

## Temperance in Sunday Schools and Leagues.\*

THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

**T**HERE is peculiar pertinence in the occasion and association of this subject—"Young Methodism and Moral Reform." The organization of young people and the recognition of temperance have been invariably characteristic of Methodism. The sanctified genius of Methodism anticipated by some generations the institution of the Sabbath School and temperance societies. As a church we are uncompromisingly committed to temperance work, by conviction and tradition. Temperance work and the organization of youth are our peculiar heritages. To ignore them would be culpable treason. "Cannot be legalized without sin," is our apothegm.

The strategic point in all moral reform lies in our youth. The child is father to the man. The convictions of youth are the principles of maturity. In our Sabbath Schools we enjoy an absolute monopoly of the invaluable potential factor, and that at its most desirable period—the formative. To-day society is, or should be, a Sabbath School product, and its expression in action generally reflective of Sabbath School teaching.

Does modern life then justify the past inculcation of temperance in our Sabbath Schools? Our consumption of liquor is the least per capita of any civilized people and our legislation (potentially) the most advanced of any constitutional land. Observe the social habits of our people, their abstemiousness and sobriety. Within a generation a moral revolution has been effected and who can deny that the greatest contribution hereto has been made through our Sabbath School temperance lesson? Like the coral insect, these workers have secreted and deposited temperance truth in the minds of our youth until there gradually arose above the angry surf of national prejudice, social usage, and popular delusion, a reef of conviction that secures for our land unparalleled peace and prosperity. Temperance teaching in our Sabbath

Schools has passed beyond the speculative and experimental period into the demonstrated and accepted stage. No proof is needed. It is axiomate.

But our work, though well done, is not all done. We rejoice at 250,000 temperance voters, and place them to the credit of Sunday School work. What about the 141,000 opponents, and say 120,000 absentees? They too are Sunday School graduates, they must stand to the debit of our teaching.

Have we not regarded Temperance Sunday indifferently, taught the lesson prefactorily and impersonally? Have we not dealt too much on the scientific and too little on the moral aspect? We may safely leave the scientific to the day school teacher (thanks to our progressive spirit), who will more efficiently present it than we can, but the moral we can relegate to no one—that is the "sine qua non" of a Sunday School teacher.

The Sunday School must, on the authority of its text-book, the Bible, charge the individual conscience with the moral claims of temperance. To some it must be glorified into a cross, the faithful assumption of which is necessary to their salvation. Only as we teach our scholars that drink is immoral and unchristian, and that discipleship involves the sacrifice of prejudice and even gratification, can we secure consistent and satisfactory results. If liquor cannot be legalized without sin no more can it be tolerated without sin—that at least should be the Methodist deduction.

All Sunday Schools should have a Band of Hope, and every means possible should be used to cultivate and strengthen the moral sense of temperance among our children. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is a voter he will not depart from it.

### THE EPWORTH LEAGUE.

Temperance work is here imperative if we would secure permanent and practical results. Through circumstances that we can do no more than note now our youth graduate from Sabbath School between the ages of fifteen and eighteen years. With the assumption of freedom there is the tendency to impulsiveness. Immaturity of judgment and experience is associated with the responsibility of suffrage. They hardly cease to be students of history ere they become makers of history. These facts constitute the adolescent period as one of

\* Synopsis of Rev. Geo. H. Williams' (Delta) paper given at the Brockville District Epworth League Convention at Kempville. From *The Liberator*.