

ADDRESS

ON

Female Missionary Work.

By M. L.,

C.M.S., NINGPO, CHINA.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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FEMALE MISSIONARY WORK.



I PROPOSE to consider this subject under the following five heads:—

- I.—THE *work itself*.
- II.—THE *difficulties* OF THE WORK.
- III.—THE *privileges* OF THE WORK.
- IV.—THE *encouragement* TO THE WORK.
- V.—THE *call* TO THE WORK.

And, in conclusion, I would leave with you one practical thought on each head, which, prayerfully worked out, may bring forth useful fruit.

I.—What is a Missionary? Literally “one sent,” the Latin equivalent of “angel;” only it is well that our Societies are called Missionary, and not Angels’ Societies, or who would venture to join them? By the term Missionary we now understand more especially one who is sent to a distance, who voluntarily relinquishes home work for the supposed more arduous toil on

a foreign shore. And what is the work the Missionary is sent to do? There is a verse in the forty-fifth of Isaiah which gives in one line the aim and work of the Missionary. In the 20th verse we read—"They have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image and pray unto a god that cannot save;" and the 21st verse contains this commission: "Tell ye, bring them near." And is not this God's aim in all His dealings with men? Is not this the cry of the great Father from the "Where art thou?" of Gen. iii. to the "Let him that is athirst come" of Rev. xxii. "I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself." "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." In Psalm cl. Israel is called "a people *near* unto Him," and we all remember St. Paul's appeal to the Ephesian converts:—"Ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Now it is just to these "far-off" ones that the Missionary goes to try and bring them "near." But the means by which this great end is to be attained are infinitely various. There is first, the *preaching*, pure and simple, of the Gospel. We perhaps naturally shrink from the use of the word "preaching" with reference to women, but after all it is only declaring the good news, and whether we call it "speaking," or "preaching," makes very little difference. Let me point out one passage which seems to warrant the use of the bolder term. In Psalm lxviii. 11, 12, we read—"The Lord gave the word, great was the company of them that published it," or as the Prayer Book version has it "the preachers." "Kings with their armies did flee and were discomfited, and she that tarried at home divided the

spoil." That the tarrier at home should be *she* excites no surprise, it is quite natural. Is not home every woman's sphere? Does not St. Paul exhort women, especially young women to be "keepers at home"? But commentators tell us that the "preachers" of the preceding verse is also in the feminine gender. So here you have a company, or as the margin renders it an "army" of women-preachers. Let me guard against being misunderstood. I am no advocate for women in Christian lands addressing large mixed audiences, especially in the presence of clergy and others well qualified to speak; I can see no distinct warrant for this in Scripture, and a great deal in the spirit and tenor of Scripture contrary to it. Again and again in the course of my itinerations in the villages, when the room in which I was speaking filled with men, I have stopped and appealed to their sense of propriety. I say to them, "This is neither Chinese nor foreign propriety, that I, a woman, should be talking to you a company of men; let the women come and hear me, and men will come and talk to you. And I can distinctly recall the scene on more than one occasion, when they good-naturedly turned out, and in another minute the room was full of women. On one occasion I entered a large open court, where several carpenters and other men were at work. Down went their tools in a moment, and there was a general rush, each one shouting to the other, "a red-bristled woman, a red-bristled woman." It was quite a new place to me, and although I seldom *show* the white feather, I believe I was frightened. I walked on into a second court, and then turned and faced my followers.

