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THE HISTORY
OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
CHRISTIAN ERA.

BY THE

REV. JAMES HOUGH, M. A., F. C. P. S.

PERPETUAL CURATE OF HAM:

LATE CHAPLAIN TO THE HONOURABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY AT MADRAS.

VOL. I

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TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
CHARLES RICHARD,
LORD BISHOP OF WINCHESTER,
PRELATE OF THE MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER,
ETC. ETC. ETC.
THE LIBERAL PATRON
OF
CHRISTIAN MISSIONS
TO THE
HEATHEN WORLD.
THIS ATTEMPT TO RECORD THE RISE AND PROGRESS
OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA
IS,
WITH HIS LORDSHIP'S PERMISSION,
GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED
BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

A HISTORY of Christianity in India has long been desired by persons interested in the progress of the Gospel in the East. The only general work of the kind, is the *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*, by La Croze : a work little known in England, and, though of great value, yet not full enough for a mere translation of it to supply the desideratum. For the earlier annals of the Indian Church, the materials are very scanty ; and they are mixed up with much that tends to obscure, rather than elucidate, the few fragments of history that are unquestionably authentic. But there is no lack of information on the subject during the last three centuries, for readers who have leisure to explore its ample resources ; which, however, is by no means the case with all who are interested in their contents. So numerous are the volumes, consisting chiefly of portions of history and missionary correspondence, that have been published ; they are written in such a variety of languages ; and some of the most important of them are become so scarce ; that they are inaccessi-

ble to the generality of readers: and even of the persons who are competent and have opportunity to examine this variety of records, only a small proportion have time for the task. There can be no question, therefore, as to the importance of a work of moderate size that shall combine the information scattered over so wide a surface.

In publishing the present History, I do not pretend to have supplied the desideratum; for a much more extensive work would be desirable, had I leisure for the performance, and the means of incurring the responsibility of its publication. Neither am I entitled to the credit of entering upon the present limited undertaking merely for the purpose of meeting the general wish for such a work. The duties and responsibilities of my situation are too great for me to have thought of engaging in so laborious a task, had I not been constrained by a conviction of duty to the Church of Christ. No other motive could have induced me to sit down to write history, or to persevere in it when begun; for it is not without much inconvenience and many scruples that I have devoted to these volumes the time that they have required.

If asked, what constituted this constraint, I answer,—The pertinacity of the romanists in continuing to misrepresent the state of their own and the protestants' foreign missions. Like M. P. Norbert, a Romish missionary in India, who tells us that he was compelled by the Jesuits' libels to publish many things in justification of himself and his brethren;* so have I

* *Memoires Historiques, &c. tom. III. p. 423, &c. Les Apologistes de la Societé par leurs Libelles ont contraint le P. Norbert à se justifier par des Pieces qu'il auroit tenu cacheés.*

been urged, on former occasions as well as the present, from a similar cause, to expose the fallacy of their statements. In 1824 I was called upon to answer the Abbé Dubois's *Letters on the State of Christianity in India*; and evidence was given in my Reply to reverse the picture he had drawn, that, I have reason to know, proved satisfactory to readers of candour, and disabused the minds of several persons who had been misled by the opposite statements. The only attempt I heard of to answer my work, was an angry letter by a Bishop at Pondicherry, published in the Madras papers, to which I replied on the spot: and as nothing more appeared for some time on the subject, I ventured to hope that no similar attempt would be made to mislead the public mind. In this expectation, however, I have been disappointed. About six years ago writers of the Romish Church resumed the charge, repeating the calumnies of former authors, especially the misrepresentations of the Abbé Dubois, whom they quoted as an unquestionable authority, without noticing the confutation of his assertions. This disingenuous conduct came to my notice in November, 1833, and I met it immediately with a letter to the *Editor of the Record*, repeating the substance of my Reply. But this produced little effect upon the opposite party, whose confidence was then gathering strength to publish whatever they chose: and their subsequent proceedings soon convinced me, that to maintain a controversy with men so utterly regardless of their opponents' answers, was a hopeless contention. They write chiefly for their own people, very few of whom venture to read what is written on the protestant view of the subject; and thus the repetition of falsehood confirms them in the belief of its

