

MISSIONARY ASSOCIATIONS IN  
KNOX'S CHURCH, TORONTO.

We cheerfully give place to the following articles, as illustrative of the Missionary spirit in a congregation, and we wish most earnestly, all success to our young friends thus laudably engaged, while we commend their example to the imitation of others:—

SABBATH SCHOOL MISSIONARY  
ASSOCIATION.

To the Editor of the Missionary Record.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—

It has been suggested in some quarters that an occasional article on the subject of Sabbath Schools would be both interesting and useful, especially to your readers in the country.

On this subject there certainly can be only one opinion. We know that many of our friends have difficulty in carrying on these valuable institutions—not so much from a want of capability or willingness, as from a lack of information on the proper means to be employed for keeping up the interest of the children, and for attaching them to the school. There is little doubt but a series of short articles on this subject, by one or more of our ministers, would be received with thankfulness—read with interest—and would be productive of much real good for the youth of our Church, and of the country generally.

Not pretending to enter upon a subject so wide and important—involving principles which might well occupy the mind of the most profound—and demanding detail of operation, which no other than a person of ingenuity and method can furnish—I wish only to call the attention of your readers to the advantage of engaging the sympathies of the young, in the cause of Christian Missions, both *Home* and *Foreign*. And while I shall allude principally to the advantage of systematic effort, in connection with our Sabbath Schools and Bible Classes, I of course do not wish it to be inferred that no importance is to be attached to efforts by those who are not in the habit of attending such institutions. On the contrary, I would rejoice to see every family have its little Missionary Society—and I am fully aware of the happy results which might be expected from the adoption of such a plan.

As a Church we are greatly deficient in attention to this very important branch of youthful training. It is true that missionary boxes are to be found in a goodly number of our schools and classes, but we meet with very little regular, systematic missionary effort. Hamilton and Montreal are perhaps examples to our congregations in this respect. The Sabbath School in Hamilton supports a native Teacher in India, and both the Schools in Montreal contribute liberally to our Home Missionary objects. Toronto congregation is now moving, and may we hope that many others will be induced to follow.

The time has now passed when it might be asked if this is suitable work for children?—if (what are called) the innocent amusements of youth are not more appropriate for them?—and if their little pocket money should not rather be spent on such gratifications. It has been proved that even children derive the greatest enjoyment from doing what is good and useful. The boy who drops his penny into the poor beggar's hat, has more substantial satisfaction, and more real enjoyment than the one who spends it on apples or sweetmeats. In like manner, the company of children who are united in seeking the eternal welfare of the perishing heathen, or the ignorant and ungodly around them, experience more gladness of heart than those who are combined for mere frivolous amusement.

We do not wish to see the austerity of age depicted on the countenance of youth—nor do we like to see the child attempting to act the man, but we do believe that such engagements as we

are now speaking of, are quite compatible with the exercises and amusements appropriate to youth.—in the midst of the joy characteristic of their years, they are admirably fitted to remind them that they must live while they live, and that the most useful is always the most pleasant life.

It can no longer be asked—what can children do; their poor pence cannot go far in the evangelization of the world? We would simply ask—what have children done? Did not a portion of the Sabbath-school children of Britain, a few years ago, purchase, and fit out a large and beautiful ship for the South Sea Mission? Did not the children of the Free Church of Scotland raise, in one year, £1000 for Missions? and do they not contribute annually from £500 to £600, for the same hallowed purpose? Have not the children of the United Presbyterian Church contributed for the purchase of a ship for the use of their African Mission? Is it not a fact, that a twentieth part of the revenue of that noble institution—the London Missionary Society—is contributed by children?

With such facts and figures before us, are we at liberty to say, that children's pence can do nothing? They have already done much; and with the blessing of God, they shall yet do much more. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

