
A Brief Notice of the Life of the Rev. Edward Bickersteth

Eardley Culling Eardley

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THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH.



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A BRIEF NOTICE

OF THE LIFE OF

THE REV. EDWARD BICKERSTETH,

BY

SIR C. E. EARDLEY, BART.,

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A BRIEF NOTICE,

&c., &c.

OUR last number promised some tribute to the memory of our beloved and lamented friend, the late Rev. Edward Bickersteth. We do not profess to give anything which deserves the name of a biography. Our connexion with him was only of later years, and we wish to speak principally of that which came within our own knowledge. We should like, if we were able, to communicate some impression, however imperfect, to our readers, of what Edward Bickersteth was when God took him.

It is necessary, however, shortly to state a few facts of his history. He was born, in 1786, at Kirkby Lonsdale—an instrument prepared by God just before the convulsions of Europe, in order to be ready, at the peace of 1815, for a share in the great Christian movement which was to follow. During that interval God trained him

for his destined work. As a solicitor's clerk, and subsequently a solicitor, he learned business habits, which never deserted him. As a visitor of the poor, and secretary of a benevolent society in the dense and dark population of Spitalfields, he acquired missionary and pastoral experience. During the same period he also married the excellent wife who survives him. Mrs. Bickersteth's brother is well known as a Dissenter of ability and influence; and this connexion, together with the early friendship of John Joseph Gurney, was calculated to foster that "largeness of heart," which He who gave it to Solomon, also abundantly bestowed upon Edward Bickersteth. Mr. Bickersteth's brothers* have attained to eminence in their respective professions,—Mr. Robert Bickersteth, the eminent surgeon of Liverpool, and Lord Langdale, the Master of the Rolls. In all the brothers, the family staple of common sense and ardour of character has equally received, and repaid, a suitable cultivation. But, while in the case of the others there was nothing, as far as we are

* I ought not to have omitted to mention the Rev. John Bickersteth, Rector of Sapcote, Mr. Bickersteth's eldest brother, with whom he lived in the closest fraternal union.

aware, unusual in their training, the destined minister, and leader in the Christian phalanx, was, as we have shown, prepared for God's own work, in a very remarkable manner.

Mr. Bickersteth was ordained by the Bishop of Norwich. His first services, as a minister, were in the missionary department—first, as a deputation of the Church Missionary Society to Sierra Leone, to inspect and report on their West African Mission; and, subsequently, as joint secretary of the society with the Rev. Josiah Pratt. During his occupancy of the latter post he also held the assistant ministry of a small chapel in London.

About 1830 he was presented by Mr. Smith, of Watton Wood Hall, Hertfordshire, to the living of Watton, in that county; a name which has become known to every part of Christendom by letters and books dated from it. Nothing could be more kind to the individual, nothing more serviceable to the Gospel, than that appointment. A country parish, with a good income and moderate population, afforded the incumbent at once the means and the leisure for other labours far a-field. Here, for about