

A BRAND FROM THE BURNING

BEING A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE LATE

Rev. W. P. S.
NATHANIEL

OF

COLOMBO, CEYLON.

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*"Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."*

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WAT



RAINBOW PROMISES

“ A Rainbow round the throne shall shed its light,
To tell the old, old story o'er again,
That only in the clouds once black with rain
The arc of promise sets its jewels bright ;
That only those who well have fought the fight,
And here on earth have suffered grief and pain,
Can learn to swell that new, triumphant strain
Which ransomed hosts shall sing on Zion's height ;
And then those white-robed armies, who have passed
Through tribulation in the by-gone years,
Shall learn that all the sorrow they have known
Serves but to bring them fuller joy at last,
When heaven's sunshine falling on earth's tears
Spans with rainbow the eternal throne.”

E. T. FOWLER

FOREWORD

“ A Brand from the Burning ” was written in 1927 by Mr. A. M. Nathaniel, as a tribute to his revered father, Rev. W. P. S. Nathaniel, whose memory it was intended to perpetuate. This book provides posterity with valuable information about their ancestry.

In order to comply with numerous requests from friends and relatives of the revered priest, the book had to be reprinted in 1941. Since then there have been further requests for copies of the “ Brand ”, and it is to meet this demand that his son, Selvam, has caused the book to be reprinted again. Posterity will, no doubt, bless him for his generosity. Although, by profession, W.S.N. is a doctor, he has the heart of a missionary. He is, as it were, a combination of the twin brothers—the doctor and the clergyman. He practises his profession without any fuss or ostentation and preaches Christianity silently, in his life and actions and his reactions to the different situations that arise.

H. I. MURUGUPILLAI

Nawalapitiya,
7th October, 1967.

A Memoir of the Late Rev. W. P. S. Nathaniel

INTRODUCTORY

The subject of this memoir was born at Araly, a village in the Jaffna Peninsula, Ceylon, about six miles to the west of the town of Jaffna, in February, 1846. He was known in his early days by the Hindu name of Subramaniam (after the god, known otherwise as Kandaswamy, the son of Siva), and to this day he has been known more familiarly by that name amongst a great many of the older people, particularly the Hindus.

The family in which he was born belonged to the "Chetty" community, held in the highest esteem in Jaffna, both on account of their social status (or caste), as well as their strict adherence to religious and ceremonial observances. They were and are strict vegetarians, and very meticulous in regard to morning ablutions, rubbing of the sacred ashes, temple worship, fasting on special days etc. They belong to the "vaisia" caste, according to the original classification by Manu, and rank higher than the "vellalas", who are of the "Sudra" caste. I am told on good authority that they belonged to the same class as the old Tamil Kings of Jaffna—the Ariya Chakravathis. Be it as it may, they are an exclusive people, marrying and inter-marrying among themselves, very dignified in their bearing, and whether poor or rich they were humble, polite and in-offensive in their dealings with others. They have also their residential quarters in a few other parts of Jaffna congregated in localities generally known as "chettiyal-kurichee" or "chetty-theru." This particular family

became specially illustrious, as for generations its members had zealously cultivated the study of the ancient Tamil classics—a distinction so rare in those days, owing to the iconoclastic policy adopted by the Portuguese, and after them, though not with the same virulence, by the Dutch, who ruled over Ceylon (including what was once the kingdom of Jaffna) for over two centuries, before the British sovereignty was established. Tamil learning was in fact waning away in the land, and it was only one here and one there that kept the torch burning. All sources of learning in those days were confined to *erdus*—books made of the dried leaves of the palmyra palm, containing manuscripts written with iron styles. Only a very few families in the upper classes of society either afforded, or cared, to preserve these as a valuable heritage. The ancestors of young Subramaniam were by no means the least conspicuous of these. His grandfather, Swaminather, and great-grandfather, Muthucumarar, had been reputed scholars and pundits, endowed also with poetic gifts of no mean order, the latter being the author of some great poetic works, such as “Kanchan Kaviyam,” “Valai-Veesum-Puranam,” and “Thirukkesuran-Kaviyam.”

Tracing two generations further backwards, we find Sithamparapillai and Cumaraswamy who had also enjoyed the same distinctions, though, at such a distance of time, it is not clear to what degree they did so. But one thing is known, which also forms a landmark in the history of the family, viz., that this Cumaraswamy, the father of Sithamparapillai, was the son of one Muthucumarar, and had flourished in his day and generation. He was known in his early days by the pet name of “Cunchucumarar,” and later in life the much-coveted title of “Mudaliyar” was conferred on him, so that he was known as Cumaraswamy Mudaliyar, or more popularly,

Muthucumarar
Mud. Cumaraswamy
Sithamparapillai
Swaminathan
Subramaniam

“Cunchu-Cumara-Mudaliyar.” Many facts relating to these early times have come down both by oral tradition and through *erdu*. We find, for instance, that some poetic admirer of the great literary talents of Sithamparapillai's sons wrote a panegyric, a part of which may be thus rendered :—

If once their winsome hands the *erdu* take,
The scripts and scrolls would flow as fast as wind;
The sense of driest verse so sweet they make,
That e'en “the best three fruits”¹ we bitter find.

