

or that a change ought to be made by substituting a more common term, meaning the first day of the week—of heathen origin—a helping hand is needed to day to preserve the weekly day of rest, and appeals are being made to law-makers, based upon the word of God, for this very purpose, and how much more forcible would support from Scripturally named institutions be! These feeble thoughts on this important subject is submitted in all kindness to students of the Bible, nearly all of whom would like to see the day of rest preserved because if that day was taken away the church and school would suffer.

### MARRIAGE AND MISSION WORK.

BY A LADY MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.

Mission work is not the sentimental, romantic thing which it may once have seemed to those who looked upon it from afar, or even to those to whom it came as a matter of personal experience. It is, on the contrary, intensely practical, touching life on every side through the Church and the world. Hence it calls for most careful thought and study, both for those remaining at home and to a certain extent directing the movements of those who go forth under its auspices, and by the latter class in the solemn responsibilities which they assume.

And not the least serious or important of the many questions which present themselves for attention is that of marriage as connected with mission work. It demands of us calm, unbiased, prayerful consideration, in order that we may so treat it and so use it that our Master may be honoured and His faithful servants strengthened by our words.

The topic divides itself into two distinct parts, one relating to the marriage of missionaries before they go to their friends, the other to the marriage of those who enter upon their work as single women, and to whom the suggestion of marriage comes afterwards.

It is an old, much-discussed question whether it is better for missionaries to go out married or unmarried, and strong arguments can be brought on both sides. On the more general subject, a certain great Apostle wrote some beautiful, wise words more than 1,800 years ago, believing that he "had the spirit of God" to guide him, albeit he had "no commandment from the Lord" on the subject; nor can it be by accident that those wise words stand in our Bible to-day.

But it is not needful here to examine at length arguments on either side. Under the present conditions of our women's work we have simply to imagine the result of only unmarried men and women going to mission stations, to convince ourselves that there is "a more excellent way." A large force of single men and another large force of single women working in the same or closely-connected mission fields, would exhibit a remarkable and unpleasing spectacle to our Protestant eyes; accustomed as they are to look upon such arrangements as belonging to the priests and nuns of the Romish Church. In such an atmosphere, no sweet home life would ever be set before the people among whom these celibates would live. The beauty of motherhood, forever blessed by the Babe of Bethlehem; the sacred love of husband and wife, hallowed inexpressibly by being used to symbolize the love of Christ and His Church; the family altar; the children given to God and trained for Him from their birth; the quiet, orderly Christian household—all this would be hidden from the eyes to which it might be a constant, striking object lesson.

We need to think very tenderly of missionary wives and mothers. They are by no means drones as regards active work, in schools or zenanas, some of them having a grand record in that line in our annual report, and others doing genuine, useful work which is not thus recorded. And even where such activity is not permitted them, their influence is in many ways most powerful. The homes of which they are the light and life are not only "peaceful habitations" for the hard-worked husbands, and "quiet resting places" for other weary workers, but often centres of blessing to a wide circle coming within their reach. A missionary of the A. B. C. F. M. says that "it is these missionary wives who have made it possible for unmarried ladies to go and live and work among the people of Eastern lands."

To you, therefore, who are sustaining married missionaries in their work in foreign lands is given a most important sphere for thought and prayer and sympathy. Do not fail to give these to them in large measure, and do not expect from them more than, or as much as, you would ask from Christian wives and mothers at home, in the way of active labour outside of their own households."

With regard to this part of the subject, however, another word must here be said. Not all the wives of missionaries are true missionary wives. There are those who go out, desiring to have it understood that they accompany their husbands as any good wives would do, with no intention of being missionaries themselves. Some of these are constrained by the love of Christ and souls to become devoted labourers after they have been on mission ground for a short time, while a few succeed to a great degree in maintaining their original attitude towards mission work.

There are also those—not so many as there once were, we think—who go to mission fields as married women with an honest purpose to be true missionaries, but with very inadequate qualification for such work; whereas it would seem as if they, quite as much as single women, need special equipment, physical and spiritual, if not mental. Many a strong and valuable missionary has been obliged to leave his field to bring home a wife, whose condition of health before going

should have prohibited her ever being sent to the mission ground.

