

COLUMBIA COUNTY ANNUAL INTERDENOMINATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL CONVENTION.

A Crowded Court House--A Delightful Assembly--Inspiring Music--A Spiritual Benefit.

Twenty-fifth Annual Convention of the Columbia County Sabbath School Association met at the Court House, Thursday morning and was called to order at ten o'clock by the President of the Association, Myron I. Low. Despite the unfavorable weather the court room was quite well filled with delegates and representatives from all parts of the county. The first session was opened with singing, after which devotional exercises were conducted by Rev. C. H. Brandt. The singing of another hymn was followed by an address of welcome tendered by Rev. W. C. Leverett. He bid the delegates welcome in the name of the citizens of Bloomsburg, and hoped that they would be able to enjoy themselves while here. He also entreated them to be earnest, energetic and active in their work. "Doing it heartily as unto the Lord," because only such workers and teachers can succeed. President Low responded to this welcome with an address given in his pleasant and inspiring manner. He said, "The Church of to-morrow is the Sunday School of to-day. He also said that there is need of more practical teaching in our Sabbath Schools. Have a little geography, biography and history, but above all things teach the word of God plainly. The teacher's aim should be to win souls for Christ and to do this he must have Christ with him." Rev. A. Dunlap, of Berwick, was then introduced and gave an interesting paper on missions. He thought that no work was so important in the church as that of missions. It is not a side issue. America, the best hope of humanity, should be the first place where work is done. The work should be fostered by the pastors, church and Sabbath Schools. Our nation, our country and ourselves are benefited by the work done. A. W. Spear, Corresponding and Statistical Secretary, then gave his report for the current year. He reported an increase of the percentage of the population of the county now in the Sunday Schools. This is encouraging. In a very few townships only has there been a falling off. He thinks the work in the schools has improved during the past year. He reported twenty institutes held in the county and thirty-eight schools visited by the committee. To do this work necessitated traveling over 1350 miles, about half of which was with horse and wagon. The session closed with the benediction of Rev. C. H. Brandt.

Thursday afternoon session opened at two o'clock with a service of songs, followed by devotional exercises conducted by W. C. Leverett. B. F. Armstrong then gave a Bible reading on the subject of the Holy Spirit. His exercises showed a careful preparation, and set forth the absolute necessity of having the Holy Spirit with you in your work, and the many ways he manifested himself.

The following committees were then nominated: Committee on Nominations: H. V. White, H. G. Supplee, Z. T. Fowler, Mrs. Fred Ikeler, C. W. Yeager, W. C. Thomas. On Place: Rev. Brewster, Rev. Ruppel, Rev. Aurand. On Resolutions: Dr. Graydon, G. S. Lee, Prof. Wilbur.

The convention was then entertained by Prof. G. E. Wilbur with a talk on the Geography of the World. He thinks it is absolutely necessary to know the geography of the Bible lands in order to understand the effects on the people of that time.

Rev. G. E. Weeks followed with a discussion of the subject The Study of the Word. It should be studied daily. His plan of study would be well worth trying. First, read one book as a whole at one sitting. Go over it and write out topics of your own for each chapter. Also make an analysis and index of the book and follow the chronology through. His talk contained much material for thought and study.

A letter was read stating that on account of the flood Rev. Reimensnyder could not be with us. After singing the meeting closed with benediction by Rev. Heilman.

THURSDAY EVENING SESSION.

The convention opened with a full house which was filled up still more as the evening progressed until there was not even standing room left. After a splendid song service, Rev. Ferguson led in a number of short prayers for the workers in the Sunday Schools.

Prof. Sprengle, State Field Sec., then took up the subject "Helps for the sowers." The sower, he said, was the worker in the Sunday School. One of the helps is for the sower to realize the magnitude of his work. Show me the teacher who realizes this and I will show you the one who is a success. The work of the Sunday School is a divine one and is not only for a day or the short time they are together but his influence is exerted constantly. It is said that a watch must be regulated for the person who is to carry it. If we have this influence over a watch

surely we must have a still greater one over the children. Encouragement in the work is a help. It is inspiration. There never was in the history of the world when man longed more for the Word of God as he does to-day. We are in a progressive age and we must extend this work. Fail in line in the hurry and rush and do not get left. Power and help of the Holy Spirit is the most important help we can have. This we must have, for if we do not possess it we cannot impart it to the others.

