

ADDRESS

Delivered before the Women's Baptist Missionary Union of the Maritime Provinces, by the President, Mrs. Williams, St. John, N.B., August, 1886.

We have come to make mention of the loving kindness of our God, and as we gratefully recognize the hand that has led us during the year now closed to a degree of success, the natural enquiry that arises in our minds is—What lies before us in the year to come? What is there for us to do? What necessities press upon us, and how shall we meet them?

Let us look for a moment at the necessities. Our aim is—"All the World for Jesus." Some may think that there is so much being done that "He may have the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession," that the call is not to us so urgent.

Thank God much has been done since the heroic Carey ventured into the soul mines of India. 100,000 missionaries have gone forth with the message of life to the heathen, and thousands upon thousands have been brought to Jesus; yet there are 850,000,000 of our fellow-beings ignorant of the only name whereby they may be saved.

Five hundred millions of these are women and girls, and call to us for help. Let us pause a moment that we may apprehend the awful truth.

We have been called upon to imagine these helpless, hopeless sisters of ours passing one by one in unbroken succession our door. If we look but for two seconds into each pleading face, thirty years would have rolled their round before the last one would have passed from our sight. Is here not a necessity? Do we realize it?

At times we do, when some burning spirit with the eloquence born of conviction and consecration depicts to us their suffering. When we are told, as we were a few months ago, of a childhood that knows no joy, of girlhood that instead of bright fancies and happy hopes, carries already burdens too heavy for age; of womanhood whose every emotion is stifled at its source, and out of whose heart is crushed every hope but that of non-existence. For a little our hearts are moved, and perhaps our eyes moisten with the tear of sympathy, and it seems as we listen that we must respond to the call for help. But alas! the impression passes away with the occasion. The duties of life press upon us, or it may be its pleasures allure us, and the dew of feeling never crystallizes into purpose and action. And so but one in ten of those who believe that Christ died for them do anything to carry out His last commandment.

It is because we forget so soon that so many of us fold securely our own hopes and prospects about us and are content to be at ease in Zion. This is why of the 25,000 women in the Baptist Churches of the Maritime Provinces but 3,000 are members of aid societies, and of these 3,000 so few are found to keep alive the altar fires, and to claim the promise made to united prayer.

And here another necessity presents itself to us, that of arousing the hearts and consciences of these our 25,000 sisters to such a realization of their obligations as shall prompt each one to the fulfilment of them.

How shall we do it? When the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt they built every man over against his own door. We expect our meeting to-day to be a power, and we have prayed that influences may go forth from it that will reach in blessing to far-distant India, and will re-echo in eternal harmonies.

Our associational meetings just past have aroused consciences and stirred hearts; but they will all be as a pleasant song unless they result in individual effort. Let everyone see to it that her own information is so complete, and her own soul so in sympathy with the work committed to her by her ascending Lord, that she herself will be a power of light, that no one may come within the circle of her influence without being stimulated to better service.

"The spirit of a single mind makes that of multitudes take one direction." Let each member of our aid society plan and work for increase of membership. Our aim should

be, every woman in the church—Remember, we have but 3,000 out of 25,000. To this end no pains should be spared to make the meetings interesting.

Many methods have been suggested, and much is said and written that is helpful; but of all that I have seen nothing has pleased me better than the photograph from real life presented to us in the July LINK by our own correspondent. I wish that it might become a reality in every one of our societies. Its externals were a well-lighted and well-heated room, and good maps. Its essentials were, such intelligence as is the result of careful study (facilities for which are within the reach of us all), such liberality as characterizes the giver whom God loves, and such devotion, such earnest prayer as cannot fail, but pleads until the touch of faith is experienced, and such praise as rises even as sweet incense from hearts that have learned to rejoice in God, and in His promise of saving health for all nations.

"As iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the face of a man his friend," and so an occasional reunion of the Aid Societies of a county or district would be found helpful. The reports of our sister societies make frequent mention of such meetings, and some of the secretaries regard them as their great hope. With individual consecration resulting in efficient Aid Societies, with quarterly, or semi-annual county or district meetings, gathering the rivulets of feeling and purpose into our associational meetings, all pouring their blessed streams of faith and zeal into our annual feast, and each with a reciprocity like to nature's own, receiving in its turn holy quickening, what might we not accomplish? Our \$3,000 would become \$30,000. Instead of two representatives in the Foreign field, we would have twenty, and when claims presented themselves to us of which our judgment approved, and to which our inmost hearts responded, an empty treasury would not face us, and bring both heart and soul into abject bondage.

Last year we pledged ourselves to use every effort to induce our Sabbath Schools to give the subject of Missions a prominent and permanent place, and among the activities of the ensuing year I would urge the carrying out of this resolution.

It would be idle for me to take up time in presenting arguments for the training of children in missions. We meet them everywhere. Every missionary paper and magazine discusses the subject. Only our last LINK contains an article headed "The Children, our Helpers and our Hope," and stated that many a good missionary were he to have but one chance of reaching the good people of a town or country church would unhesitatingly say, "Let me meet the Sunday School and tell my story to the children and young people." So the question no longer is—Shall missionary training be supplied, but how shall it be supplied?

Much is being done by Mission Bands, and their work is beyond all praise, but we think this resolution of ours points to a more excellent way.

Training to be of value must be begun early and reach through all the years from childhood to maturity. It must be permanent.

Of necessity the interest of Bands must fluctuate, for it too often depends upon the zeal and energy of one devoted spirit.

The training must be general. Bands reach but a part of the children, and in many cases the children who need it least. The same effort that would reach and interest twenty children might and ought to reach two hundred. What agency so well adapted to give early, systematic, permanent and general training as our Sunday Schools? A beginning has been made. Some schools have thrown open their doors to the Mission-Band, devote a portion of their funds to Missions, and participate in model Missionary meetings, consisting of map lessons, class exercises, recitations, addresses, and inspiring music—all without any labor on their part!

Others have more fully magnified their office, have recognized themselves as a missionary organization, give all their funds to Missions, Home and Foreign, and themselves furnish the model mission exercises.