

Sabbath School Teacher.**THE RELATION OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH.**

The following paper was prepared by the Rev. John Laing, M. A., for the recent conference of the Toronto Presbytery, and in his absence, was read by the Rev. Mr. Cameron:

With much pleasure, though absent, I comply with the invitation given me and account it a privilege to contribute my share to the important discussions on Sabbath School interests in which you are engaged. I only regret that I am by absence deprived of the pleasure of hearing what others say. I shall confine my remarks strictly to the subject entrusted to me by the Committee, "The Relation of the Sabbath School to the Church," and before I attempt to say what that relation is; we shall consider what the Church and Sabbath School respectively are; when, if I mistake not, the relation will be so evident as to require of little more than a distinct statement in order to satisfy us what its true nature is.

First then, what is the Church? The general notion of the Church as prevailing among Evangelical Christians, is that of a distinct Society, having its own peculiar basis, and origin, organization and constitution, life and means of action, design and sphere. Of course I speak of the visible Church, with which alone man has to do in his outward relations. It is not a mere voluntary association, which depends for its origin on the inclination of individuals and which may at any time cease to exist, if its members please to separate. Nor do its constitution and the object for which the Church exists, depend upon the assent of its members. Nor can the members enact their own laws, or lay down the terms of membership. As opposed to all such disintegrating opinions, we hold the visible Church to be a society established by the Son of God and his apostles; possessed of a divine life through the indwelling Spirit, and having a continued organic existence through all the ages; while its terms of membership, its laws and functions are authoritatively prescribed by its head, its objects being the salvation of fallen man, and its sphere of action determined by that object.

Further, the Church includes children, although they cannot comprehend their privilege, or discharge the duties of adult members. And the Church membership of infants depends not on the "due administration of the Sacrament of Baptism," whereby they are made Christians, but upon the fact that they are the offspring of the members of the Church, and thus born within the covenant, heirs of covenant privileges and covenant obligations.

By such a course of reasoning, based I am fully satisfied on the whole tenor of Scripture under both dispensations, we come to adopt the simple yet inclusive and far-reaching definition of the Westminster Confession, "the visible Church consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion together with their children."

Second, what now, we ask, is the Sabbath School? We at once feel that in no sense is it an institution co-ordinate with the Church—we may not say that it is a modern invention, for all the ends which the Sabbath School fulfils have been met in all ages, more or less perfectly by God's faithful people. For our present purpose, it may be best to speak of the Sabbath School as an institution, which has sprung up among us, the result of pitying, Christian love and ardent zeal, and designed by means of appliances suited to the circumstances of these latter times, to teach the youth of all lands the religion of Jesus, that they may be saved. The history of Sabbath Schools presents us with an object distinctly twofold. 1. We have the missionary aspect of the Sabbath School. In this department shines in primal brightness the name of Raikes. Christian pity mourned over neglected children who were growing up within the sound of the gospel trumpet, yet ignorant of the name of Jesus, and who played in the shadows of the house of God, but never entered to worship. Christian love went forth to speak to these lost ones, and gathered them together, that they might learn that name and adore. This is the naked idea, this the impelling motion, this the way of working, and this the dark, forbidding, difficult, yet deeply interesting field of Sabbath Schools in their missionary aspect. As such they have spread, till not only the waifs in the loathsome dens of city godlessness, but the careless thousands that are scattered in lone country districts have felt the power of the love of Christ following the lost sheep to save. This missionary aspect of the Sabbath School consists in the gathering in of the unlearned children of ungodly and unchristian parents.

2. But it has never been thus with the offspring of the godly. While Sabbath Schools, as such, were unknown, the work of religious instruction was carefully performed in the family, and at the instructing desks of the Sabbath and on week days. This we call the educational aspect of the Sabbath School. It has

reference chiefly to the children who are within the church of God, and who therefore being brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In this aspect the Sabbath School is a meeting of the children of the church for religious instruction on the Lord's day, where they may enjoy the ministrations of men and women who are regarded as more qualified than parents to give such instruction. How far this may be true, or how far the Sabbath School as thus conducted may react favorably or unfavorably on parents and family, or what may be the gain on the whole, I do not stop to inquire. It is enough that we distinctly understand what the Sabbath School in this aspect is—a meeting of the children of the church for religious instruction.

This twofold character of Sabbath Schools has been oftentimes disregarded, and an attempt made to intermingle the children of the godly and the ungodly. The result is not satisfactory in all cases, as what is suitable and necessary for the one class does not suit the other, and devices resorted to in order to render the Sabbath School attractive may have anything but a beneficial effect on children whose opinions and tastes have been formed under more ennobling religious influences. Practically where mission schools on a large scale are effective, they are separate from the school of the church properly so called.

