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# SEARCHINGS OF HEART

IN CONNECTION WITH

# MISSIONS IN BENGAL.

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**An Address**

DELIVERED AT THE UNITED MONTHLY MISSIONARY PRAYER-MEETING HELD ON THE 6TH OF DECEMBER, 1858, IN THE UNION CHAPEL, CALCUTTA.

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BY

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MISSIONARY

*Of the Free Church of Scotland, Calna.*

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SERAMPORE:

PRINTED AT THE "TOMOHUR" PRESS.

1858.

## AN ADDRESS.

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“THERE WERE GREAT SEARCHINGS OF HEART.”—

*Judges v. 16.*

ON the first day of the last month, I came up to your city to deliver, in my turn, the usual monthly address. I found no audience, as you were all otherwise occupied. On the afternoon of that day, all Calcutta was at Government House to hear Her Majesty's Proclamation, read in the presence of her loyal subjects. I too was there. And though a Bengali by birth, my heart thrilled with joy at the gracious words of my Sovereign, and I gladly joined in the enthusiastic cheering of the hundreds of Anglo-Saxons who then surrounded me. The night that followed seemed a bridal night. Gay festoons of light adorned the edifices of your “city of palaces;” and in your streets was heard the voice of mirth. Thus was inaugurated a new era in the history of India. My prayer is, that that era may be as bright as the evening in which it was ushered in—an era of social and moral progress.

It has struck me, that at the inauguration of a new era when, it is to be presumed, the various departments of the Indian Government will be overhauled and subjected to a sifting process,—it has struck me, that at the commencement of an era of hopeful progress, it is desirable for those, who are either directly or indirectly connected with Missions, to review their conduct with respect to the spread of the Gospel in this country. The old and great Company, which never made public profession of Christianity, and which, for a long time, deliberately set its face against Missions, and at last barely tolerated them, is now num-

bered with the things that were. The Victorian era has commenced. And in the very first message which Her Majesty sends us, she proclaims, in the face of all India, that "she firmly relies on the truth of Christianity, and acknowledges with gratitude the solace of religion." I may truly say, "old things are passed away." And I doubt not but that "all things will become new" when, by the restoration of internal tranquillity, our Sovereign will be in a position to carry out all the wishes of her royal heart. At such a time it may not be deemed unseasonable to examine the inner life of our Missions. I do not mean, that we should discuss the comparative merits of the various modes in which Missionary operations are carried on in this country. I do not mean, for instance, that we should enquire, whether Missionaries, engaged in the noble work of imparting a thoroughly Christian education to native youth, ought to be called, as some have gravely doubted, Missionaries in the proper sense of the term. But what I mean is, that at the inauguration of a new and hopeful era, it is desirable for every Missionary, for every native Christian, for every Christian layman, to examine his own heart, in connection with the propagation of Christianity in this land.

Most of us, I fear, are loathe to examine ourselves in this matter. Most of us, taking it for granted that we ourselves are discharging our duty, throw the entire blame on the shoulders of our neighbours. Ask a Missionary, why the Gospel is making little progress in the country, and, ten to one, he will tell you, that the Hindus are perhaps the most wicked people on earth; that the native converts, from whom much is to be expected, are, for the most part, heartless and worldly-minded; and that European Christians, in their every-day life, present to their native fellow-subjects, a very unfavourable aspect of Christianity;—all the while, the Missionary is taking it for granted, that he himself is not at all to blame in the matter. On the other hand, put the same question to a European layman, or to a native Christian, and each of them will tell you, that the real secret of the matter is, that Missionaries are not so

laborious and self-denying as they ought to be; that they are a little too fond of creature-comforts; that they itinerate only during three months of the cold season, in painted boats, with their wives and children by their side, and do not, like Chaitanya, dressed in the habiliments of Faqirs, go about preaching through the length and breadth of the land;—all the while the European layman and the native Christian are taking it for granted, that they themselves are discharging their duty. Now, it is time that such mutual recriminations should cease. It is time for every Missionary, for every native Christian, for every European layman, individually to ask himself the question, “Am I, or am I not, discharging my duty with respect to the regeneration of India?”

