

SABBATH SCHOOLS AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

BY PROFESSOR HENRY DRUMMOND.

It is not easy to interest in foreign missions men in middle life, with their sum of interests already made up and the romance driven out of them long ago by the prose of business. But with children this problem scarcely exists. They are not yet rooted in the environment of any country. It is really only as we grow up that we become provincial. The child is the true cosmopolitan, has the universal mind, and India and Malabar are as real to it as the next parish. The Sabbath-school teacher will do well to mark this characteristic, and take advantage of it. Anything which makes foreign countries real is a contribution to the missionary cause.

Picture-books of wild animals, missionary adventures and travels, descriptions of the manners and customs of savage races—these have a most important function in preparing the mind to realize missions. Moreover, these are the most tempting of all themes to a boy or a girl—for there are no more voracious readers of boys' books than girls—so that this preliminary missionary education can be carried on without the possibility of prejudicing the scholar by the dryness of his task. A Sunday-school superintendent might do much worse occasionally than take his whole school to a menagerie, and a good paper might be written for next conference on the missionary function of Noah's ark.

No man, in fact, has a finer chance in any department of Christian work than the teacher who would interest the young in missions. While every other class of work is handicapped by difficulties of the most hopeless kind, this stands out as an almost solitary exception—an exception which would become the rule if men grew into the higher aspects of religion in childhood, instead of striving to free themselves into them in maturer years.

But, wholly apart from the religious nature, there is an appeal in missions to the instincts of the young, which affords an enormous leverage to those who would interest children in the missionary's work. Between the wondering adventurous spirit of the boy and the heroic career of the missionary there is a natural sympathy, and the question reduces itself mainly to this: Grant the preparation of the boy, grant the surpassing interest and fascination of the facts, how are we to bring the one in contact with the other? This is really the whole problem. The facts will make all the impression, create all the interest, enlist all the scholars, if they are only known. The teacher should know them. But the majority of teachers are simply ignorant of missions. I have lately returned from a visit to one of the best known missions in the world, an ideal mission which has been before the public in many ways, and whose romantic story, one would think, must have given it a place in the hearts and interests of many. I have been moving among the people most likely to have shown that interest, and yet I have not found more than three persons who could ask an intelligent question about it.

I have been asked by intelligent people if I went to Lake Nyassa by the Congo, and a dozen times I have had to change the conversation in despair on being asked if I had seen anything of General Gordon. It is a teacher's duty to qualify himself for his work by a knowledge of foreign missions. With regard to the information to be brought under the notice of the Sunday-school, the main thing is definiteness. The ordinary appeal for collections for India, or China, or Lebanon or the New Hebrides, is comparatively useless. The box goes round as a matter of mere routine, and, as a rule, the child sees no further than the hole into which it vacantly drops the reluctant copper. In many schools there is no more unintelligent part of the service than the missionary collection, whereas, if wisely managed, it might become one of the brightest interests of the school.

The proper method consists in singling out some specific object, person, or place, and fixing it in the mind as a living interest. When a new steamboat is wanted for a missionary, half the schools in the country should be asked to put a plate in it. One large school should be asked to supply the funnel, another the compass, a third the

screw, a fourth the anchor, others between them should pay the captain's salary, and there should be a competition open to all the mission schools in the country for the post of cabin boy. If a medicine-chest is wanted for the South Sea Islands, a hundred schools should furnish a bottle each for it; and in many such ways the fact that missions do not only exist on paper will be driven into the mind.

Another application of this principle consists in the singling out by a school of a certain person in the foreign field—a certain heathen to be taught, a certain native catechist to be maintained, a certain orphan to be educated in some missionary institution. Acting upon this principle, the United Presbyterian Church, after the Indian famine, had four or five hundred orphans distributed over the schools of this country. In many cases, the better to interest the home school in their welfare, these orphans received the name of their superintendent, or of the minister, or of the minister's wife, or of some leading teacher. This, by the way, I think a mistake, as well as an error in taste—Siamesa and Chipitula are much more picturesque than Norman McLeod or John Cairns.

