Chandgiri Rajah 1829

A

CHARGE,

DELIVERED AT

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE

Society

FOR

PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

AT THEIR

HOUSE IN BARTLETT'S BUILDINGS,

On Thursday, July 9, 1818;

TO THE

REV. MR. SPERSCHNEIDER,

PREVIOUS TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR INDIA,

AS ONE OF THE SOCIETY'S MISSIONARIES.

BY THE

REV. JOSEPH HOLDEN POTT, M.A.

ARCHDEACON OF LONDON, AND VICAR OF ST. MARTIN IN THE FIELDS.

TOGETHER WITH

MR. SPERSCHNEIDER's ADDRESS TO THE BOARD.

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1818.

A

CHARGE,

&c.

MY REVEREND BROTHER,

When I address you at this moment, the deference which I owe to the voice of others must become my plea for that which will be spoken in the name of this Society, and in compliance with its deliberate injunctions.

Were I left at liberty to follow the suggestions of my own mind, I should now regard you, Reverend Sir, with a silent, but not less earnest feeling of complacency. I should rest contented with a secret wish, that every step which you shall set forward in the path to which it hath pleased God to incline your heart, may prosper. It would suffice for me to indulge the hope that your future course may answer to that noble zeal by which your views are now directed to a quar-

ter of the globe far distant from the place of your own birth; distant from those shores on which you have so happily set foot, and remote from this assembly in which you now appear. But, if I must not be allowed to contemplate your attendance here this day in silence, and to follow you from this room with a secret prayer for your success, the best use I can make of this occasion, will be to call your notice to such topics as may furnish grounds for our mutual advantage, and may serve for profitable recollection.

It is a mixed scene of gratulation and of farewell in which we are now engaged; for your stay among us is so limited by pressing circumstances, that these alternatives, so interesting in the scenes of human intercourse, are brought near together. It will, therefore, be my aim to offer something which may answer to the word of greeting; and something also which, I trust, you will be willing to take with you as the word of valediction, the counsels and the blessings of sincere and cordial friends.

For the theme of present gratulation, I shall avail myself of some presumptions in your favour, which will not want their weight with those who hear me, and which you may receive without a blush; though I cannot easily forget that a modest temper formed the leading feature in the lines of character which were first transmitted to us, and

urged in your behalf, by the venerable Pastors of your Church. I will not dwell, then, upon what has been certified by those who had the care of your early years, and who have testified their satisfaction with your progress and proficiency in every good attainment. I will take a topic which may be less uneasy to you, but in which also your peculiar interest will be as readily discerned.

I have, then, to observe, that nearly a century of years have been numbered, since this Society has made the publication of the great truths of Christianity in the eastern world, with the conversion of the heathen, one great object of its anxious and assiduous regard: and, in order to promote this purpose, it has received into its connexion a succession of zealous and good men, from among the members of that branch of the reformed Church to which you belong, and from which you have received the sacred pledge of your commission. These pious, faithful ministers of Christ, have well answered our best expectations, so far as their own personal good conduct, and their exemplary services have satisfied the claims of duty, and fulfilled their own engagement. Their uniform attention to the single object of their calling; their simplicity of heart; their prudence, and, in some remarkable and distinguished instances, which stand graced with

such names as those of Fabricius, Swartz, and Gerickè, their exalted piety, and inflexible integrity of soul, have entitled them not only to the grateful approbation of this Society, but to the esteem and confidence of the British Government in India, whose favourable suffrage has not been wanting to them, and whose kindness has been manifested on all fit occasions. Even the jealous gates of hostile fortresses were opened to those messengers of peace. Their word was the passport which secured admission and good faith. Their heads were sacred; and their characters became the bond of confidence, and of uniform reliance, where no other tie subsisted. You see, Reverend Sir, that you do not come a stranger to us, since you follow in that train.

Our last greeting, and our last word of farewell also from this circle, are fresh still in our memories; for indeed they are impressed upon our recollection by the pungent sense of keen and durable regret. The mild and sensible Jacobi, the sincerity of his purpose, the cheerful animated zeal which he displayed, excited such a various interest in the minds of all those who conversed with him, and who witnessed the preliminary steps which became the earnest of his future course; that we are still left, for the sake of others, to deplore the loss we have sustained. That regret indeed is tempered by the never-failing consola-

tion which reminds us, that any day of service which is well employed, is long enough for the glad returns of endless recompence. The grief which refers itself to the sovereign will of Providence, is subject at all times to such wise reserves of Christian confidence: Behold, then, the fruit of such a qualified and prudent temper of the soul, which can couple hope with sorrow! Behold another scion from the same stock! The cheering promise is renewed to us; and the word of gratulation once more finds its place.

