

# THE CONTINENT

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## A World Waking to Its Need

On August 28 Richard H. Edmonds of Baltimore, editor of *The Manufacturers' Record*, published in his journal an editorial entitled "Am I My Brother's Keeper?" On September 2 Roger W. Babson of Boston, in Babson's *Barometer Letter to Merchants, Bankers and Investors*, published an editorial entitled "The Need of the Hour." Each, to give testimony to the profound personal conviction with which he wrote, attached his own individual signature to the utterance of his periodical. Anybody acquainted with American business life knows that there are no two men in the country whose opinions carry more weight with commercial leaders than Mr. Babson and Mr. Edmonds. Both are men who think a lot before they speak at all. And it signifies a great deal which should make other men think, that at the same moment in the beginning of the present active business season these two keen business observers felt independently that this country of ours requires before anything else a reminder of the values of religion—a message customarily associated with the pulpit rather than commercial journalism.

The meat of their thought and appeal as well as the impressive identity of their convictions can best be shown by parallel quotations from the two editorials:

### EDMONDS

Above all else this country needs a nation-wide revival of old-fashioned prayer meeting religion—a religion that makes men realize that if there is a heaven, there must also of necessity be a hell—a religion that makes a man realize that every act is recorded on his own conscience and that though it may slumber it can never die—a religion that makes an employer understand that if he is unfair to his employes and pays them less than fair wages, measured by his ability and their efficiency and zeal, he is a robber—a religion that makes an employe know that if he does not give full and efficient service, he too is a robber—a religion that makes a man realize that by driving too hard a bargain with his servant, his employe, his merchant, he can be just as much a profiteer as the seller or producer who swindles by false weight, false packing or false charges—a religion that will teach church members to contribute to the extent of their ability to the support of religion and that compels them to recognize that if they are paying their pastor less than a living salary, they are robbing God and man alike.

In short we need a revival of religion which will make every man and woman strive in every act of life to do that which on the great judgment day they will wish that they had done, as with soul uncovered they stand before the judgment seat of the Eternal.

In the golden rule followed in the fullness of the spirit of this kind of religion, there would be found a solution for every business trouble; there would be created friendship between employer and employe; capital and labor would work in harmony and with efficiency, with efficiency for the capital and efficiency for the labor, with profit to both.

It is not merely in the chanting of hymns here or in the world to come, but it is in the recognition and full application by rich and poor, by learned and unlearned, that each is indeed his brother's keeper, that we can bring this country and the world back to safety. A nation-wide acceptance of this, the only true religion in action, would bring business peace and world peace where there is now turmoil, and men would then cease to seek to gain their ends by lawless immorality.

### BABSON

The need of the hour is not more legislation. The need of the hour is more religion. More religion is needed everywhere—from the halls of Congress to the factories, mines and forests. It is one thing to talk about plans and policies, but a plan and policy without a religious motive is like a watch without a spring or a body without the breath of life. The trouble today is that we are trying to hatch chickens from sterile eggs. We may have the finest incubator in the world, but unless the eggs have the germ of life in them, all our efforts are of no avail.

The solving of the labor situation is wholly a question of religion. The wage-worker will never be satisfied with higher wages and shorter hours any more than you and I are satisfied with more profits and a bigger house. Things never did satisfy any one and never will. Satisfaction and contentment are matters of religion. Communities and industries where right motives are paramount, have no serious labor troubles.

When both employer and wage-worker honestly believe that we are here in this world to serve others, the labor problem will be solved; but not until then. We employers should learn to give up and labor should wake up. However neither of us will do it except as we are actuated by religious motives. We all need a new outlook on life, a new political policy, a new industrial policy and a new social policy. The old politics founded on fear and striving only for protection has fulfilled its usefulness. We need a new politics based on faith and striving for production.

Meanwhile what is happening to our churches? They are going to seed. The ministers are paid starvation wages and the whole church industry lacks pep and imagination. And yet the church is the only organization in existence for generating right motives in man. Schools develop intellect, theaters and novels foster passion, but the church is the sole organization which develops those good motives of love, sympathy, hope and inspiration on which the industrial salvation of the world depends. But that organization is asleep, and other agencies which develop hate, jealousy, and fear are running rampant.

Can any Christian, layman or minister, read words like these with quiet pulse? Think what they mean. For one weary generation after another the church has been lamenting the difficulties of forcing religion on an indifferent or contemptuous world. It has been telling the world that men's biggest necessity is religion, and the world scoffed. But today the world is in trouble—struggling with a surge of rising troubles dismayingly multiplied. And what men scorned before they are suddenly convinced of. The world today sees it is true that the biggest necessity is religion. And it is turning to the church to demand it. It asks the church for guidance to it.