And so again, two generations later, another admirer extemporized on the talents running in the family of Swaminathar, as follows :—

The *erdu*, if they e'er do take,
Their hands it hardly would forsake;
Lustily do they write and learn,
As though the nectar they would churn.²

THE OLD AND THE NEW MEET

Leaving these early times more or less overshadowed in oblivion, the life story of Subramaniam's father is known in all its important details. He attained to much profundity in Tamil learning—having set at the feet of such Pundits as Asaiyar and Nellinather, and

1. Proverbially, the banana, the jak and the mango are spoken of as the “best three fruits.”

2. This is a reference to the old story of the god Siva churning the sea with the Himalayas to obtain “nectar,” the food of the gods.

the famous Senathiraja Mudaliyar of Irupalai. By reason of his learning and vocation in life he came to be known throughout the length and breadth of Jaffna as Sanmuga *Chattambiar*, the honorific addition to the name being equivalent to the words, "the revered Teacher." His labours in keeping the light of the old torch burning were centred in many parts of the Peninsula, such as Araly, Alaveddy, Mallakam, Punnalaikkaduvan, Irupalai, and Vannarponnai where he had groups of disciples who looked upon him as their Guru. The last mentioned place was and is the strongest citadel of Saivism in Jaffna; and the *Saivapragasa Vithiyasalai*—Institute of Oriental Learning, formerly known as the *Navalar School*, after Arumuga *Navalar* who founded it—was really built on the small beginning originally made by Sanmuga *Chattambiar*.

One of the earliest institutions for the dissemination of advanced learning in English and Tamil, in any part of India or Ceylon, was the Batticotta (now Vaddukoddai) Seminary; and the people of Jaffna, even the Hindus, to this day speak in terms of the deepest gratitude and praise of this great and generous gift to them by the American Ceylon Mission in those early days. Sanmuga **Chattambiar's** family residence at Araly was only a mile distant from the Seminary, and it is no wonder that he and the Missionaries were mutually drawn to each other. He was engaged by them as their *moonshee* (instructor in the vernacular) in the later years of his life; and besides teaching them Hindu philosophy and the higher Tamil classics such as Siva-pragasam, Siva-Gnana-Chithiar and Thaththuva-Kaddalai, he also helped them in translating the Scriptures into Tamil.

He was also employed as Tamil Pundit in the Seminary itself. The late Mr. J. R. Arnold, the eminent

Tamil scholar and author, was one of his pupils in the Seminary, and has paid a grateful tribute to his quondam master in his "Pavalar Charithra Theepagam" (Galaxy of Tamil Poets). Thus, in him the old and the new learning joined issues, and the old and the new faith came into conflict. His mind became a veritable battleground, and his leanings and his declarations were sometimes on this side and sometimes on that. His inner convictions would seem to be driving him to Christ, but the pride of caste and the ties of kith and kin were pulling him away. Later on, he was received as a catechumen, and was at length baptized in the Vaddukodai Church on April 25, 1849. Even after this event, he seems to have fallen into many inconsistencies in word or in practice, as was often the case with many of the early converts. An instance may be given to illustrate this. Once, it is said, he uttered the words "Siva-Siva," according to his old habit. These words are considered meritorious, and are therefore repeated frequently by devoted Saivites—even a sigh finding expression in this form. He was in the company of some Christians at the time, and therefore, almost in the same breath, he gave a poetic finish to his ejaculation by adding the words—"some there are who so say!" His life came to a premature end. There is sufficient evidence pointing to the fact that he died with a firm and full belief on the saving power of Christ—on June 6, 1849, in his fifty-fifth year.

Well may we rest assured that the words of the prophet Isaiah have been fulfilled in him: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench."

EARLY EDUCATION

Subramaniam, who was only three years old at his father's death, was fondly brought up by his mother

who remained a staunch Hindu, in the orthodox traditions of his forefathers. After a course of Tamil education, he was sent in 1858 to the Vaddukoddai English High School, which had just then been opened by the Mission. Here he remained for six years, being taught by such well-known and highly respected teachers as Breckenridge, Williams, Daniel Niles, Lyman, and Russell—all products of the Seminary. The lad made steady progress in his studies, and by his industry, proficiency, and genial character, won the affection and esteem of his teachers.

PUTS OUT INTO THE WORLD

By this time the family became rather straitened in circumstances. According to the old Hindu ideals, the teacher or the "Guru" was enjoined not to set his eyes or his heart on the riches of this world, but to regard the merit of having laboured for the dissemination of learning and the inculcation of religious observances as his best reward. Sanmuga Chattambiar did not therefore leave a competency worth speaking of for his family, except some ancestral property which he and his wife had severally inherited. It also happened that the Mission authorities closed the Seminary in 1855, and with it the chances of a higher education for the youths of the American Mission field were practically closed for some years. Under these circumstances, Subramaniam, in his sixteenth year, decided to launch out into the world in search of employment.

He proceeded to Colombo, and after some months of waiting there, he succeeded in getting a "billet" under the Government in the Public Works Department. From 1864 to 1873 he worked in this Department in the Kandy District, first as an overseer and then

as a clerk. Besides other important works, it was his privilege to be in charge of the work when the Kandy-Matale road was first opened out and constructed. During these nine years, the young man gained a good deal of experience of the world and learnt to take a serious view of life, much sooner than is usual at that age in life. His great ambition was to make himself a man, and render financial assistance to his mother, brothers, and sisters, and this was amply realized : he succeeded in "making his penny," as the phrase goes. An important event, however, happened during this period, which, under God's providence, gave a complete turn to his whole outlook and future career.

CONVERSION TO CHRISTIANITY

He has left on record that even during his school career in the Vaddukoddai High School, the instructions he received in the Bible, and still more, the personal influence and talks of some of the teachers, had made an impression on him. These impressions deepened when he attended some Revival Meetings that were held during that time. He was convinced of his sinfulness, and of his need of a personal Saviour, which Hinduism could not satisfy. But he was prevented from taking the decisive step and making an open confession of his faith, owing to the obstinacy of his mother, who even threatened to throw herself into the well and put an end to her life. One reason he mentions why he went abroad so early in life is that he might have more freedom in the matter of his faith. Although this is mentioned in a casual way, it affords a striking evidence of the sincerity of his motives and the genuineness of his character, at a period when it was not uncommon in Jaffna that different worldly motives induced people to embrace the Christian religion and win the favour and patronage of Missionaries.

