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THE MISSIONARY
AND
SABBATH SCHOOL RECORD.

Vol. VI.]

DECEMBER 1, 1849.

[No. 12.]



Heathen Books and Christian Tracts.

The word *Bible* means "a book;" and *Scripture* is "a writing." When we say *Holy Bible*, we mean "holy book;" and by the *Holy Scriptures* we intend the "holy writings." Now, it need scarcely be asked why the Bible is called *holy*; for we know it has been given to us by the holy God, that it was written under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and is designed to make men holy.

Many of the heathen have books which they call *sacred*, or religious; but they cannot be said to be "holy." We shall soon see how different they are from the word of God.

In the East Indies, the Hindoos have their sacred writings, which they call *Vedas*, or the "four books." They are written in Sanscrit, which is a *dead* language; that is, a language not now spoken by the people. This is as though our Bible were only printed in Latin. How few would then be able to read it! It would be no Bible to the thousands of little children who live

in our land; and how many poor and aged people would be deprived of the chief comfort they have in the world! But, then, the heathen priests do not wish the people to read their sacred books; they say, these writings are only for the priests; and if any of the poorer classes dare to read them, or even *listen* to them when read, they are threatened with eternal death. How unlike is this conduct to the direction given by our Saviour, "Search the Scriptures," John v. 39; and to this text, "the poor have the gospel preached to them!" Matt. xi. 5.

Next to the *Vedas*, are the *Sub-vedas*, or "inferior writings." The poor may hear these read; but, then, what good can they get from them? There is not a single word to teach men about God, and their duty to him.— They profess to treat of war and music; and give many absurd accounts of the sun and moon, and the other heavenly bodies, but these are not the books which a sinner needs, to show him how to find pardon, peace, and eternal life.

Besides these, the Hindoos have other books, called *Shasters*, or "comments." The priests say, that these writings once filled a million of volumes, though only a few have been preserved to the present day. It would have been better for the people if they had been all lost; for those that remain are full of the most unholy stories and songs, and encourage wicked men in their sins. They contain prayers for thieves and housebreakers, that the gods may grant them great success, and give them plenty of plunder! They teach the worship of *Kalee*, the "god-

dess of thieves ;" whose followers before they go forth to rob and murder first offer in her temple bottles of spirits, such as rum and other strong drinks. A missionary has copied from the shasters the blessing which robbers say over the instruments they use in breaking into houses ! They then hope to have much plunder, and not be found out.

Another sacred book of the heathen is the *Zend-avesta*, or "the living word." It is held in much reverence by a people called the Parsees, who also live in the East Indies, and who worship the sun and fire, before which they bow down in prayer. Their sacred book, it is said, was formerly twenty times larger than it is at present, the greater part being lost about two thousand years ago. The portion that is now in use is full of silly addresses to good and evil spirits, which they suppose to exist. In former ages, whole nations paid honor to the *Zend-avesta* : but there is only a tribe that now regard it as sacred.

The Chinese have nine sacred books which were written by a learned man, named Confucius, and his disciples ; besides the works of the "ten wise men," in 32 volumes ; with many smaller works. They do not profess to teach the knowledge of God, but contain strange accounts of demons, departed spirits, and dragons, along with many good and wise sayings. But these books cannot teach heavenly wisdom, nor lead to true virtue ; and if they did, how could the common people of the land find time to read, and money to buy, forty-one volumes ? Only the priests and learned men give much attention to them ; the poor are satisfied in offering pigs and rabbits in the temple, in honor of Confucius ; or burning scented pieces of paper, and knocking their heads on the ground as a kind of worship presented to their departed friends. One book has been written for the use of females. In it every girl is taught to look upon herself as placed in the lowest rank of the

human race, and as no better than a slave. She must be without a wish or will of her own, and ought to regard herself as property liable to be bought or sold.

These are some of the sacred books of the heathen ; but the time is coming when they shall deceive the nations no more. Missionaries have gone forth with the Christian's Bible ; thousands of poor idolaters have received it with gladness, and others are asking to possess it. A missionary says :—"The natives of India are quite astonished when we offer them our Scriptures ; they are astonished that our sacred writings are open to all the people, and that we offer them without money and without price. They think it strange that we should press them upon the attention of the people, and invite them to reflect on the truths they contain.—When they take the Bible into their hands, and read in their own language the wonderful works of God, they are surprised that our Scriptures are plain and easy to be understood. They become interested in the narratives, the devotional parts, and the epistles.—They say they are all excellent ; and then again they wonder that we should think of changing their religion through the influence of books. They thus address the missionaries :—"When others have come to our country, they took into their hands the sledge-hammer and the axe, and broke down our gods ; but you have nothing but the book and the school—you wish to move us by these only. There is truly something wonderful in all this !"

