

Obituary Notice
OF THE
LIFE AND MINISTRY
OF THE LATE
REVEREND JOHN MACK
OF SERAMPORE.

“ BEHOLD, HE WAS HONOURABLE AMONG THE THIRTY, BUT ATTAINED
NOT TO THE FIRST THREE.”—*I. Chron. xi., 25.*



NEWCASTLE
T. & J. HODGSON, UNION STREET

MDCCCXLVI.

DEDICATION.

TO JOSEPH TOWN, ESQ., LEEDS.

MY DEAR SIR,

Lord BROUGHAM has somewhere remarked that the hostility of religious sects toward each other is in an inverse ratio to the points in which they are agreed. This witness is true: and we have an ample illustration of it in the hostility which the general body of Baptist Ministers in this kingdom have shewn toward the Serampore Brethren, with whom in every point of faith and ecclesiastical order they profess to be agreed—the only point of difference being a bare matter of economical arrangement. The three great names, CAREY, MARSHMAN, and WARD, once the household words of the Baptist Denomination, have lost among the English Baptists the charm which

they possessed. It is true the name CAREY has not been formally cast out as evil—a lingering halo yet surrounds it; but who can read that most miserable of all miserable biographies, Carey's Memoirs of Dr. CAREY, without reaching the conclusion that it savours more of an indictment of the great Missionary than a fair and honest narrative of the life and labours of a man who, from the Ascension to the present period stands without a rival as a translator of the Sacred Oracles of Almighty God. It is pleasing, however, in the midst of the bigotry and party feeling which surrounds us to find a man like Mr. ANDERSON, of Edinburgh, in his immortal work *The Annals of the English Bible*, bear the testimony which he does to Dr. CAREY and the Missionary Family of Serampore—a testimony which must find its way to the judgment and affection of every unprejudiced reader. But Mr. JOHN C. MARSHMAN, of Serampore, is, after all, the individual who is bound by every principle of filial piety and christian duty, to submit to the world what has been so long expected at his hands—*The History of the Serampore Mission during the times of Carey, Marshman, and Ward*. His powerful and ac-

complished pen is fully equal to the task of clearing away the mists of prejudice which bitter and disappointed men have thrown around "the first three," and to bring out their characters and labours in their true light and glory.

The Fathers and founders of the Serampore Mission having had to undergo the petty persecution to which I have alluded, it is not surprising that their successors should have been treated with contempt. Who now hears of Serampore, once designated "the Eye of India" and "the Jerusalem of the East"? and yet men mighty in Christian and intellectual enterprise have always been found there. Among them Mr. MACK held a distinguished place, but his death has only occasioned a passing notice in the Baptist periodicals of England. I have therefore deemed it to be my duty to reprint the Sketch which appeared in *The Friend of India* of May 8th, 1845, and which is attributed to the kindly feelings of his old associate, Mr. J. C. MARSHMAN. A more extensive record of the Christian attainments and labours of this most excellent person I hope may yet be given to the public. I had the happiness of making the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. MACK in 1838, and

the impression which their Christian character made upon the feelings of my family and myself are as deep and fresh as ever. To Mrs. MACK I owe the possession of a lock of the hair of CAREY, which she separated from his venerable head, and although I am no worshipper of relicks, yet I value it most highly as a memorial of a man of imperishable renown. You, my dear TOWN, took a prominent stand among those who remained faithful to Serampore, and I know of no one more worthy than yourself to whom I can dedicate the present reprint.

I am,
MY DEAR TOWN,
Ever your's, faithfully,
JOHN FENWICK.

11, *Ellison Place, Newcastle upon Tyne,*
5th January, 1846.

THE LATE
REVEREND JOHN MACK.

(From the Friend of India, May 8, 1845.)

IT is with feelings of no ordinary sorrow that we this week record the loss which the interests of society have sustained by the death of the Rev. JOHN MACK. He passed the evening of Tuesday the 29th of April, in the company of his intimate friends, and never appeared to enjoy better health, or to exhibit more life and cheerfulness. On rising the next morning, he complained of a slight diarrhœa, and in the hope of shaking off the attack, took a long ride on horseback; but by ten o'clock in the day, it became manifest that he was labouring under a severe attack of spasmodic cholera. Medical aid was promptly afforded and nothing which the assiduity of relatives and friends, or the resources which professional skill could supply, was wanting, but the disease had already obtained too firm a grasp of his frame, and he expired about half-past ten on the

night of the 30th of April. He was interred the following afternoon in the cemetery which contains the remains of his beloved colleagues. His corpse was followed to the grave by a large body of friends, and by his missionary brethren of various denominations from Calcutta, amidst the lamentations and tears of the inhabitants of the town, of which he was so distinguished an ornament.

