

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER 1, 12.

VOLUME II.]

COBOURG, UPPER CANADA, SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 1836.

[NUMBER IX.]

Original Poetry.

For the Church.

LINES WRITTEN IN BROMSGROVE CHURCH-YARD, WORCESTERSHIRE.

How sweet it is when peaceful Evening throws
O'er heaven and earth her mantle of repose,
To hold communion with the starry train,
And all the glories of the ethereal plain!
How sweet to roam in mild and pensive mood
Where sleep alike the wicked and the good;
Where sculptured pile and humbler stone proclaim
The records of each now forgotten name!
How sweet 'mid scenes like these to wile an hour,
Till peeps the Moon from out her silvery bower,
Bathing in pallid light the moss-grown spire,
That bids our souls to other worlds aspire!
The graceful lime-trees on their shadows rest—
A straggling beam illumines the yew's dark vest;
Each stone reminds us that we all must die,
Each text proclaims a world beyond the sky.
A scene like this imparts no idle gloom,
But sheds a ray of glory o'er the tomb.

A. F.

SONNET.

Written at Woodspring Abbey, Somerset, 1836.

The Three Mailed Men, who in Canterbury Cathedral, rushed
on Archbishop Becket, and slew him.

BY THE REV. W. LISLE BOWLES.

These walls were built by men, who did a deed,
Of blood;—terrible CONSCIENCE, day by day,
Follow'd where'er their shadow seem'd to stay,
And still, in thought they saw their victim bleed,
Before God's Altar shrieking; pangs succeed,
As dire upon their heart the deep sin lay,
No tears of agony could wash away:
Hence! to the land's remotest limit, spread!
These walls are raised in vain, as vainly flows
Contrition's tear: KARTH, hide them, and thou, SEA,
Which round the lone isle, where their bones repose
Dost sound for ever, their sad requiem be,
In fancy's ear at pensive Evening's close,
Still murmuring 'MISERERE, DOMINE.'

THE STUDENT.

With aspect pale, and forehead damp,
And eye in hectic lustre bright,
Beside his oft replenished lamp
Yon student watches out the night;
What busy workings of the mind,
Thought chasing thought on wings of wind,
In painful search for knowledge rare,
Meet in that lonely student there.

Around him ponderous volumes lie
Rich with the lore of ages past,
Thereout he drinks with eager eye
Strange theories—conceptions vast;
And while beneath his pen they grow
Notes which his varied reading show:
Poor youth! these vigils of the brain
Draw on life's source with fatal drain.

It was not thus, when, stamped as "good,"
Fresh from his Maker's hand he came,
And every subject creature stood
To take from man his fitting name;
Intuitively then each thought
Rose on the soul with knowledge fraught;
Nor gained he then, by process slow,
This truth—how little truth we know.

'Twill not be thus, when, in the ray
Of that blest sun which sets no more
All earthly knowledge fades away,
And learning's toils and gains are o'er;
Then, as the angel's steadfast gaze
Can look on truth's unveiled blaze,
So ransomed man before the throne
Knows God e'en as himself is known.

The spare minutes of a Minister.

THE RIGHT REV. THOMAS FANSHAW MIDDLETON, D.D. FIRST BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.*

The state of religion among the British residents in India, at the close of the last, and commencement of the present, century, could not fail deeply to affect the minds of pious persons, whose relatives were there stationed, and were necessarily exposed to the numerous temptations which presented themselves to cast off all serious thought, and to forget the solemn requirements of God's law. The Christian philanthropist could not hear without deep emotion of the avowed recklessness that existed to the claims and demands of the Gospel. India, indeed, with its millions of heathen worshippers, sitting in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, presented a melancholy spectacle to the reflecting mind; but the British population resident among them, it is to be feared, were too little alive to a sense of religious duty. Truly pious persons, certainly, were to be found among them. A few devoted ministers of the Gospel were labouring with assiduity and fidelity; but what were they among so many? The call for a more adequate supply of faithful labourers was imperative; and it is almost impossible to conceive the principle on which they could have acted, who looked not only with a jealous eye on every attempt made for the conversion of the natives, but who were unwilling that the European population should be more extensively favoured with the means of grace.

"In all ages, and in all countries," says a living prelate of our Church, "the vices and crimes of Christians have formed the most formidable impediment to the truth of the Gospel; and in no quarter of the globe has the truth of this remark been more strongly exemplified than in India. It was the desire of gain which induced the first settlers to establish themselves in the country; and their successors, through a long series of years, were actuated by no other motive. Their object was to accumulate as rapidly as possible such a mass of wealth as might enable them to live in luxury and splendour when they returned to their native land. Influenced by this motive, and placed in circum-

stances most unfavourable to the cultivation of religious principles and affections—with no Christian institutions to remind them of the faith in which they had been bred—with no periodical returns of public worship to recall their thoughts from their worldly cares and occupations to the concerns of eternity, can we wonder that they soon ceased to retain more of Christianity than the name, or that their morals were gradually corrupted by the continual observation of pagan manners and pagan vices?"