Yes, this *one* book shall drive from the earth all the vain and wicked writings of the heathen. It is given by God for all the world ; and it is suited to all people in all ages. It tells us what all their books can never teach ; that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16.

Let all the heathen writers join
To form one perfect book ;

Great God, if once compared with thine,
How mean their writings look!

Not the most perfect rules they gave
Could show one sin forgiven,
Nor lead one step beyond the grave—
But thine conduct to heaven.

Among other means employed in doing good to the heathen, is the circulation of Christian tracts. Near St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, is a building, which we may compare to a storehouse, filled—not with food for the body, but for the immortal mind. This building is the new Depository of the Religious Tract Society. It is like a spring-head, from whence pure and healthy streams flow to refresh all lands. It is a tree, whose boughs spread far and wide, and whose leaves are for the healing of the nation. It is an armoury, from whence the missionary obtains those "weapons," which are "mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds." Thousands of Christian tracts and books are sent out from this depository every week. Ships bear them to the heathen in nearly every part of the world, and men and children, of almost all countries have been taught by them the way of salvation.

It is a good day for a heathen land when a chest of books arrives at a missionary station. When the South Sea islanders first saw the tracts that were sent to them, they called them "speaking leaves." In some places in the east they are named "white books," and Christianity is known by the name of the "white book religion;" while in other parts of the world, the missionary is called the "book man," and his tracts the "books of the Lord Jesus."

Sometimes the missionary stands under the shade of a tree, and gives away the books to the people as they pass along the road; or he takes his place on the steps of an idol temple; or he walks along the bazaar, or market-place; or perhaps, he sits on a mat in the porch of his own house, and spreads out his tracts before him. The people

stop, and look at the white books: some begin to read, and then ask questions about what they find in them: they are told that if they wish they may each take one home to read in secret or to their friends. At other times, the missionary gets into a boat, and distributes to the people who crowd the shore, or who stand up to their knees in the water. Then he takes a bundle of tracts, and goes a long journey to the villages: as he travels from place to place, he opens his treasure, and gives one, it may be, to a little boy or girl, who runs home with it to show to its heathen parents.—Soon a crowd gathers around, and then is heard the cry, "Teacher, give me a book! Do not say, no! Have you not one for me?" The missionary now holds one in his hand, and begins to read: he tells them that their idols are vain and worthless, and then speaks of the love of God in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world.

A missionary, who had spread out his books under a tent, seated himself by their side. It was the season of a heathen fair. Soon a crowd began to collect at a little distance: they looked at the books, and then began to talk one to another. At last one man came forward and said, "Are these books for sale?" "Yes, for those who can pay; but to those who are poor, I give freely." "Do not be angry, sir," said the man, "for I know no better; never were books brought to this fair before, either for sale or to give away." "My good brother," was the reply, "I am not angry with you: sit down and look at my books." The man took off his shoes, and sat down, and said to the people who were standing and gazing, "Come, the gentleman is very good, and speaks our language; come and hear him." The whole crowd now ran to the tent. When all was quiet, a man asked the missionary who he was. He said, "A mussalchy;" which means, "a lamp-lighter." He spoke in this way, because the eastern people are fond of metaphors,

or figures of speech. "No, sir," said they; "tell us who you are." He replied, "I have told you the truth; if you do not know what I mean, I will explain it. I said I was a mussalchy; well, a mussalchy's business is to show you light in a dark night. Now, you are in darkness, and do not know the way of salvation; so I am come to show you a light." To this one of them said, "You are a blessed man." The missionary then added, "I see you are all come to seek salvation in the Ganges: you must know that this river can only wash your bodies, and not your hearts; so I will tell you of a Fountain opened to take away sin: if you bathe there, your hearts will be clean." To this they again replied, "You are a blessed man." "You must know," continued the missionary, "that our holy book says, there is no salvation in idols, water, or anything else; only in Christ. He is the Son of God, and came into the world to do the work of salvation, by giving his life for us: now believe on him, and you will have life. These books give you a full account of him, and what you are to do." The men now began taking the books, and reading them. By the evening, the missionary found he had given away half a chest of books and tracts, which were conveyed by the people to their homes in various parts of the country. Thus was the good seed scattered abroad: the harvest will be gathered at the end of the world.