truth. The success of these statements even upon protestants is much more extensive than may be suspected. For some persons, not sufficiently informed on the matter, are carried away by the confidence with which these writers put forth their assertions; and though they may read a pamphlet on the other side of the question, yet it soon shares the fate of most pamphlets, which are frequently put out of sight, and dismissed from the mind. Accordingly, when they hear the calumnies that it answered repeated, they have forgotten the arguments and facts that at one time, perhaps, seemed to them satisfactory, and they begin to feel inclined to think that there must be some truth in that which had appeared to be false. It is by no means uncommon to find persons of intelligence on other subjects so ill-informed upon this, as to credit the statements of these authors for no other reason but because positively made. When remonstrated with upon the impropriety of allowing themselves to be carried away by falsehoods so easy of detection, you shall often hear them reply—Such confident assertions can hardly be without some foundation:—and herein is proved the sagacity of Voltaire, as well as his want of probity, in the advice that he is said to have given to a controversialist to go on repeating his falsehood, without noticing its confutation, assuring him that at last it would be believed.

Such were the circumstances that convinced me that no satisfactory result was to be looked for from a mere controversy with these antagonists, however conducted, or to whatever length protracted. A History of Christianity in India seemed to present the only hope of fortifying the public mind against their assaults; and this thought first suggested the undertaking to my mind.

Of the manner in which the task is executed, the public will judge : but, while very far from indifferent what judgment may be pronounced upon it, I will confess that my chief solicitude has been about facts. This was demanded, as well for the integrity of the history, as for the sake of the parties chiefly implicated in the transactions here recorded. Exposing as they do the infamous conduct of Romish Missionaries, it was specially necessary to ascertain the truth of every statement, and for this reason I have omitted some of doubtful authority. I am not aware of having stated one fact that did not appear to me unquestionable ; and *I pledge myself to withdraw every thing that can be proved contrary to the truth.* But I do not promise to take notice of any assertions that have already been confuted. My sole object has been to put the public in possession of a History that shall enable them to understand the merits of the question raised by the romanists to the prejudice of the protestant cause : and the end I desire to promote is, the glory of the Lord—an end not to be accomplished without the most scrupulous adherence to truth. Under this conviction, I shall deem nothing that may seem to affect the *integrity* of the work too unimportant to claim the best attention I can command.

During the past six years the confidence of romanists in England has increased more than, perhaps, at any former period since the Reformation. Their chapels and seminaries have been multiplied, but it does not follow that their converts have kept pace with them ; for it is their well-known policy first to provide the building, and then to exert themselves to fill it. While, therefore, there is enough in their activity to keep protestants on the watch against their encroachments, we

should take care not to allow ourselves to be deluded by these appearances into the belief, that their progress is equal to their pretensions. Glad would they be to make such an impression on the public mind; for it would tend to paralyse the timid, and to confirm the lukewarm in their indifference. They are now preparing extensive means of aggression, and threatening great things: but, in reliance upon the God of truth, we tell them, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off." (1 Kings xx. 11.)

Besides these exertions, we are informed, by the Hon. & Rev. George Spencer, that he has proposed to the Romish Clergy abroad to unite in prayer for the conversion of England to the Roman Church, and that they, especially the Archbishop and Clergy of Paris, have entered with zeal into his proposal. Of this there could be nothing to complain, if they would confine themselves to prayer for the Divine blessing on their instructions. No doubt nothing more is to be apprehended from the reverend gentleman with whom the proposal originated: but he does not yet know his newly adopted fraternity, if he imagines that they will be guided by his pacific suggestions, as soon as they shall have attained power to use means more in accordance with the history, the character, and the pretensions of their Church. The record of their proceedings in India here presented to the public, may teach him, and England, what we have to expect, should they ever obtain the object of their prayers.

But is this probable? What prayers are the Romish priests using for the purpose? The reverend gentleman informs us, that he was greatly encouraged in his proceedings for England's conversion, on being as-

sured, by some French priests, that they had made a beginning *by offering mass* on the first Thursday that occurred after his proposal. Surely he must have forgotten, or never could have rightly understood, the Creed and Liturgy of the Church he has forsaken, if he expects such prayers to obtain the answer desired. When we consider the character of this Mass—its adoration of a consecrated wafer; its invocation of the Virgin and other Saints; we feel that we have nothing to fear from it for the Protestant institutions of our country. Though the whole body of the Romish clergy should unite in this service, we believe that such prayers can injure none but those who offer them. Should the Lord be pleased again to bring Great Britain under the yoke of Rome, it will be, not in answer to these prayers, but in punishment for her own sins.