I showed them that I had purposely passed on to the more private quarters and appealed to them to go back to their work and leave me with the women. They looked at me for a moment as though doubting whether I meant it, and then ejaculating "shih-wô z-go," those words are true, they went back. After a long and pleasant talk with the women I passed out, and the men nodded good-humouredly, bidding me "come again and next time bring a gentleman to talk to us." As I have no gentleman at my own private disposal I could not do this, but I asked a native catechist to visit the place soon. I must however plead guilty to addressing more public and mixed audiences, for one cannot always help heads three deep in the window, and if the idea strikes you that you will both breathe better and be heard better from the table, you sometimes yield to the force of circumstances; or if on the margin of the blue lake the people press upon you to hear the word, and Peter's boat is close at hand, it is, to say the least, very tempting literally to tread in the dear Master's steps, and praying Peter to thrust out a little from the land and sitting down to teach them as they stand on the shore. How can one help it? If in answer to the prayers of believing friends at home the string of your tongue has been loosed and you speak plainly; if utterance *has* been given you and you feel that you have got hold of the people, will you close the mouth which God has opened because women may not preach? Oh! I wish I could show you China's millions sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, I wish I could show you village after village, even in the near neighbourhood of Ningpo, where the women know absolutely nothing of the Lord Jesus, and

you would not care whether women "spoke" or "preached" to them.

But there are other departments of Missionary Work. The command is not only "Preach the Gospel to every creature," it is also "*teaching* them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The restored apostle is not only to "tend the sheep," with instinctive tenderness the Good Shepherd tells him first "Feed my lambs." And the sphere for educational work is simply boundless, limited only by the number willing to engage in it. In China the facilities for imparting knowledge to *girls* vary very much. In the South, in Canton and Amoy particularly, education is prized and there are many heathen schools for women. With us, such a thing is unknown. In Hangchow mixed schools are tolerated, but I remember hearing an American missionary friend there say that it took ten boys and one girl to make a girls' school! Bishop Russell's old teacher expostulated with him more than once on the subject, "women" said he "are troublesome enough as it is, if they are taught to read they will be quite unmanagable!" Perhaps this dread of teaching women is the instinctive consequence of our first mother's disobedience, the tree of knowledge is probably still two-sided. But indifference and opposition are no reasons for neglecting duty. We believe that the time is coming when the Chinese Christians will learn to give due "honour to the weaker vessel," and looking on them as "heirs together of the grace of God," will desire to share with them all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It is deeply to be regretted that educational work was not more extensively tried at the outset by many of

the missions which are now tardily taking it up. I do not hesitate to say that our own Society has crippled itself in this respect, but its action during the past few years has been modified. We do not want a high classical education for our girls, but we *do* want to put the scriptures in their hands, we *do* want to give them the elements of general knowledge, we want to give them that full use of their faculties, which, even apart from religious knowledge, must free them from many of the most foolish and debasing of their superstitions. Above all, we *do* want, while the heart is yet tender and the conscience unseared, to tell them day by day, little by little, line upon line, of Him who is ready to "satisfy them early with His mercy that they may rejoice and be glad all their days." Teaching may be second in some respects to preaching, but the step between is a low one, and there is a special promise, not often quoted, in Dan. xii. 3, "They that be wise," the margin has it "They that be *teachers* shall shine as the brightness of the firmament."

Then again for those who have taste neither for teaching nor preaching, who prefer a more sedentary life, there is an endless work in the preparation of books. The Vernacular Society of India has done a work on which we in China cast longing eyes, for we have very few class books, and one of our ordained clergy wrote a most earnest entreaty to Mr. Wright to send out a missionary to do no other work than to translate commentaries! But we want also much simpler works than commentaries. We want simple Geographies, Histories, Arithmetics, books on Natural Science. Are there no English Christian ladies, with a natural taste for languages, and some true perception of the powers

of words, who would be glad to put this talent to its highest use? Instead of perfecting yourselves in the idioms of France, Germany, or Italy, turn the full vigour of your intellectual powers on something of which the Master can say, "Ye did it unto me." When I tell you that at present in Ningpo we have only six or seven books of the Old Testament in the colloquial, that is, in a language intelligible to the ear as well as to the eye, that the rest is in a tongue as much sealed to the unlearned as Latin to our peasantry, you will allow that the field is attractive and noble enough to satisfy the loftiest ambition. The breathings of the man after God's own heart, the poetry of Isaiah, the pathetic wailings of Jeremiah, the mystic numbers and deep predictions of Ezekiel, the tender expostulations of Hosea, have yet to be rendered into intelligible and chaste colloquial. Who will give to the Chinese in their own tongues all the "Scriptures of Truth"?

