

ADVANTAGES
OF
Christianity
IN PROMOTING
THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PROSPERITY
OF THE
BRITISH GOVERNMENT IN INDIA;
CONTAINING
REMARKS OCCASIONED BY READING A MEMOIR ON
THE VELLORE MUTINY.

BY JOSHUA MARSHMAN, D. D.
ONE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AT SERAMPORE.

“ Whatever is right is wise.”—LORD TEIGNMOUTH.

“ What is morally wrong can never be politically right.”—Mr. Fox.

“ Righteousness exalteth a Nation.”—SOLOMON.

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1813.

DR. MARSHMAN'S REMARKS

ON

THE VELLORE MUTINY:

EXTRACTED FROM THE PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS OF THE BAPTIST
MISSION, NO. XVIII.

Written 1807.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

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ADVANTAGES

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CHRISTIANITY,

&c.

IT is curious enough to observe the conduct of those who deprecate the idea of alarming the natives with any appearance of a design to extend christianity. They themselves have done more in one hour to excite alarm among the natives than all the missionaries in India have done from Zeigenbalgh's arrival to this time, or perhaps may do for a hundred years to come. Let me solve this problem. The Hindoos are not so much afraid of *becoming* christians as of being *made* christians ; of embracing a doctrine when previous and ample examination has convinced them of its truth, as of being *compelled* to embrace it while they, through ignorance, hold it in abhorrence. Discussion, especially of a religious nature, is familiar with the Hindoos ; it agrees with their taste, and the country is almost full of it. Among the various sects of the brahmans it is carried to a surprising extent, and it has been thus for many centuries. I have heard it also mentioned as one cause of the detestation in which the Hindoos have always held the Mahometan governments in India, that they were constantly hostile to religious discussion, which I believe is a strong feature in all Mahometan governments. This freedom of discussion renders it perfectly safe to propose any doctrine, or agitate any question of a religious nature. Are their prejudices attacked ; opinions, held sacred for ages, called in question ; or even the fundamental principles of their religion opposed ? A Hindoo feels no kind of alarm : he even enjoys the confusion of his teacher, when pressed with powerful arguments, and sometimes unites in the ridicule which is poured upon

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him. Why is this? Because the reception of these new principles is a matter of perfect option: they are questions proposed for discussion, not commands which must be obeyed, however repugnant to the feelings and the judgment. Hence they are examined with pleasure, because they can be rejected without incurring the displeasure of their rulers. Not so under the Mahometan governments, and hence the dislike already mentioned. Of the truth of these ideas, the most abundant proof has been furnished. Whence has it arisen that the preaching of the gospel for nearly fourteen years in Bengal, the distribution of many thousands of tracts, and several thousand copies of the new testament, and above all, the baptism of more than a hundred of the natives—Kaystas, Brahmans, and Mahometans—have never occasioned the least appearance of tumult, or sensation of alarm? Nay, more: To what can it be ascribed that the labours of those zealous and able missionaries, Zeigenbalgh and his successors, and particularly the fervent, the apostolic labours of the venerable Swartz, for nearly half a century, caused no sensation of alarm even in a country situated in the vicinity of powerful princes, both Hindoo and Mahometan; the latter of whom, Hyder and Tippoo, for a great part of the time in a state of actual hostility, and of course ready to foment the least appearance of discontent? Even to this, they only *persuaded* men; nothing of a compulsory nature was added to excite fear, and create alarm—and no alarm was excited, even at Vellore, by these means, although the gospel has been preached there and in its neighbourhood *more than forty years*.

But the issuing a command to obliterate, while on duty, all marks of Cast was a measure of a totally different complexion, of which a moderate acquaintance of the real state and feelings of the natives must convince any one. I have heard of a missionary who attempted, partly by authority and partly by ridicule, to obliterate those marks on the face of his hearers. We however never attempted to prevent their wearing them, though we have remonstrated and continue to remonstrate with them in an affectionate manner on the evil of idolatry, of which this is a badge; but we have never prohibited their appearing with it. Had we done thus, we should probably have had no servants, nor have left the least impression on their minds favourable to the gospel. Their judgment

remaining unconvinced, they would still have considered these marks as sacred badges, and conceived of us as unjust and unreasonable men.

The case of the soldiers, however, differed even from this. It might be, as Sir J. Craddock states, that the influence of Tippoo's family was the grand cause of that unhappy affair; But I am as fully convinced that a more favorable occasion of working on the minds of the Hindoo troops could scarcely have been furnished to the emissaries of that family. How easy was it for designing men to represent to these poor ignorant Hindoos, 'They have commanded you to efface all marks of cast while on duty; but what is this, but a prelude to compelling you altogether to obliterate them, nay, to renounce cast, and embrace the religion of *Eesa*.' I do not say that this unhappy circumstance was thus fatally improved to the prejudice of their british masters; but it was what I should have expected, and that these Mahometans would also have urged the impossibility of disobeying every subsequent command of this nature, unless the first were resisted, which to men ignorant as these Hindoos must have been, and unable to evade the command without the crime of desertion, might have enraged them almost to madness.