After a selection by the Y. M. C. A. choir a Bible drill was given by Mrs. Wilbur's class of twenty-four little girls. This must be seen and heard to be understood and appreciated--no newspaper reporter can give an adequate idea of the wonderful exhibition of Bible knowledge display by the little girls. No Bible student, no teacher, no minister in the vast audience would attempt to answer a small fractional part of the questions on the history, geography, biography and divine truths of the Bible propounded to this class in a promiscuous manner and responded to promptly and decidedly every time with quotations and reference to support every statement. The congratulations and expressions of honest appreciation from President Low, Rev. Heilman and Prof. Sprengle, spoke more than could be written in a column. May they live to teach these precious truths to future generations. At the close of the Bible drill Mr. O. A. Yetter favored the audience with one of his choice bass solos.

At this point the program called for "Lights and Shadows of Sower's Work," which was responded to by Rev. Heilman in his usual happy manner. He dwelt at length on the "Lights" enumerating the many encouragements and joys in the teacher's work in the Sabbath School and urged that all engaged in the work should study the bright side and present it to the class in such a cheerful manner as to encourage them to study the word to find the same blessed truths. The "Shadows" only come when we lose our hold on the Divine hand and are kind warnings to woo us back to the joys that are ours if we will but accept them.

After singing by the congregation and a solo by Prof. Sprengle, he took up the questions and answered them in his usual sprightly manner. Some of the questions were:

Should the minister teach in the Sunday School? No, I think not. He has enough to do without, but I think he should have a general oversight of the school. 2. What would you do with a class that is well qualified to teach and will not? I think the teacher should determine who of that class are qualified and then talk with them on necessity of their responding to the call for teacher. She should do this often and get the superintendent and minister to urge them. 3. What would you do with the members of a class that find fault with every teacher they are given? Teach them good manners. I think they need it. 4. Should a Sunday School Supt. distil whiskey? No; he should not distil whiskey, commit murder nor any other crime in the catalogue. 5. What is the best way to teach a primary class? Teach objectively. Use the black board. No elaborate drawing is necessary. Children have vivid imaginations. After singing by the Y. M. C. A. Choir the session closed with benediction by Rev. Weeks.

FRIDAY MORNING SESSION.

The usual song service began at 8:45 and was followed by devotional services conducted by Rev. Womelsdorf.

Prof. Sprengle followed with a talk on "Methods to adopt with Primary Classes." He said "First of all there must be a love for the pupils in order to make a good primary teacher. Also the child must be studied. Another important item is thorough preparation. Do not attempt to teach that which you know nothing about. The teacher who depends on inspiration solely will not be a success. Do not think that if you put your thoughts in language that cannot be understood that your discourse is profound. It is harder to see to the bottom of a mud puddle than that of a clear lake if it is a thousand times as deep. Teach objectively and vividly. Use the black-board. The imagination of the child will always aid you. Question them. Begin with questions, proceed with questions and end with questions." A song followed, after which Mr. H. R. Bower presented very able reports from the International and State Conventions, held in St. Louis and Pittsburgh respectively. These reports were accepted by the Convention with a vote of thanks.

The president then called the roll of township presidents and as many as were present gave their reports and some who were obliged to be absent sent reports to the Secretary. At the close, the orchestra having arrived from Centralia the Convention was favored with a choice selection by it. Following this the nominating committee reported that after due consideration they had appointed the following officers for the ensuing year: President--Myron I. Low, Lime Ridge.

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Vice-Presidents--Rev. P. A. Heilman, Bloomsburg; Rev. A. Houtz, Orangeville; Isaiah Bower, Berwick. Recording Secretaries--Miss Eva Rupert and Miss Martha Powell, Bloomsburg. Statistical Secretary--A. W. Spear, Cabin Run. Treasurer--Mrs. Anna McHenry, Stillwater. Fieldsman--H. R. Bower, Berwick. Delegate to State Convention--Miss Martha Powell, Bloomsburg. Alternate--R. F. Whitmoyer, Pine Summit.

The officers nominated were elected by the Convention by acclamation. The attention of the convention was then taken with a discourse by Rev. Myers, of Catawissa, on grading in the Sunday Schools. His point, that the Sunday Schools should be graded just as our day schools are, was well taken and he supported it with an outline of the course used in a Sunday School in Wilkes Barre. The course is divided into six sections: Primary, Intermediate, Junior, Senior, Normal and Reserve. As the scholar is instructed in the different grades, his progress is taken note of and at the close of a certain period of time he is given a written examination, and if found proficient is promoted to a higher grade. In the normal class scholars are prepared for the work of teaching and the reserve corps is kept up for the express purpose of filling vacancies. If this course were followed out there would be fewer of the boys and girls from fifteen to twenty years of age leaving the Sunday School, as it would interest them and thereby hold them. Music followed and Prof. Sprengle took up the questions that had passed in. Among them were: Does the Lord ever get angry? Yes, but "The Lord is slow to anger." Should persons who are not Christians be elected as delegates to the convention? If they are a fair representation of your school. Would you teach temperance in the school? Yes. How would you teach a primary class in the presence of the whole school? I would not attempt that at all. Get them by themselves in some place, even if it is the parlor at home. After singing the meeting closed with benediction by Rev. Beddal, of Persia.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON.

