

Contributors and Correspondents.

THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

ITS PLACE AND PURPOSE.

(For the British American Presbyterian.)

The following address was delivered by Mr. W. N. Hesse, at the Convention of the County of Peel Sabbath School Association recently held at Bolton.

1. THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

Mr. Pardo says, "Is a place where the Church of Christ meets with the children and youth for the worship and service of God—Christians caring for the children on the Sabbath day," and I have learned that while they seek to instruct the children in a knowledge of Bible truth, if truly sincere, they are themselves largely benefited, having their own hearts kept alive and refreshed. The progress made in this department of Christian work within the last twenty years is astounding. Teachers are now numbered by the million and scholars by tens of millions. While it is our duty and privilege to send the gospel to heathen lands, we should not forget the children in our own neighborhood, many of whom are living without God and without hope at our very doors. Surely we can reach them easier than our devoted missionaries can those heathen in lands where, in addition to prejudices, the laws are against the introduction of the Bible and Christianity. Then, all who have the heart and desire the conversion of the ungodly, but have not the means to send the gospel to distant lands, here is a field of labor, right at home, requiring no money, but a willing Christian heart to take a part in the Sabbath School. Let us glance for a moment at the progress made in this work. In all ages, whenever pure religion has been revived, special attention has been given to the early training and religious instruction of children. The soul is diseased and the application of Bible truth is the proper remedy. A Bible education then is of the highest importance. In that wonderful Book, which extends its record over the long period of four thousand years of the world's history, there is throughout a wonderful regard for children. Of the Patriarch Abraham, nearly four thousand years ago, it is written, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Gen. xvii. 19. The history of the childhood of Joseph and Moses, and David, and Samuel, and Daniel, wonderfully illustrates the value of the instruction and religious training of children. These words in Deut. vi. 6, "Hear, O Israel * * * These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children." Thus we find so long ago the great Sabbath School principle foreshadowed and embodied; and can there be found in all the Bible a more definite authorization or divine appointment for any of the great denominational Christian Churches which now so bless our land, than is here found for the Sabbath School? It is true, if parents did their duty, there would be less need for the school; but, I ask, do they do their duty? Do they? In fact no congregation can be said to be properly organized if it has not got a Sabbath School, an adjunct ordained and signally blessed of God. The Sabbath School, then, is simply the Church of Christ putting forth its legitimate effort in its most inviting field of action, right at home, not away across the mighty deep. It is the regular systematic working department of the Christian Church, not an outside auxiliary, but something within, the church itself in action, and as such should be carefully guarded and cherished. The progress made in the management and teaching of the Sabbath School and in other matters connected with it is very noticeable. Robert Raikes's, whose name in connection with this enterprise shall never be forgotten, first idea was to keep the neglected children out of the streets and to protect the Sabbath. In rural parts the inducements to evil are not so abundant as in cities, where vice in varied forms are brought so near together. Then his work was simply that of a Sunday School, for the children were merely taught to read and write, a great boon in those days, for few at that time had the advantages that the children of Canada at the present day possess, where education is as free to every child as the air it breathes. Some time after a great advance was made by the introduction of the Bible as the Reading Book. The next step was to commit the Bible to memory, and then the Christian churches took hold of the Sabbath School. I use the term Sabbath in preference and in contra-distinction to the term Sunday, because there is something sacred and religious in the term Sabbath, besides it is Scriptural as well as sacred, while Sunday is neither sacred nor Scriptural. The wicked may, and do enjoy, Sunday, but the Sabbath day is a weariness to them. In Gen. ii. 2, we read that "God rested the seventh day and blessed it," and then in Exodus xvi. 23, the day is called "the rest of the Holy Sabbath unto the Lord," and then in the Fourth Commandment we have, "Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy." At first the aim of Sabbath School teaching was very feeble and indefinite: to keep the children out of mischief, teach them to read the Bible; correct their manners and make them better children—not profane and disobedient. Next the aim was to give them a general knowledge of Bible history and Catechism, but did not pretend to hint at the possible conversion of the children. The

Bible was long used as a book of task lessons for the young. I remember having to learn chapters of it as a punishment for trifling irregularities at the common schools. Catechism and hymn recitation engrossed even our Bible classes. But now the Bible is exalted and so applied I trust in our Sabbath Schools as to be the most attractive of all books, and the aim of the Sabbath School is, or ought to be, the immediate conversion of the children to Christ, and giving their hearts early to him; not only the children, but all who attend. Many a Sabbath School Teacher has had his or her own heart renewed while engaged in the great and precious art of leading little children to Jesus, who was wont to bless them, and take them in His arms while He was on the earth.

