

the dollar which she had received for admission to the skating rink, and this, too, although she was very fond of skating. Let the young people in our Sabbath schools be taught their privileges in comparison with the sad condition of heathen children in Africa and China. "Heathenism all the world over," remarks an able writer, "is a fountain of unutterable woe. Charity opens not her hand; sympathy seldom sheds a tear; the sighs of the orphan are not heard; the destitute may perish unrelieved; the sick may languish unregarded; and the dying die unheeded and alone." And let our Sabbath school children become acquainted with the missionary triumphs of the Church with which they are connected—it may be on the palm-girt shores of Eriomanga, or in great cities on the magnificent rivers of Hindostan. The future herald of the Cross has oft been nurtured in the Sabbath school.

3. *Increase of the Church's ranks.* The young people should, of course, be taken by their parents to the sanctuary, and thus early trained to habitual attendance on its services. And there let them hear the pastor pray for a blessing on the Sabbath school, and let them also get a word or two that they can carry away. In due time, through the Lord's good hand upon them, they will increase the Church's ranks. Some years ago it was reported, at the annual meeting of the Sunday School Union in London, that nearly 8,000 scholars connected with the Union had joined Christian Churches during the past year. But upwards of 80,000 teachers had been engaged leading these 8,000 to the Saviour, who were, moreover, but as one in eighty-five of the entire number of children on the roll of the Sabbath schools of the Union. Nevertheless, the Sabbath school here plainly appears as the *nursery of the Church*, and as increasing its militant ranks. "Here" may we say, in the eloquent words of Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds, "has the future pastor first felt the inspiring power moulding him to an unknown work. Here has the missionary, the future bearer of the keys which shall unlock the word of life to hundreds of millions, and disimprison those hundreds of millions themselves, first received the mantle and the burden of his unessayed enterprise. Suppress the Sabbath school, and the energies of a people are benumbed; a principal scope for action and devotion is cut off: the heart of the Church beats languidly and heavily."

Before sitting down, permit me to read the following unpublished lines, which I have entitled

WATCHWORDS FOR SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

Fellow-pilgrims to New Salem,

Take these watchwords four—

"Forward!" "Watch!" "Hope Ever!" "Courage!"—
Till the journey's o'er.

"Forward!"—On from faith to virtue!

And from virtue pass

Up the white steps of the graces,
Shown in Scripture's glass.

"Watch!" For the sleeper marks not,

As life's chariot goes,

How the prospect opens—hears not
Fast approaching foes.

In the name of Christ "Hope Ever!"

Victory's sword He draws

For our Sabbath Schools and Churches—
Truth and Freedom's cause.

"Courage!" Darkling through yon valley

You must go with pain,

And encounter grim Apollyon
Ere the crown you gain.

Fellow-pilgrims to New Salem,

Take these watchwords four—

"Forward!" "Watch!" "Hope Ever!" "Courage!"—
Till the journey's o'er.

REPORT ON THE STATE OF RELIGION.

PRESENTED BEFORE THE QUEBEC PRESBYTERY BY THE REV. CALVIN
B. AMARON, M.A.

The importance of the subject under consideration is second to none, and such a subject should be dealt with in the most scrupulous and conscientious manner. It undoubtedly does not belong to us to judge our fellow-men, because we cannot read their hearts. It is quite true that God alone could give an exact report of the spiritual state of our individual congregations; but, at the same time, it is our bounden duty to put forth every effort to arrive at the truth in this matter, and Jesus Christ gives us tests whereby we may in some measure, nay, in a large measure determine, whether a man is a child of God or not.

In preparing this report, I am not asked to select those portions that are of an encouraging nature from the reports that have been sent me, and eliminate all the dark and discouraging features. I am asked, if I understand my duty, to give a faithful summary of the information given me by the different Sessions that have obeyed the instructions of the General Assembly.

I am sorry to state that, owing partly to neglect on the part of some Sessions, and partly to the fact that several of our churches are vacant, the report of this year is much more incomplete than that of last year. Moreover, I should call the attention of the Presbytery to the fact that, on reading the various reports, one is led to believe that they are not an embodiment of the views and convictions of the Session, but simply of the minister. These questions are sent to the Sessions of our congregations with a view of eliciting information from those who have the spiritual oversight of these congregations.

But of the sixteen pastoral charges, eleven only report, together with three mission stations. Sherbrooke, Kinnear's Mill, and St. Sylvestre, being vacant, send no report. I have no information from Scotstown and Megantic; these Sessions have paid no attention to the instructions of the General Assembly. The report contains, therefore, no information from that whole section of the Presbytery extending from Richmond to Kennebec Road, together with the other churches already mentioned. The following is a summary of the answers given to the questions of the General Assembly:

I. "What evidences of spiritual growth and practical piety have you observed?" etc.

Two Sessions report a marked improvement, as shown in the deep interest taken in the spiritual welfare of the Church, whilst all the others see no marked evidence of spiritual advancement beyond attendance on the means of grace. The services of the sanctuary are, on the whole, fairly attended, and two of the reports are most encouraging in this respect. Some complain again this year, that while one of the services is well attended, the other is almost wholly deserted. On the subject of family religion, very little information is given. In one congregation every family but one observes family worship. In another a goodly number of families attend to it, whilst many neglect it. Great progress seems to have been made in liberality. One congregation has given more this year than ever in its previous history; another has become self-sustaining, and has added \$100 to the minister's stipend, at the same time contributing more liberally towards the schemes of the Church; a third has paid a debt of \$3,000, and has done well towards the support of missions. All the reports indicate encouraging progress.

