

BIOGRAPHY.

From the Church of England Magazine.

MEMOIR OF C. GRANT, ESQ.

The spiritual improvement of the British empire in the East is a subject so deeply interesting to all who have at heart the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, that it has been the intention of the Editor, since the commencement of this work, to give a biographical sketch of the four prelates who have filled the see of Calcutta; of some of the most eminent clergymen and missionaries in India; and of those laymen, who, while filling high official situations, used their influence to promote the cause of true religion. There is, perhaps, no name connected with this most important object, to which the reader will revert with more entire satisfaction, than that of the subject of the present memoir; who, himself having tasted of the sweets of religion, and experienced its richest consolations, was anxious that others should participate in the same unspeakable benefits. The whole public and private life of Mr. Grant appears to have been spent with the earnest desire for the furtherance of the glory of God, and the truest interests of man; and it is no, too much to say, that had it not been for his steady, unflinching, and straightforward conduct, the establishment of a bishop in India could not have taken place at the time it did. For it must be recollected (the subject has already been adverted to in the memoir of Bishop Middleton) that there was not only supineness or indifference on the subject, but absolute hostility. There was a strong party, vehemently opposed to the propagation of the Gospel amongst the natives of our eastern empire; who regarded such a measure as fraught with incalculable mischief to the interests of Great Britain in that country. It is difficult to conceive upon what principle, save that of the most despicable selfishness, such views were entertained. It is a matter of rejoicing and heartfelt gratitude to God, that the attempts of these enemies to the dissemination of truth were frustrated; and that there is at the present moment an ecclesiastical establishment in India, closely connected with our own Church; from which the most important results may be expected to spring, with reference to the conversion of the millions of the East. The lamentable state of India, in a religious point of view, at the end of the last century, is thus faithfully, though painfully, depicted. "The inadequate provision made for the maintenance of public worship, even in the capital of our eastern dominions, and the want of chaplains in the subordinate settlements and military cantonments, had produced among the Company's servants in general a total indifference to the grand concerns of a future state, and an apparent disregard of the doctrines received and principles imbibed in early life. In the splendid metropolis of Calcutta, the service of the English Church was confined to an apartment over the gate of the old fort; while the lofty towers of the Portuguese and Armenian churches, rearing their heads in the capital, proclaimed from afar to the zealous Hindoo and Mahometan, the irreligious epicurism of their English sovereigns, who had the wealth of rich and extensive provinces at their command. . . . Through all its extensive territories, a few stations excepted, there was no temple, no priests, no worship. Religion was of all concerns, the most neglected and forgotten."

Mr. Grant was born in Scotland in 1716; and his father falling at the battle of Culloden, a few hours after his birth, he was placed under the guardianship of an uncle, who anxiously watched over his truest interests, and by whose kindness he received a good education in the town of Elgin. In the year 1767, Mr. Grant proceeded to India in the military service; but, on his arrival there, was taken into the employ of Mr. Becher, a member of the Bengal council. He re-visited Scotland in 1770, and married Jane, daughter of Thomas Frazer, Esq., by whom he had issue, Charles, the present Lord Glenelg; the Right Hon. Sir Robert, governor of Bombay; William Thomas; Sophia, and another daughter. In 1772, he returned to India, and during the voyage became acquainted with the venerable Swartz. An intimacy, founded on the best principles, and arising from a similarity of views on the most important subjects, speedily arose between them; they corresponded toge-

ther for many years; and it was chiefly by the recommendation of Mr. Grant, that the East India Company erected a monument in St. Mary's Church, at Fort George, to the memory of the missionary, whose name will be handed down to posterity with reverential admiration, as of one who was willing to leave all for Christ, who "kindled in the South of India a light which has been continually growing brighter and stronger, and is hastening, as we devoutly trust to a more complete and 'perfect day;' while he is already, to the eye of faith, exalted, among the children of God, above the brightness of all earthly glory, and shall, ere long 'shine forth like the sun,' in full and unclouded splendour, in the kingdom of their Father."

It does not fall within the limits of this memoir to trace Mr. Grant through the various high official situations which he held while resident in India for the space of twenty years; or to enter at any length into his honourable and useful career, while one of the directors or chairman of the India Company; or while he represented the county of Inverness, or the district of Berwick, which he did from 1802 to 1810. — It is rather than to say, that his conduct fully testified the vitality of that Christian principle which governed all his actions; for whether he gave his opinion as legislator in the great council of the nation, or transacted business at the India House, — it was obvious that the best interests of the human race, and of India, in particular, were near to his heart. While resident at Calcutta, he testified his readiness to contribute liberally to the support of religious ordinances. The church, which had been originally constructed at Calcutta for the use of the English residents, had been destroyed by a furious hurricane in October 1737; and, incredible as it may appear, from that period till the erection of the Mission Church in 1770, no Protestant place of worship existed there. Towards the erection of a new church, Mr. Grant was a liberal donor. In 1737, the chapel called Bethshephillah, with the schools and burying-ground, that had been erected by the missionary Kierander in the year 1770, was placed under sequestration, to answer for the missionary's personal debts. To prevent the sale of the premises, Mr. Grant paid the sum of ten thousand rupees, the amount at which the property was valued; and immediately placed them in trust for sacred and charitable purposes for ever, constituting Mr. William Chambers, the Rev. D. Browne, one of the Company's chaplains, and himself, the first trustees

To be continued

MINISTERIAL.