And what has the church to say? What is it going to do? Can it measure equal to the call? Can it vindicate itself from the complaint of even its well-wishers that it is asleep? What a challenge! What a chance! God help us!

# Keeping the Sunday School a Spiritual Force

BY CLELAND B. McAFEE

**S**UCH A TITLE AS the above implies that the Sunday school is today a spiritual force, and it is. Some of us feel pretty strongly that it should be made more fully an educational force and we welcome all movements in that direction. But we are not willing to admit for a moment that it must choose between these two forms of force. Gain in one ought not to come at the cost of the other. There is no reason why a real school should not be spiritual; certainly there is no reason why spiritual forces should cease to be educational. The contradiction sometimes suggested is imaginary. And yet, of course, practically it is common enough. In the new zeal to develop an educational program for Sunday schools some leaders have minimized the spiritual value of the school and that fact has given a semblance of excuse to those who oppose educational advance. Here, as often, the friends of a movement are its worst enemies. Over against their fear can be set the obvious weakness of the Sunday school in giving its members even the bare bones of Scripture knowledge. As an educational agency the average Sunday school is a poor excuse and needs immense improvement, which we believe is on the way. The plea of these lines is that such improvement ought to increase rather than decrease the spiritual power of the school.



Dr. McAfee

## *School Needed As Outlet for Spiritual Energy*

The Sunday school is needed as an outlet for the spiritual energy of those who lead it, officers and teachers. Spiritual life grows by sharing, as all life grows. Pastors are often advised to place only mature believers in charge of classes, and their judgment approves the suggestion, but when they face the facts of experience, they are reminded of cases where maturity has come in the work of teaching. Thoughtful young people, too young and too untrained to meet normal requirements, have grown by leaps and bounds in their honest efforts to teach others. Their spiritual life has found its strength in its sharing. Such cases do not conflict with the advice quoted, for they are exceptional, but they impress the point just now being urged—that an outlet is needed for the spiritual energies of the working force of the church. It is an offset to the social accent in which we are so much interested, an accent which does not go far toward keeping alive in us the fact that men are primarily children of eternity, with an inner life that is sure to outlast all social improvements that can be made, however it is helped by them.

The church needs to maintain the Sunday school as a spiritual force because it is its best way of initiating the Christian life in its members. Of course that is true regarding the children whom it reaches, but it is true also regarding older members of the school. It is under these conditions that they are most plastic and ready for the call to Christ. Increasingly the church must widen its opportunities of instruction to mature people. The psychology of conversion shows that it occurs oftenest in adolescence, but it does not show that it occurs only then. Some of us have known men of 80 to come to Christ as simply as boys of 18. Whatever the books say, the church must set no limits on the readiness and ability of the gospel of Christ to lay hold on men of any age. That is the ground of evangelistic meetings, and Sunday school workers may always wish them well. But for substantial, confirmed acceptance of Christ nothing surpasses the decision made in a Bible class in a Sunday school, where the appeal is made definitely and clearly and the man finds himself in presence not of an emotion, but of a great, undeniable truth. Then, the Sunday school has best chance at adolescents. The decision for Christ can be a natural one and the yielding to God's Spirit a next step in the unfolding life. For generations now it has drawn its new membership more largely from its Sunday schools than from any other one source. If it should develop the schools in any direction so that it can no longer look to them in the same way, it will be a costly and losing development.

## *Truth Can Best Be Taught in Small Groups*

Moreover, the Sunday school is needed as a spiritual force for the culture of the spiritual life of its members and of the whole church. Preaching is the outstanding way of instructing the congregation as a whole and the neglect of that phase of the pulpit needs checking at once. But any teacher knows that truth has a better chance at acceptance when it is handled before a small group,

directly and intensely, than when it is put before the larger body in the form of lecture or sermon. Henry Adams, in the story of his "education," declares that it is impossible to teach more than six or eight people at once, though everybody knows how easy it is to lecture to 1,000. The chief agency of spiritual life is the truth of the gospel and the church must somehow get that truth understood and accepted by its people if it is to be a strong, developed body. That means that it must break up its larger gatherings into small groups so that they may face without evasion the truths that make for the saved life as well as for salvation. The inspiration of the larger gatherings is familiar enough, but it is not in them that the truth has its best opportunity.

The method of maintaining the spiritual life of the Sunday school is not far to seek in theory, but is not always easy to follow in practice. First of all, it rests upon the tone of the school, the attitude taken throughout toward the members and the truth that is handled. Effort is now being made to get the day schools to consider their pupils as prospective citizens and to teach everything from that point of view. The appalling fact has emerged that lads can go through the entire curriculum of some schools and gain no sense of responsibility for the nation of which they are a part. And it is argued that it is not new or different courses that are needed, but a new point of view in teaching what is already there, with occasional definite exercises which keep the note of citizenship sounding. Is there not just as distinct a point of view for the Sunday school? It includes citizenship, to be sure, but it goes much farther and higher. If officers and teachers keep it clearly in mind that they are dealing with souls, with eternal lives, with children of God in Christ Jesus, and teach everything from that point of view, they may not need new courses or radical changes, or they can accept and use the newest courses and adopt the most radical changes without concern.

