

Our Letter Box

"Deeply Interested"

One of our District Sunday School secretaries says that when he was selected for this work he "hardly knew what to think of the appointment." "Now," he adds, "the work has got hold of me, and I am deeply interested in it." We expect to hear of progress on this brother's district. The fact that he is interested in his work, that it has really gripped him, augurs well for the future. We can become interested in a subject by thinking much on it, by reading about it, and by talking it over with others. Enquiry would probably show that this preacher's interest was developed in this way.

Ten Cents per Member

A note from Rev. H. A. Ireland, of Griensville, contains a money order for \$18.25 for the Sunday School Aid and Extension Fund from the three schools on his circuit. One school, which numbers 75, gave \$7.15, about ten cents per member. Another with 70 members contributed \$7, exactly 10 cents per member, and the third with 35 scholars gave \$4.10. This result would seem to indicate that the request of the General Board that all our schools contribute amounts equal to five cents per member is by no means unreasonable. When the schools take hold of the matter earnestly this can be easily surpassed. We would like to receive more letters like that of Bro. Ireland.

A Study Class at the Parsonage

An eastern minister, writing of Sunday School affairs, informs us that he conducts a Teachers' Study Class at the parsonage. His circuit is large, and on Sunday he has to drive about 30 miles and preach three times, so that very few visits can be made to the Sunday Schools. In the circumstances, he has decided to meet with the teachers once a week and help them in the preparation for their work. We believe that he could do nothing better than this. The pastor is responsible for the teaching of the young, and if he cannot do it personally, he should at least do his best to instruct and inspire those who are actually engaged in the work. We have all too few of these study classes.

About the Pledge

A League officer in one of our towns intimates that some of the members of his League are exercised over the Epworth League Pledge, which they think is rather too hard in its requirements. The clause which is specially objected to is this: "I will make the daily study of the Bible the rule of my life." He says:

"While this is a high ideal, some of our most conscientious members feel that, truly speaking, we do not, not one in twenty of us, really study the Bible daily, as we would in preparing a Sunday-school lesson, for instance, and in view of this, some of us question whether we are fulfilling our obligations. One member, who daily reads his Bible, and whose conduct in daily life is above reproach, believes that if the pledge asked us to 'read' the Bible, instead of 'study,' he would feel that the requirement could be carried out,

but with pressure of other duties is often impossible to really spend the time for much study."

We are glad to note that our League members are conscientious, and careful in taking the pledge, but do not think that any one need be troubled over this. Anyone who is in the habit of reading the Bible daily in a thoughtful way, certainly fulfills the spirit of the pledge.

Greeting Strangers

A League president, in one of our towns, thus describes a difficulty which the League has encountered in its work:

"We are trying as young people to find some good method of welcoming strangers, as we find that we are losing some because they have not been very heartily received when they have come to our League meetings, and also to the regular church services. Some of the members of the Lookout Committee say that they feel rather timid about approaching strangers, so it has been suggested that if they were to wear a badge or something of that sort to show that they had some authority to do this work it would help them."

It is a good sign that the officers of a League are concerned about reaching strangers and visitors in a cordial way. Scarcely any part of the society's work is of greater importance. We cannot, however, feel seriously doubting the wisdom of labelling the members of the Lookout Committee with badges. For the sake of doing our work systematically we have various committees, but in dealing with outsiders this fact should not be made prominent. There is reason to believe that about one-half of the good effect of a hand-shake or a greeting is lost if the visitor gets the idea that you are paying him attention because you are a member of a committee. Keep the committee idea out of sight as far as possible, and let your greeting indicate real friendliness and heart-felt interest in the one who has come among you.

A New Thing Under the Sun

Rev. J. R. Patterson, of Brantford, thus writes of a decided innovation:

The recent missionary campaign in Brantford developed a new phase of missionary activity. Inspired partly by the campaign common to the district, and partly by the laymen's missionary movement, confined to the city, the laymen rallied round the pastors in connection with the missionary interests as never before. Never before did one church, in particular, see a sight like that witnessed after the evening service on the second Sunday of the campaign. Upon invitation of the pastor, some three-score men assembled in the lecture-room to consider plans for the missionary canvass. Quickly the church's constituency was divided into some forty-two districts, including about seventy streets. From among the brethren some forty-one canvassers were selected. Not one of the men refused to act; not one declined the territory assigned to him; not one failed to carry out his commission. It was surely a new thing under the sun to see bankers, managers, captains of industry, merchants, teachers, clerks, mechanics and laborers engaged in a still hunt for missionary subscriptions. Needless to say, the canvass was a success. Needless to say the canvass was a great blessing

to the church and especially to the men engaged in it. The men will now take charge of the collecting of the subscriptions. The good ladies who usually attend to such matters would be without missionary employment were it not for the fact that the zeal of the brethren has provoked their sisters to good works, with the result that the Women's Missionary Auxiliary will report a record year.

The Sunday School and the College

A letter from a pastor has just been received concerning Sunday School work, in which he refers to the lack of training on this subject in our theological colleges. He says: "I spent two years on circuit, and four years at college, preparing for my life-work, and was never told that I should have anything to do with the children. I spent months over the circle and the square, the co-sign and the tangent, the atom and the molecule, or trying to understand the vagaries of Locke and Hamilton, of Spinoza, Kant and Leibnitz, but not one hour in learning how to understand the nature and needs of those who would make up more than half of my congregation."

This brother will be glad to know that there is considerable improvement in the attitude of our educational authorities to the Sunday School. We now have five text-books relating to this institution for our theological students, and in Victoria College, at least, a course of lectures on practical methods is now being delivered, dealing with such questions as "The Pastor and the Sunday School," "Child Study," etc. There is, however, much room for improvement. A more general and more thorough course of training should be provided.

To Encourage the Timid

There are always some young people who are very timid about leading a meeting, who really ought to do so. A good plan which has been adopted by one Young People's Society is to tell such persons that they will only be expected to take charge of the meeting for twenty minutes, instead of a full hour. The rest of the time is taken by speakers from outside of the society, business men, lawyers, ministers, professors from the college, etc. A business man speaks on "The Kind of Young Man Needed in Business," another on "The Formation of Habit," another on "My Recent Experiences in Europe." This plan introduces the element of variety into the meetings, but does not take the programme entirely out of the hands of the members.

An Interested Pastor

A western pastor says: "I have read your book, 'Practical Plans,' with delight and profit, and took the liberty of recommending it at our recent district convention. It should be in the hands of all Leagues." Our Editor's may recommend this book without causing any offence to the author. It will help your League work, too.

The Calendar Appreciated

A League President writes expressing appreciation of The Epworth Era, referring especially to the Missionary Calendar which appears in these pages monthly. He states that at their last missionary meeting the whole Calendar was read, nearly as many persons taking part as there were days in the month.