

Pastor and People.

A PLEA FOR THE HEATHEN.

I plead with those whose lives are bright,
For those who dwell in gloom,
On whom there breaks no starry rift
Of hope beyond the tomb;
I plead with those whose homes are fair,
For those whose homes are dim,
Oh guide them in the way to Christ
That they may learn of Him.

Borne far across blue rounding waves,
A wailing voice I hear,
"Uplift us from this place of graves,
Alas! so vast and drear!"
That call from China's crowding host
Blends with the Hindu's cry,
"O sisters of the blessed life,
Come hither ere we die!"

Turn Eastward still; the Rising Sun
Looks down on eager lands,
Sweet daughters of sea-girt Japan,
Who stretch imploring hands,
And beg with eager hearts to day
For Christian knowledge vain
It cannot be their earnest plea
Shall come to us in vain.

Well may we scorn for gold and gems
And brocaded garments hue,
To cumber Christ's victorious march,
To shame his conquering line,
The banner of the Cross shall float
From every mountain crest,
For He must reign o'er all the earth,
By all their King confessed.

He stoops to-day our aid to ask,
His name He bids us wear,
The triumph of His outward path
By sovereign grace we share
O loiter not! to heathen gloom
Bear on the torch, His Word—
What glory for a ransomed soul
To help the Almighty Lord!

—Mr. M. E. Sangster.

CULTIVATING A SPIRIT OF TRUST.

In our intercourse with our fellows, and in our attitude toward God, we are constantly called to choose between trusting on the one hand, and distrusting on the other. There is in every case an opportunity for trust, and an opportunity for distrust; and it is for us to accept the one opportunity or the other as we may prefer. On this choice there often pivots our peace of mind and our practical power for good; hence we have need to know our duty in the premises, and to act accordingly.

Trust is reliance, or confidence. To trust another is to place confidence in him, to rely on him, to believe in him. Trust in another presupposes a ground for confidence in him; it has a reasonable basis to rest on. It would not be right to put trust in every person alike. But when the question is settled that a person is worthy of being trusted, then it is nobler to trust him than it is to doubt him; and as trust is worthier than distrust, and gives joy instead of wretchedness, trust is to be cultivated as a desirable attainment, and as an imperative duty in its sphere.

It is a natural instinct to trust. A little babe trusts, at the start, not only his parents, but all others. Distrust is a later growth in a child's nature. And all the way along, in a child's life, trust is more admirable than distrust. True child-likeness is evidenced, not in distrust, but in trust; and that child would be deemed abnormal, if not a monstrosity, who, having come to the possibility of an intelligent choice in the matter, should be constantly showing distrust of his loving and faithful parents. As it is with the child, so it is with the older person; the voluntary exercise of a spirit of distrust, where trust is a duty, is a cause of shame and reproach, because of its exhibit of the baser nature of him who indulges it.

There is a time to decide whether or not to trust another; but that question once settled, the duty of trusting in that direction is to be recognized as a prevailing duty. If, indeed, a radical change in the state of things is to be brought about in the course of time, it may be right to open anew the question of trusting one who has thus far been deemed worthy of confidence; but in such a case the primal question of the propriety of trusting is to be looked at deliberately by itself, apart from the inclination or impulse to trust or distrust for the time being. It is the attitude of trust, or of distrust, toward one who on the whole is deemed worthy of confidence, that is to be looked at as testing the character of him who assumes that attitude.

In every true friendship, trust is not only a duty, but it is a duty that will not be ignored. Even the cynical La Rochefoucauld said, "It is more dishonourable to distrust a friend, than to be deceived by him." And Young gave this as a canon of friendship:—

First, on thy friend, deliberate with thyself;
Pause, ponder, sift, not eager in the choice.
Nor jealous of the chosen; fixing fix;
Judge before friendship, then continue till death.

He who distrusts a friend thereby confesses himself lacking in true friendship; for, if he loves as he ought to love, he can not be moved by suspicion or distrust. "There is no fear in love (and distrust is a phase of fear); but perfect love casteth out fear; . . . and he that feareth is not made perfect in love."

