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Institute Lecture.

FORTY YEARS IN FOREIGN MISSION EFFORT.

BY THE BAPTISTS IN THE MARITIME PROVINCES OF BRITISH NORTH AMERICA.

A Lecture delivered by Rev. W. S. McKENZIE, before the Ministers' Institute, at Saint Stephen, Aug. 22, 1872.

I propose in this lecture, if it may be so designated, to present a hurried review of the origin and progress of our Foreign Mission enterprise. Such an attempt, though simply touching the more prominent facts in the history of our Foreign Mission efforts, will, it is believed, furnish instruction, stimulus and guidance for the present hour, when we are about to re-enter with new plans and renewed vigor into labors for the evangelization of some portion of the heathen world. Many have risen up within the borders of our Zion "who knew not Joseph." Not a few of our membership, and of our ministry also, are either but imperfectly acquainted with what has been done, or at least attempted by our denomination in these Provinces for Foreign Missions, or are totally ignorant of our history in that direction. Others are familiar with all the facts of this mission history, but have not, it may be, surveyed them in their historical relations as a whole. Hence we may render a gratifying and useful service by the review here proposed. None we think, will have occasion to question our statement of facts, but some may dissent from our opinions and impressions founded upon the facts as we view them.

It is now forty years since the Baptists in Nova Scotia organized a society to aid in sending the gospel to heathen lands. But it was not until the year 1838 that any definite and decisive efforts were made by our brethren in this department of Christian work. In that year, at the Association convened in Chester, there was a marked revival of missionary zeal. Stirring appeals were made and vigorous resolutions were carried, reaffirming the duty of the churches connected with that Association, to convey the gospel to heathen lands, and pledging the denomination to more special and determined action in the sphere of Foreign Mission effort.

A Committee, consisting of Brethren Saunders, T. S. Harding and F. W. Miles, was sent to the sister Association in New Brunswick, to hold a consultation with that body "on the means of forming a union of the two Provinces for the purpose of raising funds and devising methods for sending the gospel to the heathen." Another Committee, consisting of Brethren Crawley, Nutting, McLearn and Chipman, was appointed to go to the same Association, empowered to join in forming a Constitution for the union proposed. Brethren Crawley, J. Dimock and W. Chipman were selected as a Committee, and instructed to address an appeal to the churches of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick "on the subject of their duties in respect to the establishment of a Foreign Mission." The New Brunswick Association, held that year in Springfield, heartily agreed to form, in conjunction with the Baptists in Nova Scotia, a society for the maintenance of Foreign Missions.

As a beginning of practical effort in this direction, the churches were pledged "to the adequate education and maintenance of some one suitable person as a missionary for the foreign field, so soon as one possessed of suitable character should be found."

In the following year, 1839, a young man offered himself to the work, and his education was provided for with mission funds, churches and individuals being called upon to contribute with that specific object in view.

In 1845, seven years subsequent to the Association held in Chester, your first Foreign Missionary, Rev. Mr. Burpe, was sent forth. Mr. Burpe began his labors at Akyab, in Arracan, among the Burmans. He had made considerable progress in the study of the Burmese language when he was urgently pressed by American Baptist missionaries to remove into the province of Tenasserim and to occupy the station at Mergui, about to be vacated by Rev. Mr. Brayton, on account of failing health. That request was communicated to the Secretary of your Foreign Mission Board, Rev. Dr. Crawley, and he was instructed to correspond with the American Board, "in order to ascertain whether they would feel willing that" Rev. Mr. Burpe should take charge of the Mergui station. A reply was received from Rev. Dr. Peck, Secretary of the American Board, "offering to give up the station at Mergui to the entire possession and control of the Missionary Society of these Provinces, in consequence of their missionary, Mr. Brayton, being under the necessity of retiring from that position on account of ill-health." A copy of Dr. Peck's letter was forwarded to Rev. Mr. Burpe, inducing him to assume the Mergui station as the field of his permanent labors. From Maulmain, and on his way to Mergui, Mr. Burpe wrote, "And now it may almost be decided that the whole of the Mergui Province is thrown at your request, into your own hands. Bro. Peck said, in alluding to Bro. Brayton's illness, 'Your Society would then have entire possession.' In the name of God, and in the name of the N. S. and N. B. Foreign Mission Society, shall I take it? No I will not; I dare not assume such a responsibility, until I know what is your determination in regard to sending another. Bro. Vinton says one will not do—two will barely suffice. Bro. Ingalls says the same. Will you send another? You have sought after a field; doubtless you have prayed to God to open a field for you. He has heard your prayer and opened a door, but the door is wide, and it will require an effort to occupy it. Will you occupy it? One is not sufficient for Mergui, and if you cannot send another missionary now or very soon, would it not be better to unite with the American Board? To think of sustaining a distinct field with but one Mission family is absurd."

