

I have the tenderest affection for the people of Montreal, and if I were not an American, could wish that I were one of your fellow citizens."

HOW CAN THE INTEREST IN OUR FIRST-DAY SCHOOLS BE INCREASED?

A paper read at the F. D. School Association of N. Y. Yearly Meeting, in 5th mo., 1894, by Lousia A. Haviland.

How can the interest in our First-day Schools be increased? is a question which the writer feels better prepared to ask than to answer, and in a better position to listen to the solution of the problem by some more experienced worker, than to attempt any such solution before this meeting.

The subject of this paper, therefore, is not to offer a perfect plan of work, or to propose any specific for the cure of existing weakness, but rather to encourage a free expression of thought as an important means of increasing interest.

Every step forward in the uplifting of humanity, every wonderful invention or discovery perfected, every triumph of truth that has at last dissolved some seeming mystery into a mighty law of God, has existed at some time as a simple thought in some mind. The wondrous beauty, and loveliness of nature, comes to our sight through the medium of reflected light, so the spark emitted by the expression of a common-place thought may be reflected by some more experienced mind, and a flower of beauty and utility be revealed. Therefore, in the attempt to give an intelligent answer to our question, these essentials suggest themselves: 1st. That we endeavor to estimate the First-Day School at its true value. 2nd. That we be willing to give expression to our thoughts on the subject, for in them may lie something more valuable than we know.

From a just appreciation of the First-day School, and the free interchange of thought of both young and old, must come an increased strength

and interest in the work. Horace Bushnell, when speaking of Sabbath school instruction, on one occasion, is said to have remarked: "Sometimes I think it is the only work there is in the world; certainly it is the greatest." Though this seems a slight exaggeration, since this statement was made the continued increase in the number and size of First-day Schools, both in our Society and in the other branches of the Christian Church, gives evidence of the generally recognized importance of the work.

As a natural consequence, all are desiring an increased interest and improved methods. To reach the desired end in our Society, an earnest and general expression of thought must tend to throw light on the way.

I think we should feel thankful that we live in an age when the rigid doctrines of the past have given place to more liberal thought, and when religion is no longer regarded a cause for sadness but for joy. If we wish to teach the child to think of religion as a daily companion and friend, we must make the hour spent in the First-day School interesting and satisfying, and, as Dr. Adler has said of the day school, "A place in which his whole nature, and especially what is best in him, may expand and grow."

In the report of the Directors of the Unitarian Sunday School, for 1893, the President says: "We are aiming, at least in the Sunday School work of our denomination, to establish a new education. What does that phrase mean? Perhaps the following brief extract fitly expresses it from a leading authority of our day: 'The new education aims at building up self-control and individual insight. It substitutes the internal authority of conscience for the external authority of the letter.' That is a definition in part. The whole aim is to transfer authority in morals and religion from an arbitrary and fickle command of tradition to the inner sense of right and inward voice of God. What is