

ever?" Then labour in faith to "turn many to righteousness." It is the grandest work that human hands can do; and the reward is on high.—*Christian Observer*.

FENCED CITIES FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

What will we do with the children? This was the question under consideration one day in the tribes of Reuben and Gad. These two tribes had decided to ask as their inheritance a portion of the country east of the Jordan. It had already been conquered, but before they could settle down in it for good, all of them who could carry arms must go over Jordan to aid their brethren in the conquest of Canaan. They knew it would not do for them to leave the children unprotected, and what to do with them in the circumstances was a serious question. They finally came to this conclusion: "Our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land."

What will we do with the children? is a question that is always turning up. Fathers and mothers have often wept over it and carried it on bended knees to a throne of grace. Sabbath school conventions and institutes, ministers and church courts, boards of education and State Legislatures have had it before them again and again as a subject for grave consideration, and the answers that have been given to it are as varied as the circumstances which call the question up. But where will we find a more suggestive answer than this one given by the men of Reuben and Gad: "Let the little ones dwell in the fenced cities." The cities in which the children are kept ought to be "fenced" or rather "walled" cities.

The home should be a fenced city. Around it should be the strong wall of parental authority—a wall so real, so good, so strong that when it is tried by those within or by those without it will stand the test. It is not necessary to have it unsightly and forbidding. No, let every stone in the wall from the top to the bottom be covered over with the flowers and fruits of an honest, undoubted affection. Let prayer and faith bind stone to stone with the power and presence and blessing of God. Within such a walled city the children should dwell. Getting out from behind the home walls, breaking away from the wholesome restraints of parental authority too soon, has resulted in the ruin of thousands. These walls should not only keep the little ones in, but they should keep the "inhabitants of the land" out. These foes come sometimes as "friends of the family," sometimes as playmates, sometimes in the shape of books, papers and magazines, and sometimes in the garb of fashion. Oh, parents, keep the door closed against folly and sin. By the love ye bear to these young immortals, by the awful dangers to which they are exposed, do your very best by God's help to have your home and theirs walled on every side, and covered over by the sheltering shield of an almighty Saviour.

So too, the school should be fenced—the public school and the Sabbath school. The first should be fenced or walled by the State, and the second by the Church. Around the great public school system should be a good strong wall of common law, so good and so strong that opposers could not get their fingers in to meddle with it. We thought we had the wall strong enough, but it seems we have been mistaken. It is natural for Rome to be trying to take care of her own interests, but we must give her to understand that we have rights that must and shall be preserved.

The walls round about the Sabbath school are not strong enough. It is the only fenced city that many of the little ones know anything about. The inhabitants of the land in many cases break through and snatch away the precious souls which Christian men and women are trying to save. By God's help the walls of truth, love, faith and prayer must be made higher and firmer.

The Church should be a fenced city for the little ones to dwell in. It is heartrending to see the world reaching into the sacred enclosure and taking the young captive at will. Let the house of God be made an attractive place for them. Let them be brought to it early in life, and let them have a place of their own in the family pew. Let those who are older show

their appreciation of it by dwelling within it themselves, and above all let the prayer of all be "build Thou the walls of our Jerusalem."

Let us watch carefully the walls—the walls about the home, the school and the Church. Instead of weakening or lowering them, let us aim at making them higher and stronger, so that our precious little ones may be safe. Let us teach them early in life their need of the Saviour, and labour to have them "in Christ." With Him for a habitation for ourselves and for them, all will be well. None shall be able to pluck the lambs out of His bosom. Then when we are called to go over Jordan with our brethren, we can leave the little ones behind us with the confident hope of seeing them again.—*Central Presbyterian*.

"TWENTY MINUTES FOR SERMONS."

The recent announcement by a Chicago preacher, that henceforth he shall take but twenty minutes for sermons, has a sound like the notice given by express train conductors at certain stopping places along the route—"twenty minutes for refreshments," and the notice which has to do with fixing the limit in both cases seems very much of a piece; namely, to give as short a time as possible to a necessary but rather irksome duty, which at best is an interference with one's plans, and must be done up with despatch. In connection with the twenty-minute sermons in this case, we are informed, the other services are not to be abridged. The organist will take his usual indulgence at his key-board; the choir will sing to their uttermost, and the long prayer will continue long. Expenses (in time) must be cut down, and a beginning is to be made with the sermon. Such a considerate attention to the preferences of the average church-goer is expected, no doubt, to stimulate church-going; and this ecclesiastical conductor who is henceforth going to compel his people to stop only "twenty minutes for sermons" evidently counts upon a large increase of passengers.

