

THE HISTORY
OF
CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA
FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
CHRISTIAN ERA.

BY THE
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PREFACE.

IN the Preface to the first part of this Work, including the History of the Syrian Church and the Romish Missions in India to the commencement of the present century, I expressed regret that it contained so little to satisfy the mind that is chiefly interested in the progress of Divine Truth, and ventured to promise that the Volumes now laid before the Public would correspond better with the title of the Work; and I trust that I shall be considered to have redeemed my pledge.

In perusing these Volumes, the reader should bear in mind that one of the objects for which they were written was, to furnish the Christian Public with a body of facts, in answer to the Romanists' vauntings of the success of their own Missions, and their assertions of the failure of Protestant Missions; and hence to prove the fallacy of their conclusions, that theirs must be the cause of truth, and the Protestants' the cause of error. In the two former Volumes I have shown, *from their own authorities*, that their entire course in India has been one of deception; a system of accommodation to the most absurd notions and the foulest abominations of the Heathen: that they have systematically concealed from the Hindoo the

essential peculiarities of revealed Truth; and that their Indian Missions, with reference to the propagation of Christianity, have proved, according to the confession of a Jesuit Missionary of thirty years' standing, *a total failure*. Admitting their numerical success, we deny the validity of their inference, that this proves the truth of their system. On such reasoning, Mahomedans may maintain the truth of their religion; for their progress in India has far exceeded that of the Roman Church: while the superstitions of Budhoo have outstripped them both, and must, therefore, according to this mode of arguing, be pre-eminently true.

On the other hand, in the two Volumes now published, it will be seen that the success of the Protestant Missions exceeded the most sanguine expectations, so long as they were countenanced by the local authorities, and supplied with the means of accomplishing their design. We admit their failure, after some years, at a few Stations; but before this is adduced in evidence that they were not founded in truth, it should be remembered that the Apocalyptic Churches, with others established by the Apostles, in a few years came to nothing. We have accounted for these partial failures in a manner that will be satisfactory to every candid mind, without at all implicating, as Romanists allege, the principles they have promulged. So little is known of the history of these Missions during the last century, that I venture to anticipate the astonishment of the reader to find that so much has been done with such inadequate means. When we look at the vast field to be cultivated, the result may appear small; but considering the difficulties of those who had to break up the

fallow ground, the paucity of labourers through the whole of the eighteenth century, and their scanty resources, the result is astonishing. There is nothing like it, *cæteris paribus*, in the history of modern Missions.

In recording the foundation and progress of these institutions, I have studied to trace the leadings and operations of Divine Providence and Grace. Though the labourers were few, there have been among them men of Apostolic zeal, and endowed, I have sometimes been induced to think, with all but Apostolic gifts. They were Germans; and it cannot but be grateful to the Englishman's feelings to see the reception which they uniformly met with from the highest ecclesiastical authorities in England, and even from the King and Royal Family. But for the encouragement and assistance thus afforded them, they could not, humanly speaking, have carried on their work. The Christian public, not in Great Britain only, but throughout the Continent of Europe, owes a deep, a lasting debt of gratitude to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for the liberal patronage it afforded to these Missions almost from their commencement. The publication of the first version of the Scriptures in an Indian language, the Tamul, is to be ascribed to that Society's assistance. I will confess, that, until I had investigated the entire series of the Society's Reports, together with the original correspondence and journals of the Missionaries, I had formed no conception of the extent, the value, the importance of the Society's labours in India during the first century of the Danish and English Missions.

While, however, as a Churchman, I may be allowed

to feel peculiarly gratified at the honourable, the prominent part which my own Church has acted in this laudable work, I have also had pleasure in bearing testimony to the piety and zeal, the ability and success of other Protestants, whether Dutch or Moravians at an earlier period, or English and United States' Missionaries of more recent times, who have embarked in the same cause. There should be no unhallowed rivalry, no mean jealousy among those engaged in a work like this. When the disciples of the Baptist, apparently anxious for their Master's reputation, told him of the success of Jesus, he *answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.* Would that Christians always regarded each other's progress in the work of the Lord with a similar mind! One of the best proofs to be given that we are ourselves actuated by a right spirit, is, to honour the gifts of God in whomsoever they appear; and to honour the men who are diligently using them to the glory of the Giver. We are not surprised at the rivalries of those who are ambitious of worldly renown. Even the philosopher "may wish all mankind to remain in ignorance of important truths, when the most important truths that could be revealed to them were to be the discovery of any other genius than his own. He may sigh over the relief which multitudes are to receive from institutions of a sage benevolence which he was not the first to prompt. If his country be rejoicing at triumphs that have been triumphs of freedom and humanity still more than of the arms of a single state, he may add his silent consternation and anguish to the rage and grief of the tyrant whose aggressions have been successfully resisted, and may lament that he has not himself become a slave by

national disasters, which, in making all slaves, would at least have lessened the glory of a rival." ¹