Let me glance . . . one more sphere of work, that of the medical missionary. That the subject of medical training for women is attracting more and more attention is a cause for thankfulness. Without entering in the least into the question of how that training is to be obtained, whether men and women are to study together or not, we may rejoice that another branch of honorable industry is open to the women of England. And much more I think may we rejoice that the first lady who has qualified herself as a physician both in London and Dublin, has consecrated her diploma to the service of the Master, the Great Physician, among the women of Africa. When the first fruits are thus sanctified, surely we may hope for a blessing on the harvest. "If the first fruits be

holy the lump is also holy." But while rejoicing in this good sign we cannot but acknowledge that others have been before us in the field. In China, Japan, India and Syria, American lady doctors have been for years at work, and where they have been, the higher classes have been reached as nowhere else. I know and I glory in the knowledge that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity is, that it is for the poor. Never have I felt more exultingly the meaning of, "To the poor the gospel is preached," than when the poor village women shrug their shoulders and say, "We have no money; how can we prepare for another world?" Then do the glorious words spring to one's lips, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and *he that hath no money come,*" but one's heart yearns too, over those poor *rich* people, shut up in their walled houses, with food indeed to eat, and raiment to put on, and they "know not that they are wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." These are to us inaccessible, but I do most firmly believe that a lady, qualified in medical knowledge, after a year's study of the language on the spot, would find these closed doors open to her, and behind them she would reach, not only the diseased body, but the dissatisfied yearning soul, craving after some knowledge of the unseen, of the dim future, that other life of which China's wisest philosopher refused to speak: "I do not know *this* life, how can I know the next?"

This then in some of its varied aspects is the missionary's work. Who is sufficient for these things? Let us beware of extreme views regarding the qualifications needed in those who engage in this work? While we claim that it is worthy

of the noblest intellects, the most powerful minds, the most refined education, while we long to see those who have earned distinction at home pressing into the ranks as labourers abroad, sure that the Church at home would lose nothing by what she gave, for "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth," still we cannot forget that the Carpenter of Nazareth chose Galilean fishermen for his first apostles. An earnest love for souls springing from love to the Saviour of lost souls, a certain amount of general intelligence, a dogged perseverance which can endure hardness, and if needful, fall at the post of duty but never forsake it, a *capability* as well as a willingness to adapt oneself to circumstances and become all things to all men if by any means we may save some, combined with unwavering faith in the final triumph of the Gospel, be our own part in the fight what it may, these are the essential elements, as far as I can form a judgment, of Missionary qualification. Let us never forget that spiritual power does not come from learning, and that the cleverest missionary is not necessarily the most successful. "Not by might, nor power, but by my spirit saith the LORD of Hosts." Daily do we still see that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and with the great variety of work to be done on the Mission field, there is room for every varied qualification and degree of qualification in the workers. Still, dear friends, let us give our best. In beating up recruits we may look out for "polished shafts" or "smooth stones." *Samson's* success hardly justifies our following him in his choice of weapons.

II.—Our next point is the *difficulties* of the

work. How shall we approach this part of our subject? Shall we come delicately like Agag into Saul's presence? Shall we shirk the difficulties or slur them over as trifling? I trow not! Difficulties do not daunt brave spirits, they stimulate them. Is it only on the battlefield that the post of danger is the post of honour? Is it only the soldiers of an earthly monarch who press to the van? I will not believe that the soldiers of the cross are less ready to carry their standard in rough places. There are no *insurmountable* difficulties on the Mission field. The Missionary's motto is "nothing shall be impossible unto you." We come to bring you a true report of the lands we have been to spy. "The cities *are* high and they are walled up to heaven and we have seen the sons of Anak there," but, as truly as though we were already in possession, "the Lord hath delivered them into our hand."

