrines of the Faith and by an efficacious hope in life everlasting, but also by the **benefit** of certain temporal favours—those favours which exercise an influence over the hearts of subjects, you will take care that the new Christians do really obtain in future and possess all the liberties and immunities, enjoy all the privileges and favours which till now were the exclusive share of the heathens."⁵⁰ Commenting on this, Fr. Gnanaprakasas points out that "in accordance with the royal wishes, we see provisions made from time to time for giving clothing to catechumens the day before their baptism at the expense of the royal treasury ; for exempting neophytes from payment of tithes for fifteen years from the date of their baptism ; for promoting natives to offices

48. De Queyroz : Bk. 6, p. 1053.

49. Tennent : pp. 21-22 ; Fr. Perera : C.A. and L.R. Oct. 1919, p. 84 for the adoption of the "Sannyasi" dress by the Jesuits ; Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum*, p. 5 ; cp. Dutch worship *vide* infra. p—.

50. Fr. Gnanaprakasas : p. 134.

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by Government through the mediation of the *Pai dos Christaos* (or the priest in charge of converts) whose recommendation always obtained precedence over others ; for favouring heathens who would be converted, and granting to those already converted rewards and honours, refusing them to those who would persevere in their idolatry".⁵¹

The Dutch Evangelists too had their achievements. Just as both Church and Government authorities in Portugal were keen on the spread of Roman Catholicism in Ceylon so similar authorities in Holland took a keen interest in the Evangelistic efforts of the Dutch Reformed Church. We know that the Classis in Holland called for reports, statistics and other details of work ; and there appear to have been far more Governors and Commanders who aided the Church authorities in the island in the Dutch period than in the Portuguese.⁵²

Many churches and schools some of which had been taken over from the Roman Catholics were maintained by the Church and schools commissions in the Dutch period.⁵³ and among the Dutch clergy there were zealous and devoted men like the Revd. Philip Baldaeus who worked in Jaffna.⁵⁴ The local Church authorities were anxious to see the European clergy learning and preaching in the vernaculars and the Classis in Holland was asked in selecting ministers for work in Ceylon to give preference to young men who would be able to learn the languages easily. Among the clergy who were proficient in the vernaculars were Simon Cat, Fybrandz, Henricus Philips de Melho and Wetzelius. Besides these were the Revd. Mr. Concyn who was at Matara in 1713, became a distinguished scholar in Sinhalese and translated the scriptures and Johannes Ruell who published a Sinhalese Grammar in 1708 in Amsterdam. The first printing press to be set up in the island too appears to have also been during this period. Under the supervision of the Dutch clergy the Scriptures were translated from the Dutch by a committee of clergy and Sinhalese pundits while other books and pamphlets too were printed in Sinhalese, Tamil and Portuguese.⁵⁵

51. Fr. Gnanaprakasara pp. 134-5 quotes the *Archivo Portuguez-Oriental* Edited by T. H. de Cunha Rivera in 6 fascicules. Nova Goa 1857-76 V. Nos. 695 pp. 749-50 ; 684 and 718, pp. 73, 785, No. 782 p. 911 and No. 803 p. 967-9; Windham : op. cit. p. 15.

52. Instructions from the Governor-General and Council of India pp. 92 ff ; Memoir of Baron Von Imhoff pp. 59-62 ; Memoir of Cornelius Joan Simons pp. 21-22 ; Memoir of Jacob Christiaan Pielat pp. 37-38, 60.

53. Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum*, p. 7.

54. Baldaeus : Ch. 44 pp. 708-709 ; Ch. 46 ; pp. 719-720 ; Instructions from the Governor-General and Council of India pp. 72, 92 ; Memoir of Hendrick Zwardcroon pp. 52. The Galle Church was on the site of a former Capuchin Convent, Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum*, p. 14 ; also pp. 12 ff.

55. Memoir of Baron Von Imhoff pp. 60-62 ; Memoir of Jacob Christiaan Pielat p. 38 ; J. D. Palm : in J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. I. No. 3. pp. 37-38, 48 ; Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum*, pp. 9-10 ; 12 ff. Van Cuylenberg (R) : Extracts from the Records of the Dutch Government in Ceylon : J.R.A.S.C.B. 1874 pt. I pp. 69 ff. sp. 73 ; also J. D. Palm in J.R.A.S.C.B. II 1848 pp. 5-72 passim.

