

the course of the opening exercises, the superintendent calls upon various sections of the school to "hold up their Bibles," until three or four thousand neatly-bound Bibles, nearly uniform as to size, have been displayed. To the visitor this is a most impressive scene—thousands of Bibles, not on shelves, but in the hands of as many young men and women.

The session of the school commences at half-past two, and continues for about two hours. The opening exercises last three-quarters of an hour, but so interesting are they, that no one would care to have them shortened by one minute.

† Promptly at the hour, Mr. Wanamaker appears on the platform, steps to the reading desk, and taps the bell once, and only once. He waits for order, and in a moment greets the school in a cheery,

spersed. The superintendent read one verse, then the assistant superintendent another. He was followed by those on the main floor, and then the east and west galleries were heard from in succession. The same plan is adopted in singing.

About an hour is given to the study of the lesson and everything is "done decently and in order." There is none of that feverish rush to get through in a hurry that characterizes so many schools.

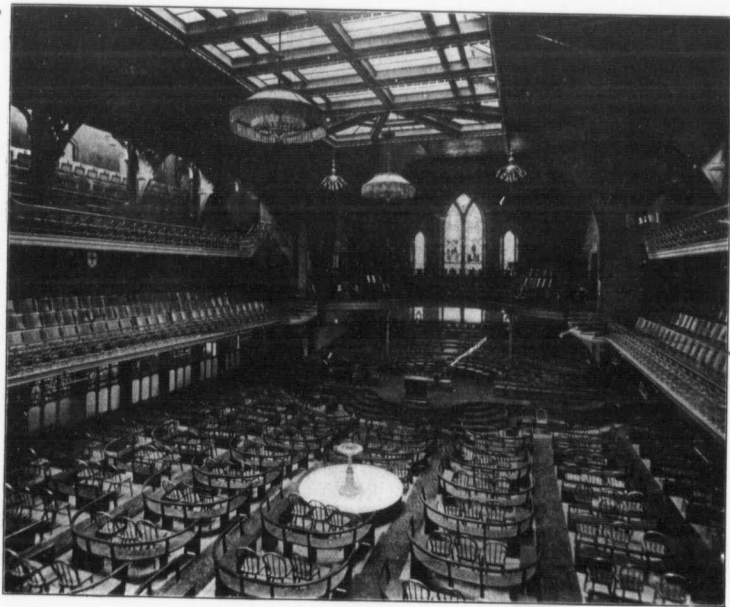
Mr. Wanamaker's Bible-class, numbering about 2,000 men and women, meets in the church auditorium. Mr. Wanamaker is its chief; next to him are centurions, and after these are tithe-men, each over a band of ten, and each pledged to hold himself responsible for the attendance, conduct, and well-being of its members. Mr. Wanamaker's comments on the

many tongues and the shuffling of feet continued. Another gesture, and the noise went on. Instantly he made up his mind to wait no longer.

"Teachers and scholars," he exclaimed, and there was an emphasis in his tone few of them had ever before heard, "I have been with you for more than thirty years. I have labored here the best I know Sunday after Sunday. But perhaps I am no longer wanted. You do not heed my requests. I cannot remain here until you do."

Before the astonished school had realized what happened, he had stepped from the platform and disappeared into the church building, where the Bible Union had assembled. His faithful assistant there met him.

"Why, what brings you here so early?"



SUNDAY-SCHOOL ROOM OF BETHANY CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

kindly manner by saying, "Good-afternoon, dear scholars and teachers." The scholars reply as with one voice, "Good-afternoon, Mr. Wanamaker." Then the first hymn is announced, and the building is filled with stirring music, such as only young hearts and lips can produce. The orchestra is not a particularly good one, certainly not equal to several that we have in Toronto. The singing, however, is magnificent, and so hearty that it would appear as if every voice in the room was adding its quota of praise. A different order for opening the school is followed for every Sunday in the year, and the programme for each one is printed and distributed among scholars and members. On the afternoon of my visit, five hymns were sung, and a number of scripture readings were inter-

lesson show that he has carefully prepared himself. It is a fresh, breezy, suggestive and practical talk, accompanied by many striking illustrations. After the lesson, the superintendent returns to the school room for the closing exercises. Then he mingles in a genial comradeship with the hundreds who cluster around the platform, inquiring for the sick or the missing, and next giving twenty minutes to an informal conference, which has been a feature of the school since its earliest days.

Promptness to obey commands is a cardinal virtue at Bethany. One afternoon Mr. Wanamaker, taking his place at the desk, gave the usual signal for silence. There was an unusual indifference in coming to order. He raised his hand in protest: but the commotion of

"That's all right, Mr. Anderson," he said. "You go over and help out Assistant Superintendent Coyle."

That was a memorable day in Bethany. The murmurs of surprise that ran through the auditorium when he left the platform gave way to dismay and distress. There were sobs and tears, and, as one of the spectators said, "The scholars would have gone down on their knees to have him back." When he did return, the sign of order was obeyed instantly, and not since has Bethany forgotten that sharp lesson in promptness.

Much is made of anniversary days and other special occasions, and in a certain sense it may be said that every service is a special service. Rev. Wm. Patterson, formerly of Cooke's Church, Toronto, is now pastor of Bethany Church.