

EDUCATION.

The Bible and Religious Instruction in the Public Schools of New England.

From the Eighth Report of the Massachusetts Board of Education.

We cannot conclude this report without referring to a subject of vital interest, not only to the prosperity of all our institutions of learning, but to the welfare, also, of all the children in the Commonwealth. We refer to the importance of cultivating the moral and religious, as well as the intellectual faculties of our children by the frequent and careful perusal of the Sacred Scriptures.

It is gratifying to the Board to be able to announce that, so far as there was reason for desiring a change in regard to the use of the Bible in our schools, the change which has taken place within the last few years is a favorable one. In one of the early Reports of the Secretary, after careful inquiry on his part, the fact was communicated to the Board and the public, that the Bible was then used in almost all the schools, either as a devotional or as a reading-book. But there were exceptions. From inquiries, however, which have been made by the Secretary during the present year, (1844,) it now appears that, of 308 cities and towns in the Commonwealth, it is used in the schools of 258 towns, as a regular reading-book, prescribed by the school committees; and, that, in the schools of 88 towns, it is used, either as a reading-book, or in the exercises of devotion. From nine of the remaining towns, no answers were received,—and in the schools of three towns only, it is found not to be used at all.

By the direction of the Board, it has been in daily use, in all the Normal Schools, from their commencement, and it is believed that it is used, in like manner, in all our academies. While we rejoice at the change, which has taken place, in this respect, the fact, that there is a single institution of learning, in the peculiar home of the Pilgrims, where the light of the Bible is excluded from the minds of the pupils, is a ground of serious apprehension and regret.

While the Christian world is subdivided into such a variety of religious sects, it is to be expected that their jealousies would be excited by sectarian instruction, or by the introduction of books of a denominational character. And, indeed, as well in the present state of public opinion, as of the enactments of our Legislature, that teacher would act strangely in contravention of his duty, who should attempt to disregard such a well-understood and beneficial provision of the laws. But the Bible has nothing in it of a sectarian character. All Christian sects regard it as the text-book of their faith. Our fathers brought it with them, as their choicest patrimony, and bequeathed it to us, as our richest inheritance. They imbued their children with its spirit. They founded our Government, upon its principles; and, to render the Government permanent, they established the institution of the Common School, as a nursery of piety.

It is, also, worthy of remark, that while our Legislatures have guarded, sedulously and effectually, our Common Schools, from becoming places for sectarian instruction, they have, at the same time, provided for the instruction of the youth, both in the schools and in the other institutions of learning, in a knowledge of the principles of the Christian religion. The 7th sec of the 23rd chap. of the Revised Statutes, enjoins it, as a duty, upon all the instructors of youth, that they shall impress upon their minds, "the principles of piety"—and those other virtues, which are the basis upon which our constitution is founded, and that they shall also endeavour to lead their pupils to a clear understanding of the tendency of the above mentioned virtues, to preserve and perfect that constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness, and, also, to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.

It is difficult to perceive, how these results can be accomplished, without a frequent reference to the pages of the sacred volume, and it is equally difficult to imagine what objection can be raised to the study of a book, which is not only the palladium of our liberties, but the very foundation also, of our most cherished hopes.

If it is said, by the use of the Bible in the schools, a wrong interpretation may be given by the teacher, to any of its passages, the reply is an obvious one, that this would be a fault in the manner of instruction, provided for by the law, and not in the use of the Bible itself. But it may be further replied, that even this danger is guarded against. The spirit of the law is opposed to it; and public opinion, in this country stronger than the law, would, at once, put down the attempt of any teacher, to violate the rights of conscience, by giving to his pupils sectarian instruction. It will be recollected that the Common Schools are under the charge of committees chosen by the people, who have power to prescribe the books, and to direct the manner and the amount of religious instruction.

