

**JOHN THOMAS: FIRST
BAPTIST MISSIONARY
TO BENGAL, 1757-1801**

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John Thomas: first Baptist missionary to Bengal, 1757-1801 by Arthur C. Chute

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ARTHUR C. CHUTE

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JOHN THOMAS.

JOHN THOMAS,

First Baptist Missionary to Bengal.

1757-1801.

BY

REV. ARTHUR C. CHUTE, B. D.,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA.

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

REV. A. J. GORDON, D. D.

"I hope you will always keep some stirring biography on the read. It is most profitable."—CATHERINE BOOTH.

HALIFAX, N. S. :
BAPTIST BOOK AND TRACT SOCIETY,
1893.

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JUN 4 1948

DEDICATED TO
MY DEAR WIFE,
ELLA MAUDE HUNT CHUTE,

with Luther's words:

*"God's highest gift on earth is to have a
pious, cheerful, God-fearing, home-keeping
wife."*

INTRODUCTION.

We take sincere pleasure in commending the following pages to all students and lovers of Christian Missions. The author of this little biography has put such under real obligation to himself, and he has done a praiseworthy work in lifting out of obscurity a true missionary hero and faithful servant of Jesus Christ.

How often is it the case that a superior man is dwarfed in the shadow of another's greatness, which he himself has helped to create. If William Carey was the pioneer of Modern Missions, John Thomas was the pioneer of Carey. He returned from India in that memorable year 1792, to report a work already founded, and to seek assistance for prosecuting it with greater vigor. Thus the Centennial which we have just been keeping marks not only the work of Carey, beginning, but the work of Thomas, begun. And so far as we can see, the great missionary translator and preacher might not have had his face turned towards India, had not the missionary doctor gone before him to prepare the way. It is the story of John the Baptist and

Jesus repeated, with the literal feature accompanying, that as the one increased, the other decreased; Thomas becoming as obscure as Carey became illustrious. Happily the former seems to have had the spirit of the great Forerunner in rejoicing in his eclipse, since he could say: "*Blessed be the Lord, I am safely wrapped up in reproach, while some are exposed to the dangers of fame and reputation.*"

How through poverty and misfortune and ultimate insanity, this good missionary won the above-named beatitude, is admirably told in this compact volume; and the author has done well in seeking that this benediction of obscurity and reproach, so long worn, shall at last be crowned with a worthy benediction of honor and appreciation. The substance and the style of Mr. Chute's missionary monograph, its literary finish and its historical fulness, merit for it a place in permanent missionary biography. Such honor the writer of this introduction cordially bespeaks for it.

A. J. GORDON.

Boston, November 10th, 1893.

PREFACE.

Why should a monograph on John Thomas be written? And why should it be read? A three-fold answer may be given. In the *first* place, Thomas was a brave pioneer in the modern Missionary Movement. He was the first to preach to the Bengalese in their own language, having preceded William Carey some years. By him the Society formed at Kettering (1792) was led to begin its operations in India. From him Carey received his first instructions in Bengali. It was he who first began to translate the Bible into the Bengali tongue; and through his preaching, Krishna Pal, the first heathen convert of the Serampore Mission, was won. In the *second* place, the defects and eccentricities of his life and character are more generally known than his many good qualities and the profit of his ministry. There was much in his career well suited to quicken faith and beget heroic endeavor on the part of those who toil upon trying fields. In the *third* place, his biography, as written by Rev. C. B. Lewis, is not only large and closely-packed, but is now out of print and hardly obtainable. For these reasons, therefore, there is need of a brochure on Thomas among our missionary booklets; and it is hoped the following pages may in some measure meet the demand.

By the courtesy of Mr. Edward Goodman, of the *Chicago Standard*, there appear cuts of Thomas, Carey and Fuller, and of that building of historic interest—the home of Mrs. Wallis at Kettering.

A. C. CHUTE.

Halifax, Nova Scotia,
October 12th, 1893.