I have ventured to take upon myself the task of suggesting a few points of self-examination to the different classes of men, directly or indirectly connected with Missions in Bengal. The task may appear a very delicate one; in the estimation of some, it may savour of presumption; but justice to the noble cause, which all of us have so much at heart, demands it; and I shall endeavour to fulfil it with all humility.

1. Missionary fathers and brethren, I beg to be pardoned for taking upon myself the liberty of exhorting you to examine yourselves, with respect to the glorious work to which you have consecrated your lives. Some of you have grown grey in the service of the Lord, and commenced your Missionary career before I was born. Others of you, by your singular devotedness and self-sacrificing zeal, have distinguished yourselves in the high places of the Missionary field; and your praise is in all the churches. To such veterans in the great spiritual warfare, it may be deemed presumptuous and impertinent in one so young and inexperienced as I am—in one not worthy to be called a Missionary—in one who should sit at your feet rather than exhort—it may be deemed presumptuous in me to exhort you to search your hearts in connection with your mighty work. But I hope and trust you will pardon me, when you consider the peculiarities of my position. As a native of this country, I am

intimately acquainted with the feelings, sentiments, and habits of thought, of my countrymen. I have heard what my heathen countrymen say of you. As a native Christian, I am familiar with the feelings and sentiments of my native Christian brethren. I have heard what they say and think of you. I have pondered on what I have heard. And as a Missionary, however unworthy, I have thought it proper to lay these things before you, and to beseech you, in no spirit of censoriousness, to search your hearts in connection with them: and what I say to you, I say also to myself.

Every Missionary in Bengal bears relation to two important bodies of men; *first*, to the people of Bengal generally, or Hindus I shall call them—the Mahomedans being in the minority; and *secondly*, to converts or native Christians. In suggesting points of self-examination to the Missionary, I shall view him in relation to those two classes of men.

In the first place, as Missionaries to the Hindus, we should, I think, search our hearts and examine whether we really *love* the people for whose spiritual benefit we labour. This exhortation may seem superfluous. It may be said, that a man, who has made a voyage of ten thousand miles in order to preach the Gospel to a people, must really love that people. That is true only to a certain extent. The fact of the voyage of ten thousand miles long may show this, that, when the man undertook the voyage, his heart may have been filled with love to the people to whom he was going. But it is just possible, that that love may end, or at any rate wax cold, on his first contact with the people, or after some years' residence amongst them. Now, it is a simple fact in the economy of man's moral constitution, that love is the spring of well-doing. Where there is no love, there evidently can be no well-doing in the proper sense of the term. If I wish to do good to a man, it is only because I love him. I may not love him with, what Dr. Chalmers calls, the love of approbation or of complacency; but I may love him with the love of pity or of compassion. Or in other words, I may not love his character which may have gross moral defects, but I

may pity or compassionate the man; and sure I am, that unless I entertain towards him either the love of complacency or the love of pity, I cannot be said to be actuated with the motive of doing good to him. But pity is of two sorts; there is, what I may call, the pity of concern, and there is the pity of contempt. It is plain, that if I pity a man with the pity of contempt, I cannot be actuated by good-will towards him. A man whom I condemn or despise, I cannot love; and if I do not love him, I cannot wish to do him good. Here are the Hindus. We are Missionaries, sent to preach to them the glad tidings of salvation. Do we love them? Do we love their souls? We cannot, perhaps, love them with the love of approbation or of complacency, because we cannot look approvingly or complacently upon their moral and religious character. But do we love them with the love of compassion? Do we commiserate their lost and ruined condition? Do we lament their spiritual destitution? Do we weep over their sins, and in our heart say with Jeremiah of old,—“O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night” for the sad state of this people? Or do we condemn and despise them, and thus disable ourselves for doing good to them? These are questions which we should ask—faithfully ask ourselves, and not take it for granted, that because we are Missionaries, that therefore necessarily we love the Hindus. Without this love our labours cannot be crowned with success. The best and greatest Missionaries loved the people to whom they were sent. Brainerd loved the Indians; Judson loved the Burmese and Karens; Swartz, Martyn, and John Anderson of Madras loved the Hindus; Van der Kemp loved the Africans; and the prince of Missionaries—the apostle Paul, loved and suffered for the Gentiles. To a Missionary who says he cannot love the Hindus, I can have no hesitation in saying, “Brother, secure your passage in the first steamer that comes to port, and go home; or go to a people whom you can afford to love.” Missionary fathers and brethren, let us search our hearts and see whether we really love the Hindus.

