

send you you will see how the Pope urges the education of the youth. The public mind wants to be educated, and I do not know anything doing more good than wisely chosen, and widely and wisely circulated, tracts. They remove the bitter feeling and dread which Catholics have instilled in their hearts by the priests.

"In Naples a dear brother, Count Papengooth Oswald—a Russian who married an English lady of rank, cousin of Lord Radstock—is doing a wonderful work for God in the midst of the worst possible persecution. He and his wife have both means. His son is an evangelist, educated in Spurgeon's College, London. The Count is an ordained Close Communion Baptist, but carries on evangelical work in a catholic spirit. He has now three large Gospel halls, with a library and a sort of Young Men's Christian Association in one of them. He has four or five evangelists, all devoted to the work, with noon prayer-meeting daily, and the Gospel daily preached at eight p.m. Even the Queen of Italy has used all her influence against him to drive him out of the place he had leased opposite the royal palace and alongside the royal chapel at the Church of St. Francesco di Paolo. Law suit after law suit was brought against him, and he won, but it was brought to higher courts so as if possible to upset his lease, when God came to his rescue. He bought two stores on the right hand instead of the left of the church, paid 45,000 francs cash, sublet the left and place, and now they can no longer touch him, as the place is his, and he has made it into a sort of church, which is only separated by a wall from that to which the Queen goes to hear mass when she visits Naples. Then he bought from the Government a large suppressed convent on the island of Capri, at the mouth of the Bay of Naples, where he has a mission and a Christian's Rest. He is also about to open a house for young trained thieves. I was at Naples for eighteen days last month, and I love this Count Papengooth Oswald with an intense love because he is so lovingly kind and is the best Gospel preacher I have heard for many a day. He asks no help from anybody, but uses the means which he and his wife possess, and devotes all his time to his Master's work.

"The doors opened to me are so many that I find it hard to decide where to go to work. Our schools close for the summer months, and I have an idea that the best field would be Milan, for the National Exhibition was opened there on the 1st of May. I wrote to Count Papengooth Oswald, and we conferred together and prayed for direction, if it is our Heavenly Father's will that we should go there. The chief reason for thinking of Milan is that when people are away from home they will go to places which they would not dare to look at when under the eye of their priest. There also we could for three or four months give away two millions of tracts, which would go over all Italy. If we go we shall have to have a million of tracts. This dear brother's means are all needed to carry on his four places. He pays 9,000 francs yearly in rent, so we must lean on the Lord to give us the desire of our heart, and your letter is part of the answer, for I conclude from it that you feel sufficiently interested in Italy to want to help us in circulating some of God's truths, and in so doing to strike a blow at the fort of Papacy, which must and will crumble to pieces. Jesus shall reign and will. It is only a question of time. But if we pray, 'Thy kingdom come,' we must help it to come by earnest work.

"I have found two places in Italy where they publish good tracts. A Miss Emery, of England, has a young man in Rome who was studying for the ministry, but is now in the printing business. He prints all her tracts, and she has in many Italian cities tract distributors. She spends all her money and time in this way, and does good. She chooses and translates from English tracts and gives me some, but she has an enormous demand for them, and her means are limited. The poor young man prints for Van Meter the Sabbath school lessons, which feed all Italy, but with all he is on the brink of failure, and I fancy he will be closed up in a short time.

[After giving an account of a tract he had written and wanted to print and circulate, Mr. N. continues.] "Count Papengooth Oswald and I gave away some 250 or 300 at Tivoli, and only three refused them who could read. The priests and Catholics have felt so much the force of our tracts that they have formed a Society with a fund of 60,000 francs to start with, called the "Anti-Tract Society." They take our tracts and

answer them, shewing how false they are, etc., and these they circulate far and wide. Truly I do think this will glorify God, for it will make the people more curious to read them, and will make them read more carefully. If I do not go to Milan I hope to go to my native town of Sienna. It has from 22,000 to 25,000 of a population, and no Christian worker in it at all. Under the influence of the Papacy and the bitterest kind of Catholics, a few who tried the field had to leave."

#### THE PRESBYTERIAN SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S COURSE OF STUDY AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The action of the late General Assembly at Kingston, and some members thereof speak and write as if this department of Church work, for stimulating increased Bible study and directing the efforts of Sabbath school teachers and senior scholars, had been practically set aside and the labours of the Committee tacitly disapproved. On behalf of the Committee we beg to say to the Church that in no regard are either of these points touched by the amendment to the Committee's report; on the contrary, the vital fact and principle of the scheme is approved and commended to the Church as important work for the welfare of the youth, and the better equipment of parents and teachers for the supreme work of instruction in the Word of God.

#### THE VITAL FACT

Is the formation of classes in every congregation to pursue a special line of study approved by the General Assembly from year to year, and tested by written examinations under recognized regulations, but that the Assembly's Committee "shall not make provision for prizes, nor report the names of those who have passed the prescribed examination to the General Assembly."

