

happy union to the extension of mission work at home and abroad. In this way God would be glorified by the extension of His kingdom among the heathen, and the Church would be strengthened by every sinner won to the Saviour.

J. W. S.

#### NORMAL CLASS TEACHERS AND HOW TO GET THEM.—NO. 2.

The people of the churches are ready for an organized movement in religious instruction conducted on educational principles and methods.

Normal classes for Sabbath School teachers and senior scholars promise help in this direction. In a previous paper we examined the ordinary means of instruction and education by which our teachers are to be built up and equipped for their important and delicate work; and it must be apparent that the means of grace and of religious education as presently endorsed by the Church, are not fully adapted to secure the end contemplated in furnishing a staff of reasonably qualified teachers for our Sabbath School work. Are matters to continue as they are in this respect? Are they all that is possible for the best results? Or are they all that is desirable? It requires no special foresight to believe, that in view of the growing importance being attached to the religious instruction of the youth of the Church, and the exposure of our Sabbath School work to dangers from without and weakness within, ten years of matters as they are will leave us barren in moral strength and feeble in enterprise. Official work however high in quality and abounding in quantity will not prevent great loss. Our unofficial workers must be raised in tone, in attainment, in experience and in training. Our teachers by the tacit consent of the Church, are placed at the sources of the stream of our future life, to cast in the healing salt, or the corrupting poison; to direct the streamlet in the path of the river of life, or to the dead sea of Sodom and Gomorrah. Mere reading the Bible and expounding it in sermon and lecture form does not meet all the necessities of a religious education.

Telling and training are different in process, distinctive in effort, and differently organized as means of help. We need an era of training co-ordinate with an era of telling, and the people that give the best and wisest attention to this, will in the future Church be the most powerful, intellectually, morally and spiritually.

God uses the best fitted instrumentality for doing His work in the earth. This desirable result can be attained only by a thorough adaptation of means to this end, and these means wisely handled by a persistent purpose, and tender sympathy with fellow-workers.

The quality of the teaching practically settles the attainments of the learner; the attainments of the children mould the character of the home; and the life of the home forecasts the efficiency of the Church; and unless the children of this world are to be forever wiser than the children of light, the Church will at once take up this question of training her unofficial workers.

Every congregation with its training class will be an organized centre of influence, and these will prove the deepest and strongest entrenchment of the citadel in the day of trial and conflict.

Our first necessity in such a work is:

1. A body of teachers.
2. A course of study.

Let us deal with the teachers first. We need spend no time in inquiries as to who these normal class teachers are to be, or where they are to come from, but at once state our conviction.

That the pastor of the congregation with his Session are the responsible parties for the instruction of the children, in the oversight of the homes and the school, will not be questioned; therefore, whatever is needful for these parents and teachers for the wise and faithful discharge of this urgent duty comes within the scope of a minister's necessary work, as truly entering into his vows of ordination as that of preaching the word.

The training and equipment of teachers and parents to this work of instruction is the minister's true position, and his vital relation to what is called the Sabbath School enterprise.

The elevation, guidance and encouragement of those already in the work, and the qualifying of others who are to be called to the work, is the highest sphere of the pastor's educational efforts. "The same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

We do not regard what we have in view as accomplished by taking a senior class on Sabbath, or through the week, for the teaching of a specific Bible lesson, but by organizing a class of workers, selected from the congregation and the school, for a course of study and training adapted to awaken and foster fitness for school work.

If then, this work be a responsibility of the Session through the minister, then it clearly comes to be a special care of the Presbytery, in which by conference, legislation and careful oversight, they help each pastor in this work by united counsel, and unanimity of action. That the Synod should deal with so vital an element in church work, and by prayer and conference arrive at practical legislation, is obvious; and in accordance with the genius of our church polity—all constitutional action comes from the Assembly—and the spirit and manner of dealing with this department of work here, will foreshadow its official treatment downward.

If this subject comes up under pressure, and time is given it, very much for outlet to a few earnest elders or some tolerated "Sabbath School Man," matters will not merely remain as they are; but undesirable hands will deal with our work, and unhealthy influences will breathe on it.

It will be thought that no satisfactory help is obtained by rolling the work of teacher-training on the Sessions, and they rolling it on the already over-wrought pastor; his present and recognized duties are all he can overtake.

From many letters of inquiry respecting normal class work we are satisfied as to the soundness of the following conclusions:

1. That many pastors admit the necessity of the work and feel the importance of it, who earnestly desire to help their present staff of teachers and wish to make provision for the future supply, but are utterly perplexed as to how to go to work, as to the kind of subjects, or course of lessons to be taken up, as to the manner of treating them, or where help is to be found.

2. Others admit the desirability of what is proposed, but realizing their own unpreparedness to grapple with the proposed work, sometimes assume a dignified position which when put into words, means that the phrase "Normal Class," expresses strongly very poor and unimportant work. So matters stand. The necessity is owned; the desirability is admitted; but the pastor cannot think of undertaking it. His work as set forth by the Church and expected by the people, IS ENOUGH.

