

Jacks around it. There are also large coloured pictures of Joshua receiving his commission and Peter walking on the water. Around the room are several Italian cards in large letters, one of which says, "It is forbidden to use profane language in this room." The hour of meeting is three p.m. every Sabbath afternoon. Mr. Basso and his helpers will be delighted to have a visit from any friends of their good work. The attendance of scholars is variable, but, on an average, it is twenty-five.

Mr. Basso, if he could get sufficient help, would have a night school for teaching his countrymen English. Only one hour or two in the week is not enough. Besides, the mere teaching of English is not suited to the Lord's Day. Mr. Basso has applied for help to the Public School board, but has met with a refusal. The Separate School Board has opened a night school for Italians, which is taught in connection with St. Patrick's Church.

I would commend also Mr. Basso's work to the prayers and liberality of the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.  
Elder's Mills, Ont. T. F.

### THE INTERNATIONAL SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION.

Ontario was well represented at the International Sabbath School Convention at Pittsburg, having about fifty out of the sixty-five Canadians who attended. Presbyterian Ontario had her share of the delegation. Among these were such well-known Sabbath school workers as Rev. Messrs. McFwan, Houston, Hardie, Tibb and Jackson, Elders, Kerr, McNabb, and Hossie. Nova Scotia's representation was wholly Presbyterian, the Rev. Dr. Burns, of Halifax, being the sole representative. Through the good management of Mr. Peake we ran from Lewiston to Pittsburg without change of cars. Since the discovery of natural gas Pittsburg no longer merits the appellation of the Smoky City, yet there are evident traces in the general dinginess of her streets that it was no misnomer in the days gone by. It is an active, energetic city, and is surely pushing its way to the foremost rank, and steadily increasing in wealth and population. Her iron and glass works are second to none in America, and Carnegie's works at Bessemer will stand comparison with any in the world. Her court house is a magnificent building worthy of this city of millionaires, of whom there is said to be 135 in Pittsburg alone.

The hall in which we met was part of the exposition buildings and while it was admirably suited for that purpose its only advantage for convention uses was its size. Being chiefly of glass and iron it was insufferably hot and owing to its close proximity to the boiler shops it was so noisy that attempts to speak often degenerated into shouting matches. It had one other advantage. It was in close contiguity to the hall wherein the fair ladies catered to the wants of their 1,600 guests. The churches of the city shared this duty between them according to their numbers, and it speaks well for Presbyterianism that it fell to their lot two days out of the four. The arrangements for the bodily wants of the guests were all that could be desired; they were made with skill and taste, and carried out with courtesy and kindness.

In endeavouring to epitomize the work of the convention it must be confessed that there was plenty of gas within the building as well as without. The reports from the various States might have been very much curtailed, especially when they were inaudible or when they took the form of broker's advertisements.

The addresses of welcome of Gov. Beaver and H. K. Porter were both cordial and dignified. Gov. Beaver's was specially pleasing to us Presbyterians on account of his happy quotations from the Shorter Catechism, which fell sweetly on our ears from the lips of a gallant soldier, who bore marks of his country's service in the loss of one leg and his consequent use of crutches, from the governor of one of the oldest States in the Union, and from a man whose ability was evidently equal to the high position which he held. "He was glad," he said, "to welcome to the city and to the State a body of Christian workers who did so much to make good law-abiding citizens as the Sabbath school teachers. Any training which left out the principles of Christianity was a singularly deficient one, and he not only honoured but highly valued in the interests of good citizenship the work of the Sabbath schools of America, which were represented here for their special work of inculcating these principles." In the absence of S. H. Blake, the Rev. Dr. Burns was chosen to reply in behalf of Canada, which he did in that happy style characteristic of the Doctor wherein humour and dignity are so gracefully blended that it is at once delightful and elevating. His correspondent was Bishop Arndt, of Georgia, a coloured man. "It marked the progress of the times," he said, "when a negro was asked to respond for a Southern State and it was specially fitting that it should be at a Sabbath school gathering, for the Sabbath school was one of the most powerful agencies in the solution of the race question in the States. No race distinctions held in it. They held in the day school, in the hotels, in the theatre, in the cars, but not in the Sabbath schools. He further tersely emphasized the three things necessary for his brethren to obtain before they could overcome the American prejudices against colour, education, morality and a bank account. He said that he had known the two first to fail when unsupported by the last but never in such a conjunction." He was listened to with rapt attention and loudly applauded. The Rev. Dr. Potts' voice was one of the few which could be heard without effort, and I may add that it was always heard with pleasure both by his co-delegates and the convention. Friend Jacobs seemed to think that the Doctor's prayer always had a soothing effect upon the convention. The ladies had the platform on Thursday afternoon and evening. In the afternoon all but Miss Willard succumbed to

the boiler-fiend and waited until the comparative quiet of the evening. Miss Willard spoke twice and each time her penetrating voice secured attention. What she said was as clear-cut and decided as the voice in which she uttered it. The saloon interest finds no weak antagonist in this modest, determined Christian woman. In the evening Miss Hall, of Chicago, and Miss Wheelock, of Boston, spoke. The first on gathering in the children. To do so we must interest ourselves in what they are interested in, and draw them to us by sympathy and affection. Miss Wheelock spoke on primary work and how to interest the little ones. She explained her methods by briefly reviewing the quarter's lesson. If these are as attractive to the infant class as they were to the 7,000 adults whom she held entranced she may rest satisfied.

