THE UNITARIAN FUND REGISTER.

No. I.

Letters from Rev. W. Adam, *Calcutta, and* W. Roberts, *Madras.*

The Committee of the Unitarian Fund wish to call the particular attention of their Subscribers, and of the Unitarian public, to the following interesting communication. However impracticable it may be at present to realize such a plan of Missionary operations as Mr. Adam has suggested, it will be well to keep that plan in view, and the remarks which it has led him to make on the state of society in Hindostan cannot but be read with pleasure. A valuable present of books has been forwarded to Mr. Adam, and the Committee have pledged themselves to bring his application for assistance towards the erection of a Chapel at Calcutta, before their brethren in this country, not doubting that so important a case will receive the prompt and liberal attention which it merits. Subscriptions for this purpose will be received by the officers of the Society.

To the Secretary of the Unitarian Fund.

Dear Sir,

Having lately seen an account of the Unitarian Fund Society, of which it is stated that you are Secretary, I take the liberty of soliciting, through you, the attention of that body to the state of religion in British India, and especially in Calcutta, its capital. I left England as a Missionary, under the patronage of the Baptist Society, in the year 1817, and since then have continued to reside in this city. The difficulties I experienced in my labours amongst the Natives, on the subject of the Trinity, gradually, although slowly, matured into a conviction that it was contrary both to scripture and reason, and this conviction compelled me to an open renunciation of it and profession of Unitarianism. I have, in consequence, within a few months past, been excommunicated from the religious Society to which I belonged, and with the assistance of a few friends have rented a house in which Christian worship is regularly conducted. This, together with a late publication of Rammohun Roy's, whom I am happy to number amongst the very warmest supporters of our cause, has excited much opposition amongst the Trinitarian denominations, Churchmen, Independents and Baptists; and the immediate object which I have in view, in this communication, is to secure that co-operation with Unitarians in England, which is necessary to give efficiency and permanency to our efforts in this country, and which, I believe, is one object of the Unitarian Fund Society to afford. I am wholly ignorant of the numbers and actual state of Unitarians in England, and of the character which they possess as a denomination, having received all my impressions on these subjects from the writings of their adversaries. I am, therefore, wholly unable to judge whether a proposal to form a Unitarian Foreign

Missionary Society on a scale to embrace the whole denomination in England, Scotland and Ireland, will meet with your approbation, or the attempt with ultimate success. I know that Trinitarians in general represent their opponents as destitute of that deep feeling of the value of true religion, by which some of themselves have been induced to visit foreign and distant countries with a view to communicate to the Heathen a knowledge of the gospel. This, after all, is a merit which they cannot claim universally, for they are not all Missionaries; nor can they claim it exclusively, without forgetting the numerous navigators and travellers who, on purely worldly principles and motives, have dared every difficulty and danger without shrinking. As for myself, I can say, that since I embraced Unitarianism, while I am thankful to my Father in heaven for so enlightening my mind as to perceive the errors of opinion which I formerly entertained, and so strengthening my religious principle as to enable me to avow my convictions, I, at the same time, feel an equally sincere and earnest desire to be instrumental in making known to my fellow-creatures, and especially to the Heathen, the glorious gospel of the blessed God—a desire which is abundantly confirmed when I consider that there are so many of "my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh," whom I love and esteem and revere as pious Christians, but who, in principle at least, approach so near to the Heathen. In order to justify and enforce the proposal suggested above, I will mention some advantages which English Unitarians may enjoy in seeking to propagate Christianity in this country.

1. You as Englishmen enjoy superior advantages to American Unitarians. Under the term Englishmen I include, of course, both the Scotch and Irish; I am myself a native of Scotland. I need not remind you of the Act which was passed by the Legislature about the year 1811 or 1812, at the time the opposition to the Missions in India was at its height. With its particular provisions I am not fully acquainted, but it is in virtue of documents, executed agreeably to that Act, between the Missionary Societies, the Missionaries they employ, and the East India Company, that the Missionaries are permitted to reside in India.

