

# The Wesleyan,

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## HOME RELIGIOUS TRAINING, IN ITS RELATION TO SABBATH SCHOOL INSTRUCTION.

(BY REV. J. S. COFFIN.)

We enter upon the consideration of this most important theme, assuming that the ultimate object of all religious instruction of the young, should be, their conversion to God. It is certainly necessary that the mind of the child be fortified by Scripture truth, against the attacks of error, which it is sure to encounter in after years. But permanent stability in the faith of the gospel can only be secured by the heartfelt experience of its saving truths. "No depth of earth" may well be written over against all mental experience of divine truth, which falls short of a real change of heart; and, "no true success," should be the complaint of every teacher's soul, until this supreme object be gained. It was an old Roman custom, beautifully suggestive, to turn the face of the new-born child towards the sun, thus signifying that it was to seek companionship amongst celestial scenes. The great design of all religious training, is to turn the face of the child Christ-ward, that so it may, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord." This foundation principle has of late years become to be recognized most earnestly in connexion with Sabbath school work; and the whole system throbs with the life-pulse of intense desire for, and aim after, the conversion of the young to Jesus. It is from this most interesting standpoint that we appeal to those parents or guardians of children, who may read these lines, while we seriously ask the question:—"How far can Sabbath-school effort succeed, in the absence of religious instruction at home?" The answer, by the light of the facts of life, is not a difficult one to find. Children may be taught ever so faithfully and well in Sabbath-school; but all such effort will be of little avail, unless it be followed up by careful, persevering home training. To expect, in connexion with any other department of education, that the end desired shall be secured by one lesson of an hour each week, even though that were given by a teacher of the most unexceptionable qualifications, would be self-evident folly. That lesson must be followed up at home, if you would make it efficient. Judging by every legitimate rule of application, Sabbath-school effort cannot succeed, unless it be assisted by faithful, persistent endeavor, on the part of those whose it is to direct and inspire the home circle.

There is one great danger to which the very perfection of our present Sabbath-school system peculiarly exposes us. It is that of practical disregard of the duty of home instruction. Of this latter there is an alarming neglect; and many parents are quite too ready to shift off their responsibility in this matter, upon the Sabbath school. And it may be, that there is a tendency, in some Sabbath school workers, to exalt their favorite institution, to the depreciation of an older and more honoured one—the family. The Sabbath school is "a" nursery of the Church; but the place, where, above all others, the religious instruction of children is demanded, and is made a blessing to them, is the family circle. Here there are bonds of sympathy, and facilities, favorable to this blessed labor, which cannot be found in the best sustained Sabbath school: it is simply home, where life is unconstrained and practical; where the child is ever under the parent's care; where obedience is natural, and love rules. Children obey none so naturally, believe none so implicitly, follow none so trustfully, as they do their parents.

God has made parents the natural guides of their children. The education of the soul for eternity begins at the fireside; and—whether for weal or woe—there it will be chiefly carried forward. Home religious training, is as much above, and more important than Sabbath school teaching, as the family is older than the Sabbath school. It will be a sad day for Sabbath schools, for children, for parents, and for the Church, when it becomes to be a recognized policy, to transfer the training of the young, from the family to any other agency under heaven. Sabbath schools were established by Robert Raikes, in Gloucester, about 100 years ago; the family was instituted by God himself, in Eden, nearly 6000 years ago. To give the former precedence over the latter, is contrary alike to reason, to nature, and to God. True, there are many families where God is not honored, and where children never hear the sweet story of Jesus and his love; while, on the part of many professedly pious parents, there is no adequate apprehension of the nature and tremendous importance of the godly training of their children. So much greater the guilt of such parents! But these facts do not militate against our argument; and still we say, that first in importance, is religious instruction at home; and after that, the Sabbath school, to strengthen and further by its own peculiar facilities, the home work; and also to supply, as far as possible, the "lack of service" of those parents, who refuse or neglect those duties to their children, which nature and religion devote upon them.

God forbid that we should indulge in one thought calculated to disparage unduly the Sabbath school work. It is a most valuable and indispensable auxiliary to home training; and the absorbing interest which is now taken in it, is one of the happiest omens of the glorious future which awaits—not far hence—the Church and the world. We have written what we have written, not because we love the Sabbath School less, but because we love the family more; and because we deprecate the most evident tendency which exists, towards the shifting off of parental responsibility, in the matter of the religious training of children, upon persons and agencies which we believe, should only occupy a secondary relation in this great work.

We recall to mind the cherubim which of old were placed, one at either end of the mercy seat, and whose wings, stretched toward each other, covered under their shadow the ark of the covenant; so would we have the family and the Sabbath school, each reaching towards the other, with never-ceasing prayer and yearning, while under their fostering wings our dear children should dwell in safety, amidst all the temptation and sin which surrounded them, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

With the permission of the Editor, we will return to this subject in a future article.