Christian tracts are now printed in many languages, and are freely sent to nearly all parts of the earth. If you love the little books and tracts which you call your own, will you not pray that God may bless those that are given to the heathen? And will you not help, if you can, in sending these little "messengers of mercy" to them? Who can tell what good a single tract may do? A missionary, on his return home, attended a Tract Society meeting. He had in his hand a tract, printed in the language of Birmah. As he held it up to the meeting, he said, that a

copy of that little book had been the means of converting the son of a native chief. "This tract," said the missionary, "cost one cent (or halfpenny.)" *Whose cent was that?* It will never be known here, but it will stand recorded throughout eternity, as the offering of Christian faith and love. Let us, then, not forget that a halfpenny may pay for printing a tract, which God may employ to the saving of a soul!

Whose cent was that? which gave the word
Of life and love,
To bid the heathen, when he heard,
To look above?
No more to worship idols vain
Of wood or stone,
But trust in Him who death hath slain,
And saves alone.

Whose seed was sown in faith and prayer,
And watered well
With tears of love divinely fair?
No one can tell—
Yet in the long, unending day
Beyond the tomb,
'Twill be transplanted where it may
For ever bloom!

THE SAILOR BOY.

The Cornelius was a good ship, writes one of the West India chaplains of the American Seamen's Friend Society, but at one time we feared she was on her last voyage. We were but a few days out from New York, when a severe storm of five days' continuance overtook us. Like a noble charger between two contending armies, it made the ship quiver in her joints and struggle to escape from the fury of the winds and waves. At the height of the storm, I must tell you a feat of a Connecticut sailor boy.

He was literally a boy, and far better for thumbing Webster's Spelling Book than furling a sail in a storm. But his mother was a widow, and where could the boy earn his living for himself and mother better than at sea? The ship was rolling fearfully, twice I saw the captain lose his centre of gravity—tho' he kept his temper pretty well—and measure his length on the deck. Some of the rigging got foul at the mainmast head, and it was necessary that some one should go up and rectify it. It was

a perilous job. I was standing near the mate and heard him order the boy aloft to do it. He lifted his cap and glanced at the swinging mast, the boiling wrathful sea, and at the steady, determined countenance of the mate. He hesitated in silence a moment then rushing across the deck, he pitched down into the fore-castle. Perhaps he was gone two minutes, when he returned, laid his hands on the railings, and went up with a will. My eye followed him up till my head was dizzy, when I turned and remonstrated with the mate for sending that boy aloft.—He could not come down alive! Why did you send him?

"I did it," replied the mate, "to save life. We've sometimes lost men overboard, but never a boy. See how he holds like a squirrel. He is more careful. He'll come down safe I h-o-p-e."

Again I looked until a tear dimmed my eye, and I was compelled to turn away expecting every moment to catch a glimpse of his last fall.

In about 15 or 20 minutes, having finished the job, he came down, and straightened himself up with the conscious pride of having performed a manly act, he walked aft with a smile upon his countenance.

In the course of the day I took occasion to speak with him, and ask him why he hesitated when ordered aloft? why he went down into the fore-castle?

"I went, sir," said the boy, "to pray."

"Do you pray?"

"Yes, sir; I thought I might not come down alive, and I went to commit my soul to God."

"Where did you learn to pray?"

"At home; my mother wanted me to go to the Sabbath school, and my teacher urged me to pray to God to keep me, and I do."

"What was that you had in your jacket pocket?"

"My Testament, which my teacher gave me. I thought if I did perish, I would have the word of God close to my heart."—*Seamen's Magazine.*

THE CHOICE.

A Quaker residing in Paris was waited on by four workmen, in order to make their compliments, and ask for their usual New Year's gifts.

"Well, my friends," said the Quaker, "here are your gifts; choose fifteen francs, or the Bible.

"I don't know how to read," said the first, so I take the fifteen francs."

"I can read!" said the second, "but I have pressing wants." He took the fifteen francs. The third also made the same choice. He now came to the fourth, a lad about fourteen. The Quaker looked at him with an air of goodness.

"Will you, too, take these three pieces, which you may attain at any time by your labor and industry?"

