

preceding generations? Had one after another gone down into black night? Had they all become lost in a darkness that would never lift? Fifty generations swept away—a present generation fast moving onward! But the commission flashed into his mind. What of that? Did Christ mean it to be literally fulfilled? He must have so meant it. But there were believers living during the fifty generations. What of them? The earlier ones were doubtless in earnest, but the later ones sat still, forgetful of the dark nations. There was apathy still, for it was painfully clear that the present generation of Christians were not thinking of themselves as under any particular obligation to Christ, or to the heathen, to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.

As he looked out upon the Christian world he could see here and there an earnest worker toiling with tongue and pen to arouse sleeping Christendom. Verily the few seemed a forlorn hope, and to human eyes it did not appear as though much result would follow. But Clifton saw with clearer eyes, and he counted himself henceforward as one of the chosen few. From that time this had been the ruling idea of his life, and had shaped his actions.

He bided his time of preparation, took advantage of his favorable circumstances, and gradually turned his studies more and more into the line of missions. His own people had a mission in India among the Telugus, a people on the Eastern Coast, inhabiting a stretch of country running north from Madras about 400 miles, and numbering from sixteen to eighteen millions. This settled his field of labor and also gradually narrowed his reading until he made India and its people a particular study. Thus he came to study that ancient language of the East, the sacred language of the Brahmins—Sanskrit—and, having some linguistic abilities, he worked up a thorough knowledge of this language and the works written in it. Accordingly, before setting foot on Indian soil, he knew something of the Indian Classics, the Vedas, the Mahabharatam and the Ramayana.

We have said nothing of his parents, for they died when he was a mere lad, so that he had grown up under the care of an uncle.