

Interfaith Encounter and Religious Pluralism: J.T. Sunderland's Mission to Brahma Samajes of India, 1895-96

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According to one of the few book-length studies of encounters between American missionaries and Hinduism in the nineteenth century, the years between 1870 and 1910 represents an important turning point. For more than a half century before this period, American promoters of the Christian faith in the British Raj had focused their energies almost exclusively upon exposing what they saw as the unmitigated social, moral and spiritual evil of Hindu "idolatry." Devoted to the teaching of Christian doctrine and to affecting conversions, early American missionaries had found little or nothing of value in the "heathen" religious culture they sought to replace. These same Americans agreed with British colonial officials that Hinduism, not colonial rule or endemic poverty, was mainly responsible for the social evils that plagued Indian society. Characteristic of such views was the 1823 *American Missionary Register's* argument that Hinduism was one of the "great fooleries of the world" and that the resulting "Hindoo character" was "more despicable than amiable."¹

These extremely negative constructions of India and Hinduism have persisted up to recent times in American popular culture, but there is evidence that such views receded during the late nineteenth century in important segments of the American religious landscape. Historian S.M. Pathak cites the birth of the Social Gospel movement, the growth of liberal theology and the emergence of academic comparative religion as important factors in reorienting missionary culture toward more complex, pluralistic understandings of Hinduism. Beginning

in the 1880s, moreover, the appearance of highly educated South Asian religious intellectuals in the United States undercut the crude stereotypes of benighted Hinduism that had long sustained missionary fund raising in the United States. Swami Vivekananda's famous speech defending Hinduism at the 1893 World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago is well known to students of American culture, but Protap Chandra Mazumdar's three, well-publicized visits to the United States provided Americans with a different, but equally positive view of religious life in India. The growing vibrancy and ferment of religious thought among Indian intellectuals, a trend embodied by men like Vivekananda and Mazumdar, helped to convince American missionary societies that young recruits heading into the field would need more sophisticated knowledge of South Asia's rich spiritual heritage in order to be effective advocates for their own.²

While the broad outlines of the changing relationship between American missionaries and Hinduism seem clear, students of American history and culture have not kept up with British scholars in filling in the details. In what ways did the rise of religious modernism in both the United States and India create the possibility for new, more pluralistic religious encounters? Did such encounters require fundamental alterations of the American missionary endeavor or were they compatible in some way with the traditional emphasis on religious conversion and doctrinal teaching? What role did South Asian religious intellectuals themselves play in revising negative American missionary perceptions of India's spiritual traditions? And finally, how was the American missionary discourse about Christianity and Hinduism affected by the growing conflict over colonialism and nationalism in India? J.T. Sunderland's 1895 mission to the Brahmo Samajes of India, while only one example of a large and complex story, provides insights into these questions.³

In the 1932 edition of his book *India in Bondage*, the Rev. Jabez T. Sunderland of Ann Arbor, Michigan explained to readers that the origins of his nearly forty years of activism in the cause of India's freedom from British rule stretched back to his missionary tour of the country in 1895-96. The fifty-three year old American had spent three arduous months in the Raj traveling thousands of miles by railroad, steamboat, pony cart, and, in remote areas, by trappa, "a chair carried on the back of a man." From Calcutta and the great cosmopolitan cities of the north, to the Khasi Hills of Assam on the very eastern limits of British India, he had preached Unitarianism's optimistic gospel of religious and social progress to audiences of university students, social reformers, and political activists. In the midst of it all he had even become the first American to attend a meeting of the Indian National Congress, the institution that would ultimately lead India to independence in 1947. Yet Sunderland's brief account of his mission tour left out two important contexts that had profoundly shaped his experience in South Asia as well as his later commitment to India's political freedom. The first was the common devotion to religious liberalism and social reform that linked Sunderland to his audiences in India. And the second, which Sunderland himself only dimly

understood, was the ways in which his Indian audiences had carefully shaped his understanding of their culture.⁴

J.T. Sunderland was in many ways an unusual missionary, but the personal and intellectual path that led to his encounter with India highlights the complex threads that sometimes connected American religious reformers with their counterparts in India. Brought by his family to the United States from Yorkshire, England as a small child, he had grown up in a strict Baptist home in Chautauqua County in western New York. After serving in the Union army during the Civil War, he had studied for the Baptist ministry at the “first” University of Chicago and the Baptist Union Theological Seminary. At the seminary, he followed a curriculum designed by George W. Northrup, the theologian and biblical critic. Northrup, an orthodox Trinitarian, was also a broad-minded, progressive thinker who encouraged his students to engage the work of liberal theologians from Germany and the United States. Among the books he recommended were those by Unitarian “heretics” like Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker. At Chicago, Sunderland was exposed to higher biblical criticism and theological rationalism, both of which would guide his own later career as a religious reformer and missionary. Although he filled two Baptist pulpits following his graduation from seminary in 1870, his intellectual doubts about the rationality of traditional Christianity resulted in a painful decision to abandon orthodoxy in favor of a career in the Unitarian ministry. Three years after leaving the Baptists, he still spoke powerfully about the “mental torture” his crisis of faith had produced and the relief brought about by his conversion to liberalism.⁵

As a Unitarian, Sunderland became well known as a strident critic of the popular evangelical theology of the late nineteenth century. At the same time, his early immersion in orthodox Christianity had important implications for his ministerial career and for the assumptions he brought to his missionary work. In the mid-1880s, for example, when he served as the Secretary of the Western Unitarian Conference, he had led a fierce, though unsuccessful, movement to maintain the denomination’s explicitly Christian identity. Pitted against Chicago radicals William Channing Gannet and Jenkins Lloyd Jones, both of whom sought to rebuild the Unitarian movement on the foundation of broad-based ethical humanism, Sunderland had used his large and successful church in Ann Arbor, Michigan to rally more traditional Unitarians in preserving references to God and Jesus of Nazareth in the platform of the conference. Opponents charged that Sunderland’s insistence on the Christian, theistic character of Unitarianism amounted to a theological creed, a concept that was anathema within Unitarian culture. Yet Sunderland refused to back down and he remained an influential dissenting voice in the West. “I protest against the de-Christianizing of Unitarianism in the West,” he declared in 1886. “Let us be sure that all true religious progress leads to God.”⁶