A good sermon may be preached in twenty minutes; but that does not justify the use of any such device as this to attract men to church. We do not know how the exact announcement may have sounded under what may have been peculiar circumstances; but, judged abstractly, the fisher of men who baits his hook with "twenty-minute sermons" will next be advertising two-minute prayers. Such expedients are undignified, unmanly, unbecoming. They tend to lower the name of religion, to cheapen the instrumentalities of the church, to put the Gospel before the world in the attitude of a beggar instead of the messenger it is. Let a minister preach twenty-minute sermons if he wants to—and can; but not attempt to make capital out of the practice by advertising it.

It is very doubtful whether this preacher, whose name we do not even know, will succeed in making his sermons short by confining them within twenty minutes. Some sermons would be long even at twenty minutes, while others are short even at an hour. Some subjects demand longer treatment than others; some occasions allow it; and for a preacher to measure out his "meat" in due season "in portions of uniform size, is sometimes to over-feed his flock and sometimes to starve them." Old Dr. Emmons used to say: "No conversions after the half-hour;" and he rigidly regulated the length of his famous theological essays called sermons according to this maxim; but we venture the opinion that a good many conversions have attended the last part of sermons which have stretched a good deal beyond the half-hour. We know of a minister who, when he sits down to the composition of a sermon, takes so many sheets of paper—no matter what the subject and no matter what the occasion, and writes till he has filled them out. Then his sermon is done. Nothing could be more fatal to the best preaching than any such mechanical ways of sermon-measuring. Not the d-stick, nor the hour-glass, should be the preacher's guide, but common sense. When his sermon's length begins to exceed its breadth and its depth, then it is getting too long, and it is time for him to put a stop to it.

A good motto for preachers is, Stop when you have

finished. It is one also which applies to editorial writers.

Enough said.—*Christian Union*.

MANY WAYS OF DENYING CHRIST.

It is a fatal mistake to suppose that there can be no apostasy from Christ where we are not absolutely called on to deny His name, or to burn incense to an idol. We deny our Lord whenever, like that Demas, we, through love of this present world, forsake the course of duty which Christ has plainly pointed out to us. We deny our Lord whenever we lend the sanction of our countenance, our praise, or even our silence, to measures or opinions which may be popular and fashionable, but which we ourselves believe to be sinful in themselves or tending to sin. We deny our Lord whenever we forsake a good man in affliction and refuse to give countenance, encouragement and support to those who, for God's sake and for the faithful discharge of their duty, are exposed to persecution and slander.—*Bishop Heber*.

THE Ultramontanes in Belgium are coming into open collision with the government in the matter of elementary education. The bishops have published a collective pastoral letter condemning the new school law, and commanding all Catholic parents not to send their children to the reformed schools, nor to participate in any way in its execution. They wind up their letter, after stating that all the resources which the Catholics possess must be devoted to the creation of Catholic schools in opposition to the public schools, with the old crusaders' cry, *Dieu le veut!*

FOR many years the Provinces of our Dominion have been flooded with impure literature emanating from the United States. Our own Governments have endeavoured to prevent the importation of such matter, but with only partial success. We rejoice to find that steps are being taken by the American Government to shut off this deleterious stream at its source. A publisher who has been in the practice of disseminating literature of an improper kind throughout the United States and Canada, has recently been sentenced to thirteen months' imprisonment; and although the case was appealed to the President, and much pressure brought to bear upon that functionary to have the sentence commuted, he inflexibly sustained the decision of the court and left the culprit to undergo his well-deserved punishment. We hope the example thus made will have a beneficial effect.

IT is just about time that people should cease amusing and entertaining themselves and others under cover of giving extra attention to religion. We have now before us a poster which, while bearing unmistakable marks of authenticity, would be in good place as a keen satire on the religious summer gatherings so much in vogue at present. When so-called religious services get to be of such a nature as to necessitate or encourage Sabbath breaking it is time to enquire whether they ought not to be abolished. The advertisement to which we refer invites all and sundry to an "Evangelical Camp Meeting" at a certain place in Ontario, describing it as "the attractive spot of the season for pleasure and profit," and directing particular attention to the facts that "special trains will run" from about a dozen stations along a certain line of railway on three specified days, one of which is a week day and the other two Sabbath days, and that "a steamer will be in readiness, on the arrival of each train, to take excursionists down" a certain "beautiful" river to the "evangelical meeting," which, it is stated, "promises to be the most attractive and immense of the kind ever held in Western Canada." The principal attractions set forth are "superb location," "fresh breezes," "blue waters," "nature's temples," "every pleasure and comfort," "boarding hall," "provision store," "baggage room," "book store," "post office," "rare chance to hear the most clever men of the continent," "trifling expense" (including ten cents taken at the gate), "songs of praise" led by "the Indian jubilee singers, thirty-five in number," and to sanctify the whole enormous piece of wickedness and folly, a series of religious services opened by a Bishop.