

HOW WE MAY ASSIST THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

By A PARENT.

First of all we should examine ourselves as to our appreciation of the duties that fatherhood and motherhood involve, and weigh well whether bringing up our children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord" is not one of these duties.

Then we might examine our children as to the results of religious training which they have received. A few simple questions on Bible history or Bible doctrine addressed to them may reveal to us a state of affairs which will astonish and pain us. We may find out that our children are growing up in what is practically complete ignorance of the Bible and its teachings.

We may then be led to examine our methods of religious instruction, and to see that these methods, if we have methods at all, are not sufficient for the purpose intended. We may discover that it is not sufficient to take or send our children occasionally to church, or to send them more or less regularly to Sabbath School. What shall we then, as conscientious parents, do to increase the efficiency of the present means of the most important kind of training?

We shall be members of some branch of the Church, attend its services regularly, and join in its worship devoutly. As soon as our little ones can toddle there, we shall take them to church with us. At a very early age children appreciate this privilege, and can be taught much as to the significance of God's ordinances.

We shall begin very early to instil into the young minds and hearts committed to our keeping Bible stories and Bible truths; and once begun, we shall continue Biblical instruction in some form as long as our children remain under the parental roof. We shall teach our children to pray, to love God and to keep his commandments. We shall do our utmost by precept and example, to induce them to become humble followers of Jesus. We shall have regular family worship twice a day, and try to make its exercises edifying even to the younger members of the family, joining instruction to devotion. We shall arrange for a special home hour on the Sabbath for such purposes as reading and explanation of the Word of God, reciting passages from it, drilling on the Shorter Catechism, and uniting in spiritual songs. An important place should be given to the study of the Sabbath School lesson together.

To give our most practical aid to Sabbath School we should attend it as regularly as we do the Church, if not as officers or teachers, then as scholars. Every Sabbath School should have its adult classes where in groups of two or three or a dozen the 'Children of a larger growth' may have converse concerning the things of the Kingdom.

How inspiring such conference is! It would be better for us to absent ourselves from one of the preaching services of the church, than not to attend the Bible-study service. Excellent as sermons are in their place there is often more real stimulus in a quiet talk with a few friends over a passage of Scripture, than in the passive, sometimes lazy, absorption of a well-prepared discourse.

At a very early age our children will be eager to go to Sabbath School with us, and no coaxing will be required to keep them in regular attendance till grown up. When fathers attend in considerable numbers there will be no difficulty in retaining hold of the older boys. How much help we can thus give in solving one of the most perplexing problems of Sabbath School work!

Finding out by experience the advantage of the best equipment for the Sabbath School, we shall contribute liberally to its funds. We shall inculcate the spirit of reverence in our children, and our very presence with them will do away with all difficulties in management to a great degree. If we but lead the way they will be orderly and attentive, they will attend regularly and punctually, they will be enthusiastic in the most fascinating, the most profitable of all studies.

Some may ask: How are we to find time for all this? It is not a question of *time*, but one of *interest*. We can always find time for the things we consider the most important, and this is a matter of supreme importance. Fifteen or twenty minutes a day, with an hour on Sunday, can surely be arranged for. Just before or after the morning and the evening meal will, in many homes, be the most suitable time for the daily devotions; Sabbath morning, or afternoon, or evening, according to circumstances, for the quiet hour. We shall have to sacrifice a little ease; we shall have to deny ourselves some pleasures; but what would we not give up when the eternal welfare of our boys and girls is at stake? Let us rise a little earlier every day; let us forego our Sunday nap; let us spend less time over the frivolities of fashion and the inanities of the newspaper and the novel; let us pay less attention to some other engagements and pursuits.

Others will plead lack of ability. The Lord does not expect us to do what we cannot do, we may be sure of that; but are we quite sure we cannot do, or at least attempt to do in humble reliance upon divine help, what has been suggested above? If we have only one talent, are we using it to the best advantage, or are we hiding it in the ground? Alas! alas! too often we deceive ourselves: what we really lack is not the *ability* but the *will*.
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"The parent who fails to develop in his child a fondness for good books and religious papers, is making one of the most serious mistakes in his life."