

## HOW TO INCREASE THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN CONNECTION WITH OUR SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK.

A Paper read before the Montreal Diocesan Sunday-School Association, by R. H. Buchanan, Esq., Superintendent of the Sunday-School of Christ Church Cathedral, Montreal.

(PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.)

The subject before us for our consideration and discussion this evening is deserving of a more capable and experienced exponent than myself; yet, at the same time, realizing as I do its great importance, and the attention it demands, at our hands, as well as the apparent neglect with which the matter is treated by many Sunday-Schools, I sincerely trust that what I may say upon the matter, together with the discussion which shall follow, may lead to renewed energy on our part, and to a greater stimulus in the Missionary cause amongst us.

I would consider, then—

- 1st. As to its Importance.
- 2nd. As to the Time and Place.
- 3rd. As to the Best Means of Working.

### 1. As to its Importance.

No true Christian who has the love of God abiding in his heart can say aught against its importance. There is nothing more helpful to a church, as well as to an individual, than to have its sympathies enlisted outside of itself and its own little world. Nothing so good for a man as to get out of himself and his own selfish desires. For how many are there here to-night who have not already learned that the true art of living is living in the benefitting and helping of others. Truly it is said, "Tis not to live at all, to live for self alone." One thing we need, as Christians, to especially pray for is, "O Lord, make me more unselfish, more self-denying; give me more love towards the souls of my fellow men."

Tell me what you are doing for Missions and Missionary work in your parish, and I will tell you whether you have a live church or not. Eighteen centuries have rolled by since the command was given, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Again, almost our Saviour's last words here upon earth were, "And ye shall be my witnesses, both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Our duty is clear. The order is most emphatic and distinct, "Go ye to all the world." And yet how slowly the Church rises to obey; how few men are found to-day willing to give up all—I say comparatively few. Thank God for the noble examples we have in such men as Judson, Williams, Patterson, Livingstone and others, whose lives

stand out as beacon lights amidst the black darkness over yonder, as if with waving hands and earnest voices they beckon us to follow in their steps.

It is true great strides have been made within the past twenty-five years in opening up Missionary fields. We see India, Japan, China, Africa and many islands of the Pacific whose doors have been closed against the Gospel, and where to go meant almost certain death, now opened to easy access. And as there now comes rolling back to us across the sea the call for help and assistance; as we hear of China and India, teeming with its 800 millions of souls living without God and without the knowledge of the Saviour, how important it is that the Church should rise to the emergency, and provide not only the means, but educated and consecrated men and women, with a burning love for God in their hearts, and their souls overflowing with sympathy for those who are still living in darkness and superstition.

How often we hear the prayer, "O Lord, hasten the time when all shall know, from the least to the greatest," &c., or again, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," and either because of indifference, or even, as I fear still more, because they have never realized its importance, these very people do little or nothing for the spread of the knowledge of His will. Far from the work being accomplished, it seems only at its beginning. True we can say, "There remaineth yet much land to be possessed." May we not well cry, "O Lord, increase in us not only more of the knowledge of Thy will, but more of the Missionary spirit in our hearts, to go out and to do Thy will." As the Apostle says, "How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher?" As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

2ndly. As to the S. School being the proper time and place to bring before our scholars their part in this most noble work.

We all know that the impressions formed and lessons learned in early childhood are the most lasting and enduring, for it is at this time that the character is moulded, and often the work of the after-life marked out; and can one begin too young to enlist their heart's interest in this heavenly calling? viz., by teaching them that life should call forth our noblest aspirations, that "they only live who live for others than themselves." I have heard it said by some, that we ought to be very careful about influencing any one to go into the ministry, but that they ought rather to feel called of God themselves. True, no one should take upon himself this office without being led by the Holy Spirit; but I ask, ought not their thoughts and steps in early life, before other objects are presented to them, to be led in this direction, showing them that a life spent in the Master's service is the brightest and best in the end; they that turn

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many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever? I ask, then, where will you find a place more appropriate or a time more suitable for pressing this truth home than in the S. School? I have thought (I may be wrong) that if this matter was not so much neglected by parents and teachers in early life, this inclining of their minds to this grand thought, "alas, so often forgotten and so little lived." That we are placed here not being our own, being bought with a price, and that God has a divinely appointed work for us all to do. I say, if this truth was more faithfully taught, we should not be continually hearing of the lack of eligible young men willing to devote themselves to the ministry. True, the laborers are few, but we are told to pray the Lord of the Harvest, that He will send forth laborers into his harvest, and, as we are taught, Prayer and Work go together. Are we, then, working as well as praying. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." Now is the time for us as Sunday School workers to bestir ourselves in this direction, that from our Sunday Schools may come forth a band of earnest men and women filled to overflowing with the Water of Life; strong in the strength which God supplies through His Eternal Son; mighty in the Scriptures; willing to spend and be spent in His service.

My life I give to Thee, I would not be my own.  
O, Saviour! let me be Thine ever, Thine alone.

My heart, my life, my all, I bring  
To Thee, my Saviour and my King!

But to come to the practical part of our subject. As to the best means of carrying on this work, or, How may the Missionary spirit be increased in our S. Schools? Various plans of working may suggest themselves to you, but we must remember that what may suit St. Martin's may be unsuited to St. Jude's. I can, therefore, only give an outline of my own opinion on the matter, some of which plans are working with apparent success in the Cathedral School (with which I am connected), which work should be carried on at the same time, and not in any way detracting from the other work of instruction for which the S. School is held, viz., that of first showing them Christ, as their

Saviour, as revealed in God's word, which is able to make them wise unto salvation, and instructing them in the order and doctrines of the Church to which they belong.

Among the first things to teach a child in connection with Missionary work is that the collection is as truly a part of worship as the prayers or the sermon. That all we have here below is given up of God, "for of his fullness have all we received." That we are placed here as stewards to use wisely what is committed to us. That we should esteem it a pleasure, as well as a privilege, to be dealers out of the Lord's bounty. Further, that God requires the best at our hands, and to give Him cheerfully and freely of His own, for the carrying on of His work. If these truths can be implanted into the hearts and minds of the rising generation, I predict there will be no more need for begging sermons, as they are called, in the years to come.

I would say—Begin with the infant class. Among the many Bible stories, may we not allude to St. Paul, the great Missionary to the Gentiles, and what it means to be a Missionary, and that God not only wants us to give of our savings and earnings, but of our time and talents as well; and may we not right here show them that the noblest and best life is not to be a soldier or a sailor, a statesman or a rich merchant, or a grand lady, but by true illustrations and gentle persuasions, try and draw out their childish sympathies to the poor heathen who have never heard of the Saviour's love, who worship idols of wood and stone, with the earnest prayer that the lesson thus taught may make an indelible impression in the chosen path in life.

(To be continued.)

If I am asked what is the remedy for the deeper sorrows of the human heart, what a man should chiefly look to in his progress through life, as the power that is to sustain him under trials, and enable him manfully to confront his afflictions—I must point to something which in a well known hymn is called "The old, old story," told in an old, old book, and taught with an old, old teaching, which is the greatest and best gift ever given. Gladstone.