

→ 1866 ←

The Woman's
Foreign Missionary Association

—OF THE—

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

—IN—

PROVIDENCE, R. I.

→ 1891 ←

by
DURFEE

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE WOMAN'S FOREIGN MIS-
SIONARY ASSOCIATION OF THE FIRST BAPTIST
CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R. I. READ AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING, JUNE 13, 1891.

BY
SARAH C. DURFEE,
PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.

PROVIDENCE :
F. H. TOWNSEND, PRINTER.
1892.

HISTORICAL SKETCH.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee."—Deut. viii. 2.

As a society it is our privilege to pause to-day and turn our thoughts backward for a quarter of a century to discover, so far as we may, the facts connected with the beginning of our history. In attempting to review any enterprise it is interesting to trace the preliminary steps, to try to discern the causes which operated to produce the movement, and to note the providential circumstances which combined to form the suitable occasion for action. In pursuance of such an investigation, we find that this was in the beginning a missionary church. Its first and most illustrious pastor who drew with him the little band of constituent members said expressly, "my soul's desire was to do the natives good," and doubtless his influence in this direction was an inspiration to other members of the company. In the formation of the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society which was the earliest missionary organization among the Baptists of this country, Rev. Stephen Gano, then pastor of this church, took an active part. He also represented the church at Philadelphia in 1814

when the first General Convention for Foreign Missions was held, out of which grew the American Baptist Missionary Union. From the records of the Female Mite Society, which was the first missionary society in this state and was composed chiefly of members of this church, it is learned that portions of its funds were given at different times to foreign missions.

In 1827 we have the first record of an organization of the women of the church expressly for foreign missions. It probably resulted in part from the impulse of the visit of Mrs. Ann H. Judson to this country, and also from the influence of Dr. Wayland who was personally acquainted with Mrs. Judson and who had recently become president of the college. Of the early history of this society little is known except by tradition as its records are missing. Five years after its formation it assumed the support of a native preacher in Burma, at an annual expense of \$100. In a woman's meeting a few years ago, the late Mrs. Emily A. Eddy gave a most graphic account of the gathering at the house of Mrs. Wayland, when it was announced that the first \$100 had been collected, much of it in sums of not more than twenty-five cents. So great was the joy of the members in their success, that Dr. Wayland was called in to lead them in a prayer of thanksgiving. Although its meetings had been discontinued, collections were made until they were no longer deemed necessary, because the

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was engaged in a work essentially the same. Under the ministry of Dr. Pattison in 1832 a young ladies' association for missionary purposes was begun. Its membership fee was fifty cents per annum and its funds were applied to foreign missions. It was in existence twenty years later in 1853, but it held no regular meetings, and its identity was soon after lost. It is worthy of note that Home Missions were not neglected, for under the same pastorate in 1835 there was organized the "Ladies' Western Association," which raised \$150 a year and was auxiliary to the American Baptist Home Mission Society. It being found difficult to secure collectors this work was merged in the general collection made by the church for Home Missions.

Another fact which deserves notice is the interest in the monthly missionary concert. Some now living can remember to have seen the vestry filled on the first Sunday evening in the month. The collections usually amounted to \$50 and sometimes to nearly \$100 in an evening.* The church was particularly blessed in the missionary spirit of its pastors. Dr. Pattison resigned his charge to become Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, and the visit of Dr. Granger to our Asiatic missions did much toward increasing intelligent enthusiasm and neither before nor after this journey did he

*Memoir of Francis Wayland, D. D. Vol. I, pp. 341-2.

cease to urge upon his people their duty in this regard. Dr. Wayland and Dr. Caswell had intimate connections with the official headquarters and were always well informed concerning the latest news from the field, while Prof. Gammell, the historian of American Baptist missions was familiar with the work of other branches of the Christian church and always sought to make his influence felt on behalf of this cause. At one time the larger part of the contributions of the Sunday School were given for foreign missions. In the course of years however, this was discontinued and there was not among most of the young people that intelligent interest which was desirable, if the church was to maintain its record as a missionary body.

