

Have We No Rights by Mabel Williamson, Start Publishing, Lexington, KY, 2019.
(19 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols.)

1. Giving Up Self.

On the mission field it is not the enduring of hardships, the lack of comforts, and the roughness of the life that make the missionary cringe and falter. It is something far less romantic and far more real. It is something that will hit you right down where you live. The missionary has to give up having his own way. He has to give up having any rights. He has, in the words of Jesus, to “deny himself.” He just has to give up *himself*.

Paul knew all about this. If you do not believe it, look at 1 Corinthians 9. “Have we no right to eat and to drink?” he asks. “Have we not a right to forbear working? ... “Nevertheless,” he goes on, “we did not use this right ... Though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more” (vv. 4,6,12,19). [page 6]

2. Home – A Stumbling Block to Service.

...we greed that one principle must never be violated. We would have nothing in our house—its furnishings, its arrangement—nothing that would keep the ordinary poor people among who we work from coming in, or that would make them feel strange here. [page 8]

3. The Progress of the Gospel.

Does it matter to the people to whom we go whether we conform or not? And, more important, does it matter insofar as the progress of the Gospel is concerned? Will our conforming help win souls to Christ? [page 9]

4. Accepting the Missionary before Accepting the Message.

It is not natural to be attracted to those who are different from ourselves. The missionary wants to attract people. People must be attracted to him before they can be attracted to his message. They must accept him before they will accept his message. The more we can conform to their way of life, the easier and more natural and more rapid their acceptance of us will be. [page 9]

5. All Thing to All Men.

Paul says: “I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). He found what the present-day missionary finds, that to some extent he must adopt the way of life and the standard of living of the people to whom he was sent. [page 10]

6. Understanding the People One Serves.

When we have become familiar with how they eat, how they sleep, how they work, how they play, what they like, what they dislike, what they hope, what they fear, how they think, how they feel—when we really understand them, then, and only then, will we be able to present the Gospel to them in an adequate way. [page 10]

7. Familiarity Brings Ease.

Over a period of time familiarity not only turns difficulty to ease, but often even removes the “dis” from dislike! [page 12]

8. Giving Up One’s Standard of Living.

Before we go to the field then, let us give up all right to our own standard of living, and be ready contently to embrace, as far as He makes possible, that of people to whom He sends us. [page 13]

9. Trusting God, Even for One’s Health.

The Lord of the harvest has sent us forth. A dead laborer, even a sick one, is not much use. It is surely our duty to take all sensible precautions, and whenever possible use the safeguards to health with which modern science has provided us. We have no right at all to disobey the rules of hygiene just because we happen to feel like it. But on the other hand, when those among whom we are ministering, people whose training is different from ours, who have no conception of modern hygiene, out of the love in their hearts provide us with things to eat and drink, surely then is the time to say with Paul, “asking no questions for conscience’ sake” (1 Cor. 10:27). Surely in cases where adhering strictly to the rules of hygiene would hinder the fulfilling of our commission, we can trust the One who sent us forth to look after us. [pages 18-19]

10. People Get to Know Missionaries Serving.

Let us remember ... that people must come to know us before they can accept our message, or before our testimony has any value to them. Why should I desire to keep hidden *anything* that has to do with myself—if *the sharing of that thing might help draw someone to the Saviour?* [page 27]

11. God Makes the Choice for Us.

If the choice of a life partner were a matter to be decidedly purely “on one’s own,” then this sort of situation on the mission field might lead to many a tragedy. Thank God, that is not the case! After all, He is the One whom we want to make the choice for us, and He can be depended upon. Certainly any young missionary should make this a matter of definite prayer. If God has chosen the two for each other, He will see to it they meet; and He will witness in their hearts as to His leading, so that they need not

hesitate or fear. If we set our hearts on some certain thing, irrespective of whether or not it is His will, disaster will result. If we commit the matter entirely to Him, and trust Him to work out His own perfect will, we can go ahead, with confidence, knowing that the union (if He indicates it) will be as the path of the just, that “shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” If anyone doubts this, let him look at any missionary couple. In spite of all the difficulties and dangers, the percentage of happily married couples must be greater among missionaries than it is anywhere else. [pages 36-37]

