

abandon a field once occupied only when the door seemed absolutely closed, and when at the same time God in his Providence afforded them an opportunity of making their escape. But neither of these things took place in the present instance. Up to the last moment of Mr. Gordon's life, so far as we can learn, there was no indication that the way was closed against farther labours. He had still around him the people of that side of the island where he lived among whom he was still permitted to labour—he had still a great work to do in administering medicine, by which probably some hundreds of lives were saved, and he was able to give many warnings to the living and speak many words of consolation to the dying, which, accompanied as they were by his fervent prayers, we know, from the faithfulness of Him who hath promised, shall not be in vain. And, at the last, death came in such a form that the alternative of escape was not afforded him. The blow was so sudden, so unexpected, and coming from a distant quarter, no provision could be made against it. So that, looking at the circumstances as they stand, we do not consider that Mr. Gordon's case presents a parallel to those in which Missionaries have felt themselves not only warranted, but absolutely called to seek another sphere of labour.

Nay, more, we think that the whole circumstances of the case strongly indicate that he could not, in faithfulness to his Master, have left his sphere of labours. For more than three years he had laboured there with scarcely, if any more, than the ordinary peril of a Missionary among savage tribes—he had made decided progress in his work—he had gathered around him a number, who were receiving Christian instruction, and some of them without doubt favourably disposed toward Christianity. And upon what principle could he desert his post at such a crisis, so long as any prospect remained of continuing his labours in safety. But more than this, knowing the ideas of the natives as to the connexion of Christianity with disease, what would have been the effect upon their minds, what the consequences as to the future progress of Christianity among them, if, after labouring three years among them, when disease at length came in such a fearful manner, he had left them to die without medicinal aid for their bodies, and to perish without hope for their souls? We venture to say that had he done so the Christian Church, aye, and many a worldling, who may be now ready to sneer at his enthusiasm, would have cried shame. The Soldier who deserts his post in the hour of danger is branded with infamy, and we hesitate not to say that from the facts, so far as known to us, our conviction is that had Mr. Gordon deserted his post—his honourable, his glorious post, in the very van of the Christian army—at that time and under these circumstances he would have been dishonoured as a Soldier of the Cross. Highly as we esteemed Mr. Gordon—much as we hoped from his zeal, his earnestness and his diligence—and much as we would have done to have retained his labours on the Mission field, we would not after all that has happened have had him purchase his safety by leaving his post in such a manner. The good Soldier prefers death to dishonour, and the patriot mother has chosen that her son should make his last bed on the gory battle-field, but with no stain on his name, rather than that he should have brought dishonour upon his country and his kindred in the hour of trial. And we believe that the heart of the Church will decide, nay, that Mr. Gordon's dearest friends, when the first outburst of sorrow is past, will respond that it was better, since such is the Master's will, to see him faithful unto death, though that death be a martyr's, than that, having put his hand to the plough, he should have turned back—than that there should have been any fainting in the hour of trial. "He that findeth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for my sake