Many young persons had been baptized by Dr. Wayland in the revival of 1858 and others had been added in the following years under the ministry of Dr. Caldwell, whose missionary zeal was not inferior to that of his predecessors, so that in 1865 there was a large company of young women who were actively engaged in the home field, through the Sunday School, the sewing school and the young women's prayer meeting. They needed only some word of inspiration and appeal to start them on the track of labor for the perishing in heathen lands. Among these were a few who from early home training as well as from the missionary atmosphere of the church, had come to have a wider

outlook and a deeper interest than the rest, and to them it was a source of constant regret that so few were like-minded. "They spake often one to another" and earnestly longed for the sympathy of a larger number. One had been impressed by the letters of Mrs. Ingalls in the *Missionary Magazine*, and having learned that she was soon to return to America, wished much to see and hear from her. While meditating over the matter, a plan for organizing a young woman's society was presented to her mind. This seemed very desirable, but the question was how to begin. At once there occurred the suggestion to send for Mrs. Ingalls who would be sure to interest all. It was necessary to secure the co-operation of some older friends and the first person consulted was Mrs. Emily A. Eddy, whose husband Deacon Richard E. Eddy had been for many years the treasurer of the *Missionary Union*. Mrs. Eddy had thus been brought into close connection with missionaries and she was in hearty sympathy with their work. She was also keenly alive to all that concerned the interests of this church. The project met with her cordial approval and from that time until her death she was a constant adviser in all that concerned the society. In the temporary absence of the pastor Dr. Wayland was next approached and he too favored the plan, offering to receive Mrs. Ingalls as his guest and making a suggestion which was afterwards embodied in the constitu-

tion and still remains, that no fixed sum should be required for membership, thus making it possible that all who could make any contribution however small should be members of the society. This interview took place in August, 1865, and in the following month Dr. Wayland rested from his labors and entered into the joy of his Lord. It is a pleasure to remember that his sanction was thus given to the movement in its inception. Conference was had with the pastor, Dr. Caldwell, after his return and he also heartily approved. The way was thus opened for a beginning. The next step was to send a letter to the Rev. J. G. Warren, D. D., Foreign Secretary of the Missionary Union asking for a visit from Mrs. Ingalls whenever arrangements could be made. This letter was taken to Boston by Miss Sarah M. F. Greene, now Mrs. Samuel W. Duncan. A verbal answer was returned to the effect that Mrs. Ingalls would be in Boston at the anniversaries and would then visit Providence. Here the matter rested until May, 1866, when Dr. and Mrs. Caldwell met Mrs. Ingalls in Boston and invited her to their home, thus beginning a friendship which was closed only by death. She came in the early days of June and made her home at the parsonage for nearly a week, where all the church had opportunity to meet her. The visit followed closely on a period of religious interest, when there had been a number of additions to the church, so that many hearts

were open to her words. For several consecutive afternoons meetings of ladies were held in the vestry and were addressed by Mrs. Ingalls. On Saturday, June 9, 1866, a special meeting for young women was held. On that occasion her appeals reached the heart of one from another church who afterwards became a missionary in Burma. At the close of this service the young women of this church retired to the committee room and with the assistance of Mrs. Eddy organized the Young Ladies Missionary Association of the First Baptist Church, by the adoption of a constitution which with few amendments has continued in force to the present time. It stated that the object of the society was to aid the missions of the American Baptist Missionary Union, provided that any young woman (of the First Baptist Church or congregation)* who should make a quarterly contribution of any amount should be a member of the association, and at the request of Mrs. Ingalls a clause was added to the third article providing that "persons may be chosen honorary members by vote of the society." Mrs. Ingalls was the first person thus elected. The officers were to consist of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, and collectors. The four principal officers constituted an executive committee. Provision was made for quarterly collections. By this frequent appeal the subject has been kept before the

*These words were dropped by an amendment, June 12, 1869.

members, and it has doubtless tended to prolong the life of the society, besides making it easier for those to contribute who preferred to give small amounts frequently rather than larger ones annually. Meetings were to be held on the second Saturday of each month, the annual meeting to be in June.