12. More Women Are Needed on the Field.

I shall always remember ... hearing one of my sisters say: “Before I came to the mission field I thought that the reason there were more women than men on the field was that more of the women were wholly consecrated to the cause of Christ; but after I had been out for some time I changed my mind. Now I believe that God calls *more women than men because more women are needed.*” [page 37]

13. God’s Calling We Can Do.

Whatever God has called us to do, we *can* do. Each state has its own blessings. When one sees the “trouble of the flesh” (1 Cor. 7:28, KJV) that bringing up children on the mission field entails, it is almost enough to make one feel that the single state is the easier. It is easier in some ways, of course. Yet remaining single is not easy either. Every human heart longs for someone to “belong to,” and perhaps the hardest thing that the single missionary has to face is that she can never, never say to anyone, “I going to stay with you.” [page 39]

14. Children, An Asset to the Ministry.

Where there are children, it is recognized that new responsibilities are involved, but care should be taken that family claims do not monopolize the time and energies of either parent. Children who grow up in an atmosphere of loving yet firm discipline are not only a joy to their parents but an asset to the work of the Gospel. But when children are over-indulged or uncontrolled, whether on the field or at home, serious harm to God’s cause as well as to the reputation of the Mission may result.” –The Overseas Manual of the China Inland Mission Overseas Missionary Fellowship (1955), p. 22. [page 40]

15. Living Out the Love of Christ in a Family.

What a wonderful thing is a Christian home! What a privilege to be able to establish, among thousands of darkened, pagan homes, one that is truly Christian; and to be able to live out the love of Christ in actual family relationships before people who know nothing of it! [page 41]

16. The Love of Christ Greater than Love of Family or One Another.

John and Mary [*pseudonyms*] gladly took others into their home, really wanting them, not because they did not appreciate having their own home to themselves, but because of their concern for the work was greater than their natural desires. They counted the cost, and sent their child away from them, away to school, because they knew that it was best for the child and best for the work. Love for Christ was greater than love for home, or for children, and greater than love for each other. If they had held on to their right to home, and given it first place, that would have meant losing it—losing the Christ-centered home that they wanted. But in giving it up they found it—found a home that truly showed forth the love of Christ, because the love was the compelling force of their individual lives. [page 47]

17. God Does the Choosing.

The One who chooses for us makes no mistakes. So whether it be a matter of accepting a fellow worker you would rather not have, or of letting go one whom you would like to keep—remember the One who does the choosing for us makes no mistakes. [page 53]

18. The Essential to the Church Is Christ.

The Church of God is not dependent upon Gothic arches and stained-glass windows, upon ministers in Geneva gowns and upon robed choirs. It is not dependent upon material resources, or this world's learning. None of these things are essentials. The only things that are essentials to the Church of Christ are found in Christ and in the penitent and forgiven soul, no matter what his race or culture or economic status. The Church of Christ can function on any level at which men for who Christ died are living. [page 71]

19. Christ Had No Rights.

He Had No Rights

He had no rights:

No right to a soft bed, and a well-laid table;

No right to a home of His own, a place where His own pleasure might be sought;

No right to choose pleasant, congenial companions, those who could understand Him and sympathize with Him;

No right to shrink away from filth and sin, to pull His garments closer around Him and turn aside to walk in cleaner paths;

No right to be understood and appreciated; no, not by those upon whom He had poured out a double portion of His love;

No right even never to be forsaken by His Father, the One who meant more than all to Him.

His only right was silently to endure shame, spitting, blows; to take His place as a sinner at the dock; to bear my sins in anguish on the cross.

He had no rights. And I?

A right to the "comforts" of life? No, but a right to the love of God for my pillow.

A right to physical safety? No, but a right to the security of being in His will.

A right to love and sympathy from those around me? No, but a right to the friendship of the One who understands me better than I do myself.

A right to be a leader among men? No, but the right to be led by the One to whom I have given my all, led as is a little child, with its hand in the hand of its father.

A right to a home, and dear ones? No, not necessarily; but a right to dwell in the heart of God.

A right to myself? No, but, oh, *I have a right to Christ.*

All that He takes I will give;

All that He gives will I take;

He, my only right!

He, the one right before which all other rights fade into nothingness.

I have full right to Him;

Oh, may He have full right to me! [pages 72-73]