2. As Unitarians you enjoy the same privileges here that you enjoy in England. I have been informed, on good authority, that his Lordship, the Bishop of Calcutta, soon after I commenced Unitarian worship in Calcutta, agitated the question of my being sent home or silenced by "the powers that be;" but Mr. Spankie, the Attorney-General, assured him that these days were now past. It could only be on the ground of Mr. Smith's Bill that the interference of Government was negatived.

3. This country has peculiar claims upon you as Christians. Here is an immense population subject to the British Government, but ignorant of the gospel, and unblessed with those elevated and purifying hopes which it conveys. You are possessed of the light of Christianity, of which they are destitute; and you have free access to them for the purpose of communicating it if you will avail yourselves of that privilege. The conquered naturally view with great respect all who belong to the cast of the conquerors, especially if the latter possess learning, and I, perhaps, may say piety, as they are by no means blind to the excellencies and defects of those who bear the Christian name. I have reason to suppose that they even exercise a very strict scrutiny over those who profess to teach them a religion better than their own; and the fact that they have discovered, or supposed that they have discovered, much that is selfish and worldly in the conduct of such, has operated powerfully against the propagation of the gospel. On the other hand, if Christians of sound learning and rational piety, unfettered by worldly pursuits, and independent of pecuniary assistance from those to whom they are sent, engage in Missionary labours in this country, they will command the respect of their bitterest Native antagonists, and may be eminently useful in spreading the knowledge of the gospel.

4. As Unitarian Christians you possess advantages superior to those enjoyed by any other denomination. The principal classes who form the

object of Missionary labour are Europeans, their descendants born in the country, Mussulmans and Hindoos. Among the persons belonging to the *first* class there is, it is true, a vast host of prejudices; but truth is gradually making its way, and time is discovering many more than might have been expected, who dare to think for themselves. There are even not a few who, from the unreasonableness and absurdity of the popular modes of Christian belief, have cast off all regard to religion itself. Two, if not three, persons, who formerly belonged to this description, now regularly attend my preaching, and I cannot but hope, that they will be gradually convinced of the truth, and imbibe the spirit of Christianity. One gentleman, in particular, has assured me, that for eighteen years that he has been in India he never once before attended any other place of worship, solely for the reason I have already mentioned. There are many, it is believed, in similar circumstances, who would reject with disdain every attempt to convert them to Trinitarian Christianity, but who, if proper exertions were made, would yield to the more rational and more evangelical doctrines of Unitarianism.

The *second* class are those born of European fathers and Native mothers, and the offspring of those by intermarriages among themselves. This is a body of people who are just beginning to feel their own importance, and will, I doubt not, at a future period exercise a powerful influence over the destinies of this vast continent. Their religious and literary character is as yet unformed, or is at least only forming, and none can be so useful in leading to its complete developement as Missionaries, and especially Unitarian Missionaries, against whom their prejudices are much weaker than those of the pure European population. Convinced that they know little, they have in general an anxious desire to learn; and to minds in such a state, the pure, liberal and enlightened principles of Unitarian Christianity must prove highly acceptable.

The Mussulmans, who compose the *third* class, are perhaps the least accessible to Christian Missionaries, but of all Missionaries they are most accessible to Unitarian Missionaries. From the misconceptions which they entertain respecting Christianity, and their consequent prejudices against it, it is almost impossible for a Missionary to get a hearing from a respectable or learned Mussulman. They know it principally, if not wholly, from what Mohummud has told them of it in the Koran, that is, as it existed in the sixth and seventh centuries, and what they do hear from Trinitarian Missionaries tends too much to confirm their erroneous notions. It is only Unitarian Missionaries that can ever expect to obtain from them a patient hearing, and to superinduce, on the acknowledged principle of the Divine Unity, the pure morality and the purifying hopes of the gospel.