But having turned for a moment to past labours, it must be owned, that when we regard the boundless population to which those good endeavours were directed; we cannot but indulge a sigh, and look with heaviness of spirit upon the small increase which has been added, even by their pains, to the Christian flock. Alas! the obstacles are many, and as full of difficulty as they are abundant. In a land where superstition and idolatry are linked with insuperable prejudice, and bound by chains of adamant upon the hearts of men; a land where all things are tied to the strict and never-changing rule of rigorous casts; determined by fantastic notions both of honor and disgrace, notions which are stronger in the minds of those who harbour them than the love of life itself; it is hard to win a passage to the understanding, and still more hard to wean the heart from its attach-

ments. Where none are very busy, and where the wants of life are easily supplied, you may have many hearers for a little moment, but though you gain the leisure and attention of a listening ear, yet the choice is sealed, and pleas which cannot be resisted on the ground of argument or reason, may receive a ready answer on the score of fixed and unalterable usage. The stern laws of the Brahmin and the Prince, alike despotic, and alike inflexibly devoted to one form of things, and that the worst that can be, will be opposed to every just persuasion. If you urge them with their gross and unworthy misconceptions of the nature and the will of God, or the monstrous follies of their fabulous theology; they will turn it off with a sly civility perhaps, or with a popular and careless proverb. You may be told that "heaven is "a wide place, and has a thousand gates;" and that their religion is one by which they hope to enter. Thus, together with their fixed persuasions, they have their sceptical conceits. By such evasions they can dismiss the merits of the case from all consideration, and encourage men to think that the vilest superstition may serve to every salutary purpose, and be accepted in the sight of God as well as truth and righteousness. To this detestable opinion, too shallow for the name of sophistry, there are not wanting some consenting voices among those possessing better

privileges; among those who must add ingratitude to folly when they venture to maintain such sentiments. If such opinions however do find abettors among men who enjoy the light of truth, and who should prize it at its real worth, can we wonder that the faith which they profess should make but little progress beyond the limits of their own land?

But, my Reverend Brother, in addition to that noble zeal which presents a favourable omen on your part, there are some hopeful indications which the present time affords, and which I may be allowed to touch; regarding them with joyous expectations for your sake and the Gospel.

The settled interests of the British Government must operate favourably for your purpose in a country where, though it be true that customs and opinions never change, yet no other thing could continue safe or quiet from the gusts of sweeping conquests, or the ravages of sudden inroads and invasions. Before those blasts commerce fled, and agriculture drooped in hopeless indolence, or pined in anxious apprehension. It was but to rear that which another's arm should gather; to sow, for the sword to reap; to cherish, what the grinding impost and perfidious levy would absorb. The British power, we know too well, has its military struggles in the same land, its frequent warfare, which cannot be too heavily deplored, or too fearfully and strictly

guarded from sinister motives, from insidious colours and pretences, or clandestine policies; but where the British arms prevail, whatever be the quarrel, there is at least the prospect of a settled form of things to follow. Wave does not succeed to wave, until nothing can remain but the broken wreck, the pebble, and the sand. Accordingly the best interests of the mind will be apt to grow amidst the growth of peace, and to flourish where a settled order is established. There may be some hope of attention, where men can reason and reflect, without a daily flight from menaced evils, or a ceaseless conflict with oppression which endangers life and substance.

I have the happiness to remind you likewise, as another welcome topic of encouragement and gratulation, that the British Church with which you will now be connected, has its pastoral Head in that land which opens a new sphere for your exertions. From the wise and exemplary Prelate who presides there, with so much advantage to the common hope and expectations of his country, you will experience at all times the sure word of counsel; you will find the ready arm of succour and support.

We have to contemplate also, with delight, the progress which is making with wide and extensive influences, in the good work of early education. That tide flows back like the life-blood to the heart, returning to that very

source from which the best methods of instruction for the many, were derived. That widely circulating blessing furnishes a ground of good hope, and presents a theme of lively gratulation which meets you at your entrance on your charge.

There is a large class of persons more particularly, who have strong claims for such succours; strong claims for commiseration; persons who are open to religious cultivation in a more especial manner, because they are not tied to the fatal privileges of superior casts: Alas! they have no privilege but the protection of the civil government, which however well disposed to every object of its care, cannot wholly remedy the disadvantages under which they labour. You will contribute your aid to enable this numerous band of claimants for the pity and regard of charitable minds, to redeem the blemishes of adverse circumstances, by a nobler elevation to the ranks of spiritual honour and the fellowship of Christ's disciples.