In a similarly lively vein Mr. Drummond advised that every school should be equipped with a good set of maps. When a band of missionaries start for the foreign field the fact should be announced in every school, and their route traced with the pointer. With regard to collections, the traditional box might be laid on the shelf for a month or two, say at Christmas time, and a neat card for home use put in its place. The senior girls might make the cards themselves illuminating them nicely with a text and the collector's name. The wide circulation of good missionary records and lives of missionaries, can scarcely be too much insisted upon. The chief duty here is to see that the literature is really of first-class quality, and especially that the narratives given are all rightly true. One of the most efficient ways also of exciting missionary interest is the frequent exhibition of curiosities from missionary lands. These can now be had almost for the trouble of collecting, and, few things are more stimulating to the mind of the child. Equally, if not more valuable, are magic-lantern exhibitions with missionary slides. The churches might do worse than have one or two lanterns, with competent professional lectures, in steady circulation, and a desideratum for the future to supply might be a carefully-projected, first-class, well painted missionary panorama.

Only one influence remains to be noted, but that the most important of all—the living voice of the living missionary. There is such a thing as a dead missionary—and when one thinks where they spend their lives, and the few privileges they enjoy, the wonder is there are not more. I would never let a dead missionary speak to a living child. No one feels the touch of death like a child, and its instincts will not be deceived. There are also weak missionaries, despicable missionaries, soured and discouraged missionaries, unempathetic, scolding missionaries. I would not have their voices heard in any Sunday-school. But when you can get the real man, at any cost bring him. The tale of self-denial, quietly told, will make its mark; long after the day is past and the story of his life forgotten, his personality will abide in the hearts of the best in the school as an ever-living power. If they cannot be got, let some one go where they are and catch their fire, and bring back words, for a single echo from a living voice is eloquence.

Interesting scholars to become missionaries is the highest department of our work, and the one most of all neglected. It is not enough to watch among the scholars for an interest in missions. We must watch for the dawn of the missionary spirit, and direct the picked few who manifest it by solemn and careful steps. The missionary spirit steals into the mind at a very tender age. It is too great a thing to come late—it has to bear too much strain to be of any growth. It seed must be in the virgin soil of the heart, and it must mature from the beginning of active growth. The few missionaries whom I have ventured to sound upon this matter have unanimously testified that the call came to them when very young; and I am inclined to place the usual time of impression at about the age of twelve years. This fact gives a new impulse to all of the missionary work of the Sabbath-school.—*The Christian.*

HINTS TO TEACHERS ON THE CURRENT LESSONS.

(From Peloubet's Select Notes.)

June 7.—Heb. 1: 1-18; 2: 1-4.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

It is surprising sometimes how little our scholars know of Scripture facts. Therefore test their knowledge of who the Hebrews were. (Well very briefly on what is known as the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The subject is, God's message by his Son, as given in the title of the lesson. The divisions may be the six given in the Notes or the three below.

I. The revelation by Jesus Christ superior to all former messages from God (vers. 1, 2). (1) The former revelations were given in portions, here a little, there a little. Christ's was a perfect whole.

II. Illustration. The rays of light when divided into various colors by a prism, and the same when united in one perfect ray of white light.

(2) The former were given through prophets, an imperfect medium; the latter by the infinite, all-knowing Son of God.

(3) It was given in the most perfect way, by word, by example, by atoning love.

III. Because of the superiority of Christ Himself (vers. 2-8). There are many difficult things in this part of the lesson, which it is well for the teacher to understand as perfectly as possible, but for the younger scholars the great facts are enough. These should be made clear and plain.

(1) Being divine, he knows all, and can make no mistakes.

(2) He is Creator is an all-powerful Saviour.

(3) As the image of God, he reveals God's character.

(4) By his atonement for our sins he reveals the love of God.

(5) He is now a living Saviour at the right hand of God.

(6) He should be honored and worshipped.

(7) His kingdom is righteous and eternal.

III. The duty of giving heed to his message (vers. 1-4). Letting them slip or drift away.

Illustration. As a boat in the river, and unfastened, drifts away with the tide. The word of angels was steadfast. Illustrate from some of the facts in the Old Testament; the history of the Jews as a nation; the facts we see around us in life; the laws of nature.

Illustrate the danger of neglect from any facts known to your scholars; a little fire, a small leak, a boat in the river drifting towards the falls, and other illustrations given in the notes above.

Dwell on the greatness of the salvation as a reason why we should give the most earnest heed, and on the miracles and the work of the Holy Spirit, as God's endorsement of the truth of the Gospel.

