

board has now a consort in the form of a zenana mission or a woman's board, and a vast amount of mission work is now being carried on by these agencies. Thus the gospel is being carried to the homes of many women, who could otherwise never hear it. Many boarding-schools for Christian girls are preparing the women who will make Christian homes in India, and miscellaneous schools for poor children; for caste girls, or for village boys, are opening the way for Christian teaching, for Sunday school, and for preaching.

In the city of Madras alone twenty or more ladies are engaged in this sort of work. The immediate results of their work are very small, except in the case of their Christian boarding-schools, and I am sure the warm-hearted ladies who manage the affairs of these societies have made no mistake in according to their representatives here a measure of personal interest and sympathy that is often denied by boards made up of the sterner sex. Surely it is greatly to the praise of Christian women that they should set an example of zeal in missions, as in every good work.

Women out of Galilee followed the Lord Jesus and ministered to him of their substance, and women of Philippi labored in the Gospel with Paul. And now that women have added the power of organization to the power of personal effort, we may hope for greater results from their labors than ever before.

I have, however, still to mention what I regard to be the most direct and fruitful means, not only for the evangelization of the men of India, but for the redemption of women, viz., the direct preaching of the Gospel. Our principal reliance for evangelizing the people of any land, and even for reaching the women of India, must be the preaching of the Gospel. When Jesus went about all the cities and the villages preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom he did not fail to reach the women of Galilee and Jerusalem. When the apostles carried the Gospel into other lands, not only women of the common people, but honorable women not a few, embraced the Gospel; and the main reason that the efforts of American Baptists in the mission field have been so signally blessed, is that the Gospel has been preached from village to village, and has been blessed by the Holy Spirit to the salvation of the hearers. In the Telugu mission multitudes of women, as well as men, have believed in the Saviour. Of course, they are not caste women, but they are of the same class as the men who form the main body of our converts.

Every preacher among the Telugus has daily opportunity of preaching to women. They are in nearly every audience, and they often outnumber the men. They are also the most quiet and attentive listeners. I do not say that the women of India can only be reached in this way. I cast no slight upon the earnest labors of ladies in the zenanas or schools. I only express the opinion that school and zenana work should not be made the main reliance for bringing either the men or women of India to Christ. In the city of Madras there are perhaps twenty missionaries, who are engaged in educational work. There are many ladies who are working under various societies in schools or zenanas. There should be twenty men who are wholly devoted to the preaching of the gospel to the heathen. Instead of twenty there are but six, and even of these six nearly every one has arduous duties in addition to his preaching to the heathen. I must plead, therefore that the men among American Baptists will awake, and bring their share of the work to a proportionate degree of proficiency. Let us have not merely woman's work for woman, but man's work for woman. The Lord Jesus preached one of his most eloquent

sermons to a sinful woman of Samaria. The Apostle to the Gentiles laid the foundations of the first church in Europe by preaching outside the gates of Philippi, in that place of prayer by the river-side, to the women that resorted thither. Let us have still more of that sort of work for women. Let us have more missionaries and earnest women to carry it on. And may the Lord hasten the day when the women of every land shall be raised to that position of honor and esteem that is given them in the teaching of the Gospel of Christ.

Social Reforms in India.

BY THE REV. THOS. EVANS.

Long after I came to India some thirty years ago, no Hindu would ever dream of either allowing a widow to marry, or of seeking a wife for himself or his son among those who were looked upon as "cursed of the gods," by the loss of their husbands, however young, or fair, or beautiful, rich, or respectable in the social circle the widow might be.

The fact that she was a widow—though often she had only been betrothed and had never lived with her to-be husband, and perhaps not ten years of age, yet "the gods had killed her husband," as a punishment on her for some crime she was thought to have committed in some former birth, and therefore she was considered as a "cursed thing," on account of which she would be shunned by her nearest friends, and hated and despised by her late husband's family as "a vile wretch" who had been the cause of the death of the man who had the misfortune to make her his wife. She is not only condemned to perpetual widowhood, but she is subject to all manner of insult and ill-treatment—from sheer dread that any act of kindness shown to the "accursed thing" would be resented by the King of Hades, who had on her account killed her husband. She is now to eat only the most common and coarse food, and that only once a day. She is to be stripped of all ornaments, however rich she may be, to wear the most coarse clothing, to sleep on the bare floor, to be the drudge of the whole family, and never to be shown any pity or compassion how ever ill or pained she may be. She is never to sing and never to laugh, and never to appear happy, nor to join in any family feast or pleasure. All this, and much more, insult and cruelty often drove the poor victim of it to desperation and despair which often ended either in an awful plunge into a well, or to a disreputable life of prostitution. One name for a widow in India is "Ränd" and "Rändi" is the common term for a harlot, which shows the light in which the poor despised widows were regarded in Hindu society.

Though I say were regarded, we are not to suppose that the stigma on this state has been abolished throughout India. But it is a comfort to know that it is now beginning to disappear, especially among educated Hindoos, and more especially the Moslem community.

This will be seen from the fact that there is an organ now published in India for the express purpose of "encouraging and facilitating widow marriages." This paper is published in English but conducted by Hindoos. It is called *The Social Reformer*, and has been published now for a whole year, and the native editor says that "the journal has been started with the object of promoting the social felicity of our natives."

It may interest the readers of the *Missionary Herald* to read a few of the many advertisements found in this journal for wives from the formerly despised class of widows.