But the chief topic of good expectation upon which I have to congratulate both you, my Reverend Brother, and those also in whose name I now address you, arises from the happy dispositions, with relation to this branch of our

common hope, which prevail at this hour in this land. The wish which is cherished for enlarging the boon of safety and protection to those who are now sheltered from the pillage, and secured from the oppressions of capricious power; the laudable desire, inseparable surely from the Christian bosom, of adding more abundant blessings to the grant of civil freedom, founded, as in every righteous government it must be, upon acknowledged, universal claims, and on mutual duties from which no human being is exempt, this generous ardour breathes among us: and with that gale every prosperous effort, every healing ministry for the best improvement of our fellow-creatures, may be wafted.

An equal, uncorrupt administration of the course of law and justice, which forms the peculiar glory of our own realm, is transferred already to the courts of its dependencies. Is it asked then how benefits so precious which guard the rights of personal security, of property, and conscience, can be further amplified, augmented, and enlarged? Can they put this question who know what the life of man is at the best in this world, and who should know what his hope may be in a better scene? The enlargement then, of the benefits of civil freedom, must consist in the cultivation and encouragement of moral and

religious principles, without which there can be no adequate improvement in the human character, and therefore no successful operation of external laws; without which the sum of every reasonable satisfaction in the heart of man must be wanting; and without which there can be no intelligible apprehension of a future state, no just presumptions, and no hopeful earnest of that happiness to which the soul of man aspires as the fountain leaps up to its springs, and points in its utmost elevation to the level of its native current.

Without doubt the work of moral culture will advance in no light measure where the salutary end of civil goverment shall be maintained. But indeed there is a debt to truth; a debt which they who love the truth can never overlook. There is a public service to be rendered, which truth only, that truth which has God for its author and its object, can supply. The best improvement and the noblest exaltation of the moral character of man, can only be made good by just conceptions of the moral attributes of God. Behold, then, the perpetual ground of every truth by which the choice of man can be directed! It is here, that the work of sound instruction must begin. His own name; his own excellence; his own perfections, form the ground of every treaty which God opens with the reasonable

creature; the ground of every argument and evidence which he proposes for their notice, and of every truth which he reveals for their acceptance. Where this first principle of truth and knowledge shall be vindicated and established, the monstrous errors of idolatry and superstition (the twofold bane of all improvement in the life of man) must be supplanted. The field will then be opened to communicate the knowledge of God's gracious will, and to teach men what his counsels and provisions have been for the succour and salvation of a fallen race; for reconciliation after trespass; for the restitution and recovery of a lost integrity, and for the glad inheritance of future and eternal glory.

Do but consider for a moment, with reference to that first requisite to the hope of man, his reconciliation before God, how gross and deplorable the state of doubt and ignorance had been, and must continue still to be in heathen countries. Regard those doubts: and that distressful ignorance as they are manifested in the miserable victim to fantastic penances in those regions to which your views are now directed. Observe the desperate resolve, the cold, deliberate, yet frantic purpose of the self-devoted zealot, who wades from the margin to the stream, and waits the fluxes of the Ganges, till the tide ascends, till the flood is poured into his lips, and

death pays the voluntary tribute of unequal, insufficient, uncalled, unhallowed expiation. Regard, if you think fit, the self-same doubts, the same distressful ignorance, as they once existed in the noble mind of Socrates, who trimmed the lamp of reason with a steady hand, and traced the light of nature to its sources; the scourge of sophisters, the glory and the scandal of a curious, fickle, and ungrateful people. Hear him declare distinctly, that if the knowledge which was sought by men, respected their chief exigency; if they were prompted to explore the means of reconciliation and acceptance before God, they who made such enquiries at his mouth, must wait until one should arrive who could declare the will of God: one, who as we well know, could both declare the will of God and prove it by convincing tokens, and seal it by his blood. If that flood of cleansing and atonement, rose also even to the lips of men, it was to pour into them the balm of life. If that fountain too ascended to its source, that source was no other than the springs of truth, the sovereign attributes of God, the harmony of whose adorable perfections was so plainly vindicated in its flow.

