

observance of this centenary in the city of London; and a letter on the subject from Secretary Grosier inviting the co-operation of friends in America, was printed in *The Sunday School Times* more than a year ago. Moreover, our American International Sunday School Convention is to assemble at Toronto in 1881, and it is proposed to give to that character of a centennial observance of the origin and progress of Sunday School work. It ought not to be forgotten however, that the true idea of the Sunday School dates back at least forty centuries, to the time when Abram, the Mesopotamian, had a religious school of more than three hundred scholars, and received God's word of approval for the manner in which it was conducted. From that day to this the Sunday School idea has never been lost sight of in the world.—*Sunday School Times*.

### PLAGIARISM.

Plagiarism is literary theft. It is universally considered the mark of a vain, weak, mean mind. A humble man would not, an able man need not, and a high-minded man could not, be guilty of the offence. That the evil has considerable prevalence there can be no question. Many a preacher shines in borrowed plumes. Nor is plagiarism limited to the pulpit. Not a few articles in magazines, and some books, are substantial reproductions of old and forgotten writings. It is really a mystery that intelligent persons, as they sometimes do, should pride themselves for literary works to which they merely give publicity, under a false and dishonourable claim.

The grosser forms of plagiarism, whether in the pulpit or through the press, are readily detected, and universally scorned. It is not easy, however, to decide where the legitimate use of the thoughts and language of others ends, and plagiarism begins.

Thoughts are common property. The design of language, whether oral or written, is to diffuse and make common human ideas. It answers and can answer no other purpose. It is impossible for any one to distinguish between the thoughts which have originated in his own mind and those which have been communicated to it by words, spoken or written. If the most original and fertile mind were deprived of all knowledge which it has derived from others, it would be reduced to a state of deplorable imbecility. It cannot, then, be wrong to appropriate and digest the thoughts conveyed to our minds by the language of our instructors. Indeed, what is education but the process of receiving the views of others, communicated by language, incorporating them with our own conceptions, and employing them for our own purposes?

We may go a step further. The substantial repetition of the thoughts of an author, with his arrangement, is not necessarily plagiarism. The matter may have been fully studied, the views of the author conscientiously adopted, and his plan heartily accepted by the imitator. Against few English authors could the charge of plagiarism be more unreasonably brought than Robert Hall. He did not need to borrow the thoughts of other men. He had genius, learning, industry, and rich stores of knowledge; and yet no

careful reader can compare his circular letter on the Holy Spirit with the writings of John Howe on the same subject without being convinced that the former was much indebted to the latter for his thoughts, and for the arrangement of them as well. The truth is, Hall greatly admired Howe, and designedly or unconsciously adopted his views and method, while he far excelled him in style and brilliancy of conception. Hall was, to some extent, as indeed every minister is, an imitator—the imitator of a noble example—but he was in no sense a plagiarist.

Quotations are not plagiarisms, provided they are fairly and openly made. It is not necessary, especially in speaking, to give credit for citations, when by doing so the train of thought would be broken, or its effect diminished; but there should be no desire of concealment and no affectation of authorship.

Plagiarism is a conscious, deliberate effort to pass off for one's own the intellectual product of another. It is a desire to gain distinction and praise by fraud. It is a great weakness as well a great folly. We have never known any one to gain lasting reputation or real good by it. The plagiarist soon runs his course. His literary thefts cannot be so perpetrated that he will escape detection and exposure. Others read as well as himself. He can find no book so rare that his neighbours may not have access to it. His own speech will betray him. His borrowed feathers will not correspond with his own plumage. The difference between the stolen and the original composition will arrest the attention of intellectual hearers or readers.

A plagiarist once attempted to pass off his pilfered scraps in the pulpit. Unfortunately for his reputation, he had a hearer more intelligent than courteous. As the preacher proceeded with his borrowed strains, his mischievous critic would say in an undertone: "That is Doddridge—that is Watts—that is Leighton"—and so on. The exasperated preacher said to him at length: "I wish you would hush." "That's your own," replied the pertinacious hearer. If all preachers had such a critic to hear their discourses, there would not be much plagiarism in the pulpit.

In short, it is the privilege of every one to learn all that he can from whatever he hears, reads, or sees; and to make the thoughts of others his own, incorporate them with his own conceptions, clothe them in his own language, and use them according to his own pleasure. He should be always ready, however, to give full credit for his indebtedness to the intellectual labours of others. He will find nothing by his honesty.—*Richmond Herald*, (U. S.)

### Varieties.

THE GENTLE REBUKE.—A right reverend prelate, himself a man of extreme good nature, was frequently much vexed in spirit, by the proud, forward, perverse, and untable temper of his vicar. The latter, after an absence much longer than usual, one day paid a visit to the bishop, who kindly inquired the cause of his absence, and was answered by the vicar, that he had been confined to his house for some time past by an obstinate stiffness in his knee. "I am glad

of that," replied the prelate, "tis a good symptom that the disorder has changed place, for I had a long time thought it immovably settled in your neck."

A WISE NOBLEMAN.—Henry VIII, designed to send a nobleman on an embassy to Francis I, at a very dangerous juncture; but he begged to be excused, saying, that such a threatening message to so hot-headed a prince as Francis I, might go near to cost him his life. "Fear not," said old Harry, "if the French king should offer to take away your life, I would revenge you by taking off the heads of many Frenchmen now in my power."—"But among all these heads," replied the nobleman, "there may be not one to fit my shoulders."

ABERNETHY AND THE DUKE OF YORK.—The Duke of York once consulted Abernethy. During the time his Highness was in the room, the doctor stood before him with his hands in his pockets, waiting to be addressed, and whistling with great coolness. The Duke, naturally astonished at his conduct, said, "I suppose you know who I am?"—"Suppose I do; what of that? If your Highness of York wishes to be well, let me tell you," added the surgeon, "you must do as the Duke of Wellington often did in his campaigns,—cut off the supples, and the enemy will quickly leave the citadel."

A WIFE AND SOMETHING TO BOOT.—Old Vivian, a well-to-do farmer, had some four marriageable daughters; and being one of those men who think their girls should get married as soon as they are out of their short clothes, felt somewhat chagrined that his girls should remain on his hands so long. Now, there was a young fellow in the neighbourhood who had been waiting on the Vivian girls for some time, and gone the round from oldest to youngest; and the old man had been anxiously waiting for, and expecting young Bounce to "ask consent" for some one of his girls, but as yet he waited in vain. Bounce, however, had proposed and been accepted; but the old folks had not been made acquainted with the fact. In the meantime, young Bounce had purchased a fine horse of the old farmer, and had given his bill at six months for thirty pounds. Well, pay day was fast approaching, and Bounce had not the "ready" to meet it; so the day before the note became due he made his way over to the old farmer's determined to ask him for his daughter, hoping thereby to get an extension on the bill at least. As good luck would have it, he met the old man in the yard, and was about to go through with the interesting ceremony of "asking consent," when imagine his surprise and joy on hearing the old gentleman break out with the following: "Look here, Bounce, you young rascal, you have been courtin' my gals for morn'a year; you have been gaddin' and cuttin' round with the whole of 'em. Now, your bill comes due to-morrow, and I'll tell you what I'll do. You shall marry one of my girls—I don't care a snap which—and I'll give you a good settin' out and your thirty pound bill to boot; and if you don't 'll sue you, by 'Jupiter!—'Tis a bargain," said Bounce; "I'll do it." The next week there was a wedding; and to this day Bounce chuckles over the way the old man gave his consent without asking, and thirty pounds to boot.