

religions exercise God has designed for them in fitting themselves for the important duty of training up their children in the way they should go, become weak and useless members of the Church, and their children barely exist upon the crumbs they receive from others instead of growing upon the bountiful supply God has provided for them.

It is a common and with many a favourite remark, that the Sunday School is the nursery of the church, because that now the larger portion of those added to the church are from the Sunday School, and in consequence the Sunday School is credited with their conversion.

How far this matter *should* be looked upon in *this light*,—is a subject of much doubt.

It is true that now most of the additions to the Church, are from the Sunday School, but it is also true, that nearly all of these, are the children of Christian parents.

Now what is the fact in relation to conversions in this class of persons *before* the days of Sunday Schools. There is no reasonable doubt of there having been as great a proportion of these persons added to the Church, before Sunday Schools were established as there has been since, so that really the only perceptible difference is, that *now* the individual goes round through the Sunday School, into the Church instead of direct from home as before.

This may lead us to inquire, what good after all are Sunday Schools now doing?

And humbling as the answer must be, we are forced to the conclusion that they are not accomplishing by far so much good as we had supposed.

It is the firm belief of many good men, that Sunday Schools are really eminently useful only in so far as they are instrumental in the salvation of those who are in the main, destitute of all other means of religious instruction.

It is true that they may be, and in some cases doubtless are a help to Christian parents in instructing their children, but the value of this agency, in these cases, is so small in comparison with the great opportunity for their usefulness in the right direction, that really it is hardly worth mentioning.

That there is in our midst, a class of persons, destitute of all moral and religious training, is believed by all, that there is a *large* class of such persons is believed by many, but all who have taken the trouble of informing themselves upon this point, are perfectly astonished at the result of their inquiries.

In the city of Brooklyn, New York, a place noted for zeal and energy in efforts for destitute children, there were about one year since 15,000 Sunday School scholars, 30 of their schools being Mission schools, and yet at the same time it was estimated that there were in that city alone 20,000 children out of Sunday Schools.

It is also worthy of notice that at the Sunday School Convention of the State of New York, held at Albany a few days since, the alarming statement was made, that there are *now*, in that single State, not less than 300,000 children, whose moral training is totally uncared for, except as they may be reached by the Sunday School. Compare the population of Canada, with that of the State of New York, make all the deductions required on account of those who are Catholics, and of course appa-

rently beyond our reach, and we have here in Canada the vast number of not less than 100,000 to 150,000 of this same class of destitute children.

It is to be feared that we have allowed ourselves to fall into a grievous error, in relation to the uncared for in our midst.

While throughout the Province of Canada the number of children *out* of Sunday Schools, is vastly larger than that of those who are *in*, we have criminally closed our eyes to their deplorable condition. We are literally surrounded by darkness and heathenism. Those very persons who are to be men and women, and active upon the stage of life, at the same time with our own children, are growing up in ignorance of the Bible, strangers to God, profaners of the sabbath day, and eminently qualified for all that is sinful and wicked.

And those very persons whom God has designed, as instruments in his hands, to rescue them from this fearful condition, are to-day almost as totally regardless of their welfare, as if their existence was merely in the imagination.

But it is a question not lightly to be thrust aside. Is there not a fearful responsibility resting upon us in relation to them? To-day they are within our reach, and they may be gathered into Sunday Schools and taught the truths of the Bible, but in a few years it will be with them as it now is with those who are, apparently, entirely beyond the reach of our efforts. If it is in our power in any way, or by any means to bring them, or any number of them, under the influence of the gospel, I ask dare any of us take upon ourselves the responsibility of withholding the means God has provided for the accomplishment of this purpose?

What Sunday School teacher, after having carefully reflected upon this subject, and knowing as he comes before his class next Sunday, that there is not one in it, in whose father's house there is not bread enough and to spare, can feel in his heart, that he is really and faithfully accomplishing the object and design for which Sunday Schools were established.

I think we must conclude that the Sunday School is designed for the destitute, for those against whom every other door of access is closed, and I feel that until all these are gathered in and provided for, we have no business whatever with those for whom God has provided Christian fathers and mothers, only as they may be made useful in attracting or influencing others. We ought by no means to lose sight of one important fact in connection with this subject, which is this, that wherever or whenever any successful effort has been made for this class of persons, it has been done through the agency of the Sunday School.

We have every reason to believe this to be God's own appointed way of accomplishing this work; for look where we may, we see how, in every place and at all times, when this kind of instrumentality has been used with a firm reliance upon Him for His blessing, invariable success has been the result.

Who can estimate the amount of good that would be accomplished—the joy and rejoicing that would be in heaven—if the efforts which are being made by all the Sunday Schools in Canada for the benefit of the children of the Church,