



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK**

### **WESLEYAN CONVENTION IN SALISBURY**

Anniversary services in connection with the Sunday School of the Wesleyan Chapel in Church Street were held on Sunday, when the special preacher was the Rev. W. H. H. Kelshaw, of Nottingham, who was also present in Salisbury for the purpose of conducting a short mission. His popularity in the district accounted for a very large gathering at the evening service, additional seats being required, while some latecomers found themselves promoted to a position on the rostrum. The hearty singing of special hymns was led by Mr. Harding's fine string band.

On Monday afternoon the Circuit Sunday school Convention, was largely attended by delegates from the various churches, the company being large enough to quite fill the body of the chapel. Over the rostrum a handsome Sunday school banner was suspended. The chair was taken by the Rev. J. J. Bosward, who was supported by the Rev. J. O. Mann, the Rev. W. H. H. Kelshaw, Mrs. Malpas and Mr. M. Snelgar.

After devotional exercises Mr. Snelgar read a report showing the numerical position of all the Sunday Schools in the circuit. The figures were 233 teachers and officers, of which 203 were members of the society, and 1,599 scholars, an increase of three scholars, 10 members of the society and seven teachers and officers.

The Chairman considered it is a satisfactory report. He referred to the fact that a school had been opened at Stapleford, and for the size of the village was wonderfully successful. He was delighted that there was a very much better gathering than last year.

Mrs. Malpas then read the following paper:- Some time ago we were confronted with the somewhat startling question, "Is Christianity played out?" We replied with unshaken faith a thousand times, "no," but rather in its grandest form it is yet to be. Since then a mighty wave of spiritual influence and power has swept over the land. There has been a great awakening. Your people have in large numbers been brought under the power of the Gospel and quickened into newness of life, proving that what education and civilization had failed to accomplish the Gospel of Christ can achieve. We are awaking to the fact that education has had a fair trial, and have to confess with tenfold more confidence than before, that it cannot cleanse the life of a nation, that the disease lies far deeper, and that nought but the Gospel of Christ can "touch the spot." We have had the floodtide of intemperance, of gambling, of contempt of Sabbath law, of wild rush for pleasure, and we have been told that these things would give way before the advance of civilization and education. But is it so?

Look at the Child Life of today as you find it either in town or village. True, they know far more in the way of general knowledge than those of years ago, and of their intellectual training we make no complaint. But what of the moral and spiritual side of their nature? What of the conduct of boys, and girls too, in our public streets? Very many of whom are scholars in one or other of our Sunday School. Children never resented rule and restraint as they do today. Every barrier and safeguard against evil is accounted a vexatious opposition to the buoyancy and cheerfulness of young life. To obey is not in their programme. Another very serious lack in the character of child life today is the most total absence of respect. Respect is a keen sense of the value of men and things. It is always part of the make up of a good character, and only in rogues and criminals is it wholly lacking. Respectful behaviour is not the mark of a fool, but of wisdom, it takes nothing from him who gives, is not the mark of a fool, but of wisdom, it takes nothing from him who gives, but adds strength and beauty to his character. It is not also a painful fact that truthfulness is so rare? Let a stone be thrown, and it is always, "Twas him, 'twasn't me," when you know that the speaker is the young monkey who did it. Then how unkind and selfish the children are, plainly demonstrating that with all the excellent day school teaching the culture of heart and soul has been overlooked. Perhaps the most distressing feature of child life is the cruelty which finds pleasure in tormenting a defenseless animal, or in the wanton destruction of a beautiful plant. In a word, the almost utter disregard of those things which go to the making of a good life and character. You will say, "This is a dismal view of things and very pessimistic." I cannot help that, the picture is drawn from real life. Nor I am blame -

