

OUR DINNER TABLE

(The following questions were propounded at the Bay of Quinte Summer School, recently held at Wellington. They are eminently practical, and being of general interest and application are given right of way here.—Ed.)

"How can the Epworth League and Adult Bible Class, composed of practically the same persons, in a country neighborhood, co-operate to the profit of both?"

Presumably the Bible Class concerns itself with the study of the Bible on Sunday. The League work is more particularly related to the interests of the young people and week-day industry are necessary. Just which is the more important is not the supreme question now. As the class and the league are composed mainly of the same persons, an understanding may be reached whereby, by this division of interests shall be made. On principle, one organization for the same young people is better than two; but that one must do all that is necessary for the young people all the time, everywhere, and in everything. The Bible class perhaps is incapable of this. So perhaps is the league. But between them, all that both stand for, all that each represents, may be done without friction and to mutual profit. But they must not be considered in any sense competitive, but supplementary. A conference of the officers of both organizations may be held and the interests of both there considered, and the work of each planned. In process of time it may be deemed wise to merge the two into one such a way that the union would preserve the essential features of both and carry on the work even more advantageously than the two as now managed could possibly do. But this merging must come naturally, and should not be forced.

"What books would you advise for a teachers' library in the Sunday School?"

Every Sunday School library should have a teachers' section. This may be small at first; but if the teachers appreciate the use of it, it will certainly grow. As far as possible the teachers' books should be graded so as to supply some helpful material for all. With a view to the purchase of a small library of this character, I would suggest the following as a commencement—"Black's" "Primary Plans," Mrs. Lamoreaux's "The Unfolding Life," McKinney's "After the Primary, What?" Du Bois' "The Point of Contact," Miss Slattery's "Teachers' Candlestick," "Living Teachers," "The Seed, the Soil and the Sower" and "The Charm of the Impossible," Foster's "The Boy and the Church," Forbush's "The Boy Problem," Axtell's "The Organized Sunday School" and "The Teaching Problem," Lawrance's "How to Conduct a Sunday School," Meyer's "The Graded Sunday School in Principle and Practice," Cope's "The Modern Sunday School," Gregory's "Seven Laws of Teaching," Koon's "The Child's Religious Life." Of course there are many others, and in some teachers must become interested as they read. Such books as Cope's "The Spiritual Life," "Education in Religion and Morals," Starbuck's "The Psychology of Religion," Burton

and Matthews' "Principles and Ideals," and Hazlitt's "The Pedagogical Bible School," should all be read, but these will come as teachers cultivate a taste for reading along the course they are to read in their work, and starting with such books as Miss Slattery's named above, it will not be long before they will be reading and studying such as Brumbaugh's "The Making of a Teacher" represents. The ordinary school it is better to get a few books at the start and add to them gradually than it would be to buy a lot at once. Try it and report.

"Can the Sunday School replace the League in effective mission study?"

This is a difficult question on which to pass an opinion. It is a most encouraging fact that the Sunday School is introducing the study of missionary problems into its curriculum as never before. The new system of Graded Lessons proposes just such systematic study of missions in the regular session of the school as the League has conducted in and through its Missionary Department. With this no reasonable fault can be found so long as missionary text books are kept subordinate to the Word of God. Sunday School classes may be properly organized for the study of missionary problems supplementary to the regular lesson as taken in class on the Sunday. Where such study is conducted under an efficient leader it must result in great good. Whether in League or Sunday School, that form of organized missionary study is the best which imparts the largest measure of missionary information to the pupils and enthralls them to the greatest possible degree with the spirit of personal service for the advancement of the Kingdom of God. As we see it, at the present time, neither Sunday School nor League is accomplishing all that might be expected, and it may take still further steps in the evolution of plans and methods in both to achieve what is desirable. Relax your study in neither, but utilize each to the fullest degree.

"Which should be the most effective agency in bringing the young people into the work of God, the Sunday School or the League?"

It is hardly fair to set these two organizations up in comparison and contrast in this way, because each of them has its own place and responsibility. It is likewise not correct to say, as many do, that the Sunday School and League are alike in their plans and purposes of work. The Sunday School is coming gradually to the incorporation into its activities of the industrial features that have characterized true Epworth League work. In the past the Sunday School gave hundreds of inexperienced and untrained young Christians to the Church. The true province of the League has been to develop and train these. That was what the Epworth League was primarily for. It was never intended to compete with the Sunday School, but to do what the school had failed to do. If the Sunday School is, as someone recently termed it, the people's religious university, the League is the school of practical science. When the Sunday School becomes in every sense a real educational institution, not only for the

promotion of Bible knowledge, but for the practice of Bible truth and the preparation of its students for the actual work of the Kingdom, the Epworth League may be unnecessary. But till now, and at the present time, both agencies are necessary and are likely to be for some time to come. Don't compare them, work them.

"How can we introduce systematic giving into the League?"

Systematic giving cannot be introduced except as the result of conviction. It is largely a matter of education, and not of legislation. Your members deserve to be informed as to the basis as taught in the New Testament. Instruction in the stewardship of money is essential to its right use in the Lord's work. Any motion to introduce systematic methods of giving among the League's members, unless backed by the individual convictions of the members, will fail. I would advise, therefore, that you encourage the young people to study such chapters as 2 Cor.: 8 and 9, and therefrom see what the doctrine expounded by St. Paul really is. If they both understand and admit his argument, they will reach his conclusion, and thereafter systematic and proportionate giving will be easy. I would instruct before I legislated on the matter.

"Would not united meetings occasionally, of Junior and Senior Leagues, be beneficial?"

They certainly would, and should be held. Too many adult leagues ignore the Juniors, forgetting the fact that no league can retain its vitality and enthusiasm that loses its youth, and that any league that fails to introduce into its membership members that are younger than those already enrolled, will certainly grow old. The Junior element is necessary in every sense to keep the older body young. Give the Junior members an occasional opportunity to present a programme. They can do it, and if time is so allowed for preparation beforehand, their programme will both interest and edify their older brothers and sisters. Take care of the boys and girls, not only for their own sakes, but for your own. Your league will become an older people's society before long if you neglect them. Keep young, and keep the average age of your league members down.

"Our League has taken too much the form of a mere place of entertainments. How can it be remodelled?"

I am glad you are coming to realize the need of something higher and better than a mere entertainment. The highest form of entertaining is by doing so not as to manifest or advertise the entertainment, but by so engrossing the attention and interest of those present that they are held unconsciously to themselves, and incidentally find entertainment. If, for instance, you present a programme that is of absorbing interest, there is no doubt or difficulty about the entertaining part of the business. But if you set out merely to entertain you will soon run out of material, and in it all will have failed to cultivate a real good taste for that which is really worth while. I would not say that entertainment has no legitimate place in the League. It has, but it is a subordinate place, and comes incidentally not as the main object or purpose of the meeting. Make each successive programme a little more informing, put a little more study into the real subject matter. If your programme, bit by bit introduce a more solid element, and before long you will find your members entertained in spite of themselves. I would not advise any violent break in the meetings, for if you attempt to "remodel" the