

Christian Visitor.

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Religious and General Intelligence.

GEO. W. DAY, Proprietor.

“BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.”—ST. PAUL.

Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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GOD IS NIGH.

Beyond, beyond that boundless sea,
Above that dome of sky,
Further than thought itself can flee,
Thy dwelling is on high:
Yet dear the awful thought to me,
That thou, my God, art nigh.

Art nigh, and yet thy labouring might
Feels after thee in vain,
Thee in these works of power to find,
Or to thy seat attain.
Thy messenger, thy stormy wind,
Thy path, the trackless main.

These speak of thee with loud acclaim;
They thunder forth thy praise;
The glorious honour of thy name,
The wonders of thy ways;
But thou art not in tempest flame,
Nor in day's glorious blaze.

We hear thy voice, when thunder's roll!
Through the wild fields of air;
The waves obey thy dread control;
Yet still thou art not there.
Where shall I find Him, O my soul,
Who yet is everywhere?

Oh, not in circling depth or height,
But in the conscious breast,
Present to faith, though veiled from sight:
There does his Spirit rest,
Oh come, thou Presence infinite!
And make thy creature blest.

John Thomas, M. D.

THE FIRST ENGLISH MISSIONARY TO BENGAL.

BY J. W. MORRIS.

Nothing more strongly marks the directing hand of Providence than the circumstances in which the Baptist Mission to India originated, or shows more clearly the effects of a Divine agency in combining a variety of incidental events, over which human power or foresight could have no control, to accomplish the mysterious purposes of Infinite wisdom and benevolence.

Mr John Thomas was born of pious parents, at Fairford, in Gloucestershire; was brought up a surgeon, and settled in London. His early habits were not favorable to economy; his unsuspecting confidence and unbounded generosity soon filled his ledger with a large amount of irrecoverable debts, which involved him in difficulties that compelled him eventually to relinquish his situation. He then obtained an appointment as surgeon to an East-Indiaman. His adversity led to serious reflection, to which he had before been a stranger; and while walking in the streets of London one Sabbath morning, full of melancholy musings on his own peculiar wretchedness, he was soothed with the sound of the church-going bells, which seemed to invite his weary steps to the sanctuary. Presently, in passing along Little Wild Street, near Lincoln's-Inn Fields, he heard some singing that pealed upon the ear, and detained him for awhile in pensive silence. At length he ventured into the chapel, a perfect stranger, and found afterwards that he had been an unexpected auditor of the celebrated Dr. Stennett, who preached that morning from John 6: 37. The discourse was so reasonable, and so adapted to his case, that it relieved him at once from all his temporal anxieties, and fixed all his thoughts on the great concerns of another world.

Soon afterwards, in the year 1783 he sailed to Bengal as a surgeon to the *Oxford* Indiaman, leaving his wife and daughter in London. During the voyage, the convictions and consolations which he had derived from Dr. Stennett's preaching were deeply cherished, and accompanied him to the shores of India.

In the same year that Mr. Thomas was thus unexpectedly driven out to India, and to go he knew not where nor for what purpose, Mr. Carey entered upon a public profession of Christ, and was baptized by Dr. Ryland, at Northampton.

When Mr. Thomas arrived in Bengal, he felt extremely anxious for a little Christian society, and not being able to meet with any, he advertised for a Christian in the public newspapers. Such was the state of society at that time in Bengal, that a serious Christian could nowhere be met with. One man, indeed, replied to the advertisement, and had an interview with Mr. Thomas, making great professions of religion; but he was profane in his conversation, and derided Mr. Thomas, as an enthusiast.

In the following year, Mr. Thomas returned to England with the *Oxford* Indiaman, having under his medical care the whole of the ship's company, nor had he at this time any view to missionary labors. In the year 1785 he was baptized in London by the venerable Abraham Booth, and began to exhort in private societies, and afterwards to preach in different places in town and country.