Whilst in Kandy, he happened to come in close touch with the late Mr. John Philips of Jaffna, who was there employed as a planter. It was no doubt by the will of Providence that it so happened, for Mr. Philips was one of the rarest specimens of a truly Christian gentleman that could be found anywhere. The young man was eventually induced to attend a Sunday Bible Class held by Mr. Philips, and a fresh light broke upon him when he learnt the great truths of Christianity, as expounded by Mr. Philips from the Epistle to the Romans. The old convictions which had been lying dormant were quickened to life, until at last he made **the great decision**, and surrendered himself to the Lord. He was baptized in the C.M.S. Tamil Church at Kandy, with the name of Warren Poor (NATHANIEL). Thus the cross of Christ, not only triumphed over him, but enabled him to triumph over the world. Thus did the seeds that had fallen in his heart during the days of his boyhood slowly but surely take root, and, in spite of the alluring "cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches," spring up to bring forth fruit an hundredfold in the years to come, through the wonderful workings of a gracious Providence.

MARRIAGE

According to Eastern custom, any decent young man of high social standing and of good promise in life is soon beleaguered with proposals of marriage from all sides, with offers of handsome dowries as a bait. Mr. Nathaniel was no exception. He was endowed with gifts and graces of head and heart much above the average. His character was unblemished, and he also possessed an attractive personal appearance. In spite of many tempting offers of "fat" dowries, he preferred to choose for himself a wife from a good Christian family,

of sound religious education and training. After due thought and careful inquiry, he decided to marry Harriet Packiam, the second daughter of the late Rev. John Hensman of Kopay, Jaffna, who is still revered in memory as the first-ordained Tamil Clergyman of the C.M.S. in Ceylon, the great founder of the Church at Kopay, and the "Father" of perhaps the largest and most virile of the Christian families in Jaffna.

The marriage took place at Kopay on September 9, 1870. An incident of a somewhat sensational character happened in connexion with the marriage, which shows the rigid obstinacy of his people and his own steadfastness in the path he had chosen for himself. Arriving from Kandy and finding that his people would no longer receive him into their homes because he was a Christian, he stayed with Mr. (afterwards Rev.) Daniel Niles, the first son-in-law of Rev. ~~John Hensman~~. On the day fixed for the Notice of Marriage, he went to Araly to inform his mother and other relations of the event. But to his utter dismay, the news caused a terrible commotion, and he was beset with boisterous pleadings, wailings, and imprecations from all sides. His people considered the step he was going to take as nothing less than putting the irrevocable death-seal to all their cherished notions of caste and family prestige. His mother actually ran towards a well to drown herself in, but he managed to prevent her from doing so. His infuriated brother and a few others seized him and locked him up in a room. The time appointed for the Notice came, but the prospective bridegroom had not arrived. The bride's party, having waited some time, suspected that something untoward had happened, and came in search of him. Finding the awful predicament in which he was placed and the unrelenting attitude of his people, Mr. Alfred Hensman, his would-be brother-in-law, being

a lawyer, "cut the Gordian knot" by threatening to bring in the Police immediately and to put a legal warrant in operation. This ruse had the desired effect. The people were intimidated, and Mr. Nathaniel was released from his "prison," and the notification ceremony, though thus unavoidably delayed, was carried through. A few days later, the marriage was celebrated at Kopay amidst the rejoicings of a large assembly of friends and relations, while at Araly it was a day of mourning to all his people.

The culmination of this marriage, in spite of overwhelming obstacles, was another important turning-point of Mr. Nathaniel's life, as it had the effect of gradually drawing his heart and mind away from the world and worldly ambitions, and of inducing him to make a fuller surrender of himself to his Lord and Saviour. A great Power outside himself seemed to have been driving him on from stage to stage towards the fulfilment of a great Divine purpose. After spending a few days at Kopay under the roof of his godly father-in-law, he went with his bride to Kandy, and made a home for himself there. His eldest son, Alfred, was born on August 6, 1871, at Katugastota, Kandy, and his second son, Goonaratnam, on October 5, 1872, at Kopay, Jaffna.

THE GREAT CHOICE

In 1873, Mr. Nathaniel came on long leave and stayed at Kopay, and during this time—the deep piety and prayerful life of his godly father-in-law* had undoubtedly influenced him in this direction—he felt that God was calling him for the service in His vineyard. After much internal struggle and prayerful waiting, he

* The "Life of the Rev. John Hensman" has been published in connection with the C.M.S. Centenary, 1918.



Mr. Nathaniel as a young man at Kandy.

Mr. McDaniel is a young man at Knap.

at last made the **great choice**, and gave up the idea of resuming his work in Kandy, in obedience to the Heavenly call.

His people at Araly were in the American Mission field, and his heart was longing to see them brought also into the Christian fold. A suitable opening offered itself not far from his home, and he accepted the post of Catechist and Reader under the American Missionary, the late Rev. T. S. Smith, at Manipay, in November, 1874. At this time the Missionaries were also the Pastors of the Churches, and Mr. Nathaniel proved a devoted assistant to Mr. Smith in all the departments of his work. For about six years he laboured in this capacity, and during this time were born his third son, George Thambyratnam, on April 22, 1875, and his fourth son, James Ariaratnam, on July 30, 1876.

