

MISSION BAND WORK.

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Many measure the importance of Mission Band work by the amount of money raised in this way, but, to my mind, the raising of money is but *one* important feature of the work and, perhaps, not the greatest. In Mission Band work, we should have an eye to the future. Some seem to regard the term missionary as applying only to those who have given their whole time to mission work beyond the bounds of their own local church, but the term should be used in a much broader sense, for we need true mission workers in all of our churches. People are dying all around us without the knowledge of Christ, and not a few Christians seem to think that the preacher or the missionary is the only one that is responsible. One Christian is just as responsible as another, according to his opportunities and talents. Each should shine in the corner in which God has placed him. We each have a work to do that no one else can do as well as we, and yet we let the golden opportunities pass, thinking that some one else can do it better, but the some one else has his own work to do. The man who does no mission work in his own church will not accomplish much in foreign lands. If we are to have successful work done abroad, we must have devoted ones in the home land with the same spirit as those who have gone into heathen darkness. We have seen young men who seemed to take no interest whatever in the work of the church of which they were members, gave nothing, were seldom seen at prayer-meeting, had no anxiety for the souls of those around them, strike out to study for the ministry or offer themselves as candidates for foreign mission work. May the Lord save us from filling our ranks with such men. I have read of a woman whose prayer for twelve years had been, "O, Father, make me a foreign missionary; I want to go to foreign lands and preach." One day when she was praying this prayer, the Father said, "Sophie, stop! Where were you born?" "In Germany, Father." "Where are you now?" "In America, Father." "Well, are you not a foreign missionary already?" When I saw that, the Father said to me, "Who lives on the floor above you?" "A family of Swedes." "And who on the floor above them?" "Why, some Switzers." "And in the rear house?" "Italians, and a block away, some Chinese." "Now you never said a word to these people about my Son. Do you think I will send you thousands of miles away to the heathen when you have them all around, and you never care enough about them to speak with them about their souls?"

What has all this to do with Mission Band work? Just this. If we are to have mission workers in our churches, we must train them, and we have no right to expect them unless we do train them. The time to

begin training a mission worker is when he is a child. It is a mistake to wait until Christians have become old and crystalized in their habits. If we want beautiful maples in our gardens, we do not go to the forest and get a large tree, but we take a small one, water and care for it, and in time we have the beautiful tree we desired. In the same way we produce the most efficient mission workers. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

The qualities needed in successful mission workers are much the same for the worker in the local church as for the worker abroad, and these are the qualities we should strive to develop in the boys and girls of our Mission Bands, some of which are *liberality, knowledge of mission work, executive ability and willingness to work*. As to how to develop these qualities, a few hints may be given. We should teach the children to give, and not money that their parents have given them, but money that they have earned themselves, that they have made some sacrifice for; they will be more interested in that which costs them something. Parents can help the children in this work by giving them something to do. They might have a corner of the garden to work and sell the vegetable. There are many ways we can find for them to earn money if we are interested in them and their work. I would distribute mite-boxes among them, and then have a special meeting of some kind when these would be opened. I have seen little eyes sparkle with delight as they saw *their* boxes opened, and listened to the music of the pennies, *pennies* that were there, perhaps, because they had denied themselves candies, etc. Then, in giving their mites, they can be taught that—it is not the amount that God looks at so much as the spirit in which it is given, because we love Him and the people He has made. Then, too, they can learn that all they have they owe to Him. Who will say that these little ones who learn lessons of self-denial in their childhood will not be more useful men and women because of these lessons?

And, as to knowledge of missions, how can we expect persons to be interested in missions unless they know something about them, and how are they to know about them unless information be given; and is not the Mission Band just the place to give this information? In giving this mission knowledge, a large map of the world is essential. It should hang before the children's eyes at every meeting, and be constantly used by the leader. It is an invariable help in making the lesson interesting and easily understood. As a first step I would aim to give the children a clear idea of the terms "mission," "missionary," "gospel," "heathen," "lost," "saved," etc. I should drill them on the meaning of these terms thoroughly, until they understood that their own ministers, their own S. S. teachers, and all engaged in such work, are really missionaries. Then remind them that