The Hindoos form the *fourth* class, and amongst these there is a large majority of Idolaters, and a small but increasing minority of Theists. With respect to the former, a Trinitarian Missionary is placed in inextricable difficulties which a Unitarian cannot feel, for after having convinced them of the absurdity of Idolatry, he is obliged to refute himself by teaching them the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ. The same arguments which he employs against the Idolaters, they may employ against him. Those whom I denominate Theists are the followers of the Vedant system of philosophy, and are in fact Unitarian Hindoos. This system has been of late revived in Bengal with considerable success, through the exertions of Rammohun Roy, and those who have embraced it form a small but highly respectable portion of the Hindoo community. From them the Trinitarian Missionary experiences much greater difficulty than from their idolatrous countrymen, for here it is not as in the former case, one error struggling with another, but error contending against truth. The Unitarian Hindoo possesses a vantage ground, from which the Trinitarian Christian never can dislodge him. Yet in them we have a proof that the doctrine of the Divine Unity alone does not humble the mind, restrain the passions, and reform the life, for no one is more deeply impressed with the necessity of giving them the light of Christianity than Rammohun Roy, who has had the best opportunities of knowing the effect which such

conversion from Idolatry to Unitarian Hindooism has produced. All these considerations combined, seem imperiously to call on English Unitarians to exert themselves according to their ability, in spreading the gospel in this country. I hope in suggesting these, I shall not be considered presumptuous, or as casting a reflection upon your zeal. We can never be the worse of being told our duty, and encouraged to do it.

On the supposition that something like what I have suggested may be practicable, I must beg for your indulgence in the remaining part of this letter, while I attempt to point out some errors into which it appears to me Missionary Societies, have in general fallen, and to suggest, in some particulars, what has occurred to me as most advisable to be done. I have no wish to dictate, and if I had I know that I have no right to expect to be listened to. You will, therefore, consider me as expressing my opinions with freedom, because I know you will exercise the same freedom in judging of them. 1. With respect to those who shall be employed as Missionaries, they should not only be pious, which is of course indispensable, but, if possible, well versed in literature, both sacred and profane. It has too frequently happened, that persons have come to this country as Missionaries, who have no other recommendation or qualification but their piety; and the injury which is thus done to the Christian cause is incalculable. How great must the injury be, when instead of teaching others, they need themselves to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, and when instead of being superior, or at least equal, they are far inferior in a knowledge of the principles of reasoning and in a general acquaintance with science, to most of those amongst whom they are called to labour! 2. My next remark respects the *salary* of Missionaries. That which they receive seldom enables them to do more than barely subsist, and they are in general left in the greatest uncertainty respecting a provision for the future wants of their wives and families. This is productive of the very worst consequences. It lessens their respectability, harasses their minds, and in both ways impedes their usefulness. This is not all. From a laudable desire to support themselves and provide for their families, they open seminaries of education, or engage in other secular pursuits which take up a great portion of their time and strength, already sufficiently exhausted by the nature and effects of the climate. By this means also, they come at last to be considered as no better than all others who come to this country in search of wealth and worldly comfort, and not as those who make the spiritual concerns of men, and the propagation of the true religion, the principal objects of their attention. As a Missionary is expected to relinquish every means of personal and family aggrandizement, so both the present and future wants of himself and family should be, not splendidly, but decently and respectably provided for. His salary should enable him to support his family and educate his children, and by gradual savings to lay up a sum which may assist his widow and orphans when he is dead. I proceed on the supposition that he is married, because it is on many accounts desirable that he should be so; but whether married or unmarried, his salary should be such as to enable him to promote his studies in theology and in the languages, literature and religion of this country, by purchasing books and employing learned Natives, and also to promote in a pecuniary way, those schemes of benevolence which are every where afloat. Two Missionaries thus supported will be more efficient than ten in the ordinary way, and it is my knowledge of the great evils that have resulted from a contrary course, that has led me on this subject to be so particular. 3. What relation should subsist between a Missionary abroad and those who support him? Nearly the same as between a minister at home and those who support him. A minister is never dictated to by his people. They retain their independence and he retains his. But I have known the Directors of Missionary Societies dictate to their Missionaries abroad on subjects with which they could not be sufficiently acquainted. Choose only such men as Missionaries in whose piety, zeal and prudence you can confide, and then leave it to themselves to labour where and when and how they think best. 4.

What relation should subsist between two or more Missionaries supported from the same funds, and living in the same city, or province, or country? Each should be perfectly independent of all the rest, and all should be viewed by their common employers with equal affection and confidence. There are various instances of a most injurious partiality shown by Missionary Societies to those who have happened to originate a Mission. Nothing is more depressing to the spirits of junior Missionaries, nothing more fatal to the success of all, by sowing the seeds of dissension and of every evil work.