Some indeed have gone out with fair prospects of health, and have broken down under the strain of work or the influences of climate, and in returning home they must cause their husbands also to abandon their work. God may sometimes deal with those who would gladly serve Him long and well in heathen lands, and we should cheer their sad hearts with utmost tenderness, while we share their disappointment. All that we urge is that a woman thinking of going to a foreign mission field as a wife should carefully and conscientiously consider her fitness for missionary service as well as wifehood, that she may help and not hinder her husband in his life work.

After all, however, the second part of this subject is the most important one to us, and truly there is scarcely any theme which is just now of greater practical interest in our women's work. It has become such a common thing for the young women who go out to mission ground single to marry in the course of a year or two, that we have begun to speak of those who remain single as remarkable and praiseworthy exceptions, and at the same time to wonder how the necessary supply of single workers is first to be obtained and then to be maintained. It seems wise and timely, therefore, to look carefully at the matter, and if possible see what is reasonably due to the work, to the society at home, and to the individuals most nearly concerned.

We have already shown that we have no protest to make against missionary marriages in general or in particular, believing, as we do, that God has ordained this state for missionaries as for others. Nor would we for a moment maintain that in no case should a lady going out single, marry upon the field. There have been many instances, not only of very happy unions, but also of great gain to the mission work from marriages among those labouring together in the same or even in different fields. Having freely admitted all this, we must yet take strong ground on this whole question. A single woman is usually sent out to do a specific work, such as can only be done by single women. Fitted by previous training, selected because of that fitness, animated by zeal and by a strong purpose to give herself wholly to the work assigned her, she goes to her field, followed by the earnest prayers and warm sympathies not only of her immediate personal friends, but also of a large circle of people who are interested in the work which she has undertaken to do.

She is lonely, especially after the first outburst of enthusiastic welcome from the missionary circle is over, and she settles down to her new life. But was not loneliness included in the "cost" at which she has left country and friends, and which she surely must have "counted" before she offered herself for this service? A home has been arranged for her in some missionary family, unless she is one of two ladies who will make a home for themselves. Her work is now before her, after an interval necessary for study of language, observation of the people, insight into the accepted methods of teaching, etc., and it is a work to fill heart and head and hands for as long a life as God may grant her.

Before many months or it may be before many weeks, there comes to her what comes to nearly every girl sooner or later, what may already have come to her before she left the homeland—an offer of marriage, perhaps from a fellow-labourer, perhaps from some one quite outside of mission work. What shall she do? Is she free to answer as is any girl in her home in America, who is under no obligation except to follow the dictates of her own heart in the fear of God?

It is a difficult matter to advise any one under such circumstances, nevertheless, supposing the question to have been asked let us try to answer it. We do not say that she should turn altogether and always from all such proposals. We do say that she should remember the solemn obligations, some of them spoken, others implied, under which she has gone to her field. She went out to do a certain specified work which awaited her coming. Is she under no bonds to perform that work for a time, at least long enough to meet the expectations and relieve the anxieties of those who sent her out? Has she a right at once to make a vacancy, when the workers at home have only just at great effort and at no small expense commissioned her to fill the one that existed? Greater usefulness, wider opportunities, happier surroundings a more assured position, these doubtless are presented as motives for the change, but they are not in question now. Going out for a certain, definite work, appointed thereto at her own deliberate request, she owes herself at least for a term of years to that work. Does she not?

It needs no argument to prove that the service to which single women are assigned in foreign mission fields is one which wives of missionaries are usually unable to perform. It is a definite work, from which they turn when they marry to an entirely different sphere of labour, and the change is often made with the briefest notice to those by whom they are sent out. Is it strange if, when these tidings come home, they bring a sense of discouragement and of wonder that the strong, high purpose of sacrifice and service has been so soon surrendered, and the life turned into a different channel? One commissioned, equipped and sent out on the terms above specified, would seem to be under a certain contract, bound by certain obligations, to fulfil a certain duty and by no persuasions to be turned from that duty until the contract is fulfilled and the obligations discharged. After this is done, she is free to do as she will with herself and her life.

This is an earnest word which we would speak to our young women. With regard to such as have already married soon after reaching their fields, while we certainly regret their loss

as single women in the special work which we had hoped they would do, we still hold them dear as our missionaries when they continue to belong to us, and from our hearts we wish them great happiness and usefulness in the new sphere which they have chosen. We say, God bless them, with true, loving sincerity.

