

ON MISSION BAND WORK.

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Proverbs are brief, pithy sayings, condensing in a striking or witty form truth founded on the experience of the ages—Such an one we have in: "As the twig is bent, the tree inclines," which after all rests on a proverb as old as Solomon "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Convinced of this truth and of the equally important truth that the children of to-day must, of necessity, be the workers of the next generation, it becomes a matter of solemn moment that they should be so trained as to leave a deep impress for good on the age in which they shall live. The Romish church understands this fact and one of their wisest men has said, give us the children until they are twelve and we do not care very much who has them after that age. Robert Brudetie gives a striking illustration on this line. The family were living at one time where there was no Baptist church, his sister was asked to take charge of the Primary Class, she objected and said, she did not think it would do as she must teach the whole truth. The teachers said to each other, why they will leave her class so young that it will make no difference. She taught the class and Bob says, when they grew up they took to the water as naturally as young ducks.

The power and permanency of early impressions are being realized more fully as the ages pass. Bands of Hope and Mission Bands not only evince a growing interest in the young but have existed long enough to prove that from these organizations have come the most active workers in moral and spiritual movements. The deeper the impressions made in early life the more constant will the progress be in riper years and no more effective means can be used for the carrying out of Christ's last command than the organization and upholding of live Mission Bands in each church.

How to organize and how to sustain are two important questions. As regards the first, organization, two different methods prevail, first, that in order to membership, there shall be a regular fee, weekly or monthly, as the case may be, and from certain standpoints this is the ideal. Society or Band implies membership and perhaps, those enrolled and given a badge or certificate of membership might take a deeper interest than they otherwise would, and it might be easier to get them to a weekly meeting but as the object is not so much to raise money as to enkindle and quicken interest in the largest number, we prefer the second. The whole Sunday School a Mission Band and the session of the Band to immediately follow the Sunday School. By following this course a larger percentage of the young, as well as the older members of the school is secured, and is the one that I should prefer. But whatever plan may be adopted the life and success depends on the management, depends on the interest that some take in it, evinced by the sacrifices made for it. No organization, whether juvenile or otherwise will live if some one does not put some of the spare hours of life into it, not only by attendance, but in timely preparation so that each meeting of the Band may not only be a pleasant one—one that all might enjoy but also a meeting where vital truth may in a pleasing manner be stamped on memory and heart. I take for granted that the pastor's heart is in this work, and that so far as other engagements permit, he will be present, not to monopolize but in a brief,

pointed way, in a manner suitable to the occasion, present some phase of mission work or some event that has occurred in a mission field, and no month passes that something does not occur in the field of missions, that will not interest and profit the youngest member of the Band. The Band should be impressed with the idea, "the Band is ours," not "yours" and that each is expected to do all they can to make each meeting better than the preceding one. We require a leader who has time, tact, and taste in selections, and patience to bear with delinquencies on the part of those who have promised but do not perform. Who, amid all the discouragements attending such work perseveres animated by the feeling, I am doing this for Christ's sake. One of the mistakes into which workers often fall is, to make the exercises too long. They should be short and crisp. We have seen all interest killed by a recitation, that, although good in itself, was so long as to exhaust the powers of the reciter as well as the patience of the listeners. We have to accommodate ourselves to the spirit of the age that demands short sermons, sentence prayers, and other devices that stamp on this age "rush." Music must form a very important factor in the meeting and this should, with perhaps some exceptions, be furnished by the children. The exceptions will be, when some warm-hearted good singer will give a soul-ringing solo, or when perhaps the members of the choir, will for the benefit of the Band give a choice selection. Every effort must be put forth in all ways to maintain an interest, sometimes by an entirely changed programme. One end to be aimed at is, that each and every member shall have in course a part and that not a few members, however good their ability, should appear on every occasion. We are all interested in that to which we contribute. The more general the work of the Band becomes the more general will be the interest felt in it. One of the problems in Mission Bands is, to get the boys interested. In most of Mission Bands they are silent if interested spectators. It may be we do not take the boys early enough, but leave them until they think it is well enough for girls, but we are too big for that work, and a solution of the problem would materially aid work and give a deeper interest in the meeting, through the use of more varying talent.

While the whole range of Missions should be put under tribute and every continent receive its share of attention, one chief aim should be to keep in close touch with our own Missions and a useful exercise would be a taking up of the Mission in its origin, its history under the American Baptist Missionary Union, then the organization of the independent Mission, the search after the Karens accompanied with a description of them, then the hand of God pointing to the Telugus. Our first missionaries, the first stations and then in regular order all the stations. The trials, discouragements and successes, their present standing, etc. This might be done either by the pastor or the president as a prelude or a conclusion, bearing, however, in mind the advice given before, "brevery." This should be kept up until the Band is familiar with the name and in some measure with the life of every missionary. The name of the station, the number of the workers, the number of church members. They should have a clear idea of caste, as the great hindrance to the Gospel, and the influence the Gospel has in elevating the sunken natives. The contrast between, Christian and heathen nations should be so presented as to make the youngest thankful