ITS PLACE

should be in the bosom of the church. You remember how anxious mothers were to place their children in the Saviour's arms; the good earnest disciples thought it unnecessary, and a waste of His precious time, and so were about hindering the access of these little ones to him. Jesus mildly rebuked them, sweetly smiled, and kindly said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." In this mixed community where congregations of the Church are weak, it is not expected that they can occupy the whole field; still more can be done than has been done yet. Every professing Christian should desire the early giving of the children's hearts to Jesus; but it is not enough merely to desire; let us have faith, and work to accomplish the object desired. O we do want more laborers in this interesting place, which should be made comfortable and attractive. Wherever a few people meet for public worship organize at once a Sabbath School; it will do much in building up a congregation, for men and women are but children of a large growth. Don't forget that children are fast taking the places of their parents. Wherever a Christian may live near a Public School House that is far from a Church or Meeting House, there we ought to have a Sabbath School, and such Christian is not responding to God's call if he allows an opportunity of this kind to pass unimproved. Let such case at least be brought under the notice of the Committee of this Association, who will be happy to render every assistance in their power to establish a school there, and in this instance a Union School is perhaps indispensable. Let us labor to bring within the reach of every child the advantage of a Sabbath School.

ITS PURPOSE.

Its purpose is not to supersede paternal duty in the family. The institution of the family is as old as mankind. Parents are therefore the divinely appointed guardians of their children and there is no shrinking from their responsibility except by unfaithfulness, and no evading of it without guilt. Parents may paralyze the influence of the best Sabbath School Teacher in the land; it is therefore important that the family and the school go hand in hand. The school should supplement and assist parents in the religious instruction of their children, and with the admirable International Series of Lessons, nicely printed, and a copy in the hand of every child in the School, the family are enabled systematically to pursue the study of the lesson at home, and thus see that their children are attending to their lessons at the Sabbath School. Parents ought heartily and actively to co-operate with the Sabbath School so as to make it a blessing to their children. While lessons may be carefully and systematically attended to at home there is a powerful influence for good or evil, one or the other, in a class of even five scholars. It is therefore the purpose of the Sabbath School that these influences be good only. Our aim should be the immediate conversion of the children. There are many families brought up in the strictest manner, yet it is a fact that no direct word is said to the individual child. Family worship and the religious exercises may be regularly attended to, but all too general, too charitable. Let us come right home to ourselves, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner." The school being the working department for the Christians, it is eminently fitted to keep their zeal alive; and while it is the effort of teachers to lead the children to Jesus through a knowledge of the Truth in God's own Holy Word, their own souls are refreshed. Let us also aim at bringing the children into closer relation to the church at an earlier day than they would do if left to themselves. I do love to see young persons, while their hearts are warm and comparatively free from the slavery of sin, coming forward and professing their love to the Saviour. And we have His blessed example to follow. At twelve years of age he appeared before the Doctors and astonished them with His wisdom. If it had not been customary for young persons thus to appear before these dignitaries of the church, this circumstance would have so pointed Him out as to have marked Him in a more special manner than simply for His wisdom. With the same lesson for all the classes they will naturally be graded, and the child pass from class to class until it reach the Senior or Bible Class, which should be preparatory to entering the church in the capacity of an adult member. It is painful to see our hopeful scholars, as they grow to be fifteen or sixteen, thinking themselves too big, or something else, leave our school to spend many years in unrestrained enjoyment. O how much sin they might have been saved from had they been under the restraining influence of early connection with the Church. Having evidence of their being brought to the Saviour, let us gently lead them into the society and fellowship of the adult believers. Dear Teachers, do not, after bringing your scholars thus far, drop them to go out from the holy influence of the Sabbath School, but try to retain them in the service of God. Entreat the pious youth to press on to the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus, and have their name entered on the Communion Roll. May God help Teachers to discharge this all important duty with faithfulness and a single eye to God's glory.

In all evils which admit a remedy, impatience should be avoided, because it wastes that time and attention in complaints, which, if properly applied, would remove the cause.

THE BANKER'S REASON.

BY REV. W. JAM. M. BAKER.

"There is a favor I wish to ask of you, Mr. Reynolds," a Doctor of Divinity said to a wealthy man of the world, a near neighbour, president of a bank, with whom he was taking tea one evening.

"With pleasure, if in my power, Dr. Rankin," Mr. Reynolds replies, for he is a model of courtesy and liberality, as well as of all that practical wisdom which results from life-long dealing with men. "What is it, Doctor?" he has to ask, for his clerical guest has hesitated, as if embarrassed.

