

# THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL

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WHOLE No. 111

## The Primary Purpose of Church Work.

**T**HERE are many indications that the efficiency of many of our churches is beginning to be seriously impaired by the substitution of the educational for the evangelistic ideal. The notion widely prevails that if the Sunday School is organized according to the most approved pedagogical methods; if the minister's preaching is thoughtful and instructive; if the prayer meeting is devoted largely to the discussion and solution of Christian problems, and if the members of the church are interested and active in various popular philanthropies, the interests of the Kingdom of God are advancing in the most practicable ways.

To say nothing of the fact that this is not the ideal that prevailed among our Baptist churches when they were struggling up, against Congregational antagonism, into strength and efficiency. Our fathers believed that a primary function of the church was to lead men to a personal decision for Christ, and that men could be trained in the Christian life far more successfully than they could be trained to it. Possibly they disparaged unduly the quiet persuasive force of generic Christian influences. Possibly some of the weaknesses that have appeared in our churches can be traced to their failure in this regard. They did not make nearly enough of the culture of the regenerated life, but they were magnificently right in believing that that life could not exist at all apart from the personal commitment of the individual heart to Christ.

The bearing of this conception upon church activities is shown clearly in the way it influences the tone and ideal of preaching. The outstanding lack of modern preaching is that it lacks the note of contest and victory. It is learned enough, instructive enough, eloquent enough, but it does not appeal with directness to the moral intuitions, contend with the hearer's spirit, and win in his own heart the moral victory of a decision for Christ. In a given congregation there may be a dozen lads between sixteen and twenty years old—the period of stress and temptation. We would not in the least disparage the value for such young men of generic Christian influences and familiarity with Bible facts and Christian associations. But their central need, which if met, will give them new ideals and outlook and strengthen their hearts to realize a noble manhood is the commitment of their hearts in loyalty to Christ. And unless the church and its pastor have a conception of their work that makes the reverent, affectionate and reasonable presentation of the claims of Christ primary, they are remiss to their divine calling.

Our pastors, as a rule, firmly believe in these principles and ideals, but sometimes they are sorely discouraged because they find so little support in definite spiritual work for immediate results in their congregations. We cannot bring our readers any more appropriate counsel than to urge them at the opening of the new year to adjust the entire scheme of the work of their churches to the primary end of bringing the unconverted to a personal decision for Christ.

## Christian Service and Triumph.

We believe that it is our duty, as servants and friends of Christ, to do good unto all men, to maintain the public and private worship of God, to hallow the Lord's Day, to preserve the sanctity of the family, to uphold the just authority of the state, and so to live in all honesty, purity and charity, that our lives shall testify of Christ. We joyfully receive the word of Christ, bidding his people go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, and declare unto them that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself and that he will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We confidently trust that by his power and grace, all his enemies and ours shall be finally overcome, and the kingdoms of this world shall be made the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. In this faith we abide; in this service we labor; and in this hope we pray.

## The Larger Life.

Oh, yes there is something that widens life beyond the task, a something that comes as an inspiration and sends the life-current faster and plays a veritable hallelujah on the harp of our senses. It is this that sends the patriot to the battle of words on the public arena, or to face the belching cannon beneath the fortress. Sometimes the larger inspiration of life is born of an old memory. The French soldiers in Haiti were ready to shoot down the French-born natives, the muskets were lifted, the finger was on the trigger, the eye was glancing along the deadly barrel, they were only waiting the signal from their commanders to send forth a hail of lead and death. The suspense was not long. The command "Fire!" was soon given; but it came too late. The French soldiery stood as if petrified. Their brothers in black, the French born natives, started up the "Marseillaise," the outer rim of the larger life was touched. No more could the French soldiers fire on the "Marseillaise" than could you on the "Star Spangled Banner." Bismarck said that no sacrifice was too great to free Germany from the oppression of Austria in order that he might bid it to the Prussian throne. "To do this," said he, "I would brave all danger—exile the scaffold—what matter if they hang me, if thereby the rope by which I am hung binds Germany to the Prussian throne." In that same spirit let us resolve that no sacrifice shall be too great for us to attain unto the larger life, that neither pain nor pleasure, suffering nor sorrow, shall be too much if thereby we may be led into the brighter day, the better tomorrow.—G. H. SIMMONS.

