

had a relapse, and serious apprehensions as to the result are entertained. We are glad to see that the trip to the Cape of Good Hope has done so much to restore Rev. Dr. Johnston to his wonted strength and unbounded activity. Dr. A. C. Murphy of Dublin, who has been called to London in connexion with the English Presbyterian Church, is the eldest son of Professor Murphy, the commentator. The younger doctor is a very scholarly and cultured man, and a man of rising influence.—H.

Report on State of Religion.

(Continued.)

OTHER reports, like that of Hamilton and London, note the earnest efforts of most Sessions to turn this ebbing tide, and express a strong desire for a great and general effort, aided by all the weight of the Assembly's influence, the Church's authority and the unfailing help of a faithful God.

We have given this large space to this subject under a profound conviction of its momentous nature. Besides the Christian Sabbath, the institution of the Christian home is the one priceless relic of primeval paradise, divided by infinite wisdom and love for the good of man, which we still possess. Rich in its provision for the happiness and welfare of the individual, from the time of tender infancy to decrepid old age, incomparable in its potencies for good to the race at large, alike in its national, social and religious interests, let us see that, God helping us, we do not fail or falter in doing our part in preserving its unique and holy power for our Church and our country. Its loss were irreparable. Its decay is alarming. Many parents, the reports tell us, excuse themselves on the plea of Sabbath Schools and Bible classes, to which their young people are sent. This excuse suggests two things. (1) We must more distinctly and emphatically than ever expose its fallacy and wickedness. The Sabbath School can never do the work of the home. No substitute can furnish the parents influence. (2) We shall with no less emphasis negative the idea, hinted in some of the reports, that this evil is to be remedied by bidding the Sabbath School take a lower place. No, we shall not take a hair from the head of this young Sampson, the modern Sabbath School, but hope and pray that, after a century of noble service, the prime of his power is yet to come. As a separate report on this subject is to be presented to the Assembly, we shall not do more than add that we learn with pleasure that, in almost every part of the Church, these means of Grace for the young are maintained with vigour by bands

of teachers, for the most part devoted and painstaking, among whom are to be found many of our elders and of the parents of the children, whilst many more of the latter in their homes co-operate zealously with the efforts of the schools. Still it is evident from what has already been said of the state of things in so many households that, as some of the reports remark, the efficiency of the school and the extent of its good results would be greatly increased by a more general and practical sympathy between the school and the home, the teacher and the parent. In addition to these ordinary means of reaching and benefitting the young spiritually, several reports mention, Band of Hope, communicants' classes, evangelistic services specially suited to the youth, recommended in one case by satisfactory results tested by the experience of years. The great need of increased, direct and earnest efforts to reach and influence the young for Christ is made apparent by the replies to the question, "What proportion of your youth between fourteen and twenty are upon the communicants roll?" The reports indicate considerable diversity in this respect, the proportion in a few cases reaching three-fourths, while in many cases it is "few," "very few," often "none." From one whole Presbytery *none* are reported. Well may one report remark, "It appears that Sunday Schools, Bible Classes and family training are not yielding the fruits in conversion, which might be expected. Much precious seed is sown, but the harvest has not yet come. Let this awaken anxiety. Let the parable of the sower teach us it is not enough to sow. Sowing is nothing without the increase. Let us labour for conversions." As to prevalent hindrances to our work, we have the usual dark catalogue enumerated, of which Sabbath desecration and intemperance form subjects of separate report, and we need only remark that there is a generally concurrent opinion that the latter is diminishing while the former is increasing. Formalism, inconsistency, indifference, dancing parties, theatre going, and frivolity, abound. Mormonism is mentioned by one report, the tobacco habit among professed Christians by more than one. Covert infidelity is common, avowed agnosticism is not unknown. Sensuality and licentiousness are recognized, though loving the darkness because of their own evil deeds. Worldliness, bolder, and unblushing, stalks in the land and intrudes in the Church, often without any cloak to hide its eagerness for money or for pleasure, or its pitiable subjection to the spirit and the fashion of the world. Mention is also made of "irreligious literature circulating in the homes of our people, which cast ridicule on sacred things and teaches the miserable lie that men can live virtuous and happy lives without God and without obedience to His moral law."