

We beg in this connection to call attention to the following article:—

#### SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

In answer to the question, "Shall we have libraries in our Sunday-schools?" we would answer, "Yes," with emphasis. Very likely there are a half-dozen families in your school who have all the reading they can use, while the large majority depend upon the fireside department of the county paper. Many of the children never touch a book from the year's beginning to its close, except the school textbook. The bare handling of books, the care of them by the scholars, and the peculiar sight of them on the tables in homes, is itself a little education not to be disregarded.

Of course the first work of the Sunday-school is moral and religious teaching. Secondary to this is the forming of reading habits, which itself is a safeguard, and the cultivation of a literary taste. Whatever the child carries home, whether it is the remembrance of the earnest words which you as teacher have imprinted on the memory, or the book tucked snugly under the arm, it will hold him to the school through the six days.

Since the Sunday-school library determines the literary taste for so many of our children, the selection of books should be more carefully made. If the peep at the outside world is taken through the pen of a sentimental writer, or through the eyes of some shallow visionary, how can the youth learn to know and love the truth of real life, which is the ground-work of every good book? The idea that only those books do harm which are pronouncedly bad is a wrong one. A book may do harm from its very weakness, from belittling truth and sacred things.

Do not buy a library "en masse," because the books are bound alike, or are cheaper so. It is too much like getting your library by the pound.\* Each book ought to be known to a certain extent, either through its author or some reliable book notice. If you have in your school several bookish persons, it would be a good plan in selecting your library to ask the members of the school, who choose to do so, to bring the following Sunday the names of books, with their authors, which they would like to have in the library. This will give scholars a voice in the selection, and stimulate them to the reading of book notices. Give these lists to a competent committee, and they can soon cull out what is undesirable.

Every age of childhood and youth should be considered in the selection. You will find the little girls are easily suited. Any thing that is a story pleases them. The little boys are not so easily suited. A certain library had on its catalogue Mrs. Miller's book, "The Bears' Den," and every small boy in that Sunday-school

wanted it. The most difficult class to provide for is that of young men from sixteen to twenty. "Tip Cat" and "Aunt Jane's Hero" are excellent for this class.

Mrs. Prentiss's books, Mrs. Whitney's, Miss Alcott's, Rose Porter's, and Fanny's earlier books should be in every library, "Ben-Hur" should have a place, and Mrs. Jackson's Indian story, "Ramona."

Every department of literature should be represented; not only fiction, but biography, history, and travel. Miss Ninde's new book, "We Two Alone in Europe," should be ordered for every Sunday-school library.

There should be a small department of science, represented by such books as Bishop Warren's "Recreations in Astronomy." I am supposing the average library where the sum of money to be expended is limited. The missionary department should surely contain that wonderful book, "From Boston to Bareilly."

Even if you must start with a small library, get good books, and it will be much easier to raise money for additions.—*Jennie M. Bingham in S. S. Journal.*

The Sunday-school is constantly becoming more important as an instrument of the churches. It is the chief source from which they are to recruit their numbers. It furnishes the churches with members of the choicest quality, and further fits them as hearers to receive a wide range of truth, and as laborers to work more effectively. It trains to benevolence those to whom the churches must look in the future for revenues to carry on their work. It incites Christian homes to greater zeal, and enforces their teachings in fresh and varied forms. It supplies a connecting link between the churches and the world, becomes a religious home to multitudes who would otherwise be without religious instruction, and wins favor for religion in communities new and old. It is beyond all question the chief instrument by which organized Christianity is to meet and conquer the dangerous foreign element in the population of this country.—*Pilgrim Teacher.*

ONE class of superintendents is "great" on singing, another on order, another on responsive readings, another on blackboard exercises, another on reviewing the lessons, etc. The tendency of many a superintendent is to over-emphasize some one portion of the exercises. He is apt to ride some one hobby pretty hard for a while. He dismounts one to get on another just after he has attended some convention and heard the fast-going qualities of some other rocking horse described. There are few who are careful to make all parts of a Sunday-school service equally good. The Sunday-school should not be a mere singing-school, nor a place largely for drill in sacred geography, nor an opportunity for eloquent addresses on the lesson, etc. If it be safe to over-emphasize any one feature of the Sunday-school session, worship is the one. And, so far, there has been no danger of laying too much stress upon that.

\* Yet if the books are judiciously selected, and are all of a good character, we do not understand that our correspondent would object to their being bound alike, or old cheaply. Of this sort are the "Cheap Libraries," issued by the Methodist Publishing House.—[Ed.]