## *Spiritual Power in Religious Truths*

So with the attitude toward the truth that is taught. It is a good sign of the times that we are all zealous to assert the divine origin of all truth and to declare that God speaks to us in everything that we discover in nature or history. But that zeal need not blind us to the fact that some truths have spiritual power in them that other truths do not have. Some of us wonder that a man can study natural science, knowing its great arresting facts, and yet be indifferent to God and be undeveloped in his inner life, but we would be stupid if we did not know that it can be so. Men who study the heavens do not always say, "O God, we think thy thoughts after thee!" There is a spiritual value of a certain sort in all truth, but in the truths which have come to be directly connected with religion there is a peculiar value for the spiritual life. A public school teacher cannot fail to recognize it if he teaches in both kinds of school. The study of George Washington simply does not turn young people to God as the study of Christ does, nor even as the study of Paul does, and while the hand of God is as truly in American history as in Hebrew history, yet that hand's guidance in the field of religion and the spiritual life is more obvious in the Hebrew history. The concern of the truth handled in the Sunday school is directly spiritual and takes all other concerns as collateral. We want the members of the school to know these truths because they deal with their inner lives. In that case, we must keep that phase of them before ourselves. And this steady objective determines the tone of the school.

## *Program of School Should Be Orderly*

The program of the school has much to do with its spiritual power. The order of its exercises and the elements in its program are all important. The Holy Spirit can work in the helter-skelter, chaotic methods of some leaders, but surely the first thing he would do with them is to brood on the face of them until he made a cosmos out of them and got some kind of order established. Most of us are reached by still small voices, rather than by thunder and whirlwind, and yet the idea of some Sunday school leaders is to make everything as windy as possible. They select only hymns that can be "whooped up," as one of them said. They are so eager to be bright that they become boisterous. Their manner in prayer is deadening to all spiritual power. There is no logic in the arrangement of the program; it works (Continued on page 1138)

were lived out in vividness before them. The fall of Jericho, the defeat and victory at Ai, the tricky plot of the Gibeonites, and the final conquest over the five kings, all took on a new reality as the teacher recalled them with vivid interest and marked the places where these things had actually taken place.

"And now I am going to ask you to cut out the homes of all these tribes," she said, producing several pairs of scissors from her hand bag. "Several of you can work at once, only be very careful to keep the lines that I have drawn."

Every boy reached for a pair of scissors, and in an incredibly short time those who were fortunate enough to get a pair had dismembered the home of the Israelites into thirteen irregular sections.

"Now, who will volunteer to put them together?" asked the teacher quickly.

"I will," said a chubby, freckled faced boy, with little twinkling blue eyes, the leader in the mischief of other days.

"All right, Arthur, try it," said the teacher; and all the other boys eagerly leaned forward to see what progress Arthur might make. He really did remarkably well, and with several abrupt suggestions from the other boys and only a few low voiced remarks from the teacher, he had the map put together again. Then another boy tried it and another, till at last the teacher thought that she never could forget where a single one of the tribes belonged.

"Those people worked very hard for a home," said the teacher at last, as they all sat looking at the map together, "but don't you suppose they were glad they did when they were really settled among the lovely hills and valleys of the holy land?"

"God has given us this church for our home," she added, gently, "and what a beautiful place it is, where we may come to meet him face to face! Don't you think it is worth while to work very hard to make this a place where God would really like to be?"

A moment's reverent silence was broken by the tinkling of a bell.

"Well, what do you know about that? There's the last bell!" said Arthur in surprise.

### Keeping the Sunday School a Spiritual Force

(Continued from page 1134) to no climax; it gets nowhere. Such chaos has no spiritual promise.

Nor is the easy neglect of the Bible itself promising. There is meaning for the average Christian in the handling of the physical book itself. The writer of this article was never trained to superstition about the Bible and knew that it is a book-like other books

on its purely physical side, but he will always be thankful for a youthful experience which showed him how shocked his good mother was at seeing him put a copy of the Bible among other books to stand on in reaching a high shelf. The use of books for that purpose at all was bad enough, but to step on the Bible was impossible! For young people reverence in reading and handling the Bible has spiritual value. Certainly no other book can rightly replace it as a textbook in a Sunday school. Say what we may about its likeness to other books, it does a business with a human soul that other books do not do. The program of the Sunday school centers around it.

