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W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, JUNE, 1900.

The Sunday-school Library.*

BY WM. THOMPSON.

Without a well-chosen library a Sunday-school is not fully equipped for its great work of character building. Papers for scholars and teachers have their useful purpose, but should not wholly displace books. The exclusive reading of papers or magazines gives but a smattering or incomplete knowledge of subjects or of literature, and want of thoroughness is a crying evil. But while good reading awakens desire for knowledge, imparts information and introduces the youth to the world's best literature as such, these are but secondary objects. The library should be an aid and an ally to the officers and teachers in school management in Bible study,

* Paper read before the North Dorchester Union Sunday-school Association, at Belmont, Ont.

should emphasize and illustrate true principles, the evils of sin, the merit and reward of virtue, and help the youth to a higher and better life. Reading is not merely for recreation—too often another name for mental dissipation—but to train the faculties of an immortal mind for service, how to think straight and how to think pure.

MATTHEW ARNOLD

says of study, it is "to enhance the excellence of the nature and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent in order that he may leave the world better and happier than he found it." By reading we get inspirations from lofty ideals and become associated with the good and great characters of this and other ages, and associations mould character. Through the inspired volume, and books that have grown out of it, we know the life of Jesus better than the people of Samaria or Bethlehem ever did.

Some localities may require a library more than others, but in very many the Sunday-school furnishes the bulk of the reading that enters many homes, barring the newspaper. Besides attracting adult scholars especially, a good library will help to arouse and sustain the interest and support of parents often when they do not attend the school. There is very grave danger that if good reading is not furnished boys and girls they will get what is of doubtful value—and if doubtful probably useless—or positively bad. "I would gladly cut off my right hand," said a man, "if I could blot out of my mind the consciousness of a glance into a vile book." Reading largely determines thinking and

"AS A MAN THINKETH SO IS HE."

If you desire a Divine precedent of the value of books as an agency in uplifting men and women, I point you to the Bible itself. Therefore I conclude that the Sabbath-school cannot well afford to neglect this duty and opportunity.

When, however, we consider the appalling number of books now printed, the task of selection becomes most serious because you may make or mar a neighbourhood by your choice. There never was so much good literature printed as to-day, and perhaps never so much trash. By way of suggestion I would say,

1st.—Appoint a committee of four or five of the best informed persons in the school on the subject of suitable books, one being the minister of the church.

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