Mr. Burpe proceeded with his family to Mergui, and made that the field of his permanent settlement, laboring for the Burmans in that country, but meanwhile studying the Karen language with a view of devoting himself more especially to mission labor among that people. Mergui, resigned to the solitary efforts of Mr. Burpe, was a large country, with a widely scattered Karen and Burman population. His mission tours were frequent, extensive and laborious, imposing a severe strain upon his health, never robust, and at this time considerably prostrated. Signal success instantly followed his labors, especially among the Karens, and that success urged him on to still greater exertions. His zeal was intense for the salvation of souls. Writing from Akyab, his first field, he exclaims, "O could you look upon this desolate field—this land of darkness and doubt—could you see, as we daily do, multitudes of human beings marching onward with one unbroken front to the brink of endless woe, I know you would feel, I know you would not forget your pledge." That intense ardor for the salvation of the heathen he carried with him into the destitute Province of Tenasserim.

Again and again did Mr. Burpe appeal for a helper from home. His frequent and thrilling calls for a speedy re-enforcement of the mission in which he was fast consuming all his strength, were taken up by the Board and urged upon the brethren in the Provinces. The Secretary, Dr. Crawley, in the Annual Report for 1847, says: "The Board waits with strong hope, that in a short time a general activity prevailing throughout the whole of our denominational operations, will designate distinctly the arrival of the favored moment in which they may without rashness, solemnly engage themselves to the support of a second Missionary; and in the meantime they earnestly call for information both from individuals themselves, who may hope they are called to foreign Missionary labor, as well as from those acquainted

with such persons, so that the Board may with calmness and prayerfulness be prepared for a wise selection." In the same report we find other words of thrilling earnestness sent forth to the churches, calling for the re-enforcement so imperatively and instantly demanded for the mission at Mergui.

There at Mergui was a lone missionary, far remote from all friends and counsellors, struggling to carry on the work in a vast and promising field, opened, and now surrendered by the American Board to the entire possession and independent control of the Foreign Mission Society of these Provinces. The feeble health of that solitary missionary was daily becoming still more precarious. In the Treasury were funds sufficient, or nearly sufficient, to meet the requirements of an outfit and one year's salary of another mission family. God had opened the door and was loudly calling for men to enter and occupy.

At the Convention in 1848, it was resolved to re-enforce the mission at Mergui if the man could be found. The resolution passed at that time reads as follows: "That this Convention, confiding in the wisdom of the Foreign Mission Board, and in the integrity of the churches of the denomination to sustain an additional Missionary, hereby authorize the Board to send forth another family to join our beloved Brother and Sister Burpe at Mergui, as soon as they can make the necessary arrangements." Another resolution was connected with the foregoing, pledging one-third of the amount requisite to meet the increased expense of a re-enforcement from the Baptists in New Brunswick. But the man needed could not be found. Meanwhile Mr. Burpe had retraced his steps to Akyab, and was rapidly sinking under a pulmonary disease. It was decided that he must abandon his work and return home. In December, 1849, with deep grief at quitting the mission he so ardently loved, but with some hope of prolonging his life, and resuming, after a brief respite, his mission labors, Mr. Burpe sailed for his native land, and in May, 1850, after an absence of five years, reached the shores of Nova Scotia.

His health having somewhat improved, he, in 1851, contemplated a re-entrance into the foreign field. But before the hour arrived for him to make preparation for his anticipated return to Burmah, it became plainly and painfully evident that the Board must relinquish all intention of encouraging their esteemed brother to resume his mission labors. In the month of February, 1853, at Jacksonville, in Florida, and separated from every member of his beloved family, Rev. Mr. Burpe the genial and sincere friend, the earnest and faithful Christian, the laborious and successful missionary, passed away, under great physical suffering, to his eternal rest and reward.