LOSS OF WIFE

During this period he had the misfortune to lose his dearly beloved wife, who died on August 20, 1876, at the age of twenty-three years. She suffered from puerperal fever consequent on the birth of the fourth child, and succumbed in spite of the best medical treatment that was then available. Her remains were removed from Kopay, and interred in the presence of a large assembly of friends and relations at the Nallore C.M.S. Burial-ground. Her death was a severe blow to Mr. Nathaniel. Even during her school career, her strong Christian character, her cheerful disposition, her sympathetic heart, and initiative skill, had made her the leader of the girls in the Mission Boarding School. Her pluck, diligence, and intelligence, added to her methodical ways and charming appearance, had made her the favourite of all the teachers. At home, she was the pet of her parents and the beloved of her brothers

and sisters. And now for about six years, she had proved herself a loving wife and devoted helpmate through all the changes and chances that occurred.

According to the custom among respectable families, a bride would continue to live with her parents until at least a few months after the first child-birth. But knowing how much her husband had sacrificed for her sake, she on her part sacrificed every other consideration for his sake.

The thought of separation from her parents caused a terrible pang to her, but with great courage and resolution, she held to her purpose and wrenched herself away from all the dear ones at home. Her faith in God was strong, and she clung to her husband wholeheartedly. How much she had to sacrifice will become still more evident, when it is remembered that the journey to Kandy, a distance of over 200 miles, took more than a week by jolting bullock-carts—the only means of conveyance available in those days—and lay through dense forests infested with wild animals, and frequented by highway robbers. Her constancy and devotion had always been a source of joy and inspiration to Mr. Nathaniel. But now when she passed away to her rest, so early in life, leaving four children behind, he patiently took up the cross, and with great resignation committed himself more completely to the guidance of his Heavenly Father who was pleased to take her away.

The last child died at Kopay, having survived for only a month.

DIVINITY STUDIES

In 1878, a Divinity class was started in connexion with Jaffna College, which, after a few year's interval, took the place of the old Vaddukoddai Seminary.

Mr. Nathaniel was highly recommended, and he studied Theology, going at week-ends and on other necessary occasions to Manipay to discharge his duties as Catechist. The late Rev. Dr. E. P. Hastings, the veteran Principal of Jaffna College, the late Rev. Dr. S. W. Howland (whose profound scholarship in English and Tamil and attainments in philosophy, physical science and astronomy, won the esteem and admiration of the whole of Jaffna), and the late Rev. B. H. Rice, the saintly and devoted Pastor of Vaddukoddai Church, were in charge of the class. He finished his course in December, 1880.

SECOND MARRIAGE

He married (a second time) on June 11, 1879, Sarah Ponnammah, a daughter of the late Mr. Henry Richards, who was then employed as an evangelist under the C.M.S. She belonged to another large Christian family, which had already become inter-allied to a degree to the Hensman family. The eldest son by her, Egbert Vathiah, was born on March 29, 1880.

ORDINATION AS PASTOR OF MANIPAY

On February 11, 1881, Mr. Nathaniel was ordained as the first Tamil Pastor of the Manipay Church, where he had already laboured as Catechist for over six years. It was **the greatest day of his life**, for which he had prepared himself with many days and nights of prayer and fasting. The Church was crowded to overflowing, many of his friends and relations from the C.M.S. Churches being also present. The Misses Margaret and Mary Leitch happened to be appointed as Missionaries in charge of the station about this time, and Mr. Nathaniel started his new responsibilities under very happy auspices.

MINISTRATIONS AT MANIPAY

The Misses Leitch, whose names have become household words throughout Jaffna, introduced many reforms and opened out many new outlets for their operations. The parish of Manipay, situated almost in the centre of Jaffna, was a very large field at that time, comprising the villages of Manipay (proper), Sanguvely, Kaddudai, Sandilipay, Changanai, Suthumalai, and Anai-cottai. Throughout this extensive parish, all people, Hindus and Christians alike, felt as if the flood-gates of heaven were suddenly and wonderfully opened. Moon-light meetings, evangelistic bands, temperance campaigns, and Sunday School re-organizations became the order of the day ; children's guilds, mothers' meetings, choir bands, musical concerts, Christmas trees, and conventions of all sorts were in full swing ; and there were also put into operation carefully planned-out schemes for systematic Scripture teaching and monthly inspections in schools, inter-school and competitions, prize-giving, house-to-house visitations, cottage meetings, social functions, and what not ?

These many and varied activities soon worked like magic in all the Churches of the American Mission, and indeed gave a new life and impetus to all the Churches in the Peninsula. The variety of channels through which Missionary zeal and philanthropic activities flowed, and the **modus operandi** adopted, became object-lessons for all the Churches to follow as far as possible.

In all these activities, Mr. Nathaniel was closely associated with the noble ladies, and his heart was often filled with overflowing gratitude to God, for having given him these grand and glorious opportunities for service. The various movements for the material,

social, intellectual, and spiritual advancement of the people were so widely recognised, that Governor Sir Arthur Gordon, who paid a visit to Jaffna during this time, was pleased to accept an invitation from these ladies. In the short space of two days, a spacious and magnificent pandal was erected in the Mission compound, and His Excellency was given a grand Reception in the presence of about a thousand people of all sections of the community who had gathered. And it was Mr. Nathaniel who had the honour of reading the Address on that august occasion.

