

## Messenger and Visitor

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### Our Sunday School Work.

It is doubtful whether anything in connection with our denominational affairs is more in need of attention or would more largely repay untold and judicious effort than our Sunday School work. Much prayerful thought and labor are indeed being expended by earnest individual Christians in connection with our churches on behalf of this work, and no doubt with most excellent and gratifying results. In many churches pastors and earnest workers are co-operating heartily and persistently to promote the Sunday Schools in connection with their own churches, endeavoring to secure the highest efficiency in the teaching staffs and in the methods employed. There is also some measure of co-operation between our Sunday Schools, and some endeavor, by means of organized Associations and Conventions, to promote general interest in the work and efficiency in the schools.

It is however in respect to this matter of co-operative effort for education and inspiration, and of organization to that end, that our Sunday School work seems to be sadly deficient. We are destitute of any general plan of organization and effort. Our Convention and most of our Associations are indeed supposed to give some attention to the subject. They appoint committees to prepare reports on Sunday School work, and those reports (if the committee does not forget the duty entrusted to it) are read, and discussed more or less intelligently, and adopted. The Associations also undertake the duty of gathering statistics in reference to the Sunday Schools connected with the churches, but while many churches report the facts as correctly and fully as practicable, it will be generally admitted that the statistics so gathered are not on the whole by any means so complete as could be desired. In some parts of the country Baptist S. S. Associations or Conventions of a more or less local character and scope are held, and in some parts nothing of this kind is attempted. Some of our Sunday School workers are in sympathy with the interdenominational organizations. They attend the gatherings for the promotion of Sunday School work held under such auspices and think that they derive valuable inspiration and instruction from such association. Others are not in sympathy with the interdenominational work, and will have nothing to do with its Associations. On the whole then it must seem that as a denomination we are very much at sixes and sevens in respect to co-operation and organized effort in Sunday School work, and to those who give attention to it, the present situation in its general aspects must appear far from satisfactory.

It would seem to have been a pronounced conviction of the present unsatisfactory condition of our Sunday School work, and the possibility of improvement, that led the Convention's committee on Sunday Schools to say, in its report to the Convention last year at Moncton, that, in the judgment of the committee, "the time has arrived when, in the general interests of the denomination, a definite and organized effort should be made by the Convention to place the Sunday School work on a more solid and substantial basis," and further, to recommend "the appointment of a general superintendent who shall devote his whole time to the furtherance of the educational and evangelistic interests of Maritime Baptist Sunday Schools under the direction of a Board to be appointed by this Convention." The fact that the Convention, after favorable discussion of this report, unanimously adopted its recommendation, would seem to indicate a general feeling that improvement in respect to the condition of our

Sunday School work is both practicable and highly desirable.

The Board called for by this report was appointed by the Convention. It was fairly representative of the three Provinces, and its personnel would seem to justify confidence in its ability to undertake successfully—with the sympathetic co-operation of the churches—the important duties with which it was entrusted. What deliberations may have been held by this Board during the year, or what preliminary steps may have been taken in the way of carrying out the suggestions and recommendations of the report adopted at Moncton, we do not know. We have not heard that anything has been done, and certainly no general superintendent of Sunday School work has been appointed. Perhaps it has been thought wise to take time for deliberation and inquiry, and not to move in so important a matter without strong assurance that any course to be pursued would meet with general approval and support on the part of the churches. If such is the explanation of the apparent inactivity in this matter, we do not know that any fault should be found with the Board appointed last year. Success in such a matter must depend largely on a general sympathetic and intelligent co-operation on the part of the churches. Perhaps as a result of inquiry and deliberation, the Board will be in a position at the approaching meeting of the Convention in Yarmouth to outline some definite plan of organization and action. At all events we may be permitted to hope that the action taken by Convention last year will not prove a mere denominational spasm, without any vital significance. We believe that there is a very important sphere of usefulness for a Sunday School Board in connection with the Convention. Whether the Convention could wisely undertake to devote one whole day to Sunday School work and so become in part a Maritime Sunday School Convention might be doubtful. But, without extending very materially the time which the Convention is accustomed to give to the consideration of Sunday School work, such a Board might be of great service (a) by charging itself with the employment of a General Superintendent of Baptist S. S. work, (b) by co-operating with the Superintendent for general and uniform organization on Maritime, Provincial or Associational lines, endeavoring by all practical means to promote the work, and (c) by presenting to the Convention and for publication in the Year Book a full report, statistical and otherwise, of the Sunday School work of the denomination for the year. Such a report would naturally, with the information presented, embody suggestions and instruction of large value, and the full result of the Sunday School Board, if it proved equal to its opportunities, would be of the greatest importance in unifying, stimulating and strengthening the Sunday School work throughout the denomination. We therefore hope that this matter will receive the earnest consideration of the Convention.