This is put strongly, but it expresses truly the temptation to which Christians, and even Missionaries, are exposed, to contemplate with uneasiness the triumphs of truth over pagan darkness, only because *we* have not done it, or because its successful champions belonged not to *us*. This is the very element of discord—the way to paralyze our own sympathies and to weaken our efforts. Union is strength: and the secret of unity is to learn cordially to rejoice in the achievements of all that are engaged in the cause we have at heart. Any other feeling gives reason to suspect that we seek our own glory as much as that of the Redeemer.

And is there not special cause for unity in the Missionary work? Protestants of every name have one common enemy, vigilant and active to obstruct all their exertions. In human affairs, a sense of present danger is enough to bring into co-operation very discordant minds, having a mutual interest in the result of their combined exertions. Much more ought this consciousness to unite all that are engaged in extending the Kingdom of Christ in the world. Their enemy is the Church of Rome, which now assumes a more confident position than at any period, perhaps, since the Reformation. Hitherto she has ventured to argue with her opponents, till, beaten at every point, she now seeks to intrench herself within her assumed supremacy. This is the language recently used by one of her leading organs—

“We readily subscribe to the sentiments contained

(¹) Dr. Brown's Philosophy of the Human Mind. Lecture LXXII.

in the following extract from Dr. Wiseman's Lectures on the Eucharist:—' I will acknowledge the truth of what a modern French divine has convincingly proved—that Catholic controvertists, especially in England and Germany, have greatly erred by allowing themselves to be led by Protestants into a war of detail, meeting them, as they desired, in partial combats for particular dogmas, instead of steadily fixing them to one fundamental discussion, and resolving all compound inquiries into their own simple element—Church authority.'"¹

Yes, they are right. The Reviewer, Dr. Wiseman, and the French Divine, are all right. This is *the* position for Romanists to maintain, for it is the only ground on which they can defend their numerous dogmas and practices against which Protestants make their appeal to common sense, to the Primitive Church, and the Word of God. Allow Rome to assume that she is **THE CHURCH**; that she is endowed with infallible wisdom, and invested with supreme authority; and there is at once an end to the exercise of the judgment on questions which she has decided. Reason and Scripture must be held in abeyance by her decision.

But will Protestants submit to this? No, not if worthy of the civil and religious liberty which their fathers have achieved. For Romanists to talk of *discussing* this fundamental question with us is a mere pretence. Where, when, with whom, has Rome fairly discussed it? She universally assumes it; and those

(¹) Dublin Review, No. XXVI. Nov. 1842, pp. 278, 279. Review of the Rev. W. Palmer's Letters to Dr. Wiseman on the Errors of Romanism, &c.

who dispute her claim she visits, where she has the power, with her severest *anathemas*.

Romanists, however, are not consistent herein: they do not always shut themselves up in their assumed prerogative to dictate to the world. If their antagonists happen to make a mistake in controversy, instantly do they expose it with exultation. When, therefore, they affect to disregard a work or an argument which they find bears hard upon them, and say 'We *will* not answer it,' you may be sure it is because they *cannot*.

To maintain her assumed supremacy Rome is now putting forth all her strength. She vaunts her astonishing efforts to spread the Gospel in the world. We have only to read the former portion of this History to see that their Missions in India were carried on with a studied concealment of the Gospel; and that their crusade against the poor Syrian Church ended in the extinction of the little light they found in her: while in the present Volumes it will be seen that they have left no means unemployed to *obstruct* the progress of the Gospel by the labours of Protestant Missionaries. About the year 1732 the Pope sent twelve Jesuits to India for the express purpose of rooting out the Protestant Faith.² Their numbers have increased with the progress of our Missions, until they amount, as stated in the last Report of their *Propaganda*, to seven Bishops, and six hundred and twenty-four priests in India alone.