In order likewise to the encrease and enlargement of the benefits which should be derived upon an heathen population, by their intercourse with an happier and a more enlightened people,

there will on your part be the care to couple the best rules of practical improvement with the principles of faith. You will have to testify, that this is the will of God, even the cleansing of the heart from evil purposes and faulty habits, and the care to cherish in it, through this term of trial, every good and profitable disposition, every generous quality, every noble elevation. The votaries of a wild degrading superstition must be taught that such is the will of God, and not the rigours or the phrenzies of fantastic methods of religion. How plain is it, that uncouth and horrid schemes of discipline produce one uniform effect, in full contradiction to the great end of revealed truth as it is designed for all. Thus they never fail to sever the professors of such narrow rules from those who may perhaps admire their zeal, and gaze at their strange performances, but who have no heart, and no rational or fit inducement to incline them to adopt the pattern.

Thus it happens, in all ages and all countries, and, alas! under better dispensations of the light of truth, that where extravagant pretensions and exaggerated schemes of life, which serve no one end of moral duty, or of real purity of heart, are permitted to supply the place of sober maxims, and are prized above them, they serve only to divide men into distinct unconnected bands, who reap no profit from each other. Thus do men

stand divided, wherever the religious character is marked with superstitious tinctures. The bewildered zealot, the fanatic of all times or places, forms his circle, and they who extol his zeal, as well as they who despise and deride it, pursue their own licentious course. The path of rational improvement, the way of truth and righteousness lies between them, and is overlooked. I have touched this point particularly, because you will find enough of such fantastic rigours in the eastern world, the fruit of vulgar superstition: and you may encounter, perhaps, extravagances of our own growth, which will offer no fit remedies for such abuses of the name and purpose of religion. You will find too, in that land, as in this, that such excesses are contrasted by the opposite extremes of loose and careless conduct, whilst, again, the middle course is equally forsaken.

I would fain indulge a better hope in these respects; and I would ground it on the good sense and the sound principles of the Christian character, and calling, as they are professed in that Church, to whose friendly countenance you come recommended. Certain it is, and it forms an important and encouraging consideration for our joint attention, that a form of faith, and a scheme of discipline, such as that which now claims your affectionate regard, a communion

which, beyond all others, has made the least use of violence of any kind, in order to those ends which you have in view, a communion animated by a better spirit, and grateful for its own release from the lash of persecution, or the impulses of force, will bid the fairest to effect that which can never be effected but by means which God will bless. It is from that temperate and prudent course, without which the Christian pattern will not prove attractive, or deserve to be so, that we must seek an answer to the fears and cavils which have been urged so frequently against the good work to which your hand is set.

Having dwelt awhile upon these points of hopeful expectation, there was the promise of a word of counsel, such as might be coupled with the parting good wish which will accompany your course, and will cleave to you when the land of countrymen and friends shall recede and dwindle from the vessel, and when the world of waters and the foreign coast extend before you.

The ground indeed of every reasonable, every salutary counsel, has been laid already, for the leading principles of truth and duty have been touched; they are the treasures and the freight you have to carry; the stores of spiritual wisdom, which have God and his favour for the sum of their intrinsic value and unspeakable importance. Is it asked of what the lesson should

consist which is to be offered to those who are wedded to a thousand misconceptions? The answer is not hard. If there be any spark of reason left in human bosoms, any ray which the fogs of superstition and the deep night of idolatry have not quenched, the phantoms of deluded minds must give place where the noble image of God's everlasting attributes shall be vindicated and displayed. Surely, in whatever measure or degree we can form conceptions of things good or holy, wise and excellent, in the breast of man, the same things raised in excellence and exalted in perfection, will naturally lead the notice and conduct the thoughts to God. He provokes us to this argument in all his reasonings with the sons of men. He gives them this substantial ground upon which to build conclusions that can never be subverted. Thus, when he calls himself a Father; who knows not what a Father's love is? When he calls himself a Ruler and a Judge; who knows not that integrity and justice must be the measure of his sway? When he speaks of mercy; who that consults his own needs can want to be informed what that is also? Thus we are not beckoned to the clouds, nor sent into the deep, for God is ever near us, if we will consult our own hearts, and consider what remains there are of any good thing in them, and what notions can be formed by us of what is good from all we see, from all,

we know, and feel, and understand. Establish well these leading principles, and you will scatter the first obstacles which would obstruct the knowledge of that saving word which God hath spoken.

And what then are the proofs that God hath spoken? That is the next enquiry which you will encounter. Simplicity is the character of truth, even as it is the perfect definition of the God of truth; and they are simple propositions, simple facts, and simple proofs arising from them, which constitute the grounds of faith in that word which God hath spoken.

And what then are the facts? The history of man; the history of man's redemption; the uniform experience of mankind; the nature of our whole condition in the world.

