

## SUNDAY-SCHOOLS AND MISSIONS.

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Within the past few years earnest and systematic efforts have been made to enlist the children in the work of sending the gospel to the whole creation.

Until quite recently they were not expected to have any part in the work of evangelizing the world. Now, however, they are regarded as necessary and important factors in all great missionary undertakings. It is not known who originated this idea. Certainly Robert Raikes never contemplated anything of the kind. It matters not to whom the honor belongs; the important fact is that it met with instant well-nigh universal acceptance. The age was ripe for a mighty onward movement. As soon as the plan was suggested that promised good results, it was put into successful operation. The Sunday-schools throughout Christendom give about a million dollars a year for missions. Those connected with the Free Church of Scotland give \$27,000; those connected with the English Baptists give \$100,000; those connected with the English Wesleyans give \$86,000; those connected with the American Board give \$12,000; those connected with the Episcopal Society give \$25,000; those connected with the M. E. Church give \$250,000; the Presbyterian children give \$50,000. The Foreign Society received \$10,000 last year from the children, and expects to receive \$20,000 this year. Out of an income of 1,15,000 the Church Missionary Society receives \$6,000 from the nobility. The children give five times as much as the richest and most splendid aristocracy in the world.

It is easy to enlist the children in this work. There is no opposition to be overcome. There is no prejudice to dislodge. There is no need of argument. They are ready to respond when the claims of any worthy cause are presented. Many a devoted worker and generous giver of mature years can look back to the time when he was a child, and spoke as a child, and thought as a child, and can trace the source of his interest in this work, which grew with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, to what he did then. And if he has put away childish things, now that he is a man, it is only that he may aid the cause in ways better suited to his enlarged capacity. William E. Dodge began life as a poor boy. He wanted to give something for missions, but he had nothing. He planted some potatoes and sold the crop and gave the proceeds. He grew rich: he became a merchant prince in New York. He gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to this cause. If the children are started right there would be no trouble over after. If they are trained up in the way they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. Win them now and they are won forever.

The children took part in the triumphal entry of our Lord into Jerusalem. The priests and scribes were silent, or went about muttering curses; the children cried, "Hosanna to the Son of David." The authorities said; "Hearest thou what these say?" He replied, "Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise?" The children are now ready to take part in the triumphal entry of Christ into the heathen world. The prophet said: "Seest thou what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, the children gather the wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead the dough to make cakes to the queen of heaven." All ages took part in this idolatrous worship; fathers, mothers and children. If we purposed to send the bread of life to the perishing millions of earth, we must enlist the children. They are ready to help. They have built ships, and homes, and schools, and chapels, and hospitals; they have paid for the education of thousands of children: they have supported native teachers and

preachers; they have provided printing presses for the missionaries. And they are willing to do more than they have in the past to expell debasing superstitions and to convey into the heart the ennobling influences of the Christian religion. A missionary in the Yoruba country was one day visited by eight little children. The youngest of the group was four years old, and the oldest eight. They carried in their hands 4,000 cowries, or little shells, which are used as money in some parts of Africa. Forty cowries are worth a penny. They had heard, they said, that other little children were helping to send the gospel to the heathen, and they thought they would like to share in this work themselves. They had, therefore, made up their minds to give, when they could, twenty cowries a week, and they had brought what they had already gathered in this way. These children were very poor, but wanted to give something every week to help send the gospel to nations that were still in darkness. Children can give before they can pray or make speeches or do anything else. Livingstone used to say that the time would come when rich men would support whole stations of missionaries rather than spend their money on hounds and horses. They must be enlisted in their youth or they will not do so. An Eastern proverb says, "The world belongs to the young." They will soon be the merchant princes, the millionaires, the railroad kings: they will soon fill all positions of trust and honor; they will soon control the destiny of the nations. If they are properly taught they will do ten times as much as the present generation. They will begin under more favorable auspices, and with nobler and larger conceptions of life and duty. If they are won now they will be permanent friends.