But how shall we speak of Missionary difficulties without alluding to that which is the greatest difficulty to all workers both at home and abroad, that which makes the difficulty of all difficulties, *self*? Some people seem to look upon Missionaries as persons virtually exempt from many of the weaknesses common to others, or suppose that by the mere fact of being Missionaries they have reached a higher standard of Christian character. But dear friends why should you expect this? Does the forming of a high and holy purpose secure its own fulfilment? Surely the Apostle did not think this when he wrote, "*When* I would do good evil is present with me." Is it not just when the whole soul is bent on living for God, that we may expect the evil within and the tempter without to be more active and persistent

in their opposition. Think you it was for nought that the temptation came between the baptism and the first miracle? Yea, think you that the Scripture saith in vain, "*Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost* was led up into the wilderness to be tempted? And then consider the drawbacks on the Mission field to the maintainance of a high standard of spiritual life. English services are very few, family prayer is conducted in Chinese, and it is long before we derive the same benefit from services in the strange tongue. Is it any wonder that the lamp sometimes burns low? God forbid that I should excuse it! That were to impugn the faithfulness of Him who always provides the way of escape, but I would have you realise it.

But to pass on to difficulties peculiar to the Mission field. There is the *climate*. Eastern and tropical climates do certainly try European constitutions. They try the nerves, the brain, the liver, and worst of all the *temper*. How often have we seen fine strong men, and women who have not known a day's illness in England, struck down by dysentery, lowered by repeated attacks of fever, either compelled to leave the field or succumb to their deadly effects. Here too we must guard against extreme views. The health of Europeans abroad is more easily preserved than it was years ago. We now know better the dangers to be avoided, and the precautions to be taken; and though no doubt it is trying to get up in the morning with the thermometer at 90°, and go to bed with it ranging from 88° to 92° for two or three months in the year, or never see it go below 75°; or again to live in snow huts and be in danger of losing your fingers or ears if rashly

exposed to the cold, still men die in India and China after thirty years, more than the Levitical period of service. Medical science too has decidedly advanced in the treatment of diseases peculiar to the tropics, and the climate is no longer the deadly foe it was. There is the *language*. Missionaries may, I think, indulge in a special grudge against the builders of the Tower of Babel. I remember writing home that I had no difficulty about accepting the consequences of our first parents' transgression. I feel sure in Eve's place I should have eaten the forbidden fruit, but the disobedience at Babel was quite another matter. To crowd together in a city instead of spreading out over God's beautiful world, to build, build, build, instead of dispersing over and cultivating the earth, this is a form of transgression with which I have no sympathy, and we pay dearly for it. The difficulty of course varies widely in the different Mission fields, and when we look at what perseverance and prayerful labour have done in this particular department none need despair. Nowhere perhaps is this difficulty more real, more overwhelming, than in China and Japan. The forty thousand characters of the chief Chinese dictionary may well make the bravest heart quail, but for practical purposes an acquaintance with six thousand is quite enough, while a true classical knowledge of ten thousand will enable you to hold your own with native scholars of ability. But there is an easier path for those who cannot face these Alps. There is now in many parts of the Mission field a Romanised system which enables native children to read the New Testament in a few months, and is an immense boon to beginners in the language. Of

course to any one who has never learned any language but English, who has no notion of the letters having other powers than they have in English, the difficulty of learning Chinese even with this system is very great. Still men and women of moderate intellectual powers, and with small educational advantages, have mastered this language sufficiently to teach the way of life, aye, and to lead others into it. Another great obstacle is the difference in character and habits of thought and life between the foreign agents and the natives among whom they work. Nothing but continual contact can overcome this. We must live with them, try to see with their eyes and hear with their ears; we must study their customs, we must not shrink from what is truly difficult at times, intimate and close intercourse with them. We must not shrink from contact with them. Who are we that we should shrink? Are we not alike dust, and did not God ally Himself to dust when He took on Him our nature? Often and often when the poor, toiling countrywomen have compared their hard-skinned, sunburnt hands with mine have I taken their hands, and with a real sense of pleasure in believing that God made of one blood all the families of the earth, I have said to them, "This is earth, that is earth, only one is a little whiter than the other; in a few years both will have turned to dust, who will know the difference then? Are we not sisters?" I have seen that go straight to their hearts. But it is not always that one can overcome their prejudices. They are still very shy of us, and believe us capable of the most atrocious crimes. In going to new places much suspicion is often manifested. Two years ago I

