

Family Circle.

RELATION OF MINISTERS TO SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

The connexion of ministers with Sunday-schools is a subject that deserves and demands consideration. It is an omen for good, that these institutions are to be brought before the Congregational Union at its Autumnal Meeting this year. As a member of that Union, and a minister somewhat interested in the matter, I, for one, cannot reflect without hope on the results of the attention given to this subject by so important a body of intelligent, Christian, and earnest men. If their minds receive the conviction that there is a connection between ministers and Sunday-schools, the discussion will not be in vain. The sense of deep respect entertained for the influence and character of the pastoral office, renders strong the impression that happy will be that day for Sunday-schools, for churches, for pastors, for the Congregational denomination, & the nation, when the duty of ministers to their schools is understood and fulfilled. That there is a duty at all is only beginning to be seen by many, and by many is still unperceived. The views on this branch of pastoral superintendence expressed by the *British Banner*, in the review of the recent Conference of teachers in London, are worthy of much consideration, and will awaken reflection in many minds. To show that similar thoughts have been the opinions of other earnest men, the remarks of the Rev. John Todd, a pastor of a Congregational church, and a well-known authority on these institutions, are extracted for the perusal of the ministers who may not have met with them. They will carry weight, and be of use and may be commended with confidence to the attention of all:

“Ministers of the gospel should make the sabbath-school an important part of their pastoral charge.”

“Ministers have done much to rear up and sustain the institution of sabbath-schools. That they have not done more, and all that might be reasonably expected of them, I impute in part to the pressure which this age brings upon them, and partly to the fact that they have never examined to see precisely on what ground they should stand in regard to it. I do not believe any deficiencies on their part which might be pointed out are the result of design.

“Almost every sabbath-school contains hundreds of children in the morning of their being, open to the best impressions, and rapidly forming characters which will abide with them for ever.—These hundreds of immortal beings are placed in the hands of some thirty or forty teachers—the best probably to be obtained; but all the minister is supposed to know of them is, that they are members of his church, and persons of common abilities. I ask, now, if he would be willing to have as many adults taken from his pastoral charge, and once a week instructed in religion by those of whom he knows nothing, except that they are professors of religion? Would he be wise or safe, judicious or justifiable, in so doing? I think not. But are not these children as liable to be led wrong, biased by any want of judgment or piety on the part of the teachers, as the adult part of the congregation would be? It seems to me that the pastor ought to know who and what the teachers are, how they teach, what they teach, and what impressions they are making. Each teacher has some six or eight children committed to him, and he can teach them and form their character as no other human being can. Ministers may preach well, eloquently, learnedly, and powerfully; but in the pulpit they reach not the child—all goes over him. But the teacher can reach him, make impressions, and aid in forming his character, every sabbath. Were it only for the safety of the individual church, the minister ought to become deeply interested in the sabbath-school. But more: let the teachers be neglected, let them pick-up knowledge as they are able here and there, let them teach error, and we have a power growing up which is irresistible. Our churches are already in the hands of sabbath-school teachers. They give character, and create the fashions and feelings of our churches. Let them believe and go wrong, and we cherish an infant Hercules, whose club will shortly be used in beating and killing his own mother. Teachers must be taught, that they may feel the ground on which they tread is firm, and that their part is through light and under sunshine. If our teachers are not held responsible for what they do and teach, to the pastor and to the church, woe be to the hopes of stability in the walls of our Zion!—In order to meet the case, the minister must not be cold, formal indifferent; but his heart must warm over the school, as over his own children.—The safety of our churches, their stability, permanency, order, purity, knowledge—all, under God, depend on the character of our sabbath-schools.—That character cannot be what it should and must be, if there is any deficiency on the part of our ministers.

“Teachers are men—good men, I will suppose; but men who want improving, enlightening, and instructing. They are ready to admit this. Left to themselves, they grow discouraged and droop. They do as well as they can. The minister and the church stand off; they receive no countenance, no encouragement, no sympathy. They bring such explanations of Scripture as their limited means will allow; and thus each one teaching and explaining in his own way; they plod on from year to year. Is this right? Ought not the minister

to meet his teachers once a week, as a father—to feel that they are colleagues, with him, aiding him to take care of the lambs—instruct them in the lesson which they are to teach the ensuing sabbath, giving them his warm sympathy and co-operation? Ought not the sabbath-school to be made an integral and an important part of his pastoral charge, so that the minister shall feel that he is to be the guide of the teachers, and he is to keep the church awake and alive to the interest of the schools—that he is to do what he can to create an interest in the parents, in the congregation, and in all classes of his charge, so that it shall be cherished by all as the dearest boon committed to the church? If it is that he has not time for all this, I answer, it may be true; but he must take time. There is no part of his work that is more important than this.—He had better have fewer weekly meetings, make fewer pastoral visits, than to neglect the school.