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It was through these efforts that the Dutch Reformed Church built up her congregations. In the kingdom of Jaffna, Baldaeus reported that in 1663 there were 62,558 Christians and that between 1658-1661 there were 5,799 children attached to the churches of Jaffna. In 1772 it was said that throughout the Dutch possessions there were 424,392 Christians. But since much of the activities of the Dutch Reformed Church were built on Roman Catholic foundations it is possible that these numbers included many who were at heart Roman Catholics. Even the Dutch authorities were convinced that many Ceylonese who called themselves Christians were really pseudo-Christians. In 1751 the Dutch Consistory thought that the converts of Jaffna were but Laodicians at heart, and the Classis of Walchern but a few years before had expressed their fear, from the small number of communicants in proportion to the crowds of Sinhalese who had been baptized, that their profession was unsound and the converts themselves.⁵⁶

Christianos Sine Christo

The Dutch Reformed Church would have been more successful in her Evangelistic activities during this period but for certain very serious obstacles. It was indeed a very great mistake in religious policy to have allowed such rigorous laws to be enacted against the Roman Catholics and the non-Christians.⁵⁷ It was doubtless the spirit of the age but it is in adverse circumstances that the Christian Church has always thrived and the persons who profited by these laws seem to have been the very persons against whom they were chiefly directed—the Roman Catholics while, if the Dutch Reformed Church got adherents from the non-Christians by these methods many of them proved to be pseudo-Christians.⁵⁸

Then again over against the colourful and attractive worship of the Roman Catholics, the worship of the Dutch Reformed Church eschewing Catholic ceremonial, images and processions, must have been very austere and unattractive to the Oriental mind; and especially those who had been already influenced by the Portuguese Christians must have found the new ways of worship unhelpful.

Even the control of her own members by the Dutch Reformed Church appears to have been far too strict to ensure happy or long-lived co-operation. In 1659 a resolution was passed by the Council for regulating the Burgery of Trade Guilds to the effect that no native Christians should be admitted into the Tailors' Guilds "unless they prove their eligibility by diligent church attendance, etc." And similar measures were to apply to shoe-makers and

56. J. D. Palm : J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1. No. 3. pp. 27, 54, 65.

57. v. supra pp. 271-2.

58. v. J. D. Palm op. cit. passim.

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bakers.⁵⁹ Fines were imposed not only on all eligible persons who failed to attend school on week-days, but also on 'those who failed to attend Divine Service on Sundays.'⁶⁰

The repressive laws of the Dutch in Ceylon were looked at with disfavour by the authorities in Holland and when reports of these reached the Classis in Amsterdam they sternly disapproved such methods. As the years went on partly because liberal ideas were reasserting themselves in European religious thought and religious intolerance was becoming less popular, partly because the Portuguese who were the most influential Roman Catholics were becoming less of a political danger and partly because the Dutch authorities in Ceylon discovered for themselves that hard religious laws did not bring the results they were intended to get, the more rigorous laws were repealed. And there were instances of governmental offices, at least in the village areas, being held by Roman Catholics and less difficulties being placed in the way of their exercising their religion.⁶¹

Meanwhile the Evangelistic efforts of the Dutch suffered from further disabilities. In contrast to the large numbers of Roman Catholic clergy who were in Ceylon not only in the Portuguese period but also in Dutch times, the Dutch weakened their religious work in the latter years of their government by providing a ministry which was inadequate both in numbers and in the knowledge of the vernaculars. Between 1642 and 1726 there were 97 clergy of whom only 8 could preach in the vernacular. In 1747 there were only 5 Dutch ministers employed in garrison duty and in the superintendence of the instruction of the Ceylonese and only one of them knew the vernacular. Earlier in Jaffna Baldaeus complained that he had only two or three clergymen of his church where there had been more than 40 Roman Catholic priests previously.⁶²

For all these reasons the religious and educational work of the Dutch suffered. At times meetings of the Consistories and School Boards were not held for long periods and the charitable institutions were mismanaged.⁶³

59. Memoir of Ryckloff Van Goens to Ryckloff Van Goens, the younger 1663-1675 : Appendix B. p. 53.

60. J. D. Palm : J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1. No. 2, p. 107. Instructions from the Governor-General and Council of India 1656-1665, pp. 30-82 ; Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum* p. 9. cp. however a similar attitude to non-Christians in Portuguese times : Fr. Gnana-prakasara pp. 135 ff.

61. J. D. Palm : J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1. No. 3, op. cit. passim. There is an interesting record of a High Court Trial in Dutch times in Colombo where the two officers who were accused of a "forcible" baptism—the Arachchi and the Interpreter—were both Roman Catholics : see E. Reimers : Article on "A Trial before the High Court of Colombo on March 14, 1770. Directors of the East India Company vs. John Rodrigo (?) *Ceylon Daily News* Fr. Perera in C.A. and L.R. January 1921, pp. 113-134 ; and article in the *Ceylon Daily News* September 4th, 1937 ; Tennent pp. 58 ff ; Ludovici : *Lapidarium Zeylanicum* p. 5.

62. J. Hough : *A History of Christianity in India* Vol. III, p. 103 ; Hough quotes Valentyn as his authority ; see also Baldaeus Chapter 46, p. 719 ; Tennent : p. 62.