Sunderland was particularly frustrated with what he called the “de-Christianizing of Unitarianism” because he believed that it came at a time when the prospects for liberal Christianity were otherwise very bright. In his view, late-

nineteenth-century Unitarianism represented an intellectually defensible Christianity purified by the “great trial of religion” ushered in by evolutionary science and the higher criticism of the Bible. Stripped of superstitions and irrational doctrines, he argued, it now stood before the people of the world as the highest expression of human moral and spiritual aspirations. His basic message was that a simple ethical theism resting upon the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man was not only compatible with the direction of modern intellectual life but also offered the most reliable antidote to the materialism and social conflict of the Gilded Age. A broad and ambitious “missionary Unitarianism” would lead the world to see that the “great, eternal principles of the Teacher of Nazareth” had been “vindicated at the bar of reason” and were fully applicable once again to “the deep wants of today.” Like his insistence on Christian theism, his concept of a missionary impulse for Unitarianism grated on more radical colleagues who identified it with their opponents in the evangelical movement. But Sunderland wasn’t listening. If Unitarians failed to take the lead in reconciling modernism with religion, or if they did so in a way that surrendered religion entirely, other churches would fill the gap and reap the rewards.⁷

Sunderland’s more conservative brand of Unitarianism had important implications for his encounter with Indian religious leaders. His 1895 position was indeed liberal and modernistic in comparison with orthodox Christians, but it was not pluralistic in the fullest sense. Like other liberal Protestants who had attended the famous 1893 World’s Parliament of Religions, Sunderland respected the delegates from other religious traditions, but he did not endorse the notion of “parity” among the world’s faiths. He found such an idea both “absurd” and at odds with sincere belief. Instead, he subscribed to the concept of “fulfillment theology,” a system of thought developed by Max Muller, Monier Monier-Williams and other early European pioneers in the study of comparative religion. Fulfillment theology departed from traditional Christian thought in its willingness to accept, on a limited basis, the truth of non-Christian religions. Using evolutionary models to understand the religious history of the world, fulfillment theologians argued that all spiritual traditions should be understood as progressive responses to an innate, and therefore universal, human religious impulse. “We . . . see that there is not one [religion] which is entirely false,” wrote Max Muller in 1873. “In one sense every religion is a true religion, being the only religion which was possible at the time.” But fulfillment theologians also argued that Christianity represented the final destination of all human religious evolution. Christianity was a system that, in the words of Monier-Williams, satisfied “all the religious instincts, faculties, cravings, and aspirations of the human race.” Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam merited respect and detailed study not because they were equal to Christianity, but because they had raised important questions about the nature of God, prayer, and human ethics that were best answered by the Christian tradition.⁸

Prior to his mission trip, J.T. Sunderland was directly influenced by the fulfillment theology of Muller and Monier-Williams. He believed that other religions, especially Hinduism, offered important truths that should not be

ignored, but was also convinced that “the simple, rational, beautiful religion of Jesus . . . was by far the noblest form of religion that has come into the world—God’s most precious gift to the human race.” Although fulfillment theology had emerged in Europe, Unitarians in the United States proved a receptive audience for it. James Freeman Clarke, for example, American Unitarianism’s most innovative practitioner of comparative religion, praised the specific contributions of the “ten great religions” of the world, but concluded that liberal Christianity was a “pleroma” or “a religion which contained all the elements necessary for a universal religion.” In its modernist form, Clarke argued, Christianity had transcended its historic or cultural particularism and become unique among the world’s religions, “an inclusive system” of belief. At the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago, this view was reinforced by J.T. Sunderland’s wife and co-pastor Eliza Read Sunderland, who had recently completed a PhD in philosophy from the University of Michigan. “Christianity has gathered contributions from many lands and woven them into one ideal large enough to include all peoples,” she argued. Under “the ideal of a universal brotherhood bound together under a common Divine Fatherhood,” Christianity alone was “tender enough to comfort all” and “lofty enough to inspire all.”⁹

It was through this vision of spiritual evolution toward liberal Christianity that J.T. Sunderland and other Unitarians understood the significance of the Brahma Samajes (or God Societies) of India. Founded in 1828 in Calcutta by Raja Rammohun Roy, the Brahma Samaj emerged in nineteenth-century Bengal as a dynamic, if *avant garde* association of western-educated Indian religious and social reformers. Roy himself had been committed to the promotion of Hinduism’s Vedic tradition, but his intellectual relationships with English and American Unitarians led him to the systematic, critical study of the New Testament Gospels. A second generation of Brahmos built on Roy’s partial integration of Christianity in constructing a theological and moral critique of orthodox Hinduism. They argued forcefully that Vedic scriptures, rightly understood, testified to the existence of the same merciful, but ethically-demanding God that Jesus had described in the gospels. Keshub Chandra Sen, the Brahmos’ most charismatic nineteenth-century leader, was certain that the “earliest scriptures of our nation . . . are fulfilled and perfected in Christ.” Polytheism, rigid caste regulations, child-marriage, the seclusion of women, and prohibitions on widow remarriage were, to Brahmos like Sen, corruptions of Vedic ethical monotheism and violations of the “purity of character and devotion” taught by Jesus and the other great religious prophets. Protap Chandra Mazumdar, a talented and devoted disciple of Sen’s who came to the United States three times as a Brahma missionary, thrilled liberal Christians in America with his beautifully written 1883 book *The Oriental Christ*, which was published in Boston during his first visit. In it he spoke not only of his own personal “endeavors to realize the character and spirit of the Son of God,” but also of Jesus’s elevated status in the theology and liturgy of the Brahma Samaj. To many Unitarians in the West, then, Brahmaism’s rejection of traditional Hinduism and its adoption of a progressive social reform

agenda mirrored their own revolt against Christian orthodoxy. It also appeared to confirm the notion that liberal Christianity was indeed becoming a pleroma.¹⁰

Sunderland had met Brahma leaders, including Protap Chandra Mazumdar, during the World's Parliament of Religions, an event which he reported for the *Unitarian*, the denominational monthly he edited in Ann Arbor. Mazumdar's addresses to the parliament were reprinted in the *Unitarian*, and B.B. Nagarkar, who had represented the Brahma Samaj of Bombay was invited to lecture on "The Progress of Religious Thought in India" at Sunderland's church after the closing of the parliament. It is clear that Sunderland saw the Brahma movement as essentially Christian in character and, if guided carefully, the source of what he called India's social "regeneration." His articles in the *Unitarian* promoted the idea that Brahma "ideals and central principles are Christian in the best sense of the word." He was aware that denominational missionaries had created explicitly Unitarian congregations in Madras and Calcutta, but he believed that the success of the Unitarian movement in India hinged on the ability of western religious liberals to lead the Brahma Samaj toward Unitarian-style religious and intellectual modernism. "Though it does not explicitly call itself Christian," he had written in 1889, "it is essentially a Unitarian Church that has sprung up on the soil of India, fed by the best brain and heart of India." Brahmaism's elite social character, like that of American Unitarianism, gave it added significance for Sunderland as it reached "the trained and cultured," "the university students" and others who could wield an influence greater than their numbers.¹¹

