

would have been confined to the Bible and the Shorter Catechism. The many topics which arise in this day would have been considered foreign to its objects. Were those who first organized Sabbath Schools to rise from their graves, how astonished would they be at the multifarious agencies that are now at work! It would of course have been a question with them whether genuine improvement has been made upon the old plans and ideas which marked the commencement of the Sabbath School work.

On the one hand, we cannot but acknowledge that a wonderful progress has been made. At first the Sabbath School was regarded as an expedient to meet the wants of the young who were unfortunately outside the pale of the Christian Church. Such an emphasis was placed on Family Instruction that the Sabbath School of to-day would have been considered an interference with parental duty. The work was commenced and for many years carried on in the interests of those who were receiving no form of Biblical instruction. But now the Mission School is growing less common, or it is regarded as the proper nucleus for a new church and congregation, and the work of Sabbath Schools is viewed as a necessary branch of every church organization. It is the children of Christian parents who are for the most part taught in them. So marked is this the case that few congregations are contented with their place of worship as suitable for the Sabbath School. They are everywhere erecting beautiful and commodious buildings for this work, which are furnished with a variety of rooms appropriate to the various classes from that of the Infants to the Bible Class. In these we find pictures, maps, blackboards, with one organ in the main room, and perhaps another in the Infant Class room. The exercises are without doubt interesting, as they command the enthusiastic attention of the scholars, and the application of the teachers is a subject which calls for the warmest admiration.

But on the other hand, the question arises, is the Sabbath School answering its proper purpose? Some hold that its grand object is the conversion of the children. It is to bring them to Christ. It is to make them Christians. No one will hardly dispute this. But is this end to be gained simply by interesting and animated services? Will good singing accomplish this? Will personal dealing with children lead to this result? Will a lively time, as it called, bring about the desired results? Will a sort of diluted preaching that relies upon sentimental stories do this? Now, while we do not say that this characterizes all the schools of the day, or even a majority of them, we fear that this is the case with too many. In the United States especially, it is common to occupy the session of the school with singing hymns and telling stories. The Shorter Catechism is ignored, and instead of searching the Scriptures, the leaves of the International Lessons are carelessly perused, and there is an end of the matter. They have had a live time, but have they had anything more than this?

It gives us sincere pleasure to observe that the speakers at the present Convention more

or less emphasised the use of the Catechism and a careful study of the Bible. Without this we cannot conceive that the Sabbath School will accomplish any great purpose. The Shorter Catechism as a compend of religious knowledge is an invaluable instrument in the training of the youthful mind. Its logical structure is such that it gives stamina to the intellect. No one can learn it without becoming a good logician and having a mastery of argument. It is like a chain complete in every link, and by its use the Scriptures assume an orderly shape in the mind of the pupil. While we allow that many things are in it which a child, nay a profound intellect, cannot grasp, yet when it is thoroughly learned in youth it becomes an invaluable possession in after years. Now, we protest against the growing tendency to let the Catechism alone, or relegate it to a few moments of the time devoted to instruction. We trust that strenuous efforts will be made to have it thoroughly taught in the schools. Especially is this needed in this country where it is banished from the public schools. Indeed, something more is required, for parents should make it a daily recitation in their families.

Then, the very excellency of the system of International Lessons points to a danger with regard to the Word of God itself. Isolated passages are being brought before the attention of the scholars, without any attempt being made to master the Old and New Testament history, to follow the books of the Bible in detail, to grasp the reasoning of a Paul. Our fear is that too hurried an attempt is being made to get over the Bible in a certain limited period. In saying this we have not a word against the present International plan, for we think it has answered many valuable purposes. It has given unity to the Sabbath School work throughout the world. It is an interesting thought that the same lesson is being taught in China, India and Japan, and in America and Great Britain, on one and the same day, if not at the precise moment. The International Series has given rise to a noble and enterprising literature which is doing much to stem the tides of infidelity and scepticism. Still we are not having the Bible mastered, and we look for some development, after the present plan has been completed, that will lead to a more thorough and comprehensive study of the Scriptures themselves.

