

Sorely disappointed, they had to go back home, the weary miles. Dr. Clough had no more work for them; so long as the effect of the famine was still apparent, he could baptize no one. He put a coin into the hand of each, to keep the people from starving on their way home.

Pressure was now brought to bear upon him. The Secretary of the Missionary Society in America who had been to him a teacher and a prophet, wrote to him: "Shut not down the gate! I tell you God is in this thing, as he was in the miracles of Jesus." Profoundly stirred by this command, he, soon after, found that priests of the Roman Catholic Church had been ordered to gather in this harvest, if he did not. Moreover, his staff of preachers told him the converts were murmuring against them because he was putting off the baptism so long. They assured him that the converts were living a Christian life. He saw that he must act.

He raised the gate on Sunday, June 16, 1878, beginning with the baptism of those living near Ongole. In a careful, deliberate way, nearly 2,000 were baptized during the remaining two weeks in June. He sent a call to his staff of thirty preachers to meet him at Vellumpally, ten miles north of Ongole, to arrange with them to receive those ready for baptism on the whole field. He requested them to ask the converts to remain at home until plans were made. They refused to stay behind. Not a preacher arrived but there were hundreds with him, walking sixty miles and more, many of them.

Dr. Clough hastened to Vellumpally and found a multitude waiting for him. The preachers seated the people under some large banyan trees. He preached to them from their favorite text, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Then he told them he had no more famine help to give them, and asked them to go back to their homes. The cry rose from every portion of the multitude, "We do not want help, by the blisters on our hands we can prove to you that we have worked and will continue

to work. If the next crop fail, we shall die. We want to die as Christians. Baptize us, therefore!" They were holding up their hands to show him the callous places, that had come by digging that canal.

He withdrew to talk with the preachers. They prayed together and courage came. It was not possible to refuse the people, patiently waiting under the banyan trees. He went before them and told them their request would be granted. He and the preachers now acted together as one man. Inquiry meetings on a large scale were held in a tamarind grove near by. Each preacher gathered the converts from his special field together, and with the heads of households to assist him, he conducted his examination. Searching questions were asked, and many were sent away.

On the first day, July 2, 1878, a beginning was made, 614 were baptized, on the next day 2,222 followed; on the third day there were 700 more, making 3,536 in three days. The multitude gathered on the bank of the Gundlacumma River, where the water was fairly deep. The six ordained preachers took turns, two officiating at a time. The names of the candidates were read; without delay and without confusion one followed the other. As one preacher pronounced the formula: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," the other preacher had a candidate before him ready to repeat the formula, and to baptize him likewise. Dr. Clough stood on a bank overlooking the scene, helping and directing. He sent the people home with prayer, committing them to the Lord Jesus, to keep them in His care even unto death.

Now the preachers made themselves spokesmen for those who had obeyed their request and had stayed at home. They would grow disheartened with long waiting. Rapidly plans were made. At two distant centers the candidates were to be assembled with their preachers and teachers and the Christian village elders.