

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE

THE SYNOD OF NEW JERSEY,

AT

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OCTOBER 21, 1857 :

BY WILLIAM RANKIN JR. Esq. •

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MR. RANKIN'S ADDRESS.

ADDRESS.

THE Board of Foreign Missions, during the past year, has met with a series of reverses.

The first, in the order of time, was the destruction of the mission property at Canton, in the bombardment of that city by the British forces in November last. This involved the loss of some \$5,000, the breaking up of the schools, and the closing of the hospitals and chapels. The brethren who have taken refuge in Macao, and Drs. Happer and Kerr now in this country, have as yet been unable to return and resume their labors, which they are all anxiously waiting to do.

The second reverse I note, is the suspension of the mission to the Chinese in California by the failure of health and return home of our only laborer there, Rev. William Speer. This mission was commenced in 1852, and proved in many ways, through the untiring and diversified labors of the missionary, a great blessing to those whom he served. It was unfortunate that its existence depended upon the health of a single individual, and that now 50,000 foreigners in a sister state, whose numbers are constantly increasing, are left to worship in their heathen temples in full view of a Christian chapel, that was built at great expense expressly for them, and is now vacant.

Third. In the Treasurer's report of May last, a balance of \$11,000 was transferred, as a debt, to the account of the present year. The General Assembly attempted to liquidate this debt by a special collection among its members and the churches. The attempt has failed, as \$6,500 of it yet remains to embarrass the operations of the current year. This extra burden could have better been sustained almost any other season than the present one.

These three discouraging facts in our recent experience, if standing alone, would be worthy of more special comment on this occasion. They seem to us, however, as little spots in our sky, indicating it may be a frowning providence, in view of that black

storm-cloud that has burst in terrific fury upon the largest and one of the oldest and most promising of our missionary fields.

It is just twenty years, this October, since the Board of Foreign Missions held its first meeting in the city of Baltimore, and became fairly organized. The executive officers were then appointed; New York was designated as the seat of its operations, and other measures necessary to its success were planned and adopted.

The transfer to the Board from the Presbyterian Missionary Society embraced, among others, four stations in Northern India, viz., Lodiana, Sabathu, Saharanpur and Allahabad. To these have since been added eleven others, an average increase of more than one every second year. These stations were formed at intermediate points on the Ganges and Jumna, and farther to the north in the Punjab, and beyond the Indus. The distance between the lowest and the northernmost station is about 900 miles, and the surrounding country teems with a population of more than thirty millions of souls.

Of the early laborers then in that field there remain on the ground, Rev. John Newton and Mrs. Newton, Rev. James R. Campbell and Mrs. Campbell. Including these and their associates, over ninety missionaries, male and female, have been sent out to India by our Board during these twenty years, of whom about one half were ordained ministers. Some of these, after contending for a longer or shorter period with failing health, have been obliged to return home and find employment in other, though less coveted, portions of our Lord's vineyard. Some have found their graves upon the hot plains of their adopted soil, or among its mountain ranges. Some will hear the last trump from the ocean's depths; and some have "gone under the altar where are the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

Last May the number of our foreign missionaries in India was forty-seven. To this force may be added two ordained native ministers, two native licentiates, and upwards of fifty other native assistants, some of whom are catechists under the care of Presbytery and teaching with Presbyterial license. To keep the machinery of our operations in motion, with the force from time to time engaged, has cost the Board in twenty years nearly \$900,000. The average annual expense of these missions is \$60,000, or nearly one half the average receipts from the churches.

Northern India, then, is the great missionary field of the Presbyterian Church. If a blow like that occasioned by the sepoy mutiny

falls upon us, it affects us more vitally than if it came on any other portion of the heathen world.