"As you say the book is good, I will take it and read it to my mother," replied the boy. He took the bible, opened it, and found between the leaves a gold piece of forty francs. The others hung down their heads, and the Quaker told them he was sorry they had not made a better choice.—*Literary American.*

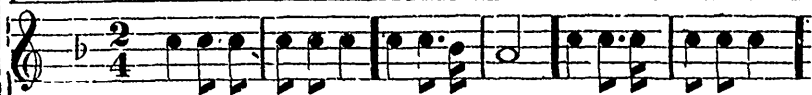
THE HAPPY LAND.

There is a happy land,
Far, far away;
Where saints in glory stand,
Bright, bright as day.
Oh, how they sweetly sing,
Worthy is our Saviour King;
Loud let his praises ring—
Praise, praise for aye.

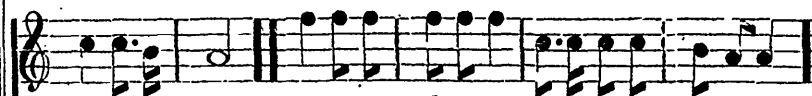
Come to this happy land,
Come, come away;
Why will you doubting stand—
Why still delay?
Oh, we shall happy be,
When from sin and sorrow free!
Lord, we shall live with thee—
Blest, blest for aye.

Bright in that happy land
Beams every eye—
Kept by a Father's hand
Love cannot die.
Oh then to glory run;
Be a crown and kingdom won,
And bright above the sun
We reign for aye.

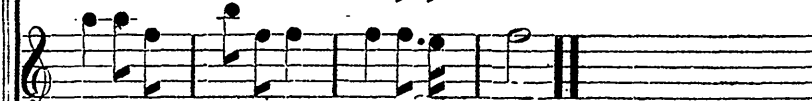
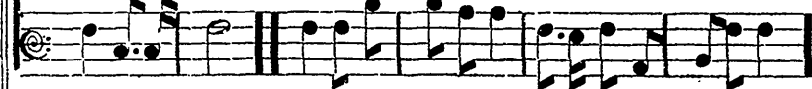
THE HAPPY LAND.



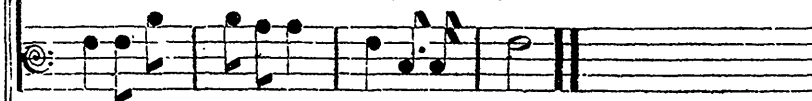
There is a hap - py land, Far, far a - way; Where saints in glo-ry stand,



Bright, bright as day; O how they sweet-ly sing, Wor-thy is our Sa-viour King,



Loud let his praises ring, Praise, praise for aye.



(For Hymn, see preceding page.)



„ Two women shall be found grinding at the mill.”—Mat. xxiv. 41.

FOOD OF THE ANCIENTS.

From the Bible, we see that the diet, or food, of the Jews was very simple and plain. It was chiefly bread, milk, honey, rice, and vegetables. John the Baptist used to feed upon “locusts and wild honey,” Mark ii. 6.

The Jews seldom had animal food, except at their solemn feasts and sacrifices. As they did not often eat flesh, they considered it a great dainty. Jacob’s pottage of lentils, which tempted Esau to sell his birthright, Gen. xxv. 29—34, shows how simple the usual food of the patriarchs was. Irby and Mangles breakfasted in an Arab camp from a mess of lentils and bread, seasoned with pepper; they describe it as very good. Lentils are a sort of small beans; they dissolve easily into a mess of a reddish or chocolate color.

The grain was usually ground into flour, then fermented, or made light by leaven, then kneaded into bread. The flour was ground by small hand-mills,

which were only two flat circular stones, one placed upon the other: the upper one was turned round, while the corn was poured between them, through a hole at the top. In these representations are a mill complete, and ready for use. Also the upper stone and the lower stone. It will be seen they are fitted one into the other.

These mills grind the flour but slowly, so that it is the employment of every day to grind some flour. The sound of grinding, and of the women singing as they work the mill, is heard in the morning early in the houses of the East, and is considered a sign that the people are well and active; when it is not heard, the neighbors fear that all is not well, Eccl. xii. 4. This explains the description of the desolate state to which Jerusalem was to be reduced, Jer. xxv. 10.