After a praise and promise meeting conducted by Rev. Dechant, of Catawissa, Dr. Graydon gave the teachers and delegates very many good suggestions on "When and How to teach Temperance in the Sabbath School. He advised them to teach it at all times, whenever an opportunity offered itself. Have one Sunday in the month devoted entirely to teaching this subject. Let the songs, prayers and lessons tend to put down King Alcohol. Teach it a little at a time. The children will take the thought home with them and their influence will be felt by the parents. Teach the fact that alcohol is deadly. If we believe in anything at all we believe in saving the lives of our boys and girls. Opium can only be bought on a prescription of a physician, while alcohol in the form of beer which is quite as deadly, is sold to children by the bucketful. Dr. Graydon's talk was followed by a song, "The Little Missionary," by three little girls from Centralia.

A number of questions were then answered by Prof. Sprengle. Would you have a question box in your Sunday School? Yes, I think it would help. What are the duties of a superintendent? He should be the manager of the school. The pastor may suggest but should not dictate to the superintendent. He is supposed to be the best man that could be found to fill this place and should be allowed to carry out his own plans. He must make whatever changes he deems best for the school. If he finds that a teacher is filling a position for which he is not competent, he should by all means ask for the resignation of that teacher and fill his place with one who is capable of doing the work required of him.

The matter of "House to House Visitation" was then taken up and it was decided that on the 29th of June, the Sunday School workers, under the direction of the Executive Committee, would make a canvas of the county and ascertain who of the people were not in the Sunday School and give them an invitation to become regular attendants.

The list of schools by townships was then read and delegates responded with a number of delegates and contribution to the work of the Association.

Report of the Committee on Resolutions was submitted and accepted as follows:

WHEREAS, God, our Almighty Father, whose we are and whom we serve, has brought so many of us through another year to this, our 25th annual convention, therefore

Resolved, That we, in convention assembled, with a profound sense of our unworthiness, render to Him the gratitude of our hearts, and homage of our lives, for guiding us through the dangers of the year, sparing us from sickness and death; perils of land and flood; dangers that lurk in the night; the evil machinations of the enemies of our Lord and His cause, and with hearts brimming with thanksgiving we consecrate to his service our undivided all.

Resolved, That we implore the presence of His Holy Spirit in our

midst and in our individual lives, making us more spiritually minded, and forceful in soul winning, more willing to work diligently and prepare thoroughly for our work; that we will be more and more inclined to ask ourselves--"And when I come what shall I say unto them," taking care that we are in the right place with the right message.

Resolved, That we regard the plan of "house to house visitation" as adopted by this Convention, as a great help in advance; and 1st. A direct and positive effort to preach in homes and convert souls; an effort to obtain exact information concerning the church relations of all citizens, in order that missions may be more intelligently established, and the great work of evangelization be systematically and successfully prosecuted; 2. An effort to offer in each home a cordial invitation to attend some Protestant Church or Sunday School. To discharge the obligation which rests upon the Christian citizenship, to see to it that the Gospel invitation is extended to all; leaving the results with "Him who doeth all things well," and knowing that his promises are to the faithful and not necessarily the successful servants. 3. An effort to find where the pastoral work of missions and churches can be more wisely expended; and that we thus heartily endorse, and will co-operate in this work.

Resolved, That it is the sense of this Convention that a strong and determined effort should be made to keep our Sunday Schools open all through the year, at the hour best suited to surrounding circumstances, believing much of the effect of our work upon our scholars to be lost in any interim, and that Satan's opportunities to destroy our teaching are very greatly increased during such times.

Resolved, That we believe the demands of modern Sunday School teaching in the progress of the times call for careful and thorough preparation on the part of the teachers, prayerful and pains-taking Bible study, which study should be paramount to, and take precedence of anything else, and accompanied with a seeking after the illumination of God's spirit.

Resolved, That we reaffirm and believe that total abstinence is the only safe ground for a Christian to occupy; that we will by precept and practice endeavor to train the growing generation to live upon this plan, and to wage unceasing war upon the drink habit as an enemy to God and mankind.

