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Sunday School Banner.

W. H. WITHROW, D.D., EDITOR.

TORONTO, JULY, 1889.

The World's S. S. Convention.

By the time these words reach the reader the Editor of these papers with a party of friends, embracing some of the most earnest-hearted Sunday-school workers in the Dominion, will be on the ocean on the way to the World's Sunday-school Convention in London. He will keep both eyes and ears open, and will endeavour to learn something that may be of use to him in his work, and which he will communicate to his fellow Sunday-school workers.

Talks with Teachers on Retaining Elder Scholars.

BY THE REV. A. ANDREWS.

THE FACT.

As in the past, so in the present, when our scholars pass the line of boyhood and girlhood the tendency, and largely the practice, is to drift away from the Sabbath-school. Every convention deprecates this state of things and studies the best means at command to remedy the evil. And still we are brought to face the truth that, after all our efforts, large numbers of our young people utterly neglect the Sabbath-school. In many places it must be acknowledged that there has been a marked improvement, and this encourages further attempt in this line. Yet the fact remains, that the Sabbath-school does not retain its elder scholars as it ought to do.

THE CAUSE.

Before we can hope to effect a remedy in any given case, we do well to enquire into the causes of its existence. Some of these we propose to mention—

1. The Sabbath-school from the beginning, and for very many years, was considered to be only intended to teach children. At first, indeed, only children of the neglected masses of the poor, and then children of all classes. In some of the early schools it was a common practice, when a scholar had passed through the various classes and knew the catechisms, etc., to formally dismiss him, just as a graduate is passed out of college with his diploma. It has been reserved to recent times to change this theory and practice, and we now aim at holding on to all the scholars. And we must repeat it, line upon line, "The Sabbath-school is designed for all; for the young, the middle aged, and the old."

2. Growing out of this fact is the idea in the minds of many boys and girls that it is childish to attend Sabbath-school.

3. Many lose their interest in the school. They are conscious of personal sin, and do not like to be placed where they can be appealed to in such a close way as in the Sabbath-school class, and so easily are persuaded to stay away.

4. Many worthy young people are nervous and hesitating, as some teachers practise the class in reading the lesson, so that each scholar must read his verse aloud. And, added to that nervousness, some fear that they cannot read well, and rather than run this gauntlet they stay away. This is no man of straw that we set up. I have met with young people who give this as their only reason for leaving the adult class.

5. Another class of young people have seen and felt the inefficiency of their teachers, and from lack of respect to them have stayed away. It must be admitted that some of our teachers are neglectful in preparing their lessons, and this lack is sure to tell on their classes.

6. Then such scholars have reached an age when they are fond of society, and it is a strong temptation to follow young acquaintances who spend their afternoons in promenading the streets rather than in the Sunday-school.

These seem to us the principal causes which render it difficult to retain them in the schools.

THE CURE.

Now, what remedies shall we propose?

1. Let as many of the adult members of the Church and congregation, as wish to keep their hold of these dear young people, attend the school themselves, and thus show that the school is not for the children alone. Then our young people will feel that it is not childish to go to Sabbath-school.

2. We must aim at the conversion of the scholars before they reach this dangerous period. I attended our Sabbath-school at Gorrie and found 56 scholars fifteen years of age and upwards, and 79 under fifteen. I asked the superintendent how he accounted for this excellent state of things, so different from what is

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