If it is said, also, that the Church, the Sabbath School, and the family, are places better adapted than the Common School, for the education of children in the principles of the Christian religion, we reply, that though undoubtedly it is the duty of parents and of religious teachers, to co-operate with the Common School teachers in their religious instructions, yet it is only in the Common School that thousands of the children in our Commonwealth can be thus instructed.—How many are there of those, who swarm in our cities, and who are scattered throughout our hundreds of towns, who, save in the public schools, receive no religious instruction? They hear it not from the lips of an ignorant and vicious parent. They receive it not at the Sabbath School, or from the pulpit. And if in the Common School, the impulses of their souls are not awakened and directed by judicious religious instruction, they will grow up, active in error, and fertile in crime.

The Board do not propose, indeed, they are unable to suggest any legislation to remedy the evil. It is beyond legislation! Like legislation itself, it depends upon popular opinion; and if that is not awakened to it, the evil is irremediable. But if the community will look back upon the institutions of the Pilgrims, and contemplate the wonders which those institutions have wrought for us; if it will compare the moral aspect of New England, with the most favoured features of a nation, where the light of the gospel has shone with less effulgence; or, if it will compare an individual, subjected at an early age to religious influences, his energies aroused, guided and controlled by judicious discipline, and his affections trained and confirmed in habits of kindness and benevolence, with one reared without principle, educated without morals, corrupting youth by his example, and harassing society by his crimes, it will form, it is believed a more correct estimate of the unspeakable value of a religious education.

STANDING REGULATIONS.

Correspondents must send their communications written in a legible hand, and free of postage; and enclose in its confidence, with their proper names and address.

The Editor holds not himself responsible for the opinions of correspondents—claims the privilege of modifying or rejecting articles offered for publication—and cannot pledge himself to return those not inserted.

Communications on business, and those intended for publication, when contained in the same letter, should, if practicable, be written on different parts of the sheet, so that they may be separated when they reach us. Grammatical errors and exchanges should be addressed to the Editor, Halifax, N. S.

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THE WESLEYAN.

Halifax, Saturday Morning, August 25, 1849.

Concentration and Extension of Ministerial Labour.

On the formation and execution of judicious plans, much of the success of ministerial effort depends. Ample scope is here presented for the manifestation both of wisdom and prudence.

But before we proceed, let us observe, that although we think it not absolutely necessary for the vindication of our orthodoxy—yet to bar out all pretence for mistrust, it may be discreet in us—to state, that, in our unreserved judgment, all arrangements and all agencies, are alone efficient to the accomplishment of spiritual good, so far as they are attended with the favouring and concurring blessing of God. So that, should this first principle not be reiterated in express terms on every occasion in which the effectuation of moral or religious good is spoken of, let us not, in all justice, be suspected of *legality*, contradistinguished from *evangelicalism*, nor charged with *suppression veri*, a suppression of the truth. On the soundness of our views on this all-important point, we fear no scrutiny—are apprehensive of no exposure.—For the satisfaction of those beyond the pale of our Church, who may have, from a combination of causes, which require only this general reference, contracted, and indulged against us erroneous opinions, we may here assure them, that, as *WESLEYANS*, or *evan-*

gelical Arminians, we subscribe, *ex animo*, to the sentiment expressed by the bard of Methodism in the following verse—

"Except the Lord conduct the plan,
The best concerted schemes are vain,
And never can succeed;
We spend our wretched strength for naught;
But if our works in thee be wrought,
They shall be blest indeed."

After this short digression, which we have deemed requisite in order to guard against misapprehension, we remark in the pursuance of our subject, that, as instruments, employed by the Head of the Church in the furtherance of his cause, and the Church's interests, Ministers of Christ have on their part something to do. They are "workers together"—or as variously expressed—"labourers together with God," and are required to act the part of "wise master-builders" in erecting "God's building."

That a given amount of labour may be productive of the greatest amount of good, plans are requisite for the right direction of that labour. Effort made without design is not wisely made—it may, or it may not, accomplish good—or it may result in some, but not in all that good, of which it might have been capable, had it been put forth under the guidance of wise counsel and an enlightened zeal; or, in other words, had there been a judicious adaptation of the means used to the end to be secured. We cannot conceal from ourselves the fact, that much zeal has been manifested, and much effort made, in the cause of the Redeemer, by some Ministers of the Gospel; the results of which have been comparatively trivial, the effects transient. We account for this to-be lamented failure principally on the ground of the zealous labour having been without forethought,—desultory,—prompted by momentary excitement, instead of having been the consequent of a deeply-matured, systematic, and wise scheme of operation. On this topic we cannot now further dilate; sufficient we think has been said to justify the inference, that wisdom and prudence in the plans adopted and carried out by the Ministry are necessary to secure great, extensive, and permanent benefit.