The subject of a regular ecclesiastical establishment in India had, for some time, excited the attention of the British parliament, as well as of the directors of the East India Company; and was not, as may be supposed, viewed by all parties in the same light. Without adverting to the opposition made to the plan, or to the names of those who manfully espoused it, it is sufficient to say, that by "an act for continuing in the East India Company for a further term the possession of the British territories in India, together with certain exclusive privileges," &c., India was placed under the episcopal jurisdiction of a bishop, in 1814, whose residence was to be at Calcutta, and on whose shoulders was to rest the overwhelming load of the direction of ecclesiastical matters in the East. Considerable benefit was expected to be the result of this new establishment; and unquestionably the anticipations of those who regarded it as likely to introduce a new order of things, have not been disappointed. "In this consists one of the most important advantages to be derived from the ecclesiastical establishment in India," continues the prelate, whose words I have already quoted, "that it cannot fail to confirm the faith, and improve the practice of the European inhabitants. They, who were early instructed in the truths of the Gospel, and have acknowledged their efficacy, will no longer be exposed to the danger of sinking into forgetfulness and indifference, through the absence of those visible institutions, and the want of those regular calls to religious exercises, without which, in the present corruption of our nature, the flame of devotion can with difficulty be sustained. While they who have never been sensible to the power of religion, if they are not renewed in mind, or prevailed upon to abandon their criminal habits, will at least be awed into decency, and be solicitous to conceal the vices that they formerly practised without compunction, and without shame. How materially must such a change in the department of the British settlers contribute to the success of the missionary's labours! Hitherto he has contended not only against the prejudices of the native, but also against the corrupt morals of Christians themselves; for with reason might the Hindoo question or deny the superior pretensions of a religion, which appeared neither to command the respect, nor to influence the behaviour, of its professors."

The first person appointed to fill the see of Calcutta was Dr. Thomas Fanshaw Middleton, at that time archdeacon of Huntingdon, and vicar of St. Pancras, Middlesex.

Dr. Middleton was born at Kedleston, in Derbyshire, in January 1769, and was the only child of the Rev. Thomas Middleton. He received his earliest education at Christ's Hospital, in London, whence he was removed to Pembroke College, Cambridge, on one of the school exhibitions. He took the degree of B.A. in 1792, his name appearing in the tripos among the senior optimes. He proceeded to the degree of M.A. 1795, and B. and D.D. in 1808.

He was ordained, in 1792, by Dr. Pretyman, bishop of Lincoln, and entered on his ministerial duties at Gainsborough. In 1794, he was appointed tutor to the sons of Dr. John Pretyman, archdeacon of Lincoln; and was presented by the bishop, in 1795, to the rectory of Tansor, in Northamptonshire. He, about this time, published a small periodical, entitled "The Country Spectator." He married, in 1797, Elizabeth, eldest daughter of John Maddison, Esq. of Gainsborough. In 1798, he published "The Blessing and the Curse," a thanksgiving for the success which had followed the British arms; and in 1802, he received another piece of preferment from the bishop of Lincoln, the rectory of Little Bytham, with Castle Bytham annexed. His reputation as a scholar was very considerable; but it was not until the year 1808, that he more fully established that reputation by the publication of a "Treatise on the Doctrine of the Greek Article applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament," a work of great importance to the Biblical student, and which brought Dr. Middleton more prominently before the public. In 1811, he resigned his livings for that of the large, and even then overwhelmingly populous parish of St. Pancras, with that of Pottenham in Hertfordshire. In April 1812, he was appointed archdeacon of Huntingdon, in the diocese of Lincoln. All his preferments, in fact, he owed to Bishop Pretyman; St. Pancras being in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's, of which the bishop was for many years dean.

The overgrown state of the suburban parishes of the metropolis, and the lamentable destitution of places of public worship in connexion with the Established Church, were subjects of deep regret to those who were not only anxious that the Church should maintain its position in the hearts of the people, but who foresaw the fearful consequences of suffering a dense population to grow up in utter ignorance of the truths of the Gospel. When Dr. Middleton entered on the vicarage of St. Pancras, the population amounted to upwards of 50,000 persons, while there was but one church in the parish, and that scarcely capable of accommodating a congregation of 500. Dr. Middleton endeavoured, to a certain extent, to remedy the evil. He was the means of the introduction of a bill into parliament for the erection of a new church, which was lost in the debate upon the second reading. Can it be wondered at, that, with such inadequacy of church-room, many persons should have been induced to attend dissenting places of worship, where accommodation could easily be obtained at a moderate rent,