was trying to open a school in a new place only ten miles from Ningpo; native friends had been looking at houses in this large village, and had found several to let, and at length fixed a day for me to go down and settle on one. But when I got there not one was to be had. In the only one where the owner was willing to let me have some rooms, the other lodgers prevented her doing so. The Christian woman who had been looking out for me was much disappointed, and blamed me for the failure. Why, do you suppose? Because in the course of conversation questions having been put about my family, I had answered truthfully, and this was the result. First they said that I could not be a woman, or I could not walk so far, and even if I were not a man in disguise, I had owned to having five brothers, and if I were admitted these five brothers would soon come together and take the house and grounds by force. The old lady said I ought not to have told them I had five brothers, but I felt like Joseph's brethren when Jacob blamed them for telling the man that they had a younger brother. Could I certainly know that they would say my brethren will come? Nor can I in the list of difficulties omit one, which though it is, thank God, limited to China, is a very serious one—viz., the opium traffic. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury some years ago, Bishop Russell characterised this trade as "The greatest crime ever perpetrated by one nation on another, the greatest blot on our national escutcheon, and the greatest hindrance to the spread of the Gospel in China." Never have I heard a Missionary address a heathen Chinese audience without the opium question being brought up. Often and

often have I been interrupted by the sneer, "Who brings the opium?" Dear friends, if for nothing else, China deserves something more from England than the handful of Missionaries now in the field. Do you know that for twenty years a contraband trade was carried on under the British flag? Do you know that the Union Jack floated as a shield over smugglers? Do you know that when English cannon had reduced the Summer Palace to ruins, and brought the Chinese Emperor to submit to English terms, he wept when he signed what he believed to be his people's death warrant, he was compelled to legalise the opium trade. Would that we could rouse the people of England to forego the paltry seven millions which the Treasury derives from the Indian opium revenue. "It is not lawful to put it into the Treasury, it is the price of blood."

But turn we to a brighter subject, and consider, thirdly, the *privileges* of the work. And here you will at once perceive that to magnify the office is in no way to magnify those who are permitted to fill it. The vessel remains an earthen vessel still, and the magnitude of the treasure in it only manifests the excellency of the power to be of God. The worm is not changed into an archangel, and then told to thresh the mountain, but "*the worm shall thresh the mountain.*" But it is a high calling, and its privileges *are* great! To my own mind the highest has ever been the privilege of special fellowship with the Lord Jesus in His work of seeking the lost. It is fellowship not only in the work, but in the way of working. Did He not leave His father's house, His father's bosom, the society of angels, all the joy and all the glory

which were naturally His, and which in that wonderful 8th chapter of Proverbs we learn that He really enjoyed as the Eternal Son with the Eternal Father? And did He not come to a people hard of heart and dull of hearing, a people who could not understand His motives nor respond to his desires; a people who interposed childish objections to His most solemn declarations, who could be taught neither by parable nor by plain speech? Did he not long for human sympathy with a most touching longing both in His joys and sorrows, taking even those dull and heavy disciples as far as possible with Him in His mysterious agony; but, Alas! finding them alike on Tabor and in Gethsemane "heavy with sleep." And who are they who can best understand all this, but they who in their finite, their infinitesimal measure, drink of the same cup? Is home-sickness a myth, think you? To some it is a life long martyrdom, and I can tell you it does not need a *rance de vache* in China to rouse the longing for home. It does not last of course, but I have felt it bow me to the earth for days together. It came down like a tempest, and the beaten vessel lay like a log upon the water till the storm had spent itself, and heart and soul revived once more, knowing that the seasoned timbers would better bear the next shock. And then gradually the earthly bonds and family ties, though they never *break* yet *give* a little, the spiritual becomes more real than the natural, we learn the meaning of "Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?" And by and by home means heaven rather than England, and our Father's house is where He has gone who has ascended to His Father and our Father, and home-sickness loses itself in "the

desire to depart and be with Christ, which is much more better."

