

THE CHRISTIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL

I fully appreciate the privilege of at least attempting to write a paper on this all important subject, even though I humbly acknowledge my inability to do justice to it—yet it is too great a theme to be dismissed with but a few brief paragraphs.

First: You will notice, it is the CHRISTIAN Sunday School that we have under consideration, one that believes and teaches the doctrine of Christ. All Sunday Schools do not do so,—for instance the Jews conduct schools on Sunday—but they do not believe in Christ, therefore they are not Christian. Then there are the Bolsheviki, a Russian party of extreme radicals, who also conduct Sunday Schools, but teach atheism, and sad to say this cult has invaded our own fair Dominion. We are told that two Sunday Schools are held in Toronto, having as their banners, "There is no God", this is too awful to think about, Satan is truly the arch enemy of the soul.

Second: The term Sunday School as ordinarily used applies to Bible Schools in Protestant churches only. The origin of these schools is due, we are told, to Robert Raikes of Gloucester, England, who employed women engaged in teaching day schools to gather the children of poorer classes on Sunday and give them instruction, a part of which was religious and a part secular. At first the movement met with opposition. Those within the church thought it interfered with the proper observance of the Sabbath, and those without, that it interfered with the home duties of the children. Nevertheless, the movement grew rapidly. A council of bishops was called to stop it, but before the council met, the movement was beyond its control, and Sunday Schools spread throughout the world. Before Raikes died in 1811, there were over 400,000 children in Sunday Schools in Great Britain alone.

The first Sunday School in America was opened in Philadelphia in 1790. The first organization for promoting the work was formed in New York in 1816. In 1824 the American Sunday School Union was organized, and in 1832 the first National Sunday School Convention was held. In 1872, this Convention at its annual meeting adopted a uniform system of Sunday School lessons. This was followed by the publication of the International Series of Lessons. In 1875 an international convention was organized, out of which has grown the International Sunday School Association which maintains adult, elementary and teacher training departments, each in charge of a trained Superintendent, and all under the general direction of the international secretary.

In 1918 there were in Canada 10,604 schools, 85,000 teachers and 854,000 pupils. In the world there were 296,129 Christian Sunday Schools with 2,633,120 teachers and 26,654,000 pupils. If we could get the correct figures of the last fourteen years, I am sure they would far outnumber these which I have gathered.

The Sunday School is the greatest avenue through which the church can do her best work, for we believe a large percentage of conversions are due through the efforts of the Sunday School teacher.

As a Missionary agency, the Sunday School is unexcelled. The Sunday School is the forerunner of the congregation.

Some one has said, "I believe that there is no field of labor, no field of Christian benevolence, which has yielded a greater harvest to our

national interests and national character, than the great institution of the Sunday School". If this be true, it is our duty as well as privilege, to put forth every effort towards the advancement of our Sunday School work. From a spiritual educational point of view, the Sunday School is invaluable, for it is the only source of spiritual knowledge many children get. The real object of the Christian Sunday School is the salvation of its pupils.

THE INCOMPARABLE TEACHER

Jesus was pre-eminently the greatest Teacher this world has ever known, for He had divine as well as human wisdom. He has given us a message—We are to teach all things which He has commanded.

It is very essential that the Sunday School teacher should be deeply spiritual, and well established in the faith of the fundamental principles and doctrines of Christ, and then ever studying the Word with much prayer in order "to show himself approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth". Great responsibilities rests upon the teacher, and much wisdom is required—but this may be obtained from the great store-house above, where the resources are inexhaustible, and fully sufficient for every emergency.

It is said "there is danger that our Sunday School teaching may degenerate into an interminable process of working the practical application; that we fail to link our lessons to the lives of our scholars." If so, this is deplorable, for the time is all too short in which to impress upon young minds the meaning of the beautiful Scripture lessons. This Word of God—which shall never pass away—is of priceless value; how we should treasure it up in our hearts, and teach others to love it also.

THE PRIMARY CLASS

The Primary class is believed by many to be the most important class of the Sunday School. Here young minds are plastic, easily moulded or impressed for good or for evil, yet very lovable. How necessary then to give them a spiritual teacher, with heart and soul in the work, who can wisely teach them the love of God, and endeavor to lead them to Jesus, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven".

I think we are agreed that a female teacher is more suitable for this class, as she can more fully enter into their joys and understand their needs, especially a wise Mother of children.

THE JUNIOR CLASS

The Junior class is equally as important I believe, for many of these pupils can be easily influenced for good, they are imitators and usually hero worshippers. They should be taught to look up Bible heroes, such as David, Joseph, Daniel and others, and also the value of memorizing Bible verses, and of course this applies to all classes. Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon this, for lessons faithfully learned in youth will remain when more recent impressions have faded.

An old man told me on his death-bed that although his sight had failed so he could no longer read, yet the Scripture verses which he had memorized when but a child, could be easily recalled, so he was praising the Lord.

THE INTERMEDIATE CLASS

The Intermediate or teen age class, is about the most difficult to manage, for they are usually restless, careless and critical. It is also the dangerous age, for Satan has many pitfalls laid for these dear young people, and I believe he bids high for their eternal destruction, especially young people from Christian homes. They should

be closely guarded from his wiles and surrounded by daily prayer.

Much grace and patience is required by the teacher in order to concentrate their minds on things concerning the kingdom. If their confidence is won—much may be accomplished.

Young people should never outgrow the Sunday School—for therein lies danger.

We take for granted that adults attend Sunday School for the purpose of studying God's Word, for none are too old to learn. If parents would attend with their children instead of sending them, there would be fewer wrecks along life's way.

A monthly Teacher's meeting, where the work is prayed over, discussed and plans made for the welfare of the school, is profitable.

By observing special Sundays, such a Temperance, Missionary, etc., with short programmes by the scholars, will create a greater interest among them—giving them something to do.

Respectfully submitted,

I. M. KEIRSTEAD

GOD AND THE TRUE SCIENTIST

"The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth" (Acts 22-14).

In conversation with Professor S. F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, the Rev. George W. Hervey asked him this question: "Professor Morse, when you were making your experiments yonder in your rooms in the University, did you ever come to a stand, not knowing what to do next?" "Oh, yes, more than once." "And at such times, what did you do next?" "I may answer you in confidence, sir," said the professor, "but it is a matter of which the public knows nothing. I prayed for more light." "And the light generally came?" "Yes. And may I tell you that when flattering honors came to me from America and Europe on account of the invention which bears my name, I never felt I deserved them? I had made a valuable application of electricity, not because I was superior to other men, but solely because God, who meant it for mankind, must reveal it to some one, and was pleased to reveal it to me." In view of these facts, it is not surprising that the inventor's first message was, "What hath God wrought?"—From the Moody Monthly.

John Wesley once felt the need of closer sympathy among the ministers and together with twelve others, including Charles Wesley, they signed the following covenant. "It is agreed by us whose names are underwritten,

"First, that we will not listen or willingly inquire after any ill concerning each other;

"Secondly, that if we do hear any ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it;

"Thirdly, that as soon as possible we will communicate what we hear by speaking or writing to the person concerned;

"Fourthly, that till we have done this, we will not write or speak a syllable of it to any other person whatsoever;

"Fifthly, that neither will we mention it, after we have done this, to any other person;

"Sixthly, that we will not make any exception to any of these rules, unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in conference so to do."

—Selected.