

its efficient performance are not easily procured, because there must be a combination of various qualities that, in their full development, are not often found united. No Sabbath school teacher can be successful without fervent zeal and genuine piety, and that living earnestness which is clearly distinguished from the formalism of a heartless service; but knowledge, experience, and discretion, are also indispensable. To him the general direction may be addressed, "Know what you have to do, and do it." By quiet and unostentatious labour—by seeking to combine the greatest amount of performance with the smallest exhibition of outward show—by endeavouring to instruct his scholars, and to exercise their understandings, and affect their hearts, without giving prominence to his own acquirements, or indulging in lengthened exposition of the passages of Scripture selected for the lessons—he will best secure the accomplishment of the object to which his efforts are devoted. The Committee recommend, that in the appointment of Sabbath school teachers, the practice should be followed, which frequently prevails, of selecting for this important and difficult duty those only who are communicants in the congregation, and who engage in the work under the sanction and approval of the minister and kirk-session.

The relationship in which the Sabbath school stands to the Church has also been noticed in former reports. The Committee are not prepared to maintain, that in every conceivable case there ought to be a Sabbath school attended by the children of those who are members of the congregation. They have always held, that when parents are able and willing to instruct their children on the Sabbath, and when this duty is actually performed by such parents, it is not necessary that their children should attend a Sabbath school. That the minister of a congregation ought to take a deep interest in the religious condition of the children connected with it, it is unquestionable, but it does not follow that parents, when placed in circumstances which render them well fitted to give instruction to their children on the Sabbath should deprive themselves of the privileges of discharging this duty. In almost all cases, however, congregations are so constituted that they may have advantageously, as congregations, their Sabbath schools, in which the young may be trained to a personal application of the truth, and persuaded to anticipate that time at which they may seek admission to sealing ordinances, and give evidence of their acquaintance with the Scriptures and their spiritual attainments.

The distinction between Sabbath schools in large cities, or populous districts of the country, and those in rural parishes, was fully stated in the last report. They are felt to be very beneficial among a class of the community, cut off, in a great measure, from the benefits of Christian example, and from that training in religious principle and duty which is so valuable when obtained under the domestic roof. Even in many cases where these advantages are fully enjoyed, such schools are eminently useful. They assist domestic training and discipline, especially among our peasantry; and when aided by the religious instruction received in the parish school, they may be powerfully instrumental in affecting the heart, and moulding the disposition, and giving practical impressiveness to the lessons of the Bible. But it is in our crowded cities, or in districts where

there has been a rapid increase of population, that Sabbath schools contribute most to the important work of rescuing the neglected children of careless and irreligious parents from the evils with which they are surrounded. Such instrumentality, indeed, can make but a slight and feeble inroad on the large fields of juvenile ignorance and delinquency. It is only a limited amount of education that any one can obtain both at week-day and Sabbath schools. During the hours of every day, whether spent in relaxation or active duty, men may be regarded, throughout the whole period of their lives, as pupils in a school,—receiving impressions—advancing in knowledge—subject to discipline—becoming older in experience. It consequently follows, that from earliest childhood the largest portion of education must be obtained among those with whom the young associate when they are not at school; and that the moral and religious character of the children in any community must be chiefly affected by the habits that prevail among their parents and other relatives. But attaching full weight to all these considerations, it is not to be denied, that the Sabbath school often gives a right direction to the conduct, imparting an intelligent acquaintance with the Word of God, and frequently enabling the young, not only to resist evil, but to deter others from continuing in its commission. Conducted, moreover, as these schools are—devoted exclusively to religious training and instruction—they are peculiarly fitted to impress children at an early period with the importance of remembering the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Correct impressions of the sanctity of that day are by no means universal. Although Sabbath schools belonging to various denominations have been instituted in our large cities, many children are still found gathering in groups, for mischief or amusement, at the very time at which these schools are taught; and even the children attending them by no means uniformly maintain that propriety of conduct which becomes the morning or the evening of the Lord's day, but it is believed, that, notwithstanding this, a salutary influence is exerted over those who are placed in favourable circumstances, and that they are thus preserved from the evil of being misled by the daring and unscrupulous efforts now so often made to eradicate and destroy every feeling of reverence for the Sabbath.

The Committee, in conclusion, would add, that they cannot examine the nature of these schools, the work they profess to accomplish, and the difficulties with which their teachers must contend, without feeling that, even at the best, they form only a contribution to that vast and varied agency demanded for meeting the evils that exist; the ignorance, irreligion, immorality, and revolting crime that prevail among certain classes of the community. These are springing up with luxuriant growth in our crowded cities, and larger towns, and mining and manufacturing districts. Every kind of delinquency finds there nourishment and success; and there, too, it is most dexterously concealed; but scenes of licentiousness and flagrant crime are repeatedly presented even in our rural parishes, revealing the melancholy fact, that, with all our boasted privileges, there are many by whom the lessons of divine truth are unknown, or, if known, entirely disregarded. There is a loud cry for education as the sovereign remedy for all such evils. It is of the utmost importance that this counteracting influence, in its

most effective form, be universally applied. The only kind of education which the Committee can commend, and of which they desire to see the universal extension, is that which is conducted in strict accordance with Christian principle, combining religious with ordinary instruction, and recognizing the necessity of constant training in conformity with a decided and avowed faith in the Gospel of Christ Jesus. They rejoice that this is the education obtained at the parish school, and they cherish the conviction, that, without the aid of such education, the efforts of the Sabbath school would be comparatively powerless. Trusting that no attempt ever will be successfully made to banish religion from the week-day school, under the pretext that it is taught elsewhere on the Sabbath, they would record their belief, that Sabbath schools must be productive of great and extensive injury if their existence should ever be regarded as a reason for indifference to the preservation of that system of combined secular and religious instruction in the week-day school, which, united to the kind of training to which it leads, has conferred on this country inestimable benefits. But while the Committee desire to give prominence to a right education, with all possible improvements, as one valuable influence that ought to be directed against existing evils, they believe that the cure is not to be found in education alone. They recognize the necessity of that higher power, without which man's utmost efforts are unavailing; and while earnestly imploring the divine interposition, they are satisfied that, in addition to churches and schools, valuable and important as they are, there must be a greater concentration than has yet been effected, of Christian zeal and activity in the work of elevating the humbler classes of the community, and making them better, and happier, and more enlightened men. They regard this as a matter of pressing urgency, forced on their attention by the examination of the working of Sabbath schools; and which swells into more impressive magnitude when it is seen how little such schools, even when efficiently conducted, can accomplish. The Committee believe that the evils of ignorance and vice, with all their degrading deformities, in the wynds, and lanes, and dark recesses of our cities, and amidst the coarse sensuality of many rural parishes, demand the earnest and immediate attention of every member of the Church; and they would rejoice to see the COMMITTEES, both for the city and country, expressly appointed under the sanction of the General Assembly, to whom the work might be specially entrusted; convinced that it would be in the highest degree important to ascertain fully and clearly the extent of such evils—the real causes to which they ought to be ascribed—and the means, however vast and expensive, that seem best calculated to form the careless, the ignorant, the idle, and the profligate; so that, introduced into the ranks of the peaceful, intelligent, and industrious of our countrymen, they might, if possible, be brought at last to the knowledge and faith that are essential to salvation.

MISSIONARY TO RUSSIAN PRISONERS.—The Soldiers'-Friend Society has appointed the Rev. Mr. Stallybrass, late Missionary in St. Petersburg and Siberia, as Missionary to the Russian prisoners of war in England.