Yes; but the Eastern worshipper has his histories of this world, and of man. And what are they? Let them be compared with those which we produce. It will soon appear what is consistent, credible, and sober, and what is self-repugnant and ridiculous, without a shade of any yet remaining proof for its support. Compare those dreams of childish folly, the senseless visions of distempered fancies and deluded minds, compare them with the simple narrative of the sacred writings. Compare them with the plain and interesting annals of the patriarchal ages; with the

signal monuments of Providence in all the earth, and in the very lives and persons of distinguished men; compare them with that clear and connected view which the Scriptures furnish of man's first creation; of his primæval state; of his fall, and subsequent condition; of his encrease on the earth; of the care of God toward him, in selecting those plants which should preserve the worship and transmit the knowledge of the Lord. Compare the eastern legend and its monstrous fictions, with the long train of prophetic warnings, delivered with large intervals of time, from age to age, and clearly and distinctly brought to pass.

You will point next to the signal works by which those declarations were attested. If those works be not now visible, and the record of them not familiar to the stranger, yet the proofs of them, which exist at this day, shall suffice to stamp their credit. The tokens of such public demonstrations of the will and counsels of the Lord subsist still: they speak still in the fortunes of whole states and empires; empires bordering upon those which you will visit. What man is there in all the east to whom the fame of Abraham the father of the faithful, has not reached; or who has not seen some of his posterity, bearing every badge of their descent from him, except his faith?

Will the challenge then be, from those who do not want acuteness to enquire; will the plea be, "these are your written testimonies, but who "shall vouch for their integrity?" The world itself, and all that has been transacted in it, shall speak in confirmation of those testimonies. The suffrage of all history, profane as well as sacred, shall yield its consenting voice to those authentic documents. The stubborn and determined enemies to the truth itself shall stand forward for the vouchers. You meet them every where; in the east and in the west. Let the considerate heathen ask the Jewish exiles if those sacred oracles to which we point, have not been for ages in their custody. Let him ask if they have kept them carefully. It is a plain proof that they have, since the witness bears so hard against themselves. Let him ask if those records are the same still that they were before and after the dispersion of their tribes. Let him ask if we have changed one testimony for our own ends; if the books still extant speak the same things, deliver the same doctrines, relate the same facts, and inculcate the same precepts, now as heretofore. The answer is inevitable, and the conclusion gathered from the lips of friend and foe, is no less certain and convincing.

Look yet more closely to the books themselves, and do not hesitate to bring their whole contents

to that standard which was first established, to God and his perfections. Do they speak things worthy of him? Do they foretel things to come? which was the challenge of the Lord to those of old time, who endeavoured to deceive his people; and to his own people when they inclined to such deceits. Are such proofs suited to their ends? Can any man devise, or indeed imagine any better?

Regard once more the signal works above the power of human agency or ordinary means, by which the same word is as suitably attested. But the eastern worshipper has his wonders too; his works of miracle, recorded and believed; things far more strange and more prodigious than those which we allege. He has so. Let him display the legend. If the challenge be, as it should be, the challenge of comparison; let it be considered of what kind those wonders were, and for what ends they were wrought.

The miracles to which God makes his appeal, were wrought for purposes entirely worthy of him; for solemn purposes of justice or of mercy; they were wrought with public demonstrations, to recall men from idolatries and errors, from crimes and misdeeds; to fix them in the knowledge and the service of the Lord; they tended always to good ends; they were often marked with incidental circumstances of lesser benefit and present kindness; they were such as none could contradict,

but those who destroyed their own malignant plea, even by their own desperate assertions. Thus they put an evil agent for the worker of all benefits and blessings, and made Satan the subverter of all moral mischief in the world.

If I have touched these things too rapidly, it is because the time forbids a larger compass of discourse. But you see, Sir, the pile rests on sure foundations; simple in its basis, and no less simple in its structure.

I have detained you I begin to fear too long, but I cannot resist the wish I have to touch for your encouragement what remains yet of chief moment in our common faith.

Having laid these grounds of truth and evidence by which the word of God is measured and attested, how readily will you bring the means of reconciliation which you have to offer, and the precepts and the lessons which you have to teach, to a test as certain and convincing. Are they such as answer to the sovereign excellence of the Moral Ruler? Are they such as are adapted most expressly to the needs of man? Are they such as conduce most to his best improvement: not romantic bitter trials for the self-devoted; not beds of spikes or antic feats of penance; not portentous pilgrimages measured by a man's own length in painful revolutions of the body; not fixed stations between earth and skies, which convert

