

me before the Lord, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness. And when he died (xxv.), "All the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah." What greater honour than this, "from my childhood unto this day?" Who would have it otherwise? And yet otherwise it is with very, very many. What then?

"Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." But the leprosy taint is there. Can it ever be washed away? Who can recall the foul past and write the record anew? Yet was there one who, at a prophet's bidding, "washed, and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean" (2 Kings v. 14). And so you in that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness bursting from Calvary. Come, believe, and the life is yours.

"Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole,
I want Thee for ever to dwell in my soul;
Break down every evil, cast out every foe,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

—Canadian Independent.

THE FOUR P'S.

Vacations are over, and the bells of duty are ringing all over the land—calling pastors back to their pulpits, and Sabbath school teachers back to meet their re-assembled classes. The most immense harvests America ever produced have been housed; as the autumn days come on, farmers are filling up their apple-bins; it is a fit time for a few frank words with Christ's husbandmen who are working for spiritual harvests, and who are filling the bins of young hearts with Bible stores.

No one is fit to resume his or her place before a class of young immortals who does not realize that the post of a teacher is a post that angels might covet. When John Eliot had reached his eighty-sixth year a friend stopped to see him and found him teaching the alphabet to an Indian child. "Why don't you rest from your work now?" inquired the visitor. The veteran apostle answered, "I have asked God to keep me useful to the last, and now that I can no longer preach, He gives me strength to teach this poor child." Everything depends upon being a teacher, not a pious trifter. If marriage is a relation not to be entered into hastily, but soberly and advisedly, so is that of handling an immortal soul in its most critical period. Shrewd old Dr. John Todd used to say, "Some people are sewed together, and some are only basted." This pithy expression happily describes the difference between the two kinds of work turned out from the Sabbath schools. A strong stitch well put holds for a lifetime; the basted threads soon ravel.

I. Four characteristics certainly belong to all thorough work wrought by a Sabbath school teacher. And the first one is that of *Painstaking*. The old Puritan adage, "Painful preaching makes easy hearing," points to the same principle; the labour of making a truth clear should always be performed by the teacher, and never be left to the hearer or to the child. During my summer tour I saw some slovenly farming and scanty crops; but I also lighted upon a dozen acres of bottom-land so thoroughly cultivated that it produced fifty bushels of wheat to the acre. It was

more like a garden than a field. The children that need the Sabbath school most are the very ones that it requires the most painstaking effort to get hold of. They are not the sons and daughters of church-members, but the inmates of ungodly homes, and often the waifs and Arabs of the by-streets. Such require the most trouble in getting into school, and also the most trouble in getting Gospel truth into them.

Jesus is an example for all His teachers. He once made a long journey into the coasts of Syro-Phenicia, and we never could discover any reason or result except that he bought a rich blessing to one heart-broken mother. What pains He took to bring saving truth into the heart of the poor darkened woman whom He taught beside Sychar's well! He was "wearied" when He got there, but not too tired to save a soul.

II. *Patience* is another prime essential. The cases that need you most will be the most discouraging. To undo in an hour or two on Sabbath what the devil has been doing in a boy for six days requires great faith and steady toil. It will try your patience desperately to see how thankless and persevere and wayward some of your class continue. But remember how patient God is towards you!

III. A vast deal of useful work has been lost in Sabbath schools by being left half done. *Perseverance* would have saved what was already gained, and won final success. If you yourself have a Christian character, it was not built in a day. A loving God persevered with you a great while, or you never would have become a Christian at all. The teachers in my Sabbath school have had all the largest success in winning their scholars to Christ (the great end of all teaching) who have been most persistent in holding on, both in labour and prayer. They have also made their efforts individual. Each scholar has been addressed, visited, talked with and prayed for, by himself or herself. The wise way of winning souls is to win a soul. This is personal work, and it tells, for it is permanent work. At this season of the year farmers are gathering their fruit, but the apples that will keep best during the winter are not shaken down, but picked of the tree one by one. Some people make a great noise with their shaking process; the hand-picking process is slower and quieter, but it brings better fruit into the Lord's baskets. To gather one precious soul into heaven is glory enough and joy enough for a lifetime's service.