In the following year, Mr. Thomas undertook a second voyage to India, on board the same ship, and with the same captain and officers. On his arrival, he found that two or three serious friends had fixed their residence at Calcutta, and a pious clergyman from England had taken the charge of the Orphan School. Here he found new associates—established a prayer-meeting—and preached occasionally at the house of one of his friends. He was now beginning to be “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.”

In the year 1787, Mr. Thomas had acquired such an acquaintance with the Benaglee language, as to commence his missionary labors among the natives. Here again we trace a coincidence that is quite remarkable, for it was in that same year that Mr. Carey was ordained over the Baptist church in the obscure village of Moulton, near Northampton, with a salary of £18 a year—being compelled to work at his trade as a shoemaker, and to keep an evening school, to provide for his necessities.

During the remaining five years—from 1787 to 1792—Mr. Thomas continued to labor in India, and two or three of the Hindoos were awakened under his ministry. All this time, Carey's mind was deeply impressed with the importance and necessity of making some efforts for the spread of the Gospel. He wrote a pamphlet, and called the attention of his brethren to the subject. Meetings for prayer were held—various counsels had—and a society at length was formed, with a view of sending the Gospel to the heathen world. But the society knew not where to begin their operations, nor when nor how to accomplish the object they had in view. At the suggestion of Mr. Pearce, of Birmingham, they had rather concluded to make their first attempt on the Pelew Islands, on the western side of the Pacific Ocean, but knew not how to proceed. Carey was ready to go whithersoever his brethren might wish to send him; but they had no funds, and very few persons could at that time believe that such an undertaking was at all practicable.

At that juncture, Mr. Thomas returned a second time to England, with a view of taking back with him his wife and daughter to Bengal; and not knowing anything that had happened, he anxiously enquired of Mr. Booth whether any person could be found in England to accompany him on his intended mission to Bengal—for, from the encouragement he had already met

with, he was determined to devote himself to the work of the Lord among the idolatrous Hindoos.

Mr. Booth of course directed him to the society recently formed in Northamptonshire; and in October, 1792, the first interview took place—an interview never to be forgotten! Mr. Thomas arrived by the mail late in the evening, wrapped up in a large India shawl, and was immediately introduced into the room where the ministers waiting to receive him. Having heard of the devotedness of Brother Cary, and that he was destined to be his companion in missionary labors, he rushed into his arms as soon as he saw him, and they tenderly embraced each other, and wept.

In the course of a few months they sailed to Bengal, on board a Danish Indiaman—the East-India Company having refused them a passage by any of their ships. Mr. Thomas labored in the mission for several years with good success, and died of a brain fever at Calcutta; but not until he had had the honor of opening the kingdom of heaven to the myriads of India.—*Bap. Mem.*

“Man's Spiritual Cry.”

To whatever quarter of the world we look, this phenomenon strikes us—that in every part of the earth, amidst every variety of the human race, and under all possible forms of government, of manners, and of religion, one thing is evident—transition. Look where you will, and you behold it. Yonder it is, treading with burning steps upon the snows of Greenland; and yonder, breathing in a healthy infancy amidst all the malaria of Guinea. We see it overleaping the wall of China, and it is yonder again in New Zealand. In India we see it too, penetrating territories that have been closed for long ages, and defended by millions of hereditary priests. It is entering Turkey, and opening the doors of the harem, and establishing, under Mussulman protection, evangelical churches in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We find it also treading soil long forbidden to the spirit of transition—boldly marching over the Italian land. In the city of the Seven Hills, the craft of blasphemy had stimulated the thunders of another Sinai, and had soared far away many innovators; but now we find that very spirit of innovation approaching these Seven Hills, heaving them with hold and resistless motion, and declaring in the ears of the Pontiff, like a loud and unexpected thunder-clap, “wicked and living Antichrist.” All these changes, whatever they may be in their primary aspect, whether of education, civilization, or any other feeling, arise from man's moral necessities—from man's spiritual cry for something that he has not. We find no community that is not wanting something new, except those communities that have obtained “pure religion and undefiled” in the Gospel of the Son of God. It appeared as if, in the midst of the universal commotion which surrounds us, a strange Providence had permitted us to stand on the only rock in the world which is not heaving now; and while the fabrics of other constitutions are falling down upon kings and subjects, and crushing them together, in Heaven's wonderful mercy, that fabric which our fathers built stands over our heads, and we within its shelter are permitted to praise our God. Many a time since February last, as he had thanked God for such a spectacle, he had asked “How is this?” and the answer had come to his heart, as if it had come from the lips of the Master. “The rains descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.” All the world was now presenting to us a demand for the Gospel which we possess—the continent of Europe, stumbling upon barricades, and gasping in the smoke of gunpowder, and stained with blood, were crying

