

# Sunday School

## Parents' Meeting

A most helpful and inspiring meeting was held recently in connection with the Sunday-school of Yonge Street Methodist Church, Toronto. The parents of the scholars contributed largely to the programme in song and address, taking up such themes as "The Co-operation of the Home and School in Character-Building," "The Co-operation of the Home, Church, and School," "The Influence of the Holy Spirit in Decisions for Christ." Such a meeting could not be but productive of great good, making stronger the link binding the school and church together through the influence of the home.

## Co-operation of Home and School

BY MR. S. ORAINEER.

The Earl of Shaftesbury once said, when a bill was being introduced into the House of Commons for the education of the English people. "The Sunday-schools of England have saved the country." The Sunday-schools of every country form one of the greatest factors of salvation. The work of the Sunday-school is a self-sacrificing work, an unselfish work, a work for which the only pay is in the love of the children, the liberating of them from the power of evil, and bringing them into a living fellowship with Christ.

Are we as parents interested in this work? Do we care whether or not our boys and our girls, while yet in their youth, choose Christ as their example? Do we care under what influences they are placed, or what kind of characters they are forming? Surely to none so much as to the parents is this of such importance.

We would covet for our children the Christ-life, and desire that they be surrounded by the very best influences possible. Then will it not pay us a thousandfold to uphold the work of the Sunday-school, and be not sparing in any help or encouragement we can give the teachers, thus making that one hour of the week tell to its very utmost, that hour when some of the very holiest and best influences surround our children.

We might consider a few of the practical ways in which we as parents can co-operate in this work.

The first way which naturally suggests itself, is by seeing that our children are present at the school every Sunday when possible. This sometimes may imply more than simply seeing that they start for the Sunday-school. Many a mother thinks her boy is at the school, when in reality he is at the park, or some other place of amusement, having been enticed away by his companions. There are ways of knowing that our children are really in the Sunday-school, and of ascertaining how they conduct themselves while there. If necessary, it might be well for us to exert a little parental authority in order to enforce the proper reverence for God's house. There is no doubt that a great deal of the trouble our teachers sometimes have with our boys and girls would be avoided were that teacher's influence supported by the father's authority. We should advise when we say the father's authority. There are some things which mothers can do, but which fathers can do to a great deal better. Where the inattention is one of thoughtlessness on the part of our children, a few words regarding the reverence which is due God's house, and God's Word, would no doubt bring about the desired result. Let us try to help the teacher in this respect, and it will make the work so much easier. It is very hard indeed for a

teacher to make a lasting impression for good upon an inattentive child.

Then I think we should see that our children are punctual at the Sunday-school. Nine times out of every ten when they are late, especially the younger children, it is through some irregularity in the home. We are very particular to have our boys and girls on time at school on Monday, why not be just as particular on Sunday? Let us help our children to form these habits of regularity and punctuality, and these habits so formed will serve them well when they take their places in the work of life. Thus, while we are helping the school we are helping our children in the formation of character.

Another way in which we can help the work of the school is by coming with our children. There is no excuse for anybody not belonging to the Sunday-school. From the Cradle Roll to the Home Department the whole territory is covered, and a place is found for all. Let us have it the custom in our home for every member of it to attend the Sunday-school. If we cannot take our place as teachers, let us come as scholars, or if members of our home are too young to come alone, let us bring them with us to the Primary Class, where we will always receive a warm welcome. If we come in such numbers that there is not room enough, no doubt accommodation will be found for the mothers and the babies.

Let us see that the names of all the little ones are enrolled on the Cradle Roll, a most beautiful part of the primary work. We cannot begin too soon to throw around our children influences for good, and can any one say that forces will not begin to operate in the child's life if he is too young even to fully comprehend the meaning of the Sunday-school, or the lessons therein taught, forces which will eventually lead him to choose those things which go to the making of a strong, good character. The result of the example of our children, and the influence on their lives of seeing our homes closed every Sunday afternoon, and mother and father at the Sunday-school, eternity alone may reveal. Let us make the Sunday-school our own. Speak of it as "my" Sunday-school, or "our" Sunday-school. This will cheer the hearts of the superintendent and teachers, and will increase the respect our children will have for the school, and the work it is doing.

