

# The Church Guardian,

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## THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE LAW DEFENCE ASSOCIATION.

We hope the clergy have not lost sight of this organization. We fear very many of them, while opposed to the recent legislation making legal the marriage of a man to the sister of his deceased wife, and anxious to see the law repealed, have so far taken little or no interest in this Association. We know they, with many of the laity, have been solicited to become members; but we believe but few of the clergy have, up to the present time, taken sufficient interest in the work as to forward to the Honorary Secretary in Montreal, Leo H. Davidson, Esq., D. C. L., the small yearly fee of twenty-five cents, which constitutes membership in it. Nothing can be done until funds are in the treasury; and we urge our brethren to take an active interest in its welfare at once, by soliciting their laity to become members, and remitting their own and other subscriptions to the address already mentioned. This will be the only effective way at present to testify their sympathy with the movement, and will enable the Association to issue the needful literature, and employ other means to promote the success of the undertaking.

## SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

A PAPER recently read before a large and influential meeting of Sunday School workers in England, deals at length with the whole subject of Sunday Schools and Sunday School instruction. We submit the following extracts, as being worthy of careful consideration. The suggestions they contain are practical, and might well be adopted in our Canadian Dioceses. "There is no disrespect in saying, what our Sunday School teachers are themselves the first to admit, that very many of them have not had the educational advantages necessary to fit them for their important work, and that they stand in need of counsel and instruction. Add to this that these teachers have had no special training whatever for their office; and further, that they have usually to struggle on in their work under little or no supervision; and I think it must be conceded that the improvement and systematizing of our Sunday School lessons are a matter urgently demanding consideration.

"In connection with the diocesan syllabus of a uniform course of teaching, some simple manuals of lesson notes, such as those published by the Church of England Sunday School Institute, might be recommended for the use of teachers.

"The adoption of uniform courses of lessons would render possible a further step in diocesan organization—the establishment, namely, of an annual voluntary examination of Sunday scholars. Such examinations are now held in connection with three at least of our local associations in the diocese, and are found to be of value as a test of work done and a stimulus both to teachers and scholars.

"The inspection of Sunday Schools is another important matter which could be dealt with by such a diocesan organization as has been suggested. This is a matter, no doubt, of great delicacy, and surrounded with difficulties; but yet it is, I venture to think, by no means impracticable. As a partial solution of one of the difficulties involved, I would suggest that laymen of experience in Sunday School work, as well as clergymen, should be invited to assist as inspectors.

"I now come to what I regard as by far the most important object to be attained by a diocesan organization of Sunday School work—the adoption of some scheme for the better instruction of teachers not only in the art of teaching, but also in the doctrines of the Christian faith. So many plans for the establishment of teachers' instruction classes might be suggested that I refrain from alluding particularly to any. One suggestion only I would make—that the annual examination of Sunday School teachers, held under the auspices of the Church of England Sunday School Institute, might well be utilized in any such schemes set on foot.

"In conclusion, allow me briefly to recapitulate the chief points of this paper:—

"1. Sunday School work has a legitimate status, and an important function in our Church of today.

"2. There is, however, urgent need of various improvements and reforms in our ordinary methods of carrying on this branch of Church work.

"3. These necessary reforms demand some more distinctively diocesan recognition and organization than we have at present.

"4. The objects to be attained ultimately, though not necessarily at once, by a diocesan reorganization of Sunday School work are—The establishment of rural-decanal associations of teachers; the adoption of a uniform system of instruction, and the recommendation of suitable manuals of lesson-notes for the use of teachers; examinations of Sunday scholars and inspection of schools, teachers' instruction classes and examinations.

"All this would entail, it must be freely allowed, a large expenditure of thought and labor; but I am quite convinced that any effort made in the direction of Sunday School organization would be abundantly repaid in the beneficial effect of such organization upon the Church of the diocese; and I am assured, too, from personal observation, that clergymen and laymen could be found in every rural deanery of the diocese able and willing to take their part in this work."

## FREE AND OPEN CHURCHES.

BELOW we give some extracts from the report of the Open Church Association of the Dioceses of Chester and Liverpool for the year 1883, read at the annual meeting of the members held in the Common Hall, Hackins Hey, Liverpool, on the 21st January, 1883.

"When the ecclesiastical history of the latter half of the nineteenth century comes to be written, there will be a recognition of the revival during that period of the great truth that one essential feature of the Church's work is that she is missionary, and that as her members have been blessed with the knowledge of the means of salvation, so it is their bounden duty to convey and hand on that knowledge to those who have it not. The place in which this knowledge is to be taught is obviously the Church, a building which, if missionary work is to go on in it, must not be the monopoly of a chosen few, but one to which all, high and low, rich and poor, must be made equally welcome.

"Another lesson which the present generation has intelligently to learn and loyally to practice is the duty, imposed upon every member of the human family without exception, of appearing before God in public worship on the Lord's Day. This act of public recognition of a God in solemn assembly by the whole people is one that has been too much forgotten, though the obligation to render it is the same on the part of the poorest as of the richest in the land. Hence for one branch of the great Church Catholic to permit any barrier, whether moral or physical, to interpose between man and his Creator in the performance of this sacred duty become a mistake which is unpardonable, and for the commission of which punishment some day will surely follow.

"The public cannot be too frequently reminded that the pew system is a phase of that 'selfish individualism which has been so disastrous in the religious world,' and as such is the exact opposite of that meekness and humility which ever marks the Christian life and its actions. Personal comfort and convenience, it must be admitted, are associated with the privilege of a pew of one's own. Such considerations obviously tend to displace thoughts of the honour of God and the well-being of our neighbour. The Bishop of Liverpool has said: 'Let us beware of selfishness in our Religion. A man's Religion may be well suspected when he is content to go to heaven alone.'

"As each year rolls by, a record is presented of the number of churches in the two dioceses which have been made free and open during the preceding 12 months. The churches thus converted from pewed into open churches are the parish Church of Macclesfield, Holy Trinity, Toxteth Park, Liverpool, and St. George's, Hyde. As an evidence of the remarkable change taking place in public opinion it may be stated that the freedom of the last named church was accomplished by means of a poll of the parishioners, which resulted in a majority of seven to one in favor of a free church.

"The progress of the Open Church movement in London and its suburbs, as exhibited in Mackeson's Guide, is remarkable. From this authority we learn that whilst in 1869, 17 out of every 100 churches had the weekly offertory, the present proportion is 58 in every 100 churches.

"That whilst in 1869, 7 out of every 100 churches were free and unappropriated, the present proportion is 36 out of every 100 churches.

"And that whilst in 1869, 3 3/8 out of every 100 churches were open for private prayer, the present proportion is nearly 14 out of every 100 churches.

"One most important branch of the Association's work is the opening of churches for private