5. In sending out Missionaries and fixing upon stations, a *system* should be adopted and steadily followed. This has not in any instance, as far as I am aware, been even attempted. Missionaries have been sent forth east, west, north and south, without any calculation of the probabilities or proprieties of the thing. The proposed Unitarian Missionary Society should *confine* its attention to the British possessions in the East—a field of exertion sufficiently wide, and embracing a numerous and highly interesting population. Missionaries should first be sent to the three Presidencies of India—Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, and to Columbo the capital of Ceylon: for each of which, four Missionaries would perhaps be sufficient. Missionaries should then be settled at the military stations attached to these, and for each of them, perhaps, two Missionaries would be enough. Attention should then be given to the principal Hindoo and Mussulman cities, for each of which, at least two would be required. By proposing to send first to the Presidencies and the military stations, and last of all to the Native cities, the stronger claims of the Natives upon our attention are by no means overlooked, for wherever you find a European you are sure to find a Native population, and the character of the former is powerfully operating to form that of the latter; from which it follows, that if you wish to affect the Native character you must not only work directly upon it, but also indirectly, by working upon the European character.

6. The Missionaries, who are sent to the Presidencies and to Columbo, should be accompanied, without fail, by a printer, and, if possible, with a letter-founder, with as complete a supply of the apparatus of their respective arts, as your funds will enable you to send. If a paper-maker, as well as a printer and letter-founder, were sent to each of these places, the advantages would be still greater. In this country these three arts are in a very low state of cultivation, and yet all three are eminently useful, if not indispensably necessary in the diffusion of knowledge and religion. The equipment of these persons would be at first expensive, but they would more than repay you on their arrival in India. A schoolmaster, well acquainted with the Lancasterian system of education, would be very useful also at each of these places, but from his labours no emolument could be expected to arise. His equipment, however, would be attended with far less expense.

7. In order to promote that good understanding between Missionaries residing at the same place, which is so desirable but which is so seldom witnessed, there ought to be a *division* of labour. A printer should do nothing but print; a letter-founder should do nothing but cast types, a paper-maker should do nothing but make paper, and a schoolmaster should do nothing but instruct youth. This, although so plain and so manifestly proper to be done, has seldom, if ever, been adhered to. But I will go further and say, that of the four Missionaries, whom I shall suppose to be stationed at Calcutta, of the four at Bombay, of the four at Madras, and of the four at Columbo, two ought to engage in labours which have the English language for their basis, and the other two in labours which require the use of the Native languages. Of the two who engage in Native studies and labours, one should devote his exclusive attention to Hindoo, and the other to Mussulman literature and theology; and, perhaps, at Madras and Columbo, a third Missionary would be required to study and labour in Portuguese. Amongst these different classes of people, the modes of thinking and reasoning and acting are so opposite, as well as the courses of study necessary for those who would labour for their good, that if the same Missionary attempt any

two, he will be successful with neither. Again, of the two Missionaries, supposed to be settled at a military station, one should engage in English, and the other in Native labours; and of the two supposed to reside in a Hindoo or Mussulman city, one should labour amongst Hindoos, and the other amongst Mussulmans, for there is no city either wholly Hindoo or wholly Mussulman.

I must now hasten to the end of this long letter, and hope you will excuse the freedom and minuteness with which I have considered the subject. How much pleasure will it afford both to me and to several friends of true religion in this country, if I can learn that you are directing your attention to the wide field of usefulness which is presented here to the Unitarian denomination! We have just established "The Unitarian Press," at which we are reprinting a very excellent sermon, preached by Mr. Channing at Boston, United States; and I propose issuing, in the course of a week or two, subscription books for the erection of a Unitarian Chapel. If the Unitarian Fund Society can assist us, let them do it either in the form of a subscription for the building of the Chapel, or by sending out a supply of good printing materials; viz. press, types, paper, and if possible a printer. The latter mode will be peculiarly acceptable.