None of this will take the place of definite effort for the spiritual life of members of the school. Decision days, times of specific appeal, seasons of obvious concern for the inner life, are wholly logical and defensible. They do not take the place of the regular pressure on spiritual responsibility but they do not interfere with it either. Some of us have found it of largest value to time such interest according to similar movements in other parts of the church. No communion season ought to pass without the knowledge and attention of the Sunday school. Several Sabbaths before it occurs, and not always with reference to new members but equally with reference to those already in the church, hearts ought to be shaped toward it, its simple conditions made clear, its value to the spiritual life brought into view again.

Such impressions are apt to carry back into home life as well. It is no new notion that "the Sunday school interferes with home training," but it is not a true notion. The same idea was expressed a hundred years ago in presence of Thomas Chalmers and he repudiated it, declaring that family religion was sadly deteriorated before the Sunday school appeared and had improved by reason of it. In 1819, Rev. Abel Flint of New England wrote that "It is a melancholy fact that few children receive religious instruction from their parents or others at home," and as far back as 1683 another writer exclaimed: "How is religion dying in families through neglect of the religious services and worship of God and the religious education of children and youth in families!" The wail over neglect of family religion is, therefore, fairly old in America. Sunday schools do not cause it, but they can do much to correct it, by cooperating constantly with the family and constantly demanding cooperation from the family.

The battle of spiritual force in the Sunday school is half won when the necessity for it is realized. Methods will take care of themselves if the zeal is there. The church of the future will be in largest part what the Sunday schools of the present make it, and the church of the future must be first of all spiritually mighty.

## Nuggets of Help for All Departments of the School

As soon as a school begins competition with a vaudeville house, it loses its rank as a Sunday school.

Disorder that doesn't get started never disturbs anybody. It is easier to keep control than to regain it when lost.

Is your church so situated that a morning chapel service can be held for the public school children on their way to school?

Can you imagine any one's not getting fidgetty sitting still for a half hour on the kind of seats provided in some schools?

That class is most attentive and gets most out of the lesson which is privileged to have the largest part in the discussion thereof.

Teachers who urge constantly the necessity of daily Bible reading are the ones who find the members of their classes "knowing the lesson."

The hymns and songs children learn stay by them through many a year. Are the hymns you are teaching your pupils worth being remembered?

The teacher who shows by sample how interesting the Bible is will get larger results from his suggestions and more ample preparation will be made for the lesson than for the teacher who merely emphasises

the duty motif in life. The principles of pedagogy apply whether one is teaching the sermon on the mount or the American declaration of independence.

Many a teacher delivers a lecture during the half hour supposed to be devoted to the lesson and imagines that he has taught the lesson.

If a Sunday school can make Bible study interesting without permitting the pupils to lose reverence for sacred things, the ideal has been achieved.

The superintendent ought to prepare for his two minutes each week with as much care as a pastor puts on his twenty minute sermon to the congregation.

There is enough power in the gospel to get and hold the attention of the most irresponsible boy if sufficient intelligence and persistence is used in the application.

Surprise is one of the attractive elements of life. If teachers can introduce this element into their class work they will discover greater attention on the part of their pupils.

The assistant superintendent may not conduct the opening exercises as effectively as would the superintendent but the latter

will be helped by sitting quietly in the back of the room and letting someone else do the platform work once in a while.

The wise teacher is he who can best lead the spontaneous conversation of his teen age boys toward the theme of the lesson rather than attempt to discourage their spontaneity.

The superintendent who in the course of a year does not read at least one book pertaining to Sunday school work hardly measures up to the standard of efficiency which he would set for subordinates in his own business.

As a general thing, the trustees of a church are not usually among the teachers and officers of the Sunday school. How then can you expect them to wax enthusiastic over your appeal for \$50 for new equipment.

Is it necessary that all the classes of your school meet at 10 a. m. Sunday morning? Perhaps a group of working boys can be persuaded to gather in the church parlor, or Y. M. C. A., or in one of the homes on Tuesday evening.

Every school which does not have as its aim the development of men and women who will devote their lives to unselfish service fails to measure up to

its opportunities. Count the number of missionaries or preachers that your school has developed — are they as numerous as they should have been?

The ice can be broken and cordial relations established between pupil and teacher very often by the simple expedient of asking members of the class by a show of hands to indicate their preference on this or that question related to the lesson.

In a Sunday school where the song books were carelessly used the superintendent had one of the teachers, well informed regarding the processes of making books, describe the various stages of manufacture. Incidentally he emphasized the desirability of taking good care of books. The damaged books were much less numerous for some time thereafter.

If your janitor or some other responsible person is not instructed to gather in a safe place all the surplus lesson leaves and Sunday school papers for shipment to the Surplus Material Department of the World Sunday School Association, your school is missing an opportunity to participate in a worthy missionary work. All such papers can be used on the mission fields.