men into living statues, exposed to all the tortures of the mid-day sun, and all the chill of nightly dews; a living death, compared with which the peace and silence of the grave are objects of the highest envy and supreme desire. Are the precepts you would lead men to accept, such as offer remedies to every faulty passion and disordered appetite; not by destructive means and idle scruples, but by correcting what is faulty and inordinate, and by planting better inclinations in the heart? Above all, are these things coupled with the great treaty of redemption; that work of God's consummate counsels, which supplies a certain ground of access to a state of favour and acceptance before him: are they coupled with advantages which are established in the person and prerogative of one who had the power to lay down and the power to take up life for others, power to ransom and redeem, power to reign and rule in a new kingdom which is not limited to time, place, or nation; power to be an universal head and source of reparation and renewal to those who stand united to him, those whose nature he assumed, and on whose part he appears before the throne of grace, a righteous and effectual intercessor? Do the same testimonies lead us also to the needful succours which are furnished for those who must fulfil their own appointed service before they can receive the recompence which is won for them, the

great prize of another's victory? do they lead the weak and humble to God's holy Spirit, to the promised Comforter and perpetual Guide?

With these grounds of redemption, and these rules of faith and duty laid for our return to God, shall we, my Reverend Brother, take their counsel to be good, who would persuade us to leave man to himself, to be the slave of vicious appetites, or the dupe of manifold delusions; without authority to lead, or the sanction of authority in others to incline him to be led; most ignorant when he has most need to be instructed, and wise only to perceive his own defects, which was the sum of real wisdom in the heathen world.

But if the points which I have touched, my Reverend Brother, are familiar to you, as no doubt they are, and therefore do not answer to the promised word of counsel, let that word now be added. The counsel I would give is this; let not the disputable tenets which divide the hearts of men in the Christian world, things which stand apart from the sure foundations of our common faith, let not these things be carried with you: leave them where perhaps they have done the most harm they can do. It is surely no unreasonable word of counsel, that they who have wrangled so long for disputed things with no good success, would keep them from the ears of others whose interest it is to learn only what is

necessary to be known and needful to be practised.

And now my Reverend Brother, I have but to commend you to the blessing of him who can turn aside the arrow that flieth by day, and avert the pestilence that walketh in darkness. May his gracious favour keep you. May the happy sense of that reward which is laid up with him, support you in the sharpest day of trial. May his mercies give a good result to every hopeful expectation which we share with you with no common measure of solicitude, and to which your own best wishes have been raised.

You have made a noble choice, with the sacrifice no doubt, of many an interest which have their value. But the things which you will leave, are passing daily from the tenants of the day; and the things you seek, will abide with you when you shall be called from these sublunary scenes.

Although it may be your's to sow, and another's joy to see the stalk rise, and the ear swell; yet when the days of harvest shall arrive, your portion shall not be wanting in the plentiful division.

If the heart droop, or the spirits fail in any moment, call to mind what God spake in past ages: and what are ages in his sight, but the ripening seasons of his counsels? Let this be the ground of consolation and of trust, "my

" word shall not return unto me void; but it
" shall accomplish that which I please; and it
" shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent
" it."

ADDRESS

OF THE

REV. MR. SPERSCHNEIDER.

WITH great emotion I stand before you, Reverend and Venerable Sir, and before this honourable Assembly, and can scarcely express by words, what I feel so deeply and strongly in my heart. This moment is too important, I am too much interested in it, and in its consequences, to be able to do what it demands from me. Being now on the point of quitting Europe, and to remove to a distant clime, whither the sacred office, to which I have devoted my life, calls me, I ought, in taking leave of you, Reverend and Venerable Sir, and of this honourable Society, to which I am so happy to belong, to give thanks to you for the proofs of kindness, with which you received me on my arrival in England; I ought to thank you for the marks of bounty and love, which you have so abundantly bestowed upon me during my short stay here; I ought to return

thanks to you for the distinguished proof of confidence, of which you have thought me worthy by assigning to me a station, the claims of which are so great, the duties of which are so sacred. But what utterance shall I give to my grateful feelings, in a language, which I as yet so imperfectly understand, since I should even in my native tongue be unable to do justice to my heart? Certainly I should be incapable to free myself from the painful feeling of embarrassment, I should never be permitted to hope to pay even a small part of what I owe to you, if I were obliged to think, that all these honourable proofs of your kindness and love were bestowed upon me for my own sake; but especially the lively sense of my own weakness would excite in me the distressing apprehension, that I should entirely disappoint the just expectations you entertain of me and my services, if I could for one moment suppose, that in committing to me such a charge, you had relied upon my own capacity. No, I am fully convinced, and find myself extremely comforted by it, that you have still other and higher motives of benevolence towards me, that you have better and stronger arguments, whereupon your confidence in me is founded. It is your high interest in the important and sacred cause, the furtherance of which has been the object of the assiduous labours of your venerable Society for more