III. We are now prepared to say what relation the Sabbath School holds to the church:

1. If the church be God's appointed instrument to gather in and teach the lost, then it is the duty of the church to establish mission schools. The commission of the church is to "every creature," and she is to evangelize or preach the gospel to every creature, including children, "teaching them to observe every thing which Christ has commanded." This is a law binding on the church which cannot be disregarded without sin, where the church, in its united capacity, fails in her duty, and the zeal and energy of private Christians seek to make up for that failure, we rejoice; we hail such labourers as valued assistants in the Lord's work, with sorrow and shame we acknowledge the sin and deficiency of the church which have called for the separate, and, if I may use the expression, irregular action of Christian love and earnest zeal while therefore Sabbath Schools distinct from the church have been undoubtedly useful and the blessing to many, nay while in some abnormal state of the churches, it may be the only way of successfully gathering in the neglected children, and as such we thank God for these independent schools, we will still consider the more excellent way, where the mission school originating in connection with and under the control of the church, this relation brings a mutual blessing. It affords due exercise for the gifts of the members of the church and quickens their graces, while it secures for the school the united support and sympathy of a divinely guided society, the Christians oversight of experienced Christians, and a protection against the evils that may result for the errors of well-meaning but often ill-instructed and impulsive men alike in matter of doctrine and administration and further when this relation is observed, all unseemly collision between private Christians and the church is avoided, while ample scope is afforded to all who are disposed to engage in the good work. Practically we find this result to come about, wherever churches are active and zealous, independent schools disappear before the well directed and sustained efforts of denominational institutions.

2. The above line of argument applies with still greater force to Sabbath schools which consist of the children of the church. "Feed my lambs," is the injunction laid on the pastors of the flock. And when owing to circumstances it is manifestly the best way of feeding the lambs, to gather them together, and instruct them, through duly qualified men and women, it is unquestionably the duty of the church as such to select, prepare and direct the teachers, and generally to take the oversight of the school; seeing to it that the children are fed with the pure milk of the word, and that all is done to the edifying of the body in love. To neglect to do this is to fail in a most important department of church work and by unfaithfulness and negligence to endanger the faith as well as the Christian character of the children of the church.

My general answer to the question then is—The relation of the Sabbath School to the church is one of subordination. The school should originate in the church; should be carried on by it, and sustained directed, and controlled by it; as one most important part of the great work committed to it, and this, whether we regard the church's function of ingathering the godless and unlearned, or of training the children of the church and developing the life of Christ within them. Happy that church which realizes this its high ideal, and happy those children that enjoy the fostering care of such a church.

Do your duties, and let wealth come to you, if God will. Then there is hope that your culture and capacity to it will keep pace with its growth.

Our Young Folks.**A KISS FOR A BLOW.**

"I'll knock you down," cried Jamie Jones, speaking to his sister; He raised his fist and struck at her, But happily he missed her.
"And I'll kiss you," said little Pot, running to her brother; She threw her arms around his neck, And so they kissed each other.
Dear children, would you know the way Of true and happy living, You must, like darling little Pot, Be loving and forgiving.
—The Child's Paper.

THE RAG-PICKER'S SON.

As the gray dawn of a November day was breaking over the city of—, some twenty years ago, a light streamed from the window of an old lodging-house in Manchester street. The room from which it came was the dwelling-place of "Old Meg," the rag-picker, and her little son Willie. For seven years she had been an inmate of the same room, and nearly every morning, at an early hour, she went forth in search of rags, and her little son went to his place of employment in the town.

Willie was a bright-faced, curly-haired little fellow, of thirteen years, and was the hope and pride of his gray-haired mother. Willie's mother, "Old Meg," as the boys used to call her, was about forty years old; but her road through life being rough, and her burdens heavy to bear, she looked much older. Everybody in the neighbourhood knew her to be an honest, God-fearing woman. She troubled nobody; and since her husband's death, some ten years before, had worked hard to support her little son, and let him receive as much education as possible.

On the morning in question, she was up at the usual hour, and her scanty meal was spread for herself and Willie. The room in which they were living was not very large, nor was the amount of furniture extensive; but everything had the appearance of the most scrupulous neatness. After they had been seated at the table a few moments, and Willie's mother had asked a blessing, Willie said:

"Mother, you must let me go and gather the rags to-day. I have a holiday, and you do not look well. I know the rounds, for, you know, I used to go with you often before I went to work for Mr. Williams."

"My son," said his mother, "this is the only holiday you have had for six months, and I would not like to take it from you."

"Never mind, mother; I am young, and don't mind work. You won't have to go out many more mornings, for Mr. Williams is going to raise my wages soon, and then I shall make enough to keep us without your working."