THE LAWFUL COMMISSION.*

Not every one who feels a loyal devotion to an earthly sovereign and rejoices to tell of his merits, is the lawful ambassador of that Sovereign, but he alone who bears his seal and is entrusted with his warrant; so must the ambassador of Christ have some commission to point to — some title which can be recognized — some "epistle which may be known and read of all men." Even in the age of miracles, when the Divine Spirit was supernaturally bestowed, we find that an outward form of consecration was used, and that specified ceremonies were observed, in separating any of the disciples of the Lord to the work of the ministry. In referring to the practice of our Saviour himself, we perceive that, after a certain probationary trial, he selected from the whole number of his followers, first twelve Apostles, and afterwards seventy Disciples, to be the bearers of his message of love, and to instruct the world in the requirements of his religion; and after his ascension into heaven, we discover that they to whom our Lord had entrusted the government of his Church, "ordained elders (or presbyters) in every city," with the laying on of hands — by a solemn ceremonial and a distinct commission. To certain others they entrusted the same authority which they were exercising themselves, — namely, to "commit the same to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also," — thus constituting a provision for the continuance, the perpetuity of that separated class of men whom Christ himself had first commissioned. And early ecclesias-

* From an Ordination sermon by the Rev. Mr. Bethune of Cobourg, U. C.

tical history furnishes us with a variety of examples of the strictness with which, under all ordinary circumstances, the sacred order was preserved.

If, therefore, it be necessary that ordination should be conferred — if a commission must be regularly given before a man can rightly exercise his ministry — if no one of himself may lawfully assume any spiritual authority, — it follows that that authority cannot be derived from, or through, an unauthorized person. No lapse of time can render that valid which was at first invalid. And though God may choose, in some degree, and under certain circumstances, to use the services of such persons and overlook their doings to his own glory, yet this pleasure of His cannot be taken as sanctioning a departure from the order which he desires to have observed in his Church. The belief that the end may, in this way, justify the means, would bring us precisely into that position which the Word of God so pointedly condemns, — "to do evil, that good may come."

Most grateful, my Brethren, should we be to God that, in our own venerated Church, the order of the Apostles is preserved; that the commission to teach and to preach is given by men amongst us who received it, according to ancient rule, from those who were themselves in turn similarly authorized; and that so, link by link, we hold an apostolic chain, and can trace the connexion upward, until we come to the only source of ecclesiastical dignity, — our blessed Saviour himself acting by his apostles. If, then, the continuity of this chain be any where broken, — if at the head of any ministerial succession stands merely the congregation or the self-commissioned teacher, — it must, in fairness, be allowed that the order of things is inverted — that authority is conferred not by the superior, but by the inferiors. It is true that, at the present day, this last may be no unpalatable doctrine, when it is a favourite maxim that "the power that be are ordained" not of God, but of the people — that from their voice is to proceed all civil, and ecclesiastical authority. There are, however, not a few (and, praised be God, they are fast swelling into that great multitude which no man can number) who, as they believe with the Scriptures that by God and from God "kings reign and princes decree justice," so, by parity of reasoning and respect for that divine authority, do they trace up the ecclesiastical commission to the same heavenly source. It is not for us to determine the extent of injury inflicted by this failure in order — this flaw in the ministerial succession. In abundant charity towards those in whose this irregularity is to be discerned, let us be grateful to God for the privileges which he has been pleased to confer upon ourselves.*

Instead, too, of leading to arrogance and promptness to extravagance of pretension, let this consideration rather beget humility in the authorized holders of this fearfully responsible commission. To be an ambassador for Christ — to speak "in his stead" to fellow-sinners in a fallen world — to be the dispenser of his refreshing and sanctifying ordinances, — is a high and ennobling privilege; but when the inquiry, "Who is sufficient for these things?" comes home in its power to the minister of Christ, self-abasement, fear and trembling, must take possession of his heart. Exalt himself he cannot — he dare not; but laying all the extent of his poor acquirements at the foot of the cross — avowing his utter unfitness for this high charge — and confessing that it is in the strength of heaven alone that he can go forth to this duty, — he declares the testimony of God, as did the Apostle of old, "in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling."

VALUE OF THE SOUL.

"Were we permitted," says an excellent writer, (Rev. T. T. Biddulph,) "to descend into the bottomless pit, and be witness to the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, with which its horrid caverns perpetually resound; were our ears to be wounded for a season with the bitter lamentations of the lost, and their earnest, but fruitless entreaties for a drop of water to cool their flaming tongues; nay, were we ourselves to taste that cup of trembling: would

* The substance of a few of the preceding paragraphs will be found in an article on "Ministerial Succession" in the third volume of the Church of England Magazine.