As the millstones were so necessary to prepare the daily food of each family, the Israelites were forbidden to

“take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge, for he taketh a man’s life to pledge,” Deuteronomy xxiv. 6. This is a strong expression; it shows how important an article of food bread must have been, when the instrument by which it was prepared was of so much consequence to every family. The finest flour was made into cakes, and baked quickly upon the hearth, Gen. xviii. 6; the coarser flour was made into loaves, 1 Sam. xxi. 3. Sometimes the cakes were baked upon the coals, being laid upon the hot embers, or upon a flat piece of iron, or a grate of iron over the fire, as cakes are now sometimes baked upon a plate of iron, called a griddle, and are called griddle-cakes, 1 Kings xix. 6.; they must be carefully turned; the neglect is noticed, Hosea vii. 8. But we also read of ovens being used, Lev. ii. 4.; Mal. iv. 1. The ovens now in use in the East are heated by fuel being burned within them, Luke xii. 28., as in our bakers’ ovens. When the oven is hot the loaves are put into it to bake. The bread is usually made in flat cakes. The lighter kinds of bread stick to the sides of these ovens, and are soon baked. These ovens are sunk in the ground, which explains how the frogs of Egypt got into them, Exod. viii. 3. Sometimes the oven is only an earthen pot sunk in the ground.

Perkins describes a more carefully constructed oven, called Tannoor, used in Persia, which in cold weather is covered with a quilt or other covering, under which the family place their feet while they sleep in a circle round it. Thevenot describes the roasting or baking of meat in the ovens.

Harmer says, that the kneading-troughs are often wooden bowls or leather bags, as among the Israelites, Exod. xiii. 34. Niebuhr describes these leathers as round and flat, used as tables, and after eating, drawn up by cords and rings at the sides, like a bag or purse.

Leviticus xi. contains particular directions as to what sorts of animal

food the Jews might eat, and what was forbidden them. Upon this a general remark may be made, that the sorts of food forbidden are mostly such as are unwholesome and hard of digestion. Pork, for instance, is considered very unwholesome in those hot countries. Many sorts of food which may be eaten among us without harm, would be very dangerous there. In the year 1801, when the English attacked the French in Egypt, many of the troops died from want of care in this respect. The illness of which the captain of one of the English frigates died, began from his persisting to eat eggs for breakfast, though it was not safe for Europeans to do so in those countries. Cooling vegetables were, and still are, much used for food, as melons and cucumbers, Isa. i. 8. The Israelites in the wilderness longed for them, Num. xi. 5.

But the laws respecting food were also to keep the Jews a separate people from those nations who fed upon what they were forbidden to eat, and to teach them temperance. Tertullian, one of the ancient fathers, who lived soon after the days of the apostles, says, “If the law takes away the use of some sorts of meat, and pronounces creatures to be unclean, which before were held to be quite otherwise, let us consider that the design was to accustom the Jews to temperance, and to look upon it as a restraint laid upon gluttons, who hankered after the cucumbers and melons of Egypt, while they were eating the food of angels.” To think a great deal about eating or drinking is wicked, and every one must despise those who thus indulge themselves.—*Jewish Nation.*

WORTHY OF IMITATION.

A little boy, six years old, has saved, by denying himself the use of an article that costs other children three-pence a week, amounting to 13 shillings annually, and has nobly given this sum towards clothing and instructing poor children in the Bethel school; and his little sister, eight years old, has saved the same amount for the Sunday schools where she attends.

Should all children do likewise, by the advice and aid of their parents, the funds of all good institutions would be overflowing.

Those who take a cigar and a glass of strong drink daily, are respectfully invited to inquire if they could not lay out the amount of these luxuries in promoting some good object. If a child can save one halfpenny without loss of health or enjoyment, what might be saved by those who freely use strong drink and tobacco.

All who drink and smoke tobacco are seriously warned and taught by the *Great Teacher* in Matt. vii. 12. The Saviour, when he had fed many thousands told his disciples to gather up all that was left, that nothing be lost. If all would save that which might be spared without injury to themselves, we then should have sufficient to clothe and instruct all destitute children and build decent houses for worship and instruction throughout the world.

T. OSGOODE.

OUR NEXT VOLUME.

With the issue of the present number of our monthly sheet, we conclude the sixth volume of the *Record*. It is not for us to speak of the way or manner in which the year's labor has been performed; indeed, we confess our inability to discharge the important duties devolving upon us, as they ought to be performed, but we "have done what we could." It may be encouraging to our friends to know that our circulation has for some time past been on the increase, which we take as some evidence that the *Record* is being appreciated; however, there must be many places where it is not yet taken, and where its introduction might tend to advance the good cause.

We propose no change in the *Record* for the coming year. It will be our endeavor, and we hope that the arrangements now in contemplation by the Committee will be successful in obtaining a supply of illustrations of a rather better class than those we have been obliged to use. But as this is not only attended with much expense as well as great difficulty—publishers not being willing to part with their illustrations at any price—we do not positively promise it.