out for “pure religion and undefiled.” It seemed to him as if poor Africa, kneeling in the blood of her sons, and weeping for her children because they are not, were crying too for “pure religion and undefiled;” and as if Polynesia, feasting on the limbs of her warrior sons, and dashing her little ones against the stones, were echoing the same cry. It appeared to him also as if Asia, her limbs crushed beneath the car of Juggernaut, and her breast pierced with the Mahometan scymetar, were crying to us for “pure religion and undefiled.” All want that same thing.—*Bap. Reporter.*

The following is a good description of the Emperor of Russia's household guard:—

“This cavalry corps is the emperor's pride, and is the flower of his household brigade. The finest men in the army are drafted into it, and their uniform and appointments are superb. The men are as nearly as possible of the same height, and uniformity is carried out to an absurd extent. Those whose upper lips are so disloyal as not to be productive of a sufficient growth of hair are corked and painted that they all may look alike; and the expenditure of cotton must be immense, for one man is taken as a standard, and the rest are padded all over to bring them out to that shape and size. Such a youthful regiment I have seldom seen and consequently the black brush is in great requisition. At a little distance the effect is splendid, and even when close the making up is so admirably done that it is difficult to distinguish the really muscular from the stuffed and bolstered man of war. The uniform is very similar to our Life Guards, but white with silver appointments; and instead of our plume in the helmet they wear the spread eagle, which makes a beautiful and becoming head dress. Instead of the curriass they wear a red corvlet with a yellow star on the front—an old usage still preserved on state occasions. The emperor appears as colonel of the regiment in which uniform he appears by far the best. He is followed by his aides de-camp; he inspects the troops as he passes along; those he has inspected set up a mechanical shout, a sort of howl of approval—very different from the hearty cheer we hear from the British troops. This howl continues perpetually increasing in volume till the whole are reviewed, when, passing to the centre, the emperor waves his royal gauntlet and a death-like stillness prevails. The army is a sort of automaton; every eye is centered upon him; he polls the wires by nod or look, and the machine performs its work. The religion which teaches them that God and the emperor are the first to be revered, gives them the idea that in that capacity their king is more than human, and they worship him accordingly. The abject slavery of the Russian to his emperor is astonishing; a due and becoming respect to the sovereign is praiseworthy, but a cringing servitude is despicable. The Russian uncovers his head on the approach of his emperor, and remains so until he takes his departure which may not be for hours—still it would be sacrifice to cover the head in his august presence.”—*Pictures from the North by George Franklin Atkinson Esq.*

BOARD OF HEALTH.—All the gentlemen named in the commission, under the Great Seal, establishing a Board of Health for the City of St. John and Parish of Portland, attended at the Mayor's office on Thursday last, and were duly sworn to the faithful performance of their duties. Mr. Thos. McAvity was appointed Clerk to the Board, and Patrick Colton, Messenger.—A committee, consisting of his Honor the Recorder, Isaac Woodward, and M. H. Perley, Esquires, was appointed to prepare rules and regulations, and the Board adjourned until the committee should be prepared with their Report.—*New Brunswick.*