

"So much depends on having the right man in the chair." It does. I feel it deeply; and I ask myself, "Who is sufficient for these things?" I could not obey your call, but for the assurance that you will have me in your hearts, and make mention of me in your pleadings with our Father. I understand that pledge to be included in the vote just given, and, thus strengthened, address myself to the duties of the chair. Permit me to say that not only is the Sabbath-School cause dear to my inmost heart, but that I also place a very high value on these Conventions, as a means of promoting it. In attending (as I have done) each of the Provincial Conventions already held in Canada, not as a teacher but as a learner, I have so richly enjoyed the brotherly fellowship on these occasions, and have received so much of stimulus and instruction, that they are among the happiest recollections of my life. Heartily, therefore, do I rejoice that, at length, you have come to Toronto. Welcome to our homes and hearts, our Churches and schools! May this be the best Convention of the four, but may the next be better still! You put a President here to serve, not to rule. His function is to be your voice and your hand, in fulfilling your will. In the discharge of this duty, it may sometimes be necessary, for the sake of the body, to cross the path of individual members. The liberty of the whole is not to be sacrificed to the license of any part. Now, if I ever have to call a wandering brother back to the point under discussion, or to stop one who is speaking too long, please to understand that there will be nothing personal in such a necessary act. I am now simply a piece of clock-work, constructed and wound up by the Convention itself, compelled to go round according to the rules, and when the hand points to the hour, I must strike—can't help it! I know, for I have felt, how hard it is for a speaker to be thus brought up suddenly, when he has just fairly got under way, and feels that he is sailing along fairly. That ting of the bell is like a sudden box on the ear, or a shot from a gun. But if every one were to speak as long as he might think it desirable, and as often, there would be an unseemly scramble for the floor; ten would be disappointed for one that would be gratified; and conventions would be broken up amid general discontent. If every speaker will cut off all apologies, introductions, repetitions, and perorations, dash right into the middle of the subject, and stop when he has done, it is amazing how much he can say in five minutes. The three golden rules to be remembered, are these:—Speak to the point; speak out; and speak short. Will my fathers and brethren in the ministry allow me to say, that we that are accustomed to have full swing in the pulpit, the only speakers, with our thirty, forty, or sixty minutes, need to drop our preaching habits when we come to a Sunday-School Convention? *Verbum sat sapienti*. It is one of the difficulties and drawbacks of this position, that the presiding officer does not come to know the greater part of the members of the convention until its sessions are nearly over. I would that I could call you every one by name, and "draw out" the "gems of purest ray serene," whose light is hidden in "dark, unfathomed caves" of unconquerable bashfulness! Would that I could "put into the pool" those whose "infirmity" would keep them at the margin for "thirty and eight years," for always "another steppeth down before" them. Their heart is ready to burst like wine bottles, but their tongue refuses to give it vent. I can only invite you all, the humblest as well as the highest, to use the liberty of the Convention as you have opportunity; and ask you beforehand to pardon any "sin of ignorance" I may commit in passing by any one who ought to be called out for speech, or prayer, or office. Just in proportion as our Conventions are successful, as the members in attendance increase, will it be more difficult for every member to have a hearing—nay, it will be impossible. But our silent friends may not always be our least benefactors. I am sure that I but express the earnest desire of the body when I say, that we want all mere formal and routine proceedings cut down to the smallest possible dimensions, to have no "points of order" arise, or, if "such offences come," to dispose of them with the utmost celerity; and so to reserve our whole time for the great cause that