There is a general complaint that the young people take little interest in their souls' salvation; few additions have been made to the membership of the Church—one Session reports none at all during the year, the young people preferring the pleasures of the world.

With one exception, no special means have been employed to promote spiritual life. Special evangelistic services were held in one congregation with good results, especially among professing disciples.

II. *Hindrances.*—The hindrances to Christian life are those which Satan has ever put in the way, everywhere, and in all ages. The following list I have gathered from the reports:

1. Spirit of worldliness; carelessness in attending the services of the sanctuary; indifference to religious things generally; a lack of living piety among professed disciples, and conformity to the world, which leads Christians to encourage their children to seek worldly associations; ignorance of the Bible.

2. Thirst for riches; pleasure seeking; promiscuous dancing; nights spent in godless revelry, even by professing Christians; the gaieties of life; snow-shoe tramps at night; theatre going and theatrical performances. I call attention to the fact that no less than five or six Sessions give dancing-parties as one of the main causes of spiritual deadness. It would not be amiss for the Presbytery to take cognizance of this fact. Bazaars with lotteries, card-playing, visiting on the Sabbath day, liquor saloons and strong drink—these are some of the main hindrances to which the attention of the Presbytery is called. One happy Session is able to state that "there is nothing in particular practised among the people that can be regarded as a hindrance to religion."

The measures taken to overcome or remove these are:—Faithful preaching; earnest endeavours put forth to lead men to seek higher objects than those offered by the world; unmeasured condemnation of sinful practices; constant appeal to repentance, and to separate one's self from the world; preaching concerning the dangers of sin; earnest warnings, faithful individual dealings, and fervent prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the word preached.

III. *Neglect of Ordinances.*—One Session reports that there are many who neglect the means of grace—many who once were Presbyterians. All speak of individual cases, and many lament the fact that God's house is neglected by the heads of families and their young men. The greater number of the reports state, however, that there are but few families that neglect totally the ordinances of God's house, and in some quarters several who did not attend church are now seen there more frequently. Such neglect is attributed to three causes: 1. Absolute indifference; 2. Scepticism; 3. The inconsistencies of Christians. It is often objected that Church gatherings are too often characterized by a spirit of bitterness which is little in keeping with the character of Christ.

The means suggested for reaching these negligent persons are the only available ones: personal dealing; invitation to repentance and to come to the house of God; an appeal to their friends to draw them out. One report adds: "We think that preaching alone will not do; these non-church-goers need to see in all Christians the patient, gentle, loving, charitable, but firm and brave character of Christ."

The report has its discouraging, but also its encouraging features. It speaks to us all, no doubt, of duties left undone, and is an incentive to a more earnest consecration of ourselves to the main work of religion—viz., the salvation of souls. While we humble ourselves, let us take courage and thank God for whatever good has been done.

A FAITHFUL PASTOR—A WISE COUNSELLOR—A TRUE FRIEND.

Thank God, there are ministers to whom these appellations are due, for we know many congregations gratefully acknowledge their possession.

Such an one becomes a source of strength, not with his own people alone, but to the whole community in which for the time being his lot is cast.

In him there is no narrowness, seeing merit only in those with whom he is in Church fellowship, or over whom he has charge. On the contrary, he is invariably found to be full of an earnest desire for the general good, lending a helping hand to every interest likely to promote the welfare of those around him, while at the same time he guards and watches the flock more particularly under his immediate care.

His character as a Christian minister, a worthy citizen, becomes the admiration of all, but intensified by a retiring disposition—a keeping in the background inclinations which seem to be the necessary concomitants of such a life.

Although striving with many prayers to lead those committed to him away from the pleasures and the vain pursuits of this transitory scene up to Him whose he is and whom he serves, he will also be found aiding others in the vineyard of a common Lord and Master.

The meetings and partings of this world fully demonstrate these truths. The first hearty grasp of the hand, the warm welcome, are often brought about by what is known to have been the past record. The severing of ties binding an affectionate pastor to a devoted people—the loving, tearful goodbye—are frequently caused through the field of usefulness expanding, the call of duty becoming louder to do greater things for Him who gave Himself for us.

Wherever it may be, the experience is the same. This week the place from which these reflections are dated has recognized the influence of a catholic spirit of this description—the charity of a career like this.

Far be it from the writer to dwell upon the labours of one who is so well known throughout the Church; but remembering what he has been to him as pastor, counsellor, friend, he ventures respectfully to hope that as the departure hinted at is most assuredly Ottawa's loss, so it may be in a much greater measure Winnipeg's gain. There he will ever be lovingly remembered for his happy, gentle nature, and for his noble work's sake.

J. B. H.

Ottawa, 13th June, 1882.