

ment of the common school works. Popular speakers ridicule the idea of the young being taught the love of Christ by their daily secular instructors. Teachers are thus led to give up the religious department of their work, and to confine themselves to the secular. And so the school ceases in a great measure to be the scene of Scriptural instruction and of Christian discipline.

The religious training which children do not get at school they do not get at home. The parental training which was formerly so common is rarely kept up now. Parents are generally absorbed in their earthly employments; children are early taken from school and put to work, and are thus set free from the control alike of teachers and of parents.

The Sabbath school, with its hour or two of religious instruction once a week, does not supply the want of the years of daily and thorough scriptural instruction in the school, and the hourly guidance and guardianship of a Christian and prayerful parentage.

When children thus fatally mismanaged grow up to young men and women, and enter the classes of a minister, during the short weekly meeting which he holds, he finds it impossible to find effectual access for the truth to their ill-informed minds, and their ill-conditioned hearts.

Meantime they are going out into the world, to be carried away by its pleasures and absorbed by its business. And so, when they come to the sanctuary on Sabbath, they are full of vanity and earthliness, and utterly unprepared to appreciate, or even to understand, the lessons of the Gospel.

"But they get plenty of good and cheap reading, adapted to their tastes, and full of interest."—Yes, sensational periodicals and publications of every kind are thrust upon them, which supersede the reading of the Scriptures, and of solid works, by wasting the time and destroying the taste for their perusal.

Then they go to church relishing nothing but sermons and services got up for outward effect; and in proportion as they succeed in their wishes, they come away quite pleased with the service, and with *themselves*, and with the world.

Having done so well on "Sunday," they feel at liberty to devote the remainder of its hours, and of their life to temporal pursuits and pleasures!

If, on a generation so trained, moulded, and fashioned, the truth has little power, and if they complain of the dulness of the ministry, what an injustice to attribute the fruitlessness of preaching in their case to a want of power in it!

Sadder still. God begins to do an unusual work of grace. Awakenings occur; conversions follow. And then what hap-

pens? The ill-taught state of the minds of many at once begins to display itself in connection with such a work, and to mar it. A slim but active agency, with peculiar manifestations of seriousness, and full of self-confidence and self-conceit, thrusts itself forth upon the scene, to take special charge of the work; gets up meetings and exercises of a humanly-exciting nature, and forces to a distance the most faithful ministers and ministrations of the gospel. Under this self-constituted management many of the awakened are led or left to rest on false foundations, and soon fall away. Shrewd spectators, who might have been led by judicious measures, to respect the progress of the work, had it preserved its first character, and might have even been brought under its power, turn away from it under the character subsequently forced upon it. That work which the Lord himself commenced in the Spirit, the vanity and folly of pretenders, and even of good men, cause to end in the flesh. And the disorders, strifes, and envyings, which this vanity and folly cause in connection with what, in its beginnings was a glorious work of God, raises up out of that very work, which would have made preaching easy and powerful indeed, the most formidable obstacles of all to its success.

Now, the beginning of all this mischief to the *membership* and ministry of the Church is found, in a large proportion of cases, in the want of a sufficiently scriptural training in the schools in which those concerned received their education, and had their mental and moral habits developed and determined.

What minister who has had to deal with the facts of the case, is not ready to proclaim both the painful and pleasant experience which he has had in reference to this matter? Young applicants for communion of one class are so stupid and unteachable that he cannot arrive at any satisfaction as to the result of the efforts which he makes to have their judgment informed and their hearts touched in reference to spiritual and eternal things. And when he traces back their history, he finds at once the foundation of their stupidity and unconcern in the irreligious character of their education and their teacher. On the other hand, a minister has to do with applicants so intelligent as to divine truth that without the necessity of labouring to instruct them, he has the pleasure of ascertaining what they already know, and requires only to remind and warn them that what they need is not so much further instruction as grace to exemplify what they have been already taught. And in tracing their knowledge of divine things to its origin, he finds no difficulty in tracing it to the daily teaching of the schoolmaster, from whom, during a course of six or seven years, they received all their education.

Moreover, to revert to the solemn subject