In the letter of a Romish Bishop in India alluded to above, one principal cause of the writer's displeasure was, my use of the term *Papist*, instead of *Catholic*, in the Reply to the Abbé Dubois. Nothing was more foreign from my intention than to give offence by using an obnoxious term, and therefore, in the present History I have adopted the word *romanist*. The term *papist* occurs indeed, but it will be found generally, if not exclusively, in quotations from other authors. If asked, why I have not called them *Catholics*, since it is the name which they prefer, I answer—Because of the advantage that they disingenuously take of our use of the term. The Church of England retains the word *Catholic* in her Liturgy, and the romanists know that we do not use it in their exclusive sense, but apply it universally to all that have been baptized in the name of the Trinity, hold the true faith in Jesus Christ, have “the pure word

of God preached " to them, and the Sacraments " duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." (Article xix.) The Church of England regards all other churches who answer to this character as united with her to Jesus, their common Head, by communion of the same Spirit. Though varying in outward circumstances, and in matters not essential to salvation, they form various branches of the Catholic, or Universal Church. Yet romanists well know, that many members of both our Church and theirs do not make this distinction, but apply the term exclusively to that of Rome: and, taking advantage of this ignorance in some, and negligence in others, they charge us with inconsistency in using the term, while we protest against their Church. Whereas, they know that protestants use it in its legitimate sense; and the inconsistency is theirs, in applying it only to their own communion.

Are we then to be charged with illiberality for refusing to concede to them this name, while they persist in making so unfair a use of the concession? This is not a mere logomachy. Truly has it been said—"Names are things." For protestants to call romanists *Catholics*, is to put a weapon in their hands which they neglect no opportunity to wield against us. While in courtesy yielding the name, they pretend that we concede the principle it implies; and hereby we expose our brethren, who do not take trouble, or have not ability to discriminate, to the designs of these enemies to the truth and freedom of the Gospel. The single point they keep in view is, that theirs is the only Catholic Church; that all Christians out of her

pale, by whomsoever baptized, owe allegiance to the Pope; and that every term is to be repudiated that implies the existence of any Church independent of Rome. *Catholic* is the name that best accords with these arrogant pretensions; no wonder, therefore, that they so strenuously contend for it: but for the same reason should protestants resist their exclusive appropriation of it to their own communion. *Papist* is, undoubtedly, their most appropriate designation, for it implies an acknowledgment of the Papal supremacy and infallibility, which they alone believe; and the learned Bossuet, and others of their best writers were not ashamed to use it. In the days of those authors, indeed, it was not in such bad odour as it is at present, and this is the real cause of the modern romanists anxiety to get rid of it: but unless their character is altered, they will gain nothing by changing their name. There are countries where even the word *Catholic* is as odious* as the term *Papist* ever was in Europe: and wherever the light and liberty of the Gospel shall predominate, no mere appellation will shield the darkness and tyranny of Rome from general abhorrence. Should the account of the Roman Church in India given in the following pages, tend to awaken the public mind to the danger of her present encroachments, I shall be grateful to God for the result, and deem myself amply recompensed for all my pains.

The Synod of Diamper is the leading event of the Romish Missions in Malabar, and it develops the character of their entire history. There could be no ques-

* See Smith and Dwight's *Missionary Researches in Armenia*. p. 392, &c.

tion, therefore, as to the necessity of giving in detail the account of its proceedings, together with the circumstances that preceded and followed it. At the same time, the length of its Decrees created some difficulty. As they contain the only authentic account extant of the doctrines and practice of the Syrian Church in Malabar, previous to this atrocious Synod, I could not consent to curtail them. Yet, if given in the body of the work, they would nearly have filled a volume of the ordinary size ; and an analysis of them is, no doubt, sufficient for the general reader of history. Such an analysis is given by La Croze, for which he has incurred the censure of some Romish writers. It seemed, therefore, essential to the character of the work, as well as due to myself, to publish them entire ; and while consulting the reader's convenience by giving a brief abstract of them in the text; the whole are printed in smaller type in the Appendix. Persons who have neither leisure nor curiosity to consult such records, may deem this unnecessary ; but I shall be disappointed if the student of ecclesiastical history does not consider them a valuable appendage to the work.

During the progress of these volumes, a paragraph appeared in the public papers, stating that the Bishop of Calcutta was composing a similar history, for which he was said to have collected some valuable materials during his recent visit to the Syrian Church in Malabar. I applied immediately to the Bishop's son, the Vicar of Islington, to ascertain the fact, and was assured by that gentleman that he believed the report to be without foundation. I then wrote to the Bishop himself, and as his Lordship's answer, while it confirms his son's opinion, also shows the importance that he

attaches to such a work, I venture to transcribe that part of it which relates to the subject.