"It is a matter that I dislike to mention, but it has flashed upon me this moment that you might help me greatly"—and Dr. Rankin, stately in person, learning, and manner as an archbishop, is simple as a child, and blushes as he hesitates.

"With pleasure, Doctor, with pleasure!" the bank president repeats, perfectly certain it is some case of destitution, his mind already settled upon the size of his cheque.

"It is, to tell me why it is so few people come to hear me preach?"

It is said with tremendous effort. "We have a central and commodious church, well warmed, lighted, seated. Our organ and choir are acknowledged the best in the town. I prepare my sermons—pardon my saying so—with utmost care. Yet, although our pews are free, the attendance is very small. You cannot tell how it distresses and perplexes me."

It certainly did. The Doctor's children could testify to his gloom at the Sunday meals, his wife to his wakeful nights, to his hours of actual weeping and prayer of which he supposed his Master only was aware.

Mr. Reynolds highly esteems his neighbor, although he rarely enters his church—perfectly comprehends the entire case, so far as causes go.

"If you will allow me to speak with frankness," he begins, for they are alone together before the parlor fire.

"Certainly, certainly, it is what I beg of you!" his neighbor replies.

"All you say of your church is correct." (The bank president is clear, cold, and accurate—it is a matter of business.) "You yourself, Doctor, are of spotless life, learned, exceedingly able, eloquent, if the size of your congregation were such as to set your material and yourself on fire. The fact simply is, you take no interest in people, and therefore people take no interest—excuse me—so little interest in you!"

"How greatly you mistake!"

"Allow me," Mr. Reynolds interrupts, with bank precision. "I presume you visit your parishioners systematically, give such as call upon you a welcome; say to those who hear you, in conversation and sermon, all you can. But you are rarely on the streets; unless it is a member of your church, or a particular friend, you never recognize any body; children, for instance, feel as if you regarded them no more than insects. Do you ever drop into a machine shop, say, or a store—into a factory or bank, except when compelled by business—then in and out again as soon as possible? Did you ever stop to speak to anybody, Doctor? I do not mean on church affairs, but as all the rest of us do every hour of the day simply as friends and neighbors, chatting about small matters, showing an interest in everybody, in little things. Of course, no minister would be respected who made a habit of loafing about here and there. We business men mix very thoroughly among each other without doing that. Yes, doctor, if you associated more with men in their places of business, they would feel more like dropping in upon you in your place of business—church. I suppose it was your training when a student. I dare say it is impossible to form the habit of being intensely occupied with religion in the abstract and as a system, and equally interest yourself with it in a person. When a man addresses himself in a set speech two or three times a week to men, women and children, grouped into a vague mass as a congregation, he loses, I suppose, the more natural way of being interested in them as individuals. They are so steadily regarded, too, as immortal souls, living for ever hereafter, that you underrate them now and in the body. You good clergymen make yourselves, unconsciously, a caste, a class. Tones, countenance, bearing—a minister. You never lay off your official robes. Excuse my candor."

"I was in a wholesale shoe store," Dr. Rankin said, after a long pause, "the other day, to see a deacon on business. I suppose that is what you mean. A rough countryman entered while I was there. The deacon was with me by the office fire, but he met the man half way, welcomed him by name, shook hands cordially, led him back into the office and introduced him; had a hundred questions to ask him about his crops and his family!"

"And sold him a bill of goods before he left," Mr. Reynolds adds.

"I did not observe. I asked the deacon afterward," the clergyman continued, "who his friend was? He told me he had never seen him but once before, and that a year ago. 'Why, how could you remember him so well?' I asked. 'It is my business to do that,' he said. I dare say, I dare say," the minister continued, reflectively, "that you are right, Mr. Reynolds—that you are right."

"I began with nothing—of money, education, or friends. It is the way by which, with honesty, and energy too, of course, I have made all I have and am. Possibly," the bank president continued, "my interest in strangers was put on at first; but it has become nature to me. Besides, the interest you take in people is, of course, deeper than mine. You are aware I am not a Christian."

But, very skillfully, the banker at this point turned the conversation from himself to the superior moral excellence, generally speaking, of men of the world over professing Christians, especially officers of the churches.

It was this bank president himself who related to the writer this conversation of his with the minister in question. By a simple narrative of actual occurrence in itself, it so impressed the writer as to his own danger that he ventures thus to record it

for others, should they need warning. It is not from any banker, however, but only by closer communion and fellowship with Christ himself that we can be conformed to him—a perfect example to us in this incidental matter also. The writer is compelled to add that the excellent minister, here concealed by another name, remains to-day, it is feared, the same man exactly that he was before he asked that evening at tea, and obtained, the banker's reason—so strong is his habit.