But more than this. As Missionaries we should *respect* the people for whose benefit we labour. The word *respect* may create a smile in some; and yet I use the word advisedly. If you respect a man, he will respect you. If you show a man no manner of respect, you cannot expect him to respect either you or your opinions. He may be frightened, he may be awed in your presence; but that is not respect. And if, as a Missionary, you fail to command the respect of the people amongst whom you labour, you cannot be useful to them. Christianity apart, on the common ground of humanity, there is much in the Hindus to call forth respect. They are entitled to respect as belonging to a nation, pre eminent in civilization at a time when the rest of the world was sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism, and as inheriting a literature as rich as ever any people inherited. Nor are good points wanting in their character. "They are," says the good and amiable Bishop Heber, "They are sober, industrious, dutiful to their parents and affectionate to their children, of tempers almost uniformly gentle and patient, and more easily affected by kindness and attention to their wants and feelings than almost any men whom I have met with." European Missionaries, I mean English Missionaries, (under which designation I include the Scotch and Irish as well as the English properly so called) ought, I humbly think, on account of a peculiarity in their position in this country—a peculiarity arising from the circumstance of their belonging to a conquering race,—English Missionaries, I say not German Missionaries, ought constantly to bear in mind the maxim of the wisest of men—"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth." No man deploras more than I do the lax religious views of Her Majesty's Secretary of State, into whose hands the administration of the affairs of this country has been entrusted; and yet it must be acknowledged on all hands that Lord Stanley is a man of rare talents and of equally rare sagacity. That nobleman, in a speech recently delivered, said as follows:—

"We do, I believe, regard—and undoubtedly we ought to regard—the natives of India as persons towards whom it is our duty to feel good

will, and for whose welfare it is our duty to labour; but that is not enough. It is not enough to regard them, as objects upon whom our benevolence may be exercised, or as persons upon whom it is in our power to operate important changes for good. We must look upon them also as men with whom, and not against whom, we have to work—as men with feelings of their own—as men who, although politically subject to us, have a sense of their own rights and a respect for their own independence—and as men who will be apt to be all the more tenacious of their intellectual independence and national customs, because of the political subjection in which they are held. There can be no doubt, that the position of a conquering and governing race confers many advantages as regards the influence which may be exercised over a conquered people; but that position carries with it this disadvantage—that a conquering race almost inevitably displays a certain sense of superiority,—a certain arrogance, if that be not too harsh a word—a certain disregard of the feelings of others, which, not being placed under such circumstances, it is hardly possible for us to understand.”

So strong is my conviction of the truth of the statement made by Lord Stanley in the sentence quoted last, that I have sometimes thought it a circumstance prejudicial to the interests of Christianity in this country, that our Missionaries—at least, most of them—should belong to the very nation that has conquered us. English Missionaries, who are but men—possessing like passions with other men, should, therefore, as members of a conquering race, guard themselves against that sense of superiority—that arrogance, if that be not too harsh a word to use, which a conquering race almost inevitably displays.

