

We regret deeply, that after a much longer delay than we had anticipated, we are at length able to send to you only one herald of the gospel—our dear brother M'Lachlan, whom we beg to introduce to your christian regards. His heart has long been set on missionary enterprises; he was not only very willing to go, but very desirous of being sent to Canada, although he might readily have found a field of labour at home; and it is our hope that you will find him a faithful ambassador, in what respects the glory of his great Master, and the best interests of immortal souls. Receive him, we beseech you, in the Lord,—and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake.

It is well remarked by an eminent living divine, that in respect to the body, and the present life, the sense of want becomes more acute in proportion to the greatness of the necessity; but that in respect to the wants of the soul, the rule is just reversed. Now, in conformity to this rule, there is reason to apprehend that the estimate which many of you form of the value of a gospel ministry, may have been materially affected by your residence in that country. We should feel happy, if any considerations we could offer to your minds, in our brief address, might prove the means of counteracting this tendency, and of exalting your views of the great leading institution of the gospel system.

When our great High Priest had completed the stupendous work of redemption, and just before his ascension into heaven, he gave a commission to his disciples to go and preach the gospel; and promised to be present with them in the prosecution of this work, "*always,—even to the end of the world.*" This promise implied, that the ordinance of preaching was a standing ordinance in his church;—that a gospel ministry should be perpetuated. And in conformity with this promise, we are further informed, that, "when he ascended up on high, he gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." You will remember the high pre-eminence which the apostles assigned to the work of preaching, over every other employment that might come into competition with it. When the work of dispensing the bounty of the church to the poor began to inchoach on their time, they resigned this work into the hands of others. "It is not reason," say they, "that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." "*We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*" It may seem still more remarkable, perhaps, that the apostle Paul held the work of preaching as having higher claims on his attention, than the administration of the sacraments. This sentiment seems plainly contained in the following declaration: "for Christ sent me *not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.*" The same inspired writer assigns the reason of the supreme importance he attaches to preaching;—"it hath pleased God," he says, "by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God."

The experience of all ages has shown how difficult it is,—if it be at all possible,—to preserve religion alive in any community without the Sabbath. And the difficulty of maintaining the Sabbath in any degree of efficiency, without the stated or very frequent ministrations of the gospel, is scarcely less formidable. We have cause to fear, brethren, that