It is not possible at this time to measure the extent of pecuniary loss sustained by the Board in this mutiny. We know that six of our fifteen stations have been pillaged and burned ; viz., Lodiana, Agra, Mynpurie, Futtelgurh, Futtelpore, and Allahabad. At these there has been destroyed a large amount of property. Precise information as to the particulars of this loss has not yet in all cases been received ; but there is reason to believe that it embraces nine churches, thirteen dwelling houses, three high school buildings, two printing establishments, with four presses, type foundries, binderies, and depositories containing ten millions of pages of sacred truth and seven founts of type, with the matrices of the alphabets of several languages and dialects spoken in India ; also the families belonging to these stations, have lost nearly all their private property.

Would that the catalogue of distressing events ended here, without the additional record of bodily and mental sufferings. There have been alarms by day and by night—sudden flights to places of refuge—an abiding consciousness of danger from those professing the sincerest friendship. We cannot realise the mental torture that has been endured for many days together, and even for weeks ; and then those sights of rapine and murder I need not detail. They have been common to the whole European community, and the civilized world has read them with utter amazement.

Our native Christians have largely shared in these trials. Some, we fear, have suffered martyrdom ; others have endured cruel tortures, and many are now scattered like sheep without a shepherd, and for these the missionaries feel a painful solicitude. The experience of your fellow Presbyterian, Rev. Gopeenath Nundy, may illustrate some of these trials, and it will heighten the interest you take in this native brother to know that one of your own body now present officiated at his ordination by the laying on of hands. [*See Mr. Nundy's Journal in the November number of the Foreign Missionary, page 188.*]

Alas ! that our sympathies must yet be more deeply moved by the recital of events that have brought mourning to our own home circles. There are witnesses for Jesus, with whose faces we have been familiar, who went as our representatives to that land of darkness and have sealed their testimony with their blood.

Rev. John E. Freeman and wife, of the Presbytery of Elizabeth-

town, sailed for India nineteen years ago, and after ten years of missionary labor, Mrs. Freeman was called to her rest. Their two children, a son and daughter, are in this country receiving their education. The latter is a deaf mute, and this infirmity has given to the State of New Jersey the honor of becoming her foster-parent, so far as to sustain her in the deaf and dumb asylum in New York. She and her brother are also upon the funds of the Board—a blessed union, this, of church and state, in rearing an orphan girl, who is giving it the sanction of a sweet development of mind and heart. Mr. Freeman visited his native land in 1850, and returned to India in the fall of 1852, having married Miss Elizabeth Vredenburgh, of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Rev. David E. Campbell, of the Presbytery of Alleghany, and wife, sailed for India in the summer of 1850. Two children were with them at Futtelgurh, and a third child—a little boy—is now at Landour, a place of retreat in the hills. .

Rev. Albert O. Johnson and wife, also of the Presbytery of Alleghany, left this country in 1855, and Rev. Robert McMullin and wife, of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, during the last year.

These four brethren were stationed at Futtelgurh, on the river Ganges, about 200 miles north of Allahabad. At this station was a church organization of fifty-nine communicants, of whom eight were added last year; a new church building finished in the spring; an orphan asylum, the children of which were taught weaving and tent making; a Christian village which had grown out of this asylum, and schools of all grades numbering 475 scholars, from the small children of the village to theological students.

Happily and successfully these missionaries were doing their work when this storm of mutiny burst upon them. They had cause for alarm from the very first, for there were no European troops at the place, and all around were rumours of fearful massacres. But their faith and trust in the merits of an Almighty Saviour failed not. Their lives were in His hands, and they were glad to leave them there. The safety of their native brethren and of the Ark of God in the land, gave them as many anxious thoughts as their own. "What is to become of us and of the Lord's work in this land," writes Mr. McMullin, "we cannot tell, but He reigneth, and in Him will we rejoice." Again, "We cannot but be anxious both for ourselves, the native brethren here, and God's work in this land." "Although we may be called upon to part with life for Christ and his cause," writes