A natural consequence of the love and of the respect, on which I have been insisting, would be an avoidance of all contemptuous expressions when speaking or writing of the people for whose spiritual renovation we labour. The object of every true-hearted Missionary ought, manifestly, to be to gain the affection and to win the confidence of the people to whom he has been sent. He should endeavour, as much as possible, not to give them unnecessary offence. He should, certainly, reprove their vices, point out their sins, and affectionately draw them to the Saviour; but at the same time he should carefully avoid

all expressions calculated only to irritate their feelings and alienate their heart. Whatever newspaper-scribblers, penny-a-liners, and "able editors" may say when writing of the Hindus—and they often distil their gall in plentiful measure—a Missionary should, above all persons, religiously avoid all contemptuous expressions. If he indulges in such expressions, he loses the respect of the people; he can never win their confidence, and his Missionary usefulness is imperilled. Missionary fathers and brethren, let us examine ourselves and see whether we are entirely faultless in this matter.

As Missionaries we should endeavour to be easily accessible to, and familiar with, the Hindus. The greatest and most successful Missionaries of olden as well as modern times were so. Their houses were open to any one who chose to enter into them, and they themselves were often seen entering the cottages of the people. They dwelt amongst the people, daily sat in the midst of them, chatted familiarly with them, and sometimes slept in their wigwams. Their maxim was the old Pauline maxim, to be all things to all men.

It has been said, that the peculiar customs of the Hindus, especially the system of caste, preclude such an intercourse. That they preclude a certain sort of intercourse, I admit. Those religio-social customs would, undoubtedly, prevent a Hindu from eating with a Missionary; but they would not at all interfere with the holding of a familiar intercourse in other respects. I am persuaded, that a Missionary might gain admission, if he would but try it, into four-fifths of the houses of every village in Bengal.

It has been said further, that the difference of civilization between the Missionary and the Hindu proves an insurmountable barrier to the maintaining of a familiar intercourse between the two. And is then civilization—a mere thing of the earth earthy, after all—to be a stumbling-block in the way of the conversion of souls to God? If it be so, let us part with civilization—that hurtful encumbrance—let us sink into the lowest depths of barbarism, if by doing so we can win souls to Christ.

I suppose the apostle Paul was a civilized man—full of the civilization of imperial Rome, and of the fine culture of glorious Greece. And yet that man, so refined, so civilized, carried the standard of the Cross through the wildest, darkest, and most savage parts of the then known world. And others, in ancient as well as modern times, have imitated his example and trodden in his footsteps. Missionary fathers and brethren, let us try and see whether we may not be more accessible to, and more familiar with the Hindus, than we are at present.

I shall now look at the Missionary in his relation to converts and native Christians.

It is a fact, I believe—never perhaps stated in public, but nevertheless admitted and deplored by those who are interested in Missions—it is a fact,—and therefore there is no use in concealing it—that the relation subsisting between Missionaries and native Christians is not of a very satisfactory character. Generally speaking—there are exceptions, of course, as in every thing else,—but generally speaking, there is not that concord—that harmony—that cordiality between Missionaries and native Christians, which is to be expected from the very interesting relationship obtaining between them. This is a matter of the deepest regret. I have often thought, that this may be, for ought I know to the contrary, one of the reasons why Missions in this country have not been so successful as they might otherwise have been. Had there existed perfect cordiality between Missionaries and converts, the windows of heaven might have opened, and rich showers of blessings might have been poured from on high on all our Missions. However much it is to be deplored, the fact remains. But what may have occasioned this mournful circumstance? What is its cause? Put that question to a Missionary, and he will very likely tell you, that the entire blame rests on the shoulders of the converts. The converts—at least many of them—are sincere, but very imperfect Christians; they are newly escaped from the horrors of heathenism, and are not entirely freed from its pernicious effects,—the old man, though shorn of its ancient despotic authority, is still

very powerful in them. Now, all this may be true; but what I should like to know is, whether we, as Missionaries, are entirely faultless in the matter. Is the fault wholly on the side of the convert? Is there not an iota of fault on the side of the Missionary? As a Missionary I should like to examine myself—I should like to search my heart in reference to this matter. And Missionary fathers and brethren, I should like you also—pardon me for the liberty—to examine yourselves on this subject.