Yet Sunderland and other western religious liberals who viewed the movement from afar often saw what they wanted to see in the Brahma Samaj. As a result, they frequently read their own ideas into Brahma culture and ignored the complexity of the movement's intellectual and spiritual roots. Excited by the title of Rammohun Roy's book *Precepts of Jesus*, for example, western liberals were less conscious that Roy's analysis of the Christian gospels, while deeply sympathetic to their message, was undertaken in part to validate aspects of the Vedic scriptures by comparison. As David Kopf has argued, Roy did not embrace liberal Christianity as much as he used its value system and analytical techniques to demonstrate the spiritual and philosophical worth of India's own sacred texts. In the same way, Keshub Chandra Sen often surprised and irritated Unitarian visitors who assumed that his theology and social ethics mirrored their own. Even P.C. Mazumdar's *Oriental Christ*, which seemed closest to the liberal Christianity of Sunderland and other Unitarians, was actually modeled on "the genre of Indian lives of saints" rather than on western theological works. The New Dispensation Brahmaism of Sen and Mazumdar was more eclectic in its spiritual foundations than liberal American Christians, operating within the framework of fulfillment theology, were willing to recognize. The Brahmos' veneration of Jesus in no way precluded an equally strong devotion to the spiritual insights of Buddha, Muhammad, or Caitanya. Poised between two cultures brought together by colonialism, Brahma leaders like Roy, Sen and Mazumdar were careful and

selective in their use of western ideas. For Sunderland, understanding and reacting to this selectivity would be the major challenge of his encounter with India.¹²

Sunderland's missionary sensibilities, his speaking ability, and his connections with the leaders of the Brahma Samaj made him a natural candidate to serve as a short-term missionary in India. Traveling in England with his family during a year's sabbatical from the Ann Arbor church, he was contacted by the British and Foreign Unitarian Association about spending several months in India where he would "ascertain and report upon the condition and prospects of any Unitarian movements" and file a detailed report upon the "condition of the Brahma Somaj and the religious condition of India generally." Agreeing to the assignment and arranging for his family to spend the next several months touring Europe, Sunderland began an intensive, seven-week study of Indian culture and society at the British Museum library. He later said that his reading had provided the "most favorable possible view of British rule," but the list of books he made in his diary at the time suggests that he imbibed small doses of liberal dissent along with imperial apologetics. With standard works by William Hunter, for example, he read William Digby's *India for the Indians* which indicted the Raj for its failure to deal effectively with Indian famines. Digby anticipated arguments that Sunderland would later make by charging that British policies were draining India of its wealth and impoverishing the very poorest of its people. Nor was this an isolated discordant note, as Sir Henry Cotton's *New India*, a spirited criticism of the empire's failure to promote Indians to top positions in the civil service bureaucracy, made it onto his reading list as well. Jabez Sunderland went to India as a Unitarian missionary, but his hopes for the Brahma Samaj as a catalyst for social "regeneration," his exposure to the writings of British liberals, and his larger theology of human progress provided some critical standards for observing the colonial regime.¹³

In the late-nineteenth century, the journey from London to India took nearly three weeks in which travelers passed over continental Europe by railroad and then through the Mediterranean by steamship to Egypt's Port Said. After a brief, hundred-mile passage through the Suez canal, another ten days journey through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean by passenger ship ended the voyage in Bombay. Like many visitors to India during this period, Sunderland was initially overwhelmed by cultural disorientation. The frenetic life of Bombay's port, its sailing ships and coasting vessels, initially reminded him of San Francisco harbor, he was uncharacteristically inarticulate in describing his other reactions. "How strange, strange, strange the people, costumes, and scenes on the street," he wrote his wife after a few hours in India. A day or two later he had recovered enough to comment, as many Victorian-era travelers in India did, on the "rainbow glory" of "native costumes" and to observe that Indian women had not adopted western canons of modesty in dress. Unlike the earlier English Unitarian traveler Mary Carpenter, who had concluded that the "deficiency in clothing" among Indians proved that they were "devoid of any sense of decency" or "proper self-respect,"

Sunderland reacted to this difference with humor rather than judgment. “What a place to study human anatomy!” he wrote home. “No corsets or covers on toes.”¹⁴

Sunderland’s detailed account of his experiences in India reveals a process of cultural negotiation in which his Brahma hosts acted as brokers between the expectations their western guest brought to India and the realities of the society he was encountering. In many ways, Sunderland discovered that his earlier understandings of Brahmoism and its relationship to western religious rationalism were incomplete at best. In Bombay, for example, he was surprised to find that Brahma services were not simply mirrors of sedate Unitarian styles of worship. At B.B. Nagarkar’s little congregation, twelve “devout” believers sat in a circle on the floor chanting and singing in a style that seemed “very weird” to an American Unitarian. “It seemed to me all in the minor key, half a wail,” he reported critically. Two months later in Calcutta, he attended the New Dispensation or Nava Vidhan church, a faction of the Brahma Samaj founded by Keshub Chandra Sen in 1879. There the “clapping of hands and swaying of the body and violent dancing” went on for nearly an hour and “the men sweat and it seemed to me they would drop down in exhaustion.” Unaware that many Brahmans integrated aspects of Vaisnava devotionalism (Bhakti) into their services, Sunderland confronted the fact that the Hindu tradition remained at least as important to the Brahma movement as liberal Christianity or western models of religious expression.¹⁵

In addition to his confusion about the emotional and mystical elements in Brahma spirituality, Sunderland also had to reckon with the presence of caste divisions in Indian society more generally. Among the many Indian luminaries whose homes he visited in Bombay was Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, the president of the Prathana (Prayer) Samaj and one of the founders of the Bombay Natural History Society. He found Pandurang to be a well-educated and liberal man, but was not allowed to meet the doctor’s wife because she observed orthodox Hindu caste prescriptions. “Mr. Nagarkar says that she would not for her life have handed me a cup of tea,” Sunderland reported to his wife. “It would have violated caste, the deadliest of sins.” During a subsequent train ride from Bombay to Madras, a high-caste passenger who shared Sunderland’s compartment was unwilling to accept or even to touch the oranges and bananas he had offered. Though gracious in his refusal, the man made “signs which I take to mean that he thanks me very much but can not eat them coming from me.” As a reformer and religious modernist Sunderland was troubled by the persistence of caste in India, but he reacted to it more as a passing relic of a less enlightened age rather than as an inherent flaw in Indian society. Again, his rather humorous description of the Brahmin passenger’s refusal to touch his fruit as “gastronomical high-upness” is typical of his reactions.¹⁶