Trust rests on the person trusted, not on his words or acts for the time being; on his character, rather than on his conduct; on his character as vouching for, if not explaining, his conduct, rather than on his conduct as being the only intelligible proof of his character. For this reason it is that there is always a call for trust beyond sight in one's attitude towards even the best of friends; for no human friend can so bear himself that there is never an opportunity for distrusting his character, if his conduct of the hour be the only basis of trust in him. Character must be rested on as a basis of trust, where conduct is at the moment inexplicable; hence it is that one's joy and peace of mind and safety in his friendship will so often pivot on one's trust in a friend, rather than on that friend's fidelity as a friend. Whatever he may be or may do as a friend, a man is powerless to win that confidence in him which it is for those who watch him to give or to withhold at their pleasure.

As in the truest human friendship, so in friendship toward God. If God is worthy to be trusted—and that question is already settled once for all—God is to be trusted always; to be trusted because of what He is, and not merely because of the proofs of His worthiness to be trusted, that are multiplied to us hour by hour. There are times when we cannot understand the ways of God; times when God's ways might be so interpreted as to seem to show a lack of wisdom or a lack of love; but then it is that our trust in God is to be rested on as having a surer basis than our understanding of His present providences. No child of God has, indeed, a true trust in God, unless he can feel and say in all sincerity concerning God, when God's ways are most inscrutable, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Both trust and distrust are capable of cultivation. Both of them are to be found in our nature; and it is for us to develop the one and to repress the other by persistent exercise, according to our intelligent choice in the premises. We can accustom ourselves to rest on the conviction that our human friends are to be trusted because of what we know they are, whether we can understand, or not, that which they are saying or doing for the hour. Or, we can accustom ourselves to look always at the possibility of our friends' untrustworthiness, and to see fresh illustrations of this possibility in their every act which is capable of a two-fold interpretation. And our attitude toward our Divine Friend may be the same as our attitude toward our human friends. There is always an opportunity to exercise trust or distrust toward God, according to our preference; and we can cultivate the one spirit or the other as we decide for ourselves.

Because trust is noble, and distrust is ignoble; because trust is right, and distrust is wrong; because trust is the exercise of our better nature, and distrust is the exercise of our baser nature; therefore we ought to exercise trust and to repress distrust, man-ward and God-ward. We are not to console ourselves with the thought that it is natural for us to be suspicious and to doubt, and that therefore it is no shame to us to be in the constant attitude of distrust toward God and toward those whom God has given to us to love and to trust. But we are to face squarely as a fact the possibility and the duty of cultivating the spirit of trust, and so of triumphing over our natural propensity to evil in this sphere of character.

—Sunday School Times.

A FEW DON'TS IN SABBATH SCHOOL EFFORT.

And first to the superintendent, don't make a mistake of your office. It is not for me to tell you what that office is, but don't, I beg of you, imagine that you can attract all the disorder of the school into your own entity by doing that which you are exhorting the rest not to do. Don't imagine that the desk at the beginning of a session, or at any time during the session for that matter, is a fitting place to practise for a position on some troupe of "Bell Ringers." Don't imagine that you have taken a contract to do all the talking for the school, and that you are watched by jealous rivals to see that you are fulfilling every article in the agreement. Don't "run the school." Don't impose on the good nature of your associate, leaving him in the lurch every now and then without any notice whatever. Don't think that you are a bigger man than your pastor. Don't concentrate the quintessence of Bible knowledge solely within yourself. Don't stand aloof from your brother superintendents although they may have a different denominational name from you. Don't, by word or deed, give any shadow of an opportunity to bring into disrepute the religion you profess, neither by pharisaical sanctimoniousness, nor by an assumed humility, nor by a careless frivolity.

Next, to teachers. Don't think that you have a peculiar ability to just say a word more, or give a notice after the signal for silence, and not disturb the rest of the school. Unless you have really made the discovery, don't think that you are clad in the "air colour" of the fairy story, and that your quiet whisper to your neighbour or to a scholar is not seen and its influence felt in the efficiency of the school. Don't think that because the superintendent is the appointed servant of all that you, thereby, are not to obey him immediately, implicitly and good-naturedly at all times. Don't think that the superintendent has to do all the planning for the school, but especially don't be disappointed if your plan may not be applicable just now; don't give up trying again and again. Don't try to teach by inspiration; don't neglect the home visiting of your scholars. It is said that a teacher in a public school in Philadelphia received a note requesting

that a scholar be excused for tardiness, that read somewhat in this way: "Please excuse Johnny for being late, he had shad for dinner." Don't have shad for your Sunday's dinner, or indulge in an extra nap if your school begins in the morning.

