

**COUNSEL TO
NEW MISSIONARIES**

**From Older Missionaries of the
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VII

SOME COUNSEL TO WOMEN TEACHERS

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AS one who has traveled through a pleasant country enjoys meeting those who are commencing the same journey, I take pleasure in greeting you at the threshold of your mission life. You have chosen a good work, and it is your wish to make the most and best of life, and I am glad indeed to have the privilege, through these pages, of extending to you a welcoming hand, hoping that it may also be a helping one, and to pass on to you through this medium some of the thoughts and experiences which have proved helpful to me. You and the Master alone know the full measure of what has been involved in your decision, and the sacrifice you may be making, but I doubt not that you are glad and happy, and feel that it is a great privilege to be one of His chosen messengers, and the promise of the hundredfold is yours. I well remember how, during my first voyage to the mission field, made before the days of rapid transit, as the days grew into weeks, and the weeks into months, and the dear home-land seemed to be going very far away, the beautiful lines were constantly in mind

“I know not where His islands lift
• Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift,
Beyond His love and care.”

The promise, "Lo, I am with you always," is your *sure* possession, so you can never be left *alone*.

The first step in your new life will be the acquisition of the language, and its importance cannot be overestimated. The usefulness and efficiency of the missionary worker depend to a great extent upon familiarity with the language of the people. The gospel message is new and strange to their ears, and if not clothed in familiar words is not likely to reach their hearts. It is difficult enough for them to grasp and understand it when expressed in the best possible way. Do not feel impatient to begin work, or that the time is wasted which is necessarily given to this most important preparation for your chosen work. The waiting time is valuable in many ways; it gives time for adaptation to new surroundings, and becoming familiar with the thoughts and feelings of those whose highest good you are seeking.

The very first requisite for a successful missionary life is a Christ-like love for those for whom you labor. The heathen women and girls will read very readily and accurately your feelings towards them, and unless there is a genuine interest and love for them in the heart, the effort to reach them is hopeless.

There is a heart language, which can communicate without the aid of words, and which is understood by all. The kindly smile, the loving glance of the eye, the sympathy manifested in looks and tones, even if in unfamiliar words, are eloquent expressions of the love that is in the heart, and are readily understood and appreciated. Could there be a more beautiful tribute to the life and spirit of any one than was paid to a dear missionary sister,

who had returned to the home-land hoping to regain health and strength for longer service? When the message came back that her earthly work was finished and she had gone to receive the heavenly reward, one of the native Christian women said of her that it was through her life she had learned to understand the love of Christ for sinners; it had always seemed a strange, incredible story until her love for the poor heathen women, so unlike herself, had been such a revelation of the power and strength of human love, that it had made it possible to understand the divine love of the Saviour. It must ever be borne in mind that you are the exponents of the Christianity which you profess, living epistles, which will be known and read by those about you, who will be quick to detect any inconsistencies in life or example.

If you have been engaged in educational work at home you will doubtless realize from the first the different character and object of the educational work of the missionaries, which should always be largely evangelistic. In many mission schools much of the teaching corresponds nearly with the Sabbath School work in the home-land. The conditions on the mission field are so different from those in Christian lands, where the pupils in the schools have the home influence and teachings, the church, the Sabbath school and Christian friends, while for many of those who attend the mission schools it is the one opportunity of a lifetime to learn the priceless lessons, which are so infinitely more important than the learning which pertains to the earthly life. Fifty years hence it will matter very little how much or little they have learned of the higher mathematics, or the different sciences,

if they have only obtained that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation.

Whatever they find, or do not find, in the school curriculum, be sure that they are taught how to find the way that leads to heaven. It is a comforting thought that it does not necessarily need much teaching to insure this. With the blessing of the Holy Spirit a single text of Scripture has been sufficient to point the way.

Let the words of the Bible enter largely into the instruction given. As Frances Havergal has written, "God's promise that 'My word shall not return unto me void,' is not made of our words, but of His own." While it is desirable to give to the pupils in mission schools all the general information possible, let us never for a moment lose sight of the supreme object. After this the amount of instruction which can be given in other lines will depend upon the different conditions of the schools.

In schools which are composed of the children of Christian parents, there is a good foundation to commence with, and in those where the pupils remain under instruction for many years, it is possible to give them in addition to the religious instruction what would be considered a good education in Western lands.

