

A. Mathias Mundadan CMI, History and Beyond, Aluva: Jeevass Publications, 1997, pp. x+450, Rs. 250.00 (US \$30.00).

This is a collection of selected articles written by the author, Dr. A. Mathias Mundadan CMI, during the past thirty years or so. Coming from no less a historian and scholar than Dr. Mundadan, the book is most welcome, indeed. Reading it I felt really grateful to him for taking pains to collect and bring out the articles in one beautiful volume, thus saving the coming generations the trouble of doing it. For, I am sure it would be quite spontaneous for his admirers to wish to possess all his works together for reference and further studies! And now they have the wish realised _under the title History and Beyond. With regard to the contents of the book, in the words of the author himself, "Much of what is published in this volume is documented history, with some historical reflections on specific topics, areas of Indian Christianity, or even on the contributions of certain outstanding personalities. A few of the writings are of a more general nature: theological-philosophical elucidations on the understanding of the historical process; theological and inter-religious investigation; Eastern Christianity; Eastern Christian worship and spirituality. Hence the title of the book, History and Beyond" (Preface, p.v.).

Among the twenty-three articles included in the book, "The Churches in India," "St. Thomas the Apostle," "Missionaries and Portuguese Discoveries," "Religious !Monastic Life of St. Thomas Christians," and "Syro-Malabar Liturgy: History of Development" come mostly under documented history; "Some Thoughts for a Student of Church History," and "Theological Activity: Reflections from History" concern the theology of history; "Placid: His Call, Vision and Contributions," "Cardinal Parecattil: A Historian," and "An 'Unknown' Oriental Scholar: Ernest Hanxleden (Arnos Pathiri)" are studied in the contributions of those individuals. "The Invalidity of Synod of Daimper," and "Emergence of the Missionary Consciousness of St. Thomas Christians" deal with questions related to St. Thomas

Christians; "Selfhood of Indian Christians" discuss the search and struggle of Indian Church for identity and autonomy; "Hindu-Christian Dialogue," and "Kesub Chander Sen: the Church of New Dispensation" have reference to inter-religious dialogue and Indian theology; "Christian Mission Towards Third Millennium" have more bearing on missiology in the Indian context; "Liturgical Reform in Syro-Malabar Church: Texts of Divine Office" presents certain observations and suggestions on the subject along with an appreciation of Fr. Abel CMI's compositions; and "Spirituality of Syriac Fathers," and "Understanding Eastern Christianity" are reflections on Oriental Christianity.

In spite its being a collection of articles written at different times and for different purposes, the book does have a unity of vision and consistency of thought. For the most part it is history of Indian Church, and reflections on the same history with an underlying theology of history, which, too, is stated in some of the articles. It also touches on issues related to the history of Church in India: inter-ritual questions, inter-denominational matters, and inter-religious dialogue; Indian theology, spirituality and liturgy; mission and mission theology. The book may be described as an encyclopaedic work on Indian Church. Accuracy, precision and clarity of thought on the one hand, and, on the other, a scientific approach coupled with an elegance of language are the characteristic marks of the author's writings, which are obvious in the present case, too. One may also discern a development of thought as well as an expansion of the field of interest on the part of the author over the long period of three decades during which the articles have been written.

In conclusion I would like to request the author to publish at the earliest the remaining articles, too, in one or more new volumes!

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