The record gives the names of forty-seven constituent members, sixteen of whom are still with us, although many have removed and some have died. To many young girls the novelty of belonging to a society proved an attraction in those times of fewer organizations than the present. Not all the members were Christians at first, but while working for the heathen some came to rejoice for themselves in the blessed light. The first officers were as follows: President, Miss Sarah C. Durfee; Vice-President, Miss Susan C. Sawyer; Secretary, Miss E. Josephine Smith; Treasurer, Miss Alice L. Bradford; Collectors, Misses Sarah Stewart, Kate M. Whitaker, Grace Granger, Sophia Howland, Addie Clarke, Lizzie Guy, Agnes Purkis, Addie Gale, Eliza Ham, Sarah E. Harris, Ella T. Yeomans, Emma C. Scott. The collections of the first year amounted to \$92.08.

At the first monthly meeting a sketch of the history of the Missionary Union was presented and at other meetings different branches of missionary information were considered. A special meeting was called to listen to Mrs. J. G. Binney of Rangoon, Burma, who was a

sister of Rev. Dr. Pattison and formerly a member of this church. In September Mrs. J. N. Cushing united with the church by baptism, and in October she sailed for Burma, having been first elected an honorary member of this society. To her correspondence while on the field and her occasional visits while in this country the society is greatly indebted. Before the close of the first year, Mrs. Ingalls again visited us at our request in order to be present at a sale of useful and fancy articles which it was proposed to hold. This took place April 4, 1867, at the parsonage, whose doors were kindly opened to us on that occasion. Mrs. Ingalls had a room for the exhibition of curiosities, which added greatly to the interest. The net proceeds were nearly \$800. The total receipts of the first year were \$881.37. Mrs. Ingalls returned to Burma in August, 1867.

In its second year the society was permitted to send to the foreign field one of its constituent members who had taken a most active interest in its affairs. Miss Anna W. Leadbetter went to the Chinese Mission of Bangkok, Siam, in October, 1867, as the wife of Rev. W. M. Lisle. The farewell service held by the society was an occasion of deep and tender interest and has many hallowed associations for those who participated in it. Although Mrs. Lisle was not permitted a long period of foreign service, she has labored effectively at home for the cause, and is still connected with us as an hon-

orary member. In the same year a musical entertainment was held from which the sum of \$216 was realized. The collections increased to \$127.41. At the second annual meeting in 1868, Dr. Caldwell was present and the record states that he "offered some practical suggestions." His words are as appropriate to-day as when first uttered and the abstract is quoted that by it he may yet speak to us; it reads as follows:

"*First.*—That we should endeavor to be interested in the real missionary work, and not merely in the association as *our* society, as such an interest will not sustain itself long and is not the right feeling.

"*Second.*—That we should not only be interested ourselves, but seek to interest others, and so increase our members and attendance.

"*Third.*—That the members should not consider that the society is the property of the officers and that because we have efficient officers they can do all the necessary work; that although we have seen it proved in these two years how much can be done by such officers, yet each member can be nearly if not quite as useful as they, and should consider it her duty to exert herself for the interest and prosperity of the society."

The next year April 8, 1869, through the favor of Rev. Dr. Stockbridge, another sale was held in his school room. The proceeds were nearly \$900, and the treasurer of the Missionary Union in acknowledging the re-

ceipt of the money, spoke of it as "A noble sum, indicating a vigorous life in your society." It must be confessed however that the collections that year were only \$81, which was not so favorable an indication. This was the most successful entertainment which has ever been held; others have followed at different times and under different forms, but in recent years they have been held chiefly in connection with the mission band.

After this association had thus been in successful operation for nearly five years the revival of interest in missions among the women of the Baptist denomination took shape in the organization of the Woman's Baptist Foreign Missionary Society in Boston, April 3, 1871. As its work was substantially the same as that in which this society had been engaged to affiliate with it required no change of purpose or plan, and therefore, after some solicitation on the part of members of the Board in Boston, coöperation was arranged by the following action:

"*Voted.*—To send our money through the treasury of the Woman's Baptist Missionary Society unless otherwise ordered."

