CHAPTER XII

THE INDIAN MISSIONS

THE BULL MULTA PRAECLARE AND THE GOANESE SCHISM

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Indian missions appealed in vain for help. Neither the warning of the co-adjutor of Goa, notifying the regent of Portugal that the secular priests of the diocese were by no means sufficient in number to minister to the spiritual needs of the Christians, nor the appeals made by the Government in 1819 and 1831, had persuaded a single secular or religious to set out for India. The future looked darker still when the mother country in 1855 suppressed the religious Congregations throughout the territory of the *patronato* without however renouncing any of the rights attached to the *patronato* itself.

At this date there were still 248 religious in the whole of India, of whom some twenty were Portuguese. The others, the "Goanese", although not deserving the severe judgements of the Propaganda missionaries, were for the most part lacking in zeal and preferred to remain in Goan territory rather than to go out on the mission. The majority, with insufficient training, could not hope to give a good account of themselves in controversies with the Protestant ministers who, on the whole, were carefully chosen and increasingly numerous after the British conquest. Further, the Portuguese *patronato* showed less and less willingness to honour its obligations. Goa had been without a bishop since 1831, Cranganore since 1777, Cochin since 1778, Mylapore since 1804. The Holy See began by begging Portugal to make appointments to the vacant sees or else to

renounce her rights. Having received no reply, Gregory XVI established five vicariates apostolic between 1831 and 1834: Calcutta, Madras, Ceylon, Pondicherry and Madura. The bishops to be appointed would be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Portuguese ordinaries.

Justified though these appointments certainly were, they produced a situation pregnant with conflict, since the territories of the new dioceses continued to be within the sphere of the *Padroado*, which had not been abolished by any diplomatic instrument. In the meantime, Gregory XVI, with the advice of theologians and jurists, had put into final form the Bull *Multa praeclare* (1838) which confirmed the status of the vicariates, suppressed explicitly the four dioceses of Cranganore, Cochin, Mylapore and Malacca, handed over their territories to the vicars apostolic and limited Goa's jurisdiction to the Portuguese possessions in India. As relations with Lisbon had been broken in 1833, the Roman decisions were completely unilateral. Neither the queen of Portugal nor the *Padroado* administration had been warned, except by the appeal of 1837, of the restrictions to their power which were now in force. Even the Bull *Multa praeclare* itself was not addressed to them.

Its publication was a bombshell. After the vicar apostolic of Goa, Carvalho, had questioned the Bull's authenticity and its obligatory nature, the Goanese clergy in the territories incorporated in the vicariates refused to take any notice of it, inveigled the faithful into rebellion and drove out the Jesuits from some of the parishes. This was the beginning of what has been called, with a certain amount of exaggeration, the "Goanese schism". With a few rare exceptions, the resisters had no intention of denying the authority of Rome. In any case, once Carvalho was dead, the resistance decreased and some of the priests made their submission to the vicars apostolic.

There was reasonable hope of peace all round, when the appointment of a new archbishop of Goa (vacant since 1831)

rekindled the quarrel. The queen, after the resumption of diplomatic relations in 1841, had presented her nominee, Mgr Silva Torres, to the Holy See which had accepted him. Gregory XVI handed two documents to the new archbishop. One was official and declared that no change had been introduced as regards the right of patronage. It had no difficulty in receiving the royal consent. The other, *Nuncium ad te*, was secret, and ordered Mgr Silva Torres under oath to obey the provisions of the Bull.

On his arrival at Bombay, the warm welcome he received from the Catholics and the respectful behaviour of the English Governor doubtless went to his head, for he forgot the contents of the secret letter and conducted himself as though he were the ordinary of the place and this in spite of the protests of the vicars apostolic who quoted the Bull *Multa praeclare* against him. It was useless for Gregory XVI to remind him of the circumstances surrounding his appointment, he persisted in his disobedience and took with him almost all the Goanese clergy.