* Sermon preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, Feb. 21, 1823, by John (Kaye), Lord Bishop of Bristol.

where every attention was paid to the comforts, and, not unfrequently, to the caprices of seat-holders; and that, by habit more than by choice, thousands took the pale of the Establishment, and brought up their children as non-conformists? While every newspaper records the erection or consecration of new churches; while many have been erected in the metropolis and its vicinity, not to speak of the country at large; and while there is on foot the truly Christian plan of building fifty churches in London,—we can scarcely believe the fact, that, five and twenty years ago, the incumbent of a parish, containing upwards of 50,000 persons, and a man of no inconsiderable influence, was unable to obtain permission to erect a place of worship in his parish, where at most but a twentieth part of its population could join in the services of the sanctuary.

Dr. Middleton was appointed to fill the newly created Bishopric of Calcutta, was consecrated at Lambeth, and entered on the extensive labours of his diocese with the best wishes and most fervent prayers of all who had the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the spiritual and eternal interests of their fellow-creatures at heart. In accepting the appointment he made many sacrifices of no ordinary kind—his preferment in the Church at home was such as to render pecuniary emoluments not an object of desire; and he had every reason to expect that higher dignities awaited him. But he seemed to feel the appointment to a larger sphere of usefulness, as one which he ought not to reject. "I have heard him say," says Archdeacon Pott, "in the warm effusion of his heart, that he had resolved the subject which had been placed before him by the wishes of those who, with so much judgment, selected him for this charge; and that having, without eagerness of mind, or overweening confidence, surveyed the matter on all sides, and having lent an ear to the call, he thought that it remained for him to cast every care behind him, and to address himself, with an humble trust in the good providence of Almighty God, to the work to which he was appointed."

One great object of the bishop, soon after his arrival in India, was the erection of a college, where the means of sound scriptural education might be afforded, and where the rising generations for the time to come might derive instruction, with more especial reference to the propagation of the Gospel. He saw that without the assistance of native teachers, and the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of the country, little real good would be effected; and therefore, in reply to a letter from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, he strongly pressed the necessity of establishing a mission college near Calcutta. Towards the accomplishment of an object so desirable in every point of view, the bishop directed all the powers of his active and comprehensive mind; and after some years of patient labour, and no small anxiety, he had the happiness of laying the foundation stone of the Calcutta Mission College, on the 15th of Dec. 1820. The building was designed in a manner well worthy the important object in view. It stands on the right bank of the Hooghly, on a piece of ground granted by government, about three miles from Calcutta.

Most liberal grants were made towards its erection, and the foundation of scholarships and exhibitions, by the great leading societies connected with the church at home. An elegant brass plate was deposited under the foundation stone, on which was engraven a grateful acknowledgment of the contributions afforded by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Church Missionary Society; the information of a liberal grant of the British and Foreign Bible Society not having reached India. The object excited great attention in England—a royal letter was obtained, authorising collections to be made in the churches throughout the country; and the sum collected exceeded £50,000. "On this important and arduous task the bishop devoted much time, thought, and personal labour. He not only superintended the progress of the building, but himself drew all the plans, and entered into the most minute details of its internal arrangements; while to his anxiety for its completion may his death, humanly speaking, be in some degree attributed. Although he was not permitted to witness those advantages which he anticipated from the institution, he yet lived long enough to see the exterior of 'Bishop's College' completed, its principal professor appointed, and to lay down rules for its future government. . . . It will remain, so long as Christianity maintains any footing in India, a noble monument to the comprehensive and pious genius of its projector, and to the munificence of the society which established it." "It was to the New Mission College, said Archdeacon Lorings (who did not long survive him), in a sermon preached on his lordship's death, that the bishop eagerly looked as a sure means of extending knowledge to the people of this country. This institution was the nursing of his latter years. It occupied his attention many hours of every day, and his anxious mind was daily gratified with the expectation of seeing it in full operation."

The demise of the bishop, which took place on Monday, the 8th of July, 1823, was unexpected and sudden. He was apparently in the full possession of health on the preceding Tuesday, when he visited the college. On Wednesday, the 3d of July, he and his lady went out to take an airing about an hour before sunset. On turning a corner, about half a mile from home, the sun shone full upon the bishop. He instantly expressed a feeling of having received what is called "a stroke of the sun;" and said that he was sure he should suffer from it. The carriage immediately returned home. Severe headache soon came on. His lordship took strong medicine; but would not allow his physician to be sent for. He became very restless; and, on going to bed, said that he never felt so before, and God only knew what the result would be. Contrary to his usual habit when unwell, he spoke no more of death. In the night he was for getting up, saying he must work night and day to accomplish the business which he had on hand. Next day, he sat at his desk eight hours, answering some papers referred to him by