This connection has continued till the present time; most of the contributions have been thus forwarded and this society has participated in all the extended and ever-widening operations of that more general work and has derived the various advantages which accrue from union in service.

In 1871 another member of the church, Mrs. Adora N. Goodell, wife of Rev. S. T. Goodell, of Bassein, became our representative in Burma. Although she united with the church by letter, and was known to but a few members, she was elected an honorary member of the society and maintained correspondence with us so long as she continued in Burma. It is pleasant to remember that the farewell service for Miss Evans, the first missionary sent out by the Woman's Society, who sailed with Mr. and Mrs. Goodell and has since been associated with Mrs. Ingalls, was held in the vestry of this church, Mrs. Gardner Colby, the president of that society coming from Boston to conduct the exercises. The designation services by the Missionary Union were also held in the audience room.

In the spring of 1873 a mission band was formed under our auspices. So far as is known it was the first among the Baptists of the state. It can hardly be said to have had a continuous existence since that time, but since 1878 there has been such a band among the children, for which this society has been responsible, and it may now be considered a permanent branch of our work.

The association sustained a great loss in the removal of Dr. Caldwell in September, 1873. As he himself said, he had "stood by its cradle." The sentiments of the society cannot be better expressed than by quot-

ing two from the series of resolutions prepared by Mrs. Sarah Stewart Chaffin, and adopted by the society. They read as follows :

Resolved.—That while we contemplate with reluctance the loss we are to sustain, our hearts are filled with gratitude towards our beloved pastor, that he has so largely contributed to our success as a society; that from our first desire to organize and assist in our humble way in the great work of missions, his counsel has guided us, his influence strengthened us, and when tried and discouraged his ready sympathy and clear vision have uplifted our faith and inspired us with new energy.

Resolved.—That we recognize in this pastoral interest and care the gift of God, for which we would be humbly thankful, that while he has blessed us in so many ways, in none more than in giving to us for a guide, one who while he has taught us of sending light to the heathen has been instrumental in leading many of our own members to that true light, and in turning our footsteps towards the heavenly city, to which we are so rapidly hastening."

Dr. Caldwell was elected an honorary member, and was thus given the privilege of attending the meetings, a privilege which he sometimes exercised. He always retained his interest in the association and some who are present will recall his reminiscences concerning it, given at its twentieth anniversary.

At the close of the first decade in 1876, it was *Voted* that certain persons be appointed to receive from the members of the society a thank-offering for the blessings of the past ten years, and that the money so contributed be appropriated to the use of Mrs. Ingalls.

The amount thus received was \$52.50. In the same year a bequest of \$100 was received from Mrs. Maria T. Jackson. It has been held under the name of the "Jackson Memorial Fund," until this time, the interest only being used, but by a recent vote it is to be expended in payment for a bell for the school house at Oung-pen-lay, Burma, which is to bear an inscription in memory of Mrs. Jackson. In 1880 another legacy of bank stock valued at over \$100 was received from Mrs. Aleph P. Luther. This is still retained, the interest being used annually. It is known as the "Luther Memorial Fund."

In October, 1887, the society assumed the agency of the "Helping Hand." A canvass for subscribers is made annually, but it is to be regretted that only about fifty copies are taken in the church. This is a sad comment on the lack of general interest concerning those who represent us on the high places of the field. "Little Helpers" began to be issued by the Woman's Society as a separate sheet in 1883, and this society also took charge of that subscription until the paper was merged in the "King's Messengers," which is now taken in the Sunday School. In the annual report of 1879, mention is

made of the annual meeting of the Woman's Society, which was held in this house in April of that year.

