

## THE FIRST-DAY SCHOOL AS A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS FACTOR.

Man is a progressive being. Possessed of a progressive nature, he has, by and through the force of varying circumstances, raised himself from the savage and barbarous state to that of intellectual acquirements and moral stability, and in a degree to spirituality.

All along this line of progression, in the physical sense, we have seen a form of religion, a something akin to Christianity, yes, a motive even in the barbarian to be worshipful and reverent to a being, or representative being of some kind, higher or lower, according to the advancement of civilization.

We find, also, as we trace this progression, that as man became enlightened he became more dependent upon his fellowmen and his social nature, the element of friendship, one toward another, developed, and man grew to be considered of more value to his brother man. It is in his social life that we find the degree of his real civilization and in society the emphasis of the interdependence of man. We see man then in his social life, swayed to and fro by the changes of times and conditions, and as thought and action progress, his social well being should follow in proportion. Although progressive by nature, yet we find that in this progression the advancement must be guided and guarded so that the enthusiasm of victory will not carry progress beyond bounds, away from the true purpose of life. It is here, then, that the forces in man, known as divine, mingle with his social forces, guiding and directing them in paths of usefulness in this life.

Noticing this advancement, we cannot help but note the increased brotherly regard due to civilization and the restrictions placed upon misdeeds or the rapid strides of moral law. Thus far there is a tendency for something better, socially and morally, and now, when coming to this stage of advance-

ment, we find our want yet not satisfied, and we seek in and beyond material things in search of a peace that gives rest to the weary soul. When this social being with a progressive and ever unsatisfied longing for that which is in store for it which is better, is guided and directed by divine forces, which men have called the Christ's spirit. When this all-governing power controls or guides the great living element of man, then it is that we find true men in Christian fellowship and with brotherly love.

Now, as we know man to be a progressive being, the great question arises as to ways and means of bringing men to think of higher motives and look for avenues to escape the evil tendencies of misguided social forces.

Many are the institutions which have been established at various times and under widely different circumstances, with an object of obtaining this result. One of these institutions or organizations, which stands pre-eminently in the front ranks, is the Sabbath Schools of the land. This institution has long been established and its effects upon individuals, communities and humanity at large is incalculable. Its influence has extended far and wide, bringing into healthy influence many belonging to families where no spirituality is taught in the home and from the army of those all over the land which are homeless or worse than homeless, strengthening those who have known of divine teaching, giving them an opportunity to study and become better acquainted with God's laws, spreading their influence abroad as only social mingling and contact of man with man can do.

In this body of workers we find many earnest seekers after religious knowledge and historical helps gleaned from the pages of the Bible, as well as an intermingling of ideas for mutual benefit. Young and old may gather here together and learn of the prophecies of old, the sayings and doings of Jesus while upon the earth, and of His