

man: "As a general remark, it may be said that the Sunday-school library, as now most frequently composed, seems to have been selected on the principle of one who would administer to the same person both a poison and its antidote, with the idea that the two together would do no harm. Supposing that a case should arise where such a physico-chemical treatment would be proper, it by no means follows that a moral equilibrium can be sustained in the same way. The experiment might prove harmless in the case of one whose moral nature was untainted; but, as it is, the one scale is already too heavily weighted with sinful tendencies to admit the thought that a certain amount of good literature will counterbalance an equal amount of evil. The evil possesses far more attractions for the general mind than that which might counteract it, so that it is used greatly in excess of the other. It is hardly necessary to say that such a method of selection is wrong. It is not desirable that the poison should be given at all, even if its antidote is measured out and administered in well-balanced quantities. The minds of children are in no such state as could render this treatment other than injurious. Their habit is not so much to judge and divide, as to receive. Unable to discern between the false and true, the hurtful and beneficial, they should have put into their hands only that which is true, and should be subjected only to those influences which are improving." It is almost impossible to exaggerate the lengths which the desire to supply Sabbath-school children with light literature has reached. We have heard of a bookseller in a town in Canada who had done his best to satisfy a Sabbath-school customer with suitable books for his library, and, failing utterly to press upon him the books recommended by the General Assembly's Sabbath-school Committee, and more of a similar nature, at last in despair placed in his hands "Robinson Crusoe" and other books of travel-fiction. To his astonishment the teacher received them with delight, and stocked the library of his Sabbath-school with books whose sole merit, in a religious point of view, is that they contain here and there a reference to God and Bible truth, without attempting to teach any lesson of faith or godliness. The criterion by which people judge a book suitable to place in the hands of a child for Sabbath reading has come to be, that it contains a little divine truth, or reference to it, simply. The old criterion was, that it should contain little or nothing else. The old is far better than the new. The miserable excuse that children read their library books during the week, and ought thus to be provided with entertaining week-day reading, will not serve those who profess to feed the lambs. It is not their business as Sabbath-school teachers, having the oversight of the children's spiritual and not of their intellectual training, to provide them with what the common school section libraries are intended to furnish.

In what we have said we have taken somewhat different ground from that usually taken by those who assail the Sabbath-school literature of the day. They charge upon this literature the crime of displaying before the minds of children an unnatural kind of religious life, consisting of "goody books," exhibiting a weak and sentimental piety. This is not true of the present race of Sabbath-school books. There has been a change. The "goody book" has passed away with all its faults. Poor picture though it was of Christian life, it made an attempt to pourtray a believer in Christ; weak and sentimental though its piety may have been, it did not dare to dispense with piety. Teachers and writers became tired of and disgusted with this namby-pamby class of literature, and the scholars' minds, we are