Instead of falling back on the ultimate of helplessness and despair we would ask three questions:

1. Is not the training of Sabbath School teachers a new necessity in the Church, one she never contemplated in her organization of means of instruction and education? If it is she can deal with it and adapt herself to it.

2. Has not the necessity arisen from her increased LIGHT on the importance of the early period of convictions and formation of character; also from her increased LIFE in the willingness of multiplied workers? If this is the case, ought not the Church gratefully to acknowledge the open door to do higher and better work for Christ?

3. Is it not largely the result of an altered state of society in the matter of popular and public education, in the increased attention given to the education of the child, the wisdom of the methods adopted, and the completeness of the machinery set in motion, all to fit for earthly citizenship?

Shall the church be less wise, less able to see afar off, less willing to adopt her means, and organize her forces for the work of training a generation that shall be high in character and loyal to Christ.

These altered conditions have called forth great variety of agencies in the shape of societies, associations, etc., these also have shared in the work of breaking up fallow ground, but when that is done their mission is fulfilled, but if the Church will not deal with the necessities thus created, societyism may lead the people in unfruitful ways. From these and other important considerations, we regard this matter of trained workers and the way to do it as claiming careful consideration.

The pastor of a congregation is placed in new circumstances from what he was twenty years ago, and the preparation that on the whole suited his work then is unsuited now. If this work has become a necessity for him and his office, then his own preparation and training ought to be adapted to his prospective work,

that is to say: Our higher institutions in their work of training the public and official workers, ought to recognize the new circumstances and instruct and equip for it.

Our colleges should have a department of DIDACTICS alongside of, or associated with, HOMILETICS. If this were the case, and vigorously carried out, our pastors would not be so helpless as to the means and methods of training others.

Is it true what an English Minister of Education said to an Edinburgh Professor sent up to ask the establishment of a chair of Didactics in the University and with the endowment provided, "there is no science of education?"

It is well known that our present programme of subjects entering into a literary or theological course has grown to its present high standard by the emerging of new circumstances, and progressive effort to meet them. At the Reformation Greek was not taught in Oxford, England; and Erasmus records that when it was proposed to teach Greek to the students, they organized themselves against its introduction, and called themselves "Trojans."

The subjects of Homiletics and Pastoral Theology have assumed great importance because of the work and wants of the preacher and pastor. Lectureships are set up, books are published, ordinations and inductions are signalized by counsel on these departments of work, just because necessity has pressed it on the Church.

Begin work in our colleges that is required in our congregations, and then we are vitally connected with them. How to get normal class teachers for our growing body of Sabbath School labourers—does this enter into the new departure proposed by "Clericus?"

JOHN MCEWEN.

#### MODERATORSHIP NOMINATIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—Where does your correspondent "Honour" find his warrant for this statement? "It was supposed last year that Dr. Cochrane's appointment for this year was a foregone conclusion, in reference to which all would be unanimous, and from which graceful retreat was impossible." There is nothing to that effect in last year's minutes, nor in the reported debate in connection with the moderatorship at Hamilton, nor was there a word spoken publicly on that occasion in the direction indicated. And, so far as precedent goes, in other bodies at least, rejected candidates are not usually proposed a second time. As you have been asked to publish a list of the Presbyteries that have nominated Dr. Cochrane, perhaps you will kindly extend the same courtesy to the other individuals named in connection with the office—Dr. Gregg and Dr. Reid. In asking you to do this, however, the writer wishes it to be distinctly understood that he agrees with many others in the Church that that Presbyterian nominations are to be deprecated as very often the offspring of ambitious efforts to manipulate public opinion, and of unmanly strife for place. Several influential Presbyteries have apparently taken this view by abstaining from making nominations. But if nominations are in order, why not choose the best men available? Why should not Principal Caven, for instance, have this distinction conferred upon him? There is another name, too, that needs only to be mentioned to be received with favour. In Inglis' beautiful picture of "The First Meeting of the Presbyterian Union Committee" the places of honour were awarded to five distinguished clergymen. Of these, two have already occupied the moderator's chair, two have earned a still greater distinction in being elected to the "General Assembly and Church of the First-born," but the fifth is still available for the position of *Primus inter pares*. And if a representative is wanted for the western portion of the Church, or for a particular historical section of it, where could a better man be found than Dr. Ure, of Goderich, a man whom any Church might well delight to honour? Dr. Cochrane is on every other score an unexceptionable candidate, but he is too young for this position, and can well afford to wait. There are at least a dozen men in his own section of the Church whose claims come in before his. So far the good conservative practice of the parent Churches has been followed in selecting elderly men. Why, the very foremost men, say of the Free Church, Cunningham, Candlish and Buchanan, grew grey in the service before it was considered right by their brethren to elevate them to the moderatorship. If the practice of choosing young