Illustration. A German writer illustrates the greatness of our salvation after this manner. A gentleman, after the most exemplary life, died. The gate of heaven was opened, and he was welcomed as an heir of glory. One of the glorious ones was commissioned to be his conductor and teacher. First he took him to a point where he could see the most fearful representation of sin in its fruits of misery. The objects of horror made him shudder. Then his guide bade him look farther and farther down in the dismal vault, and he saw the most hideous and terrible of beings, the fruit of sin. "That," said his guide, "is what in the ages of eternity you would have been had you gone on in sin." His guide next took him to a point from which could be seen the glories of the redeemed. He saw rank after rank of angels, seraphim, and cherubim, dwelling in ineffable glory. He bade him look beyond these; and in the far distance he beheld a being transcendently more radiant and glorious, around whom floated the soft music of unspeakable sweetness and joy. "That," said the guide, "is yourself many ages hence. Behold the glory and bliss which the salvation of Jesus will bring you."—*P.*

ONE SUNDAY NIGHT not long ago 22,000 children were counted in public-houses in Manchester alone. On one Monday morning twenty boys and girls, all under seven years, were brought before the Liverpool magistrate as having been taken up drunk at the streets on the Sunday night so drunk as to be unable to take care of themselves.

PUZZLES.

BURIED POEMS.

The titles of thirty-one poems will be found buried in the following lines; and the initials of three successive words, in the last line, are the initials of the name of their author, who was born on Feb. 27, 1807.

This morn I watched the sunrise on the hills,  
And saw the woods in Winter diamond-strewn.

Anon the song of Hiawatha thrills  
Me, sitting by the fireside alone.

Now, while the light of stars the sky-dome fills,  
A psalm of life the wintry wind doth moan.

Evangeline—a tale of Acadie—please tell,  
Thou callest it the happiest land for thee.

I've heard thee trill the glad song of the bell  
That once hung in the castle by the sea,

Where thou, in blithe young maidenhood,  
Didst dwell

Close to the river Charles, that floweth free.

Reveal to me the secret of the sea,  
Describe to me the building of the ship—

The phantom ship, that sailed so fast and free.

Why, child! 's't weariness that droops  
thy lip?

Or is it something left undone that saddens thee?  
Beware! The old clock on the stairs doth click.

The child asleep? Even so. She listens now  
The soft song of the silent lute once more.

'Tis well. The day is done. We knew not how  
Footsteps of angels, treading o'er the floor

Bring consolation with calm sleep. I trow  
They send a shadow—twilight—on before.

Night, to a child, brings perfect, sweet repose.  
Then, was it strange three friends of mine

Each his hymn to the night? And one of those  
You know full well. The bells of Lynn

A mournful chime, when he had reached  
life's close

His words live still—words of a poet-king.

DIAMOND.

Increasing and diminishing words.

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1. A consonant; 2, placed; 3, number two increased to a glossy silk; 4, number three decreased to a metal; 5, consonant.

TRANSPOSITIONS.

1. Transpose an article of furniture and have a tree.

2. Transpose an article of furniture and have the cry of a sheep.

3. Transpose a part and have to cut.

4. Transpose a part of a mile and have a part of a house.

5. Transpose an animal and have an article of food.

6. Transpose a city in Italy, and have carpenter's tools; again, and have part of a door.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES.

VARIATIONS.—1, Stale, 2, Steal, 3, Least, 4, Slate, 5, Tales, 6, Teals, 7, Leats.

SPECTULAR CROSS-WORD PUZZLES.—Bismarck PRUSSIAN MINISTER.

ANAGRAMS.

1, impatient; 2, signature; 3, immediately; 4, insubordinate; 5, unanswerable; 6, exclamation; 7, transubstantiation; 8, melancholy; 9, impatient.

HALF-WORD-SQUARE.

S H A R E  
H A R E  
A H E  
H E  
E

THE COW should be treated to the best the land affords. Her milk forms a large percentage of human food, and is very much affected by the food and surroundings of the cow. How important this is, then, is for each one to judge for himself. If he wishes his family to have pure milk, the cow must have pure food, pure water, good treatment, and never be allowed to suffer in the least.—*Christian at Work.*