

A Bible Class with a History

Off and on invades the Sunday School. How many superintendents are vigorous—off and on? In the country, many schools hibernate, in the city they estivate. Is it that the off and on habit has got a hold of the superintendents? The waxing and waning of enthusiasm in a church that teaches the perseverance of the saints, surely ought not to be a common phenomenon.

Have teachers ever the off and on habit? Is any lagging to be noted at certain seasons of the year? Are the teachers as sure to be in their places on rainy days as on rally days?

Does the habit penetrate the home, as well? Are parents zealous and faithful—off and on: intent now, and careful that the boys and girls have their lessons prepared and are in their places in the school every Sabbath; and again slack and indulgent, allowing any petty whim or excuse to serve for non-attendance or for tasks neglected?

Steady schools, and sturdy, steadfast Christian character are not so attained. The off and on habit is catching, and like all infectious disorders, finds its readiest victims in the young. Fashion travels downward. Off-and-on-ness passes with fatal certainty and swiftness from parents and teachers to the boys and girls; whilst, on the other hand, the children are proud and eager to keep pace with their seniors who show by an all the year round and every Sunday devotion to the Sunday School and its work, that they think this worth while.

Upper Musquodoboit, N.S.

A Bible Class With a History

Dr. Donald Fraser, in his autobiography, tells how deeply he was impressed, at the beginning of his ministry in Coté Street, with the sage counsel of a friend who held to the opinion that a young man taking a city charge should not "put up all his sails at once." His successor, already conscious of reserve power, lost no time in putting up at least one sail that carried him steadily into channels where his strongest life-work was to be accomplished.

He organized a Bible Class.

This, though there have been larger since,

speedily became the largest in the Canada Presbyterian Church at that time. Several hundred, including not simply young people, but prominent citizens, gathered at this class from Sunday to Sunday with an enthusiasm that did not succumb even to the languors of midsummer heat.

His unabashed purpose was to treat the Bible as a source of delight, a source of wisdom, a source of safety, and a guide to God. At every meeting he exalted it to that unique supremacy which it had long obtained in his own settled convictions, and from which, to his dying hour, it was never to be dashed down. The hop-step-and-jump method received absolutely no favor with him. Toilsome, patient, consecutive mastery of the contents and interpretation of entire books was aimed at: a course that involved constant and severe critical, exegetical and homiletical study.

The class was organized, and always conducted, with a view to practical action. It was the regular feeder of the working forces of the congregation: and nothing used to delight him more in ensuing years than to trace definite results, especially in the development of the spirit of liberality, back to the hard work bestowed on this class.

He held that if the people are to form generous habits they must be trained in them. Accordingly he planned, and carried out, a series of studies on that all-absorbing topic, Money. The class was never better attended: in some instances, by people who were in the habit of daily handling large sums in the transaction of their business. The course swept the Old and New Testaments with an overwhelming cumulative impression of scriptural principle that brought direct financial benefit to more than one of the public institutions of the city. He used to say that among the most regular attendants at the class were men like Peter Redpath and Joseph Mackay, one of whom, besides endowing a chair in McGill University and enriching its library, as well as the library of the Presbyterian College to which he donated Abbé Migné's Patrologia, built those chaste structures, the Peter Redpath Museum and the Peter Redpath Library, and the other of whom built and endowed that ad-