## Her Own Talent.

Margaret Sangster tells of a woman neither young nor beautiful, nor robust, nor accomplished, nor educated, who became a bride. She realized that she was extremely unlike her brilliant husband. "I have not even one talent to fold away in a napkin," she said. But the husband loved her, and she loved him, and would, please God, make him happy. "There is one comfort—I can keep house," she said. So she planned the delicate, dainty, healthful, meals and kept the home clean, but not forbiddingly spotless. It invited the tired husband to rest, to litter it with books and papers if it pleased him to bring work home from the office, while she sat beside him, ready to smile or speak as he looked up. The husband said one day: "There's one talent you have, darling, beyond anyone else in the world—the talent of having time enough for everything." His home was a suburb of paradise, and he went forth to the competition of life steadily successful in all his enterprises. And the quiet wife, who had time to love him, to share his hopes, to listen to his plans, and make his life supremely happy, was an element in his success which counted more largely than even the husband knew.

It is rare to find in this hurrying world a being who works with an air of repose; who can pause to listen to another's story; who has a heart touched to so responsive a key that sympathy in a friend's good fortune is as ready as pity for a friend's calamity. This woman, who had the one talent of doing fully and blithely every home obligation, by degrees became a social power. A large class of girls each Sunday bent eagerly

around her while she unfolded the lesson to them, and upon stated occasions she entertains the poor, pale, fagged-out girls of the down-town factories, and keeps them by kindly words and helpful ministry, and a Christian example from places of temptation, for she believes it as much a Christian work to keep young girls pure as to save the poor remnant of their ruined lives after they have fallen. Telling the life-story of this woman, Margaret E. Sangster says: "Altogether, when I think of the sick-beds this little woman sits by, the heartaches she soothes, the confidences of which she is the trusted recipient, the happy home life which is hers, and the good she is doing, silently, I am quite sure her talent is bearing interest for the Master."

## My Times are in Thy Hand.

When sunny skies are smiling landscapes greet me,  
And balmy airs breathe perfume and delight;  
When woods and fields flowers spread joy about me,  
And not one voice of nature speak of blight—  
"My times are in thy hand."  
When barns are bursting with full harvest measure,  
And all around are objects rich and rare;  
When love, home, culture and a wealth of treasure,  
Have lifted from my heart a load of care—  
"My times are in thy hand."  
And when 'mid changing scenes the storm clouds lower,  
And on the shifting strand life's wrecks are strewn;  
When hope lies dead and perished earthly power,  
Then through the rifted clouds God's love is shown—  
"My times are in thy hand."  
And when at last the final scene is shifted,  
And o'er life's dreams death's sable curtain falls;  
Then mid angelic choirs I shall be lifted,  
To dwell immortal in celestial halls!  
Because my times were in thy hands.

C. H. HAINSON.

The writer of the verses is now lying very low, probably near unto death. But no doubt that the sentiment of those lines are a consolation to him, as they are to us in our affliction.

EDITOR.

Rev. Dr. W. W. Week of Toronto in a letter to us says I have just finished reading "THE HOME MISSION JOURNAL," and it occurs to me that I have not paid for it yet. I herewith inclose one dollar for two years. "That article of yours on the Substitutionary View of the Atonement is worth ten times the price of the paper." Another brother says, "Your paper on The Atonement is both literary and Scriptural," such articles make the little paper very valuable," and another says, I like your paper very much and would not like to do without it. There are many of our subscribers speak of the paper in commendatory terms. Brethren and sisters, give us your continued subscriptions, and get others to subscribe for the paper and we will spare no time nor means to make it worth more to you than it costs.