63. Memoir of Cornelis Joan Simons, pp. 21-23.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE PORTUGUESE AND THE DUTCH PERIODS

More than once the Classis in Holland and Governors had to draw the attention of the Consistory to a more vigorous execution of their Evangelistic work.⁶⁴ For Dutch religious teaching, despite the elaborate educational establishment had become very weak and men like Baldaeus and the other accomplished ministers mentioned earlier were all too rare.⁶⁵

Towards the end of the Dutch period there were two revivalist movements. The hardness of the Dutch religious laws drew many Roman Catholics 'underground'. Some, specially the clergy, moved from the maritime provinces which were under the Dutch to the Kandyan kingdom where the kings who had originally welcomed the Dutch to get rid of Portuguese rule were now repentant of their connexion with them and gave the Roman Catholics asylum. The friendship which was offered to them at certain times during this period by the kings helped the campaign for greater religious freedom which the Roman Catholics conducted from Kandyan territory although at other times political reasons provoked the kings to inflict hardships on those to whom they had offered asylum. No account of this difficult period both of suffering and of revivalism can be complete if mention is not made of the chief of the Roman Catholic clerical revivalists—Fr. Joseph Vaz, a Konkani Brahmin priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri at Goa. He crossed over from South India to Ceylon in disguise and won the goodwill of the Kandyan king and, bearing many privations and undergoing many perils for the sake of the gospel and the church, revived and reorganised Roman Catholicism in Ceylon with the help of other priests who joined him.⁶⁶

There were also the beginnings of Buddhist revivalism during the latter part of the Dutch period. For many years the Buddhists had allowed the ethical idealism which had been a powerful focus of appeal of their great religion to be lost and many who called themselves Buddhists had, like adherents of other religions, ceased to take any interest in it being involved in the pursuit of material advancement and internecine strife. Many of them also believed in primitive animistic cults, worshipped in Hindu temples and adopted Hindu practices. Such kings who took an interest in their religion, however, were able to kindle a like interest among their people; and among these were Wimala Dharma Suriya II (1687-1707), Vijaya Raja Singha (1739-

64. Selections from the Dutch Records of the Ceylon Government No. 5; Memoir of Jan Schreuder, Governor of Ceylon delivered to his successor Lubbert Jan Baron Van Eck on March 17, 1762. Translated from the original by E. Reimers, M.B.E., Government Archivist (Retd.) Colombo (*Government Press*, 1946) pp. 95-6; J. D. Palm: J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 42 ff;

65. Baldaeus p. 720; Tennent pp. 68-70; but. cp. J. D. Palm: J.R.A.S.C.B. Vol. 1, No. 3 pp. 137-8; supra pp.

66. Fr. Perera (Ed.): "*Catholic Agitations in Dutch Times*" C.A. and L.R. January 1921, pp. 113-134; see also his article on "*Kings of Kandy and the Catholics*" in the *Ceylon Daily News* August 28, 1937; and "*The Aloysian 1937-8*" p. 421; also Tennent pp. 50-51; H. W. Codrington p. 133 ff.

1747) and Kirti Sri Raja Singha (1747-1780). In the time of Kirti Sri much was done for the furtherance of Buddhism and of cultural activities generally. Among the monks at this time the most prominent of those who influenced the revival was Valivita Saranankara Thero. He was one of those who were ordained to Upasampada status at its restoration after many years through the good offices of a Chapter of Siamese monks which was invited to Ceylon. Saranankara Thero encouraged the study of Pali and initiated a cultural revival not only in the Kandyan kingdom but, through his pupils, also in the south and, in view of his great contribution both to religious and secular learning, he was installed as Sangha Raja in later years.

Arriving in Ceylon several centuries after the first Buddhist missionaries, the Christian missionaries who came in the Portuguese and Dutch periods were able to proclaim the Gospel to vast numbers of the Ceylonese and many of them were converted to Christianity. The foundations of the Christian missionary enterprise in Ceylon were laid by the missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church and were later built on by those of the Dutch Reformed Church. As religious missionaries all over the world have done, these Christian missionaries too sought the aid of the rulers of the country to propagate their faith and, as rulers all over the world have done, they assisted the Evangelists when such assistance redounded to their favour.

This close connexion of a particular Religion with the State has often brought many good results to both agencies but there is no doubt that, however unofficial the connexion, it has also created many evils, the chief of which is nominal religion specially among those who would exploit religion for the sake of political power, material advancement or organisational prestige. Many in the Christian Church in Portuguese and Dutch times succumbed to such temptations as these and nominal Christianity abounded. The moral strength of the Church and her contribution to this country's true welfare would undoubtedly have been far greater had the Church in these as in other times relied less on political and other material aids for the proclamation of her message.

Despite the weakness caused to the Church by nominal Christianity, however, there were undoubtedly many Ceylonese who being convinced of its truth accepted the Christian religion and supported the personal and social Evangelism of the Church whether the government of the day was favourable to them or not. They formed the nucleus of the Church in Ceylon and it was chiefly through them that Christianity was transmitted to later generations and was able to serve the country as the years went by.

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