## MATTERS IN NEW YORK.

A. Oakley Hall, is one of this city's favorites. He was educated here, and entered as fully as any man ever did into the spirit of its life. He was a lawyer of repute, a brilliant writer, a witty speaker, and as full of warm impulses as a woman. At the time of the great Tweed frauds he was mayor of the city, and was implicated in them. He indignantly repelled the charge, and, after a fair and full trial, was honorably acquitted. Not a dollar of the plunder was traced to his possession, and his only complicity consisted in attaching his signature to papers without due examination. It was urged, and we believe rightly, that it was im-

possible for him to make such examination, and society took him back into its arms again.

Yet he never fully escaped, even in his own mind, and the recollection has haunted him everywhere. The frauds were so patent on their very face; the sums required so enormously disproportionate to the services rendered; the style of living so immensely beyond any possible honest earnings; and then—bitterest of all to a gentleman—they were such a vulgar gang of thieves, and "smelt so—pah!" why, a baby ought to have known it. And Oakley Hall was not a baby, but a full grown man-of-the-world, supposed to have all his wits about him. No wonder he grew sensitive, or that, as he saw Sweeney arrive, and knew the whole dirty business would be gone over again, he hastened to get out of the way.

There has been a curious case reported from Harlem, part of the city, of a colored girl who is sure that she has swallowed something in the water and there is a living reptile in her stomach. And strangely enough, she has found one man, who rates himself as a physician, to endorse her statement to a certain degree. Of course such a thing is utterly absurd since no animal can live in gastric fluid of the stomach but a few moments. But the curiosity of the matter is greatly heightened by the method of its refutation, before a class of students, by one of the physicians attached to the Insane Asylum. Dr. McDonald brought eight patients, men well advanced in life, suffering from hypochondria, to illustrate his position, and questioned some of them closely as to their ailments. One of them gravely asserted that he was well enough until he was taken to the "Governor's Castle," but that now he was suffering intensely, because "he had a Doctor inside of him." The poor fellow "knew he was there because I can feel him"—so he said. We have no room for the details, but the lecturer not only demonstrated the impossibility of such fancies, but showed clearly that others besides Hattie Brown of Harlem were laboring under similar delusions. And so vanishes another, and very common, excuse for "taking something" in the croton water to kill the animalcule.

But the most astounding fraud was reserved for Christian Aanson, a Dane, whose talent for fiction beats Hans Anderson hollow. This man, discharged from prison, finding the struggle for life too hard for him, attempts burglary in open day, and on arraignment boldly says that, on account of his former life, no one will trust him, and there is nothing left him but the stone walls of the penitentiary. The Judges of the court, warders, keepers, criminal lawyers and others brought constantly in contact with crime, stand aghast at the revelation and the problem it presents. Sympathy is aroused to an extraordinary degree. The prisoner becomes a pet at once, and receives favor he did not dream of. Stimulated by success, he tells of large bank robberies in which he was engaged, and to which he was forced by this cruel action on the part of society. "Give him a chance to be honest," is the universal cry, and having been decently clothed a situation is engaged for him, and New York breathes freer because of one good action. Alas for humanity! The fellow's story turns out to be a tissue of lies after all; the banks he named were not robbed at the time mentioned, nor at any other time; and he remains in the Tombs, a sort of white elephant to his keepers. Nevertheless it was a great sensation for a day or two, and we narrowly missed a mass meeting on the subject of "reformed convicts."

We are aware this is not a Methodist letter; but it may do you no harm to know there are some things in this city that an earnest Methodist might go far to alleviate, if not cure. Lux.  
March 23, 1877.  
—Central Advocate.

## RELIGIOUS BREVITIES.

In a lecture delivered at Hartford, Rev. Joseph Cook characterized certain Churches, "where the aristocratic members must be fanned with eloquent sermons, sprinkled with the lavender of ease, and swung in a hammock, one end of which is fastened to the cross, and the other held by the finger of Mammon."

Five hundred Mormons will leave St. George, Utah, in May next for Sonora, Mexico. They have been promised perfect religious toleration and large grants of land.

A business man of Boston, but a hard drinker, was taken by a friend to see Mr. Moody last week. He offered Mr. Moody \$1,000 to cure him of his appetite for liquor. He was pointed at once to the great Physician, and prayed for. That night, while in his own home, surrounded by praying friends, about twelve o'clock, he found deliverance. He has abolished rum and tobacco, he has no appetite for liquor, and is one of the happiest Christians in the City.—*Y. M. C. A. Bulletin.*

Bishop Hall, commenting on the New-Testament story of the Syrophenician woman, remarks: "O woman, say I, great is thy humility, great is thy patience; but O woman, says my Saviour, great is thy faith. He sees the root, we the stock. Nothing but faith could thus temper the heart, thus strengthen the soul, thus charm the tongue."