In the fifteenth year the quarterly collections were smaller than ever before and the meetings were less fully attended. The society had entered on a period of declension, and the total receipts of the five years, including the two legacies, were considerably less than in any former period. An effort was made to secure new members and not without some degree of success. New methods were adopted in the meetings and various endeavors were made to deepen the sense of obligation to the cause. There are fewer events of interest to record about this time, but it may be noted that a tea party was held to obtain money towards the building for the Home for Children of Missionaries in Newton Centre, Mass. It realized \$182.

It having been found very difficult for several years to enlist the help of the younger women, it seemed best to some of those who had been officers from the beginning to resign their places, and thus throw the burden of responsibility upon a younger element. Accordingly at the annual meeting in 1883, the president, vice-president and secretary declined renomination and their places were filled by others. Miss Sarah S. Palmer became president, Miss Elizabeth Howland vice-president, and Miss Laura I. French secretary. It was an attempt to solve the problem of retaining the interest of the young

people who leave the mission band and are not old enough for a woman's society. The arrangement seemed to promise well. Some new measures were tried. The "Studies in Baptist Missions" were used in the meetings and there was a larger attendance of the younger members. In 1885 a committee was appointed to secure names for a Baby Band to be composed of children of seven years old and under, for whom ten cents should be paid annually, the money to be used for the support of the Home for Children of Missionaries. A missionary library was started, but the experiment proved unsuccessful, as it could not be always accessible, and the books have since been loaned to the Sunday School library. In 1886 when an appeal was made for a contribution equal to twenty-five cents from each member of the Baptist churches to extinguish the debt of the Missionary Union, this society took up the work and by soliciting from all the members of the church, both men and women, secured \$278.25, or an average of fifty cents per member. In the same year an envelope party was held to obtain a fund for current expenses. This yielded \$27.25. It was a pleasant occasion and served to draw attention to the society.

As the time drew near for the annual meeting of 1887, there was a serious question as to what steps should be taken to quicken interest among *all* the women of the church. The young women were not satisfied with the

progress which they were making, and the rest had no missionary meeting, and were simply giving their money to a collector or through the weekly offering. Less than fifty women were contributing through the church envelopes and some of these were the same who were giving through the Young Ladies' Society. It was evident that a new start must be made, and at the suggestion of some of the young women an informal meeting of past and present members of the society was held at the house of the former president to consider the situation. There seemed to be only one mind in regard to the subject and that was that there should be one organization for this cause and that every woman in the church should be invited to belong to it; that the object should be withdrawn from the list of weekly offerings and that personal appeals should be made by collectors; that the Mission Band should remain under the care of the society; and that, if it should prove desirable at any time, the young girls should be encouraged to work by themselves, but in connection with this society. In order to accomplish this it was only necessary for the existing organization to drop from its name and constitution the word "young" and to make other slight changes. Accordingly at the next meeting it was

Voted that in consideration of the fact that it appears to this society desirable to include, under one organization, all the woman's foreign mission work of this church,

the society appoint a committee with full power to make all arrangements necessary for a social gathering to which all the women of the church shall be invited, and that the following proposition shall then be submitted, namely: The Young Ladies Missionary Association offers to drop from its constitution the word "young" and to make any other changes which may be needful, in order to reorganize as the Woman's Foreign Missionary Association of the First Baptist Church, these changes to be made at the next annual meeting.

The social gathering was held and was addressed by Mrs. O. L. George, formerly of Burma. The proposition was submitted and was received with favor. At the next meeting committees on revision of constitution and nomination of officers were appointed and at the annual meeting in June, 1887, on its twenty-first anniversary the necessary changes were made, and the society became the Woman's Association. Since that time the number of members has increased and the contributions have been larger, partly as the result of the plan of apportionment which has been tried by the general society for a few years past, whereby each church is asked for a definite amount. Many of the meetings have been well attended and there has seemed to be a deeper spiritual interest, at least on the part of some members.

In 1890 some of our young women became enlisted in the Young Woman's Branch of the Woman's Foreign

Missionary Society of Rhode Island. Miss A. Mabel French represents this church on that Board and Miss Annie E. Phillips is the local director. The object is to interest the younger girls in all the churches, each being at liberty to use its own methods. The plan attempted here is to enroll the girls as a local branch of this society, their contributions passing through our treasury, but being credited to the branch. This is a field in which much effective work is needed, if the organization is to outlast the present generation.