Then again we are looked upon and detested as foreigners, suspected of every imaginable crime, "He hath a devil—He is a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." And among those who we hope have received the truth we meet with such constant disappointment: "Are *ye* also without understanding," we have so often to ask the professed followers of Christ. Yes, we know something of the daily sorrows of the Man of Sorrows, and we know too with a power and sweetness indescribable that He knows by personal experience our sorrows, yea rather, they are not ours but His which we are permitted to taste.

Then there is the privilege, so seldom really enjoyed with the same freedom in England, of brotherly intercourse and fellowship in the work with all denominations of Christians. In the face of heathen superstition, in the face of blind idolatry, we can forget that the church is divided; we know only that we are brethren, fellow-workers with each other and with God in the great work of demolishing the strongholds of Satan. In China, members of the S. P. G. Mission lived for over a year in the house of an American Presbyterian missionary, learning from him how to set about their work, going with him on long itinerating journeys, uniting with him in prayer for the conversion of the Chinese to Christ, not to the Anglican Church. In Japan I heard a most touching testimony from an aged Baptist missionary who had been thirty years in the Sandwich Islands. At a united prayer meeting held at his house, he confessed that he had been wrongly exclusive in his earlier years, but he now rejoiced in

being able to welcome all parties in the Church of Christ as fellow labourers. He had been specially won by the loving conduct of two young men belonging to the S. P. G. Mission, who, rather than show a divided front to the heathen Japanese, had regularly attended these union prayer meetings, although the ladies sometimes lead in prayer. I myself on one occasion spent Christmas with some Presbyterian friends in Shanghai, when the lady of the house and myself, having a great desire to know something of what the Roman Catholics teach, went to the midnight mass together. It was not all interesting till just at midnight, when a group representing the Holy Family was suddenly displayed, and an old French priest stood up and in the simplest colloquial told the people what they were to remember at that time: how that the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, seeing how wretched men were, had come to save them. Not a word of *Mary*, nothing but the same sweet story which rang out a few hours later from our own pulpits. We came away rejoicing that there are some in the Church of Rome to whom we can say "God speed," and hoping that there may be many who in the face of heathenism feel they can afford to win men to Christ and not to Rome. Not that there is much fellowship between Protestants and Romanists. They denounce us as heretics, and forbid their people to hold intercourse with Protestant converts; still, if there be one who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, we may be glad.

A third privilege of mission life is freedom from much which makes life small at home. Our position is a recognised one, we are abroad for a definite purpose and are not expected to attend to

anything but our work. There need be very little mingling with worldly society; time need not be wasted in morning calls and afternoon teas; the dress of a missionary lady need not occupy much of her thoughts, though dress will be a trouble till we don the white robes which neither soil nor wear out.

The privilege of winning lost souls is one which workers at home know and realize, but there is something specially close and endearing in the affection which springs up between those who have been brought out of heathenism and those who have been the means of their deliverance. The poor people are so childlike; they accept with such unquestioning confidence the word of their teacher; they cling so to the new bond of brotherhood that we cannot but be drawn to them in a special manner, and thus to taste in anticipation something of what that day will bring when we shall say, "Behold, I and the children whom Thou hast given me." On my last morning in China, the chapter in course at family prayer, the second lesson for the morning service, was the seventeenth of St. John's Gospel. One would hardly dare choose such a chapter, but coming in regular order, how could one miss it? There were about forty present, as some of the women and old girls had come to say farewell, and I do not think there was a dry eye in the room when we finished that last solemn service together, and ten year's toil seemed little to pay for the privilege of taking up in any measure the words of that high-priestly prayer: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them. I pray for those whom thou hast given me; for they are *thine*. Holy Father, keep

through thine own name those whom thou hast given me keep them from evil."