I have been favoured by a gentleman with a hasty perusal of your Sermon "On the Duty of Christians towards Deists," and earnestly pray that the enlightened and Christian views which it contains, may exercise their due influence in repressing the attempts which are made to defend our religion by force. The absurdity of these attempts is instantaneously perceived in a Heathen country, especially if it be under a Heathen government. In such a country, under such a government, acting upon such a principle, how could Christianity ever be propagated? Another gentleman has also lent me the first part of Dr. Carpenter's Reply to Bishop Magee, and it will give me much pleasure to see the second part when that is published. May I beg the favour of your communicating to those Unitarian Ministers with whom you are acquainted in London, Bristol, Liverpool, &c. &c., the substance of this letter, and endeavouring to concert with them those measures by which its object may be attained. Earnestly praying that you may be animated with pious zeal, prudence and unanimity,

I am, very sincerely yours,

W. ADAM.

Calcutta, January 28, 1822.

Another letter has arrived from our worthy Correspondent at Madras. The arrangement contemplated by the Committee, and which they hope to be enabled to render permanent, has been already stated by Dr. T. Rees, in a pamphlet stitched up with the Monthly Repository for December last.

To the Rev. W. J. Fox.

Madras, August 25, 1822.

REVEREND SIR,

By the blessing of heaven all things are going on as well as can be expected in our blockaded state: my health is pretty good, my brethren are all pretty well. The enclosed piece is Questions to the Trinitarians, with two small Dialogues taken from the Christian Reformer, Vol. I. pp. 87—91;

Vol. III. pp. 24—27; Vol. II. pp. 19, 20; and Vol. IV. pp. 10—13. When I answered your letter this was in the press; for fear of some unforeseen hindrance I did not mention, but now happily I got it accomplished. The Prayer Book is now in the press, and as far as half of the evening service, is printed off, and I hope by good Providence to be permitted to go through the whole. I have already advanced above one hundred Rupees for paper and printing toward this business. If I do not receive more money from your Society very soon, I shall be under the necessity of mortgaging or selling some of my little effects, which will make my circumstance more harder than it is already; but I have the hope of receiving assistance from our respectable English Unitarian friends. What little I can get done in the way of printing I am anxious to have it done; no time is to be lost; I am growing older and weaker every year, and do not yet see men in our Society capable of arranging my writing and correcting the press after me; even if a Unitarian Missionary comes to-day, it will be many years before he can do any thing of the kind in our language. Therefore, I earnestly [illegible] my respectable friends and benefactors, the friends of pure Christianity, to do, without losing time, every thing in their power to further and promote the truth, which we have providently discovered through their laborious works, and which now wants their parental assistance and encouragements.

Our Prayer Book, I think, will contain about 120 pages, of the same paper and size of the enclosed tract, at half a pagoda a page for the printing, which will come to 60 pagodas; paper for 250 copies will cost about 18 or 20 pagodas; to a person attending at the press 8 pagodas; for binding fifty copies for present use, 12 pagodas; total, one hundred pagodas, or forty pounds English money.

When the Prayer Book is done, which I hope will be done before the end of this year, my intention is to print Josiah Townsend's Collection of Scripture Texts, and some other small tracts. After that, if I am enabled, with three hundred pounds I shall be able to put my Notes on the Gospel and Acts to the press. I think about four hundred and fifty, or five hundred pounds will nearly print most of my writings. Let this estimation be laid before the Unitarian Committee that is formed to correspond with the Native Unitarian Christians of Madras, and let them do and assist me, from time to time, as their means will enable them. As I am not allowed to publish my religious sentiments, the printed tracts, of course, for present, will be circulated only among the members of our own Society. I hope my friends will continue their application to the Government for procuring us the liberty of the press, and may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the one living and true God, the Supreme Ruler and sole proprietor of heaven and earth, bless and reward them with all their good endeavours and kind intentions for the good of mankind and the advancement of pure Christianity.

The twenty pounds that I received in last September, through the house of Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co. gave me 177 rupees and 12 annas; but the thirty-five pounds that I received in last month, through the house of Messrs. Binny and Co., gave me 350 rupees: in this there is five pounds more, but in the former only about six shillings and one or two pence.