After some years, the Misses Leitch left Jaffna, and for some time Mr. Nathaniel was in immediate charge of the whole work. Later on, other Missionaries came from time to time, such as Revs. E. P. Hastings, S. W. Howland, A. Ward, and Richard Hastings, and the Church was slowly but steadily growing and expanding. A new and important development took place in the year 1893, when the Green Memorial Hospital (called so in memory of the late Rev. Dr. Green who had been Medical Missionary of this station years ago) was re-opened, and the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Scott took charge of the station as Medical Missionaries. The re-establishment of the Medical Mission at Manipay gave Mr. Nathaniel greatly increased opportunities for much personal work amongst the patients and visitors daily pouring in. Missionaries came and went, but he kept steadily on and was ever a devoted worker, labouring unsparingly and untiringly for the spiritual, social, and material welfare of all the peoples in his parish. He was held in the highest respect by all the leading high caste Hindu families, and was a true friend withal even to the poor and low caste people. He got many poor boys educated in the Mission schools free or half-free of tuition fees, and when they left school secured

employments for them, either in the Mission or in the firms and tea estates in South Ceylon. We may count by the dozens men prospering in life at the present day, who owe their positions almost entirely to his efforts. In truth, it may be said that there is hardly a single family in all the large parish, which he had not visited and helped either with his counsel or some other kindly act, and hardly a single individual to whom he had not brought the Gospel message. Indeed it was in this kind of individual and personal work that he excelled, and was pre-eminently successful. He seldom carried on sustained discussions on religious questions, as he felt that no good can come by them ; but it was by friendly and loving talk and by giving his own personal testimony and experience that he tried to drive the great truths home. As a result of all these efforts, God enabled him to bring many into the fold, though it is beyond the reckonings of man to say what amount of good has been done to a multitude of others in so many other ways.

FULLER CONSECRATION

At sundry times and in sundry ways God speaks in a special manner, not only to individuals calling them for His service, but also to peoples and Churches, rousing them up and deepening their faith and spiritual experience.

A memorable event of this kind happened in Jaffna about the year 1888, when a most wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit was witnessed in all the Churches, particularly of the American Mission. Mr. Clarke Chelliah Pillai, B.A., B.L., was a Jaffna gentleman who enjoyed a lucrative practice in South India as a High Court Vakil (or Pleader). He and his wife, who had both been leading a worldly life, came under the power

of the Spirit of God and experienced a remarkable conversion. They not only "gave their hearts" to the Lord, but made a complete consecration of their lives and sacrificed their earthly pursuits for His service. Coming to Jaffna, they held a series of Revival Meetings, first at Pandaterruppu, and then in many other Churches. In a few weeks, all Jaffna was in the throes of a mighty revival. Hundreds of nominal Christians became "converted," or in other words, were "born again," and scores of good, genuine Christians (including teachers, catechists and pastors) made a fuller consecration of themselves in God's service. Indeed, the Spirit of God seemed to be shaking the hearts of His people, and confessions and penitential cries and intercessions went up to heaven from individuals, families, and churches. It was a great and extraordinary event in the history of Christianity in Jaffna. This is not the place to enlarge any further on it, but one thing must be mentioned in passing, viz., that it seems to afford convincing evidence that it is through leaders raised from amongst the indigenous people of the country—and not through foreign Missionaries—that any great movement or mighty upheaval of this nature could be set forward.

Mr. Nathaniel himself came under the spell of this revival and made a fuller surrender of himself more than ever before, and experienced the joys and the blessings of a life of Entire Consecration. Special mention must be made of the addresses he gave during this period on two successive evenings to the students of Jaffna College. He spoke with extraordinary power, and his addresses, in the course of which he gave the story of his own conversion, touched the hearts of the students so deeply that some of them became "converts" from Hinduism, and many of the Christian lads made a fuller surrender of themselves to their Lord

and Master. The uplifting effects of this revival made a permanent influence on Mr. Nathaniel to the very end of his life.

GROWTH OF THE FAMILY

His family was now gradually growing in numbers. Already he was blessed with four sons who were living ; and now was born a daughter, Mercy Nesammah, on August 8, 1881. A son, Thomas Nalliah, was born on February 16, 1883 ; and a second daughter, Lizzie Arulammah, on October 14, 1887. About five years later, on March 23, 1892, there was born another son, Jeba-Nesam-Pillai, who lived only for about three months ; and on September 14, 1895, was born his last and eighth son, Winfred Selvanayagam.

The growth of the family carried with it heavy financial burdens, and his stipend was hardly sufficient to meet these, although he enjoyed the privilege of educating his children free of tuition fees in the Mission schools and had the aid of bursaries for some of them in Jaffna College. But with all this, he found that the savings he had put by while in Kandy came in very handily at this time to eke out his meagre income. Supplemented by a portion of his wife's dowry, he also bought a piece of land at Manipay, and later on built a house on it. Thus, he chose the place where he had laboured so long and so wholeheartedly as his own family residence.

EFFORTS MADE AMONGST HIS OWN KITH AND KIN

This memoir will be but a very incomplete one, if no mention is made of the many and varied efforts he made to win his own blood relations. A good many



Mr. Nathaniel in his latter days.

in the early days of the movement, and some were in the movement in the early days of the movement.

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The second of the movement was the movement of the movement, and the movement of the movement was the movement of the movement.

The third of the movement was the movement of the movement, and the movement of the movement was the movement of the movement.

of them were at Araly, and some were at Mathagal, Nallore, Colombogam, etc. They were all very exclusive people, holding tenaciously to their traditional notions of caste and custom, and religious and ceremonial observances.

He was for all intents and purposes an outcast, and although later on some of them were on visiting terms, they would not even "drink water" in his house. But yet his heart was all his life-time filled with the most intense desire to release them from the iron grips of caste and tradition, and to win their souls for Christ. This longing, as the years rolled on, grew into a yearning passion. His religion was a sweet reality to him, and he could not bear to see his people shut out of the great blessings and the spiritual joys that he himself experienced.

His main efforts from the time of his conversion were directed towards his mother. For years she obstinately resisted, and it was the greatest joy of his heart when at length she yielded to the voice of God and the pleadings of her son. She was baptized in the Manipay Church, some years after his ordination. Even then, the son did not think that his work for the mother was finished. He assiduously instructed her in the great truths of the Bible, and under his nurturing care she grew stronger and stronger in her faith, although she remained a strict vegetarian to the last, and held tenaciously to some of her old habits and notions of outward purification. She died at Araly on August 13, 1889, aged seventy-six years, and was buried at the Vaddukoddai Mission Burial-ground. Her last words were: "Only Christ's love, only His grace, only His comfort!"