Were I dealing with biographical instead of historical facts, I would be expected to enter more fully into the life, character and labors of your first missionary to heathen lands.

When the return of Mr. Burpe from a foreign field became a necessity, and the fact was announced to the denomination, many felt discouraged. But the Mission Board, in its appeal to the brethren, declared "that the circumstances of the mission were those which called for humiliation, for self-examination, for prayer, for increased devotedness and zeal, but not for discouragement." The Convention of 1849 expressed, in a resolution, its "solemn purpose and determination, leaning on divine help and guidance, to maintain without fainting, and if possible with increasing zeal and efficiency, their mission to the perishing millions of India." A new and larger effort was projected by the Board and submitted to the brethren at the Convention. And the Convention earnestly called upon the churches "to allow no relaxation in their contributions toward this enlarged plan which must necessarily soon demand increased and steady supplies of pecuniary assistance." There was a young man, a graduate of Acadia College, and at this time a student at Newton Theological Seminary, upon whom the minds of the brethren in the Board were fixed as one suited for the foreign field. When the time arrived for his appointment, certain conditions were imposed which he was unwilling to accept, and consequently the Board failed to obtain him.

At the Convention of 1851, the Board presented as a candidate for Foreign Mission service a young man, well known and highly esteemed in the Provinces. That young man was Mr. A. R. R. Crawley, a graduate of Acadia

College, and at this time pursuing a course of Theological study in the Newton Seminary. The year previous, in view of the experience derived from the case of Rev. Mr. Burpe, the Convention put on record its fixed conviction, in the form of resolution, relative to the necessity of sending out two—mission families together; "that in any future efforts of the Convention in the Foreign Missionary field, it ought to be an inviolable principle, never to send any missionary or missionary family alone." "The duties and toils which rest on the single laborer are too heavy, and the need of brotherly converse and encouragement, too pressing and constant, to make it just to him or to his work, or just to the reasonable expectations and wishes of the friends of missions, to send any one so far away, on so arduous an enterprise, without any necessary aid."

In accordance with that conviction and determination, which proceeded from the Board, and found ready concurrence in the Convention, it was required that another candidate should be sought at once, to accompany Bro. Crawley. And another was before the minds of the members of the Board, and one who had expressed a desire to be engaged in Foreign mission labor. But at this hour the question of funds was exciting the doubts and fears of the Executive. Mr. Crawley, however, was received with open arms by the whole denomination as the man to engage in Foreign Mission work, and he was appointed as your missionary at the Convention of 1851. At this time it was hoped though not without some hesitation, that Rev. Mr. Burpe would be able to resume mission work with Mr. Crawley as his colleague. But the return of Mr. Burpe being uncertain, and Mr. Crawley being nearly ready, and anxious to begin his chosen work without any delay, the Board was instructed to correspond with the brother who had expressed a desire to enter the foreign field, and to assure him that the funds necessary for his support would be raised if he would accompany Mr. Crawley.

The discouragement, doubt and gloom resting upon the minds of our brethren, occasioned by the sudden prostration of Rev. Mr. Burpe's health, and by his speedy return home, were being lifted and removed. The prospect, just now so dark, began to brighten. But zeal, faith and activity were too generally languid and insufficient. Funds were not provided with the liberality and promptness indispensable to the successful prosecution of the renewed and enlarged effort contemplated. At a meeting of the Board held in April, 1852, in which meeting "the prospects and finances of the Society were carefully considered, and the plan of connecting ourselves with the American Missionary Union, often suggested previously, received mature deliberation. A resolution was passed unanimously, recommending that our foreign operations be henceforth conducted in connection with the Missionary Union. That resolution reads as follows:

"That in the opinion of this Board, it is highly desirable that our Foreign Missionary operations should be conducted in connection with the American Baptist Missionary Union, whereby sundry inconveniences will be avoided, and considerably advantage realized, especially in regard to the location of missionaries, and their cooperation with these already in the field, and that the Secretary be requested to correspond with the Secretary of the American Baptist Missionary Union, with a view to ascertain whether such an arrangement can be carried into effect."