than a century, which has induced you to confer on me so high a degree of your affection without any regard to my unworthiness; and it is your confident hope of the merciful assistance of Him, whose honour and the spreading of whose kingdom you endeavour to promote among "people that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death," it is your hope of the mighty help and blessing of our Lord, from whom all blessings flow, which determines you, to entrust to me, a weak, though willing instrument, this most important office. Therefore I am without any fear and anxiety, even under the liveliest consciousness of my feeble powers; He, whose cause and honour you intend to advance, will reward you, where I cannot, and He, "that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," can through me and in me justify your confidence, and I trust that he will do it according to his unspeakable goodness for his name's sake, if it accords with the decree of his adorable wisdom.

As for myself, I confess before you, Reverend Sir, and before Him, "who trieth the hearts and reins," that I am deeply penetrated with the sense of the high importance of this charge and of the great and manifold difficulties, with which a true and faithful administration of it will be unavoidably accompanied, as much as I am sensible of the insufficiency of my own ability for per-

forming all that it justly claims from me; and for this reason I should never have ventured, to take it upon me, and to join, in this part of our blessed Saviour's vineyard, that venerable band of labourers, whom you, Reverend Sir, have just now presented to my view, men so worthy of being imitated, if the grounds of my hope of success had been confined to the narrow limits of my own gifts and knowledge. However, since it was the Lord, who furnished me the will, who strengthened amidst the enjoyments of the conveniences and comforts of life my resolution, willingly to yield up all, which was dear to my heart, my native land, home, friends, relations, parents, prospects, in order to do something for his glory, and for the welfare of poor brethren in a distant country,—since it was the Lord, who hitherto succoured my desire, for more than two years past the warmest of my heart, by directing a suitable concurrence of circumstances: He also, I confidently trust, will grant, according to his infinite grace, the accomplishment. With Him, with the constant reliance on his most powerful aid and assistance I ventured to enter his sacred and blessed service, by His help I hope to succeed in it with joy and to prosper. And thus I go with a firm and cheerful heart, whither the Almighty Head of the church has called me, well convinced, that he asks nothing from his servant

but true faith, love, and filial trust. My heart bears me witness, that it was only the love for Him, who loved me first, and for those, who are not yet convinced of "the true and faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, which prevailed upon me to take this resolution.

And therefore I shall spare no pains in satisfying my most sincere desire, to offer to unhappy slaves of superstition and dangerous error, the blissful freedom of the Gospel, and the glad tidings of everlasting redemption, which has been obtained by the Son of God for all mankind; I shall endeavour, as much as I am able, to make them sensible of their distressed condition, that they, "turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, may enter the covenant of grace, in order to receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith." My duties, however, are still strange to me, with regard to their particular objects, and, for that reason, that kind and judicious advice, Reverend Sir, which you have afforded to me, by a view of the grounds of our religion, as they must be put to heathens, contrasting them with their opinions, was most acceptable to me; and, as I flatter myself with the hope, that I shall also in future not fail to be supported by the counsels of those, whose talents

and experience render their advice so valuable, I trust that I shall soon be initiated in the various duties and employments of my office.

As for the great and important advantages, which, as you, Reverend Sir, have reminded me, the present settlement of the British government, the establishment of a church under a pious and learned bishop, and the progress of education in India, offers to me, I deeply feel, that by all these circumstances, my prospects are very much brightened; I find many of those difficulties removed, with which my predecessors have had to struggle; I can gather with joy, where they have been obliged to sow with trouble and tears; and, what I esteem as far the highest privilege of my condition, in comparison with that of former Missionaries, I am permitted to confide in the particular assistance and advice of a man, who, as the head of the Church in the East Indies, has so great an influence upon the cause of Christianity, and who is so strongly alive to every effort for spreading the divine truth in that part of the world. I know also, that by all these advantages my obligations and responsibility are increased in a high degree; and I ought therefore, so much more to claim your indulgence, and to request you not to measure my good will and zeal by the immediate results of my labours. Very far, however, from being discouraged or

intimidated by these additional calls upon my zeal and watchfulness, I shrink from no exertion or sacrifice, which may be required in the faithful discharge of my duty. And now, may the Lord, our most gracious God, be pleased to accomplish all your good wishes for me; may he please to grant to me a longer career of earthly usefulness than he did to my dear predecessor, the late excellent Jacobi; may it please him to crown my upright and faithful endeavours with his best blessings; and never to take from me his love and grace. With a heart deeply moved, I now take leave of you, Reverend and Venerable Sir, and of this honourable SOCIETY; I shall never forget how much I am indebted to you, and how strongly I am tied to the cause of the word of God. Continue to afford me, even in that distant country, your valuable benevolence, your prayers, and your constant support. May the Lord take you, and all the Members of this SOCIETY, under his gracious care and protection; may he bless all your Christian endeavours for the welfare of many of our brethren, near and far, and for the honour of his most sacred name.