This is a matter of detail that does not come within the scope of the Committee's concern, but is left to care for itself in congregations or Presbyteries, or by individuals interested therein. Practically the provision for prizes was not wrought by the late Sabbath School Committee; they were more concerned about the importance of the work, and now it is excluded from their regulations and responsibilities. On behalf of the Committee we beg to lay before the Church the great importance of the aims and objects contemplated by

#### "THE PRESBYTERIAN SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER'S COURSE OF STUDY."

It was presented to the Church last year in the simplest form possible. Five hundred enrolled themselves as students, and thirty-one are reported as having passed the prescribed examination for that year. These belong to all classes of congregations in cities, towns, villages and rural districts—Summerside, Prince Edward Island, Montreal, Toronto, Ingersoll, Chatham, N.B., Madoc, Thedford, Manotick, Latona, Annan, Red Bank, N.B.—and in every case the teachers gladly testify to the quickening and healthful influence of the work, and as greatly deepening their interest in Bible study. The above places are named as having those who passed the written examination. There were in all twenty-eight classes, shewing that circumstances, whether in cities, towns or country places, do not render the scheme impracticable.

#### IT IS A NOTABLE FACT

that adult classes for Bible study bear an alarmingly small proportion to the adult membership of the Church and to the young people's Associations for improvement and entertainment; this is especially so in the numbers who attend.

There is a general confession of difficulty or feebleness in keeping up the interest of such classes. May not the reason be that they have been too much conducted on the line of advanced childhood, with too little definiteness of aim, and too meagre testing of results, with possibly too little enthusiasm and preparation for such work?

It is an age of great mental activity among our youth, and of pre occupation among maturer men and women. There is no more important and practical problem bearing on the future of the fields already occupied than how to enlist and direct this activity into Bible investigation and Church work.

"The Teacher's Course of Study" in its connection with home life and Sabbath school work, with its

testing by written examination is an effort in this direction—with a constituency of twenty thousand senior scholars and ten thousand Sabbath school teachers. The momentous issues involved in the future of these to the Church ought to press home the fact, that a revival of Bible study is the most hopeful forerunner of a revival of religious life, and the two are vitally related—"If ye abide in Me and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you."

A short syllabus on each subject will be furnished, an examination on one of the Biblical subjects, and the same on one of the doctrinal subjects, while fifty per cent. in answers on each will be the standard. The questions will be scrupulously based on the syllabus and the specific lessons from Sabbath to Sabbath.

This course of study for 1882-3 is to run parallel with the International Course of Lessons and to be in two divisions—junior and senior, on same subjects, but different questions for examination.

#### BIBLICAL DEPARTMENT.

A paper on the Old Testament, in Exodus the lessons now going on.

A paper on the Gospel of Mark, commencing January 1st, 1882.

#### DOCTRINAL DEPARTMENT.

A paper on the Shorter Catechism from Quest. 29 to Quest. 38, inclusive.

#### ECCELESIASTICAL DEPARTMENT.

A paper on Church Government.

In the different bodies that now constitute the united Church the report of their Sabbath school Committees have been exclusively devoted to statistical information; and there has been for twenty-five years in almost every report a reiterated commendation of the importance of better equipped teachers and a fuller knowledge of the Word of God in the home and in the school.

These reports and recommendations have had their influence in directing the Church, but the spirit of our times, and the growing sense of the importance of the work, demand that something be done. The "Teacher's Course of Study" with its essential stimulus of written examinations looks in this direction, and the Committee regard it of special value in the objects they have in view. The Sabbath school report presented to the late General Assembly calls the attention of the Church to the important fact that there has been in use in our schools a great variety of hymn books, with the psalms largely if not wholly excluded; that the Sabbath school edition of the new hymn book, embraces psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, suited to every grade of scholars, the same, in doctrine, expression and melody, as that used by the assembled congregation; this book waits for acceptance by the schools of the Church.

And further, the important department of Sabbath school literature in the form of libraries has, during the past year, received very special attention, and with the co-operation of ministers and elders whose judgment is valuable to the Church, there have been after personal examination, six hundred volumes reported on, and a classified catalogue from which schools can make their selection is ready for distribution to all applicants. This arrangement gives to the Church a Board of Publication with full moral control and no financial responsibility. This effort has received the commendation of the General Assembly. These books are supplied to the trade by Messrs. Jas. Campbell & Son, Toronto, and all booksellers in the Dominion will give a reduction of twenty per cent. on the catalogue prices to every school ordering these books, their order being signed by the pastor or superintendent.

As an assurance of the anxiety of the Committee and the publishers to have the catalogue above suspicion, any person or school finding any of the books unsuitable in moral tone and healthy influence for the objects they have in view, will have the price refunded or the book replaced by another, upon their returning it with a written statement of their reasons why it should be excluded; and further, any good book or books recommended for this winnowed list to the publishers or either of the Conveners of the Assembly's Committee will receive careful attention. Only by such means and faithful help can we expect to enlarge the catalogue and make it all that is desirable.

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