But the end of another volume reminds us

also of the close of another year. This is a thought worthy of our most serious consideration; another year of our mortal existence has been numbered with the past; how short it appears now that it is past, but you cannot conceive what an important bearing it has had on your eternal interests. It may be from you: stubbornness and repeated rejection of the truth the spirit may have said—"Let them alone, they are joined to their idols." It becomes us all to examine this point. We cannot conceal the past from our view. We must look back upon it not only to-day, but from eternity, to recall its scenes, its opportunities, its sorrows, and its joys. How solemn is this moment!

We subjoin the following appropriate reflections on this subject from the children's Missionary newspaper, published by Mr. Gall, of Edinburgh, Scotland:—

A year is gone! and how has it been improved? How has it been improved for *yourself*? Many prayers have risen for your sake, and many kind instructions have been given? Have all been entirely in vain? or have they received the much desired result in the blessing and enriching of your souls with heavenly gifts? Is your heart still unmelted by the love of Jesus? and are you still refusing to give yourself to him? Or has the past year seen you return to God, and say in your simple language, "Lord, I am thine, for ever thine!" Oh! how angels, and pious mothers, and kind teachers will have rejoiced if such has been the case! But if not, what can they say?—How has it been improved for *others*? What have you done for Christ, or for other people's souls? You began the year no doubt with excellent resolutions! how have they been fulfilled? Will any little heathen boy or girl have cause to bless God for ever for your exertions in the bygone year? Have the stories you have read of their wretched state made you deny yourself to do them good?

A year is gone! and you and I are so much nearer to eternity, and have so much less time to work. Did you never stand beside the rapid river rolling forward to the ocean in the distance, and notice the chips thrown upon its surface, which it bears along? That river is just like the year, and we, like the chips, are being borne by it onwards to eternity. Very soon, and we shall be there. Very soon, and the angel shall declare, that with us, "Time shall be no more!" "Let us work then while it is called to-day!"

A year is gone! not only in Canada where we enjoy so many advantages, but also in the heathen lands, in superstitious Asia and dark benighted Africa. How many human victims have been in this time offered to false

gods! What numbers of little children have been destroyed by their cruel parents, and what multitudes of ignorant heathen have gone into eternity! TWENTY MILLIONS of the heathen have died since the year began! And oh! could you or I have heard all their sorrows, or been told all their terrors, our hearts would indeed have bled, and we should have put forth every effort to save their souls!

A year is gone! and perhaps another will not be given. You know the hymn which says,

“Dangers stand thick o’er all the ground,
To push us to the tomb,
And fierce diseases wait around
To hurry mortals home.”

Some who were alive when the last began, and who read the first numbers of this paper, are now in eternity. Their little graves are green in the church-yard; their little seats are empty at the household hearth; and their bright spirits—where are they? We hope before the throne of God in heaven, singing praises to the Lamb! And who can tell but that before another year shall close, on some of your lips death may have put his seal of silence, and around some of your happy forms the winding sheet and the cold damp of the grave may possibly be thrown.

You say,—“Oh, but I am young. The glow of health is on my cheek. The vigor of youth is in my limb. I shall live yet many years?” I pray you may. Most earnestly could I wish for you a long, and useful, and happy life. But did you never see the little smiling infant sicken and die upon its mother’s breast? Did you never follow your little playmate to the grave, and felt, as you left him there, you too might die like him? “But why,” you ask me, “talk of this?” For three reasons.

First, To lead you at once to Christ, that you may receive at his hands a full forgiveness of all your sins, and be made fit for life or death, for earth or heaven.

Secondly, To induce you not to waste your time, nor put off the salvation of your soul another day—“for now is the accepted time;” and,

Thirdly, To stir you up to do all the good you can, because the time is short, and the night of death is near.

And now, dear children, let us all enter on the new year with holy resolutions to devote ourselves anew to Christ. Begin the year with him. Yield up your hearts at once to him. Do something every day for his glory; and when time is past, and all our years are over, I hope to see you before the throne, and join with you and vast multitudes from what are now the heathen lands, in singing everlasting praises to his name! C. H. B.

TEACHER’S CORNER.

Sunday School Errors for the Consideration of Teachers.

BY A CAMBRIDGE TEACHER.