“I cannot discuss this topic without once more urging that the pastor meet his teachers once a week, to instruct them in the lessons. They will gladly have him as the fountain whence they draw their knowledge, and by him they are willing to have their opinions shaped. They feel too, their need of mental discipline—their poverty of thought or illustration; and especially they feel their inability to obtain and grasp those great principles and views of the whole plan of redemption which are so desirable, and which once obtained, give a religious teacher such power. Ministers do not get this great system fully before the mind after years of study; is it any wonder that teachers cannot? The doctrines of the Bible, the great foundation stones of the moral temple, are what they want to measure and examine, to lay their hands, to rest their hopes upon, and by which they wish to teach better. The pastor only can thus instruct them.

“By meeting the teachers weekly, too, the minister would preach better. And how! Because he would be continually studying to simplify truth, and thought, and language, so that the children may understand what is taught them. In this way he will preach with more simplicity, more nature, more ease, more directness, and more illustration. So great a part of his instructions will not go over the heads of his hearers.

“I plead for this close connection between pastor and school, once more, because it will create a strong, a sweet, and a delightful tie between the pastor and his flock. The children will feel that their privileges are great, because the minister of God is so frequently present, and takes so deep an interest in the school. The teachers feel that they labor not in vain, and that however discouraging their prospects may be, there is one heart that will never grow cold, never lose its sympathy for them. The parents will feel that the piety and the intelligence of the church are enlisted in behalf of their children, and will be encouraged to co-operate. The church will feel that she must go with her leader, and will gather her sympathies around the vineyard of the Lord; and the minister himself will feel that when no success attends his labors, he has a cohort in his church, who by experience have learned what it is to labor in vain, and who will not be backward to sympathize with him. And when the holy man of God dies, there will be tears from the eyes of those in the sabbath-school room, who have looked upon him as their best friend.”

This passage may be pondered with advantage, and will suffice at present from the volume entitled, “The Sunday-School Teacher.”

TO BE CONTINUED.

HOW TO BE ALWAYS EASY: OR THE RIGHT USE OF THE EYES.

An Italian Bishop struggled through great difficulties without repining, and met with much opposition in the discharge of his episcopal functions, without ever betraying the least impatience. An intimate friend of his, who admired those virtues which he thought it impossible to imitate, one day asked the prelate if he could communicate the secret of being always easy? “Yes,” replied the old man, “I can teach you my secret, and with great facility; it consists in nothing more than making a right use of my eyes.” His friend urged him to explain himself. “Most willingly,” returned the Bishop; “in whatever state I am, I first of all look up to heaven, and remember that my principal business here is to prepare for my journey there; I then look down upon the earth, and call to mind how small a space I shall occupy in it when I come to be interred; I then look abroad in the world, and observe what multitudes there are who, in all respects, are more unhappy than myself. Thus I learn where true happiness is placed, where all cares must end, and how very little reason I have to repine or complain.”

HOME TRUTHS.

READER,—Last sabbath was a little unpleasant—that, no doubt, you know;—not so unpleasant, however, as would have prevented you, on any other day, from going half a mile, could you have gained a nine-pence; and yet you deserted the sanctuary during the day. Now this proves a few things:

Firstly, That you have little or no regard for the feelings of your pastor.

Secondly, That if you are a parent, you care but little what example you are setting before your children.

Thirdly, That you have little or no regard for your covenant vows.

Geographic and Historic.

A CINNAMON PLANTATION.