To assist self-examination on this point, I would suggest questions like the following:—Do I sincerely love the converts, and am I really desirous of doing them good? As converts from heathenism of the blackest dye, they have their peculiar weaknesses,—do I make sufficient allowance for those weaknesses?—do I mourn over those weaknesses?—do I pray for divine grace, and adopt suitable measures for removing those weaknesses? When I hear of the faults of a convert, am I sure that I do not often draw from that single case the general inference, that those faults must be shared in by other converts? Do I look upon my converts, or converts in general of the Mission to which I belong, as my sons in the faith—as brethren in Christ, and not as subordinates and servants? Am I sure that I am not aristocratic in my demeanour towards them—bearing myself loftily in their presence as a man of higher spiritual attainments, and of a superior civilization—issuing mandates to them with an air of authority—and not condescending to sit beside them, and “hold familiar converse delighted?” Am I sure that I am not a little too susceptible of flattery, looking upon a time-serving, sneaking, cowardly hypocrite of a convert as a perfect saint, only because he chimes in with my opinions and humour my prejudices,—while denying the Christian name to one who dares have an opinion of his own, submits not to the mere *ipse dixit* of authority, and boldly acts according to the dictates of his conscience and what he believes to be the injunctions of the word of God? Do I exercise Christian charity towards the converts, not thinking evil of them—not hastily taking up an evil report against them, but putting at all times the most fa-

vourable construction on their words and actions? It would do our souls good were we to ask ourselves these and such like questions.

Missionary fathers and brethren, I have thus ventured to put before you a few practical points of self-examination. I might have touched on a variety of other topics, but your time would not permit it. Some may think, that I have left the weightier matters of the law, and expatiated on mint, anise and cummin. The subjects which I have brought before you cannot be regarded in that light;—they are of vital importance, and are materially connected with the welfare of our Missions. As to the weightier matters of the law—the higher matters of personal piety and of personal faithfulness to God in the discharge of duty,—I have deemed it more becoming my position to leave those to your own solitary and earnest meditations.

2. And now, my native Christian brethren and fellow-converts, allow me to suggest to you a few topics for earnest self-examination. I should like you—and myself too, as one of your number, seriously to ask ourselves the question, “Are we discharging our duty to our heathen countrymen?” As amongst the first-fruits of Christianity in this land, we are under heavy obligations to our country. Do we endeavour to realize an adequate sense of those obligations? Or do we allow ourselves to be influenced by considerations of a secular and temporal character, and thus disable ourselves for discharging our duty to our father-land?

You, as a body, have been sometimes charged with being eaten up, as it were, with the spirit of worldliness and avarice. From my intimate acquaintance with a large number of you, I can unhesitatingly say, that that charge by whomsoever made—whether by friends or by foes—whether by people really interested in your welfare, though they may misunderstand your motives, or by anonymous scribblers writing on Missions with the inner life of which they are about as well acquainted as the man in the moon,—from my intimate acquaintance with you, I can without hesitation say, that that charge is groundless. But still, is there not room, brethren, for faithful self-examination with

reference to this matter? May we not be more devoted to the holy cause of the regeneration of our father-land than we have hitherto been? May we not be more disinterested than we have hitherto been?

Many of you—at least the educated and intelligent amongst you—and to such only I am speaking at present—are taking advantage of the numerous openings in life, and betaking yourselves to secular situations. I confess I do not take so gloomy a view of this circumstance as some are apt to take. In order to the creation of an indigenous Christianity in this country, native Christians must be scattered, in various situations in life, through the length and breadth of the land. If Christianity is to be planted deeply into the soil—if Christianity is to be self-sustaining, native Christians must hold respectable situations and twine round every fibre of native society. Hence I should like to see my native Christian brethren occupy every station in life—I should like to see them becoming physicians, lawyers, engineers, merchants, magistrates, and judges—I should like to see all this, till I could take up the boastful but just language of Tertullian and say—“it is true we are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your towns, cities, islands, castles, boroughs, counsels, camps, courts, palaces, senate, forum:—we leave you only your temples.”

