

Griffin's History

Chapter VI

MISSIONISM AMONG THE HINDUS

We take the following from *the Macedonian*, a New School Baptist paper, published in Cincinnati, Ohio, which will give the reader some idea of the state of affairs in a country where modern Missionism has been at work ever since Cary was sent out by the "Particular Baptist Society for propagating the Gospel among the heathen." The reader will recollect that this society was formed at Kettering, in Great Britain, in 1792, by Rev. Andrew Fuller, and his associates. And as Dr. Judson has been rather significantly called, by his friends, the father of American Missions, we are impelled by the truth of history to admit, that Mr. Fuller is the great father of Modern Missions, which is the same thing everywhere.

We now proceed to give the extract alluded to, which is a letter written at Balasore, June 26th, 1845, by O. R. Bachelor, viz:

"The prospect of affairs in India has recently assumed a new and interesting aspect. Great excitement has prevailed of late in the native society at Calcutta and vicinity, in relation to Missionaries and Missionary operations. The native press has been actively engaged, and large assemblies have been held, with the design to get up an influence which shall compel their countrymen to withhold all support and encouragement from the propagators of Christianity, and thereby compel them to leave the country.

"The immediate cause of this new movement is briefly this: The mission of the church has for several years had in successful operation a large and flourishing school, which has afforded constant instruction to nearly one thousand heathen youth in English literature and science. But the conductors of this institution were not merely teachers of literature. While the heathen mind, bound in chains for ages, was expanding under the influence of European science, they endeavored to store it with the principles of Gospel truth. Christian theology occupied a prominent place in their instructions.

"The consequence was, that so long as no converts were made, the native community were not only quiet, but loud in their praises of the Missionaries. Important changes have recently taken place. The seed, so long sown in sorrow and in tears, has at length begun to germinate. Several of the young men in the

institution, some of them belonging to wealthy and influential families, have one by one embraced Christianity. Every successive conversion has given rise to increased excitement, until lately, cases of apostasy from Hinduism have become so frequent, that the whole community has become aroused—I might almost say enraged—and the spirit of enmity to the Gospel, like the eruption of a volcano, long pent up and confined, has burst forth in all its vindictive malignity and virulence. A large assembly of native gentlemen, was called to adopt measures for counteracting the influence of the Missionaries. Many flaming speeches were made, characterized by enmity, misrepresentation and abuse; and a plan was finally adopted to raise three hundred thousand rupees, nearly one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the endowment of an English free school, capable of affording instruction to one thousand young men. But some extracts from the native papers will best show the state of public feeling on the subject. The following extract is from the Prabakar, a Bengali newspaper, of May 16, 1845, viz: The son of the brother of an acquaintance of ours, like a bird from its cage, having escaped with extended wings in company with his wife from his home, has fallen into the hands of a certain fowler in Calcutta. On this our friend with some of his relatives, by spreading the net of habeas corpus, endeavored to rescue the silly little bird from the clutches of the fowler. But the fowler—the white incarnation—seeing this, said to our friends: All your efforts are vain, for the little bird has come to my house, and I shall endeavor to keep it. I cram it daily with knowledge from my own bill; it has already learned to chirp a few pretty notes, so that it will no more relish your attentions. After saying this, he dismissed our friends, without even allowing them a sight of the boy. Alas! we fear that God has made the hearts of the white faced ascetics of the hardest stone.

"We fear the Missionary more than we do the serpent by whose poisonous bite life is so much in danger; for the evil effects arising from the serpent's bite may be removed by the application of medicine, but there is no remedy from the sting of the serpent— like white— faced missionary. The tiger is a fearful and powerful animal, but he can be overcome by sticks and other weapons, but God himself is scarce able to punish these wolves that roam the forest wilds.

"The sword is a terrible weapon, for by its stroke alone the body can be cut into pieces, and the soul freed from the body escapes to the shades of death; but the ravages of the sword may be stayed in a variety of ways, but the sword— like words which proceed from the blood— red mouths of the white— faced teachers, how sharp are they! If they but strike one, even in secret, they tear to pieces his own soul and the hearts of all his friends.

"Disease is a terrible enemy, but physicians have discovered many remedies by which the most fatal diseases which affect the body and cause death, may be overcome; but when exposed to the pestilential atmosphere of the Missionary's influence, a youth is effected by the fatal disease of Christianity, he is irretrievably lost; for this disease there is no cure, no remedy.

"Death is very terrific, for by its very mention the soul is almost driven out of the body, and when once gone there is no hope of recovering life; still we do not fear death so much as the influence of the Missionaries; for death oftentimes performs the office of a friend, when we are oppressed with sorrow, disease and poverty, and are not able to bear up with the ills of life; when we remember that one's death is as certain as one's birth, the sorrow occasioned by death is removed. But alas! alas! if a person becomes a Christian, he and his family are utterly ruined. There is no disgrace in death, but when one's son becomes a Christian, the disgrace entailed on a family is beyond calculation. Wherefore, on account of the reasons already mentioned, we infinitely more dread the influence of the Missionaries, than the attack of all the enemies we have already named.' "

The reader should bear in mind, that this extract from a Bengali newspaper was selected by the friends of missions as best suited to answer their purpose. And, having no means of information on this subject, from that distant land, except through the Missionaries, the best that we can do is to analyze their own showing.

This Hindoo writer evinces no favoritism for any religion, but does manifest a strong prejudice against Christianity. But we are not prepared to decide this matter fairly, without first knowing the fruits of Christianity, as manifested by its representatives in that country. For by their fruit they are to be known—and if that be evil, then Christ himself will condemn such Christianity.

