



Let My People Go: The Life of Robert A. Jaffray

A. W. Tozer

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Robert A. Jaffray was a citizen of no single country. From his early manhood he moved about over the face of the world—not aimlessly, but with clear intelligent purpose. He was an explorer, a pioneer, and this accounts for the gaps that will be found in this or any story of his life. He lived in too many places too far from each other to allow a closely woven biography to be written. One could have journeyed half way around the world to see him, only to find that he had left the day before to visit some remote point in the Far East where some important gathering looked to him for guidance. Jaffray was a Canadian by birth. Wherever he traveled, home to him always meant Canada. Of Canada he was ever proud, and he remained loyal to his country as long as he lived. But he had met Christ as Moses had met God at the burning bush, and he had been baptized into His Spirit, made to feel the impulses of His heart. After that, Christ's people were his people in a sense none other could be. For the lost tribes of the earth he felt a kinship such as Moses felt for the children of Israel. He felt them to be God's people, though held under the bondage of sin. In the same way they were Jaffray's own people, and he was called to set them free. He distinctly heard a Voice saying, "Say to Pharaoh: Let my people go!" This feeling of kinship with the lost of the earth and the conviction that he had been commissioned to deliver them from bondage made Jaffray a prophet and a deliverer, as surely as Moses had been before him. It was not until his last and greatest adventure, when he entered the East Indies, that he stated this conviction in so many words, but it had always been in the back of his mind and in the bottom of his heart, and it gave him an air of command. We may as well know at the outset that we have here no ethereal saint full of the gentler graces but too sweet and fragile for this rough world. Anything but that! Jaffray was a man of authority; his whole bearing bespoke it, and everyone who knew him felt it unmistakably. Toward the powers of darkness he took a stern, condemning attitude, and in the name of God he was always saying, "Let my people go!" Such facts as I have I now present to interested readers. I am certain that the power and drive of this unusual man will be felt by all who read what is written here. It is possible that the very attempt to bring a life so long and a character so rich and varied into the narrow compass of a small book may serve to focus attention upon him and allow his voice to be heard again, that voice which has been temporarily silenced by death. One word should be added concerning the treatment of the material before me. I have sought to capture the spirit of Jaffray, to present him as a real human being. For this reason I have not given too much care to dates nor to mere chronological sequence. I have not tried to write a history of Alliance missions in the Far East, but to write the story of a person, and a person is always greater than anything he or she has done. I believe the facts set forth here will be found to be accurate, but my aim has been to show the man above and beyond the facts. How well I have succeeded is for others to judge. I wish here to acknowledge the courtesy of Christian Publications for permitting me to quote from *After Fifty Years* and *With Christ in Indo-China*. I am also indebted to G. Ricordi and Company for permission to use the poem, *Go Down Moses*. To the large number of Mr. Jaffray's friends and coworkers who so patiently submitted to my long cross-examinations and answered so cheerfully my endless prying questions, I also express my sincere thanks. A.W. Tozer Chicago May 1, 1947

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