We can also help the school by devoting some of our time each week in assisting our children to prepare the lesson. Let us read it over with them, and encourage the asking of questions. This will give them some knowledge of the lesson, and may often create a desire to know more. Encourage them also to tell what they have learned from the teacher. This will give us the opportunity of knowing what our children are being taught, and of correcting any errors which may have crept into that teaching. Sometimes it may be that, through an incomplete explanation, or probably inattention on the part of our children, a wrong impression has been formed. Let us talk it over, and we will find the opportunities of emphasizing any truth which we think specially suited to them.

Then let us meet the teachers half-way in their work, and encourage their visits to our homes. Think of the many times during the year our teachers have come through the cold and storms of winter, or the heat of summer, possibly many times with a body weary and ill, or a mind perplexed with cares, to teach our children the way of truth, and let us not feel that because they have done their duty that we have done ours, simply by seeing that our children are present. Let us not throw the entire spiritual training of our children on the teacher, or expect that the result can be accomplished during the one short hour on a

Sunday afternoon, which we make no effort to secure during the other six days of the week.

Another way in which we can be most helpful in this work is by refraining from criticism. One of the easiest things in this world to do is to stand by and criticize while some one else does the work. No one is perfect, and all are apt to make mistakes, but that teacher who is doing her very best according to the talents which God has given her, whether it be with ten, or with only one, that teacher is above our criticism. Of her the Master says, "She hath done what she could, and will be rewarded manifold for her work." Let us never on any account speak slightly of the teacher in the presence of our children. A word thoughtlessly spoken may kill for ever any influence for good which that teacher may have had on our children. No matter what the teacher may be, or how unfit to teach our boy or our girl, it is not our right to lower that teacher in the estimation of our children. There are other ways of having the wrong righted.

Our children are imitators, and if constantly hearing the voice of criticism and uncharitable speaking in our homes, we may depend upon it they will develop this habit in their own characters, and the habit once formed will prove a great hindrance in their Christian life. Let us be loyal to our Christ and its officers, and when others may criticize—let us be loyal.

We can also aid the school by helping the superintendent. You may not know how I can help, but let us have the helpful spirit, and when the opportunity presents itself, let us willingly share the responsibility, which is by no means light.

Then we can pray for our school. Our teachers need all the assistance and encouragement we can give them. The teacher's is not an easy task, and often the waiting is long ere they see the results of their patient labor. What a wonderful stimulus it would prove if the teachers knew that the parents of every boy and girl in their classes were praying for them. If we have not already done so, shall we not begin to do so now, and pray earnestly that the teacher's words to our boys and our girls may be so directed by the Holy Spirit that they may be constrained to accept their Saviour and Friend. Shall we not pray that a great blessing may accompany the teaching of the lesson on Decision Day, the result of which will be that many may turn to Christ, their Life.

And can we not as parents be more helpful to our boys and girls who have already decided to follow Christ. Let us not make light of their good resolutions, but cherish and guard them as very precious jewels. Let our children see that we are intensely and intensely interested in the decisions they make.

Best of all ways, in which we can help the school, is by living up to the standard we have set for our children being what we would have them become. If ever before them in our homes we set the good and the true, they will imitate, and constant imitation of that which is right and pure and good, will result in the formation of good, true and noble characters. Let us try to realize how short is time, and that what we would do should be done now. Our children are daily growing older, and less likely to respond to the good influences with which we would surround them. Let us not forget as parents that God has given the children to us first, and to the teachers next. Let us lift our boys and train our children to do their best, and it will help our school to do its best. Thus the home will not only co-operate with the school, and the school with the home, but each will be a co-worker with God, and for work faithfully done will receive rich reward.