All the cool, calculating opposition to Jesus Christ and His Apostles, mainly emanated from the pretended worshippers of the true God. The opposition to Christianity, by the heathen, was usually through temporary excitement. A mob was raised at Macedonia and Ephesus, and other places, through the chicanery of interested priests. But this was by no means a settled design of the people. When Paul disputed with the philosophers at Athens, some called him a babbler——some said he set forth strange gods——some that he brought strange things to their ears—and some would like to hear him again on the subject; but no spiteful opposition.

Reader, suppose that a Hindu priest was to settle, with a company of associates, in our country, to decoy young people into their possession—keep them confined in secrecy from their friends—and then set the laws of the land at defiance, looking to the British flag for protection —what would be the result? Have not Catholic nunneries been destroyed in this country for similar offences while looking to our own flag for protection?

Let us now examine the admissions of the Balasore letter. The writer admits, that so long as no converts were made—that is, so long as the schools were not sectarian— "the native community were not only quiet, but loud in their praises of the Missionaries." But as soon as they began to stuff school theology down the children's throats, great excitement followed. These Hindus were not opposed to an English education; but on the contrary made arrangements to raise about one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the endowment of an English free school — free from sectarianism—free from school theology.

Before leaving this subject we feel constrained to show that these unfortunate Hindoos are not all that oppose such Christianity as they have to deal with. The following is from the Portland Boat, published in Maine, viz:

"Pious Deviltry.—It appears from recent acts of the ungodly in this city, that the tide of pious blasphemy and mockery is rapidly approaching its utmost limits; the last swell or "roller" has gone much higher than anything ever witnessed here before. The ungodly have been building what they blasphemously call a church edifice, whose weather—cock is to outtop everything in the city; and it appears from recent occurrences, that the rowdyism of its owners has exceeded that of their neighbors, in proportion to the height of their weathercocks.

A fair, or as they call it, a bazaar, was held last week to make money, as I am told, for carpeting, cushioning, ornamenting, &c, this heathen pagoda. The following notice which appeared in the daily papers will give the reader some faint idea of the blasphemous scene. Let the reader observe how much of it sounds like the doctrines and doings of Jesus Christ:

" Notice— —Bazaar at Lancaster Hall.—The above new and spacious hall, will be opened for the second time, on Monday evening next, and continue until Wednesday evening; on which occasion the ladies, on behalf of the New Church, on State street, will offer a great variety of useful articles for sale. Among the attractions may be found the 'Phrenological Old Gentleman,' a paper printed expressly for the occasion, containing original pieces from some of the most

celebrated authors of the country; a Post— Office; a Valentine Department; but more particularly a Department of the Interior. Door open at 7 o'clock, Monday evening. Admittance 12 cents.' "

"I have now before me one of the papers 'printed expressly for the occasion, and had some rowdy opened a grog shop and eating rooms, he could scarcely have published a more rowdyish thing than are most of its contents.

"The above advertisement speaks of the 'Department of the Interior,' and the following from the same paper tells us something about the contents of that Department:

" 'The Department of the Interior, abounds in the most delicious refreshments. The luxuries and substantial of our own and other lands appear there in rich profusion— coffee and lemons of the choicest flavor, ice creams, oranges, sponge and loaf cake, elegant puffs and tarts, tongues, hams, chicken salad, oysters, sardines, fig paste, Guava jelly, prunes, candies, golden tipped cigars of the nicest brands, and also magnificent loaves of Fruit Cake with gold rings in them. Every article will be sold on the most favorable terms, for cash. Supplies abundant. No one need fear exhaustion, so long as his purse holds out. Walk up.'"

"Is it not horrible that in a city like this, a temperate moral man cannot send his children into the street without exposing them to the continual danger of being drawn aside by flaming church advertisements and pious handbills, and robbed of money and morals, and initiated into vices in the name of Jesus Christ! Is it not horrible! And men who once possessed a tolerable share of common sense, and who have seen enough of the world to know the withering, cursing effects of vice, helping the priests on with their infernal craft—teaching children vice and dissipation in the name of the Holy One, just for the purpose of filching from them their few coppers.

"Cakes with gold rings in them! One ring in a cake, the cake cut into twenty slices, and each slice sold for one— fourth as much as the ring cost! A gamblers cake sugared all over to tempt the depraved appetite, and teach children to gamble for rings! And Mrs. L. H. S., Miss H. F. G., and John N., prostituting their pens and powers by contributing articles to the occasional paper, that helps on this deviltry! Strengthening the hands of the gamblers, with their pious strains!

"Magnificent loaves of fruit cake, with gold rings in them! Just as much like the barley loaves of Christ, as the religion of these blasphemers is like the religion of Christ! I will now close, for it would be impossible to do full justice to this subject.

It is horrible to witness the rapid stride, that the rising generation, especially in cities, are making in vice and immorality—everything evil; and when we reflect, that false churches, with their priests, are the fountains of these increasing evils—that they are initiating children in the school of vice, that too, in the winning name of Christ, language fails to express our horror. Is it not time that these infernal engines of evil, called churches, who are guilty of such acts as are sketched above, were despised and hated by all honest people?"

Now, gentle reader, you have seen that an American editor denounces the acts of these people in terms as strong as the Hindu editor. We ask you, in all candor, if these people will do such things in our presence, what may we expect when they are hid behind the globe, in a far distant land? Is it any wonder that an honest, moral and intelligent Hindu should despise such Christianity? Yea, has not Christ and his inspired Apostles denounced such Christianity, in stronger terms than either of the foregoing editors?