Mrs. Johnson, "may we not glorify God more by our deaths than by our lives? Each day we look upon as our last upon earth; but Oh! how delightful are our seasons of prayer, together imploring the care and protection of God, who alone can save us." "We have no place to flee to for shelter," writes Mrs. Freeman, "but under the covert of His wings, and there we are safe. Not but that he may suffer our bodies to be slain, and if he does, we know that he has wise reasons for it. I sometimes think our deaths would do more good than we would do in all our lives; if so, His will be done. Should I be called to lay down my life do not grieve, dear sister, that I came here, for most joyfully will I die for Him who laid down His life for me." What a precious legacy is this dying testimony to surviving friends, and to the Church of God. Oh! methinks if we could have been of that praying circle which nightly assembled, and where they had "sweet precious times," we would desire to be of no other circle when their emancipated spirits ascended, it may be, from mutilated bodies.

Of their actual death we have not heard. On the 2d of June they leave Futtchgurh, and, before reaching Cawnpore, are the prisoners of Nena Sahib, the Prince of Bithoor. We know the cruelty and perfidy practised by this monster a few days thereafter, when the garrison at Cawnpore surrendered; we know enough to interpret the meaning of that absence of all intelligence from the 2d of June to the latest dates from India. Alas! that we must surrender every reasonable hope of their safety. Freeman, and Campbell, and Johnson, and McMullin, and their beloved companions, and the two little ones of Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, have found a martyr's death!

Nena Sahib—and I need use no epithet to paint his character, that Maharatta name will hereafter be a word of significance which no English can express—Nena Sahib is an educated East India gentleman, a man of pleasing address and polished manners, the true type of Anglo-Indian civilization. He was trained in the schools and college established by the government, and had every advantage of cultivating such a mind and heart as it is their province to form. Here the Koran and Shasters are text-books, taught by professors of oriental literature. From these institutions every book that gives any favorable notice of Christianity is carefully excluded. The Bible is not permitted upon their library shelves, even as a curious compilation of wise or unwise sayings, of true or untrue history. By possibility, its wonder-working, softening influence might

touch the tender Hindu or Mohammedan mind, and thus defeat the British policy of non-interference in matters of religion. Behold the product of that policy in Nena Sahib, the deceiver and murderer of scores of England's confiding sons and daughters, the murderer of our beloved missionaries, their wives and little ones.

But let us not indulge in unkind, accusing words in this sad hour. England will see her fault in this, as also in that other folly, the yielding to the absurd demands of caste. Oh ! what a burden will the suppression of this superstition roll from the minds of those who are devising plans for the amelioration of the East. What shall we do with Hindu converts? has been the anxious inquiry, to which no answer has been returned. You may at first employ them about the mission premises as servants, teachers, coolporters, printers, &c. You may, as was the case at Futtehgurli, form a Christian village where families may dwell apart, and give them employment in a tent making and weaving establishment; but the burden grows upon you, and the missionary is encumbered with secular duties requiring business tact and habits, only consistent with his sacred calling from the absolute necessities of the case.

But let this oppressive incubus of caste be crushed out, and our Christian converts can go among their heathen neighbors, associate and labor with them, and thus secure their own independent support and a reforming influence over the people.

While we thus hope that good may grow out of these troubles from the evil power, may we not also hope that our Church will find in this afflictive Providence to her, an admonition and a warning that she will heed? Oh ! have we done our duty to India? Hear a single fact. In the month of February last, the Lodianna Mission issued a circular to the churches at home, making an affecting appeal for seven new missionaries, to come as fast as the swiftest ships could bring them, and fill the places that were vacant within their bounds, or might soon become vacant by the dispensations of Providence. They made the case so plain, that no man worthy of this high commission could gainsay or resist it, and yet there was no response. In all the previous history of the Board there has not been such a dearth of missionary candidates for India, as during the past year. I may add that this call was not an extraordinary one. The addition of seven new men is but continuing the average increase of our force there, which has been about two each year. Since my connection with this Board, now just seven years, our own church has sent

out but one a year. Exclusive of the Reformed Presbyterian brethren, only seven have gone since the fall of 1850. It is impossible long to retain the fifteen stations of the Board, to say nothing of multiplying them, with such meagre recruits. Surely we have cause to humble ourselves, and "pray the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

But you may ask, Are you prepared to furnish the means for these desired recruits? I answer, no—but add, that within my knowledge, no party that was ready to go abroad, has been hindered a single day for want of means. And I believe, that what has been, will be. God seems to sustain this work as He sustains the Christian in his daily walk. There is special grace for special exigencies. Should seven men for Lodianna, and four for Futtelgurh rise up before the face of the Church, and ask to be sent thither, in the light of past experience I should say, the Church will send them.

