

The Sunday School Banner.

TORONTO, FEBRUARY, 1874.

"LOOK AT YOUR COPY."

THIS little precept, so familiar in the ears of every boy and girl at school, carries a meaning which bears upon the lives of most.

That is a false stroke; look at your copy. That curve is not true; look at your copy. Those lines are not equally slanting; look at your copy. And when the page is completed, the imitation is so poor, the deviation so gross, the unlikeness so great, that a stranger would not suspect it was written from the copy. But is it not an imitation, though so poor? Yes; if the learner has made the effort without a copy, and without the precept, it would have been far more unsightly. The attempt, then, is a success; and as certainly as the learner repeats his efforts with persevering industry, ever looking from his poor work to the copy before him, that he may imitate it more closely, as certain will be his success. It is not only to the schoolboy or girl that the precept applies. Are we not looking at our copy? Is not the law of imitation so universal that each is following in the track and treading in the footprints of another; unconsciously perhaps, but certainly? The mode of life, course of action, and habit of thoughts are mostly the reproductions of the thoughts, habits, and course of life of others.

But beyond this, most men have an embodied standard to which they would attain, a copy they would imitate, an example they would follow; some standard of goodness or greatness, merit or worth, that they place before them as a pattern to model their own lives from.

Thus the warrior would be a Wellington or a Nelson, the poet would be a Milton, the painter a Holbein, and the musician a Handel or Mozart. And as each one looks at his copy, fixes his eye upon the standard he seeks to attain; as he labors with unflagging zeal, untiring energy, steadfastness of purpose, and deep earnestness, so will be his measure of success. But he must look well to his copy; his tastes, his disposition, his purpose, his modes of thought, his course of action, must be all under training if he would reproduce the original.

The Sunday-school teacher, too, has his copy, his standard, his example. He is imitating Jesus. He has undertaken a work far greater than that of subduing peoples, ruling kingdoms, or the mightiest exploits of earth's heroes; a work which even angels might envy; a work that filled the hands and heart of God's own Son.

And we have undertaken this great work as Sunday-school teachers, with no resources of our own, no supplies of grace to convert our scholars, no power to bless them, no wisdom by which we may guide their steps to the cross, no light to impart to them that they may see the matchless beauty of Jesus. Oh, how insufficient we are for our work! In vain we warn them of their danger; in vain we seek to awaken their thought of eternal things; in vain we plead with them to flee to the Saviour, as guilty lost sinners for pardon and peace, while we depend on our care for them, our anxiety for their welfare, or anything in our selves. Our eyes must be fixed upon God, and Him alone. Our pleading can only be made effectual by Him. He only is our help, for His grace alone can change their hearts.

Yet God in His infinite wisdom has made the conversion of these dear chil-