Next to his mother, he longed for the conversion of his only surviving brother, two sisters, and two brothers-in-law. His pleadings and his labours were

not altogether without reward. His brother who was a good Tamil scholar, and one of his brothers-in-law who was a successful Ayurvedic physician, confessed their faith in Christ, on their death-beds, and it gave him untold joy to hope that God in his boundless grace had saved their souls, and that they had joined the ranks of the Church Triumphant.

His sisters were found altogether too intractable, and too unwilling to make the sacrifice, and they held on obstinately to their old faith. The other brother-in-law, who was well versed in Hindu philosophy and Tamil classics, was unshakable. Once he was on a visit to Mr. Nathaniel several years after his ordination. The latter, as usual, began to speak about Christ and His saving power. Driving the subject home more fervently than was his wont, he reprimanded him and his people for their obstinacy. The brother-in-law became suddenly enraged. He got up and addressed himself to Mrs. Nathaniel who was about the place, and said with great vehemence : " Look here ! This fellow was a little brat when I married his sister. At times, I have even caned him for his mischiefs. I have studied so much of Hinduism. I can repeat stanza after stanza to show the glories of our faith and our practices. Now this same fellow presumes that he has learned more, and he wants to preach to me. Eh ! It is **he** that should sit at **my** feet, and learn the wonderful teachings of our religion. No more of his nonsense with me ! " So saying, he left the place abruptly.

Mr. Nathaniel was not dismayed or disheartened by this or by other incidents of this nature. He kept on patiently, hoping against hope, and even extended his operations amongst others of his people. He was convinced that the most effective way of winning his people,

and doing good to them from a spiritual or even from a worldly point of view, was by educating their children in the Mission schools. With this deep conviction, he frequently paid visits to his relations in the different parts of the country, and succeeded in getting some of the poorer boys and girls to be educated by him in the Mission schools. He kept up this sort of work, in spite of his own small salary and the burdens of his own family. Many of them are now in good positions in life as a result. Although his highest aims concerning them were not realised, he still had the satisfaction that he had done his very best, and took comfort in the hope that in God's own time his labours amongst his people may bear fruit.

HOME DUTIES

He had heavy family responsibilities and duties. The children by his deceased wife were tenderly brought up by their grand-parents at Kopay, but after some years they were taken over by him and brought under his own personal care. He had also taken in some of his Hindu relations. With all his many and exacting parochial duties, he regarded his duties in the household as an equally sacred trust. "True to the kindred points of heaven and home," he consistently ordered his home affairs so as to make them subservient to his heavenly mission. He managed to snatch some time daily to help the children in their school work ; and over and above this, he laid much emphasis on their private study at home of the Tamil classics, in spite of the craze for English and the contempt for the vernaculars that was the fashion in vogue. During the daily prayers, he took the time and the trouble to catechise the children and bring home to their young minds the eternal truths. Sabbath observance was rigidly enforced in the spirit of the old Puritans, and the study of the Scriptures held an import-

ant place in the programme of each day. Children were not only encouraged to pray privately, but often trained to take an active part in the daily family prayers. He often took the boys to moonlight meetings and cottage meetings, and endeavoured in every way to develop in them an interest in evangelistic work. In times of sickness, the tenderness and vigilance with which he nursed the patients were admirable. Children were taught to take care of their health, and "plain living and high thinking" was inculcated both by precept and example. In the discharge of these duties, he was heartily supported by Mrs. Nathaniel. Herself the favourite of her own family, and the petted "fag" of the late Mrs. Nathaniel in their school days, it may perhaps be aptly said that the "mantle of Elijah had fallen upon Elisha." Without trespassing the bounds of modesty or propriety, it may just be mentioned here that without her God-fearing character, self-sacrifice, and loving and sympathetic co-operation, Mr. Nathaniel could not have accomplished all that he did, for the upbringing and welfare of his complex household.

DECLINING YEARS

After thirty-two years of arduous work at Manipay, he found himself growing old and infirm, and therefore unequal to the increasing demands of such a large parish, and he accepted a transfer to the much smaller parish at Alaveddy, in January, 1906. Here he worked with unabated zeal for eight years. In March 1914, he accepted, the charge of the still smaller parish at Araly, and was grateful for the opportunity thus given him of spending the last years of his life amongst his own people, in and around his own ancestral home.



Mrs. Nathaniel in middle age.

A GREAT ORDEAL

During the period of his work at Araly, he received the greatest shock of his life, in the sudden death of his dearly beloved son Nalliah, under the most tragic circumstances. Nalliah had had a brilliant career, first as a student at Jaffna College, and then at St. Thomas' College, Colombo. Thence he proceeded to Calcutta, and in 1905 took his B.A. degree in that University, getting double honours in English and Mathematics. He was immediately appointed to the post of Mathematics Master at St. Thomas' College, where, by his ability and genial disposition, he won golden opinions from all. On the night of November 28, 1916, all too suddenly, he and a cousin of his met with their tragic end in a railway accident that happened at Wellawatte, Colombo. The news came to the proud father as a rude and even cruel shock. His highest earthly hopes were centred in this son, and they were all shattered in a moment ; but with the most wonderful fortitude, he bore up the trial, too great though it was for ordinary flesh and blood to bear at that age in life. He knew on whom he trusted.