This is a formidable array, but it need not alarm

(²) B. VIII. c. i. s. 18. First Decade. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Report, 1734.

us. In the history of Indian warfare we often read of a small European army defeating a host of six or ten times its number. Their weapons, discipline, and skill, made up for the deficiency of numbers. The Jesuits, we admit, have skill and discipline; but they have not the Protestant Missionary's weapons: they neither take *the shield of faith* nor use *the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*.¹ It is their policy to conceal that Word, for to publish it would disclose their system of deception; while their confidence is placed in the pretended supremacy and infallibility of their Church. Then let us not fear. While true to the *Captain of our Salvation*, and diligent in the use of the appointed *weapons of our warfare*, we shall find them *mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds*²; while *no weapon that is formed against us shall prosper*.³

But we must be united in object and in spirit, if we cannot be in our mode of operation. Romanists taunt us with our divisions, and we may well be ashamed of them. But have they no divisions? Long ago the learned Stillingfleet proved that there had never been greater disturbances in the world than upon the account of that authority of the Pope, which Romanists regard as the foundation of their unity; that on the same account there had happened great and scandalous schisms, when, as Fuller observes, Peter's chair was like to be broken betwixt so many sitting down together; and that these differences in religion, both as to matter of order and doctrine, had been as great, and managed with as much animosity, as any in the Protestant Churches. A more modern publication by

(¹) Eph. vi. 17.

(²) 2 Cor. x. 4.

(³) Isaiah liv. 17.

a ROMANIST⁴, contains relations of follies as extravagant, and Societies as fanatical, arising within the pale of the Roman Church, as passion, error, knavery, or madness have produced out of it.⁵ Even in their Indian Missions we have shown, from their own authorities, in the former two Volumes, that the divisions among themselves, occasioned by the jealousies, successively, of the Franciscans, Capuchins, and Dominicans, and by the Jesuits' restless and overbearing endeavours to supersede them all, have exceeded any thing of the kind to be found in the entire history of Protestant Missions. And as to their appeal to the Pope as their bond of union, we have seen how little the Jesuits scrupled to set his authority at nought when he commanded them to desist from their heathen practices in India and China. In India they actually set up a counter authority; and in China they caused the imprisonment and death of one Papal Legate, Cardinal de Tournon; while another, M. de Mezzabarba, was obliged to flee from them for his life.

So much for their vaunted unity. But we are not satisfied to answer their taunts with recrimination. We acknowledge, we deplore, our "unhappy divisions," and pray unto God speedily to heal them. We have recorded them, with their lamentable consequences, whenever they have occurred. Heartily do we wish that every Protestant Missionary would confine himself to the simple promulgation of Divine Truth, without disturbing one another with their

(⁴) "Histoire des Sectes Religieuses, &c." par M. Gregoire.

(⁵) The question of Rome's vaunted unity is ably discussed in the Quarterly Review for 1823, No. 55.

jealousies or intruding upon each other's sphere of labour. India alone is wide enough for them all. Neither should they go out of their way to provoke the hostility even of Romanists, when they will let them carry on their work in peace. This, however, they never have done, and, there is too much reason to believe, never will do. The Christian Missionary must, therefore, always be on his guard against their secret approaches, and prepared for their open assaults: he must work like the builders of the walls of Jerusalem, with the trowel in one hand and the sword in the other; with this difference, that his must be *the sword of the Spirit*. The faithful preaching of the Truth will be sure, sooner or later, to counteract the influence of error under every form: and we, or those who follow us, will one day see the formidable host of Romish Bishops and Priests fall before the little band of faithful preachers of the Gospel.

A few words, in conclusion, explanatory of the arrangement of this portion of the History. At first I followed the plan of Niecamp and Meier, giving the rise and progress of the different Missions, Danish and English, in a continuous narrative; but as the work advanced, it appeared to me advisable to give each Mission in a separate Chapter, which arrangement will be found more convenient for reference. It also renders more apparent the character and circumstances of each Mission. Though all will be seen to pursue the same object, yet there is often considerable variation in the details, which may both increase the Reader's interest, and also serve to show to future Missionaries the desirableness of not acting upon plans previously formed, until well acquainted with their stations. While actuated by sound principles,

they will see that it is advisable to be guided in their application by circumstances as they arise.

The Missions are divided into Decades; and the number of converts for every year is given at the end of each Decade, in preference to stating them as they occur, which, in Niecamp and Meier, often interrupts the narrative, and causes much repetition.

My acknowledgments to Societies and individual friends, for the loan of books and manuscripts, I have made in the body of the work, when they are first referred to. Some of these documents are rare and of great value.

The advertisement of this History, on the cover of the Church Missionary Record, will have informed the public that it is the property of that Society, and that any profits arising from its sale are to be appropriated to its "Disabled Missionaries' Fund." Happy shall I be if it produces any thing towards the comfort and support of those devoted men who have so just a claim upon the Christian community.

Whether I may be spared to finish one more volume, comprising the period of my own residence in India, is known only to the Lord. In the mean time I desire to render unto Him unfeigned thanks for being permitted to accomplish my object so far. May He graciously pardon all its imperfections; avert the evil that might otherwise arise from any error it may contain; and, above all, render it subservient to His own glory!

May, 1845.

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