

their proportions till one stands beside them, or stretches himself at length across the diameter of a fallen drum to find a foot and more of length still to spare.

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W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

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What the Sunday-school Is Not.

BY REV. JESSE S. GILBERT, A.M.

The old-time writers had a way of treating a subject, first, negatively, and then positively. They would first tell what a thing was not, and afterward what it was. It may not be amiss to look at the Sunday school from this first stand-point, and see what it is not.

1. It is not a substitute for family religion. It cannot take the place of the family altar, parental example, and home instruction. Of course, there are many children whose parents are not Christians, and who receive whatever of religious precept they enjoy through the Sunday-school; but this is no excuse for Christian parents. If Christian fathers and mothers neglect the home instruction of their children because they go to the Sunday-school, they make that institution an injury instead of a blessing. An hour of religious teaching cannot counteract an entire week of worldliness and irreligion.

2. The Sunday-school is not a substitute for the church. It is a part of the church, but only

a part. Membership in the Sunday-school cannot take the place of a public profession of faith in Christ by uniting with the church. Attendance upon Sunday-school should never be allowed to take the place of attendance upon church. We want the children to attend the public preaching of the word, and to sit in the pew with father and mother. In this way the good habit of attendance upon public worship is early formed.

3. The Sunday-school is not a place for instruction in secular knowledge. At the first this was tried, but soon gave way to the proper aim of the Sunday-school. The time allowed us in our work is so short that very little could be accomplished in secular teaching any way. There is a certain amount of geography, history, etc., that must be employed in order to properly teach God's word; but even this should not be allowed to press upon the more distinctively spiritual and religious work. There is a way in which the time may be pleasantly occupied in bringing out the history, chronology, and geography of the lesson, and yet not a single religious impression made. Such teaching may be popular for a while, but fails at the most vital point.

4. The Sunday-school is not a place of social entertainment. It is a very pleasant place. There should be kindly greetings, friendly hand shakings, and cheery words. It must, however, never be forgotten that it is a place for earnest and most important labor. There should never be an interim between the lesson and the closing exercises filled up with idle chit-chat about the fashions, local gossip, coming entertainments, etc. Five minutes of such talk will scatter to the winds every impression made by the teaching of the lesson.

Thus have we seen some things that the Sunday-school is not. What the Sunday-school is or should be hardly needs to be explained to the readers of the BANNER.

Don't slight the Home Readings! Many teachers never say any thing about them. Naturally, the scholars do not consider them of much account. They are, however, to be reckoned first in the list of lesson-helps. They are the appropriate setting of the lesson. Where the scholars will not "read up" faithfully, the teacher is obliged to supply the lack in his own words, for the hour is too short to admit of going over all the passages. But this is to the great loss of the class. No paraphrase can make up for the Bible story. It is no slight advantage to have the lesson kept in mind, morning by morning, all the seven days. The selected passages are almost always short. The busiest scholar can find the few minutes necessary to read them. The idlest will be ashamed to refuse! Get your scholars to promise that they will read one Home Reading each day, and give a little time in the class to the consideration of the Home Readings for the week.

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