

Young People's Department.

MISSION BANDS.

DO WE NEED THEM? HOW TO CONDUCT THEM SUCCESSFULLY.

(By Mrs. Graham, Montreal.)

If all Christians did their duty towards their fellow-men there would be no necessity of this Women's Missionary Convention being held.

But no one here needs to be reminded of the fact that all do not live up to the precious privilege of lending a helping hand to our heathen brothers.

Women a few years ago gave little thought to their down-trodden sisters in distant lands until a few earnest souls whose eyes had seen and ears heard wrote and spoke of the things they had seen and heard till consecrated women everywhere are saying, Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?

To mothers the answer comes swiftly back, Train up your little ones for My service. This is clearly our first duty. You plead lack of time, talents or information. God may accept your excuses, He alone knows the heart; but as you do not train your children up with a missionary spirit something must be done to supply the omission, and I know of nothing better than the Mission Band.

The cry goes up from many hearts. If I had only known sooner the great need of my money, prayers or personal service how gladly would the prayer of faith have been offered and how many more sheaves might have been garnered for the Master. Many here echo that cry. Do not then let your little ones grow up to manhood and womanhood without giving them that knowledge which will fill their young hearts with missionary zeal and inculcate habits of giving which will make them by and by valuable Christian workers.

Would you not like soon to hear that all men have had the glad message of salvation carried to them? Then train the coming generation for Jesus.

Do you wish to be relieved from reading about deficits in our Treasuries? Teach the children to give.

Are you anxious for more missionaries and more money to send them. Remember "To train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Physical, intellectual and moral training begin in childhood. Temperance reformers have recognized this vantage ground and begin with the young. Can anyone then after careful thought decide otherwise than that the best and surest way to raise an army of faithful missionary laborers is to begin with the children.

Some may say, True, but cannot they be trained in the home and Sunday-school and by the pulpit? Yes, they may, but are they? If not, then Mission Bands must supply this deficiency until all S. S. workers wake

up to see and discharge their responsibilities in this particular.

Having said this much to settle the necessity of Mission Bands, I will try to give a few practical hints concerning carrying them on which may be helpful to those interested in this work. The most important thing is the selection of the President or Leader. First, she must be one who has consecrated her time and talents to the Lord's service. The little ones require so much time, patience and information that we must sow plentifully if we would reap bountifully.

Then she must love Missions. Do not be deceived, no one will detect quicker than a child whether you are in earnest about this matter. If you are full of enthusiasm and zeal for the conversion of the heathen world you can easily inspire the children. None so easily aroused and led as the boys and girls, but your interest must be genuine and your zeal unflagging if you would succeed for any length of time. But you must not only love missions, you must love the children.

You remember how Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these, and he said unto Him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee, and He answered, Feed my lambs." You have the whole secret of success in that one verse in John's gospel. Do we love the Lord? If so we will feed the lambs. The lambs of the flock gather closely around the Shepherd; they nestle in His arms when danger is near, because with an instinct which is as strong as our reason they feel that the Shepherd loves them. The Saviour said, "Suffer the little ones to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." How infinitely tender He was to the lambs. If you love them they feel and know it from your every word and look. You will not harshly command or unthinkingly reprimand, but ruling by love will never weary or be out of patience.

Thus before all other things I would place these three qualifications: 1st, A consecrated life; 2nd, A love for missions; 3rd, A love for children. There are no doubt many here this afternoon who wish to be useful Christians. You love mission work and you have always felt more at home with the children and they were always happy with you. Have you a Mission Band in your church? If not, then go back and in the strength of God born of faith and prayer gather the little ones together and teach them the great need of the heathen, contrast their happy homes with those places which we cannot dignify by that sacred name. Lead them to see how precious the privilege to send of their pennies and dimes that others may hear the glad tidings that "Jesus saves." Believe me no Christian work holds grander possibilities for the future, no work brings a richer or a surer harvest. Others here might go home to help with their sympathy and prayers the oft perplexed and discouraged leader of your Band.