But before we provide for new missionaries, we have an important duty to perform to those who are already on the ground. Several families who were obliged to fly from their homes, and who escaped with their lives, saved nothing but the clothes they had on. In addition to their regular salaries, these should be furnished with new outfits. The Committee could not do less than send at once to each destitute family the outfit allowance of a man and wife on first going abroad. Then, as soon as practicable, they should have the means of providing themselves with suitable houses. Gradually the new church, school, press, and other appurtenances of a Mission will be required. But many things must be done at once, which will press heavily upon the funds of the Board, and require larger receipts than those of former years.

It was a wise measure to make New York the seat of the operations of our Board. With transactions in different parts of the world, it is highly important that we should be at that commercial centre. There, too, we have found men, without whose noble gifts and encouraging counsels the cause would have languished where it has made great advance. How many scores of Christian merchants might *have* done, might *now* do, as well as these? If a tithe of the amount of losses, sustained during the last six weeks by Christian men of business, had been devoted during the year to objects of benevolence, what overflowing treasuries we should have, and what infinite gains would accrue to them and those whom they sought to benefit! We hope that the contributions in our great

metropolis will not fall off, even though property values there have greatly depreciated. But then the wealth of our Church is not in one or in several of our great cities, any more than is its power or its piety.

By wealth* of the Church I mean a combination of worldly prosperity, and a disposition to use it for the glory of God. The miser who starves himself over his filled coffers is a poor man. The church that has the key of selfishness turned upon the untold treasures of her members is a poor church. There is no denomination of Christians, no class of men in this country that enjoys, in proportion to numbers, so great a share of this world's goods as the members and adherents of the Presbyterian Church. Their acknowledged industry, high principle and honesty, secure to them this superiority. The wealth of our church, then, lies in the great body of the people, for here piety and prosperity are combined to a greater extent than in any particular portion of our Zion. And hence we must look to the Church at large, for the means of supplying our special needs and carrying on our general operations.

We think we have pursued a right course in publishing a record of the yearly contributions of each Synod and Presbytery and Church within our bounds. These figures tell their own story. It is a lamentable one—but so it is, that not fifty cents a year were contributed, on the average, by the members of the Presbyterian Church to its own Board of Foreign Missions during the last year. Some gave liberally, but many thousands gave not one cent.

If the minister of the poorest parish within the bounds of this Synod, should inquire of any member of his church, (not an absolute pauper,) Can you, in view of the great distresses that have come upon our brothers and sisters in India, and of the other pressing wants of the Board of Foreign Missions, so economise in your expenses, as to lay by in store for these, two cents a week? the reply would doubtless be "Most certainly; but then, how could such a small sum further so great an object?" It may be true that two cents would not be sensibly felt in the Treasury, but the two cents *a week*, would be a never-failing source of supply, and if contributed generally, would meet all demands upon it.

The seventh day is the periodic season for laying by, as the Lord has prospered us, just as surely as the seventh day is the periodic season for resting from all our works.

A gentleman from the West presented to Kossuth, in his recep-

tion room in New York, (where the ostentations were vying with each other in the amount of their munificent gifts,) a gold dollar, as a representative of the people's contribution to the great fund he was raising for Hungary. Kossuth caught at the suggestion at once, and gratefully accepted the gold dollar as the beginning of the million similar sums that he hoped to receive.