“I wish I were writing, my dear friend, **THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA**. It is a glorious theme to those who have health, materials, leisure—of none of which three have I the least portion. How the report got into the papers, I cannot for a moment conjecture, unless it were, that, upon hearing of my 20,000 miles of travel, some one had confounded the opportunity, with the health, materials, and leisure of such an undertaking. It never entered my thoughts.” Then, in answer to my request for such information as he might have to communicate, his Lordship states, that he has not collected any; assures me, that “the rumoured collections of the Syrian Churches are all a dream;” and refers me to several sources of information from which I had previously drawn. In conclusion, he earnestly persuades me to “to pursue the work with vigour,” and encourages me to persevere: and I cannot refrain from acknowledging thus publicly the kindness of his proposal carefully to revise a few sheets of the work, though it is too late to avail myself of the advantage it would have derived from such a revision. Considering his Lordship’s incessant avocations, this was a favour I did not venture to ask; but I should certainly have been induced to wait for it, had I contemplated the probability of his finding time to give any attention to the manuscript.

In the prosecution of the undertaking, I have spared no pains to obtain access to all the authentic documents extant; and as their titles, together with, in some cases, a description of their authors and their contents, are given when first quoted, it is unnecessary to enu-

merate them here. I am not aware of having made use of one work of doubtful authority; and the facts that were likely to be questioned by romanists if not well authenticated, I have been specially careful to establish by reference to authors of their own communion. It has been a weary task to wade through such a mass of legendary tales, and to find so little of the light of truth to relieve the toil of the investigation. Volume after volume of ecclesiastical matter have I read, jaded and disappointed to discover nothing like Christianity to extract; and more than once I have doubted whether it were right to retain the present title of the work, so little does it answer to the general character of the Syrian Church and the Romish Missions in India. With this feeling I quite respond to the sentiment of a friend who has taken the trouble to read the entire manuscript. In returning the papers, he writes—"They are painfully interesting—but can you get no scrap of history that discovers divine faith or Christian graces in the poor Syrian Churches? They had the Scriptures among them, and surely they were not like dead corpses all through their history. Does Fabricius give nothing in his *Lux Evangelii*? It is greatly to be regretted that the interior and spiritual history is absent and lost. Where is the faith, hope and love of the Gospel? Where is the *Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ*? You cannot make what the remnants of history do not give you; but no doubt there could not have been such a conflict with Rome, and such a victory, without some internal principles of real and evangelical truth at the bottom. The great spiritual lessons of the history are left in obscurity for want of insight into their actual spiritual

state, and this will only fully be given hereafter in the day of the Lord."

Though not in my power to supply the great deficiency here so affectingly deplored, yet I have occasionally given expression to the feelings that afforded relief to my own mind, and have now only to desire that they may produce a similar effect upon that of the reader. If they do not show all that I desire to exhibit of the true Spirit of Christ and His people, together with their heavenly life, yet the contrast it is attempted to present may enable readers, in some measure, to see the partial character of the History in its present development, and induce them to wait with patient devotion, a future discovery of its meaning and intent. In God's own time and way, He will bring hidden things to light; and, therefore, will we always patiently abide His pleasure, and praise Him more and more.

The two volumes now published will be found to include the History of the Syrian Church and the Romish Missions to the commencement of the present century. The remaining two volumes will give the history of the Protestant Missions. Some progress is made in them, but it was deemed advisable, in the mean time, to give this first Section to the public: and while I regret that it contains so little to satisfy the mind that is chiefly interested in the progress of Divine Truth, I can venture to promise that the latter Section will correspond better to the title of the work.

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APPENDIX

TO

BOOK THIRD, CHAPTER SIXTH.

MANUSCRIPTS OBTAINED BY DR. CLAUDIUS BUCHANAN FROM THE JEWS AT COCHIN.—CHRISTIAN RESEARCHES, pp. 232 — 236. TENTH EDITION.

