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Presbyterian Church of Canada

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Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year Eighteen Hundred and Ninety,
by DAVID FOTHERINGHAM, in the office of the Minister of Agriculture.

[PRIVATE.—For the use of Members of the Assembly's Committee
on Sabbath Schools only.]

A HAND-BOOK

— ON —

SABBATH SCHOOL WORK.

INTRODUCTORY.

Wise treatment at the beginning vastly important.—Illustration: Plants under culture—under neglect.—So of childhood.—God's purposes regarding children.—Scripture.—The need of training for service in the Mission fields.—Training should be well done.—Assembly desires a Hand-Book.—Why the teaching of doctrines is not treated in this Hand-Book.

As in the natural so in the moral and spiritual world, much depends upon BEGINNINGS, upon the wise treatment and development of that from which we seek satisfactory and abiding results. In dealing with the vegetable kingdom, the natures of the seed, the soil and the climate are carefully considered before the cultivation of a plant is attempted. When the plant appears, its growth is watched and directed with patient care and skill in proportion to its value in the future. There must be protection from enemies, grafting, pruning, shelter, enriching of soil, transplanting, development under gradual exposure, and every other appliance that a full knowledge of its nature and possibilities suggest for its highest development. In due time the fruit appears in perfection and abundance to reward the toil and faith of the husbandman. Impatient, unskilful hands could secure no such results.

This parable of nature shows God's plan of development in His Church. He intends that her children, His tender plants, with almost infinite possibilities of love and service, under gracious influences, shall be studied, sheltered, guided, chastened, nourished, strengthened, developed into perfect men in Christ, full of mercy and good fruits. Without shelter and cultivation the plant could only develop into an unsightly member of the ground. Much more, a child neglected and exposed to the fierce assaults of evil, becomes a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. But it is not multiplied and unmistakable proof of His loving care for our toward children: "The promise is unto you and to your children." "And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children." "Suffer the little children to come unto me." "Feed my lambs." "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." Are there 1,000,000,000 souls in our world that never heard of Jesus and his love, sinning and perishing without law? How, oh, how are they to be saved? By believing the Gospel. But through whom are they to hear the Gospel? The Church, no doubt. But how is the Church to rise to the mighty responsibility? The surest and swiftest way, we verily believe, would be for the Church of Christ to turn the full tide of her life and love and labour on the training of her children in the knowledge and service of Him who makes us our brother's keeper. Then would the redemption of the world draw near. For, would not her children, consecrated to and accepted by Him in infancy, nurtured for Him in the home, watched over and trained by her in school and congregation, grow up strong, wise, pure, self-sacrificing, liberal, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, to go or send at the Master's bidding?