### **The Day School Teachers**

They have their work cut out and do it well, and with you Sunday School workers, suffer sorely from what is really the root of the evil, viz., want of home training. In the happy exceptions where children from earlier years are trained in the principles of religion and morality, you have something to appeal to. There is not the care-for-nothing attitude, nor the impudence, or stolid indifference so painful to deal with. Teachers, you work against tremendous odds - all honour to your loving zeal and perseverance, You deserve and have the sympathy and prayers of God's people. Take heart, a brighter day is dawning. In the great awakening that is coming upon the people there will be a higher deal of Christian life and conduct. The Church will wake up to a keener sense of consistency in the many details which go to make up our common life. The great principles laid down in God's word will be more rigidly insisted upon. To particularize - pay what thou owest, and what thou canst not pay go without; participation in a demoralizing trade shall disqualify for membership in the Church of Christ. Do justly, love mercy, not only in its broader sense, but to the cat or dog upon your hearth and the patient creatures under your care, upon whose service perhaps little thought is ever bestowed, but upon whose willing work much of the success of your business depends. Mark you, in the new era it will not be so much that we demand this fidelity of one another, as that the consciousness of Divine claims will be so quickened within us that we shall be impelled to depart from evil. All this will tell powerfully upon child life and training. The advances of education has long relieved Sunday School teachers of the spelling book and the reading lesson. Their work is emphatically by the gracious aid of the Holy Spirit to cultivate the moral and religious faculties in the young life under their care. It does not so much matter about the geographical positions, - or the chronology of events, or how the walls of Jericho fell down, as does the rubbing in by prayerful persistency of the great principles of Christian life and conduct. If only you can awaken a reverence for holy things or kindle a spark of gratitude for Divine love and goodness you have got a child well on towards repentance, and a new life opening up the way to the cross far more effectually than the pointless goody goody talk to often indulged in. Look around you, all nature animate and inanimate is full of love and wisdom of God and will yield you to endless source of illustrations for spiritual teaching, furnishing lessons that will go deeper than you think. One word more. In our anxiety for the prosperity of God's work we have need to be careful and patient- not the patience of indolence and indifference, but of passionate longing for His coming. Are we not in danger of, "Hustling " The Saviour, with meetings and organisations, by these means almost dictating to Him the methods through which He shall work? It seems irreverent to say so, and undoubtedly is the outcome of an ardent longing which indiscreetly rushes in where it should tread cautiously, but it savours of the same old human pride that, Naaman like, wants to do some great thing. It was one feature of the work in Wales that there was no advertising,

no bills, no canvassing. I am not undervaluing those rightly used, but during the progress of the work which broke out in the hearts and homes of the people the secular Press went out of its way to spread the news and kindle public interest, and has since continued to report on all movements of spiritual and religious interest more largely and sympathetically than ever before. What the secular press has to say of these things will strike the man in the street far more than what may come through the channel of the Churches. They look upon that as professional. Possibly God is about to use yet more unlikely means for the bringing of His kingdom. We are awake to the fact that there are startling changes taking place- religiously, commercially, politically. God moves in a mysterious way. Lay under the contribution every gift and faculty you possess. Teachers, work on, use the very best that is in you, let the refining fire go through your soul. Keep watch and pray. "Commit thy way to the Lord, and He will bring it to pass." If this be your attitude, you will instinctively live in the atmosphere of prayer. with your face toward the dawn- and shall find the "path of duty s the way to glory."

He that, ever following her commands,  
On with toil of heart and Knees and hands,  
Through the long gorge to the far light was won  
His path upward and prevailed,  
Shall find the toppling crags of duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun.

The Rev. J. O. Mann, while the friends were considering points in the paper inviting discussion took the opportunity to congratulate the circuit on the report, and hoped that soon they might have 2,000 scholars. He spoke very hopefully of the work at Stapleford and looked forward to the day when they would have Farley "on the strength." They would then have 26 schools in 26 centres in the circuit.

The Chairman having added a few words, which, however, did not encourage discussion. An address was given by Mr. G.W. Speed on, "Sunday School Work in the Salisbury circuit." He said there were present 25 schools, consisting of 240 teachers and 1,599 scholars, the avowed object in each school being to train and instruct all scholars in the doctrines, privileges and duties of religion, to impart biblical knowledge and Christian principles, to secure their conversion and attachment to the church, also to minister to the moral, intellectual and recreative part of their lives, but in order to still further improve their efficiency he would, in his opinion, be helpful:- School buildings should be attached to every chapel and consist of a large room and two or three class-rooms. Suitable appliances, on similar lines to day schools, should be provided. Senior scholars and infants should be taught in separate rooms. Officers and teachers should fully realize their responsibility and be regular and punctual in attendance, and real affection should exist between teacher and scholar, the former being regarded as the friend of the latter, and not as the mere instructor. Teachers Preparation Classes should be established and instruction in the art of teaching given. A Circuit Sunday School Union should be formed. There should be a Band of Hope in every School, cricket and football clubs, reading circles, and occasional out-door excursions. He thought development on these lines would infuse a new vigor and fire in the whole institution, and make it throb with a living pulsation. Our purpose this afternoon is to enquire whether these schools are accomplishing the amount of good which may reasonably be expected of them, or whether any have fallen out of line and are "marking time," instead of marching on, and judging by the reports and statistics we say unhesitatingly the schools of this circuit are doing a splendid work, and our teachers are a noble and self-denying band of men and women.