An especial favor has been granted us in being permitted to welcome among us, Nov. 2, 1889, and again Feb. 6, 1891, our beloved Mrs. Ingalls who was with us in our feeble beginning, and whose letters and unflinching interest have been to us a continual inspiration. Her words when she last met with us touched tender memories in many hearts and made us devoutly thankful as with her we were allowed to trace the influence of our work in distant lands. If here we may know something of the fruits of our labors and rejoice in them how much greater may be our joy amid the fuller revelations of eternity. A reception was given to Mrs. Ingalls to which friends from other churches were invited. Her last Sunday in America was spent here, and on Feb. 14 she turned her face once more toward Burma, the land of her adoption, to which forty years of her best service have been given. A committee from this society was

present at her embarkation from Boston. Since her departure no event of interest has occurred.

During the twenty-five years there have been comparatively few changes among the officers. The first president has held the office, except during the four years of service of Miss Sarah S. Palmer, afterwards Mrs. Henley. Miss Palmer accepted the office with a keen sense of responsibility and administered the affairs of the society with wisdom and efficiency. She loved the cause and gave to it her best endeavors. In 1887 her official connection was severed by the removal of her membership to another church, but she remained an active member of this association until her death. The society adopted suitable resolutions of respect to her memory. Miss Sawyer, the first vice-president, has held the same office with an interval of six years. The other vice-presidents are Mrs. P. G. Gamwell, now in office, and Miss Elizabeth Howland who resigned one year ago, after rendering very efficient service for seven years. The first secretary, Miss Ella Josephine Smith, served the society with loving zeal and fidelity for seven years, until June 18, 1873, when she was called after months of failing health to exchange the earthly cross for the heavenly crown. She left to her associates a hallowed and fragrant memory. Miss M. J. Peckham who had already been appointed assistant secretary succeeded to the office and retained it until 1873, when it passed into

the hands of Miss Laura I. French who was succeeded by Miss Frederica Denison in 1886. Since the reorganization in 1887 Mrs. Stockwell has been the secretary. The first treasurer, Miss A. L. Bradford, resigned in 1867 and was succeeded by Miss Annie A. I. Douglass, now Mrs. G. A. Stockwell. The other treasurers have been Miss Katharine D. Nisbet, now Mrs. Allan ; Miss Emma C. Scott, now Mrs. W. A. Gamwell, and Miss Elizabeth H. Snow who was at first assistant to Mrs. Gamwell but for the last five years has had sole charge of the treasury. Miss Amey Webb, now Mrs. B. I. Wheeler was also assistant treasurer from 1879 to 1881. It is impossible to note the changes among the collectors, but to many who have served the society in this office grateful acknowledgements are due. Only three deaths have occurred among the officers. One has been already mentioned, the other two were collectors. Miss Mary A. Spiller passed away in early youth being not quite eighteen years of age. She had loved this association and had given to it her best efforts. When the highest hopes were entertained for her future usefulness, suddenly she was not, for God had taken her. In departing she left a testimonial of her love for the society in a legacy to its treasury. Her memory survives, and is kept fresh by an annual memorial gift from her mother, to whom also the society was indebted for much valuable service during her residence here. Miss Ella C. Budlong,

also a collector, passed away in 1876, after a brief term in office.

It should not be forgotten that during the early years of the association when it was especially an organization of young women it was regarded with much favor by the older members of the church and without their encouragement and cooperation it could never have accomplished the work which it has been privileged to do. The successive pastors occasionally addressed its meetings. Prof. Lincoln was very helpful to it while superintendent of the Sunday School, and has always been its firm friend and cordial helper. Dr. and Mrs. Caswell also were especially kind and gave valuable assistance in its various undertakings, as did also Prof. and Mrs. Chace, who often received its missionary visitors to their home. Many others who were its early friends rejoice with it to-day, and as memory reviews the past we indeed realize that

"The saints on earth and all the dead,
But one communion make."