THE END.

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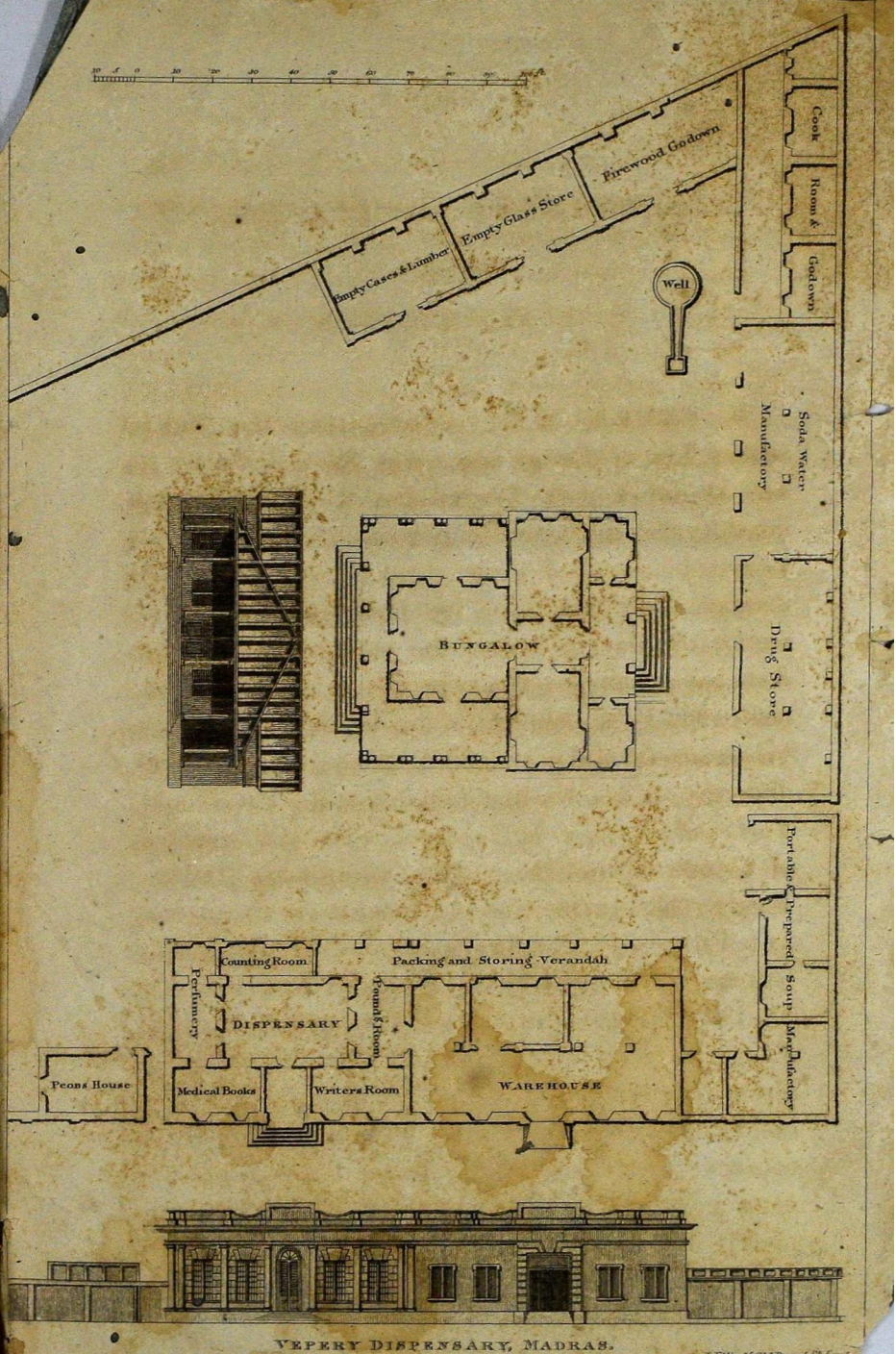

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