* Life of Bishop Heber.

government. At night, he allowed his physician to be sent for, but would see no one else—was exceedingly restless, and seemed to labour under the impression that a load of business lay upon him; and this idea did not forsake him till his death. The feverish symptoms were never violent—his pulse about eighty, and only at one time eighty-six—but the restless eagerness of his mind nothing could allay. In the evening of Monday, his physician left him with the impression that he was decidedly better; but he had not been long gone, when the bishop became very violent, walked about in great agitation, and, on being compelled to lie down, nature began to give way. His articulation soon failed. The archdeacon and his lordship's domestic chaplain were sent for. He knew the archdeacon, and made strong attempts to speak, but could not be understood. The final scene closed very rapidly, and about eleven he ceased to breathe. The physician, the archdeacon, the bishop's chaplain, the senior chaplain at the presidency, and another friend, were present.

The news of the bishop's death was received with heartfelt grief by many friends in England, who were cordially attached to him—who were fellow-labourers with him in many of the great societies in which, before his departure for India, he took a very active part. A monument in all respects worthy his exalted character and station has been erected to his memory in St. Paul's Cathedral, by the members of the two societies to which he was most devotedly attached.

With respect to the line of conduct adopted by the bishop while he presided over the diocese of Calcutta; it differed in some particulars from that which has been pursued by his successors in that see, more especially with reference to the countenance withheld by him from various institutions having at heart the spiritual welfare of the millions of India, but which he could not conscientiously support. He was unquestionably deeply interested in the propagation of the Gospel. "To advance, under God, the good work of Brown, Martyn, and Buchanan (said Mr. Parsons, in the sermon preached by him on occasion of his lordship's death) the bishop has appositely given to the cause of missions the identical sort of sanction which it wanted. It wanted political countenance, and the reputation of sound learning. Judged dangerous in its apparent disregard of political cares, it was judged of disreputable orthodoxy in point of doctrine. In the Church, it had been supposed to characterise a party. Stability and ballast appeared to be wanting to this ark upon the waters. Old institutions for the purpose did comparatively nothing toward it; the government of England had not expressed itself favourably on the subject, beyond an ancient indication or two, grown obsolete; the universities, as such, sent forth no men in the cause; it was prosecuted but collaterally, and by individual efforts; no provision existed, humanly speaking, for the continuance of missionary exertions in the Church. Our departed bishop has conferred upon the missionary cause, according to his predilections as to the mode of it, every attestation, aid, and honour, which it could expect to receive from him. Instead of a dangerous project, he has, with reason, said, that it, or nothing, must prove our safety in these possessions—that it were preposterous to suppose ourselves established here for any purpose except to make known the Son of God to a people ignorant of him. He gave the missionary cause his heart."

"The objects before his lordship, in proceeding to India, were confessedly great and difficult. He had to conciliate prejudice acting powerfully against his very office, while he had to maintain both the dignity and the courtesy of a Christian bishop; and, above all, while extending his first care to his own countrymen in India, and watching over their spiritual interests, a mind like his could not but be deeply affected by the ignorance of multitudes of native Christians, and the awful condition of the myriads of heathens and Mahometans around him. Yet this great object his lordship had to approach with peculiar caution. Prejudices and fears on this point, altogether unworthy of professed Christians, and countenanced neither by facts nor by just reasoning, were, however, numerous and strong. In what manner the bishop's mind seems to have opened to the right course, and how nobly he was countenanced and supported by the whole body of the Church and its chief societies at home, our readers well know. To this difficult post the bishop brought an enlarged and comprehensive mind, which was, however, somewhat anxious in the prosecution of its purposes. The importance of his office and his work in India appears to have been felt by him with increasing weight. The exertions both of mind and body requisite for the discharge of this office, as the bishop laboured to discharge it, in so extensive a diocese as that committed to his care, seem to have been more than his constitution, though naturally strong, could bear up against in such a climate as India. The slightest indisposition would latterly depress him, and lead him to speak as if he felt himself to be dying. Such had been the general habit of his mind for some time back."

Every sincere member of the Church of England, every one anxious for the progress of the Gospel, even should he be of a different communion, will rejoice that the diocese of Calcutta has now been divided, and that the burden has been very considerably lessened. The prospects of the Church in the East are in the highest degree encouraging. The authentic documents transmitted to the societies, the object of which is to proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God, and to carry that Gospel to the remotest regions of the habitable world, are such as to inspire with fresh hopes, while they should invigorate to fresh exertion. While the Christian rejoices that much has been done, let him remember that much remains to be done, ere the dominion of Satan be overthrown, and the kingdom of the Redeemer fully extended. Let him contribute freely to the furtherance of every good work, which is undertaken for the promotion of the Divine

* Missionary Register, Dec. 1822.

* From the 'Church of England Magazine.'