The society has been favored with visits from many missionaries whose names cannot all be recorded here. No less than seventeen have been present at one or more meetings. Correspondence has been maintained with some of them, not always officially, but by individual members. These letters have added much to the interest of the meetings and we have the testimony of many mis-

sionaries that home letters even from strangers are helpful to them.

The meetings have been held with a good degree of regularity. At the end of the first ten years it was found that although ten regular meetings had been omitted, the average per month had been maintained by ten special meetings. In the next five years four meetings were omitted and one special meeting was held. In the next three years there were five omissions, two on account of storms, one on account of repairs on the vestry and the other two in midsummer. Since 1884 no meetings have been attempted in July and August, but beside these there have been only four omissions in the last seven years. The endeavor has been to utilize the local talent by inducing as many members as possible to take part. The exercises have been varied, different methods having been tried, but all intended to lead to study of missions and particularly to thorough acquaintance with the work of the Missionary Union.

Though there has not been as much prayer as we could have desired, yet many earnest petitions have ascended for the work and the workers. Is not the continuance of the society a witness that some at least have been answered? How far they have availed to help toiling missionaries who in answer to them have been cheered and sustained, and to bring souls out of heathen darkness we cannot know until the great day of revela-

tion. There may be a practical consideration as to the relation of the monthly meetings to the prosperity of the society. If there had been only the collection of money with no endeavor to impart knowledge and no assembling together to provoke one another to love and to good works it seems at least doubtful whether we should have continued for twenty-five years. But even when few were present the fire has been kept burning on the altar and those who came have received a blessing.

The most tangible result of our work is the contributions. A tabulated statement shows receipts for the the first five years, \$2500 ; the second five, \$1526.10 ; the third five, \$1055.69 ; the fourth five, \$1064.18 ; and the last five, \$2206.26. This money has come from various sources. There have been always the quarterly collections, which in twenty-five years have amounted to \$2893.47. Considerable money was at first raised by entertainments, and nearly every year something has been obtained in this way, care having always been taken to provide for such things as were strictly honest and could offend neither the conscience nor the taste of any. Gifts have been received from certain classes, and for the last three years from the entire Sunday School, by means of missionary boxes. The birthday box has a place in the vestry and is the source of a revenue which might be largely increased if every one of us were to remember it and mention it to others. Might not the birthdays of

friends who have left us be observed as the occasion of annual memorial gifts through this box from hearts thankful for all treasured remembrances of their lives? The total amount from all these sources and from extra donations has been \$5458.76, making a grand total of \$8352.23, or an average per year of \$334.08.

For some time we were accustomed to designate most of our funds for the use of individual missionaries, but more recently in view of the great need of all the fields it has been a pleasure to dispose of the money in such manner as to extend a helping hand to all. Beside the money raised several valuable boxes have been sent to Mrs. Ingalls and other missionaries.

Thus have we recalled the way in which the Lord our God has led us. It remains to consider what lessons we are to learn from the past, and what are our duties for the future. While we rejoice over the privilege which has been accorded us of being fellow-helpers to the truth, let us not fail to remember that we have been only the instruments whom God has blessed by using us in this work, which from first to last is all of his grace. "Having obtained help of God we continue unto this day." "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory for Thy mercy and for Thy truth's sake." The work begun in weakness has far exceeded the largest hopes entertained by any of its founders. God has been with us in every step of the way. Many new en-

terprises have called for help and in these days of great activity many other branches of Christian service, all good in themselves, have come in to divide attention, until the very multiplication of new societies has seemed sometimes to weaken those already existing. Often we have been discouraged and almost hopeless in view of the apathy of many, but a faithful few have called upon God and He has answered and we have been kept from failure and our hearts have been strengthened. So to-day we set up our stone of remembrance with gratitude and praise.