FROM THE SYNOD OF PONDICHERRY TO THE END OF THE CENTURY

On their side, the vicars apostolic firmly maintained the positions given to them by the Bull and, while continuing to struggle against the dissidents, went on with their work. The most important event during this period was the Synod of Pondicherry (1845). It was summoned and presided over by Mgr Bonnand and was attended by his coadjutor elect, twenty-three priests of the Paris Foreign Missions Society, three Indian priests and Fr Bertrand, superior of the Madura mission. With a view to recruiting a native clergy, a teaching programme was drawn up. It recommended as a basis the establishment of good primary schools or at least the improvement of those already existing. Secondary education was to be undertaken by junior seminaries and its curriculum was to include Latin, Tamil, French as a cultural language, English to

facilitate relations with the administration, and the elements of history, geography, arithmetic, astronomy and physics. The pupils with an attraction towards the priesthood were to continue their higher studies at the seminary proper and were to spend one year in a missionary post between their philosophy and the tonsure, so that their vocation might be tested.

The work of the Synod was reported to the Congregation of Propaganda in a document entitled *Éclaircissement sur le synode* ("The Synod explained"), the author of which was a priest of the Paris Foreign Missions, Fr Luquet. It was welcomed and was used in giving final form to the Instruction of November 12th, 1845, a document of capital importance for the problem of a native clergy. One paragraph in it approved the school curriculum mentioned above, and declared its hope that when applied, it would recruit not only priests, but bishops too. Other paragraphs advised the abrogation of "the custom of reducing the native clergy to the state of an auxiliary clergy, a situation which they rightly consider distressing". On the contrary, "little by little, as far as is possible and prudently, the rule should be introduced that, among those labouring in the apostolate, whether they be natives or Europeans, and all other things being equal, promotion should be based on length of service in the mission". Hence, "honours, duties, ranks should be distributed with reference to seniority alone".

The programme drawn up by the Synod of Pondicherry could only be put into practice slowly and by instalments. The general inquiry ordered by Propaganda in 1858 (its findings were only made public in 1862) noted that four vicariates only had seminaries. That of Coimbatore had already produced five native priests for the mission and had seventeen pupils in training. That of Bangalore numbered twenty-nine seminarists, that of Bombay, about fifteen. The Pondicherry vicariate alone had a junior seminary and a seminary proper. They had already produced fourteen priests. On the Malabar coast, where there had been communities since the Middle Ages, founded by missionaries from the Near East, the three

vicariates of Verapoly, Mangalore and Quilon had possessed a native clergy for centuries. It was of both Latin and Syrian rite. The Syrian clergy was mediocre in quality because its members became priests since to do so was a family tradition rather than because they had genuine vocations. As regards seminaries, they were established gradually throughout the whole of India, except in the mountainous northern regions.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the Jesuits organized a system of secondary and higher education. Their oldest institution, St Joseph's College at Bombay, dating from 1807, had more than 2,000 pupils at the beginning of the twentieth century. As early as 1835, the Jesuits had founded the St Francis Xavier College at Calcutta. It was given up because of Goanese opposition but re-opened in 1859 by the Belgian Jesuits. In the Madura district, where the French Jesuits, with exemplary pertinacity, had succeeded in settling in 1837 in spite of Goanese hostility, Fr Canoz established a college at Negapatam in 1844. The Goanese set fire to it. Fr Canoz then chose Trichinopoly as the site of a new foundation, St Joseph's College, which, in 1887, already had 1,000 pupils.

The University Colleges, fifty-four in number, and open to pupils of all creeds, have had considerable influence. The Trichinopoly college alone has produced 1,000 priests and ten bishops. The old pupils, even when they remain pagans or Brahmins, retain an esteem for and gratitude towards their masters. As a number of them hold high office in the administration and the liberal professions, they help to maintain an attitude favourable to Catholicism which counterbalances the opposite mentality, based on xenophobia.

While the vicariates apostolic were making progress, the "Goanese" did not disarm. The appeal or rather the second appeal for obedience addressed to them by Pius IX in 1853 was considered by the Lisbon Parliament as an attack on the age-old rights of Portugal, and Parliament made use of the occasion to represent its resistance as an act of good citizenship.

