

autonomy, identity and unity. The confrontation left the community with its unity shattered, its autonomy destroyed and its identity distorted. The mid-17th century 'Coonen (Bent) Cross Oath' represents an outburst of the community's pent-up feelings of resentment and antagonism against these negative factors perpetrated by the Portuguese power and the Padroado missionaries. After this event the government of the Catholic St. Thomas Christians passed on to other foreigners under the Propaganda.

The divided and mutilated community grew restive under the foreign rule and selfhood. The European Missionaries, being children of the times, with very few exceptions, thought they were doing a great service to the Indian Christians by making them to conform as much as possible to the Latin, Western Church. The missionaries (Carmelites) of the 18th and 19th centuries were engaged in consolidating the earlier gains along these lines. The attempts of the missionaries were periodically thwarted by agitations of the community leaders. The first half of the 19th century, especially two or three decades of the mid-century appears to have been an exception. The agitation of the last quarter of the previous century had considerably mellowed down and the final struggle for autonomy had yet to catch momentum.

It is during these years the Italian Msgr Bernardine Baccinelli O.C.D., a well-trained religious person, a zealous and enthusiastic missionary, a tactful administrator was, as vicar apostolic of Verapoly entrusted with stewardship of the Church of the Catholic St. Thomas Christians of Kerala. He could rely for the "reforms" he launched not only on some of the able men hailing from his own order but also on the members of the newly started indigenous religious community (the present day Carmelites of Mary Immaculate). All these advantages, the new vicar apostolic, mustered to promote his 'reforms', i.e., to consolidate and to bring to culmination the latinizing and westernizing process that had been started by the western missionaries from the 16th century onwards and 'legitimized' by the celebration of the so-called 'synod' of Diamper (AD 1599). It is these 'reform' efforts of Msgr Bernardine that the author of the book under review, studies from the point of view of history and church law. The 'reform' carried out by Msgr Bernardine included many aspects of Christian life and Church discipline, e.g., training of candidates to priesthood, prohi-