A LIE, ZOOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED.

BY REV. T. DEWILF TALMAGF, D. D.

We stand agape in the British Museum, looking at the monstrous skeletons of the mastodon, megatherium and iguodon, and conclude that all the great animals thirty feet long and eleven feet high are extinct.

Now, while we do not want to frighten children or disturb nervous people, we have to say that, the other day, we caught a glimpse of a monster, beside which the lizards of the saurian era were short, and the elephant of the mammalian period were insignificant. We saw it in full spring and on the track of its prey. Children would call the creature "a fib;" polite folks would say it was "a fabrication;" plain and unscientific people would style it a lie. Naturalists might assign it to the species *Tigris regalis*, or *Felis pardus*.

We do not think that anatomical and zoological justice has been done to the lie. It is to be found in all zones. Livingstone saw it in Central Africa, Dr. Kane found it on an iceberg, beside a polar bear; Agassiz discovered it in Brazil. It thrives about as well in one climate as another, with perhaps a little preference for the temperate zone. It lives on berries or bananas or corn or artichokes; drinks water or alcohol or tea. It eats up a great many children, and would have destroyed the boy who afterwards became the father of his country, had he not driven it back with his hatchet. (See the last two hundred Sunday school addresses.)

The first peculiarity of this *Tigris regalis* or *Felis pardus*, commonly called a lie, is

ITS LONGEVITY.

If it once get born, it lives on almost interminably. Sometimes it has followed a man for ten, twenty or forty years, and has been as healthy in its last leap as in the first. It has run at every President from General Washington to General Grant, and helped to kill Horace Greeley. It has barked at every good man since Adam, and every good woman since Eve, and every good boy since Abel, and every good cow since Pharaoh's lean kine. Malaria does not poison it, nor fires burn it, nor winters freeze it. Just now it is after your neighbor; to-morrow it will be after you. It is the healthiest of all monsters. Its tooth knocks out the "tooth of time." Its hair never turns white with age, nor does it limp with decrepitude. It is distinguished for its longevity.

THE LENGTH OF ITS LEGS.

It keeps up with the express train, and is present at the opening and the shutting of the mail-bags. It takes a morning run from New York to San Francisco, or over to London before breakfast. It can go a thousand miles at a jump. It would despise seven-league boots as tedious. A telegraph pole is just knee-deep to this monster, and from that you can judge its speed of locomotion. It never gets out of wind, carries a bag of reputations made up in cold hash so that it does not have to stop for victuals. It goes so fast that sometimes five million people have seen it the same morning.

KEENNESS OF NOSTRIL.

It can smell a moral imperfection fifty miles away. The crow has no faculty compared with this for finding carrion. It has scented something a hundred miles off, and before night "treed" its game. It has a great genius for smelling. It can find more than is actually there. When it begins to sniff the air, you had better look out. It has great length and breadth and depth and height of nose.

ACUTENESS OF EAR.

The rabbit has no such power to listen as this creature we speak of. It hears all the sounds that come from five thousand key-holes. It catches a whisper from the other side the room, and can understand the scratch of a pen. It has one ear open toward the east and the other toward the west, and hears everything in both directions. All the little-tattle of the world pours into those ears like vinegar through a funnel. They are always up and open, and to them a meeting of the sewing-society is a jubilee, and a political campaign is heaven.

SIZE OF THE THROAT.

The snake has hard work to choke down a ton, and the crocodile has a mighty struggle to take in the calf; but the monster of which I speak can swallow anything. It has a throat bigger than the whale that took down the monster who declined the call to Nineveh, and has swallowed whole presbyteries and conferences of clergymen. A Brobdignagian goes down as easy as a Liliputian. The largest story about business dishonesty, or female frailty, or political deception, slips through with the ease of a homeopathic pellet. Its throat is sufficient for anything round, or square, or angular, or octagonal. Nothing in all the earth is too big for its mastication and digestion, save the truth, and that will stick in its gullet.

IT IS GREGARIOUS.

It goes in a flock with others of its kind. If one takes after a man or woman, there are at least ten in its company. As soon as anything bad is charged against a man, there are many others who know things just as detestable. Lies about himself, lies about his wife, lies about his children, lies about his associates, lies about his house, lies about his barn, lies about his store—swarms of them, broods of them, herds of them. Kill one of them, and

there will be twelve alive to act as its pall-bearers; another to preach its funeral sermon, and still another to write its obituary.