After the ladies Drs. Harper and Schanfler addressed us. The address of the former was too long for the occasion, while that of the latter was too short. He is a terse, vigorous, interesting speaker and always carries his audience with him as he speaks of city mission work.

Canada is represented on the Lesson Committee once more by the Rev. Dr. Potts and S. H. Blake. There was a strong attempt to add the name of Dr. Burns, of Halifax, as a representative of the Church in Canada, which is at least second to none in her activity and support of Sabbath school work, but this attempt failed through considerations affecting the general constitution of the committee. The Reformed Churches were more successful in their vigorous demand for representation, and after twice dividing the convention, and after the peace-loving Jacobs offered to resign to let their wishes be carried into effect, the number of the committee was increased by one.

Rev. Dr. Stairs, I think to thirteen and their proposed representative added. The closing of the convention was of the usual nature and we all separated with our enthusiasm aroused and our zeal deepened for the work in which so many of the best and highest citizens are engaged. In spite of Toronto's efforts the convention of 1893 goes to St. Louis.

### THE CONDITION OF AMERICAN FAMILY LIFE AND THE DUTIES OF HUSBAND AND WIFE.

I lately read an article containing some very pertinent remarks on these subjects which are contained in the following article from the *Boston Household Monthly* of December last, and to which I subjoin some remarks of my own. It will be seen that the editor adds some very damaging statements as to American society,—so damaging as to lead us to believe that no republic can long stand (much less any true religion exist) when such a state of society is prevalent. No doubt there is a very large amount of sound Christian feeling in the American States, and a very large amount of Christian work done, and Christian mission work carried on in churches there, but if the marriage relation is loose—if families are changed constantly by divorces—if parents cannot bear and forbear with each other—if fathers cannot know who are their children—if infamous lusts are carried out by divorces, and God's great laws disobeyed, or Christ's express commands violated, what must be the end of such a country? We have only to remember the end of the Roman Empire. It is hard for us to pass through life without some family differences, which will arise from varieties in temperaments from differences as to the way children should be brought up and treated, from the over-fondness of mothers to children—often shown to their injury,—indulging the errors of children, which ripen into irreligion and great mistakes in life, such as hasty marriages, or irreligious habits. On the other hand sometimes too great strictness exists in fathers and mothers. But more often from too great carelessness in watching the acts of children. The Sunday schools are usually good nurseries for the training of children in orderly conduct and religious views, but this training only lasts for an hour each Sabbath, whereas the home training lasts the whole day and week, and there children should be most carefully watched. No greater sin can be committed by a mother than neglect in the careful supervision of her daughter's conduct, or by a father and mother than omitting to require strict regular home habits of life. By this I mean regularity of meals, of rising and going to rest, of attending at the worship of a living God, and the Lord Jesus, who is the only true light of the world. Without Him—His solemn words, His glorious life of sacrifice, His promise of a life to come, where parents and children expect to meet in those mansions, in "His Father's House," prepared for those who are His followers, what could we do? Where could we look for consolation without this hope? Now the too prevalent fault of our American neighbours and of many European nations is their great looseness in the marriage relations. If marriage is worth anything it should be sacred, lasting and ordered of God. Look at its responsibility, being the means of bringing immortal souls into the world, in perpetuating human life from generation to generation, in causing healthy generations, in creating wise habits, in being the nucleus of nations! How often could family quarrels, little differences at first, but raised to mountains of trouble, be allayed by immediate compromises and concessions? And, as this article says, whilst it is often hard for a wife to put up with the harshness it may be with acts cruel in a husband, yet if submitted to God in prayer or overcome by kind words and acts, how often may not her glorious womanly conduct result in making him repent and turn him to kindness? To resort to divorces in ordinary cases will end in a repetition of the same thing, for it is a crime in most cases, and how does the woman or man know that a second marriage chance will be any better than the first? And what is to become of their children or that husband who may go from bad to worse? There are ministers of the Gospel at times who find it hard to bear with the misconduct of wives who, whilst the minister is preaching in the most devoted way, may be by example or otherwise thwarting all his godly efforts by letting her children do things he is preaching against, such as attending midnight balls or theatres, or breaking even the rules of strict sobriety. On the other hand there are instances of ministers setting a bad family example whilst preaching very vigorously on pure home life. CHARLES DURAND.

Toronto, June 30, 1890.

#### SOME WIFE'S OBLIGATIONS.

Considering the average estimation in which young men and women of ordinary intelligence hold the marriage-bond, in this country, there is cause for serious reflection on the part of any one intending to enter upon the marriage relation.