A cinnamon plantation somewhat resembles a luxuriant laurel copse, as the bushes are, by constant pruning, not allowed to exceed twelve or fifteen feet in height, except those that may be required for seed; and these will occasionally attain the height of thirty or forty feet. The trunk of the shrub measuring from eighteen to twenty-three inches in circumference. The propagation of the *Laurus cinnamomum* is conducted with facility.—seeds, plants, and roots (if transplanted with caution) alike thriving in an appropriate soil, that consists of a pure quartz sand, which, to the depth of many inches, is as fine as moist sugar, and perfectly white; it then assumes a gray tint, and in some of the mountainous districts, layers of black moss are found immediately under this species of sterile sandy soil. It is remarkable, that although white ants infest and abound in all cinnamon plantations in the island, these destructive insects do not injure the bushes in the slightest degree; and is a proverb with many of the Cingalese, that, to have a thriving plantation of cinnamon bushes, four plenties are requisite, namely—“plenty of sun, plenty of white ants, and plenty of water.” The foliage of the laurel is thick and of a dark shining green when arrived at maturity, but when young, the leaves are exquisitely beautiful, as their color then is a pale yellowish green, striped with bright red; from the old leaves a fragrant oil is distilled, which the natives use for medicinal purposes, and which is applied by us to many uses.—The cinnamon blossom is pure white, and scentless, the fruit or berry acorn-shaped and small, the hue of which as it ripens gradually changing from green to purple, and from this is obtained, by boiling, a substance like wax, which is frequently made into candles, and these emit an agreeable perfume whilst burning. Some enormously large tapers made from this wax were found by our troops in the King of Karly's palace. The spice is the inner bark of the shrub, and, in order to ascertain if this is in a fit state, the peeler makes a diagonal incision in a shoot, and, should the inner bark readily separate, the shrub is in a fit state for peeling.—The knives used by the cinnamon-peelers are of a peculiar form, being heavy, long, convex on one side, concave on the other, and the point of the instrument is remarkably fine. The bushes were generally peeled twice in the year, the first crop being the most abundant, and producing cinnamon of the finest quality. The first is obtained between the months of April and August, the second between November and January. The mode of obtaining the cinnamon is the following:—The cinnamon-peeler cuts off the shoots of a year old, which are of the thickness of a man's finger, varying in length from one to four feet. The leaves are then carefully stripped off and placed in heaps the peeler makes an incision with his knife the entire length of the shoot, separating the bark from the wood; he then carefully scrapes off the gray exterior skin, and the green inner epidermis, leaving the bark free from all fleshy substance, about the thickness of vellum, and of a greenish white color. The man then places the small portions of the bark on the larger pieces, spreading the cinnamon out in a warm and shady spot, so as to enable the spice to dry gradually but thoroughly. The sun's and atmospheric influence cause the bark to assume a brown hue, and pipe-like form; and, when all moisture is evaporated, the cinnamon is tied up into sheaves, or bundles, weighing from fifty to seventy pounds, and is sent to the market for sale. From the refuse of the bark, a golden-colored line-flavored aqueous fluid is distilled; from the root, camphor is procured, and the peeled twigs are converted into walking canes; in short, there is no part of the *Laurus cinnamomum* that cannot be applied to the use of man. The men who peel the cinnamon belong exclusively to a very low caste, called *Challias*, or cinnamon-peeler; and no native woman or man of a higher caste will associate with, or partake of food that has been prepared by these people,—the poor *Challia* being despised in the maritime districts, as the unfortunate *Rodia* is in the Kandian province.

THE CRUSADES.

Several hundred years before the historians of Europe began to write, Moses had defined the boundaries, and praised the fruitfulness of the promised land. When Britain was only inhabited by wild beast, Melchizedec, King of ancient Salem, in Palestine, offered sacrifices to the true God; and Abraham taught his servants to fear and obey him. This favored country the Creator of the universe fixed upon as the place where he revealed his purposes of mercy towards all nations. The wickedness of the Jewish nation exposed their country to the sword of the enemy, like Nineveh and Babylon. In the seventh century the Saracens became the lords of Palestine. Their power declined in a few hundred years, and towards the close of the eleventh century, the Turks, who had embraced the Mahomedan faith, had taken possession of the sacred territory. At that time the Greeks, the Italians, the Germans, and English professed to be Christians, but knew very little of the Christianity taught in the Bible, the substance of which is “peace on earth and good will to men.” True believers, from the days of the apostles, had looked upon Palestine with peculiar interest, and often made pilgrimages to Jerusalem to admire the scene of such glorious events. The Catholic pilgrims in the dark ages brought back to Europe the supposed remains of saints and martyrs, which were then very highly valued. So ignorant were the

generality of the people of the doctrine of salvation by faith, that an opinion prevailed that a pilgrimage to the sepulchre of Christ would atone for the most flagrant crimes. The Christian nations of Europe were oppressed and discontented, and imagined the end of the world was approaching, and that the Saviour of mankind would soon appear to judge the earth. Under the influence of terror and superstition they went in great numbers on pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The Turks hated the Christians, and sometimes committed galling cruelties on the defenceless pilgrims. Those who returned to Europe complained loudly of the barbarous Turks, and aroused the indignation of the Catholic nations.

