

PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY

In connexion with the dissemination of the Bible in India.

[Extracts from a Letter of the Bishop of Calcutta, to the Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, dated Bishop's Palace, Calcutta, June 1, 1835.]

"If the British and Foreign Bible Society had been instituted for the good of India alone, I am convinced it would have achieved a service unparalleled in the history of the Christian Church. India, with 174 millions of Hindoos and Mohammedans, under British law, or British influence, waits for your labours. Her population reads and writes. Unlike the western nations, she has been, for probably 3,000 years, at a point of civilization, low, indeed, but still more elevated than the mass of the European Communities only seven or eight centuries back. Every village has its school; every child learns its letters, and acquires the faculty of reading and writing in its earliest years. Curiosity, power of investigation, love of narrative, precocious development of all the powers mental and bodily, dispose them to read with avidity.

"The Bible is made for man, as much as the eternal world of nature, it suits his moral condition, it awakens and gratifies his attention; it comes down to his feelings and wants. The light of the sun is not more adapted to the eye of man, than the Scriptures are adapted to his inward conscience and heart. The manner also, in which truth is conveyed in the inspired volume is universally suited for man—for childhood, for youth, for manhood, for age. The matter and manner equally speak a Divine original. But India is more especially at home in the bible. It is an oriental volume: its allusions, its images, its habits, its historical vestiges, its national customs are in a large degree Asiatic; and can be most easily understood in the countries nearest to those where it was first written.

"But this is general. It is delightful to add, that the disposition of the people to receive copies of the translated Scriptures increases, just at the moment when the machinery of the Bible Society is in full play. Years were required to set such an engine up, to overcome friction in its working, to let the different wheels sweep easily along, and contribute to the grand result. Whilst this was doing, the minds of the inhabitants of Hindoostan—and the same is true of other parts of Eastern Asia—were preparing for welcoming the produce. It is something like the invention of the art of printing, being contemporary with the reformation of religion, in the sixteenth century; the two played into each other.

"Accounts are now coming in from all quarters of a readiness to receive the sacred volume; which crowds together masses of inquirers and of supplicants at all the principal festivals and annual celebrations, and scarcely allows the missionary to depart without allaying their eagerness.

"All this coincides with the decayed power of the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions upon the minds of men. But I retract the word 'religious': the impostures palmed, under that sacred name, upon a fallen world, deserve not the elevation they thus assume. Neither Hindooism nor Mahometanism merits the name of 'religion.' The sort of metaphysical compact between the grossest and most polluting mythology, of the first; and the fierce corruption of the Jewish and Christian Revelations, which are the pretended foundation of the second; these are not religions. The one is the faint vestige of original Revelation, wandering about for light, without a single holy principle to direct it; and the other the mere plunder of Christianity, poured at the feet of a false prophet and adventurer.

"Both are manifestly on the wane. The hush of universal peace during the last seven years—the progress of the arts—the beneficent sway of British jurisprudence—the noble and honest efforts of the Hon the East India Company, to raise and bless the countries submitted to her sway—the result of eighty years of improving administration of the laws—all have been at work, and are at work, silently and slowly, but surely and effectually. The least measure of knowledge is enough to dig up the foundations of systems, which are as grossly mistaken in matters of geography, history, political economy, international commerce, medicine, agriculture, and the arts of life, as in those of morals and religion.

"The pious and tranquil efforts of the British and Foreign Bible Society are especially adapted to the state of things in India. Each translated copy even of any considerable part of that sacred book, tends, not only to sanctify and bless the soul, but to raise the tone of feeling, kindle the torch of literature and general truth, open all the subordinate tracks of benevolent effort, and civilize, whilst it illuminates and saves.

"Never does the purity of the Bible stand out in

such contrast, as with the filthiness of the Hindoo legends. Never do its important contents appear so commanding, as in contrast with the trifles of the Shastros and the Koran. Never does the sublimity and majesty of the redemption so excite our admiration, as when opposed to the labours and childish ceremonies of these false creeds. Nor does the code of Christian morals ever shine so resplendent, as in the midst of the wretched polygamy, which more degrades the nations of Asia, perhaps than all her other false rules of conduct together.

"If it were possible for me to place you in imagination in the midst of our teeming millions—prostrate, degraded, lost; if I could show you the disgusting cruelties of the blood-stained Kallee, with her altars streaming with gore; if I could take you, and plant your feet at the Ghaut in this city, where in one single month, the year before last, 1,900 victims were brought down to perish at the 'sacred stream,' as it is termed, of the Ganges, if I could show you the system of wretchedness which is working under all this idolatry and darkness—domestic purity unknown—loss of life incalculable, and yet disregarded—the pressure of man upon his fellow, in every possible form, acted upon in open day—the want of the first notions of honesty and truth to bind society together—all springing from the want of the knowledge and law of the one living and true God; if I could present this spectacle—and then could show you the loveliness of Christianity, her truth, her redemption, her morals, her consoling graces, her promises—I am persuaded no other argument would be wanted, to induce you to make an effort for exchanging the one for the other.

"Nor is any objection found to lie against the silent distribution of our sacred books. Whatever fears may have occasionally been engendered of the proceedings of missionaries (and these fears are long passed by), none can spring from the transmission of the pages of Holy Scripture, which the Hindoo reads or not, receives or not, at his choice. Nor is there any method so sure, of attaching the native population more and more to the British rule, and breaking, especially among the Mohammedans, the fierce prejudices which may haunt them still, than the uniting them to us by a common faith, and fixing their obedience to their civil governors on the basis of conscience and the fear of God."