We know that our divorce laws are scandalously lax, and yet we cannot restrain an exclamation of dismay at some of the statements recently made by the secretary of the National Divorce Reform League. In California there is a divorce for every eight marriages; in Philadelphia the divorce rate has doubled in the last ten years; in New York the proportion of divorces has increased one-third during the past ten years; divorce in New York is allowed for but one cause, and consequently it is less frequent than in the West; but the number of irregular connections is on the increase, and the newspapers almost daily record some infringement of the marital law. While any transfer of property must be publicly recorded to be valid, all sorts of secret marital relations may be contracted, which generally become known only in connection with some contest about property. The Divorce Reform League secretary says: "In New England the bigamists are said to be as many as the divorced, especially in the rural districts; the evil is deep and great." A fine record that for the cradle of religion!

It is a well-known fact that the marriage-bond is most elastic in many of the Protestant religious denominations; perhaps one reason is the ease with which the bond can be contracted, it being simply necessary for a man and woman to call upon a minister and ask to be married. Or even to say before witnesses that they are man and wife; or, sadder instance still, for them to agree between themselves to become man and wife without witnesses.

"Lightly won, lightly lost." No wonder an irresponsible man thinks he may cast off a wife so easily acquired, and then contract anew this too facile kind of union. No wonder that a faithless woman lends a willing ear to the first suggestion of a new and attractive tie. A man may leave his wife and children to starve, but he goes to prison if he fails to feed his horse. And this in face of the fact that the inviolability of the family is the very keystone of the arch of state; nay, the very corner stone of all structures of social law and order.

The fact is, the modern American Protestant method of marriage is too easy. The old way, the way still followed abroad, the way of the Church of Rome, which justly regards marriage as a most solemn state, to be entered upon with due consideration and as a permanency, is the right way.

The union of two individuals, with all their inevitable differences of habit and judgment, with all their diversities of inclination and dispositions, is the most momentous connection of life. No two men ever go into business together without carefully estimating all chances of success and failure, but two young creatures enter upon this partnership for life with no more guarantee for safety than an idea that their mutual fondness will reconcile every possible diverse condition.

It is an open question whether this improvident sort of marriage is less deplorable than that frequently contracted between a man older and less attractive than some woman who captures his fancy, or, worse still, his heart, while she consents to marry him only because the burdens of life are too great for her to bear alone. Without wishing to go on record as a sentimentalist, the opinion cannot be too strongly put that loveless marriages are open doors to unhappiness. Nothing less than a feeling more powerful than self love can support the demands which the marriage-tie imposes upon its subjects.

Perhaps those outside an unhappy relation of this sort see more clearly than its parties where the fault lies which mars the entire scheme, or makes it a hopeless failure.

Taking into consideration all masculine traits of character and all imperfections of nature, the conclusion cannot be avoided that in most cases of unhappy marriages the wife might escape a fatal termination of the almost intolerable situation by forbearance and patient silence, bravely doing every duty that can be attributed to her as the party most materially benefited by the relationship. What, then, shall we say in a case where the woman has accepted all these material benefits merely because she could do no better with her life than to unite it with that of a man whom she regards solely in the light of a buffer, to ward off from her shocks too hard for her to withstand?

Suppose the case where such a woman, who, perhaps, has made a brave fight against the emergencies of life rather than at first marry simply for the purpose of securing a home; has lost her first freshness in the struggle for existence, for a woman cannot long retain her beauty who does not live generously and sleep softly; she has lost, too, that freshness of spirit which has such a charm for a man whose own illusions are things of the past. Poor soul, her strait is hard, indeed, until the man comes, who, although not the fairy prince of her youthful fancy, is willing to take upon himself all her burdens, and to stand for her in all the trials of life. He perhaps knows his generosity, but conceals any sign of such knowledge from the chivalrous spirit which at some time actuates every man in dealing with women. Feeling her comfort guaranteed, she undertakes the marriage-vows, often without having read them (for it is only communicants of the Church of Rome and the Established Church who are likely to be familiar with the marriage service); she adopts the married state as a lesser evil than her present unpleasant condition, and it naturally assumes in her estimation an aspect of temporary expediency.

Suppose a case, unhappily too frequently met, where the woman's affection sustains her sense of wifely duty under all strain and stress, and the husband disregards his obligations. Shall she, wounded to the quick, proclaim her hurt, to the confusion and destruction of the family tie, widening the breach by calling strange parties into it, until it can no longer be concealed? Shall she, demanding a condition anomalous in nature, utterly destroy her own chance of living in the conventional consideration of society; an object of respectful sympathy, rather, but unshorn of many ameliorating circumstances in no sense a wrong-doer—shall she not hold open the door of return to legitimate conditions? In a word, shall she endure injury and forbear punishment, or make the wrong irretrievable by retaliation or revenge? Which is the more womanly course? The nearest that idea of the quality of mercy we ascribe to higher powers than poor humanity?

To err is human, to forgive divine.

And when a woman forgives under such provocation she gains over her mere self and her self-estimation a victory which approaches the superhuman in its self-abnegation and sacrificial spirit; she has done all a human being can do to touch the scruples of the wrong-doer and change the wrong to right.—*Boston Household Monthly*, Dec. 1889.

I doubt if these sentiments would meet the views of many of the strong minded American women. C. D.