IV.—Fourthly, let us look at the encouragements to the work. These are twofold: First, the pledged word of our God that His word shall not return to Him void, but shall accomplish His pleasure; and Second, the innumerable proofs daily afforded of the truth that the Gospel is still "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Take the word of God to find out there His will concerning the heathen. We really study the Bible too exclusively with reference to ourselves, too little for the purpose of finding out the mind of God towards the world, and thus being elevated to sympathy with Him in His world-wide purposes of love and mercy. And, dear friends, I think even our views of *sin* are too much confined to ourselves. We know something of it indeed as that bitter thing which blights our own lives; but do we think of it enough as the world's treason against God? Study God's estimate of idolatry; bring before your minds as vividly as possible the daily hourly dishonour done to the living Father of all by two-thirds of the human race. Consider how God is provoked by seeing the creatures of His hands bowing themselves down to hideous, coarse, or at the best, gaudy images of men, beasts, and creeping things. Yet the word stands sure, "The idols he will utterly abolish." True, centuries have rolled away and idolatry is still rife; true, the chains of superstition have been rivetted on the nation; true, priestcraft is all but omnipotent in many parts of God's beautiful world, but the day is fixed in the eternal counsels when every knee shall bow to

Christ and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. And what God has promised, He is daily doing: "He keepeth his covenant for ever." Even in my own adopted country, the least attractive, the least cared for, the least loved by the English Church, even there 12,000 communicants, belonging to the different branches of the Church of Christ, are so many instances of the same saving grace, the same tender mercy which saved us. Each of those has the Good Shepherd individually sought and found; each of those has the Holy Spirit taught and dwelt in; over each of those have angels rejoiced, and of each one has the Heavenly Father said, "It is meet that we should be glad, this my Son is alive again." What more encouragement do we need? Let the South Sea Islander, the New Zealand Sabbath-keeper, the African Bishop, the Indian Maharajah, the Ceylon Tamil Cooly, the North American Indian, the Japanese student, and the Chinese ordained minister, be to you proofs that a covenant keeping God is blessing the work of the Church Missionary Society.

V.—Fifthly, let us consider the *call* to this work. Since my return to England, looking at things, perhaps, from a too exclusively missionary point of view, I confess I have been astonished at the general want of interest shown in missionary work even by Christians. It seems to be taken for granted, as a perfectly right state of things, that missionaries should be extraordinary exceptions, that the majority of Christians cannot be expected to have anything to do with the heathen outside England. With some, indeed, missionary enthusiasm is looked upon as almost a mild form

of insanity harmless, but still incipient aberration; whilst with others, only anxious to avoid anything like personal responsibility, you are told that there must be a special "call" to the work. Dear friends, what is this "special call"? It seems to me that the duty of evangelizing the heathen is laid upon every member of the Church of Christ, and I think I can bring it home to you by a very simple question. Which of you is ready to relinquish her participation in that wondrous promise of the risen Lord, that word which is less a promise than a declaration of Divine unchangeableness from the lips of Jehovah-Jesus—"Lo, I am with you always," or more minutely, "*all the days*, even unto the end of the age"? Yet how can you take the comfort of the promise while you neglect the command to which it is joined? Not till you are willing to forego that dear presence; not till you come to-day, when you are ready to look up to Him, and say, 'This day I have no need of Thee;' not till then can you divest yourself of the responsibility, nor rid yourself of the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," and "Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age."

But I know that we cannot all be personally engaged in work among the heathen abroad. With some the age for active work has passed; with others family ties imperatively keep them at home, and in the case of a few willing hearts feeble frames forbid their attempting the task. It will be enough if the fact be accepted that the duty is laid on all. If the question took the form of why should I *not* go, instead of why should I go, what a difference it would make! To those