These monsters beat all the extinct species. They are white, spotted and black. They have a sleek hide, a sharp claw, and a sting in their tail. They prow through every street in the city, crutch in the restaurants, sleep in the hall of Congress, and in the grandest parlor have one paw under the piano, another under the sofa, one by the mantel, and the other on the door-sill.

Now, many people spend half their time in hunting lies. You see a man rushing anxiously about to carry of a newspaper paragraph, or a husband, with fist clenched, on the way to pound some one who has told a false thing about his wife. There is a woman on the next street who heard, last Monday, a falsehood about her husband, and has had her hat and shawl on ever since, in the effort to correct wrong impressions. Our object in this zoological sketch of a lie is to persuade you of the folly of such a hunting excursion. If these monsters have such long legs and go a hundred miles a jump, you might as well give up the chase. If they have such keenness of nostril, they can smell you across the State, and get out of your way. If they have such long ears, they can hear the hunter's first step in the wood. If they have such great throats, they can swallow you at a gape. If they are gregarious, while you shoot one, forty will run at you like mad buffaloes, and trample you to death. Arrows bound back from their thick hide; and as for gun-powder, they use it regularly for pinches of snuff. After a shower of bullets has struck their side, they lift their hind foot to scratch the place, supposing a black fly has been biting. Henry the Eighth, in a hawking party, on foot, attempted to leap a ditch in Hertfordshire, and with his immense avoirdupois weight went splashing into the mud and slime, and was hauled out by his footmen, half dead. And that is the fate of men who spend their time hunting for lies. Better go to your work, and let the lie run. Their bloody muzzles have tough work with a man usefully busy. You cannot so easily overcome them with sharp retort as with a true and yard-stick. All the howlings of Californian wolves at night do not stop the sun from kindling victorious morn on the Sierra Nevada, and all the ravings of defamation and revenge cannot hinder the resplendent dawn of heaven on a righteous soul.

But they who spend their time in trying to lasso and decapitate a lie will come back worsted, as did the English cockneys from a fox chase, described in the poem entitled "Pills to Purge Melancholy."

"And when they had done their sport, they came to London, where they dwell,
Their faces all so torn and scratched, their wives scarce knew them well;
For 'twas a very great mercy so many 'scaped alive,
For of twenty saddle-bags carried out, they brought again but five."

A SPEECH WORTHY OF HONOR.

Professor Tyndall, before leaving for England, was honored with a public dinner in the city of New York. A large gathering of men of science, of literary men, of men of various professions, were assembled, with a small sprinkling of divines, two of whom—Mr. Beecher, and Professor Hitchcock, of Union Seminary—spoke for the profession. Dr. Hitchcock's speech must have been very brief, for the report of it very meagre; but there has been enough of it given to indicate its character. We quote it as given in the city papers on the day after the dinner:

"Professor Hitchcock, upon being introduced, turned to Mr. Beecher and said: 'I came too late into the world, sir, to meet your honored father, but with the tradition of his fine and saintly character, I should be quite a shamed to apologize for being one of those Presbyterians whose pulse the profession has quickened a little here. It seems sometimes as though science and religion had met in a very narrow path on a very dizzy ridge, and were interlocking their antlers in a struggle that must be fatal to one or the other. If it must come to this, I think history suggests that not religion, but science, must go down the cliff, for mankind at large manage to get along very well without much science, but mankind at large have never managed to get along without religion. (Applause.) Skepticism may endure for a day, but with the sunset and the starlight comes either religion or its disease, superstition; and superstition is the vengeance of Providence on skepticism, sure to come. (Applause.) But there is no need of any such issues; the path is broad enough both for science and religion; and those scientists are greatly mistaken who suspect distrust and jealousy on the part of the best representatives of the religious sentiment.' (Applause.)"

We thank Dr. Hitchcock for what seems to have been, as seen through this imperfect report, a very manly, straightforward speech. We believe, with him, that the last thing which our poor humanity will finally surrender is the religion by which it may be saved.—Philadelphia Presbyterian.

One of the ancient fathers said: "A man should be prepared for death the day before, but as he does not know when that day is to be, he should always be prepared."

"You can't do it, sir! You are a fool, sir!" said Humphrey Davy, in 1818, when a man told him that cities would soon be lighted by gas.

There is dew in one flower and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it, while the other closes itself, and the drop runs off. So God rains goodness and mercy as wide as the dew, and if we lack them it is because we will not open our hearts to receive Him.

"In small things," says Spurgeon, "lie the crucibles and the touchstones. Any hypocrite will come to the Sabbath worship, but it is not every hypocrite that will attend prayer-meetings, or read the Bible in secret, or speak privately of the things of God to the saints."