And is Canada to be behind? Is the benevolent spirit of the youth of Canada not in a similar way to be drawn forth? Are they naturally less willing to engage in a good work? By no means, they only require to be pointed the way. The children of Canada have it in their power to give as liberally to the cause of Christ as the children of Britain; and although there be some places in the country where they are not in the way of receiving pocket-money, there is nothing to prevent them from following the example of the children of the South Sea Islands—(where money is little known)—who plant their little patch of arrowroot, or prepare a few measures of cocoa-nut oil, and deposit with their Treasurer the product of their industry. We have heard of missionary rabbis, and missionary bees, why may we not hear of missionary fowls, in the barn-yards of our farms, attended to by the members of the Juvenile Missionary Society? Why may we not hear of the children's missionary patch on the well-cleared farm? But children in Canada, as well as children in Britain, may also have their missionary boxes at home, into which their friends (desirous of encouraging them in their efforts, may drop their offerings. This plan we would earnestly recommend: for by it friends have an opportunity of fostering a spirit of benevolence in the minds of children; and children who are at all interested in the work, experience far more delight when their missionary boxes are well filled, than when they have become possessed of the most gaudy toys.

But the grand end of seeking to interest children in Christian Missions, is not the mere raising of money. This, however important, is but a subsidiary end. It is as a special means of grace that we would chiefly press it. The Spirit of God is pleased to make use of many appliances, besides the direct preaching of the gospel, in bringing souls to Christ. We think there is a great deal of truth in the following remarks of a judicious writer on this subject. "In your labours with the children of your school, it has ever been your effort, if you have done your duty, to plant some ruling principle in their minds. And what has this principle been? Has it been the principle of living for Christ, and for the salvation of their fellow-men? You may have been unwearied in your efforts to lead them to the Saviour, but if you have gone no farther—if you have not (I was almost ready to say) been as unwearied in your efforts to enlist their sympathies in behalf of a dying world—your work has been but half done. Indeed, you have neglected to use one of the grand means which you might have made use of for their conversion."

We would have our Juvenile Missionary Societies to contemplate much more than the mere collecting of money. We would have them to be identified with some particular field of labour, from which they might receive communications direct: and thus they would be led to take a deeper interest in the work. We would also recommend periodical meetings for prayer, and the communication of interesting missionary intelligence, from different parts of the world. There should always be an active committee composed of a few of the teachers, and a few of the pupils, and the pastor of the congregation at their head. By such means as these the young people are made to feel that there is something tangible in what they are engaged about,—of which they could never be convinced, if called upon to do no more than drop their coppers into a box, with little certainty of the purposes to which they are to be applied.

But Juvenile Missionary Societies are also the very nurseries of Missionaries, and of those who prove the most zealous supporters of Missions.—It is said that nineteen out of every twenty of the British Missionaries became pious, or received their first permanent religious impressions in Sabbath Schools. And what could lead them to the field of Missions, as their choice occupation?—What, but the fact that the state of the perishing heathen, was brought impressively before them in these schools, and that they were early led to take an interest in their welfare, by being connected with such Societies as we now recommend?

Let the minds of our youth be fully impressed with the wants and woes of the heathen, and those who adhere to false forms of Christianity, and we are fully assured that the rising generation will not be as their fathers have been: but in them the fountain of Christian benevolence and holy zeal will be opened up; and there will be wanting neither men nor means to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We have said that our congregation in Toronto is now entering with some spirit upon this work. For want of a permanent and suitable place of meeting, the classes in connection with that congregation have hitherto been in rather an unsettled state, but now, that quiet possession has been taken of their very commodious building, they have assumed a more flourishing aspect, and we think it augurs well for the future prosperity of the congregation, that the members of these classes have determined to place such a thank-offering on the altar of God.—we trust that it shall be perennial.

We understand that the senior (male) Bible-class has formed a Missionary Society, combining mutual religious improvement, with purely Missionary objects. They purpose to support a Native Preacher in India. The senior (female) Bible-class have also formed a society, and have resolved on maintaining two pupils (a boy and a girl) at the French Canadian Missionary Society's institute at Point-aux-Trembles.

A society has also been formed in connection with the Junior Bible-classes and Sabbath School, which has determined upon supporting a Native Teacher in the South Sea Islands. These are all most interesting and important objects; and they beautifully combine the Home and Foreign field, which should always be our aim in missionary undertakings. We wish our friends much success in their laudable endeavours; and we are fully convinced, that by a very little effort, all the objects may be easily accomplished.

But as these Societies have been constituted on the principle to which we have referred, we anticipate much more from their influence on the members themselves, than from the contributions which may be made by them to the Missionary cause.

With your permission Mr. Editor, I shall append to this article a copy of the constitution of the Society which has been formed in connection with the Junior Bible-classes and Sabbath School