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WILLIAM BRIGGS,  
Methodist Book and Publishing House,  
TORONTO.

C. W. COATES,  
2176 St. Catherine St.,  
Montreal, Que.

S. F. HURSTIS,  
Meth. Book Room,  
Halifax, N.S.

## Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, MAY, 1900.

### The Possibilities, Adaptability and Practicability of the "Home Department."

#### FIRST—POSSIBILITIES.

The possibilities of the Home Department work in any Sunday-school can only be measured by the possibilities of the open Bible in the home. And surely the need for such work is as great as the need for the Sunday-school itself or even the preaching service of the church.

If there is any one thing which the Church, the State, and our whole nation most needs, it is more vital religion in the homes of the people, and such religion is never found in homes where the Bible is a closed and unused book.

"What is home without a mother?" asks the old familiar song, as if nothing could be quite so bad; and as if the question was unanswerable. But we think, "What is home without a Bible?" is as hard a question as the other and almost as pathetic. Full many a home

could better be without its fretting, scolding, worldly, fashion-loving, unsaved and unsanctified mother than to be without the refining, quieting, peaceful, happy and holy influence of the Word of God, loved, revered, and daily read and studied. Better a Bible-loving, Bible-teaching stepmother, or hired house-keeper in a family of growing children than a mother in whose heart and life Christ and the Bible have no place. Is this a strong statement? Is it too strong? How can anything be too strong which pleads earnestly for more vital religion in the home? Indeed, we will venture to emphasize the thought a little further by saying that there are thousands and tens of thousands of godly Sunday-school teachers who are truer mothers to the children in their classes than are the mothers who bore them.

The sole object of the Home Department of the Sunday-school is to open the Bible in the homes of the people, and persuade those persons who cannot or will not attend the Bible study service of the church, to study the current Sunday-school lessons one half hour or more every week. Such regular, systematic study aided by our splendid "Lesson Helps," even for a half hour a week, cannot fail of spiritual and moral benefit, for it gives God a chance to speak to, and the Holy Ghost an entrance into, the heart of him or her who reads the open book. And this is why the possibilities of the Home Department can only be measured by the possibilities of the open Bible in the home, as we said in the outset.

#### SECOND—ADAPTABILITY.

Wherever the Bible should go, the Home Department can take it, and wherever it does go, the Home Department can follow, and provide helps for the study of it. This is what makes it applicable to every home and to every community. Think not for one moment that the Home Department is not suited to city, town or country Sunday-schools. Wherever people are neglecting the weekly study of the current Sunday-school lessons, right there the Home Department fits. In all our experience we have never yet found a misfit, though we are compelled to admit that mistakes and mismanagement have often resulted in total failure in Home Department effort. Still we think that most schools which have tried it and failed, failed because they were content to fail, and really preferred failure to success.

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