And the little fellow's eyes beamed with pleasure at the thought of his mother not working any more.

"Well, Willie," replied Mrs. Matthews, "you may go out in my place to-day, and I will rest."

Willie soon finished his breakfast, and taking the bag and hook, kissed his mother's pale cheek, and with her kind "God bless you!" following him, went down the rickety stairs and out into the chilly autumn twilight, to commence his search for rags.

By noon, Willie had nearly filled his bag, and was on his way homeward. As he was passing a millinery shop, he saw some scraps lying by the side of the curb, which had been swept from the shop, and setting his bag down, he began to gather them up. He had them nearly all picked up and put into a heap, preparatory to putting them in his bag, when something lying close to the sidewalk attracted his attention. He stooped down and picked it up. What was his surprise to find that it was a pocket-book, and, to all appearance, well filled! Willie opened it, and one look at its contents opened his heart to leap with joy. Sticking it quickly in his pocket, he shouldered the bag, and started as fast as he could toward home.

As he trudged along with his bag on his back, he pictured his mother's surprise when he should tell her what he had found, and shew her the pile of money which he knew the pocket-book contained.

He soon reached home, and setting his bag down by the door, fairly flew upstairs, threw open the door, rushed into his mother's presence, and exclaimed:

"O, mother! I've found a fortune!"

And without waiting for his mother to speak, he pulled out the pocket-book, and commenced to count the money.

"Two hundred pounds!" he exclaimed when he had finished counting the roll of bank-notes. Isn't that a fortune, mother?"

"Where did you get it, Willie?" said his mother quietly.

"I found it among some rags in front of a millinery shop," answered Willie, looking at the pocket-book. "But here's a name, mother," he continued, as he raised the fly-leaf. "It's 'Horace Carpenter, No. — Street.' But he

must be rich, and will not miss it and we need it so badly."

"But my son, it would be stealing to keep it. 'Honesty is the best policy,' so you had better take it to its owner, and if he does not reward you, God will."

Without a word of remonstrance, Willie rose, saying:

"I will do as you say, mother, and if he offers me a reward I will not take it."

"Go then my boy, and God prosper you," said his mother.

So off he started for the office of Mr. Carpenter. When he arrived there, he asked if Mr. Carpenter was in. On being told that he was, he said that he wanted to see him. A clerk went to a side door and called him, and in a few moments he entered. Willie stepped up to him and said:

"Are you Mr. Horace Carpenter?"

"Yes my little fellow. What can I do for you?"

"Take this pocket-book, and see if it is yours," said Willie, as he handed it to him.

Mr. Carpenter took it, and, without opening it, said:

"Yes, my boy, that's mine. It was lost by my daughter while out yesterday afternoon. I had just written an advertisement to insert in the morning papers concerning it. But why did you bring it to me? You look as if you needed money."

"My mother bade me take it to its owner, and I never disobey her."

"You shall be rewarded for your honesty, my little boy. But what is your name, and where do you live?"

"My name is William Matthews, and I live in Manchester Street."

"I will go home with you," said Mr. Carpenter, "and see your mother, and perhaps I may do something for you or her."

They went together—the rich merchant and the rag-picker's son—and were soon at Willie's house.

After a short talk with Willie's mother, it was arranged that he should go into Mr. Carpenter's warehouse the next week. In the meantime, a more comfortable place was provided for him and his mother by Mr. Carpenter.

Time passed on, and Willie was fast winning the love and respect of all in his new place.

When he reached his twenty-first year he became a partner with Mr. Carpenter in his great warehouse.

"Old Meg," the rag-picker, is no more and the kind hearted Mr. Carpenter sleeps in the old family burying ground among the green hills of his native country. But Willie remains, and you would scarcely recognize to-day, in the handsome gentleman entering the warehouse of "Mathews & Co.," the rag-picker's son.—*The Appeal.*

Random Readings.

He who serves well need not be afraid to ask his wages.

Better be understood by ten than admired by a thousand.

A chief art of the spiritual life is to do natural things spiritually and spiritual things naturally.

Providence has a thousand keys to open a thousand doors, for the deliverance of His own.—*Rutherford.*

For each one of us no business can be of more pressing moment, of more urgent importance, than the discovery of our besetting sin.

When we come to God for counsel, we must be willing to put our whole case in his hands; to take the up-hill step instead of the smooth one, should he point to it.

A celebrated writer says that if one could read it, every human being carries his life in his face, and is good looking or the reverse, as that life has been good or evil.

If you can but give to the fainting soul at your door a cup of water from the wells of truth, it shall flash back on you the radiance of God. As you save, so shall you be saved.—*Conway.*

A Kincardineshire weaver wound up the eulogy of his minister in these words: "An' I especially like your sterling independence, sir. I have always said, sir, that ye neither feared God nor man."