He was born in Edinburgh on the 12th of March, 1797, and educated at the High School, where his early success gave an earnest of his future eminence. He subsequently entered the Baptist College at Bristol, then under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Ryland, with a view to missionary labour in the East. While pursuing his studies there, Mr. MACK was introduced to the late Mr. Ward, one of the Serampore missionaries, who had been obliged to visit England for his health, and was prevailed on to accompany him to India, in connection with that mission. Before quitting his native land, he entered the marriage state, and his widow still survives to bemoan her loss. He arrived in this country at the beginning of 1822, and immediately entered on his duties as Professor in Serampore College, and was actively and successfully engaged for 14 years in directing the studies of the youth connected with it, and more especially in training up young men for missionary labour in this country. From a congeniality of disposition, he soon contracted a strong attachment to Dr. Carey and his colleagues, and, in ad-

dition to his engagements in the College, rendered them every assistance while they lived, and endeavoured to carry forward their labours, as they were successively removed to their eternal reward. In all their trials and difficulties he adhered to them with unshaken fidelity and affection. When this Journal was established in 1835, he took an active share of its editorial management, and as long as he could command leisure, enriched it with his contributions. On his return from a tour through the eastern provinces of Bengal, the Cossya Hills, and Assam, in 1836, he was attacked with a fever, from which he recovered with great difficulty, and which rendered a voyage to England indispensable. While residing there, it became his painful duty, in consequence of the death of friends and supporters at home, and the declining health of Dr. Marshman, to make over to the Baptist Missionary Society the Missionary Stations which he and his associates had been instrumental in establishing and supporting. From this transfer the establishment at Serampore, the original seat of the mission, was excepted. Mr. MACK returned to India at the beginning of 1839, with a determination to devote his energies to the maintenance of the labours of his deceased colleagues in the contracted sphere to which they were now reduced. From his own love of independence, as well as from a hope of usefulness, he took charge of the seminary which the death of Dr. Marshman had left vacant. He soon raised its reputation to the high-

est degree, and rendered it the first private establishment of education in India. While engaged in the laborious duties of a teacher, he sustained the pastoral charge of the Church at Serampore, both European and native, directed the Missionary efforts of the station and its neighbourhood with the warmest zeal, and gave his cheerful and invaluable aid to the general cause of Missions in India.

Few men have ever come out to this country who appeared to be so eminently fitted for public usefulness, by the extraordinary endowments of nature and his personal acquirements, as our deceased friend. He was a well read classic, and an able mathematician, and there were few branches of natural science in which he was not at home, and in which he did not succeed in keeping himself up to the level of modern discoveries. He was especially attached to the science of chemistry, which he had cultivated with success under the most eminent Professors in London. Soon after his arrival in India, he gave a series of chemical lectures in Calcutta—the first ever delivered in the city; and at a later period prepared an elementary treatise on this science, and translated it into the Bengalee language for the use of native pupils. It was, however, the originality of his mind, and the solidity of his judgment by which he was so remarkably distinguished. The depth of his observations on all subjects to which his attention was turned, whether religion or science, or the political, social, and moral

condition and movements of society gave them a peculiar value. He seemed to seize instinctively upon the exact bearings of the most complicated question, and to unravel all its difficulties by the simplest process, and to place it at once in the clearest point of view. But the energies of his mind, and the strength of his affections, were above all things consecrated to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, and of the system of Divine truth revealed in them; and it was in the clear exposition and the forcible inculcation of those truths that he rendered himself so eminently useful. On all subjects he was a ready and persuasive speaker, and left a strong impression on the mind; but it was in his pulpit ministrations that he attracted the largest share of public attention. There was a uniform elevation of thought in his discourses, which, combined with a lofty train of reasoning and the fervour of pious zeal, not only convinced the judgment but captivated the heart; so that his hearers seemed to be carried irresistibly along with him as he unfolded the doctrines of the Gospel, and enforced them on the conscience with all the power of language. Yet in his noblest flights of eloquence, there was nothing meretricious, studied or affected; there was apparently no effort; his mind seemed to rise spontaneously to the greatness of the subject, and the audience felt themselves enraptured with his majestic views of Christian truth. On some occasions he seemed to attain that highest point of human eloquence, where admiration of the

speaker is entirely lost in the contemplation of the subject with which he succeeds in filling the mind.