Sunderland’s ability to deal effectively with cultural difference was in part due to systematic effort of Brahma leaders to channel his encounter with India and with their own movement in positive directions. They refused to alter their religious culture to please the sensibilities and expectations of an important

American guest, but they were careful to find common ground on other issues. Rather than engage him on theological or spiritual questions alone, the Brahmos instead focused his attention on the work being done by educated Indians to improve their homeland. A key element in their strategy was to demonstrate how strongly Brahmoism was identified with social reform and the building of educational institutions. In Bombay, Agra, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, and Calcutta, for example, his hosts introduced him to the most accomplished scholars, professionals, and reformers who had emerged from their ranks. Among them were men like Mahadev Govind Ranade, a professor of English at Elphinstone College in Bombay and a judge on the Bombay High Court. Immersed in both the Vedic tradition and Christianity, Ranade was a religious modernist who had risked the censure of his own family and of more conservative Hindus for his passionate advocacy of widow re-marriage and the education of women. Ranade not only entertained Sunderland at his plush home in the Malabar Hills, but he also presided at Sunderland's first major public address in Bombay attended by nearly a thousand people. That the judge was "one of the best known and most influential men in India" undoubtedly enlarged the size and sophistication of the audience. Whatever doubts Sunderland may have experienced about Brahma styles of worship and the persistence of Hindu religious thought within the movement, he could not help but see a clear connection between men like Ranade and the "regeneration" of India he had so far associated exclusively with liberal Christianity.¹⁷

In order to build upon the modernizing, progressive impression that Ranade and others made on Sunderland, his hosts also drew his attention to the many educational, cultural, and social institutions that the Brahmos and their allies were constructing in urban India. Against the backdrop of the buildings, railroads, telegraphs, law courts and universities built by the British, it was crucial for the Brahmos to demonstrate that neither the Raj nor Christian missionaries possessed a monopoly on reform and progress. B.B. Nagarkar, who had spoken at Sunderland's Ann Arbor church, took his ministerial guest on a tour of Bombay that indicates his shrewd understanding of Sunderland's sensibilities. One of his first stops was the "Native General Library" which contained over 10,000 volumes including works by Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, and others on modernism's must-read list. Next was the People's Free Reading room, which Nagarkar assured Sunderland was frequented by more than 150 people per day. Sunderland was impressed by the hunger for knowledge exhibited by the readers and assured his guest that he would soon send along "Unitarian books" to add to the shelves.¹⁸

But most impressive to Sunderland, who had spent the last twenty-five years of his preaching in a college town, were the colleges and other educational institutions founded by Brahmos and their allies. First among them was Fergusson College in Poona founded just ten years earlier by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Gopal Ganesh Agarkar as an alternative to British-run institutions in Bombay, Delhi, and Calcutta. Tilak and Agarkar were not Brahmos, but their educational

philosophy shared much in common with Brahma principles and some of the faculty at Fergusson College had direct ties to the samajes. These scholars employed a western educational curriculum and pedagogical methods, but they used them to explore India's own history and culture. At a *Conversazione* held at the college during Sunderland's visit, for example, he met Professor Ramakrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, an eminent Sanskrit scholar, and a member of the Prathana Samaj in Bombay. Bhandarkar, like Sunderland himself, was a man whose commitment to religious and social reform stemmed from his comparative-historical approach to the sacred texts of his own faith tradition. Reminding his American guest that Hinduism had no monopoly on caste prejudice, Bhandarkar politely asked Sunderland to explain "the terrible and most barbarous treatment which is being given to our Negroes in so many places." The minister confessed to his diary that "it is a subject most humiliating to all decent Americans."¹⁹

But it was the students at Fergusson College who made the deepest impression on Sunderland. Having spent twenty years of his pastorate in a college-town working closely with students at the University of Michigan, he was sensitive to the difficult decisions and often conflicted aspirations of college students. After a long walk and a frank conversation with a "company of young men" from the college, he concluded that they were "keen-minded, earnest fellows" who wanted to "make something worth while of their lives and ambitious to serve their country." Perhaps because he was American rather than British, the students were forthright in their complaints about the limits placed on their ambitions by what they called "foreign masters." They expressed anger with the British government and with Western-owned merchant houses who refused to appoint even the most talented Indians to anything but the most "subordinate" positions. Sunderland could not help but feel the shame and humiliation of gifted, dedicated students who had to "give up their patriotism and their manhood, keep out of politics, and be loyal to the alien government," even to secure "a meager living" as clerks, accountants, or other positions that were "too low to be accepted by Englishmen." This was clearly a turning point in Sunderland's understanding of India. "That afternoon," he wrote later, "I realized as I never had done before how bitter, bitter a thing it is for educated young men, in whose breasts burn the fires of a patriotism as true and as holy as was ever felt by any Englishman or American to know that they have no country." What had begun as a mission to guide Indian religious reformers toward a universalized, liberal Christianity was fast becoming a dialogue in which Indians defined religion and progress on their own terms.²⁰

The impact of the Fergusson College encounter was heightened because it took place in the midst of the 1895 meeting of the Indian National Congress (INC) then celebrating its tenth anniversary at Poona. The twentieth-century congress, under Gandhi and Nehru, would become a radical, political instrument through which India secured its independence; but the nineteenth-century congress remained committed to social and political change within the British empire. Though frequently critical of the British government's failure to live up

to its stated values or to make good on its promises for reform, the vast majority of congressmen prior to 1905 believed that “continued affiliation of India to Great Britain was . . . absolutely essential to the interests of Indian national development.” Since the congress represented the emergence of an educated, civic-oriented, politically engaged, urban middle class, moreover, it is not surprising to find significant overlap between the leadership of the Brahma Samaj and that of the INC. Early leaders like Ananda Mohan Bose and Surrendranath Bannerji had been shaped by the Brahma culture of Calcutta and they embraced the congress as a way to win India’s educated classes to the political and social reform agenda generated by their own ethical theism. The Indian National Social Conference, which for years met alongside the larger political gathering, also found its leaders among the Brahma and Prathana Samajes. Judge M.G. Ranade, who had been the first to suggest that Sunderland attend the Poona Congress was the presiding president of the social conference.²¹