Let there be an average contribution of two cents a week—a dollar a year—from each of the 250,000 communicants in the Presbyterian Church for its Foreign Board, and we can meet all the ordinary and extraordinary expenses of the year, and send out all the missionaries that the brethren in India have asked for.

Pardon me if, in this connection, I make another suggestion. On the first Monday in January last, in one of our churches the monthly concert meeting was omitted, to afford the members an opportunity to attend a union meeting elsewhere. Not wishing, however, to omit the collection, the pastor arranged to have it taken in the church on the Sabbath—and the result was a sum much larger than usual. This suggested to him the expediency of affording the whole congregation the opportunity of contributing to this object, instead of confining it, as formerly, to the limited circle at the prayer meeting. In this way, the average of one dollar a year promises to be realised, and when we add to this the annual and Sabbath-school collections, most gratifying results will be seen; and it will be further found, that no other cause steadily coming before that people suffers in the least degree from this monthly Sabbath morning's collection for Foreign Missions.

But I should not trespass further. It has been my purpose simply to state a few facts in connection with the operations and reverses of our Board during the past year. It is more appropriate that others improve these solemn providences for the increase of our faith, and for our incitement to duty. Most truly is the work of missions a work of *faith*. On every side of us there is nought but gloom and despondency. As our dear brother McMullin remarks, in one of his dying epistles: "This dark cloud may pass over us without harm, but it seems *very dark* just now." A few days thereafter the clear light appeared to him. He soared above the storm, and read the meaning of these afflictive dispensations. But clouds and darkness are round about us. It is *very dark just now*. What hope is there of carrying on this great warfare with Satan in India, when no recruits come to fill up our failing ranks? The English army before

the walls of Delhi may as well hope to maintain their position without reinforcements, as for our missionaries in India to retain their stations, unless speedily strengthened by the arrival of reinforcements to them. Is there no sentiment in the hearts of our young brethren at home, to which we can appeal in this day of trial and emergency? Are you indifferent to the *relative* wants of our beloved Zion, now shorn in that distant field of so much of her beauty and her strength? Have you traced out the respective geographical limits, and numbered the populations included therein,—have you compared the statistical tables of the Synod of North India and the Synod of New Jersey? To which portion of the Master's vineyard would you apply the language of the prophet, "Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe; come get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision; for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision."

It is *very dark just now* in regard to the means necessary to carry on this missionary work.

If the Son of Man were now to appear, would he find faith on the earth? Not surely in the marts of commerce. The panic which is deranging every thing there, is simply a want of confidence in man and not in the material wealth of the country; for the granaries of thirty millions of people were never fuller or richer than they are now. But man has no faith in man, and because of this, the whole mercantile community, as far as the electric wires extend, simultaneously as it were, plunges into insolvency and bankruptcy.

Is the Church to go down in this wreck? Are her enterprises of benevolence to be stopped, because God in his wise Providence has taken off the chariot wheels of those who were rushing madly after wealth? Then has God in these judgments spoken to his people and they heed it not. The cry of retrenchment is raised, and I fear the process will begin where it ought to end. Oh! it is *very dark just here*.

Your Boards of Missions cannot suspend. The protest of your Foreign Board would so destroy its credit in the cities of the old world, as to require years to regain it, and would moreover enhance greatly the cost of sustaining the missions. The bills of its treasurer, with no other endorser than a poor missionary, are in India and perhaps in China equal to any banker's signature in London or New York, and if confidence in the Board were once shaken,

the result would be most disastrous. No, we *cannot* suspend, and because we cannot, the darkness just now *may be felt*.