From the P. E. Island Gazette.

THE LATE SIR ARETAS WILLIAM YOUNG.

The following brief memoir of that brave and meritorious officer, has been handed us for insertion:—

The late Sir Aretas William Young, at the age of Seventeen obtained an Ensigncy, by purchase, in Poddimore's regiment, on the 3d Sept'r 1794—a Lieutenantcy, by purchase, in the 13th Foot, on the 25th Oct. 1795—and a Company, also by purchase, on the 15th Sept'r 1796—served with the 13th regiment in Ireland during the rebellion; and was present with that corps, under the command of the present Lieut. General the Hon. Sir Charles Colville, in the ever memorable actions fought in Egypt under the gallant Sir Ralph Abercrombie, in 1801, for which he received a medal—was subsequently employed for several years in Sicily and Gibraltar as Aide de Camp to General the Hon. Henry Edward Fox, the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean. He was promoted on the 17th Dec. 1807 to be Major in the 97th regiment, then commanded by the present Lieut. General Sir James Lyon, and served with the fourth division under Lt. General Sir Lowry Cole, in the Peninsular Campaigns of 1808, 9, 10, and 11—was engaged in the battle of Vimiera, Talavera and Busaco; at Redinha, the taking of Olivença, and the first siege of Badajoz.—Whenever the division was in movement, the light companies were entrusted to his charge; and during a part of the retreat of the army from the frontiers of Portugal to the lines of Torres Vedras, these companies were embodied under his command as a light battalion. In an affair with the enemy at Sobral, near Lisbon, his horse was shot dead under him; and it has been remarked by a distinguished General Officer, that "on every occasion, in every difficulty, and in many hours of trial, the example he set—the steps he trod—led the men cheerfully and fearlessly to do their duty."—Received a medal for Talavera. The 97th, owing to its thinned ranks, having been ordered to England, he was promoted on 23d January, 1813, to a Lieutenant

Colonelcy in the 2d West India Regiment, stationed at Trinidad; and with five companies of that corps was sent to join the expedition against Gaudaloupe, in 1815, and received one of the badges of the "order of merit," presented by His Majesty Louis 18th. On his return to Trinidad he was selected by Sir James Leith, to command the troops in Grenada and on leaving the regiment in Dec. 1815, received a letter, accompanied with a piece of plate from the officers, expressive of "their unfeigned feelings of regard and esteem for the comfort and happiness experienced whilst under his command." On being ordered back to Trinidad, in August 1816, he was voted the thanks of His Majesty's Council and the Assembly of Grenada, with a sword value One Hundred Guineas, "for the zeal and alacrity with which he had acceded to the wishes of the Colony, made known through His Honor the President, in continuing in his command during a period of great anxiety and alarm, occasioned by an insurrection in a neighbouring Island." In 1820, during the absence from Trinidad of Governor Sir Ralph Woodford, he administered the Government of the Island for four months, and in consideration of the advantage which the community had derived during that period by his being a member of His Majesty's Council, was requested still to continue a Member, to which he acceded, subject to the approval of the Commander of the Forces, who, in giving his assent, remarked that "in whatever situation Lieut. Colonel Young may be placed, the public service would be benefited." In 1823, on again giving up the Government, which he had held for two years, during a second absence of the same Governor, he was presented with four addresses:

1st, From His Majesty's Council, stating "their sincere and grateful acknowledgments for the candour, integrity and impartiality which had marked his administration."

2d, From the Board of Cabildo, with a vote of One hundred and Fifty Guineas, to purchase a sword, and to request that he would sit for his portrait, to be placed in their Hall, "as a token of their sense of the efficient manner he had presided over that Board, and to record their opinion of the moderation, steadiness and ability which on all occasions marked his administration."

3d, From the Inhabitants, with a piece of plate, to record "their gratitude for the integrity and impartiality of his government."

4th, From the coloured inhabitants acknowledging "their deep sense of the prudence, moderation and humanity which distinguished his administration of the Government."

On the final disbandment of the 3d West India regiment, in the beginning of 1825, he was waited on by a deputation of the inhabitants of Trinidad, with a farewell address, and with the request of his acceptance of a piece of plate, value Two hundred and fifty Sovereigns, to record their personal esteem and the high sense entertained by them of his conduct and services during the many years he had commanded the Garrison of that Island, and their opinion of the excellent state of discipline and exemplary good conduct of the regiment." He was appointed on 7th January, 1826, to the newly created office of His Majesty's Protector of Slaves, in the Colony of Demerara, the arduous duties of which he conscientiously and ably performed for five years. He retired from the army, by sale of his commission, on the 13th of May, 1826, but on the recommendation of his late Royal Highness the Commander in Chief, conveyed to him through Lieut. General Sir Herbert Taylor, the Military Secretary, was allowed by His Majesty to retain the local rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the West Indies, "in consideration of the worth and value of his services, and of the zeal, intelligence and gallantry, with which he had discharged every duty." He was Gazetted on the 25th July, 1831, to be Lt. Governor of Prince Edward Island: and "in consequence of the favorable opinion entertained by the King of his merits," communicated in a Despatch from Lord Stanley, His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, His Majesty was graciously pleased on the 9th July, 1831, to confer on him the honor of Knighthood.

At the period of his untimely death at Government House, Prince Edward Island, on the 1st December last, in the 55th year of his age, he had thus terminated an honorable career of forty-one years uninterceptedly devoted to His Majesty's service.