The negotiations thus ordered were attempted, but the hopes of the Board in that direction were not realized, as the Baptist Union could not agree to the affiliation sought for, without a serious and scarcely possible modification of its Constitution. What was the nature of the affiliation with the Union sought after by our brethren, and what were the obstacles in the Constitution of the Union hindering such an alliance, I have not been able to ascertain. It therefore remained for the Convention, assembled in 1852, to devise such means as would enable the Board to carry into execution the declared determination to re-open the mission in India, by sending out two missionaries as soon as practicable. The Annual Report contains the following utterances: "We must express the firm persuasion that when the claims of the Missionary cause are presented to the churches, there will be such a response as will enable

us once more to possess a field of Christian labor in Burmah, and again rejoice in success of faithful laborers from our own favored land. We would ask those who love God, and daily pray for the salvation of the heathen. Are our streams of charity to fail at this important crisis when God is opening a door to the vast Burman empire—when almost the whole heathen world lies before us as a field whitening for the harvest—when missionaries urge with a growing vehemence the demand, 'come over and help us'—when thousands who have tasted the Word of God, and are partially instructed in the law of the Lord, implore with an increased intensity of desire, that they may have the Word of God in their own language, and the voice of the living teacher to unfold its soul-saving doctrines? At this important period, when every phase in the history of our times invites to missionary labor, are our churches to fail in the pledges they have made? Must this Society yield up its existence as a missionary organization? Let our churches well consider this momentous subject."

That was at the Convention of 1852. In one of the meetings of the same Convention another highly esteemed brother, the late Rev. Mr. Bentley, at that time pastor of the Baptist church of Liverpool, N. S., presented himself for the foreign field. A Committee was appointed to confer with Bro. Bentley upon the subject. But it soon became evident that this brother's health was entirely unsuited for the work unto which he longed to enter, and the cherished hope of having an associate, in Bro. Bentley, for Bro. Crawley had to be relinquished.

But another and sadder disappointment, productive of a lamentable stagnation and discouragement in our foreign mission enterprise, was fast approaching. Mr. Crawley, the missionary elect, decided, in 1853, to sever his relations with your Board, and to go forth under the auspices of the American Baptist Missionary Union. The annual report for this year contains the following expressions relative to this, as it seems to have been, unpropitious movement, unpropitious at least to the interests of our own foreign mission enterprise. "Bro. A. Crawley," says the Report, "could not but feel anxious about the future intention of the Board. The time was approaching, when he had hoped and decided to leave for his longed for employment. He became urgent to know when, how and where he was to be sent, and who was to be his missionary associate. In view of the above urgent considerations, and with little prospect that a second missionary would present himself to the Board in time to accompany brother A. Crawley, the mind of the Board was again directed to a suggestion that had been previously entertained, viz., a union with another organization. A correspondence was opened with the English Foreign Missionary Society, and the American Foreign Missionary Union, the object of which was, an inquiry whether a union could be formed with either of them, and upon what terms."

The Board in England in a very cordial and christian letter offered to admit our missionary as a joint laborer to a station called Dinagepoo, in Bengal, we wholly sustaining our own missionaries. An answer was not then received from the American Union. Bro. Crawley was sent to Boston for consultation with the officers of the Baptist Union. The reply of that body was, in substance, "that they would gladly accept of our missionaries, receive whatever funds we could remit, and relieve our Board from all responsibility in the support of missionaries." To accept of that proposal was to abandon our organization, except so far as it was needed in the collection of funds. The offer of the English Board was not entertained, for the reason that Bro. Crawley had a settled impression upon his mind that he should go to Burmah.

The opinion of the Board on the proposal of the Baptist Union was expressed in the following resolution.

That they "do not feel themselves at liberty to comply with the proposed arrangement, . . . and will therefore continue their independent action as heretofore, and feel prepared to fulfil their engagements with their missionary, Bro. Crawley." In a communication addressed by Bro. Crawley to your Board, and published in the Minutes of the Convention for 1853, he declares strongly against a separate and independent mission in Burmah by the Baptists of these Provinces. He thinks it very desirable, but ex-