

of the work was concerned. A place was opened for preaching where every one could hear; and many were willing to accept Christianity; but they made no definite profession of it as they feared religious persecution and social ruin. Rae, however, was visited by many inquirers who were interested in the new religion, and he distributed many New Testaments, poor though they were, in the Assamese language; and a number of Bengali tracts were scattered abroad. It was Mr. Rae's great ambition to place a New Testament in every heathen temple. He reported from Gauhati that the people were friendly; that schools had been opened by certain Europeans; and that the work was quite successful.<sup>10</sup> From the sale of literature and from donations received, he was able to send to the Press at Serampore the goodly sum of Rs. 713.<sup>11</sup>

In 1836, Rae was encouraged by the baptism of six individuals and by the formation of the first Christian church in the Assam Valley. In connection with this progress, Lisk wrote: "A chapel has been prepared and an additional missionary is greatly needed".<sup>12</sup> The church was formed of twelve individuals, including the missionaries; and he wrote that for some time much prosperity was enjoyed by it.

This church had not been in existence for more than a year when its progress was partly checked and the outlook dimmed. Two of the small number constituting the membership were suspended from communion because of immoral living.<sup>13</sup> The people who formerly had listened attentively to the preaching had become accustomed to the white preacher; and Rae was discouraged and disgusted because, as he said, "they make sport of the whole and declare they care not for hell or God's wrath".

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In response to various pleas, a second missionary, Mr. Robinson, was sent to Gauhati; and after his arrival several schools were opened. Rae now had time to make a number of extended missionary tours in the province at which time he distributed many tracts and gospels. Mr. Robinson also made a tour of Nowgong, the main village of a great district in the province, about seventy-five miles from Gauhati, where he urgently solicited funds to establish an English school and to open up a new mission station.<sup>14</sup> This undertaking, however, was of comparatively short duration; and evidently, due to the discouragement at Gauhati or lack of re-enforcement, the work there also came practically to a standstill.

When in 1837, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Bronson, newly appointed missionaries of the American Baptist Missionary Union, came by Gauhati on their way to Sadiya, where work had been started by Nathan Brown, Mr. Thomas wrote that the work in Gauhati was not in a flourishing condition, and he said among other things that the English service held for the Europeans was very poorly attended. He commented on the word "for", because, he said, there was nobody in the church to preach to. That Sunday when Bronson and Thomas attended, there were only six present. Thomas further bewailed the fact that Rae had accepted the position of teacher in a government school where he would not be allowed to teach anything but the sciences, and non-religious subjects.

Soon after the advent of the American Baptist Mission, Rae retired from missionary service and went into educational work. Later Robinson also left the province for work in Bhutan. On March 7, 1838, intelligence was received from Captain Jenkins and the Rev

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