“ ALMOST in every house I find Hebrew books, printed or manuscript; particularly among the white Jews. Most of the printed Hebrew of Europe has found its way to Cochin, through the medium of the Portuguese and Dutch commerce of former times. When I questioned the Jews concerning the old copies of the Scriptures, which had been read in the synagogues from age to age; some told me that it was usual to *bury* them when decayed by time and use. Others said that this was not always the case. I despaired at first of being able to procure any of the old biblical writings; but after I had been in the country about six weeks, and they found that I did not expect to obtain them merely as presents, some copies were *recovered*. The white Jews had only the Bible written on parchment, and of modern appearance, in their synagogue; but I was informed that the black

on a roll of leather. The skins are sewed together, and the roll is about forty-eight feet in length. It is, in some places, worn out, and the holes have been sewed up with pieces of parchment. Some of the Jews suppose that this roll came originally from Senna in Arabia; others have heard that it was brought from Cashmire. The Cabul Jews, who travel into the interior of China, say that, in some Synagogues the Law is still written on a roll of leather, made of Goats' skins dyed red; not on vellum, but on a soft flexible leather; which agrees with the description of the roll above-mentioned.¹

'Ever since I came among these people, and heard their sentiments on the prophecies, and their confident hopes of returning to *Jerusalem*, I have thought much on the means of obtaining a version of the NEW TESTAMENT in the Hebrew language, and circulating it among them and their brethren in the East. I had heard that there were one or two translations of the Testament in their own possession, but they were studiously kept out of my sight, for a considerable time. At last, however, they were produced by individuals in a private manner. One of them is written in the small Rabbinical, or Jerusalem cha-

¹ "Mr. Yeates, formerly of All Soul's College, Oxford, and editor of the Hebrew Grammar, has been employed by the author for the last two years, at Cambridge, in arranging and collating the Hebrew and Syriac MSS., brought from India. His collation of the Roll of the Pentateuch above mentioned, is now finished, and is printed in a thin quarto volume. The University, with great liberality, resolved that this book shall be printed at their expense, for the benefit of Mr. Yeates; and Dr. Marsh, (the present Bishop of Peterborough,) the learned editor of *Michaelis*, has written a Note on the character and comparative importance of the manuscript, which will form a preface to the work."

few days to pass, that the minds of the people might become tranquil, and he then summoned some of the more liberal men, and gave them a hearing on the subject. In the mean time I thought it prudent to retire from Cochin, for a day or two, and went to Cranganore, about sixteen miles off, to Colonel Macaulay, the British Resident at Travancore, who was then at the house of Mr. Drummond, the collector of Malabar. On my return to Cochin, Mr. Flower informed me that all the manuscripts were to be returned to my house; that I was to select what was *old*, and of little use to the Jews, and to give back to them what was *new*. The affair ended, however, in the Jews permitting me generously to retain some part of the *new*.

‘ I have since made a tour through the towns of the Black Jews in the interior of the country, *Tritoor*, *Paroor*, *Chenotta*, and *Maleh*. I have procured a good many manuscripts, chiefly in the Rabbinical character, some of which the Jews themselves cannot read; and I do not know what to say to their traditions. A copy of the Scriptures belonging to Jews of the East, who might be supposed to have had no communication with Jews in the West, has been long considered a desideratum in Europe; for the Western Jews have been accused by some learned men, of altering or omitting certain words in the Hebrew text, to invalidate the argument of Christians. But Jews in the East, remote from the controversy, would have no motive for such corruptions. One or two of the MSS., which I have just procured, will probably be of some service in this respect. One of them is an old copy of the Books of Moses, written

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racter ; the other in a large square letter. The history of the former is very interesting. The translator, a learned Rabbi, conceived the design of making an accurate version of the New Testament, for the express purpose of *confuting* it. His style is copious and elegant, like that of a master in the language, and the translation is in general faithful. It does not, indeed, appear that he wished to pervert the meaning of a single sentence ; but depending on his own abilities and renown as a scholar, he hoped to be able to controvert its doctrines, and to triumph over it by fair contest in the presence of the world. There is yet a mystery about the circumstances of this man's death, which time will perhaps unfold : the Jews are not inclined to say much to me about him. His version is complete, and written with greater freedom and ease towards the end than at the beginning. How astonishing it is that an enemy should have done this ! that he should have persevered resolutely and calmly to the end of his work ! not indeed always *calmly*, for there is sometimes a note of execration on the Sacred Person who is the subject of it, as if to unburden his mind, and ease the conflict of his labouring soul. At the close of the Gospels, as if afraid of the converting power of his own translation, calls heaven to witness that he had undertaken the work with the professed design of opposing the '*Epicureans*,' by which term he contemptuously means the Christians.'