It is a growing belief in which we share that the Sabbath School is gradually reaching a higher ideal. The time is not far distant when it will assume the form of a congregation, from its children to its oldest members, studying the Scriptures together. For the question presses, why should this mode of instruction be confined to children and young persons? Were a certain portion of the Sabbath devoted to a meeting of all the people for the thorough study of the Bible, it would lead to many valuable results. It would consolidate the congregation. It would make the young and old sympathise with one another. It would lead to conversion on a large scale, and to spirituality amongst the members. The people, having their attention turned to the Bible, would have little time to spend in

gossip and quarrelling, and they would make a demand for the highest order of preaching. What a stimulus to a minister, if he went to the pulpit with the feeling that his congregation was composed of earnest and praying Bible students.

We congratulate this Convention upon the success of its present sessions, and we pray that much good may flow from it to all the schools throughout the land.

**PRESBYTERY OF BARRIE.**—At the meeting of this Presbytery on 30th September and 1st October, among other transactions were the following: A call from Burns' and Dunn's churches to Mr. S. Acheson, of First Essa congregation, was sustained. These three congregations were united at former meeting of Presbytery, and this call unites them under one pastorate. Mr. Acheson accepted the call, and the Presbytery agreed to meet at Burns' church, on Wednesday, 15th instant, at two p.m., for his induction, and appointed Mr. McKee to preside and address the minister, Mr. Cochrane to preach, and Mr. Burnett to address the congregation. A call from the congregation of Mulmur and Tossorontio to Mr. Wm. Anderson was also sustained. It was signed by eighty-five members and sixty-two adherents, and promised stipend of \$600 with manse. Arrangements were made for his settlement should Mr. Anderson accept the call. The Presbytery granted the petition of a number of the members of Central Church, Craigvale and Lefroy, to be organized into a separate congregation in Innisfil, and appointed Mr. J. Gray to meet with them on Tuesday, Oct. 14th, at half-past one o'clock, at Church Hill, for the purpose of completing their organization. The supply of ordinances for the newly formed congregation was entrusted to the Presbytery's Home Mission Committee, and the congregation was directed to report at next meeting where they purpose to worship. The matter of separating Honeywood congregation from the other portion of the charge of Mr. Millard for the purpose of being united to Horning's Mills in the Presbytery of Toronto, has for some months engaged the attention of Presbytery. It was at length agreed at the meeting now reported to take these steps: To seek the sanction of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston for the transfer of the congregation, and to request the Presbytery of Toronto to secure payment of arrears of stipend due by congregation of Honeywood. A Presbyterial visitation of the congregations of First and Second Tecumseth and Adjala was appointed to be held within First Tecumseth Church, on Tuesday, 14th inst., at eleven a.m. The village of Duntroon was sanctioned as a site for a church proposed to be built by a portion of the congregation of West Nottawasaga. The Home Mission business, although carefully prepared for Presbytery, took up the greater part of the sederunt on Wednesday between nine a.m. and two p.m. Reports were received from the deputations to supplemented congregations and aid receiving stations, appointed in compliance with the tenth resolution of the Assembly on the report of the Home Mission Committee. Claims for labour in the mission field for the last six months were agreed on, also the grants to be applied for for the next year. A number of rules for the guidance of missionaries and mission stations drawn up by the Home Mission Committee were sanctioned. It was agreed to call the Rev. Hugh Thompson, now residing in Paris, to labour in the Maganetawan district, and to employ Mr. W. Clark, East River, Muskoka, as catechist for six months on probation. Mr. McKay of Parry Sound was appointed to visit McKellar, King, Dunchurch and Manitowan during winter, inquiring into their condition and readiness to receive supply next year. Mr. Rodgers was requested to visit Byng Inlet before the close of the season to inquire how the interests of the Church may be prosecuted there. The supply of the pulpit of Bond Head was handed over to the Home Mission Committee. Congregations were assessed at eight cents per member for Presbytery and Synod expenses, besides five cents for the General Assembly. Fourteen students from Montreal, Kingston and Toronto labouring in the bounds during summer were certified to their respective colleges.—ROBERT MOODIE, *Pres. Clerk*.