PERIOD OF RETIREMENT

After labouring in the Mission field in various capacities for forty-five years and seven months, he retired on pension on June 30, 1918, and spent his remaining days at his residence at Manipay. By the inscrutable Providence of God he was destined during this period to pass through further trials and afflictions. Perhaps it was God's purpose to make him realize more fully the truth contained in the words of Thomas A. Kempis : " The Cross is an infusion of heavenly sweetness ; in the cross is strength of mind ; in the cross is joy of spirit ". Perhaps he had yet to gain the mature experience of

St. Paul, that we should "rejoice in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience ; and patience, probation ; and probation, hope ; and hope putteth not to shame, because the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost."

Scarcely had he rallied from the severe blow sustained by him in the death of his son Nalliah, when he found himself subjected to a series of further afflictions. On September 8, 1918, his second son-in-law, R. R. Alexander, who was Assistant Superintendent of Excise at Kegalle, succumbed to the "flue" epidemic that prevailed at the time in many parts of the world. On January 3, 1920, his third son, George Thambyratnam, who was employed in the Post and Telegraph Department died in Jaffna of pneumonia. On February 3, 1923, his second daughter, Lizzie Arulamma (Mrs. Alexander, died, leaving three fatherless and motherless children behind. Mr. Nathaniel stood the test of the fire of tribulation with great patience and fortitude, and his spiritual experience and trustfulness in God became deeper and more perfect. He would often repeat the words that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

One thing is certain, that he became remarkably more serene, more hopeful, and more cheerful under all circumstances than ever before he used to be, and devoted his time diligently in making himself more useful to his family and to others. He often gladly volunteered to render various services in connexion with the churches. He was very careful in observing the rules of health, and although subject to physical infirmities incidental to old age, he was never bed-ridden, and was singularly free from any particular organic disease. In short, his closing years were spent in the calm and quiet composure of body, mind and spirit.

LAST DAYS AND DEATH

On Sunday, June 6, 1926, early morning at about 5-30 a.m., he fell suddenly ill, and paralysis stole upon him in a few minutes. Soon his left side was completely paralysed, but he was quite conscious to the last although his voice and expression seemed to fail at times. He was removed to the Green Hospital at Manipay, and in spite of the most careful treatment given to him by Dr. Jameson and Dr. Chako, he passed away quietly at about 9-30 a.m. on June 17. It was a sudden collapse, but he knew his time was come, and passed away in his 81st year in the consciousness that he was going to his eternal rest—"to be for ever with the Lord." It is an interesting coincidence that he died in the very room which he had occupied when he received Holy Orders and for several years thereafter.

The nature of the illness was such that the doctors, as well as his numerous friends and relations, feared that it might be protracted for months, and it was a wonder to all that he was so graciously taken away without any prolonged suffering.

FUNERAL

How greatly he was loved and respected by the people of Jaffna was seen from the fact, that at the funeral services held in the house and in the Church the next morning, such a large number was present from all parts of Jaffna, although no chits had been sent. Words of genuine praise and appreciation, mingled with the deepest feelings of sorrow, flowed from the speakers at the funeral services, and the body was laid to rest in the Manipay Mission Burial-ground.

A most impressive Memorial Service was held on the following Sunday, at which again many of his friends from various places were present, with hearts full of thankfulness to God for his life of unswerving devotion and whole-hearted service, and for the great and noble example he had left behind.

SURVIVING FAMILY

He left behind his dear wife who had affectionately tended him to the last hour of death, four sons, one daughter, and thirty-one grand children to bemoan his loss. Of his children, Mr. Alfred M. Nathaniel, B.A., is officiating as Principal of All Saints' College, Galle ; Rev. N. G. Nathaniel has recently been appointed as Assistant to the Archdeacon of Jaffna ; Mr. E. V. Nathaniel is Stationmaster in the Ceylon Government Railway ; Mr. W. S. Nathaniel is a Medical Student, on the eve of completing his course. His only surviving daughter Mercy Nasammah, is the wife of Mr. A. K. Backus who is engaged in successful business in the city of Colombo.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thus passed away one, who, from the 18th year, had led a most active and useful life in the world for the long period of 62 years—10 years in secular work, 44 years in the service of his Lord and Master, and 8 years in retirement.

It is no exaggeration to say that his life was "poured out" for the glory of God and in the service of humanity. He deliberately chose a life of self-sacrifice, and God blessed him abundantly. Genuine and sincere to the core of his heart, he was humble, unassuming, and unsophisticated in all his ways. True to his name, he was "an Israelite in deed in whom is no guile."

He loved all, and was unloving to none withal. With unflagging zeal he toiled and laboured, not only for the moral and spiritual, but also for the material advancement of all those he came in contact with. There are scores and scores of men and women today, who acknowledge with the deepest gratitude that it was through his efforts they have come to be what they are.

An annual bulletin issued by the American Ceylon Mission, just to hand, makes the following brief reference to his death, in its Obituary column, which, owing to its very brevity and the matter-of-fact way in which it is stated, is worth being quoted here :—

“ Rev. W. P. S. Nathaniel, the oldest Pastor in our Council, departed this life on June 17, 1926. Though he was on the retired list for some time, yet his presence and advice in the Council and other meetings was a source of great joy and inspiration to all.

“ He possessed a strong faith in prayer, in the Scriptures, and in Him whom he accepted as his Lord and Saviour. His short illness, owing to old age, unexpectedly brought about his end in spite of the best medical treatment that was given to him.”

Preaching was the chosen vocation of his life, but unconsciously to himself, his very life was “ an epistle known and read of all men.” He transcended the noble traditions of his great family and proved to be its greatest scion, having dedicated his inherited talents to the highest conceivable purpose in life. The sweet music of his life, under the inspiration of a Power far greater and wiser than the goddess “ Saraswathi,” and far sublimer than the sacred Muses, sounded, and still resounds its harmonies in the hearts and minds, not of a select few only, but of all sorts and conditions of men, women and children.