Some there are who are altogether for extending their ministerial labour, scattering the precious seed of the kingdom over the greatest possible extent of surface. Others are as exclusively for concentrating their efforts upon one or more given points, to the utter neglect of adjoining vicinities; their aim being to produce an impression on those by whom they are more immediately surrounded. Both of these plans are defective and must prove unsuccessful in the promotion of any very extensive and lasting good. The labours of the first class are in a great measure lost on account of being spread over too great a surface, like a handful of seed scattered over a spacious field,—lost for want of repetition, or only repetition during long intervals of time,—as if a single blow of the hammer, or a succession of strokes at long-intervening periods, could make present or extensive impressions on the mountain's base! The labours of the other class are openly and manifestly too much circumscribed to effect other than limited results; as if an abundant harvest could reasonably be expected from a large quantity of seed sown within the circumference of a few feet of earth! There may be fruit—but from the nature of the case it cannot be extensive.

The wise and happy plan, in our judgment, is to be found in the *union*, as far as possible, of these extremes. Whilst we advocate, as we did in our last issue, *extension* of ministerial labour, carrying the

Gospel, and offering its blessings, and exhibiting its sanctions, to as many persons and congregations in different localities as is wisely practicable, we also plead for its *concentration*; striving, in the same wisdom to produce some lasting effects in what may be justly called, without overlooking the claims of other neighbourhoods, the more important or central points within the range of our operations.

The subject will be continued in our next.

LAYING THE CORNER STONE OF THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL AT THE MUNCEY MISSION, CANADA WEST.

On Thursday, the 17th inst., the corner stone of the Industrial School at the Muncy Mission was laid by the Rev. Dr. RICHY, President of the Conference and the Rev. E. WOOD, Superintendent of Missions, assisted by several other Ministers, S. Morrell, Esq., Ex-Mayor of London, and the chiefs of the Muncy, the Ojebway, and the Oneida Tribes.

The day was delightful and the scene no less so. A deep interest was manifestly felt by the great body of Christianized Indians assembled on the occasion, whilst here and there a pagan Indian, prompted by curiosity and interest, could be seen mingling with the throng or cautiously approaching the outskirts of the congregation in order to be a witness of the ceremony. Five or six hundred of the Red men were assembled at the hour appointed for the laying of the corner stone, above which floated the Banner of England. The Oneida tribe had marched from their village, preceded by the Chief bearing the national flag, and who, on arriving at the spot placed the banner above the stone. The Ojebways, the Muncy, and the Oneidas mingled together and formed a respectable, as they did a numerous, company—their dress and deportment contrasting most strongly with the few pagans in the immediate vicinity.

A number of attached friends in London, anxious to be present with their Indian brethren, so interesting an occasion, early arrived at the Muncy Mission. Although they had travelled one-and-twenty miles before 10 o'clock, A. M. in order to be present at the commencement of the service, they exhibited nothing of weariness or fatigue during the protracted ceremony. The presence of so many ladies and gentlemen—the occupants of twenty carriages—afforded great gratification to all, and especially to the residents on the mission.

At 11 o'clock the Rev. Enoch Wood, Superintendent of Missions, gave out the 625th hymn of the assembly uniting in singing the appropriate lines of the beautiful stanza. The Rev. Dr. Richey, President of the Conference, read the lessons, judiciously selected parts of the Holy Scriptures. An appropriate prayer was offered by the Rev. J. Carroll, Chairman of the London District, in which the congregation devoutly joined, heartily responding to the invocations, and fervently uniting in the ascription of praise to the author of all good.—*Christian Guardian of the 25th July.*

Several suitable documents, placed in a paper case, were inserted in a cavity of the corner stone.