To Sunderland, the congress was quite simply a revelation. Its progressive, reformist spirit and its orderly process of debate challenged the chaotic image of Indian political culture that he had read about in the British Museum. Instead of the “violent” rhetoric and unruly crowds he been warned to expect, he found “the best culture and intelligence of the India peoples,” gathered for a serious discussion of India’s social and political problems. Ushered by nearly 1,500 college students from “every part of India,” the more than 6,000 delegates assembled in “perfect order” under an enormous canvass pavilion where they listened with “keen attention” to speeches by the leading politicians and social reformers of the country. While British Prime Minister Lord Salisbury had said only a year before that “the principle of election or government by representation . . . does not fit eastern tradition or eastern minds,” Sunderland was finding evidence to the contrary. He described congress president Surrendranath Bannerji as “statesman-like” and compared the deportment of the audience favorably with any European or American counterpart. Sensing that their American visitor approved of the congress, the Brahmans managed to secure delegate status for him, found him a seat on the speakers’ platform and arranged for him to give a brief address to the social conference on the subject of temperance reform. Impressed by the commitment of its leaders to the education of women and the abolition of caste and child-marriage, “the member from Lucknow” as Sunderland humorously called himself, embraced congress politics as a major force for progress. “This Congress is an honor to the Indian people,” he concluded after two days of close observation. “The government ought to be glad of its existence, listen to its claims, heed its warnings, seek its cooperation.” To a missionary who had come to India convinced that western liberal Christianity was the key to religious and social progress, the congress modeled a different, but equally effective route to positive change. Its Brahma leaders were not Christians, even as Sunderland defined the terms, but their values seemed at the very core of India’s modernization.²²

In sharp contrast to his experience with Brahma leaders, college students and the congress culture, Sunderland’s observations of westerners in India were

not favorable and undermined his sense that western civilization was guiding Indian progress. Just two weeks before the congress, he had spent three days in New Delhi at the home of Douglas Burne, an American banker and “a very strong partisan of the English government.” What was most revealing for Sunderland was that Burne’s support for the Raj was coupled with a total opposition to public education or political representation of any kind for Indians. Using language that Sunderland found reminiscent of proslavery thinkers from America’s past, Burne stated flatly that “Hindus have few rights which the government is bound to respect,” and that education simply “fills their heads with foolish notions of getting a living without work.” Reinforcing this creeping analogy between British rule and American slavery was the humiliating treatment meted out by British and American guests on Indian hotel servants. “It sometimes makes my blood boil,” he reported to his wife from Poona on Christmas Day, to see how “brutally domineering many of the British in India are over the natives.” That American guests seemed “if possible worse still,” suggested to him that the social relations of colonialism were corrupting even to those who should know better. Even Sunderland himself seemed unable to completely transcend them. Earlier in Madras, he found that “all the other people at the hotel call their servant ‘boy’ so I do the same—though I feel ashamed to do it. I want to call him ‘Mr.’”²³

Just as disturbing for this Victorian Christian reformer were the personal habits of the various British officials he met during his train travels across the empire. A supporter of prohibition and rigorous physical culture, he found far too much drinking and smoking among the rulers of the empire. During one long, hot ride from Madras to Bombay, for example, he shared his second-class compartment with a “young Englishman” who “smoked and drank and almost made a beast of himself.” Upon arriving in the city, the young man neglected to remove his last unopened liquor bottle and Sunderland reported that “I at least prevented anyone else from getting it by throwing it out the window against a wall.” On his way across the Ganges valley toward Calcutta he could not help but observe the contrast between the heavily taxed farmers living in poorly ventilated mud huts he observed through the window and the four well-fed British passengers who sat next to him on the train. Ventilation was on his mind for another reason as well during this trip. “Four Englishmen have almost pickled me with tobacco smoke today,” he wrote home after the journey. The fact that congress president Bannerji was forced to travel third class on the same train while Sunderland endured a “miserable” time inhaling the second-hand smoke of British civil servants did not escape his notice either. Western racism, alcohol consumption, tobacco use, were the sale of opium and all serious issues for Sunderland and they contributed to his growing sense that India’s elite, despite its continued commitment to distinctive aspects of the Hindu tradition, shared his progressive religious and social vision more than many nominal western Christians did. Brahmo asceticism and moral austerity, which Sunderland noted more than once in his diary and letters home, proved a natural counterpoint to what he regarded as a licentious and self-indulgent imperial culture.²⁴

Yet what of Sunderland's missionary Unitarianism? In contrast to the vitality and progressivism he perceived among the Brahmos, his contact with Unitarian leaders and their congregations provoked more ambivalent and sometimes paternalistic responses. In late November 1895, for example, he arrived in Madras where the seventy-year-old Rev. William Roberts led a small congregation of Unitarian Christians in the city. Roberts's father, also named William, was an Indian convert to Unitarian Christianity who had established his church in Madras in 1813. According to historian Spencer Lavan, however, the Madras church was never very large and survived largely because of financial assistance from British and American Unitarians. The congregation was poor, largely uneducated, and by the 1890s its hard pressed minister seemed tired and distracted. Sunderland described Roberts as a "poor stick indeed -- poor as Job's turkey, with 13 children (besides four dead)[,] a young wife and a litter of little tots, one in arms." The church itself was a "little old tumble down affair" and the congregation was sharply divided along theological lines.²⁵

After his experiences among the Brahmo elite in Bombay, Sunderland was unprepared for the extreme poverty of Roberts' congregation in Madras. As he preached and performed a baptism there, he could not help noticing that there were "not more than 6 persons in the house with shoes on." The congregation seemed to him less orderly and lacking in decorum. He described it as "a curious sight, some sitting on benches, some of the floor—men women and children." These negative observations indicate that Sunderland's American class identity was one underlying element in his assessment of the religious situation in India. Despite the formally Unitarian character of the Madras church, the clear affinities of class, education, and culture that Sunderland had forged with the Brahmos were absent in his assessment of it. Writing about the Madras Unitarians after returning to England, he spoke in a paternalistic tone that rarely, if ever, crept into his discussions of the Brahmos. There was a great need, he argued, for "the fostering care and guidance of an English missionary" and expressed grave doubt that the church "will ever prosper" without a resident missionary to provide "counsel, stimulus, and practical direction."²⁶

By contrast, the Brahmos in Madras were the picture of health, independence, and vitality. In fact, as Sunderland brooded over the poverty and isolation of Roberts' church, leading Brahmos invited him to speak on modern religious thought at their large lecture hall in the city. He spoke for over an hour without notes to an enthusiastic crowd and then conducted a prayer service attended by local college students. Perhaps more aware of their guest's expectations than Roberts was, the Brahmos arranged for Sunderland to meet with the students privately to discuss religious and social issues. The American proudly reported that six or eight "earnest young men and bright" came to his room to ask questions and to purchase the many books and tracts he had brought to the city. While he certainly believed that a European missionary in Madras might be useful to the Brahmos in providing ideas and information, Sunderland also recognized that they could function effectively without one. It was hard not to conclude that while

western-style Unitarianism was struggling to survive even among the poorest and least educated, Brahmoism was attracting the best, the brightest and those most likely to influence their society for the better.²⁷