As I am now living at my own place at Pursewaukam, it would be best to direct my parcels of books to the house of Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co., or to the house of Messrs. Binny and Co., and request them to see it delivered safe, and also request them to receive any little parcels of books or tracts that I may wish to send to you. I have nothing more to add but to annex my cash account.

I remain,

Reverend Sir,

In the name of the Native Christians of Pursewaukam,

Your very obedient servant,

WILLIAM ROBERTS.

Cash received from the English Unitarian Society, and expended for the good of the Native Unitarian Christians of Pursewaukum, Madras.

1821.	Pag.	Fr.	Ca.	Rup.	An.
Balance paid to the Schoolmasters in this year -	9	2	0		
Clothes and Spectacles for Daniel Savery Moote, a Reader in our Chapel - - -	1	38	0		
A Bier and Covering for the use of the Society -	6	7	30		
Palanquin hire for W. R. - - -	0	40	0		
Books and Tracts copied for keeping in circulation, from June 1819 to April 1821.					
1 Copy of Notes and Discourses on the Gospels -	14	21	20		
1 Copy of Notes and Discourses on Acts of Apostles -	3	41	0		
3 Copies of a Tract, called "No Trinity" - -	1	9	0		
12 Copies of a Sermon on the Unity of God -	2	6	0		
12 Copies of a Letter from Abraham Ramah, on the Story of the Miraculous Birth of Christ - -	1	15	0		
8 Copies of a Discourse on the Uncertainty of our Time of Death - - - -	0	16	0		
5 Copies of J. Townsend's Collection of Texts -	2	0	0		
4 Copies of a Letter to Socalinga Moodly, on the Doctrine of the Devils or Evil Spirits - -	0	12	0		
22 Copies of a Sermon preached on the 29th of August, 1819, on Isaiah xlv. 22 - - -	1	30	0		
8 Copies of a Sermon preached on Sept. 12, 1819, in favour of returning Sinners, on John v. 14 -	1	11	0		
2 Copies of a Sermon preached on the 19th of December, the same year, on the Duty of Native Christians adhering to Unitarianism, on Matthew vi. 22, 23, -	0	14	0		
8 Copies of the Worship of the Holy Scriptures contrasted with the Worship of the Established Church of England - - - - -	1	27	0		
9 Copies of a Letter to the Translators of the Bible -	1	12	30		
1 Copy of a Sermon on the Six Attributes of God; viz. that is Self-existent, he is Eternal, he has no Body, he is Supremely Good, he is Omnipresent, and he is the Author of all things - - -	0	11	20		
8 Copies of Questions to the Roman Catholics -	2	0	0		
1 Copy of Questions to the Trinitarians, from the Christian Reformer - - - - -	0	9	0		
9 Copies of Catechism - - - -	0	18	0		
13 Copies of the above Tracts, in one Volume -	1	22	70		
To printing 250 Copies of the Sermon of Aug. 19, 1819	4	33	0		
To printing 250 Copies of a Discourse, with Questions to the Worshipers of the Threemoorthies -	9	32	0		
To printing 250 Copies of Questions to Trinitarians, with two small Dialogues from the Christian Reformer	15	38	0		
Lost by Pennapah Moodly's (my Copier) sudden Death	4	16	60		
Copied for circulation many years before the above.					
3 Copies of a large Dialogue on the Religion of Ancients, on the Mythology of the Heathens and on Christianity, in 2 Volumes; each set cost 9 Pagodas	27	0	0		
1 Copy of a Dialogue between an Idolist and a Worshiper of God - - - -	2	0	0		
6 Copies of Prayer Book - - -	12	0	0		
Paid toward the Schools from the 1st of January to the 31st of July, 1822 - - -	7	25	0		
	137	12	70	or 484	8
Received from Messrs. Arbuthnot and Co., as per Rev. T. Rees's Letter in last Year - - -				177	12
Received from Messrs. Binny and Co., as per Rev. W. J. Fox's Letter in this Year - - -				350	0
				527	12
Deduct the above - -				484	8
Cash remaining in hand on the 31st of July, 1822				43	4

Madras, 25th August, 1822.

W. ROBERTS.