Sunday schools are allowed by most persons to be a system of moral training, which, if properly brought into operation, is capable of immense power. Few societies have been more eulogized than Sunday schools. The most pleasing eloquence has been profusely employed in lauding these institutions, and presenting pictures of their future success.—They have been established nearly sixty years, have seen two generations pass away to the grave; and what, after all, have been their results, compared with the labor which has been expended on them?

They remind us of a large and complicated steam engine, of tremendous power, but that power unapplied to any useful purpose. It is true, its piston, cranks, and wheels keep moving with great rapidity and gigantic force, but it accomplishes nothing. It is a wasted power. It requires a constant supply of fuel, and unremitting attention; and its only result is, to cause the spectator to admire its graceful movements and mighty strength. He who looks well into the history of Sunday schools, from the time of their institution, *must* be brought to the conclusion that the success attending them, so eloquently described by Christian orators, has never been realized. No! it must be admitted, however unwillingly, that they are still very imperfect institutions. I know that it is considered almost heretical to speak thus, and that I shall incur the charge of presumption in recording my protest against the failings and imperfections of the system. But it is of no avail to attempt to hide our faults. If the system, or any part of it, be defective, let its defects be plainly stated, and honestly avowed. He would not be considered a skilful physician who only desired to heal the wounds rather than to eradicate the disease of a patient. I shall, therefore, pursue the plan of plainly exposing the errors of Sunday schools, in the simplest language I can use; indifferent to the motives which may be imputed to me by those who wish to retain things as they are. When Sunday schools were first established, the object of their originators seems to have been, more to keep the children out of mischief, and get them into a habit of attending a place of worship, than that of leading them to conversion. This motive has happily, in a great measure, given way to a higher one; and, with evangelical Christians, the object of Sunday school tuition now, is, that of making the children wise to salvation. The general advance of education has considerably altered the character of these institutions, and brought the best teachers to the conviction, that their business is to instruct the children in the great doctrines of the gospel, and to bring them to Jesus. This object, and this only, do we consider a sufficient motive to

induce the Christian teacher to engage in the work. That a very large mass of the teachers in Sunday schools have not this object in view, will be admitted by all who are acquainted with our schools. Many become teachers from the wish of their parents, who are pious people. This is wrong; parents must not sacrifice the souls of the children for the good of their son or daughter. Many become teachers because their young friends are so. Many become teachers because they know not what to do with their dull Sundays, without some such excitement. With such teachers how can a school be expected to produce conversions? Piety is the first and most important requisite in a Sunday school teacher.

The Scripture knowledge in many of our schools will be found, upon examination, exceedingly small. The simplest question, put to the children individually, will very frequently be answered in the most absurd and ridiculous manner. Let any one who doubts the fact go to one of our best organized schools, and try a few of the boys and girls, picked from a variety of classes, with simple scriptural questions, and the extreme ignorance of the children will excite his bewilderment and utter astonishment. There is frequently in our classes no teaching at all, neither the minds of teacher or children are alive; the whole is a mere parrot process. A hymn, catechism, and Scripture, committed to memory and repeated to the teacher, form the sum of the children's education; the whole of which is an entire riddle to the child. Unless teachers make very vigorous efforts to impart understandable instruction, and dispense, as speedily as possible, with such mechanical trifling, they cannot expect the children to be converted. We believe in no spiritual magic, our God requires of us a reasonable service, and real conversion can come only through the exercise of reason.

The discipline of our schools is exceedingly defective. It is amazing what loose notions of discipline our teachers have. They meet together to make rules and laws for their own government, and immediately break them without compunction, and justify themselves in the violation. Many of them take offence if they are called to account for it by their faithful superintendent. How frequently do we find punctuality, order, and attention to their class unblushingly broken in upon by them. It would appear that some of them are making an experiment as to how far the laws of the society may be set at defiance. It is to be lamented that too many of the superintendents are remiss in their duty of reproving such teachers. To expect success in a school where laws are set at defiance by teachers and children, is as wild and fanatic as to expect a miracle.

The teachers and superintendents of many of the schools are quite unsuitable for the work in which they are engaged. Some of them are exceedingly ignorant of what they

are required to teach. Many of them have no intelligent plan of teaching. Others seem to care very little whether their children are benefitted or not, so long as they get a little comfortable gossip with some other teacher like-minded with themselves; and many appear as sleepy and drowsy as if they felt no manner of interest in the work to be done.— Let teachers wake up to their employment, lest their master come at an hour when they least expect him, and find them sleeping.— With most of us the day is far spent and the night is at hand, and the question soon to be put to us is, 'Give an account of thy stewardship.' Ah! teachers, are you prepared to give an account?

