

Department, those passing through the four or five years after that; in the Adult Department, all over eighteen years. No one need ever be supposed to graduate from the Sabbath School. The text-book is of such a nature that the oldest and most proficient student can never profess to have thoroughly mastered it and got beyond all need of further study.

Fergus, Ont.

The Sunday School, the Home and the Church

By Rev. D. J. Fraser, LL.D.

We hear a good deal in our Church courts about the number of children who are not found within the Sunday School; but the far more alarming fact is that there are too many children who receive no other religious instruction than that which is imparted in the Sunday School. The school is made an excuse by many parents for the neglect of home training.

The modern Sunday School was originally a missionary institution. It was a place, not connected with the Church, where the children of neglect were gathered on the Lord's Day, not for instruction in the Bible merely, but in reading and writing, and in arithmetic, as well. It has among us outgrown its original purpose, but to allow it to become a substitute for family instruction is fatal.

How can it be expected that teachers who have not been professionally trained and who have the children under their care for only one hour in the week, can give them anything like a complete religious education?

What is the chief blessing of the Sunday School? It is not the amount of information that is actually imparted. It is the spirit of the teacher, rather than his knowledge—his kindly interest in his pupils, his refining influence, his power to mould character and to awaken holy impulses—that constitutes the value of his work. But the parents, if any good is to be wrought, must prepare the soil of the young heart for the seed sown in the school, and must carefully supplement the work of the school by home instruction.

The parent who irresponsibly hands over the religious education of the children to the Sunday School teacher is guilty of gross neglect. If we call the mother "unnatural" who neglects the physical welfare of her offspring, what shall we say of her who neglects their spiritual welfare?

Almost as dangerous and common a thing is to make the Sunday School a substitute for the Church. It is sometimes spoken of as the "Children's Church," and if they send their children to the Sunday School, many parents feel under no obligation to bring them to the Church.

But the Church services are for all—old and young; and the Sunday School and Bible classes are the teaching service of the Church. So zealous a Sunday School worker as Dr. Vincent well says: "If it ever comes to be a question between the sanctuary of God and the Sunday School, then my voice will be for the sanctuary."

If parents make the Sunday School an excuse for the absence of their children from the church services, the sorrow awaits them of seeing their children graduate from the school, not into the church, but into the street. One hears the complaint on every side to-day that the young people do not care to go to church. The reason is not far to seek. They never acquired the habit when they were children. If children are brought to church, they will learn to love the sanctuary, to love the hymns and prayers of the Church, and when they grow up, they will not forget the way to the house of God.

This is a word of warning which comes with special grace from a Sunday School paper, and it needs to be laid to heart by business men whose duties keep them so late on Saturday night that they are too tired on Sunday morning to come to church or to send their families, and by railroad men whose Sabbath rest is broken in upon by labor. These need to exercise the greater care and to make the greater sacrifices, if they will be spared the sorrow, in later life, of seeing their children utterly regardless of the Church and its holy ordinances.

St. John, N.B.