who have life before them, vigour of mind and body, no imperative home ties, I would say, "Why should you *not* go." The women of China, India, Syria, and Africa, are dying for lack of knowledge, sunk in the lowest depths of heathen degradation. Yet they are your *sisters*. Why should you *not* go? Take the question home and settle it with your Lord. To those who cannot go I would say, do not therefore put the call from you, the command remains, *you* must serve in the person of another. There was a proposition made two years ago by one who signed himself "An Honorary Association Secretary and former Mission Helper," that those who from unavoidable circumstances felt unable to serve personally, should support a substitute on the Mission field, and he set the example by paying £250 a year, as may be seen in the Church Missionary Report. Why should not ladies do the same? We can subsist on less. The ordinary salary for a lady Missionary is £120. Are there none who could contribute this sum in lieu of personal service? Could not a dozen ladies contribute £10 a year for this purpose? At any rate why should not the ladies of each congregation have their own representative on the Mission field? By the exercise of effort and self-denial this may become a true substitutionary service. The money given must not be merely out of your superfluity, it must be a real sacrifice, commensurate at least in some degree with the sacrifice offered by the substitute who will leave home and kindred for Christ's sake and the Gospel's.

And now very briefly let me leave with you one practical word on each head, only somewhat

reversing their order. First, the *call*; *Accept* it. Hear the appeal yourselves, "Come over and help." Say, "Here am I, send me." And if the path of duty is plainly marked out for you in England, and you cannot serve abroad, see that you redeem yourself. Collect the funds and find a substitute, at least one for a congregation.

Second, the work: *Know* it. Make yourselves better acquainted with what is being done all over the world, and try to interest your friends and all with whom you are brought into contact with what is daily being wrought among the heathen by God the Holy Ghost. "The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of all them that have pleasure therein." Do not grudge the money spent on the society's publications. I should like to persuade you all to take in and read this year's *Intelligencer* with prayerful sympathy, I have no fear that it would be dropped next year.

Third, the difficulties. *Pray* over them. Think of us as of persons of like passions and infirmities with yourselves, exposed to temptations of which you know nothing, and pray that His grace may be sufficient for us, His strength made perfect in our weakness. Think of us dwelling where Satan's seat is, our ears and souls vexed with the conversation of those around us, and pray that He may be indeed to us a little sanctuary. Think of our stammering efforts in an unknown tongue, and pray that utterance may be given to us. Think of us heated and weary, every part of the mental and physical machinery tried to the utmost; think of us grieving over blighted hopes and relapsed converts; think of us not as on the mount called to see the glory of the Lord, but too often in the crowd at its foot struggling with un-

belief in ourselves, and the power of evil in those around us. Think thus, and you will know how to pray for us. To have collected the money and sent us forth is not enough, you are responsible for us, let not *your* hands fail or the enemy will prevail over *us*.

Fourth, the privileges. *Covet* them. Covet them for yourselves. Become fellow-workers with Christ, share His sorrows now, and His joy hereafter. Covet them for your children. Ask not that when toil and conflict are all past they may have high places in the company of heaven, ask that they may follow the steps of the Son of Man, and drink of His cup here. Do you crave distinction for your sons in the army? Here is a nobler warfare.—In science? Here is sublimer wisdom.—In the ministry? Here is the highest sphere, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Would you see your daughters as the polished corners of the temple? Ask that they may themselves dig from the quarries of Hindoo, or African or Chinese heathenism, bright jewels for the Saviour's crown.

Fifth, the encouragements. *Praise* for them. Thank God that His word is pledged to His Son that the heathen shall be given to Him for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. Praise Him that this is being accomplished, that in every clime the Saviour has seen of the travail of His soul. When you chant "The noble army of Martyrs praise Thee," praise Him that the martyr spirit is not extinct; that the Tarpeian rock at Madagascar, the sullen river at Bonny, the loathsome dungeon at Foochow witness to the same grace which illumined Stephen's face. Remember the walls of Jericho

and shout; remember the ambushments of Tekoa, and "begin to sing and to praise," yea, begin the Hallelujah by faith now, and God only knows how soon we may join in the full chorus "The kingdoms of this world *are* become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ. We give Thee thanks O, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and art, and art to come, because Thou hast taken unto Thee Thy great power and hast reigned."