A similar dynamic was at work in his response to the tiny Unitarian congregations of the remote Khasi Hills of Assam which Sunderland visited in January 1896. After an extremely difficult journey east from Calcutta, much of which took place in bone rattling pony carts and in a basket carried by his guides, he was welcomed to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills by Hajjom Kissor Singh, a Khasi convert to Unitarian Christianity who had contacted Sunderland almost a decade earlier. Sunderland was delighted by the sincerity of the Khasi Unitarians, and he praised their courage in the face of periodic harassment by both local Trinitarian converts and practitioners of the indigenous Khasi tribal religion. But as in his view of the Madras Unitarians, he did not think their movement would survive without a missionary from the west. Unlike the sophisticated Brahmos he had met in Bombay and Calcutta, moreover, the remote Khasis seemed a people apart, representatives of a “wild India” with little connection to the centers of culture where Brahmoism held sway. He described the Khasis as inhabiting a “low stage of civilization,” and he believed that a great deal of “educating and civilizing” work would have to be done before their religious needs could even be effectively addressed. In the Khasi Hills, he struggled against paternalist impulses that appeared far less often in his interactions with the Brahmos. At times he seemed poised on the brink of lapsing into older missionary relationships. After visiting a Unitarian school in Shillong, for example, he wrote that the people there seemed “very earnest and intelligent for—for—persons not any more intelligent!” Among the Khasis, Sunderland sounded and acted like a traditional missionary, but their geographical and cultural distance from rest of India prevented that ethos from spilling over into his relationship with the Brahmos.²⁸

Sunderland’s observations of the poverty and fragility of Unitarian congregations in Madras and the Khasi Hills elevated the importance of the Brahmo Samaj in his larger understanding of India’s religious and social progress. Far more than the small, remote or isolated Unitarian enclaves he visited, it was the Brahmos who were leading India toward modernity. This evolution in his thought was hardly an accident. Even more than he realized, Sunderland’s altered understanding of the relationship between religion and progress in India had been carefully managed and shaped by his Brahmo hosts who had established their claim to leadership through an appeal to their guest’s religious and social idealism. The process reached a crescendo in Calcutta, near the end of his Indian sojourn, where the Brahmo elite of Bengal displayed their best talent and their finest principles. For ten days, the Brahmos of Calcutta kept their guest busy with concerts, dinners, garden parties, lectures, and tours of the many educational institutions their movement had helped to found. In late January, he heard Protap Chandra Mazumdar deliver a lecture on “The Progress of Spirituality in Modern Thought” which drew a crowd of 1,200 people. The previous day he had attended “a rather exclusive party” at the “large and elegant” home the

eighty-year old Maharshi Debendranath Tagore, founder of the Adi Samaj. There he met the radiant young poet Rabindranath Tagore whose epic work *Gitanjali* would later create a craze in the West and earn him both an English knighthood and the Nobel Prize.²⁹

Along with touring schools and charitable institutions founded by the Sadharan and Adi Samajes, Sunderland's hosts also guided him to worship services led by the leaders of the various factions of the movement. As in Bombay, the Brahmos made no attempt to disguise the eclecticism of their musical or liturgical culture. Attending the New Dispensation church founded by Keshub Chandra Sen, he was again surprised by the differences between his expectations of Brahma worship and the reality. The physical intensity of their dances, as well as their use of drums, conch shells, and cymbals emphasized the Brahma's differences not only from Unitarianism in the West, but also from the Unitarian congregations he had visited in India. Sunderland never became comfortable with the Hindu mysticism that shaped New Dispensation liturgy, but he was deeply impressed by the church's practice of consecrating all money earned by believers during the preceding week. As a veteran of battles against the rampant materialism of America's Gilded Age culture, he was curious about the practice of consecrating wealth. The worshippers explained that Keshub had instructed them to pray over their money before spending it so that they would "use [wealth] more carefully, wisely and religiously." Deeply impressed, Sunderland concluded that "there is a lesson here for Christians." As his epic journey drew to a close, the missionary was beginning to find that he had learned as many lessons about religion and progress as he had taught.³⁰

Sailing from Bombay in mid-February 1896, Sunderland spent the next several months mulling over his experiences in South Asia as he toured Egypt, Palestine, Greece, and Italy with his wife and children. Yet in that time, his enthusiasm for the "rare spirits" he had met in India had not abated and he wrote to Protap Mazumdar that "if I were thirty-five years old instead of fifty, I should be greatly tempted to return to your land for a home and a field of labour." But in the end how had India changed Jabez Sunderland's religious vision? How do his experiences reflect the ways in which interfaith encounter broadened concepts of religious pluralism and democracy? On the one hand, Sunderland's 1896 report to the British Unitarian Association shows that his experiences in India did not destroy his fulfillment theology. He still believed that liberal Christianity's "self-evidencing religion of the spirit . . . is silently gathering into its fold the purest and sincerest souls of every land." Yet on the other hand he had learned to see the process of human religious and social change in ways that recognized the distinctive historical and cultural identities that flesh and blood Indians embodied. The Brahmos, he now understood, were neither extensions of western religious liberalism nor underdeveloped evolutionary precursors of it. Instead, their movement seemed to represent India's distinctive and more eclectic response to modernity better than transplanted western Unitarianism. Far more than before his mission to India, moreover, he saw that difference as *positive*

and part of a larger divine purpose that would be worked out along parallel but distinct tracks in the religious and social evolution of East and West. "They are Hindus; we are Christians," he told a packed assembly of Unitarian divines at Essex Hall in London. "Neither of us can become other than what God intended us to be; nor should we try." Few other western Christians could have made this comment at the time, and Sunderland himself would have rejected it prior to his Indian encounters.³¹

Within this acceptance that India's path was different, however, was an equally strong conviction that in using science and critical inquiry to mine and refine their traditions, Hindu and Christian modernists had discovered a shared commitment to social, ethical, and religious progress. "They, by digging down in their soil to the deeper deeps, and we by doing the same in ours," he told his British sponsors, "have both come upon the same fountain of Eternal Love and Life." This realization is part of the emergence, in religious circles, of what historian Richard Seager has called "global cosmopolitanism" or an elite discourse that recognized difference while focusing on unifying principles of liberalism, democracy, social reform and the "critical spirit." Whatever may have divided Sunderland and the Brahmos, they nevertheless shared a bedrock faith that religion must adjust to modern intellectual trends, shape the direction of social change, and promote both education and democracy. In more orthodox circles, similar changes were taking place, albeit slightly later and through a different theological lens. But after 1900, says S.M. Pathak, it seems clear that most missionaries emphasized medical work, education, and social reform over theological disputation. The 1910 World Missionary Conference even recommended that missionaries receive training in comparative religion so they might have a "generous recognition of all that is true and good" in non-Christian faiths.³²