Nothing sets so wide a mark between a vulgar and a noble soul, as the respect and reverential love of woman. A man who is always sneering at women is generally a coarse profligate, or a coarser bigot.

How fast time flies when you are working against it; how slowly when you are working to fill it up! What a difference between trying to get your work done before your dinner hour, and trying to fill up your hour before dinner with work!

One of the best temperance sermons ever delivered is this sentence by the late Rev. Samuel J. May: "If it is a small sacrifice for you to give up drinking wine, do it for the sake of others; if it is a great sacrifice, do it for your own sake."

Scientific and Useful.**GOOD FARMING.**

A correspondent of the *Prarie Farmer* says: "Farmers don't goin' into debt to your farms. Sooner pay six, eight, or ten per cent interest to a neighbour; for, depend upon it your farm will charge you thirty. If you can't afford to keep a farm in good condition and in good repair, you can't afford to keep it all; and if you can't keep it in good condition, a few years will prove that you can't keep it at all. The worst creditor a man can have is his farm."

LIGHTING THE FIRE IN A STOVE.

Many persons have often noticed the extreme difficulty in lighting the fire in a stove especially in a still, damp morning. The stove at first won't draw, even vigorous "blowing" will not suffice and then when it does start, it is with a sort of an explosion or outward rush of air, which fills the room with smoke and gas, oftentimes puffing the unpleasant fumes into the face of the operator. This trouble is caused by the difficulty encountered in overcoming the inertia of the long column of air in the pipe or chimney, by the small column of air that can be forced up through the interstices of the wood and coal, at the bottom of which the fire is kindled. All this may be remedied by simply putting a few shavings or bits of dry paper on the top of the wood or coal, and first lighting that; it immediately bursts into a blaze, because the air has perfectly free access to it from all sides, the heated air forces its way into the chimney, and establishes there an upward current. The match can then be applied to the kindling under the fuel, which will readily light, and, if dry, burst into a brisk blaze.

OVERTAKING THE BRAIN.

A correspondent of *London Society* says: "I know a remarkably able and fertile reviewer who tells me that, though over his midnight oil he can lubricate articles with a certain sharpness and force, yet for quietly looking at a subject all round, and doing justice to all its belongings, he wants the quiet morning hours. Lancelot Andrews says he is no true scholar who goes out of his house before twelve o'clock. Similarly an editor once told me that, though his town contributors sent him the brightest papers, he always detected a peculiar mellowness and finish about the man who wrote in the country. I knew an important crown official whose hours were from ten to three. He had to sign his name to papers; and as a great deal depended upon his signature, he was very cautious and chary how he gave it. After three o'clock struck, no beseeching powers of suitors or solicitors could induce him to do a stroke of work. He would not contaminate the quality of his work by doing too much of it. He would not impair his rest by continuing his work.—And so he fulfilled the duties of his office for exactly fifty years before he retired on full pay from the service of the country."

TARRING THE SOLES OF SHOES.

About twelve years ago the writer penned the following directions for rendering the soles of boots and shoes water-proof and much more durable. Warm the soles of new shoes, apply a heavy coat of warm—not hot—coal tar, and dry it in before the fire. Let two or three coats be applied and dried in before the shoes have been worn. Smear the edges of the soles as long as the leather will absorb the tar, which will effectually exclude the water. Soles that have not been tarred, will absorb water like a sponge, and in cold weather they feel almost like soles of wet and frozen wood. So long as the leather can be kept dry, boots and shoes will keep the feet comfortably warm. Soles treated in the foregoing manner will wear like horn. A gentleman has just written as follows: "Ten years ago I concluded, with some hesitancy, to try the tar on a pair of field boots. At the same time, tar was applied to a pair of thin-soled Morocco boots, and the tar was laid on so bountifully that the Morocco was also smothered under the soles. Those boots have been worn much every year since; and they are serviceable still. The soles are like horn, and the boots have never needed repairing. The upper leather did crack a trifle were the tar was applied, but the soles did not. Soles will absorb the tar more readily after the shoes have been worn once or twice, where they were exposed to the wet. Coal tar can be procured in a jug at any gas-works, for a few cents per gallon. Pour an ounce or two into a tin dish, place it on the stove where it will keep warm, heat the soles hot as practicable without burning the leather, and dry the tar in before the fire.—*Exchange.*"

Not one quarter of the talent and strength of the churches is developed, and in use. Many of the strongest men do but little for the spiritual interests of their families or their neighbors. They do business with energy, but serve God with a slack hand; in temporal things they are eager and enterprising, in spiritual things they are asleep.