The Holy See nevertheless continued to seek for bases for

a Concordat. In 1857 the nuncio at Lisbon worked out a scheme which limited the rights of the *Padroado* to the diocese of Goa and the three suffragan sees, Cochin, Mylapore and Cranganore, but submitted to the approval of Lisbon plans for the creation of new dioceses and annulled the Bull *Multa praeclare*. The vicars apostolic protested so vigorously against a scheme which gave the victory to Portugal that Pius IX did not ratify it. But in 1861, with a view to promoting a peaceful solution, a brief granted extra-diocesan and delegated jurisdiction over the areas which the Bull had withdrawn from the *Padroado*, to the archbishop of Goa and his successors. In 1886, Leo XIII signed a new Concordat which gave to the archbishop of Goa the title of Patriarch of the Indies, but restricted the *patronato* rights to his diocese and his suffragans. Nevertheless, he himself continued to enjoy a personal jurisdiction outside these areas. New concessions in 1887 and 1890 in actual fact revived the double jurisdiction. In a word, a member of a diocese in the *Padroado* who was staying in an area under the jurisdiction of a vicar apostolic, ran the risk in case of illness of dying without the sacraments since only a *Padroado* priest had the right to administer them to him.

The Concordat of 1886 did however remove the last obstacle to the establishment of the hierarchy which Mgr Bonnand had asked for at the 1845 Synod. India was divided into eight ecclesiastical provinces: Goa, Colombo, Pondicherry, Verapoly, Madras, Calcutta, Agra and Bombay and these comprised nineteen bishoprics, three vicariates and four prefectures apostolic.

THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE NORTHERN PROVINCES

In the middle of the nineteenth century the north of India was still almost totally ignorant of Christ's message. When it reached the small States of the mountainous area to the west of Bengal—Chotanagpur, Jashpur, Surguya and Udaipur—the missionaries who brought it had to endure so many trials

and yet introduced such admirable social reforms for the natives that their story reads like an epic. All its heroes were from Belgium. The first to come, the Jesuits, entered the country as chaplains to the British troops stationed at Ranchi, in 1876. They discovered tribes living in the mountains: the Kherias, Ouraons, Hos and Mundos who were completely animist, totally outside the sphere of Buddhism and living under the domination of sorcery.

Further, they were shamefully exploited by the great landed proprietors, the Zemindars and also by usurers. The Jesuits, and in particular Fr Lievens who arrived in 1885, took upon themselves the task of defending these victims of oppression. In so doing, they opened people's eyes to the value of Catholicism. Once they saw this, some of them asked to become members of the Church. They proved willing pupils. By 1890 Fr Lievens had baptized 79,000 of them. During a visit to Belgium where he returned to rest, he died of sheer exhaustion without seeing India again. But the torch passed into the hands of other Fathers who, inspired by the same zeal, were rewarded with similar successes, in spite of the smallness of their numbers.

The progress of Catholicism in Jashpur followed a similar pattern, but by a kind of osmosis. The tribes had heard of the battle for justice waged in Chotanagpur by Fr Lievens and they asked for missionaries to be sent to them. As the rajah had forbidden the latter to enter his territory, they settled on the frontier and there instructed and baptized the small groups who came to them. In 1907, there were already 12,900 Christians in the north of Jashpur. During this same year, Fr de Gruyse crossed the frontier to forestall the Lutherans. He soon died, worn out by his labours. He had converted 12,000 natives. These young Christian communities were to reach the fullness of their growth in the second quarter of the twentieth century.

The honour of continuing J. Vaz's apostolate in Ceylon belongs to the Goan Oratorians. Towards the middle of the

nineteenth century, the island numbered some 100,000 Christians who were distributed at the time between the vicariates of Colombo and Jaffna, entrusted to the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Benedictines respectively. Colombo became an archdiocese in 1886 with suffragan sees at Jaffna, Kandy and, from 1893 onward, Galle and Trincomalee. The Oblates were assisted in their ministry by Jesuits, Premonstratensians and a diocesan clergy.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, many other institutes had come to reinforce the missionary personnel; Salesians of Annecy and from Don Bosco's community, Missionaries of Milan and Mill Hill, Fathers of the Holy Cross and the Divine Word, Franciscans, Vincentians, Canons Regular of St Augustine, Sisters of St Joseph of Cluny, Tarbes and Annecy, catechists of Mary Immaculate, Franciscans of Mary, Sisters of the Good Shepherd, the Holy Cross, Loretto, Sisters of Charity of Milan and many others. They all helped, in their respective spheres, to edify, catechize and to succour suffering humanity, in short to plant the Cross in the citadel of Hinduism and to earn respect for it there.