The words of an eminent educator of England are especially applicable to mission schools: "A school should be first of all a place for the formation of character, and next a place for learning and study, as a means for the attainment of this higher end. Discipline and guidance should be still more pre-eminently the business of a school teacher, than the impartation of knowledge." Unquestionably the aim of educational work in the mission field is "to

raise up Christian leaders." And while it is most desirable that these leaders should have all the education in every line that they can obtain, yet when their opportunities are limited we can remember that there may be quite different standards of the amount of education necessary, varying with the classes who are to be led by these Christian leaders. It is as true to-day as when the words were written nearly nineteen hundred years ago, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not to bring to naught things that are." And every true believer through all the ages may claim the fulfillment of the Saviour's promise, "I will send the Holy Spirit unto you, and he shall teach you all things, and guide you into all truth." So we may believe that no one who has obtained sufficient education to be an intelligent, earnest Christian need fail to be a Christian leader of some.

It is of the highest importance that the pupils for their own spiritual development, as well as the good of others, be trained from the first to realize that it is their duty, having heard the gospel message, to tell it to others as they have opportunity, "Let him that heareth say, come." A missionary society is very helpful in leading them to think of others.

You will wish to know each pupil as intimately as possible, and to have them all feel that you are their friend—one to whom they may always come for help and comfort. Let them be assured of your

sympathy in their trials, and feel that you will always follow them with loving interest. The importance of making the best possible use of the time while they are directly under the influence of the missionary cannot be overestimated, and every effort should be made to lead them to decide for Christ, and to prepare them for the trials, which they will be almost sure to meet, when they go out among heathen relatives and friends.

During a time of bitter persecution it was very noticeable that the native Christians who were most familiar with the Bible, were strongest to bear the trial of their faith, and could be cheerful and trustful, while others were timid and dismayed.

As they finish their studies and go out to take their places in the world, let them feel that they will never be forgotten, and thus holding fast your influence over them, without doubt through them you will be able to influence many whom you may never know.

You will feel the paramount importance of finding the best method of presenting the gospel message, remembering that your hearers are as little children, to whom it is all new and strange. It will not be surprising if they do not realize the sin of neglecting to love and worship a God of whom they have never heard, or if the beautiful story of a Saviour's love seems at first incredible to them.

Oftentimes a way that seems to appeal naturally to their hearts is to present the hope of a happier life than they have known here. For many of them the earthly life has been filled with sadness, as they are ready to admit, and the hope of something better, of a place of perfect happiness to which they may go, appeals to them strongly, and they are

ready and eager to learn how they may find the way, and thus their interest is gained.

Many questions will necessarily come up for decision, and you will often feel the need of that wisdom which God promises shall be given liberally to those who ask. It is well not to be hasty in forming opinions, as oftentimes questions, which at first seem easy of solution, may be found to have perplexing conditions, which must affect and perhaps modify, if not change, the decision which at first seemed right. You may meet with experiences which would naturally tend to make you suspicious of the motives and acts of those about you, but do not allow them to unduly influence you, or you will surely find that your own influence for good will be lessened. I remember hearing a very successful missionary say, "The law considers a man innocent until he is proven guilty, and missionaries surely should not be less generous."

It is not likely that any one for whose good you are earnestly seeking can seem dull and uninteresting, but if it should ever be so remember how *much* has been given to you, and how *little* has fallen to their lot, and be thankful and charitable.

You will doubtless find "trials by the way," and they will very likely come in ways which you will not expect. But endeavor under all circumstances to "Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." There may be disappointments, but remember that they are His appointments, and it will help you to bear them. Some one has said that "In the missionary's vocabulary there is no such word as discouragement." "The battle is the Lord's," and victory in the end is assured from the beginning. In a field where there

are such boundless opportunities, surrounded by millions who are in such dire need of the gospel, it often seems trying that one can do so little to meet the need. But when it is remembered that God Himself has set the limitations of strength and ability, they can be accepted cheerfully.

It has been truly said that the real measure of any one's work is not what can be done directly, which must necessarily be very limited, but what can be accomplished through others. This is especially true on the mission field, where the comparatively few workers from the home-lands can never hope to reach directly more than a very limited number of the vast multitudes of heathen. And the *very best* way to develop the Christian life in those who have accepted Christ for themselves, is to lead them to work for the salvation of others. Once assured that there is really the love of Christ in the heart no one need be considered as unable to be a worker in some capacity. And if you are careful to secure the very best helpers that are attainable you may confidently hope that the Lord of the harvest will bless their labors. It must be remembered that the imperfections of Christian workers are only in degree, for no one can claim to be perfect. From the first use all your influence to lead them to feel their personal responsibility, and how binding upon them is the Saviour's command, "Freely ye have received, freely give."

You will doubtless have varied experiences in your missionary life. For the bright, happy days you will be glad and thankful, and if sadness or trials come to you you can always feel that it is all in the present and will soon be past, and then the joy of service will remain forever. And you will

often find comfort and help in the thought of the many friends who "do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."

"Give me to know Thy will, O God!
And may I see each day
A light from Heaven upon the road
To clearly point the way!
That I may know just what to do
And what to leave undone,
And be unto Thy service true
From dawn to setting sun."