Resolved, That we hail with pleasure the election of the fieldsman, in whose work we see great possibilities for good, tend to bind us together more firmly, thus making our efforts in our beloved work more potent.

Resolved, That we hereby extend the hearty thanks of this convention to the citizens of Bloomsburg for their Christian hospitality; to all those who have in any way contributed to the pleasure and success of these meetings, the speakers, the singers, the musicians, the ushers, organist and all else who so kindly contributed their time and efforts, to the press, and Bloomsburg for their kind notice, to the officials who so thoughtfully placed the Court House at our disposal, and thus comfortably housed us in our sessions; to the officers of the D. L. & W., the B. & S. and C. P. & W. R. R. for their courtesy in reducing the fare; and that we congratulate the Local Entertainment Committee upon the unique and pleasing form in which it placed the programs, and the efficient and business like manner it performed its duties generally.

ANDREW GRAYDON, G. E. WILBUR, GEO. S. LEE, Com.

The music for the entire convention was the best we ever heard on an occasion of this kind. The director, Mr. Fred B. Hartman, has the happy faculty of selecting just the right piece every time and getting everybody to join heartily in the singing. His choir and orchestra were selected from the different churches of the town and showed a most creditable interest in the convention by being present at every session and taking their respective parts in such an earnest manner as to inspire the entire audience. The Centralia orchestra, consisting of ten pieces, rendered some very appropriate and entertaining selections that were appreciated both for their real worth and the fact that these people drove twenty miles through the rain to take the part assigned them on the program.

When the final benediction was pronounced by Rev. Heilman, one of the most earnest, intelligent and orderly assemblies that ever convened in the Bloomsburg Court House very reluctantly disbanded and returned to their homes to put in practice the many valuable suggestions gleaned from the work of this, the Twenty-fifth Annual Convention of the Columbia County Sabbath School Association.

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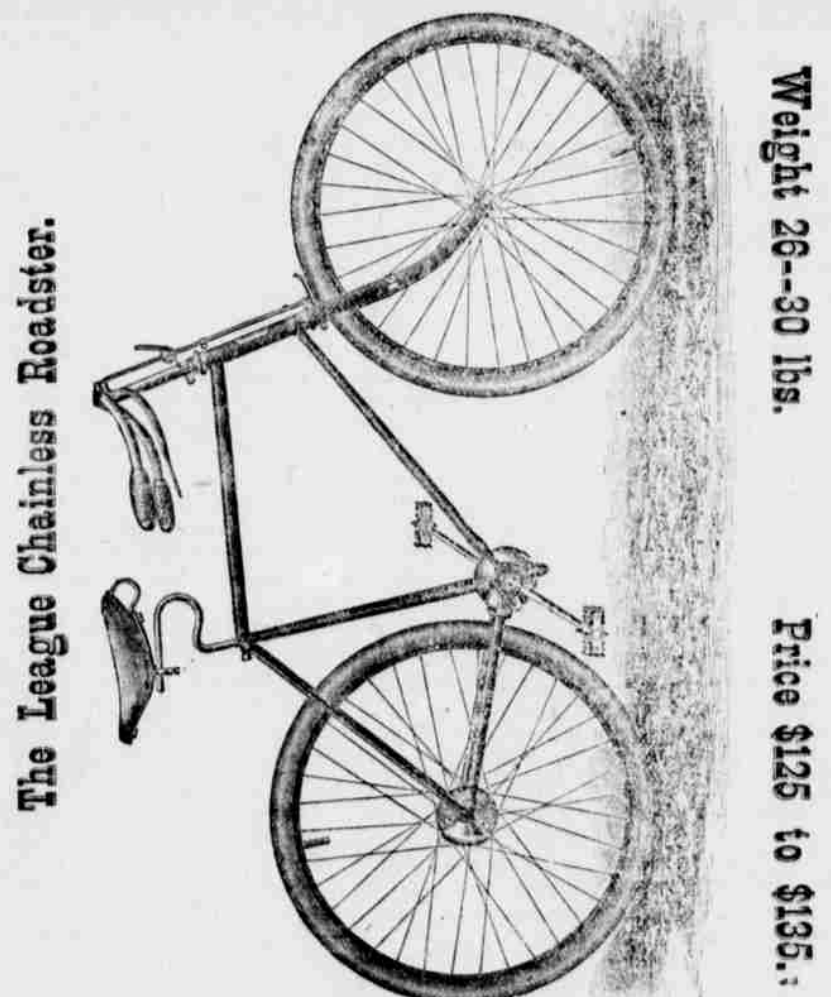
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