### The Street versus the Home.

The terrible tragedy alluded to in a paragraph elsewhere, is of a kind happily rare in Canadian cities or communities, but it may well prompt inquiry into the educational conditions out of which conduct of so criminal and fiendish a character is developed. There are doubtless persons who come into the world with a congenital predisposition toward crime. It may be that the boy now held in the St. John jail on the charge of having deliberately taken the life of a companion a few years older than himself, was born with abnormal criminal tendencies. It seems much more probable, however, that the cause for this awful result is to be found principally in the educational influences to which the boy was subject— Influences shared also by companions who may or may not be essentially better than himself. It is an illustration—and it should be an impressive one—of what may be expected to result from street education. It is a very painful illustration of what may be expected when a boy is allowed to grow up without any wise and firm parental control,—to go to school or not, to go to church or not, and to work or not, as he feels inclined, to be at home or to be on the streets at night as his mind may lead him, to go with any companions who may entice him, to frequent the purlieus of theatres and other questionable haunts, to learn to smoke cigarettes and drink beer, and worst of all, perhaps, to defile his mind and inflame his imagination with the abominations of blood and thunder fiction. Let a boy have such an education as that, and there is hardly anything more certain than

that, by a longer or a shorter road, he will go to the bad. Even if he escapes a short cut to the gallows or the penitentiary, he is pretty sure to do that which is still worse for society, become a beggar and educator of children who, unless rescued by some miracle of grace, will become even more vicious and criminal than himself. Some people are saying—"Enforce the curfew law,—let society see to it that the children are at home when night comes." The curfew law may be of some value, we say nothing against it. But evidently the root of the trouble lies deeper than can be reached by any curfew regulation. What is wanted is not merely that the children be sent home at night, but that there shall be homes worthy of the name for the children to go to. Where there is a home worthy of the name, there is little need to send the children home, for there are those there more concerned for their welfare than any others can be. Napoleon uttered a great word when he said that the supreme need of France was mothers. The greatest need of society today is mothers and the second greatest need is fathers, for where there are mothers and fathers worthy of those sacred names there will be homes which are worthy of that name which is so indissolubly connected with human welfare and which has given inspiration and purpose and character to so much that is noblest and best in connection with our English race and history. To build up the home is to build up the nation. To destroy the home is to destroy the nation. Evidently the task of regenerating homes is not an easy one, but a regenerated society apart from regenerated homes is impossible.

### Editorial Notes.

—OUR CORRESPONDENTS ARE REQUESTED TO OBSERVE THAT, ACCORDING TO THE NEW POSTAL REGULATIONS, PRINTER'S COPY MUST BE PRE-PAID AT THE SAME RATE AS OTHER CORRESPONDENCE—THAT IS TWO CENTS PER OUNCE OR FRACTION OF AN OUNCE. IF OUR CORRESPONDENTS NEGLECT THIS REGULATION IN SENDING US COPY FOR THE PAPER WE HAVE TO PAY DOUBLE POSTAGE ON THEIR LETTERS IF WE TAKE DELIVERY OF THEM.

—The Northfield Conference closed on Sunday, and the post Conference addresses which being on Tuesday of this week will last until Sept. 7. President Roosevelt is to visit Northfield during that time, and it is planned to have the President speak to the Northfield people in the Auditorium, and later to address the five hundred students who will be at the young men's school founded by Dwight L. Moody at Mount Hermon.

—There has been secured for the Carnegie Museum in Pittsburg, Pa., a boat which is no doubt one of the most ancient examples of naval architecture extant. This boat is one of five which were not long since secured as the result of excavations at Dahabur, Egypt. Buried deep beneath the hot sands and in the dry atmosphere of the desert, these boats had been preserved from the attacks of insects and other destructive agents for a period of time estimated at forty-five centuries. From inscriptions and objects found with the boat it is believed that it was intentionally preserved in connection with the funeral rites attending the burial of some officer of the Government who stood in high esteem as a master of naval affairs.

—Joseph Jacque Tissot, the distinguished French painter, has lately died, at the age of seventy-two. His work brought him into notice in Paris as a young man, and in 1870 he went to London where he continued to live for several years, winning recognition both as a painter and an etcher, and his success followed him to Paris when he returned to his native country. It is however upon his later work seen in the series of paintings illustrating the life of Jesus Christ that Tissot's fame chiefly rests. The 350 paintings in oil and water colors and the 111 pen and ink drawings were the results of more than ten years' labor. Tissot brought a devout and sympathetic spirit, as well as a high order of talent, to the execution of his great task.

—The purchase by the Wesleys of England—and as a partial investment of their Twentieth Century Fund—of the Westminster Aquarium for the sum of £330,000 is in keeping with that large and far-seeing spirit which has generally characterized the Methodist body. The securing of so valuable a property in the heart of London and amid historic surroundings of so great significance, being in the neighborhood of Westminster Abbey and the Houses of Parliament, may be expected strongly to impress the imagination and call forth the enthusiasm of the body. In reference to the important purchase, the *Baptist Times* of London says: "The courage and energy displayed by the leaders of the Wesleys lead us to expect that the new Church House will be the centre of spiritual influence and activity, which will have a deep and permanent effect upon the life of the Metropolis."

—At a meeting a few weeks since, of the Wesleyan Conference in Manchester, England, Rev. J. Ponnatt, in