

lynx, fox, mink, and other wild animals were visible. Every wild beast in the North-West flees on the approach of man. A few prairie chickens, which an expert rifleman could easily have secured for an evening meal, were the only living things seen for twenty-five miles. About two miles from the camping ground the sleigh glides smoothly over the polished surface of a five-mile lake; then a short portage succeeds; then a one-mile lake; then the trail follows the tortuous course of Pee-Wee-Nah Creek. After leaving the creek the road strikes northward through a region of splendid agricultural land. The hoarse shriek of the locomotive will ere long be heard in that cheerless wild, and its stillness, broken now only by the moan of the wind, thronged with human life. Two townships and the odd-numbered sections in this prolific wilderness, teeming with wondrous fertility, have been secured for a colony from Scotland. Ten miles from Pee-Wee-Nah Creek the scattered houses of Carrot River settlement gleam in the light of the full moon. Since my last visit the population has doubled. From Ontario, Lancashire, and even New Zealand, men have come to push their fortunes in this remote spot. Seventy-five claims have been taken up, chiefly by bachelors. There are twelve resident families. The dwellings are scattered over an area of seven miles. Timber is to be taken out this winter for the erection of a building for church and school purposes. Thirty-five constituted the audience that on a week evening assembled to listen to the preaching of the Word. There is something wrong about our Home Mission work when so promising a community, increasing and likely to increase rapidly in number, is left without Sabbath services. In the three years of its history no sermon has ever been preached on the Lord's day, and during that period it has been visited only three times by any preacher. The people are nearly all Presbyterian. Champlain declared "the saving of a soul is worth more than the conquest of an empire." It is a poor record for any Church to leave even one hundred souls in the wilderness exposed to the worst of all famines—that of hearing the word of the Lord. Talk of India and China! There is need as urgent for evangelistic work in the Far West. "Barbarism is the first danger" of any community deprived of the public ordinances of religion. One day, and that at no far distant date, the balance of power in the Dominion of Canada will be in the west. Shall it be won for Christ, or abandoned to infidelity, drunkenness, formality and worldliness? Providence has assigned to the Presbyterian Church the weightiest responsibility in solving that important question. A band of Cree Indians from the South Branch, to whom Rev. John McKay used to give occasional service, pitch their frail dwellings for the winter at Stony Creek (twelve miles from Carrot River), for the purpose of fishing and hunting. In the Fishing Lake, in the Birch Hills, there is an abundant supply of jack fish and gold eyes. The return journey was completed in one day, unmarked by any incident. The nightfall closing on the dreary track about eight miles from Prince Albert in a violent storm, the north wind whistling and howling through the trees like a gale through the rigging of a ship, driving the snow in every open expanse in blinding drifts, made the shelter of a house welcome. J. S.

Prince Albert, N.-W. T., Dec. 14, 1881.

HOW TO INTEREST THE YOUNG IN MISSION WORK.

MR. EDITOR,—I was much interested in an article on "How to Interest Children in Mission Work" which appeared in a late number of your paper. Having had a little experience in this good work, I have thought it might encourage you, or some of your readers, to know how I was enabled, by simply looking to God for help, to teach my own children, and ultimately help others on His work.

I commenced at home on Sabbath evenings, at my own tea-table, by reading missionary cards to my children, who were then between the ages of five and twelve. Each card had a picture such as Judson, Carey, Moffat, etc., on one side, and a short report of the Mission on the other. At the end of the month the card was awarded to the one who could repeat without a mistake the Mission report. Then as they grew older actual Mission work was put into their hands for the Mission schools in Madagascar; a class was ultimately formed in connection with the Sabbath

school for this object, in which teachers as well as scholars took a hearty interest. Letters from the missionaries were eagerly looked for, and all felt more than rewarded when the answer came from Mr. Charles Cousins, wife of one of the missionaries: "It was with much pleasure and great thankfulness we received your nice box, just a few days before Christmas, and if it had not come I do not know how we could have kept on the school this year." Although my children and I have left the mother country, this work is still carried on. In our first Sabbath school in this country we freighted a good sized toy-ship with Christmas gifts to the children; after which it was unanimously resolved that it should be converted into a missionary ship, and be brought out on the first Sunday of the month to receive the children's cents for the Labrador Mission. Now that we are far away from all active participation in Mission work, yet the love of it is kept alive—I may say intensified. My young people, no longer children, every Sabbath evening choose some Mission Report to read aloud, and to adopt as a subject of prayer for the week.

WIFE OF A LABOURER IN THE BACKWOODS.

LIFE AND DEATH.

"It is not all of life to live,
Nor all of death to die;"
To drink the draught the world can give,
Then perish with a sigh.

No! Life is more than meat and drink,
Or fame or worldly gear;
While souls are hovering on the brink,
And heaven and hell appear.

True life on earth is faith and hope
And love to God and man;
A living power, that dares to cope
With heaven's appointed plan;

A spark from out the jasper throne,
A diamond from the sky;
That strikes the earth, then seeks its own,
Among the saints on high.

