

### The Childlike Spirit.

BY REV. E. P. POWELL.

COLERIDGE says the true sign of a genius is a childlike spirit. The genius is especially needed in the Sunday-school. We have seen men walk in, with fifty years in all their bearing, stateliness in their words, and formality of demeanor every way, and yet expect to reach the hearts of the children. No, we are mistaken. They evidently had no idea of the children's hearts; but they had a vague idea of doing Christian duty. Their intellectual creed included the idea of certain things to be done for Christ. They were to give to support the ministry; they were to attend church regularly; and by a little extra work they could lay up considerable treasure in heaven, by "taking a class" in Sunday-school. One of these gentlemen came to us not long since, and very benevolently offered to take a class. I told him I had none to give away; if the superintendent had, he could inform him.

The childlike spirit does not mean talking or acting like a child in any sense whatever. It simply means to have the spirit of a child, to possess certain traits that make you *en rapport* with every child's heart. It means to be at least teachable, and ready to take more truth. It may be true that children are not always teachable, but they rarely conceive themselves to be beyond learning.

The best teacher is the best student, the best student not only of his Bible, but of ways and means and methods. The childlike spirit also implies plasticity, a willingness, and a consequent power to adapt our natures to those we try to teach. But it means, above everything, the readiness to enter into sympathy with the young. A true man is one who does not throw away his past, and live simply in the present, but whose boyhood is a reality still, a man who can walk back and forth, all the way from his tenth to his fortieth year. Now let a teacher with twelve year old boys live over again, or live in his twelfth year with them. He needs to feel how they are tempted, how they look at the world, and what kind of help they can take. There are twelfth year troubles that

other years do not have any share in. There is a twelfth year piety, and a fifteenth year piety; and they cannot be wisely measured by a fiftieth year piety. Children crave the sympathy of older people, and they avoid the old, only when they are made or taught to feel the difference in years.

The childlike *spirit* is what we insist upon, not childlike tones and mistakes and crudeness. To lay aside dignity, is not to become a child, it is simply to lose the proper clothing of age.



### Our Sunday School Literature.

BY REV. I. W. CANTER.

NOTHING can be more apparent to the intelligent Sunday-school worker at the present day than that our Sunday-School literature is not of the kind that develops spiritual life, and gives intellectual vigor to those who read it. Our libraries are filled with books that are not fit to be put into the hands of our children or to be read by the Church herself. They are nothing more than second or third rate novels, and would be little sought by those who are fond of reading fiction, and would never find their way into circulation, but for the fact that they are palmed off upon the market as religious books, written expressly for Sunday Schools. If Sunday-Schools did not patronize such publications they would not be written, for sale could never be found for them anywhere else. They are very cheap love stories. Some of them are too fictitious to make good fiction. The direct tendency of all such works is to engender a sickly sentimental taste; a morbid thirst for trashy tales woven by overwrought imaginations, too unreal to have the appearance of reality or truth in them. Every play must have an actor; so every tale must have a hero. The heroes or heroines of these Sunday-School stories, however, are not always the most pleasant and desirable characters to contemplate. Sometimes the hero is a boy of remarkably precocious development. He begins life well, he is promising, and you are expecting to find a moral youth in every particular. But after awhile his

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