

one would think of building a house all parlour and no domestic adjuncts; and as no officer would bring his men to the annual or other review without repeated drill in squads, companies and battalions, so the place of the Sabbath School is mistaken, unless the parents by a holy observance of the Sabbath as a day of sacred rest, put the minds of the children in a state of spiritual receptivity; unless the parents themselves amid the round of weekly duties wear their spiritual armour only to be furnished anew on that day and not merely put on for the occasion—unless by training made a habit, the child has developed the spiritual in his nature, so that it needs only to be quickened and sealed in the Sabbath School.

But if parents would make the Sabbath School meet the highest range of its functions, they cannot begin their part too early. From the time the child can distinguish light from darkness, it is receiving impressions which go farther towards moulding its character than is generally suspected. Indeed, there are many now-a-day who argue with great plausibility that training should not only begin in early infancy, but be even pre-natal. Be that as it may, everyone knows that a successful pianist must combine with natural talent careful practice from the earliest years; that a good plainsman must be cradled in the saddle, and almost from infancy swing the lasso and hunt the buffalo, and every instructor has daily experience that a clumsy method once acquired is harder to unlearn than to master an elegant process from the beginning. In the same way a wrong bent given to the inclination in early years is harder to rectify than it would have been to make the habits we wish to establish a part of the child's nature, before the tares, which must otherwise occupy the soil, are sown.

In this way the chief duties of parents to the Sabbath School would seem to be:—The earnest and prayerful supervision of the child's work during the whole course of its pupilage; the most careful preparation of the child's mind and heart for religious impressions during the years preceding pupilage; the development of a higher practical charity by having the children make frequent sacrifices of their little properties for clearly apprehended Christian purposes—not, as is too often the case, making an only apparent sacrifice for mere ostentation or other debasing and improper motives; but especially the observance of the Sabbath, so that throughout that day both parent and child will regard it, not as a period of prison-like constraint, nor one for general, though it may be innocent, pastime, but with the loving reverence and serene admiration