Death is the shadow of the soul,
That dims its setting ray;
The mists that rise to hide its goal
In heaven's eternal day:

A breath upon the glass, a screen
Twixt time and endless life:
A shade now past of yester e'en,
A sigh for what we might have been,
A truce to earthly strife:
A wrothe, a groan, a gasp for breath,
Then earnest hope,—and this is Death!

Who then should fear the cares of life,
While heart and pulse are beating high?
How can they fear the damp of death,
Whose hopes up yonder lie?
O give us then that mighty faith,
That lives through life, and conquers death!

St. Marys, Jan. 7th, 1882.

BYSTANDER.

THE GOSPEL BY MARK.

A SUGGESTION TO SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

MR. EDITOR,—It seems to me that the action of the Committee on the International Series of Lessons, in giving the Gospel by Mark for the course of study for the entire year, will be cordially endorsed by almost all Sabbath school workers. The very change will be stimulating. The order heretofore followed, although unavoidably at times abrupt and fragmentary, has served a most useful purpose, in leading to the study of portions of the Bible which would otherwise have been passed over as uninteresting. By means of this order of study, many of the less inviting fields have been explored, and have been found to contain flowers of almost exotic beauty and fragrance, and even in rocky fastnesses and sandy plains precious springs have been discovered which will never be forgotten, and rich mines of treasure which have abundantly repaid the toil of drilling through a crust of granite or quartz. Perhaps no one thing has done so much as the International Series has done to extend a knowledge of the Bible as a whole in the last ten or twelve years. But we only follow the leading of the author when we vary our mode of work.

Milton speaks of the

"Grateful vicissitudes of day and night,"

and Tennyson says:

"God fulfils Himself in many ways,
But one good custom straight corrupts the world."

An experience of the rest, of varied exercise, will be felt by Sabbath school workers in general as they

look forward to a year of the *continuous* study of one book. No reasons that I am aware of have been given for the selection of the Gospel by Mark; but each of the Evangelists has peculiar features. And the work of this year should produce well-defined results on the minds of the Sabbath school teachers and their scholars throughout the world—a vast army in the knowledge of our blessed Saviour, and especially as that knowledge is given to us by our Evangelist. The Gospels are not a four-fold copy of one narrative, with a few omissions or additions of certain details. They are the *expression* of the life of Jesus Christ by each writer, according to the manner in which that life had *impressed* itself on his mind. Each Evangelist unfolds to us what is most deeply engraven on his own mind, and in the way in which that revelation will best convey to our minds the conception he has of the Lord. Hence there are peculiarities in each narrative which need to be closely observed and attentively followed. It is better to have our minds somewhat acquainted with these at the beginning of the study. It will save labour, not in the sense in which a lazy man saves labour, but it will place us on a ground of advantage, and enable us to use time and labour to the best purpose. We shall be aware of what we are looking for; we shall not be so apt to pass over precious things without noticing them; and we shall be able to direct our studies so as to prepare ourselves for the far more efficient performance of our work.

No teacher is fit for his place or worthy of the name who does not know, who does not clearly *see* what he wants to communicate—to *give*—to his scholars. And before this is possible he must have found that thing himself. And once more, it is of great importance that he should have some conception—the clearer the better—of what he is seeking for in his study and preparation. G. BRUCE.

THE PROPOSED SUPPLEMENTING SCHEME.

MR. EDITOR,—One or two principles ought to be kept in mind in the consideration of financial schemes such as those now remitted to the Presbyteries. For example, it will be admitted by everyone who knows the Church, that there is a growing tendency to a miserable congregationalism throughout our borders; that Presbyteries seem to be losing rather than gaining in power over the churches and pastors under their care; that Sessions are in many instances being overshadowed by the managers; that people and managers are more and more thinking that money is the power that rules in the Church, or that should rule; that a member should have power according to his wealth, and not simply as a member of the body of Christ; that a minister should so work the congregation and so preach as to increase the revenue; that he should not give offence to good subscribers—at least should be very careful about it. Now, a financial scheme that encourages all these tendencies, while it may have some features to commend it, is not a scheme that will be a blessing to the Church, but the reverse. Any benefits that may accrue from it will be purchased, it appears to me, at too great a price. A scheme that is based on charity to the poor introduces an unhappy element into the ministerial standing of brethren so aided. A scheme that fails to recognize the overseers of the Church, and to uphold that principle, is a bad one for our Church at the present time. A scheme that has been rejected, on the most intimate knowledge of it, by the English Presbyterian Church, and the Irish Church, and the Presbyterian Churches of Australia, ought not to be too hastily accepted by us. A scheme that some of the more intelligent elders of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland regard as much inferior in its nature and working to the Sustentation Fund, ought not to be too hastily accepted by us. All I ask is that principles as well as details be considered in adopting a scheme. A scheme that rests on the principle of the unity of the Church, and the duty of the Church, as a whole, to provide the Gospel—a scheme that kills congregationalism, that upholds the dignity of the ministry, and its independence, as the other scheme before us does, should not be thrown out too hastily. But, after all, does it matter much what decision the Presbyteries may come to?—for if it is not satisfactory to the Assembly, some one may get the Assembly to set aside the judgment of the Presbyteries, as was done at last Assembly, and send down the