But to those single women who have lately gone out, and to those who will be sent in the future, we appeal, asking them to consider the subject as it has been set forth in this paper. We would put none into any kind of bondage or under restraint, yet we would deepen and strengthen and sanctify the feeling of obligation, until it became a power mighty enough to resist any form of persuasion to assume other duties until the pledged ones are performed. We cannot avoid conviction that a marriage entered into after this obligation is discharged, will be more truly blessed of God than one which prevents this discharge.

We are asking no more than is demanded of many a woman at home, where some strong tie of relationship involving a duty, constrains her to bid her lover wait until that tie is loosened. Nor is the waiting time always a loss if the love be true and deep. On the contrary, it would often be far better for our young missionaries to defer marriage until fuller acquaintance has strengthened and proved the new love, in the meantime going steadfastly on with the work which they went out to do. We wish to make it very clear that in all which has been said there is no intention to cast blame upon any one of those who may seem already to come under the conditions specified, or upon any one who would in future be induced to do the very thing which we depreciate.

This matter is too delicate, too complicated, aye, too sacred, to be touched otherwise than most carefully and gently by those indirectly concerned, as it surely should also be prayerfully and deliberately considered by those immediately affected. All that we desire is to lead to a more thorough understanding between single women about to go to a foreign mission field and their advisers on the one part, and those responsible for sending them on the other part, as to the obligations assumed.

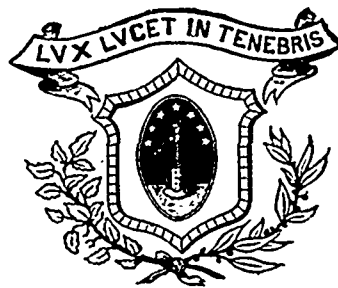
And our earnest prayer is that God will send to us in these coming years many women, strong in body, well-trained in mind, filled with a high and holy zeal, and clothed with an indomitable purpose, who shall "go for us" to the work which so urgently calls and claims them.

### THEN AND NOW.

MR. EDITOR.—The Waldenses intend to celebrate this year, in several ways, "the glorious return" (*La Glorieuse Rentrée*) of their forefathers to their valleys in 1689. The following was appointed to be one of them. No doubt, it is being carried out while I am writing these lines.

The same number, about 900, was to set out from the same point in Switzerland, at the same time, the night of August 16, and to go over the very road over which their forefathers went two hundred years ago, visiting every place which the latter did, and staying a short time, or all night, just as they did. Of course, the journey this year will take the same time, twelve days, that it did in 1689. It is to be hoped that they are having fine weather. Their forefathers had a great deal of wet during their journey. Their children who are now, literally, walking in their footsteps, do not need to go "Onward, marching as for war." They have no Duke of Savoy against them. King Humbert, the representative of the House of Savoy, though not a religious man, lately gave the Waldenses a handsome gift as a token of his sympathy with them on this joyous occasion. They have a noble record.

Their boast is not that they deduce their birth  
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth,  
But higher far their proud pretensions rise—  
Children of parents passed into the skies.



The Duke of Savoy who opposed "the noble nine hundred" during their return journey, sought their help when Louis XIV., who set him against them, turned against him. He was not disappointed. They were "ready, aye ready," to do and to suffer for their king, in whatever was right.

Dr. Gray, of Rome, told me that he, with other evangelical ministers, among whom were some Waldenses, once waited on King Humbert. His majesty did not know much about the other churches then represented. But when he came to the Waldenses, he smiled, and said that he had often heard of their Church. May the Waldenses ever walk worthy of their noble ancestry. A French proverb truly says, *Noblesse oblige* (nobility lays its possessor under obligations).

Along with this I send you a cut of the chief device of this old witness for the truth. You may be willing to deck your paper with it in honour of the occasion. For ages the Waldensian Church stood by itself, "a light shining in a dark place." There is another device of this Church, but it is not the official one. It represents a lily among thorns. Its motto is, "Emergo" (I rise up out of).

The article on the glorious return, republished in the PRESBYTERIAN of August 21, is from the pen of the Rev. D. K. Guthrie, the Free Church minister of Liberton, near Edinburgh, a son of the late Dr. Guthrie.

Elders Mills, Ont., Aug. 22, 1889.

T. F.