There is work for all. The heathen are calling for the gospel. God is urging us to go up and possess the land. We can not do this if we neglect the children. We need their contributions, their sympathy, their interest, and enthusiasm. There is scarcely any limit to the resources of the Sunday-schools. Their muster-rolls contain the names of 18,000,000 persons. Here is a host larger than the standing armies of the world. The children have money and can be persuaded to give it. Dr. Bainbridge says that in a pastorage of ten years his Sunday-school averaged \$400 a year. One year it gave \$1,500. This school was neither rich nor large. The offerings of the Allegheny school show what children can do under efficient leadership. Dr. Schauffler states that the children in one of the poorest school districts in New York City pay \$175 a week in pennies for candy. If all the children could be enlisted, a movement could be inaugurated such as the world has never seen. Then we might look for a speedy fulfilment of the promise; "Oh thou afflicted, tossed with the tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundation with sapphires, and I will make thy windows agates, and thy gate carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." It should be borne in mind that the Sunday-schools of to-day will be the churches of to-morrow. If they are allowed to grow up with no idea beyond their own little and local interests, they will never be able to comprehend the great work of God in the world. If we can prevail on them to give to-day, they will give to-morrow as the church of the past never did. We must seek to widen the souls of the children into world-embracing sympathies. We must seek to make spiritual princes and not paupers out of them. We must not rest until every school and every child in every school is enlisted.

Let them know the facts about the children in heathen lands and they will be eager to aid to the extent of their ability. In parts of China carts go through the streets every morning to gather up the infants that have been killed over night, as our

city carts go round to gather up the filth and garbage. In Polynesia one mother confessed that she had killed five children; another, seven; another, nine; and another, sixteen. In Africa it often happens that when children are at play that Arabs catch them and carry them off. They tie them together with a long chain, and drive them away to the nearest seaport to sell them as slaves. Many die on the road. If one gets sick or becomes too weak to walk he is killed. Not one of them ever sees his friends again or his home among the hills. Livingstone found slave dealers who paid two yards of calico for a boy and four for a good looking girl. Bishop Crowther was once sold for a gallon of whiskey. Such is the fate of the little ones of whom Christ said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The slaughter of the innocent under Herod was nothing compared with the slaughter of the innocent now in pagan lands. The people of China who have been impoverished by the Yellow River are destroying their children in consequence of this calamity.

In the mission fields the most successful work is done among the children. Most missionaries begin with the children. William Duncan lands at Fort Simpson, and no sooner can he stammer a few words in the language of the people than he goes forth and invites the children into a little school. Bishop Crowther posts his teachers at station after station on the Niger, and the first step at each place is to open a school and to get the chiefs to send their sons. Alexander Duff and Robert Noble, seeking an entrance into Hindoo society, begin with the boys. They are not joined to their idols. The opposition generally comes from the parents. A young Christian said to his mother: "Am I not a better son than I was before I became a Christian? I do not gamble. I do not smoke opium, I keep myself pure, and I love you a hundred-fold better than ever." The mother said: "I would rather have you a gambler, an opium smoker, and a profligate, than to have you a Christian." Natural affection is soured into hate. Family ties are turned into whips of scorpions. Curses fall like pitiless hail on the head of the convert. The old cling to the hopes and faiths cherished by their ancestors; the young are willing to hear and believe. Let the children in the Sunday-schools know what the children in pagan lands have to endure for Christ's sake and how heroically they endure it, and they will be filled with sympathy and admiration.

The children are the hope of the church and the hope of the world. Those who are now bearing the heat and burden of the day will soon rest from their labors. The scarred veterans will soon lie down in the narrow house to sleep there till the heavens be no more. "The fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live forever?" There is need of a host of consecrated young people who will seize the standards as they fall from the palsied hands of the dying and carry them on to victory. If Christian people will do their duty now, the prediction will be fulfilled; "Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." There will be a multitude that no man can number, who feel within them the pulse of a Titan's heart, the mighty thwaa of Anakim: who, in their beauty, will be fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and who, in their strength, will be as an army with banners.—*Christian Standard*

The surest way of making people think well of you is to do so well that they can't help noticing that what you do is well done. Let them see your work rather than yourself, and from that gain knowledge about you. Our works are the most trustworthy witnesses we can have. No one can deny them.