“ **THOUGH DEAD, HE YET SPEAKETH.**”

The undermentioned article refers to the late Rev. W.P.S.Nathaniel's father.

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**THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXTRACT FROM
THE "MORNING STAR"**

NATHANIEL ORசன்முகச் சட்டம்பியார்

(Extracted from the Morning Star for January 11th, 1849)

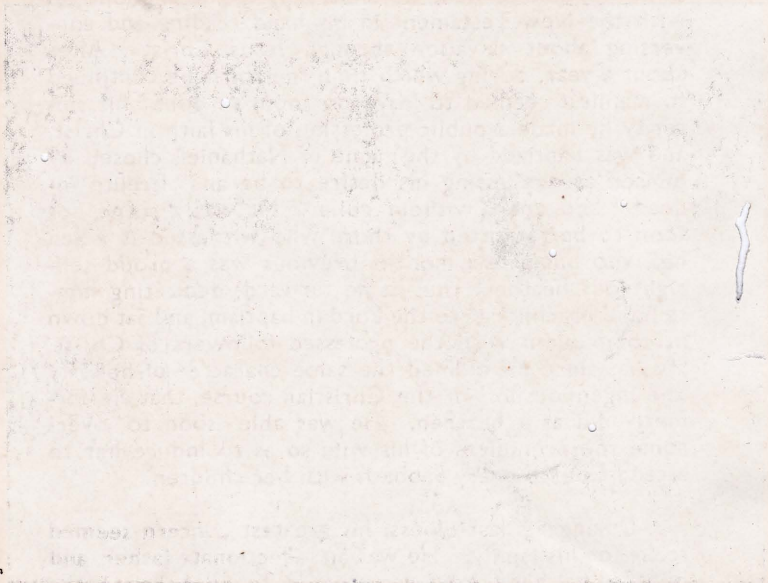
Died at Batticotta, on Saturday, (January 6th, 1849) Nathaniel, more generally known by the name சன்முகச் சட்டம்பியார் aged 55 years. He had been for a long time in the employ of the American Mission ; for many years as principal Tamil Teacher in the Batticotta Seminary, and at different times as Moonshee by the missionaries. With them he read and assisted in the translation of Scriptures, became familiar with their doctrines, which he often pronounced excellent, but still held fast to his shastras. Many an argument did the missionaries hold with him to show him the insufficiency of his system for the salvation of sinful men, and many solemn warnings did they give him of the danger of his course, yet he remained firm in his heathenism, frank and open in his professions and apparently one of the most honest and ingenuous of heathen men. When no longer employed by the missionaries he commenced teaching the doctrines of his sect for his support, having several classes of disciples, while he himself pursued a systematic course of study and meditation, by which he was advancing to the higher stages of Hindu religious life.

While thus wandering in error's mystic ways, the Lord visited him with a severe and protracted illness, when as he afterwards said, the truths he had learned from the Bible and the missionaries were all brought to his mind, and he was made to see that he was going to



A family group, 1900.

Let us first consider the case of a
 uniform field. In this case the
 field is constant in direction and
 magnitude. The field is represented
 by a vector \mathbf{E} of constant magnitude
 and direction.



The field is represented by a vector \mathbf{E} of constant magnitude
 and direction.

A simple case of a uniform field is
 the case of a uniform electric field.
 In this case the field is constant in
 direction and magnitude. The field is
 represented by a vector \mathbf{E} of constant
 magnitude and direction.

hell, with his family. He thought of all the faithful warnings he had received, and his sin in rejecting them, and resolved if his life were spared to renounce his former ways and seek the salvation of his soul. As soon as he was able to walk, he came daily to the missionaries with the New Testament in his hand reading and conversing about salvation through Jesus Christ. After about a year, during which time the spirit he continued to manifest seemed to leave no room to doubt his sincerity he made a public profession of his faith in Christ, and was baptized by the name of Nathaniel, chosen by himself as expressing his desire to be an "Israelite indeed," and one "without guile." It was a scene not soon to be forgotten by those who witnessed it when he, who but a few months previous was a proud self-righteous heathen, thus came forward, dedicating himself and his children to the Lord in baptism, and sat down in communion with the professed followers of Christ. He has since maintained the same character of honesty and ingenuousness in the Christian course, that he formerly did as a heathen. He was able soon to overcome the prejudices of his wife so as to induce her to attend Church every Sabbath with her children.

During his last illness, his greatest concern seemed to be for his family. He was an affectionate father, and not having been long accustomed to appropriate the promises of God, it is not surprising that at first, he felt unwilling to die, on account of his children, though he expressed no anxiety concerning his own safety. But he was at last enabled to say, he had given them all up, confident that the Lord would take care of them. His great wish for them was, that then might be educated as Christians. He constantly affirmed that all his hope was in the merits of Christ. For a few days previous to his death, he manifested a cheerful trust and con-

fidence which was exceedingly gratifying. In answer to inquiries he said with emphasis he was happy,—had no fears, either for himself or his family, and continued thus till he became insensible.

He knew he must die, and that death was near, yet he showed not the slightest attachment to the religion in which he had spent the greater part of his life. He had thoroughly cried and proved the falsity and folly of Hinduism.

His remains received a Christian burial according to his own request; his friends though most of them heathen, yielding their wishes to the expressed wish of the deceased. He sleeps to rise, we trust, a glorified saint in the resurrection morn.

*From Report of American Ceylon
Mission for 1852.*



Mullucan (grad gr folia)

Swamrat (grad folia)

Two genera beewords :-

~~Mullucan~~
Cen ~~swamp~~ (mudus)

↓

~~Swamrat~~ (Sun)

Subramaniam

- Sammige Chakabid

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anota
div 1849

Subramaniam nationals
tu

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