

The Home Department

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Every religious organization must justify its existence in these utilitarian days by fulfilling some necessary mission in society. This is especially true of the newer organizations, for there is no place in the Kingdom's workshop for merely ornamental machinery. The Church's burden in the matter of institutions, departments, or committees, is now so great and the cry for relief so general that a movement of comparatively recent origin must have specially good credentials to receive even fair consideration.

The Home Department has had to meet the test of utility. After more than twenty years of useful service, it is no longer a probationer, but in full membership and in good standing with the Church. So much so, that a Sunday School without a Home Department making its report to the denominational and interdenominational associations is promptly and unceremoniously denied claim to rank as an up-to-date, first-class school.

The need for this department exists everywhere. There is probably no community so ideal and heavenly that it does not need this home-reaching agency. We can scarcely imagine a church or school covering its entire constituency and ministering to the various needs of all, without the Home Department. The need has always existed but the general Sunday School consciousness had to be developed before the special need of this particular department was realized. It is now safe to say that any community which needs a church or school needs also the Home Department.

Just in proportion as a pastor, superintendent, and school believe in the necessity for systematic Bible study on the part of the people, will the Home Department make its appeal and be put into operation. If we are counting on popular addresses, social entertainments and such like in the Church (all very well in their way) as the chief factors in the spiritual and social regeneration of the community, we will not trouble ourselves much about such old-fashioned things as home Bible study. But if the conviction is well-founded that we need a society regeneration based on knowledge of a spiritual, cumulative, systematized and practical kind of sound truth in fact—we will see in the Home Department an organization divinely ordained to help bring about that result. As such it has been hailed by many.

Some have seen in it a providential plan to arrest the decay of family religion, so much deplored by patriotic and religious leaders. That promise by father or mother or both, to study a selected Scripture lesson, will give some support to the crumbling family altar. It savors of an effort to keep the Bible from being buried alive under the mass of our popular magazines and daily newspapers. The attractive Home Department publications with their suggestive and illuminating comments and illustrations are helping to make the old Book interesting in its best sense to the home students. Undoubtedly Bible study is becoming more interesting to the masses, as it is to theologians and teachers, a most important gain to be sure. In cases where parents cannot attend Sunday school, the Home Department relation is a blessing in which they and their children and the school all participate.

And to those for whom it was specially designed, the aged, the invalids in

their homes or in hospitals, mothers at home with young children, men deprived of church privileges because of duties which must be performed, indigent people, those who think themselves too poor to attend, some who are too far away from church to come regularly, and many other classes; how beneficent has been the ministry of the department! True and most touching incidents are recorded of cheer and comfort, instruction and salvation, which have come to many as a result of this best kind of home missionary work.

From the Church's standpoint it would be real and Christian statesmanship to cover especially the rural districts of Canada with a network of Home Departments. The department is often possible where a school is not. On

keep this thought more prominently before our people in prayer meeting, Sunday School and Epworth League?

This is not one of the parade religious movements, marching with flying colors and beating of drums, announcing its importance to the world; but rather one of the unostentatious movements illustrative of the principle "that the Kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

(Our Home Department leaflet will be gladly sent to any person interested. A post card request to the Editor will bring it to you promptly.—Ed.).

The Sunday School and the Home should be intimately and affectionately united. In the earliest springtime of life, the Cradle Roll, and in the later autumn-tide, the Home Department give entrance to the homes of the community. The school that neglects either of these important departments is remiss in its duty.



OUR HEART'S DELIGHT.

some of our scattered missions no better work could be done by the pastor or missionary than to make himself the centre of such a work.

Concerning the failures recorded, they cannot be charged to the idea of the plan, for of all flexible, adaptable organizations known, the Home Department is chief. The supreme, and so far as we can see the only, difficulty is that of finding the proper person or persons to enter this field as superintendent or visitors. Faith, hope and love are here as everywhere the conquering elements. Some who are singing: "I'll go where you want me to go, dear Lord," might find a rich opportunity not far away from home. Would it not be well to

The Reason

A certain minister not long ago was making his first call at the cottage of one of his poorer parishioners in the suburbs. It was early spring, and for a long time he sat at the window with the little daughter of the house.

"In looking out-of-doors, you notice how bright is the green of the leaves and grass?" he asked presently.

Little Katie nodded. "Yes, sir," she said.

"Why does it appear so much brighter at this time?" he next asked, smiling benevolently.

"Cause ma has just washed the window, and you can see out better," she said.