His attachment to the missionary cause was the leading principle of action throughout his Indian career. There was no exertion and no sacrifice which he was not prepared to make for its advancement. To have been associated with the founders of the Protestant Mission in Bengal with Carey, Marshman, and Ward ; to have assisted in their labours and participated in their joys and sorrows, he considered the glory of his life. He had relinquished all idea of returning to his native land, and had resolved to devote himself to the end of his days to the promotion of this cause. In the more immediate sphere of his labours, he gave all the leisure which he could obtain to the superintendence of the native church, and of the missionary efforts connected with it ; and his intimate knowledge of the native language and character, and that rare union of firmness, discretion, and kindness, which he possessed, rendered his services invaluable. At the same time he watched over the general cause of Indian missions in all parts of the country with parental solicitude, and omitted no opportunity of promoting its interests ; and he had just laid down a scheme of more extended usefulness in which he had hoped to take an active share, when he was suddenly removed from his labours.

As a public writer, he had few equals among us. His compositions bore the exact impress of his mind,

and were remarkable for their purity, clearness, and vigor. He cultivated his style with no little assiduity, and was remarkably happy in clothing his thoughts in the strongest and most appropriate expressions. In all he wrote, however, his great object was to discover and exhibit the truth, without any undue partiality, either for his own preconceived notions or for the authority of others. He wrote with much deliberation, and seldom modified the structure of a sentence, or even changed a word. Some of his ablest papers were sent to press without the alteration of more than a phrase or two. That correctness and elegance of diction which some men attain only by the most painful and elaborate emendations, was exhibited in the first draft of his composition.

He was by nature of a warm and impatient disposition, but by conscientious and unremitting effort, under the blessing of God, he succeeded in obtaining a most remarkable control over his own feelings and passions. His patient endurance of provocations when influenced by a sense of duty, and his calmness and self-possession in the most trying emergencies, commanded the constant respect and admiration of his friends. So complete, indeed, was the self-possession he had acquired, that it seemed as if no irritation could disturb the equanimity of his temper. Like his colleagues, he had the most perfect contempt for money, except as it could be made subservient to the benefit of others. What he gave he gave cheerfully and unostentatiously ;

his liberality was scarcely limited by his means ; and it was probable that if he had possessed the most ample fortune, his generosity would still have risen above the level of it. But he had the far more rare and difficult virtue of generosity of feeling. He was ever ready to make allowances for the failings and weaknesses of others, to put the most friendly construction on all their actions, and to respect the integrity of their motives. He was remarkable for the simplicity of his character. He entertained an instinctive abhorrence of everything that was tortuous, or even disingenuous, in morals or religion, or in social intercourse. His own principles were adopted after deep investigation, and on the most thorough conviction of their truth, and they were maintained with firmness and consistency, and without bigotry. Though his predilections were strong, he manifested great consideration for all who differed from him in opinion or principle, provided there was no manifest insincerity in their professions. Both in public and in private he exhibited great moral courage in the unflinching defence of what he believed to be the truth. He appeared in a great measure to be free from the influence of prejudice ; so much so indeed that one almost felt ashamed to exhibit any such weakness in his presence ; and if on any occasion any appearance of prejudice was apparent in his conduct or conversation, it was evidently to be traced to the strength of his principles and not to the littleness of his mind.

In the circle in which the influence of his personal character was more distinctly felt, he has left a void which will not easily be filled up. To him all resorted in trouble and difficulty, as if by a natural attraction, with the assurance of meeting with the most affectionate sympathy and the soundest advice. The clearness of his views on all subjects, and his freedom from prejudice and excitement, made him in every case the surest guide. With all these elements of true greatness in his character, few men have been so free from pride, or entertained a more humble sense of their own worth and importance. In the intercourse of life he invariably exhibited the utmost cheerfulness and even playfulness of disposition. There was so complete an absence of all moroseness in his composition, and his countenance was so perpetually lighted up with a smile, as to render him the most delightful of companions. In him true religion may be said to have worn its most attractive form, and his whole life was a comment on the instructions he delivered from the pulpit.

If it should appear to any of our readers that we have dwelt longer on the excellencies of Mr. MACK's character than is usual in such obituary notices, we must beg to remind them, that in the extensive circle of his friends and acquaintances his death is justly considered even more as a public than a private loss.—Such a tribute as we have endeavoured to offer, was, moreover, due to the memory of the last of those great and good men, whose public labours, during the last

forty-five years, have so powerfully attracted the affections of the Christian world to the Serampore Mission. If on such an occasion personal feelings may be permitted to mingle with public considerations, we shall not be censured for indulging our individual grief on the loss of the beloved associate, whose counsel and friendship we have had the privilege to enjoy for nearly a quarter of a century, without the slightest interruption.

