

asleep in the Lord, a Christian lady, whose name is embalmed in the annals of the Mission; and the first-fruits of whose charity are this day placed upon the altar, the harbinger, we trust, of an abundant harvest. Several years have now elapsed since the late Mrs. Campbell of Lochnell, through the medium of a revered and distinguished minister of this Church, placed at the disposal of the Committee a sum of money to found a mission to the country of the Sikhs. Recommended to her notice as the residence of a departed relative, who had lived there for many years, in the esteem of all who knew him, she desired to make it the field of an enterprise which, more than the gorgeous tomb or the sculptured stone, might perpetuate his memory and commemorate his work. This day, then, we are assembled to begin the work, conceived in a spirit of purest philanthropy, and to designate you as its first embassy to the Punjab. After a temporary sojourn in Bombay, to be employed in the service of the Mission and in acquiring further information, and preparing yourself for your ultimate sphere, you are once more expected to strike your tent, and to find your way to the land of your adoption. The Committee hope, that by that time the services of another may be secured to co-operate with you in your work; for they would not forget the apostolic model, and they would not wish that you stood alone in that remote and untried region, where the sympathy of a brother is especially needed, and his co-operation required. But even when thus accompanied and aided, you cannot but anticipate, in the novelty of your sphere, and its all but total isolation in the map of missions, the necessity laid upon you of maintaining the wisdom of the serpent combined with the harmlessness of the dove. If much depends on a first impression, how important is it that in your first contact with heathenism, under a new form, you should so arrange your approach, as to give your message, under the blessing of God, its best chance of success? How necessary is it that with becoming caution you handle the plough that must work its way in virgin soil, thickly matted with the superstitions, and overrun with the noxious growth of unnumbered ages! How necessary is it you should study well the native character, that every avenue of access may be known and unproved as a door of entrance to your Master's word! How proper is it that whether in the house or by the wayside, in the church or in the school, you should let no opportunity slip of recalling the heathen from their idolatres and errors, to the knowledge and worship of the only living and true God! Be assured that if you will lose nothing, but gain much, by adapting yourself in all Christian prudence to the special condition of those among whom you are placed, no compliance can be justified that would modify or impair the message of reconciliation with which you are charged. This is the one theme of the ministry in all places and seasons, forming the burden of a message which no climate can modify, or form of superstition suspend. Bearing it evermore freshly on your lips, it will be the business of your life to proclaim it to all as the wisdom of God, and the power of God. And dwelling richly in you in all wisdom and knowledge, it will form no rapid subject of cold reserve or indirect allusion; but will shine as a diamond in the bosom of all your appeals. Do not imagine that you can ever preach it too long, or preach it too much. A young clergyman, we are told, on a certain occasion, asked an aged Christian, "What shall I preach?"

He received for answer, "preach Christ." He rejoined immediately, "I have preached Him already." "Why then," added his adviser, "preach Him again, preach Him always, and preach Him only!" The advice was as suitable as it was pointed, having for its sanction the example of Paul, who came to the Gentiles not in the excellency of human speech, but determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and Him crucified; and of every servant of God who deserves the name, whether in Christian countries or in heathen climes. Let the missionary forget it—let the claims of his Master be overlooked altogether, or but partially owned—let him disguise or disfigure the ministry of reconciliation—and Christianity will soon resent the foul indignity, making him feel in his bitter experience that he is fighting the battles of religion without the weapons of the Lord.

And now, my dear brother, without dwelling longer on these and other topics, which will naturally suggest themselves to your own mind, I would desire to commend you to God and to the riches of His grace while, as the organ of the General Assembly's Committee, I now designate you to the work of a missionary among the heathen. It is not for us to anticipate the future or unroll the record, the scroll of which is in Jehovah's hands. The period of our sojourn here may be longer or it may be shorter. It may come to an end after a hurried march in the morning of life, or after a protracted journey, when the sun of nature is expected to set. At home as well as abroad—at the foot of our own mountains as under the lengthened shadow of other hills, the servant of God does well to look for the setting sun. And who can tell ere a few more years at the most are gone, how many now present may have laid down in the grave, not to raise again till the heavens are no more and the elements melt with fervent heat. But thus we know, that he who has grace to be faithful is serving a Master who will not forsake the works of His hands. Reserving to himself the times and seasons, the period of our entrance into another world, not less than our allotment in this, He has shewn us enough of His providence in the light of His word to enable His servants to say, in the most deserted scene, "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." Separated then from your kindred, you will not be separated from your God; and shut out from many earthly comforts, to which nature in its infirmity would fondly cling, it is your privilege to know that you are not debarred from the abundant consolations of the Gospel. Amidst perils by land and perils by sea, in the city and in the desert, on India's great highway, crowded with an innumerable company of pilgrims, or in the sequestered valley, with its scattered tents glancing in the sun, the promise and hopes of God's word will follow you still, like streams from the rock, to sustain, and refresh, and enliven your soul. When like the disconsolate prophet, you are prone to say, "I am left alone," they may remind you of One who, in the darkest scenes of idolatry, has not left himself without a witness, reserving to himself the monuments of His grace, who, having once bowed the knee to the image of Baal, have abandoned their idols, unnoticed it may be by all around, and almost unknown by the very instruments who turned them to God. When like another prophet, you are ready to say, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the hand of the Lord revealed?" you may think of Him who was "despised and

rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not;" but who, ere the vision is sealed or the prophecy closed, "shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." When, with an unthinking world, you are almost tempted to say, "Where is the promise of His coming?" may you not ascend the hill of prophecy, and as you hear the gathering notes of the hosannah that shall yet arise from every nation, loud as the sound of many waters, may you not dismiss your doubts, and repress your fears, and arm yourself afresh for the high enterprise of duty and devotion and love? And what shall I say of the final hour which awaits us all, when, in the silence of midnight, or the bustle of noon, the trampling of horses is heard, and the chariots of fire are ready to bear us away? To be faithful even unto death will be felt then to ensure to the victor the crown of life.

Be it yours, then, still to labour in your high and holy vocation. Let it engross all your sympathies, while it engages your exertions and gives voice to your prayers. Through good report and through bad report, alike indifferent to the world's smiles as to the world's frowns, strive to hold on your course unchanged, still looking to the outstretched arm of Jehovah, and gathering from all His bright and blessed promises that nothing is too hard for Him. The ark of the Lord is committed to you, and, like Uriah, when he resisted the solicitations of David, you must say, "The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents, and shall I go into my house?" The lamp of the Gospel is committed to you, and its light must be fed that you may be able to give the alarm, and to announce the first symptoms of danger, and to cry in the ear of a slumbering world, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" The sickle is put into your hands, and ere the harvest-home of the world has come, crowning every mountain and covering every plain, you must seek to use it as God may give you employment, till the shadows of evening have summoned you home. To all of us these shadows are creeping on apace—the forerunners of a night in which no man can work, and blessed only are they who, having well and cheerfully borne the burden and heat of the day, betake themselves to their bed of rest; while the evening hymn breaks on the ear, sung by other reapers but a short way behind, filling the air with its melody, and waking its echoes far away in the depths of heaven—"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours and their works follow them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun give light to them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them and lead them by living fountains of water, and God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Home Mission Report.

For some years past your Committee have in their Annual Report enumerated a few cases in evidence of the increase which has taken place in the numbers both of the communicants and of the Congregations connected with the chapels on the Committee's list. Following the example, a few similar instances may here be cited.

In the Gaelic Church, Greenock, the con-