

working. The reason for this is plain. The missionary's time is almost sure to be broken in upon at all hours and in a thousand ways, and so it is necessary that he should be able to sit down even for half an hour, and so concentrate his mind on his work that he can accomplish something even in that short time. However mixed his work may be, he must not let his thoughts get mixed.

And now, in regard to preparation for the mission field after deciding to become a missionary: First, *do not put off deciding what field to go to until near the time of going*. It is very common for young men or women to say, "When I have finished my education and am ready to go, then I will decide where to go." Such a plan can only result in injuring future usefulness, and for the following reasons:

Between the time when a man decides to go into the foreign field and the time when he starts, he ought, together with his other studies, to make a special study of the geography and history of and the general literature about the country to which he is going. From the moment he contemplates mission work he ought to consider himself as bound to become a specialist in regard to the country to which he is going. It is extremely probable that it would be much more difficult to get hold of the books about a heathen country in that country itself than in the home land. For instance, if I wanted a copy of the only grammar which has been published of the language of this people, Korea, I should have to send to Japan for one, or else borrow one and discommode my neighbor; but in New York I should drop into the Astor Library and ask for the Korean grammar in French, written by the fathers sent out by the *Société des Missions Étrangères* of Paris. Read all that can be read of the country before going there. Secondly, by deciding upon the field and having it always in view, and making it a special object of prayer, the young man has his enthusiasm aroused, and his sympathies engaged, and he enters upon the work when the time comes with double the power that he otherwise could have.

Mission life among the comparatively civilized and cultured Hindus is vastly different from mission life among the nomadic hordes of the Tartar plains, and a man ought to know which he is going to a long time before he goes. In deciding what field to enter, a man must be led largely by what he deems the needs of the various missionary lands. But one thing ought to be borne in mind—one's linguistic power, or the power of acquiring language has a *very great deal* to do with success in the mission field. Some men acquire languages readily, others with great difficulty. I have heard it said by a prominent and successful missionary in China that not half the missionaries in that great land are able, or will probably ever be able, to speak the colloquial language readily and correctly, not to say fluently. Of course, no one can vouch