The School, designed for Indian youth of both sexes, is to be supported by the voluntary Annuities of several of the Indian tribes in the vicinity, assisted by the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

A commemorative feast was held on the occasion, and conducted in a religious manner, being "nothing to wish for—nothing to regret." The site of the School is happily chosen, situated on a beautiful elevation, with sloping banks down to the limpid waters of the adjacent Thames.

At a general council, it was unanimously resolved to call the new School and premises the *Wesleyan Ojebway Industrial School, Muncy, Elgin*; the name of His Excellency being attached on account of the deep interest he has manifested in the school, and his friendship with the Indians during his residence in the West.—*Condensed from the same Paper.*

We have transferred the above information with great pleasure to our readers.

you prepared for eternity?" The father, with his sunken eyes; he looked upon his leaden silence reigned; both were speechless. The father addressed the boy "D6 pray for me?" "Yes, father, I do," replied. "Then pray now," rejoined the boy kneeling down, and with fervency his supplications to his heavenly Father would grant to his earthly parents the influences of his Holy Spirit, and should see fit to remove him from this world to be admitted into that rest which prepared for all whose hearts have been by grace. When the boy arose from his knees, the father appeared to have enjoyed his prayer. He then requested that all his family should be gathered together in his room, and by his domestic circle, he again desired to engage in prayer. Thus was a scholar engaged in this heavenly exercise of both his parents, and his sisters, nearly twenty years older than himself, shortly afterwards the father breathed

his last breath. The boy, who was a school teacher;—fancy if you can enter upon your next Sabbath day's at you see this delightful spectacle. Be at what the Lord has done for one he for any or all. The power of the Almighty is not weaker than ever was, nor is his as effectual. The deficiency is not in ourselves.—*English Periodical.*

A Good Sabbath School Scholar.

A good scholar is one who is early in his Sabbath School. And if he be present a few minutes before the opening of the school does not spend the time in trifling, or playing with rude boys or girls. He sees him looking over his lessons, rehearsing his memory, so that he may be able to answer correctly when required to do so. He endeavours to sing the hymns of God when the hymn is given out by the superintendent, and he quietly kneels down to the teacher in prayer to the Author of all mercies. He does not whisper to his neighbour, nor does he spend the time of prayer in talking about him or thinking of his sports or his During School hours he is attentive to the instructions of his instructor and is delighted to receive his excellent counsels. Often heart is lifted up in prayer that God may instruct upon his mind. Obedient, pious, kind and gentle to his school-fellows, he is beloved by teachers and scholars; and he is beloved by his God.

When from school he proceeds home, he thinks of all he has heard and resolved to do by the lessons he has received. He is the Sabbath and that it would be to be romping and playing by the way of home from the Sabbath School. He is a Sabbath, for it is God's day—the day the Lord especially claims for himself. A scholar, therefore, keeps holy the Lord's day, reads good books, attends Church, listens to good advice of his parents and friends, retiring to bed he commends himself to the watch-care of the Great God who slumbers not sleeps. Then, during the days of the week he pursues the lessons he learned on the Sabbath, strives to practice what he then learned, refrains from the company of idle and companions, obeys his parents, and endeavours in all things to please them.

Little Reader, are you a good Sabbath School scholar? Do you discover any likeness to the description we have just given? Draw an outline of a bad scholar; but not do it now. If you are not like the scholar in every particular, try and become every body loves a good child. God loves a child—a bad one he cannot so love; and an good children die they go to heaven, and good ones, when they die go to hell their worm never dies and their fire is not quenched.—*Sunday School Guardian.*

The Way to Win.

On the anniversary of a Sabbath in London, two little girls presented themselves to receive a prize, one of whom had memorized more than the other, both having learned several thousand verses of Scripture. A gentleman inquired:— "Couldn't you have learned one verse more than this have kept up with Martha?" "Yes, sir," the child replied, "but I loved and kept back on purpose." "Was there any of these verses you have that taught you this lesson?" "Yes, sir," she answered blushing, "I preferred one another."

ATH SCHOOL CLAIMS.—These Institutions are important claims on the attention of the public in the present day. They are her nurseries, which she must now look for accessions should take them under their special care. The results will richly reward their efforts.