

if they have ever attended, and away from the means of grace and good influences generally. The only hope for the larger number of this class—and how mournfully large it is, especially in the cities—is in the truth taking fast hold upon them before they go out upon that terrible sea of boisterous folly and maddened iniquity, where the banks go down in darkness, and the voyagers perish. The S. S. teacher should feel like one standing upon the shore and seeing a man swept by the rushing current for a moment within his reach, to be borne out again into the devouring breakers where hundreds have been engulfed. Should he not strain every energy to draw his pupils forth at once upon the ground of safety, and secure them in the clefts of the river rock, Christ Jesus? Does the teacher who is satisfied with the hope that his instructions may be seen after many days, realize that perhaps to some of his pupils, his will be the last hand stretched forth to save them—that when they go forth from his influence, they will be beyond the reach of all ordinary help—that upon him, therefore, is resting the grave responsibility of improving the last brief opportunity to rescue the child from death? Surely not! Could he fail if he realized this, to feel that he could not rest until he saw all his class safe in the arms of Jesus?

But however the child may be situated—whether he is to continue under religious influence or not, he is soon to go out into the restless, polluting currents of the world's life. The spirit of the world will soon fold him in, and bind him down to the selfish and the earthly, shutting out the higher life, and his own higher interests. The fires of unalloyed passion will soon be kindling up in his soul, to burn with fiercer and with fiercer heat. The craving of appetite is liable at any time to be aroused, and begin to gnaw away from his nature what of natural goodness there may be. A thousand besetments to evil will soon gird him round, and the very air will be filled with moral contamination. The longer he lives the greater will be the danger, the less the hope. The only sufficient safeguard against all these perils to temporal prosperity, to moral character, and to eternal destiny, is in the saving grace of God, and the possession of a new nature, and a disposition to make God his refuge and strength. Let the S. S. teacher consider this well, and he will feel that he must seek to bring his pupils at once to Jesus before the dangers threaten, and the power of sin grows greater. Just as the parent, when a child is taken sick of some deadly disease, sends in all haste for the physician, so that medicine be applied at as early a stage of the malady as possible, so should the S. S. teacher seek to have the balm of Gilead applied to the young sin-sick soul as soon as possible by the Great Physician. The teacher who merely seeks to store the mind of the child with truth, and does not strive to impress it at once upon the heart, acts as the one who should get the medicine for the child sick with a fatal disease and place it before him, without urging him to take it. No, fellow teachers, let us not wait until the remedy is applied to the sin-sick soul, for the disease is waxing more and more difficult to overcome every hour. But beyond all this, we know not but that death may come at any time to the young as well as the

old. Although we believe that, for all children who die before they become personally accountable, the work of Christ provides for the regeneration of their natures, yet the uncertainty as to the exact period when the time of responsibility has come, and the certainty that many in the S. S. are beyond that bound, should incite the teacher to the most earnest endeavour to bring each child to the shelter of the everlasting arms. If we saw one on a spot liable each moment to be swept by an avalanche, how earnest would we be to remove him from the danger at once. How much more intent should the S. S. teacher be to rescue the child at once from his danger of that eternal destruction which is ever ready to fall.

I shall notice but one other consideration fitted to induce S. S. teachers to aim at the immediate salvation of their pupils. The earlier they are brought to the Saviour, the more surely, rapidly, and broadly will they develop grace and spiritual strength; the longer and more largely will they enjoy the life of faith: the more time will they have to give to the service of God and men, with a larger share of spirit and power during all this longer period; and a greater capacity will they acquire for eternal joy with a richer treasure awaiting them in heaven. On the other hand, the less will they be cursed by the reign of sin; the less precious time will they squander; the less of evil and ruin will they effect by their influence; and the less waste of energy and of evil wrought will they have to lament. The thought that all this inestimable good to the child and to others may be secured, and all this immeasurable evil to himself and others may be averted, by leading the child early to the Lamb of God, is surely a motive strong enough to induce all S. S. teachers to aim at the immediate salvation of their pupils, and to make them tireless in laboring for this end.

But if it should be asked how can we best accomplish this aim? the reply generally would be, teach them the truth, and impress it upon them. Let us never forget that it is the truth of God, and this only, which He has promised to bless. Let us, therefore, make it our whole dependence for the salvation and edification of our pupils. Need I say that just as the first step in leading a sick man to seek a cure is to convince him that he is diseased, so must we make the children feel that they are in a lost state, having a sinful nature, which unless removed, will inevitably shut them out of heaven, and lead them down to woe. Need we say that, just as the next step to bring health to the sick man is to refer him to the remedy, and the conditions upon which it can be secured, so must the child, having been made to desire salvation through conviction of his lost state, be pointed to Christ and his work as the only and all sufficient Saviour and salvation, and be shewn that the only condition is personal and child-like trust. Need we say finally, that, if the sick man is inclined to seek a remedy which is worthless, he must be disabused of his false notion, which would stand in the way of his seeking the true, so must the child be made to feel that no visible religion, a fancy, a church, or any ordinance can deliver him from his peril, or take the place of his personal dependence upon the atoning and substitutionary work of our Lord. In order to impress the truth home

upon the heart of the child, and lead him to forsake every false trust, and yield his heart to the Saviour, the grand essential in the teacher is a deep and thorough conviction of the reality of what he teaches. He must make the children feel their danger by manifesting an earnestness and concern in keeping with this belief. He must seek to make the children sensible of the love of our Lord, by being full of it himself, and so of all the rest. Nothing but this can avail, to arouse human agency is concerned. The teacher whose manner toward the children does not show his deep conviction of the truth of His teaching, had better not attempt this high calling; for his way of teaching betrays the truth taught; and as children, particularly, are more sensitive to the living reality of voice and manner, than the thought of the words uttered, he is in danger of robbing the truth of the power it has in itself. Let the truth then beam forth upon them through the tearful eye, the radiant countenance, the trembling voice; let the teachers be permeated by the truth that it shall use them, rather than they it, and young impassible hearts will be moved and souls won.

But how, it may be asked again, can the other great aim of the S. S. teacher be accomplished?—that of preparing the children for the development of the greatest spiritual power? I have already said, form in their mind the highest and truest ideal possible of what a real Christian life is. Another thing must also be attended to, or this will largely be labor lost. They must be taught their obligation to conform to this high standard. This can be fully done only as they are made to feel that all God's word must be studied, and when his will is known it must be obeyed, in great things, in small things, in all things. All God's requirements must be respected, for in belittling one, we cut into our regard for all, and so weaken our sense of obligation to obey in any. If all our young Christians would only enter upon their new life, with the broad construction of its character which thorough instruction in bible truth would give them—if they were to begin this life with the full understanding that for them to know was to obey lovingly, gladly and expect nothing else—then it must take only one generation to revolutionize the Christianity of the world. Whether the dawning of such a day is near depends, we cannot tell how largely, upon the S. S. teachers of Christendom; for from them it is that we come early to the Saviour must receive their chief instruction.

Thus I have attempted to present this important topic before you. It has been done but imperfectly, I know. Yet from this consideration of the theme, I think every S. S. teacher must feel his aim and work to be very very high and noble. It is yours, brethren, sisters, S. S. teachers, to lead the hopeful and confident van of the church in her attack upon the ranks of evil; it is ours, brother ministers, to stand in the forlorn hope. It is yours to labor in the joyous spring, and to cast your seed into virgin soil, rich and growthful; it is ours too frequently to work in the solemn autumn, and seek to secure fruit from a field that has been the doleful wail goes moaning by, "the harvest is past, and the summer is ended, and we are not saved." It is both yours and ours to do what we can to keep hell as empty as possible,