IV. *Prayer* is the most indispensable of all the four P's. This brings God to our assistance. We take it for granted that you are praying for light on the Word, for a blessing on your labours, and for many other equally needful bestowments. But in these days pray especially to be kept from the increasing malaria of scepticism. Its evil, pestilential breath penetrates the Church, and is fatal to all faith. So much destructive criticism of God's Word is afloat; so many unsettling doubts about inspiration and human depravity, and the blessings of revivals, and the answers to prayer, and the certainty of future retribution, and other vital points, are now current, that every one who aims to do God's work must grapple hold on God with strong faith in prayer. Pray until you clear the fogs of unbelief out of your sky. Pray until the desires of your heart for your scholars are fulfilled.—Theodore L. Cuyler, D.D., in *Sunday School Times*.

CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

All men are not alike; there are often good men found among the bad. And a Scribe, more honest and truthful than many of them, came forward to the Lord, and asked Him

what command of God was the greatest and most important. It was not asking which one of the Ten Commandments was the most important, but, "If we try to get God's command and advice to us in one sentence, what would that sentence be, and what would it mean?" It was a large question—it meant a great deal. And the answer must mean a great deal too. Jesus gave this honest questioner a straightforward answer, he was to love God with all his powers! And He goes farther, He gives the man the next command in importance—he was to love his neighbour as much as he loved himself. And the Scribe commended what he heard, much admiring the words of Christ. The Lord told him he was not far from the Kingdom. The fact is, if we get fixed in our mind that the great thing for us to do is to love and please God, we shall not be long in being born into God's Kingdom.

One great trouble with the Jews was that they were not willing to think the Messiah should be divine, or anything more than a man. Jesus was always trying to put them right on this question, and to show them that He came from heaven. So He asked the people in the temple how it was that the Messiah was the son of David, when David himself spoke of Him as his Lord? And we are not told that He answered the question for them. It is sometimes good to let people go away with a question in their minds—they will pay more attention to the answer when they first search for it a little.

And the people came to the temple, not only to offer sacrifices and pray, and receive instruction, but also to give money to God, and Jesus looked on. We sometimes forget that Jesus looks on yet! The rich men dropped in their gold coins, or their handfuls of silver, with a flourish and a jingle. But a poor widow put in two mites; it was all she had, and she gave it all! And the Lord was better pleased with her offering than with all the gold of the rich men. Two years ago, in Montreal, a poor young man, far gone in consumption, lay in the hospital. He had no friends. Somebody put a few words in the *Witness*, asking assistance for him. Two days passed, and only a dollar or two came in. But a poor Scotch woman, living alone, and supporting herself by her work, saw the notice and visited him. She had no money, but she took the young man home to her poor hired room, and nursed him tenderly till he died! The "Treasury" is open still, and the "widows" and the poor still cast in "all that they have!"

The temple was a wonderful building, the glory of the land. And no doubt the Jews were very proud of it. And some one drew Jesus' attention to the grandness of the work; but He said the time would come when it should be all a ruin. And sitting on the Mount of Olives, with, perhaps, the setting sun of that beautiful spring weather glancing on the marble pinnacles of the noble building, the two pairs of brothers—Peter and Andrew, and James and John—asked Him privately about the ruin He had foretold. And as He told them of the ruin of the city and the land, His thoughts wandered on to the great Day of God, when all things in this world shall come to an end. I don't suppose they understood it all; and we don't understand it all. But to be ready and watching, and praying and loving, and hearing and obeying, will make us happy and blessed whenever that day may come!—Rev. W. Smith, in *Canadian Independent*.

LIFE is not so short but there is always time for courtesy.

THREE things should be thought of by the Christian every morning—his daily cross, his duty, and his privilege; how he shall bear the one, perform the other, and enjoy the third.