

The Children's Portion.

BY. REV. D. MCTAVISH.

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One of the vital questions in the practical work of the ministry is—how to make the regular Sabbath services interesting and helpful to the children. Some may say that all preaching should be of so simple a character that the smallest child could get help from it. You might as well say that all our food should be of so simple a character and so easily digested that the smallest child could eat it. Yet in the Scriptures we have the distinction, viz., "milk" for babes and "strong meat" for those that are of full age. Of the various methods used to interest and help children, two appear to have the prominent place. The first of these is "the Children's Service," when the whole service—hymns, address and all, are specially adapted for the children. These services are held periodically, say once a quarter, and in some cases, once a month. This has proved very helpful and children usually look forward with great interest to their service. The one difficulty about this is that the special service for the children at stated times seems to emphasize the very difficulty we wish to avoid, viz., that they have no part in the other services at all.

The second method usually adopted aims to avoid that one difficulty by devoting a portion of every service to the children. A short address—say ten minutes—forms a part in the order of service each Lord's Day. That this has been made helpful in the hands of skilful men is beyond doubt. Which of these is the better course for a minister to follow is a subject on which one would like to hear the testimony of those who have had successful experience.

That there is an improvement in this respect is evident from the large amount of literature being published on this subject. The writer had placed in his hands a few days ago, one of the earliest works of that Nestor of Sabbath School workers, Rev. H. Clay Trumbull of *The Sunday School Times*. It was published in 1869 and is entitled "Children in the Temple." In discussing the statement "Children are not at present properly provided for in the regular Sabbath services which they are expected to attend," he points out the fact that at the Congregational Union in Sheffield in 1866 Rev. Newman Hall asked (1) "Should children be encouraged to attend our services? (2) If those services are suited for adults will the children be interested? and if not will they likely love the House and Day of God?" Stranger still, the London Sunday School Union in a prize essay declared against bringing young and ignorant children to the services of the sanctuary. It is difficult to see how they could reach such a conclusion with the distinct command of Christ before them "Feed my Lambs." To-day many are really grappling with this question in earnest. Several new and interesting books have been published recently giving samples of what may be done in providing for the children each Lord's Day. Another is added, to those already published, by Rev. Alexander McLeod, D.D., entitled "The Child Jesus and other talks to children," besides special subjects such as "God's care of the Birds," "The Lion Sermon," "The Legend of St. Brendan," etc., he gives successive talks on the main incidents in some of the books of the Bible. They are models for simplicity of language and aptness of illustration. Three others have just been published by Oliphant, one entitled "Golden Nails and other addresses" is by Rev. Geo. Milligan, B.D., of Caputh, Perthshire. They are all based upon texts or incidents in Scripture. His language is sometimes lacking in simplicity but his divisions are simple, suggestive and easily remembered. For example in the "Golden Nails" address on 2 Chron. iii. 9, the points are these, 1. The smallest things are of use in God's service. 2. The nails to be useful must be good. 3. They must be in their right places. 4. The nails used here were "Golden Nails." The next is by Rev. Jno. C. Lambert, B.D., of Cathcart, U. P. Church, Glasgow, and is very much similar to the previous one except that he does not always use divisions or heads. Where he does use them they are well arranged and skillfully elaborated, e.g., Matt. v. 16, "Let your light so shine before men." there are these points (1) Why should you shine? (2) How should you shine? (3) Who is your light-house keeper? The third is by Rev. R. S. Duff, D.D., of Free St. George's Glasgow, and is entitled "Pleasant Places." They are more lengthy than those already referred to, and not all on Scripture texts or themes. They are

very interesting but rather beyond the capacity of younger children. All are worth examining as samples of what may be done in providing "The Children's Portion."

The Pastor's Wife.

We hear much of the usefulness, devotion and self-sacrifice of the pastor, and very little of the exhibition of the same qualities by the pastor's wife. Yet if the old proverb is true, and a man is what his wife makes him, the praise given the pastor must not infrequently belong to his helpmate. Take the work done in the parish for example, that of softening social asperities, of reconciling caste differences, and ameliorating untoward conditions, a work involving the exercise of both the spiritual and social functions. In the great majority of cases it is done by the woman, or at least is better done by her than by the man. Yet the unselfishness and self-sacrifice required for its successful performance is seldom adequately recognized, or if recognized, is credited to the general account of the pastor. It is the more to be regretted because it sometimes happens that the pastor has more praise than is really good for him, and because in the majority of cases it is the wife who keeps him up to his work and makes that account possible.

She does this, too, while carrying other burdens under which the man would give up in despair. Look at the variety of duties which the pastor's wife is called on to perform, and how well she acquits herself. She must be wife, mother, general business manager, and pastor's assistant all in one. In her first capacity acknowledgment will be general that she stands without a peer, the only criticism to which she is open being her tendency to spoil her husband. Where his interests are concerned, her unselfishness is remarkable, and not infrequently foolish. The children must be kept quiet lest he may be disturbed in the preparation of his sermon, though it takes half her time to accomplish it. The civilized life must be lived and a certain standard of comfort maintained in the home, and to effect this on the average pastor's salary, and at the same time release the husband from small worries, she must give as much attention to trifling details and little economies as a petty tradesman. It is accepted without question that his clothes must be good and of current pattern, that he must be scrimped in nothing that will assist him in furthering his work, and that provision must be made for his outings, though to accomplish all this the wife must practise the most rigid self-denial.

If this unselfishness were shown only toward the husband, it would entitle the pastor's wife to high praise. But it is even more apparent in her capacity as mother. The boys and girls must be sent to college and seminary, and to do that on the savings from an income of \$800 to \$1,000, involves sacrifices which can hardly be understood. And the bulk of these sacrifices fall on the wife as the administrator of the family income. It is she who must do the managing, and effect the saving. The courage and efficiency with which she acquits herself have hardly a parallel, as the number of eminent men in all the walks of life sent out from the clergymen's homes of this country abundantly testifies. The women who train these men, and send them out to be a help and blessing to the world, are worthy of the highest honor. They perform a service to the state quite as valuable as those for which it bestows the title of patriot, and which it recognizes by decorations and public resolutions of thanks. Yet little open praise is given them, though in the discharge of their duties they often show a courage that is simply magnificent.

But when all is said, perhaps the thing most to be admired in the pastor's wife is her persistent and unflinching belief in the pastor himself. No man can be a hero to his valet, much less to his wife; and diplomatists and courtiers who in their lives came into close contact with the great personages of the earth, have in their memoirs told us what they thought even of the pretensions of sovereigns. Without going so far as a recent writer in favor of clerical celibacy, who suggested that the marriage of the clergy might well make skeptics of their wives, it must be difficult at times for the pastor's wife to reconcile his practice with his preaching. Human nature is much the same in ministers as