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## Sunday School Banner.

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

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1888.

## Notes of Visits to some American Sunday-Schools.

In fulfilment of certain lecturing engagements at several Sunday-school assemblies in the United States, the present writer had an ample opportunity to study Sunday-school methods among our American neighbours. As one travels through that great country he cannot fail to be impressed with the amount of attention given to Sunday-school work. In the great cities some of the largest publishing houses devote a very large part of their energy to the production of Sunday-school literature. All that learning, and talent, and money, and artistic skill can do to prepare attractive Sunday-school lesson helps and picture papers is being done. And never before was that literature of so high a standard of mechanical and literary excellence.

At the Sunday-school assemblies some of the best talent that the Church can command is engaged in teaching the teachers, in showing the best methods of teaching, and in otherwise promoting the great work in which some two millions of devoted and self-sacrificing teachers are engaged. While we can doubtless learn something from our American friends, yet, on the whole, I think that Sunday-school work is

as efficiently carried on in Canada as in any place in the world. Our publications are, for their size, cheaper than any that I find, and for their price superior in quality to most. In many places in the United States the schools are held in the morning, or immediately after the morning church service. This leaves the afternoon free, and it is often employed in pleasure, walking or driving, or in other ways not in harmony with the sanctity of the day. Our almost universal custom of afternoon sessions, I think, far preferable. In one respect, many of the American schools surpass most of ours, viz., in the attention given to the beautifying the school-room. Many of these rooms are elegantly carpeted and adorned with framed pictures of Bible subjects, with flowers, and in one I saw a beautiful fountain playing with a delightfully cool-sounding trickling music. In many places fixed crescent-shaped seats form a very convenient system for arranging classes for instruction. But I saw few school-rooms, if any, that would surpass those of the Centenary Methodist Church, at St. John, N.B., of the Metropolitan Church, Toronto, of the Bridge Street Church, Belleville, and some others.

One feature worthy of great commendation, was the manner in which the pastors in many places availed themselves of the opportunity to reach the young people by teaching Bible-classes, or superintending the school. No grander work, I think, can any pastor do than that which is thus done in the Sunday-schools. Of course, in many cases, especially in the country, where the minister has to preach three times a day, and often to ride long distances, this is impossible. But where it is at all possible, it will abundantly pay in richest results.

It is an inspiring thing to find all over this continent some of the noblest spirits, some of the most consecrated souls devoting their best energies to the task of training the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And nowhere is greater zeal and devotion and self-sacrifice thus exhibited than in our beloved Canada.

It is a great thing to love Christ so dearly as to be "Ready to be bound and to die" for him; but it is often a thing not less great to be ready to take up our daily cross, and to live for him.  
—John Caird.

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