This indignant feeling was inflamed to the highest pitch by a monk, Peter the Hermit, who had witnessed the cruelties the Turks had inflicted on the pilgrims. He is said to have gone out from city to city, carrying a large crucifix aloft, bare headed, with naked legs and arms, calling on the people to arm themselves, and rescue the holy sepulchre of Christ from the Turkish infidels. The masses of mankind have been liable in all ages to childish fits of excitement. They were then so little acquainted with the divine truth of the Scriptures, that they believed themselves to be doing the will of God when breaking the most obvious commandments. The pope and the priesthood encouraged the people in their ignorance and superstition.

Two great councils were held, one in France and the other in Italy, in which the invasion of Palestine was sanctioned by the princes, the bishops, and multitudes of people. Eighty thousand men gathered round the standard of Peter the Hermit, and were led by him and Walter the Penniless in the first crusade against the Turks. The hermit knew very little of war, and made no adequate provision for the wants of his followers. Sixty thousand men perished in reaching Constantinople.—The Greek emperor aided the remaining part to cross the straits into Asia in 1096. The Turkish sovereign, Solymn, utterly defeated them on the plains of Nicea.

Soon after the failure of Peter the Hermit, a better disciplined army, commanded by Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert Duke of Normandy, and other warlike leaders, made their way into Lesser Asia. They attacked and overcame the Turks, and Nicea, their capital city. The crusaders marched forward and took Antioch; at length they invaded Jerusalem, and, after six weeks' siege conquered the holy city, and murdered many thousands of the people, soiling the streets with blood, in 1099.—From slaughter they turned their thoughts to devotion, and wept and sang anthems at the sepulchre of Christ, in praise of the Redeemer of the world. The apostles had gone forth from Jerusalem among all nations, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; the professed Christian crusaders, after more than a thousand years had passed away, carried into Palestine the sword of vengeance. Had the money and the zeal wasted in the conquest of Judea, been employed in preaching peace and salvation, like the primitive Christians, to the ignorant tribes of northern Europe, Asia, and Africa, the nations of the earth by this time might perhaps have turned their swords into ploughshares, and desired war no more.

The crusaders were determined to erect a kingdom in the Holy Land, though its foundations were laid in blood, and they chose Godfrey of Bouillon the first Christian King of Jerusalem. The pope shortly afterwards appointed another in his place. The zeal of the Catholic nations broke out again in the year 1147. Conrad, Emperor of Germany, and the King of France, led two hundred thousand French, German, and English warriors on a new crusade. This great army, after suffering much from famine, was destroyed by the Sultan of Iconium. The three most powerful sovereigns of Europe, the King of France, the Emperor of Germany, and Richard I. King of England, in 1190, engaged in another crusade. The lion-hearted Richard of England defeated the Turkish general Saladin in several battles, and made his name the terror of the East. He concluded a treaty with the Turks, which secured to the Christians the privilege of visiting unmolested the sepulchre of Christ, and returned to Europe. From the beginning of the middle of the thirteenth century there were several other crusades. After all the treasure expended, and hundreds of thousands of lives lost, the kingdom of Jerusalem was overturned, and the Christians driven from all their conquests in the East, in the year 1291.

Had not the overruling providence of God caused happy effects to follow the evil doings of men, the world would have been thrown backward into pagan darkness. At the commencement of the crusades, a great part of Europe was governed by barons, counts, and dukes, who oppressed the people, and kept them in bondage. Many of these petty sovereigns perished in Asia, and the peasantry got together into boroughs, which at first were unions of ten families, and afterwards formed towns, with some sort of enclosure around them. Any man subject to the barons, who took refuge in a borough, and resided there for a year and a day, became a freeman. The boroughs thus gradually obtained importance, and had charters of freedom from different kings to secure their liberties.

In the dark ages true religious liberty and commerce declined very much, but the crusades helped to revive the trade of Europe by bringing the nations of the east and west into direct contact. In ancient times the merchants of Tyre and Alexandria exchanged the products of Arabia and India with the Greeks and Romans.—*Juvenile Instructor*