After this, however, to throw the blame on Christianity, and in consequence raise a hue-and-cry against christian missionaries, and this after the experience of so many years, and the testimony of the Honourable Company, as well as of a number of its highest servants, civil and military, who had borne witness to the peaceable nature and tendency of their conduct—is so unreasonable, as well as illiberal, that I cannot find a parallel instance in christian history; nor do I know of any thing similar, unless it were the conduct of that heathen emperor, who after setting fire to his capital, threw the odium on the christians.

It is certainly true that very serious consequences arise from the retaining of cast in the military department. In addition to what this Memoir mentions relative to a private of superior cast refusing to let his officer of inferior cast sit in his presence, we know that it is painful as death itself to a Brahman, if he be required to obey the commands of a Soodra. Of this contempt of a soodra, an instance occurred last week. Nimmi Mullik, one of the richest Hindoos in India, died a few weeks since, and left an order

for three lacks of rupees, nearly thirty-six thousand pounds, to be distributed at his sradda, or funeral feast. Brother Carey a day or two ago asked several of his pundits why they had not applied for a share, as application alone was necessary to ensure success. They replied with apparent abhorrence, that they would not on any account touch a cowrie of the money; nay, the Khidmitgai joined in the sentiment. Would you know the reason why these Hindoos were so averse in this instance to touching money? Nimmi Mullik was a *soodra*, of the cast of goldsmiths, which happens to be a degree lower than that of the Khidmitgai! Cast is therefore a *remora* of the most serious kind to military subordination. It is however only *one* of the fruits of Hindooism; and if the tree must be so carefully nourished that even a breath of christian doctrine must not be suffered to approach it, lest it should prove noxious, it seems singular, and perhaps somewhat hard, that one of its principal branches should be lopped off at once, because in one instance the flavor of the fruit happens to be unpleasant. There are ways, however, of causing this branch to wither of itself, without the least alarm, and we have a number of instances now around us of the success of such a method. But if gentlemen who are disgusted with the fruit will not themselves take the pains to apply this effectual remedy, it seems rather extraordinary that they should wish to expel from India the very persons who would.

It is neither my business nor my wish even to glance at any thing of a political nature: my calling as a missionary, however, can never abate my affection to my native country, nor can I cease to feel deeply interested in its welfare. I am conscious too that no one in Leadenhall Street, nor even in Britain, more ardently wishes for the permanence and prosperity of the British empire in India than myself; and I cannot at all times avoid weighing those ideas respecting the probable means of securing these objects, which my situation among the natives and my acquaintance with their notions and feelings naturally suggest; and I am fully convinced that one of the most effectual means of perpetuating the British dominion in India will be the calm and silent, but steady and constant, diffusion of christian light among the natives. Little is at any time to be feared from the

Hindoos : they are too much divided and too indolent to be formidable. It is my firm opinion, that to the very end of time, through their imbecility of character, which christianity itself will never remove, they will be dependent on some other nation : and happy will it be for them, should Providence continue them under the mild and fostering care of Great Britain ; provided she act in her proper character, as a nation professing Christianity. The genius, however, of Mahometanism, ambitious and blood-thirsty in its very nature, is of a totally different complexion. Mahometans never forget that they once had the dominion throughout India, and nothing can ever be expected from them, except on the ground of their weakness and inability. It is childish to talk about christianity's alarming them : they neither need nor wait for any alarm of this nature : their lust of dominion and hatred of the British are sufficient at all times to incite them to resistance, if they possessed the ability ; and when they have no strength, which is happily the case at present, no alarm about christianity can impart it to them. The Hindoos then are a kind of *caput mortuum*, lying between the Mahometans and the British ; and the question is, who shall secure them ? It is true, they have no predilection for the Mussulmans ; but it is equally true, that nothing can ever effectually attach an idolatrous Hindoo to the British ; not merely because their worship, ideas, and habits are different, but because the Hindoos are in their present state incapable of attachment, unless it be to their cast. They are not attached to their own *debtahs* : they will speak and write against them for money. Hence an appearance of greater profit would turn them from any nation upon earth. Every attempt therefore to create attachment by assimilation in any degree with their religious customs or worship is totally unavailing. Impart vital genuine christianity to them, and you give them a new nature ; you create new ideas, and new attachments—attachments stronger than death ; attachments too, of which the British as christians are the full objects. But setting aside every effect of christianity on their minds, their being of the same opinion with the British in matters of religion would be the same thing in effect as being of the same cast, and would insensibly, but powerfully, attach them to the same interest.