For Sunderland himself, the trip to India marked a transition from relationships built solely on the concept of mission to ones that included cultural exchange and political alliance. Working on the basis of the affinities he had forged in 1895-96, he set aside his earlier theological categories and focused almost exclusively on supporting the broad aspirations of the Indian people. A powerful testimony to this shift can be found in his later alliance with Lala Lajpat Rai, a political nationalist and labor leader from the Punjab who spent several years in exile in the United States. Rai was a member of the Arya Samaj, a society that affirmed India's "Hindu identity" and the exclusive authority of the Vedas, but which also supported social reform and political self-determination. Sunderland's ability to work closely with Rai both in co-founding of India Home-Rule League of America and in the publication of the New York City journal *Young India*, suggests that his earlier evangelical efforts had given way to a more pluralistic vision of religion and progress. During the last forty years of his long life, in fact, J.T. Sunderland became one of the most vocal American opponents of British rule in India. His essays condemning the British for their role in Indian famines and his extremely positive assessment of the nationalist movement in India reached international audiences and drew the ire of the British government. Eight

years before his death in 1936, he published *India in Bondage*, a compilation of nearly three decades of his writing on India's troubled relationship with the British Empire. Perhaps because it received the approval of Mahatma Gandhi, the book was banned by the Imperial government and its publisher and printer were arrested and jailed briefly on sedition charges.³³

Sunderland's 1895-96 mission to the Brahma Samajes was framed in the context of a fulfillment theology that explained India's religious and social progress as an evolutionary process, led by western missionaries, and culminating in an embrace of liberal Christianity. His Brahma hosts helped to refashion his vision and they made a powerful case that India was best led by Indians themselves on the basis of principles with far more complex and varied religious roots. His own halting path toward religious pluralism and the subsequent possibility of a cross-cultural political alliance, was therefore a product of an interfaith encounter. Although he had intended to teach religious modernism in India, he had in fact discovered it there. Sunderland remained an important link between the Brahma Samajes of India and American Unitarianism, but his most important contribution was his ability to communicate this new vision of Indian self-determination to a younger generation of American social reformers and anti-imperialists who came of age in the early decades of the twentieth century. Among those Americans whose understanding of India and support for its independence owed a debt to Sunderland included Alice Stone Blackwell, Oswald Garrison Villard, Agnes Smedley, Rabbi Stephen Wise, and the Unitarian social activist Rev. John Haynes Holmes. In sharing the outcome of his own encounter with this new group of activists, Sunderland helped them to understand that India needed fewer missionaries wishing to transform its culture, and more friends wishing to embrace it. Using an appropriate historical analogy, John Haynes Holmes expressed his own belief that Jabez Sunderland would always be "the Lafayette of India."³⁴

Notes

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1. Sushil Madhava Pathak, *American Missionaries and Hinduism: A Study of Their Contacts From 1813 to 1910* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967), 221-236; See also Maina Cha Singh, *Gender, Religion and the Heathen Lands: American Missionary Women in South Asia, 1860s-1940s* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Mr. Reeve, "Discription of the Hindoos," *American Missionary Register* 4 (March, 1823), 88.

2. On popular attitudes toward India and Hinduism in the twentieth century, see Harold Isaacs' classic *Scratches on Our Minds: American Images of China and India* (New York: John Day Co., 1958). Pathak, *American Missionaries and Hinduism*, 228-229. The reception of Swami Vivekananda in America can be followed in Mary Louise Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries - His Prophetic Mission, Part Two* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama 1984) and Mazumdar's experiences in the United States are the subject of Sunrit Mullick's excellent study, "Protap Chunder Mazoomdar in America: Missionary of a New Dispensation," (DMin diss., Meadville-Lombard Theological School, 1988).

3. Work on images of Hinduism in British thought includes Geoffrey Oddie, *Imagined Hinduism: British Protestant Missionary Construction of Hinduism, 1793-1900* (London: Sage, 2006); Paul Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfillment: A History and Study of Fulfillment Theology in Modern British Thought and in the Indian Context* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001); and Martin Maw, *Visions of*

India: Fulfillment Theology, the Aryan Race Theory, and the Work of British Protestant Missionaries in Victorian India (New York: Peter Lang, 1990).

4. Jabez T. Sunderland, *India In Bondage* (New York: Lewis Copeland, 1932), xv-xvi; Jabez Sunderland, *Liberal Religion in India, Report of a Missionary Tour Together With A Survey of the General Religious Situation among the Indian Peoples* (London: British and Foreign Unitarian Association, 1896), 2

5. On George W. Northrup, see William Brackney, *A Genetic History of Baptist Thought* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 2004), 345-346; J.T. Sunderland, *Orthodoxy: The Worst Enemy of Christianity* (Northfield, MA: n.p., 1875), 4.

6. J.T. Sunderland, *The Issue in the West: Is Unitarianism Ready to Give Up Its Christian Character?* (n.p., 1886), 39. Because of his role in the "western issue" Sunderland has been either ignored or dealt with critically in denominational histories. See for example, Frank Lyttle, *Freedom Moves West: A History of the Western Unitarian Conference, 1852-1952* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1952), 177-191 and William Pease, "Doctrine and Fellowship: William Channing Gannett and the Unitarian Creedal Issue," *Church History* 25 (September 1956), 210-238. Spencer Lavan's pioneering, *Unitarians and India: A Study in Encounter and Response* (Chicago: Exploration Press, 1991) was the first work to explore Sunderland's encounter with the Brahmos.

7. J.T. Sunderland, "The Brightening Outlook for Religion," *The Unitarian* I (January 1886), 5.

8. Max Muller and Monier-Monier Williams quoted in Hedges, *Preparation and Fulfillment*, 122, 102. See also, T.E. Slater, *The Higher Hinduism in Relation to Christianity: Certain Aspects of Hindu Thought from the Christian Standpoint* (London: Elliot Stock, 1903), 279-291.

