

ministered in secret to the faithful, hiding 'n and about Oxford. His quiet house, over against Merton College, was transformed into a little sanctuary in those sad days, where was offered the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, and the Bread of Life was broken to the faithful who came thither for comfort and strength. Thus the Church, oppressed and afflicted, waited in darkness for better days to dawn. At the Restoration the church was raised from the dust, the clergy flocked back to their charges, and once more the words of the old offices were heard in lonely village Church and Grand Cathedral. Fell, who was one of the most noted churchmen of his day became, like his father before him, Dean of Christ Church, and in 1675 he was made Bishop of Oxford.

Another saint of these days was Nicholas Ferrars. His zeal for converting the heathen burned like a pure flame in his heart. You can easily understand that there could be little Missionary activity in such days as I have described; but even if we can do little for a cause we love, we can always help it by our prayers, and men like Dr. Fell and Nicholas Ferrars must have thought and prayed much for the heathen, while they never lost an opportunity of bringing this great object of Missionary work before the Church in England.

Dr. Fell succeeded in awakening a deep interest in the hearts of many prominent men in the work of evangelizing India. That great country did not then actually belong to England, and the trading interests of Englishmen there were in the hands of the great East India Company. Fell and others with him, felt that so many Englishmen were settling in India, and opening up her treasures for the enrichment of their native land, that a solemn duty rested upon them, to carry the Gospel to her people. He wrote an earnest letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, begging that help might be sent to India. In it he said, that he had conversed with the Hon. Robert Boyle, a famous man of science of that day, and with Dr. Gilbert Burnet, and that he had "enlarged upon the shame that lay upon us who had so great opportunities by our trade with the East, that we had attempted nothing towards the conversion of the natives."

Dr. Boyle was so moved by the words of Dr. Fell, that he gave a large sum of money towards the support of students at the University who should be trained as missionaries for India. Mr. Boyle was a director in the East India Company, and he was also governor of a society for the spread of the faith in New England. He warmly seconded all the efforts of Bishop Fell, and urged upon the Company his plan for missionary work, telling them that Dr. Fell would himself undertake to train missionaries at the University. The Bishop

presented a set of Arabic type to be used in publishing the Bible in the Eastern tongues, and a Malayan translation of the Gospel and Acts was issued. The result of this movement was that the Company undertook to administer all funds given for missionary work, sending out clergymen to act as chaplains to their Society and as missionaries to the heathen.

Good Bishop Fell died in 1686, before he could see more than the promising beginning of a work which lay so near his heart. Many were interested in it; his much loved pupil Humphrey Prideaux, afterwards Dean of Norwich, Bishop Lloyd, and Bishop Stratford. But at that time there was not sufficient knowledge of the native languages of India to fit men properly at Oxford for this work, and the chaplains sent out by the Company found themselves overwhelmed with work among the English in and around the Company's settlements.

It is impossible here to explain all the political causes which interfered with the development of Bishop Fell's plan—but as it turned out, the East India Company did no active missionary work, and the first missions in India, besides those of the Roman Catholics, were Baptists. All this time the interest felt in strengthening the Church in the new world was increasing in the mother country. Nicholas Ferrars never tired of urging upon his companions in the London Company the duty of assisting the missionaries in Virginia. Books and silver vessels for the holy communion were sent out by friends of the work, and a strong effort was made by them to lay the foundation of a college for Indian boys, who might be sent back to their tribes as teachers of Christianity.

In the last years of the seventeenth century, a wise and active clergyman, Dr. Bray, was rector of an English parish. He was much troubled because the clergy and laity had few books and were ignorant of many things about the Church. By his earnest efforts there was established in 1689, the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which, beside furnishing books for home parishes, sent libraries to the colonies. The S.P.C.K. is in existence still; it has done a noble work for both England and this country for more than two hundred years. Dr. Bray was sent to America by the Bishop of London to visit all the missions and report on their condition. On his return he spent his strength in pleading for the colonies, and it was through his zeal that the great Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was founded in 1701. This was the first missionary society among Protestant Christians and we owe untold blessings to it here in America, where it almost kept the Church alive in times of darkness and neglect.