But why should we despond? How can panics affect a Church unless its confidence is in man? We believe in God, and therefore should not fear. We will not intermit the prayer uttered before this day of revulsion. "Hold *thou* me up, and I shall be sustained." Our blessed Master, to whom belongeth the silver and the gold, and the cattle upon a thousand hills, may not open the heart of the rich merchant of the city, or the no less wealthy farmer of the country, but he will appear to others and bless them with the precious grace of giving. There are those who pray for the enlargement of the borders of Zion. There are those who pray in *faith*: "Thy kingdom come," and in this prayer there is not only the uttered voice and the uplifted eyes, but also the extended hand. Oh! I have known instances of self-denial that would have made an old publican at the receipt of custom, weep. We will go with the urgent claims of our Master to such, will enter their lonely dwellings and receive their willing offerings. If necessity is laid upon us, sooner than stay our hands in this blessed work, we will ask to share with the poor widow and her famished son, the little oil in her cruise and her handful of meal.

Thus will we trust God and God's people and go forward. There is work for us in India. We have launched our church there, complete in all her equipments; but she is now like a ship tempest-tost in the very trough of the sea. Shall we throw out disheartening signals to the brave men upon her decks? Shall we not rather send encouraging words across the waters?

"Let the church pray for us," is their united, repeated, and urgent request. If prayer is offered *now*, it may cheer them *now*. We need no cable to span these oceans to convey speedy intelligence of what we are doing. The mysterious influence will flash along the vault of heaven, and while we are yet speaking they may hear the angel's whisper, "The end of these desolations has come, and the commandment has gone forth to restore and build."

By the blessing of God on England's arms, our ship will outride this storm. She is staunch and strong—her keel is of the living oak. But we must renew her tattered sails, refit her broken spars, repair her bulwarks, and above all, supply the places of those lost companions—lost only because the most exposed.

Yes, we will hold on to India. We have now a special mission

there, such as we never had before. England will avenge the blood of her murdered children, and our Church too should take its satisfaction for the blood of hers. Let it be that requital which its divine Head enjoined towards His own murderers, to preach to them the gospel of forgiveness.

India is now the *Jerusalem* of our Church. There her enemies have become her persecutors, and for a season have triumphed. We can now, as we never could before, give a practical interpretation of the great commission "to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" We will go there and repair the old wastes. We will sit down by the well of Cawnpore, filled with the bodies of the slain, and talk with that misguided people as Jesus talked with the woman at Sychar. We will rear upon the site of the Bithoor massacre a *church of the Sepulchre*. Yes, the mangled remains of our dear brothers and sisters shall have a monument—no cold dead marble—but a living temple, whither the tribes go up—where the dark-minded Hindu and fierce Mohammedan, the Brahman and Sudra, with characters all changed, shall sit together and commune together over the emblems of a Saviour's dying love.

India will hereafter be the favorite field of missionary labor. The seed of martyrdom has been sown, and an abundant harvest is in store for whoever may enter upon the work. Within the last four years, at least two other sister bodies, and of these one of the largest denominations in America, have gone where before our church had almost the monopoly of missionary labor. We thank God for it, and will again rejoice at that success which we feel assured will hereafter be theirs.

India will need no other revolution than that through which she is now passing, as the harbinger of her spiritual regeneration. To human view this one seemed necessary; for how could Christianity be engrafted upon Mohammedan bigotry and Hindu caste, both countenanced by a Christian government?

Yes the field is white and ready to the harvest. Before our reapers can reach it, the land will be at peace and we may begin to shout the harvest home.

Oh! my brethren, though this day be *dark, very dark*, be not cast down. Lift up your heads—yea, lift them up, until your eyes get above the storm cloud, and you see in the clear sun light, the future realized; not indeed with the glorified vision of those beloved ones who can look down from empyrean thrones, but as the eye of

faith in mortal man may see it. Behold! India's mingled races,
 swelling from her coral strands, her Himalaya tops and verdant
 plains, that song that shall then employ all nations :

"'Tis done, see heavenly glory shines,
 It falls on men in all earth's climes,
 Millennial day has come ;
 And Afric's sons from Calabar,
 And nations near and distant far,
 Seek one eternal home.

The saints on earth with saints above exulting sing,
 Earth's woes and miseries are past ;
 The promised joy is given at last,
 'Tis now the blissful reign of our great Saviour-King."