A Virginia pastor in a recent memorial sermon said of his people: "There is one testimony which I feel bound to record to the honor and justice of this congregation. For the thirty years that I was their pastor they promptly, to a day, met their pecuniary obligations to me."

A scene occurred at the adjournment of the legislature of Indiana, Thursday, March 15, which has seldom been paralleled in the history of state legislatures. It was the close of the last session to be held in the old state house, the bill for the new one having been passed the day before, and the fact that the old house, honored by the presence of so many of Indiana's noblest sons during the last forty years, was about to be abandoned, of course made an impression more or less interesting and solemn upon the minds of all present. The business was finished, and adjournment was the next thing in order. The Hon. Harry Craft, of Marion, a prominent citizen of Indianapolis, a staunch Methodist, as he is also a thorough Republican; proposed that before the motion to adjourn was put, the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Lanham, representative from Jefferson county, be called upon to offer prayer. The suggestion was agreed to unanimously, and the speaker called on Mr. Lanham. The house arose and stood in solemn silence while the reverend representative offered a most feeling petition to God, after which he pronounced the benediction. By this time the tide of religious feeling was running so strong that some one said, let us sing, and Mr. Swayze, also a grand old Methodist, a delegate to the last General Conference, began to sing, "Shall we gather at the river?" He sang alone through the verse, but when he reached the chorus the house joined him in singing, and the old building rang again, while tears in abundance spoke the depth of feeling which these exercises had awakened. Members shook hands as is sometimes done in a warm love-feast. At the close of the hymn the speaker declared the motion to adjourn carried by common consent. It is said that the legislature was opened with prayer in this same room forty years ago, and it was fitting that the final adjournment from the old building should be marked by this devout recognition of God.

## METHODIST TABLE-TALK.

Several essays by the late Rev. Benjamin Frakland, B. A., have just been published in a volume under the title of "The Age and the Gospel!" which is intended to be a memorial of the writer. It is somewhat singular that though he was for many years one of the Connexional editors, this book is sent out by Mr. Elliot Stock, and not from the Book-room.

I hear that thirty-two thousand copies of "Daniel Quorn," by Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, have been sold, and about seven thousand of his "Sermons to Children." These works must be amongst the most popular that the Book-room has ever been fortunate enough to secure.

Mr. Mullan will shortly publish Rev. William Arthur's new work about the Vatican Council. I did hear the precise title the other day, but forget it. It is said Mr. Arthur has spent a great amount of labour on its production, so we hope for a book that will take rank in a prominent position.

Writing of the Vatican Council reminds us of an absurd rumour that Papists have set afloat to the effect that Queen Victoria is likely before long to accede to Roman Catholicism, and that the stupid old gentleman who resides at the Vatican has already got the present prepared which he intends to give to Her Majesty when she is received into the arms of Mother Church! Dear old Pope! if he lives till he makes that present he will outlive all the existing schemers for his throne.

We had an interesting scene in the House of Commons on Monday evening, when Mr. Barran, the new Member for Leeds, catechised Lord Sandon about the expulsion of a little girl from a Government aided day school at Boston Spa, because she would not curtsy to the parson's wife in the street. Lord Sandon was not as amiable as usual. He was rather tart when he suggested that it was a waste of time to bring the matter before Parliament, and he looked both surprised and vexed when the thundering Noes of the Opposition forced him to his seat on his asking Mr. Barran to converse with him privately on the subject. I felt sorry for his lordship, for despite his Churchmanship he tries to deal fairly, with Nonconformists, and it seems a pity that he should have to suffer annoyance through the offended dignity of any obscure clergyman's wife. Still, it will never do to allow indiscreet and vain people to commit unjust and illegal acts without check or remonstrance. There is, however, little doubt that if protests had been sent to the Council Office from that quiet and pretty village of Boston Spa, justice would be done to the sturdy little Dissenter who would not curtsy to the great lady who is the wife of the vicar; and the clergyman would have received an intimation respecting the Government grant that would have probably suggested to him a topic of conversation with his excellent lady of practical importance.—*London Meth.*

A STRANGE CASE.—Mr. A. D. Goodwin, American Vice Consul, Secretary-Treasurer of the Joggins Mining Company Association, and member of the firm of Quill & Goodwin, doing business as ship-brokers, off Water Street, on Tuesday, March 20th, started from here, he having been given authority to wind up the affairs of the firm of Warner, Goodwin & Co., at Providence, R. I. On the 27th he telegraphed Gen. Warnes, American Consul here, that he had attended to the duty entrusted to him, that he had forwarded to the General \$5,000, and that he would arrive home on Thursday following. The money not coming to hand nor Goodwin not returning at the time expected, the General telegraphed to a friend at Providence and received an answer that Mr. Goodwin had left Providence two days before, and of course had time to be in St. John before the despatch was forwarded. General Warner left here in search of Mr. Goodwin last Monday, and up to last night no information had been received of his search being successful.—*St. John News.*