9. James Freeman Clarke, *Ten Great Religions: An Essay in Comparative Theology* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1872), 492-493; J.T. Sunderland, "The World's Parliament of Religions," *The Unitarian* VIII (October 1893), 447; J.T. Sunderland, "The Unities of Unitarianism," *The Unitarian* II (May 1887), 118; Sunderland, "Unitarianism and Christianity," *The Unitarian* III (January 1888), 16; Eliza R. Sunderland, "A Serious Study of All Religions," in *The World's Parliament of Religions: An Illustrated and Popular Story of the World's Parliament of Religions, Held in Chicago in Connection With the World's Columbian Exposition*. Edited by John Henry Barrows. (2 vols. Chicago: Parliament Publishing, 1893) I: 638; On religious liberals and the concept of parity at the World's Parliament of Religions, see Richard Hughes Seager, *The World's Parliament of Religions: The East/West Encounter, Chicago, 1893* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 78-79.

10. Keshub Chandra Sen, *Lectures in India* (Calcutta: Brahma Tract Society, 1872), 257-258; P.C. Mazumdar, *The Oriental Christ* (Boston: George R. Ellis, 1893), 7. On the origins of the Brahma Samaj and its connections with Unitarianism, see David Kopf, *The Brahma Samaj and the Making of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 3-41; and Lavan, *Unitarians and India*, 32-40.

11. "The Brahma Samaj and the Regeneration of India," *The Unitarian* IV (May 1889), 203; J.T. Sunderland, *Liberal Religion in India*, 32; Sunderland, "The World's Parliament of Religions," 446. "News from the Field," *Unitarian* VIII (December 1893), 572.

12. Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 14; M.A. Scherer, "A Cross Cultural Conflict Re-examined: Annette Akroyd and Keshub Chunder Sen," *Journal of World History* 7, no. 2 (1996), 231-259; Mullick, "Protap Chunder Mazoomdar in America," 108-109; and Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 46-47.

13. W. Copland Bowie to Jabez T. Sunderland, September 13, 1895, Box 3, Jabez T. Sunderland Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan [hereafter, Sunderland papers]; Jabez T. Sunderland diary entries, September 4, 20, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland Papers.

14. All of Sunderland's family correspondence during his India trip was in postcard form. The bound, collected postcards are in Box 14, Sunderland Papers. J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, November 17, 1895 and November 19, 1895 in "Ninety Days in India," bound postcard set in Box 14, Sunderland Papers; Sunderland diary entry, November 17, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland Papers; Mary Carpenter, *Six Months in India*. (2 vols. London: Longman's Green and Co., 1868), I: 19.

15. Sunderland diary entry, November 17, 1895; J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, January 26, 1896 in postcard set, Box 14, Sunderland Papers; Lavan, *Unitarians and India*, 146, 156.

16. Sunderland diary entries, November 18, 1895 and November 28, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland papers.

17. J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Sunderland, November 18, 1895 and Sunderland diary entry, November 18, 1895, both in Box 14, Sunderland Papers. On Ranade, see Richard P. Tucker, *Ranade and the Roots of Indian Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 155-178, and Stanley Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and the Making of Modern India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), 27, 37, 107-109.

18. Sunderland diary entries, November 19-20, 1895 Box 14, Sunderland Papers.

19. Sunderland diary entry, December 30, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland Papers. On the educational ideas of Tilak, Agarkar and Bhandarkar, as well as information on the founding of Fergusson College, see Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale*, 21-27, 55.
20. Sunderland, *India in Bondage*, 189-190.
21. S.R. Singh, "Moderates and Extremists: The Congress till the Surat Split," in *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress*, ed. B.N. Pande (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee, 1985), 116; on the impact of Brahmoism on Bose and Bannerji, see Kopf, *Brahmo Samaj*, 142-146.
22. Sunderland diary entries, December 27, 28, 1895 and J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, Box 14, Sunderland Papers; Lord Salisbury quoted in Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 343.
23. Sunderland diary entry, November 29, December 9, 1895; J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, December 25, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland Papers.
24. Sunderland diary entry, December 4, 1895; J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, January 2, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland Papers. On the asceticism of the Brahma ministers, Sunderland wrote: "Oh how little we ministers in America know about sacrifice in comparison with these Brahma ministers here! They have no salary, and live upon what the people choose to give them." See Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, January 25, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland Papers.
25. Lavan, *Unitarians and India*, 27; J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, November 30, 1895; J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, December 1, 1895 both in Box 14, Sunderland Papers;
26. J.T. Sunderland, *Liberal Religion in India*, 15-16.
27. Sunderland diary entry, December 2, 1895, Box 14, Sunderland Papers.
28. J.T. Sunderland to Eliza Read Sunderland, January 12, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland Papers; Sunderland diary entry, January 9, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland Papers; P.R.T. Gourdon, *The Khasis* (London: MacMillan: 1914).
29. Sunderland diary entries, January 24-25, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland papers.
30. Sunderland diary entry, January 25, 1896, Box 14, Sunderland Papers.
31. J.T. Sunderland to P.C. Mazumdar, June 3, 1896 in P.C. Mazumdar, *Lectures in America and Other Papers* (Calcutta: Navavidhan Publication Committee, 1955), 276-277; J.T. Sunderland, *Liberal Religion in India*, 32-33. Sunderland's view of Indian religious development anticipates, in certain ways, the views of E. Stanley Jones whose work *The Christ of the Indian Road* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1925) challenged trinitarian missionary assumptions two three decades later.
32. J.T. Sunderland, *Liberal Religion in India*, 33; Seager, *World's Parliament of Religions*, 96-97; S.M. Pathak, *American Missionaries and Hinduism: A Study of Their Contacts From 1813 to 1910* (Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1967), 234-239.
33. Lavan, *Unitarians and India*, 180, 172-175. For more on Sunderland's later career see also Paul E. Teed, "Race Against Memory: Katherine Mayo, Jabez Sunderland and Indian Independence," *American Studies* 44 (Spring/Summer 2003), 35-57; on Lala Lajpat Rai, see Naeem Gul Rathor, "Indian Nationalist Agitation in the United States: A Study of Lala Lajpat Rai and the India Home Rule League of America" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1965). On the Arya Samaj, see Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, 48-52. Sunderland's positive assessment of the Arya Samaj can be found in his introduction to Lala Lajpat Rai's book *Young India*, rev. ed. (1916; repr., New York: Fertig, 1968), vii-viii.
34. John Haynes Holmes to Sunderland, October 3, 1932 in Sunderland Papers; on Sunderland's role in Unitarian-Brahmo relations, see Mullick, "Protap Chandra Mazumdar in America," 190-194, 280-282; and Lavan, *Unitarians and India*, 154-161; on the role of these and other American reformers in the "Pro-India" movement, see Alan Raucher, "American Anti-Imperialists and the Pro-India Movement, 1900-1932," *Pacific Historical Review* 43 (February 1974), 83-110.