The indifference of the Christian church has done much to hinder Sunday schools. It is truly depressing to see how very quiet and indifferent the members of churches remain respecting these institutions. A comfortable dinner, a refreshing nap, and a little quiet conversation respecting the sermon of the morning, seems infinitely more important to them than the conversion of the souls of these dear children. What an outcry is there by them against our school, if the children do not happen to sit perfectly quiet during a long sermon, of which they do not understand one sentence! Who are the persons that raise the outcry? Why, those very persons who will take no part in the work and incessant labor of teaching and attending the school. True, they attend at our public meeting, and rejoice with us when we rejoice, and they wish us God speed, and we see nothing more of them till the next annual meeting.

The ministers also are too frequently behind in their duties towards the school. Where are the ministers who examine the schools every fortnight or month, who enter our schools and recognize the children, and mix with the teachers, and make it their business to acquire simplicity of speaking, in order to arrive at the minds of the children. Why can they not? It is their duty to study simplicity, and to spare no pains to arrive at that aptness to teach which the Scripture enjoins upon them. They forget how large a portion of their congregations are made up of children, and that other classes besides would be no losers if a far greater simplicity of language and thought were adopted by them.

The notion of Sunday schools being merely charity schools imparts a great coldness to them, and indifference of many towards them. These institutions ought at once to repudiate this false principle, and establish congregational schools at which all the young persons under fifteen should attend, both rich and poor. Why should not the rich and poor meet together for instruction in religion? The souls of both are equally valuable. But, alas! the rich seem to think that qualification, in some measure, exempts them from the necessity of religion. It would be incalculable advantage to all parties if this intermixture were

made. These proud, haughty feelings, which are soon engendered in the minds of the young, would give place, and much more kindly feelings would be promoted in the minds of the poor towards the rich if this arrangement were made. This would also have the effect of interesting a great number of people among the middle and upper classes in these institutions, and a greater amount of efficiency would be thereby attained.

There ought to be a more direct aim at conversion by the teachers. Teachers have scarcely yet arrived at the conviction that children are open to conversion: under the age of fifteen or sixteen, and therefore their labors and hopes are aimed at prospective rather than immediate conversion. They suppose, that by sowing the seed something will eventually be accomplished, but hardly expect ever to live to see it. Too many of them think that merely telling them of certain duties, and spreading what they call truth before their minds will be sufficient. But this is a mistake. God works by means, but they must be wise means, or what is the meaning of that text, 'wise to win souls?' It will be necessary for the teacher to urge home the truths he proclaims, to the individual consciences of the children of his class. He must study the characters and dispositions of his children separately, and find out their besetting sins, and apply the probe and lancet; and then, when their consciences are awakened, he can pour in the oil of gospel consolation and healing.—He must be constantly praying and believing that God can change the hearts of the children now, and be expecting it, and urging it upon them in the language of good old Baxter, 'Now or never!'

'What, then,' exclaims the Sunday school teacher, 'do you require of us?' My answer is, that your Master, or He whom you profess to serve, requires your best and noblest efforts in his cause. He will be satisfied with nothing short of your self-denying and persevering engagements in his service, and those teachers who are unwilling to enter thus heartily into the work, had better give way that others may take their places, who are fully prepared to bear the heat and burden of the day in serving their Redeemer and Lord.

The real efficiency of Sunday schools can only be brought about by an entire Reformation;—in the teachers themselves, in the Christian church as their prime movers, and in the management and conducting of the schools. Perfection must not be expected in a mere human institution, but improvement may, and ought to be devoutly desired and aimed at by all. Let us remember that the first step towards it must be made in ourselves. We must examine our Sunday school character, habits, and deficiencies, and we shall soon find cause for commencing the work. Indolence, indifference and self-gratification, which may have usurped the throne of our souls, as connected with this work, must be at

once dismissed, and right principles must be appointed in their places. There are four qualifications perhaps more important than any other;—Prayer, Preparation, Punctuality, and Perseverance. The greatness of the character which is to be aimed at may strike some with fear, and appear almost hopeless in the attainment; but let us remember that we have the promise of Divine assistance to help our infirmities, and that the object we desire to promote is nothing less than to assist in erecting that glorious temple, which is composed of lively stones from the rough quarry of humanity, and which will exceed all others in un fading beauty and imperishable durability.

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