

■ My wife and I were deeply touched by your editorial, "Ask the Maoris," in the December issue. You concluded, "We shall leave the final evaluation of the missionaries' enterprise to those who listened and learned from them." I assure you that in many a country the darkness was dispelled by the missionaries.

We are from India. I was born and raised in Edeyangudi, the village (about six hundred houses) where over one hundred years ago Bishop Robert Caldwell labored. Today the light is still burning with warmth and power.

He served in the District of Tinnevely for more than half a century as one of the foremost Protestant missionaries. Before the end of his labors he saw the number of Christian natives increase from 6,000 to nearly 100,000.

Born on May 7, 1814, near Antrim in the North of Ireland of Scottish parents, he set sail for India as one of the early missionaries and arrived in Madras, India, on January 8, 1838. His deep and abiding affection toward India is best narrated by what he expressed in his journal, "My residence in India for by far the larger portion of my life, and the deep interest I have always taken in India and everything Indian, make me more an Indian than anything else."

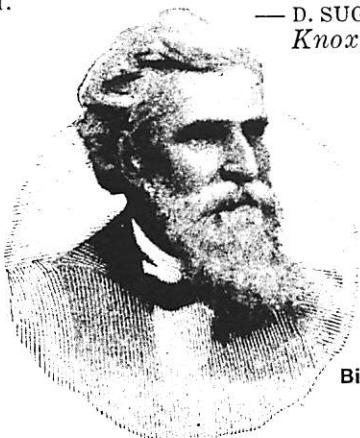
In his jubilee address, January 8, 1888, he expressed his opinion of vernaculars and English in India saying, "I conceived that the masses could only be reached through the vernaculars and the educated class could only be reached or could best be reached through English schools. I was therefore an advocate of both kinds of work." He was familiar with 18 languages.

He was a giant among the Christian missionaries (he was over six feet tall). His work was concentrated in Edeyangudi. He built a beautiful church of Gothic architecture, laid out regular streets, commodious and comfortable houses, a hospital and schools. There were times when he climbed tall trees to draw his layout for a village. His mail was carried on foot once a week by a messenger who also brought his bread to last a week.

Few missionaries who came to India surpassed him in scholarship, in success in soul-winning, or in breadth and saintliness of character. He was intimately acquainted with the Tamil people, their history, language and customs.

Bishop Caldwell said, "I wish to die among the people for whom I have lived." That wish was fulfilled on August 28, 1891, when he died in Kodaikanal (South India). His body rests beneath the chancel of the Holy Trinity Church, Edeyangudi.

— D. SUGANTHARAJ
Knoxville, Tennessee



Bishop Caldwell