It may be that I address some secretaries or librarians; if so, permit me to say, don't be a necessary evil; don't think that the chief use of the teaching half hour is to permit you to interview this teacher or the other about a book that has been out beyond the permissible time or about the new scholar that has been admitted. Don't attempt to harmonize your conversation with your assistant with the hymn of praise; don't express your preference for written prayers by continuing your pen exercise during prayer time. Don't be other than a Christian man or woman, however much your idea of your office may stand in the way.

How I could shout don't to the scholar; I could fill my page to a greater degree than there are "nots" in the decalogue. Don't imagine that the school is run to suit your ideas; indeed, don't suppose that your ideas of how a school should be run can have anything of originality or novelty. Don't come to school to be a sandwich boy or girl for your dressmaker or tailor. Don't talk when the signal for silence has been given, nor keep quiet when questions are asked you, or the verse is to be read. Don't imagine the singing is made more of a service of praise by your silence, even if it is improved as a concert performance. Don't grumble; don't pout; don't think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.

It will not do to stop here, neither is it desirable to continue too long. But if I were where I did not know the pastor; I would say, in as clarion-like tones as I could imitate, don't belittle your school, don't think that you have not a positive and important duty to be as thoroughly "in" the teaching of the Bible in the school service as you have to be in any other part of your pastoral duties. Don't imagine that preaching is always teaching or that your duty as teacher is done when you have delivered yourself of a sermon. I would like to say to the Sessions that are not here, don't think the school a mere annex, or lean to, that can get along as a parasitic plant, an organism of its own feeding on the substance of the other.

The church officers, one and all, don't imagine your duty done until you have supplied the school with an ample financial support apart from the offerings of the school. To the church members, don't forget that the school service is a church service; don't imagine that you can do your duty to that service by staying away from it. To the parents of the smaller members of the school, don't think that your duty ends when you have your children ready for school, and that what is done in the school or who does it is of no concern to you. And to the grumblers of high or low degree, don't utter a single objection to the slightest objectionable feature, at least objectionable to you unless you are ready to show a better way, and are ready to supply the proper means necessary to carry it out. The simple objector is a nuisance wherever he is found; don't be a nuisance.

I feel quite sure that many of you by this time are ready to side with the little boy who, when a speaker noted for his power of endurance was invited to address the school, began with: "Well, my little folk, what shall I talk about?" and pausing for the oratorical effect, was answered by the aforesaid boy: "About three minutes." —Charles M. Lulyre, in *Mid-Continent*

KEEP YOUR PROMISES.

Heredity may be made altogether too much of a scapegoat. A child develops, for instance, a most unaccountable habit of lying or deceit. The parents are distressed, and charge the blame to some remote ancestor. At the same time they are unconsciously teaching prevarication by breaking promises made to the child. "Be a good boy," says the mother, "and you shall go to drive with papa this afternoon." The child struggles bravely to fulfil the condition. To him the hours of waiting seem like days. At length the eagerly anticipated time arrives, and the parents drive gayly off, comforting the sobbing boy with a promise to bring him some candy. Possibly this pledge also they fail to fulfil. President Lincoln was exceedingly strict in keeping faith with his children, and required the same fidelity in others. At one time a visitor at the White House persuaded little Tad to sit on his knee by promising as a reward the charm on his watch chain. Shortly after, as the man was about dismissing the child with no further thought of the lightly-spoken promise, the President said sternly, "Give him the charm, sir!" In confusion the man obeyed the bidding. Lord Holland, the father of Charles James Fox, once told his boy that he should witness the pulling down of a stone wall on the estate. Forgetting the promise, he had the masonry restored after it was demolished, that he might not fail in keeping his word to his son. Such scrupulous regard for the truth on the part of parents will go far toward counteracting an inherited tendency to falsehood on the part of children.—*Congregationalist*.

THE Rev. Donald Campbell Bryce, of Moffat, died in Glasserton manse, Wigtownshire, recently in his thirty-ninth year. In 1884 he succeeded Dr. MacVicar at Moffat, where his preaching ability and genial character made him exceedingly popular. The officiating ministers included Mr. MacVicar, of the Free Church, and Mr. Forrest, of the United Presbyterian.