Every converted Hindoo or Mussulman is necessarily the cordial friend of the British, on the ground of his own interest and security; for on the continuance of their empire in India his very existence depends. By embracing christianity he has not only dissolved all the ties which hold him firmly to his cast and superstition, but he has incensed his friends and countrymen against him, and has every thing to dread from their obtaining the ascendancy in India. Hence every step which might be taken against the English must threaten the existence both of himself and all that are dear to him. What a powerful counterpoise in favor of the British government would be created in India, even by the partial progress of christianity! Say, that of the millions of Hindoostan, only five hundred thousand persons had embraced christianity; who can calculate the value of five hundred thousand such friends, thus united to us, both by inclination and interest, and scattered up and down throughout the British dominions in India? On this subject let the testimony of Bartelomeo, a professed papist, be heard, as you have it in his Voyage, p. 207. 'The newly converted christians on the coast of Malabar are the chief support of the Dutch East India Company at Cochin, and are always ready to take up arms in their defence. The Pagans and Mahometans are naturally enemies to Europeans, because they have no similarity to them either in their external appearance or in regard to their manners. If the English therefore do not endeavour to secure the friendship of the christians in India; on whom can they depend? How can they hope to preserve their possessions in that remote country? In the above considerations may be found one of the reasons why neither Hyder Ali nor Tippoo Sultan could maintain their ground against the English and the king of Travancore on the coast of Malabar. The great number of Christians residing there, whom Hyder and his son every where persecuted, always took part with the English.'

APPENDIX.

SINCE the date of these "Remarks," a very considerable number of Natives have been brought to embrace Christianity. The following is an Extract from a Letter written by Mr. FULLER, the Secretary, to Mr. BURLS, in London, dated Kettering, April the 6th, 1813 :—

"At the close of 1808, the Missionaries had baptized about *one hundred and forty seven*.—In 1809, *eighty*.—In 1810, *one hundred and six*.—In 1811, *ninety seven*.—In 1812, (to July,) *fifty* :

In all *four hundred and eighty*.

"Some few of them have died. Some are Europeans, who being converted from a vicious course of life, have joined them. There are now upwards of *thirty*, including the Missionaries, who preach the gospel; many of whom are Natives, and some of them had been Brahmins, of the higher casts. Of these Mr. LEONARD, Master of the Charity School in Calcutta, is a native of Ireland; Mr. THOMPSON, a young man Country-born; and Mr. KERR, with some others who were Portuguese Catholics, have, during the last year, been called to the ministry, and promise to be very useful."

LIST OF WORKS PRINTED BY THE BAPTIST MISSIONARIES AT
SERAMPORE.

1. The *Bengalee* Bible, 2 Editions of the Old Testament and 3 Editions of the New.
2. The *Sungskrit* New Testament, 4to. nearly 600 pages, and the Pentateuch 4to. about 500 pages.
3. The *Orissa* New Testament, two Volumes of the Old, namely, the Hagiographia and the Prophetic Books.
4. The *Hindee* New Testament, 4to. 600 pages.
5. The *Mahratta* New Testament, 8vo. nearly 800 pages.

The following Versions of the New Testament were in the Press August 1811.

1. The *Seeh*, 2. The *Chinese*, 3. The *Kernata*, 4. The *Telinga*.
- Besides these, there were also in the press several volumes of the Old Testament, as the Pentateuch in *Mahratta* and *Hindee*, the Historical books in *Sungskrit* and *Orissa*.

At the same period the following Versions were preparing for the Press.

1. The *Burman* New Testament.
2. The *Magudha* Bible—also a *Magudha Grammar* and *Dictionary* by Mr. Felix Carey and Mr. Chater.
3. The *Cashmire* New Testament.

Besides the Scriptures, the Missionaries have published the following works.

1. Translation of the *Ramayana* by Dr. Carey and Dr. Marshman, 3 vol. 4to. dedicated to Sir George Barlow.
 2. *Sungskrit Grammar* by Dr. Carey, 4to. pp. 1030, dedicated to Marquis Wellesley.
 3. Translation of Confucius, with a Preliminary Dissertation on the Chinese language, 4to. pp. 725, dedicated to Lord Minto.
 4. Account of the Writings, Religion, and Manners of the Hindoos, including translations from their principal works. 4 Vol. 4to. By Mr. Ward.
 5. *Bengalee Grammar* by Dr. Carey.
 6. *Bengalee Dialogues* by do.
 7. *Mahratta Grammar* by do.
 8. *Mahratta Dictionary* by do.
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