But what of the present and the future? In the record of the past we have a goodly heritage, but if we do not live in accordance with it it will be to us only a reproach. We have now a membership which embraces about one-third of the resident women of the church. Of these a comparatively small number attend the meetings. If under these circumstances our existence can be maintained what might we not do if all our sisters were actually working with us, feeling their individual responsibility, contributing as they were able, making the monthly meeting a regular engagement to which that one hour in the month should be sacredly devoted, and above all continuing instant in prayer for this cause? But so long as many are indifferent and there are still some who with the Bible in their hands and the last command of the risen Lord to his church, "Go ye there-

fore and teach all nations" ringing in their ears, can say "I do not believe in foreign missions," there is yet much for this society to do within its own borders before its work will be finished. It has for the years to come a mission of education and of persuasion which cannot be accomplished by simply requesting contributions. There is need that we seek spiritual power from on high and then gird ourselves for service, and with love to Christ and to our sisters strive by all right expedients to win them to this blessed service. May we not to-day inaugurate some method of invitation to our meetings by which those who do not now attend may be drawn to come? Will not *all* the women of this church henceforth rally around this one organization, not to the exclusion of others, but in the confidence that *this* has been owned and blessed of God, and in sympathy with the importance of its work will they not seek to make it in the years to come a greater power than it has ever been? It can reach its highest prosperity only as each shall feel that she has a part in it and is equally responsible with all the rest for its efficiency.

Let us work the works of him who hath sent us "while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work." The fields are white, and it is our privilege to help in the reaping, and we know who has said, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

CONSTITUTION

AS AMENDED JUNE 11, 1887.

ARTICLE I.

This Society shall be called the Woman's Foreign Missionary Association of the First Baptist Church.

ARTICLE II.

The object of the Association is to aid the missions of the American Baptist Missionary Union.

ARTICLE III.

Any woman contributing regularly to the funds of the Association shall be considered a member. Persons may be chosen honorary members by vote of the Association.

ARTICLE IV.

The Association shall elect annually a President, two or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, a suitable number of collectors and such standing committees as may be found necessary.

ARTICLE V.

The President, or, in her absence, one of the Vice-Presidents shall preside at all business meetings of the Association and shall have power to call special meetings. The Secretary shall give notice of meetings, keep the records, conduct the correspondence and present a report at the annual meeting. The Treasurer shall take charge of the funds, shall disburse them as directed by the Association, shall keep an account of the same and shall present an annual report.

ARTICLE VI.

The officers above named, with the chairmen of the standing committees, shall constitute an Executive Committee which shall manage all business, not otherwise appropriated by the constitution. The president shall be chairman of this committee, *ex-officio*.

ARTICLE VII.

The collectors shall call upon all the women of the church and congregation within their respective districts and shall invite them to become members of the Association, shall keep lists of the contributions, shall make quarterly collections and shall pay their collections to the Treasurer at, or before, the meetings in March, June, September and December.

ARTICLE VIII.

The annual meeting of the Association shall be held on the second Saturday in June when the reports of the Secretary and Treasurer shall be read, the officers for the ensuing year shall be chosen, and any other business appropriate to the occasion shall be transacted, accompanied by suitable religious exercises. Meetings shall also be held on the second Saturday of each month for prayer and for the communication of missionary intelligence and conference thereon. At any meeting of the Society five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE IX.

This constitution may be amended by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any annual meeting.

OFFICERS FOR 1891-92.

PRESIDENT.

MISS SARAH C. DURFEE.

VICE-PRESIDENTS.

MISS SUSAN C. SAWYER, MRS. PHEBE G. GAMWELL,
MRS. WILLIAM A. GAMWELL.

SECRETARY.

MRS. GEORGE A. STOCKWELL.

TREASURER.

MISS ELIZABETH H. SNOW.

COLLECTORS.

MRS. T. A. MILLETT,
MISS H. C. DYER,
MRS. W. H. GORHAM,
MISS CLARA STEWART,
MISS A. E. PHILLIPS,
MRS. H. W. SISSON,
MISS I. M. NEWTON,
MISS A. V. BROWN,
MISS A. E. DROWNE,
MRS. F. R. CHAPMAN.