Some discussion followed on the points raised in Mr. Smeed's address.

Afterwards adjournment to the schoolroom took place and tea was enjoyed there.

The annual meeting in connection with the Sunday School was held in the evening, the attendance being a large one. Mr. G. W. Smeed presided, and was supported by the Rev. J. J. Bosward, the Rev. J. O. Mann, the Rev. W. H. H. Kelshaw (Special missionary) Mr. M. Snelgar, and Mr. H. Penn.

After the prayer and the singing of the hymn, "The day Thou Gavest Lord is Ended," led by the choir and the organ, which was augmented by a string band.

Mr. W. Snelgar read the annual report. It stated that the staff had increased from 30 to 31 during the year, and that whilst 63 scholars had left 78 had been admitted, giving an increase of 15, 113 of the 284 on the books being over 15 years old, and 45 under seven years of age, of the total 58 were members of the Society (hear, hear). The amount raised for foreign missions was £34.3s.6d., an increase of £2. 3s. 3d. They also had a Band of Hope with 80 members, and an average attendance of 40, and a Young Peoples Prayer Union, which had a membership of 42 (applause).

Mr. Penn, the treasurer, read the items of the past year's accounts, stating that the balance in hand was £3.1s. 7d. as compared with £3 18s. 2d. last year. He expressed his thanks to the ladies who had assisted him in collecting the numerous amounts mentioned in the balance sheet.

The Chairman then gave a short address of a genial character. He added that they were sometimes told that there was not much sympathy between the church and the Sunday School, but in their case, having listened to the long list of contributions read out by Mr. Penn they could not say it was the case.

During a break in speech making, Miss Hill sang a solo very nicely.

The Rev. J. J. Bosward spoke about the Sunday School work and said he prayed God that the meetings might be the beginnings of a glorious revival. They were not simply going to hear mission services during the week, but hoped they would have a real outpouring of the divine spirit and that they would see signs and wonders wrought in the name of Jesus, Speaking of Sunday School anniversaries the reverend gentleman said they should be times of review, times when they should see whether in this respect or in that, the effort could be improved upon and the work mended, and times of reconsecration and the giving of one's self afresh to the service of helping young people. Anniversaries should be times of resolve and purpose in the strength of Christ, a time for making a fresh on the way to Heaven. There was no higher work than that of training the young people for God, leading them to Christ and seeking to fit them for the service in this life and in the world to come. Mr. Bosward also dwelt upon the importance of training in the home, the Sunday School, and the Church.

The Rev. J. O. Mann, in an earnest address, said that to have a quarter of a hundred Sunday schools represented at that meeting was an inspiring circumstance (hear, hear). He also spoke of the importance of missionary work, and congratulated the churches at Church Street and Wesley upon the amount they had given towards the object.

The Rev. W. H. H. Kelshaw next addressed the meeting, basing his remarks upon the passage: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and is whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32, v. 1-2). He made an earnest and eloquent appeal for the conversion of souls, remarking that in many cases if the man had only taken a bold stand for Christ at the beginning of his Christian career his life would have been vastly more useful than it was, in consequence of his having, so to say, sidled into the kingdom of God.

The reverend gentleman made a touching reference to the death at Shrewton of a member of the Church Street Cricket Cub, Details of the sad circumstances are reported elsewhere.

During the week Mr. Kelshaw has conducted a successful mission in the Wesleyan Chapel, preaching each evening. On two afternoons he gave Bible readings. The mission terminates this (Friday) evening.

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