Still, the greatest of all works—the work of Indian regeneration, must be carried on. For the carrying on of this mighty work we require the stoutest of native heads and the warmest of native hearts—the flower of native intellect and the cream of native piety. And hence I should like you—the very best of you—not to take any secular employment, but to consecrate your lives directly to the glorious work of the spiritual renovation of our beloved mother-country. I know many of you would rather devote yourselves to this noble work than take to secular employment. Those only, who are unacquainted with the inner life of our Missions, attribute your present choice to worldliness. Difficulties beset your path. But difficulties, fellow-converts, should not deter you from discharging, what you

must ever regard, your highest duty—the duty, namely, of rescuing our common father-land from the thralldom of sin and ignorance. And in connection with this matter, I beg of you to ask yourselves, seriously, solemnly and earnestly, the following question:—May we not, in consideration of our highest duty to God and our country, put up with inconveniences with a more self-sacrificing spirit, suffer the reproach of enemies with greater patience, and endure the misunderstandings of friends with more Christian resignation, than we have hitherto done?

3. And finally, respected European Christian laymen, will you kindly permit me to say to you a word or two? I have a great many topics to speak to you about, but my time is gone. Rather than not speak to you at all, I shall just say one word.

Many of you, dear brethren, though brought by no spiritual considerations into this country, have always taken a lively interest in its Missions; and some of you have been their staunchest advocates and most liberal supporters. But, brethren, do not take offence if I put you the question—“Can you not do more?” I do not say this with regard to your pecuniary contributions. I am not one of those who think, that the Christianity of a man is in a direct ratio—sometimes, we know, it is in an inverse ratio—with the magnitude of his monthly subscription or of his yearly donation. I should like you to give more if you can; but I do not ask the question with that view. Can you not do more in other higher and better respects? Can you not love the people of this land more than you have hitherto done? Can you not cherish towards them a more kindly feeling than you have hitherto done? Can you not look upon every native as your brother? I fear, some merely worldly Europeans beat hollow many of our pious and Mission-subscribing laymen. They hold intercourse with the Hindus. I do not mean that you should, like them, humour the people in their follies, and partake of their worldly amusements. But what I mean is, that a better acquaintance with the people, and the cherishing of a more brotherly feeling towards them, are highly desirable. I

am afraid, the late insurrection, the last billows of which are still breaking on the mountains of Central India and the plains of Oude, has thrown our Missions considerably back, not merely by crippling the resources of several Missionary Societies, but chiefly as regards the disposition of the people towards Christianity. Their hatred, in general, of Christianity is more intense than before, simply because they regard Christianity as the religion of Europeans. Some, however, think that the insurrection has improved the disposition of the people towards Christianity. This they infer from the conversion of a Maulavi here, a Faqir there, and a few other isolated facts. All that I can say to this sort of reasoning is that, nothing is more fallacious than facts. Taking it for granted then, that there is at present a greater disposition in the people than before to hate Christianity, simply because it is looked upon as a European thing—and English Christianity was exhibited before the natives not perhaps in its most amiable features during the late rebellion—I would beseech every Christian layman to cherish towards the people of this land a closer fraternal feeling than he has hitherto done.

I conclude with expressing a hope, that my Missionary fathers and brethren, my fellow-converts, and my European lay Christian friends, will forgive me for the plainness with which I have spoken out. I thought it a duty the discharge of which I could not conscientiously shrink from. May the Lord pour upon us the spirit of self-examination; and may there be in the midst of us "great searchings of heart."