

Missions in the Sunday School

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The Sunday School is too often looked upon as a nursery, a place for study, or a house to which salvation may come; and because of these partial estimates, it is not given the recognition it merits as a character-producing agency. Too frequently even the Christian worker falls to see the vast possibilities of this training ground of the future Church. The school of to-day will be the Church of to-morrow. How great then is our obligation to send into the Church material ready for the Master's use, a memory ready to give intelligent and sympathetic co-operation to every good work the Church may engage in. This involves on the part of the school an educational and training process along all lines of moral effort, but more than all else, in missionary activities.

The school must do it, because missionary work has been, and is to-day, the very essence of spiritual life, the essential feature of moral growth and development, both to the individual and to the Church. The school that even measurably accomplishes its work must cause its members to have the missionary atmosphere of "The Test Book"; and to partake of the inspiration of the world-wide vision of the greatest of all missionaries, in that inimitable prayer "Thy Kingdom Come."

The school must do it because the Church holds the key to the whole missionary situation. No other agency exists to-day that can adequately meet the conditions, and the Sunday School, being the chief feeder to the Church, practically has the situation in its own hands.

What will be the outcome? The next few years of effort on our part will be the answer to that question.

Recognizing the intense impress of the obligation resting upon us, how shall we measure up to it? How shall we answer the challenge of this responsibility?

To help us to purposeful effort, here are a few suggestions. If this important work is to be a success, it will be through the co-operative interest of all, including the scholars. This co-operation can be secured in small as well as in large schools. The superintendent is largely responsible for the prevailing spirit, for if he is indifferent or cold towards this great question others will be. Send such a man to a Congress or Missionary Summer School, or somehow envelop him in a missionary atmosphere that will produce perspiration and inspiration. We could not invest money to better advantage than watering up some of our good men and women.

But do not let the superintendent do it all, even if he is willing. A committee of three or five missionary spirits, focusing thought and effort on this work, will suggest a variety of inspirational studies and services, and will not tie the school to any one plan or method. They will suggest schemes that will employ all your available material, from the youngest scholar up to the pastor, even going outside for returned missionaries or others able to present the claims of the work profitably. They will not forget to remind you that the eye and ear give combination is not worn out. A visit to the Forward Movement Rooms where Dr. F. C. Stephenson has the walls and floors filled with accessories from all countries for sale at little above the bare cost of production and handling, will make your work on this plan both pleasant and profitable for some departments of your school must have this kind of help. Some members of this committee will

request that the instruction given, even though varied in its character, have a definiteness of aim, not alone to enthrall, but to educate in missionary work, both Home and Foreign, in its extent, countries, peoples, their needs and possibilities.

The Forward Movement shelves are loaded with this material, and our new Intermediate Quarterly (the best out) has a fine help in its new missionary question and answer plan. This same member also suggests that a definite time be allotted for this work. Perhaps this will be the first Sunday of the month, or a certain time may be given each Sunday to teaching either from the platform or in the class. A definite time may also be found for an oral or written review, either monthly or quarterly.

That committee member, with an eye to practical economics, presses his claim for finances, intimating several plans, such as the monthly collection and contribution, or the giving of all the collections to missions, and asking the church to support the school. But he has one pet scheme that he has seen tried successfully in both Toronto and Kingston, and he calls it "The Missionary Stock Company." It is based on business methods. Shares are issued at \$1.20 par value, payable in monthly instalments of 10 cents each. Application forms are freely given out, and when properly filled, indicating number of shares taken, and returned signed with applicant's name, the missionary secretary issues a handsome stock certificate. In one school they had the picture of the missionary they were supporting on each certificate. It is the best stock investment any school can go into. It increases the givings and the interest of the entire school. The scholar who, of necessity, takes only a half share is as much interested as the one who takes twenty. It is capable of adaptation to large or small schools.

The boy teacher on this committee has a very positive complaint. He claims that the schools are not sending out as many missionaries as they should. He says the reason our young people are not investing their personality in this work is the fact that we are not fully seized with the great possibilities of the Sunday School, and that if we appealed to our scholars on the line of the heroic, showing the opportunities for the expression of our highest and noblest qualities through this service, strengthening our appeal with examples of heroism on our mission fields of to-day, our prayers for more missionaries would not go unanswered. He claims that there are men and women in our home and foreign mission work doing as heroic and self-sacrificing service for God and the Church as Moses, Abraham, or Paul ever did, and that from among our present school membership are to come the men and women who shall make the evangelization of the world in a generation a glorious possibility, an actual fact.

Told to Dr. A. Maclaren.

In Dr. Alexander Maclaren's young days, he once preached in a little chapel on Loch Tay side.

At the close an old deacon said to him, "We are very much obliged to you for your sermon, and the only fault we have is the shortness of the lesson." "T-t-t."

For forty years the Doctor says he has been puzzled to know whether it was too long or too short.

The secretary of the Scottish Baptist Union caps this with another.

A stonebreaker at Tullemet, after

hearing him preach, remarked: "They say you man is an uncommon grand preacher; but look here, I heard him yesterday, and I understood every word he said."

The Sunday School and Missions

BY REV. F. C. STEPHENSON, M.D.,
Secretary Y. P. Forward Movement.

"The world will be evangelized in a generation when a generation is trained to do the work."

The great objective of the Sunday School is the evangelization of the world. In order to accomplish this as soon as possible each scholar should be trained and related to the work. The Sunday School is the great training and adjusting missionary agency of the church, and the Bible is the great missionary text-book. Every Methodist Sunday School is a branch of the missionary society of the Methodist Church (see Discipline, paragraph 399) and is expected to bear fruit. (See Discipline, paragraph 317.)

There are four principal ways in which the Sunday School can and should help in the missionary work of our church:

1. By prayer.—First and always our missionaries pray for the prayers of our young people. Missionary work is spiritual and cannot be accomplished by men and money alone.

2. By sympathetic and systematic study.—Our church needs intelligent supporters, those who know the needs and difficulties, as well as the successes, of our missionary work.

3. By systematic and proportionate giving of money.—Through money only we may provide for the physical needs of our missionaries while they preach and teach the Gospel and heal the sick.

4. By providing missionaries.—From our Sunday Schools must come more missionaries, both for the home and foreign fields that we may hold Canada for God and do our share in evangelizing the world.

ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS.

To plan the work, direct the leaders, inspire the workers, and sustain the effort every Sunday School should have:

1. Thorough organization.—A missionary committee, consisting of from three to five members and a good secretary; superintendent and pastor being members ex-officio.

2. A monthly missionary meeting.—A good programme, in which the Sunday School superintendent, teachers and scholars take part.

3. An adequate missionary equipment.—Consisting of object lessons and pictures for the elementary department, stories and biographies for the intermediate department, text-books and maps for the senior department, and a lantern and slides for the whole school.

4. A special missionary objective.—A heroic undertaking for missions. Either the support of a missionary or special object, or the share in such support in connection with the Sunday Schools or Epworth Leagues.

THE GREATEST TRUST IN THE WORLD.

Missionary work should never be spoken of as a burden, but as a privilege. While all Sunday School scholars should be taught to trust in Christ, they should also be taught that Christ is trusting them. While He said, "Come unto Me," He also said, "Go ye." He has trusted us with the privilege of witnessing for Him "in Jerusalem"—to all our friends and neighbors; "in Judea"—to those on our home and the meek mission—"in Samaria"—to all the strangers, the immigrants and all those of other nationalities in our country; "to