

# A Review

▲ ▲ ▲ Of the Sabbath-  
School Mission Work of  
the Presbyterian Church.

✻ 1887-1893. ✻

By  
Edward T. Bromfield, D.D.

BV  
1516  
.A1  
B7  
1893

11.17.97

*Library of the Theological Seminary,*  
PRINCETON, N. J.

BV 1516 .A1 B7 1893  
Bromfield, Edward T.  
A review of the Sabbath-  
school mission work of the

# A REVIEW

OF THE

## SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK

OF THE

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

---

1887-1893.

---

BY EDWARD T. BROMFIELD, D. D.

---

PHILADELPHIA:  
ALLEN, LANE & SCOTT'S PRINTING HOUSE,  
229-233 South Fifth Street.  
1893.



TO

HON. GEORGE H. SHIELDS, *Chairman*,  
REV. GEORGE P. HAYS, D. D., LL. D.,  
REV. E. R. CRAVEN, D. D., LL. D.,  
REV. EDWARD C. RAY, D. D.,  
FRANKLIN L. SHEPPARD, ESQ.,  
WILLIAM M. TENNEY, ESQ.,

The Committee on Publication appointed by the General Assembly of 1886, whose exhaustive and admirable report led to the Reorganization of the Presbyterian Board of Publication, and the Consolidation of the Sabbath-School and Missionary Work of the Board into one Department, this Review of that Work is respectfully inscribed.

EDWARD T. BROMFIELD.

625 NORTH TENTH STREET,  
PHILADELPHIA, APRIL, 1893.



## CONTENTS.

	PAGES
I. INTRODUCTORY . . . . .	7, 8
II. HISTORICAL :— Special Committee of 1886—Consolidation of Departments—Views of Committee—Work of New Department—Survey of the Field—1888-9—Student Work—1889-90—New Features—1890-1—Questions of Oversight, &c—1891-2—Finances—Summary of Work—1892-3—Location of Missionaries . . . . .	9-20
III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES :— Sabbath-schools for Sabbath-schools—Catholicity—Fidelity to Presbyterian Polity—and Evangelical Doctrine .	21-26
IV. THE FIELD OF WORK :— Preliminary Points—Statistics of the Case—International Sunday-school Conventions—Census Returns—Youthful Population—Sabbath-school Membership—Teachers and Adults—Comparative Tables—Astounding Result—Work of five Societies—Testimony from Michigan—American Sunday-school Union—Congregational Sunday-school Society—Baptist Sunday-school Work—Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school Union—Protestant Episcopal Sunday-school Institute—Conclusions .	27-38
V. RELATION OF THE SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK TO THE CHURCH :— As to Intention—As to Fact—Does the Sabbath-school Work Strengthen and Build up the Presbyterian Church—Difficulties in the Inquiry as to Statistics and Reports—Circular Letter and Replies from Missionaries—Presbyterian Schools—Churches—Conclusion from Evidence—Views of Missionaries—Pen	

Pictures — Testimony from Synods — Corroborative Experience — Reflections — Experience Teaches — Reflex Influence on Church . . . . .	39-57
VI. PERMANENCE IN SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK :—	
Criticism Stated—Importance of the Question—Data at Command—Annual Reports—Reports from the Field —Conversations and Correspondence—Why do Sab- bath-schools Die—Want of Teachers—Climate—Local Depravity — Sectarianism — Want of Church Affilia- tion—Want of Oversight and Help—Safeguards and Remedial Measures — Missionary Watchfulness — De- partmental Supervision — Annual Census — Presbyte- rial Oversight—Synodical Superintendence—Summer Schools—Encouragements . . . . .	58-73
VII. RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH :—	
The Presbyteries—Suggestions from the Field—The Churches . . . . .	74-76
VIII. CONCLUSION . . . . .	77, 78

## I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK in the United States is a crusade of the Church, through various agencies, in behalf of the religious instruction of our people, especially the young, in those places in our own land which are destitute of Christian privileges. The movement, as a whole, forms a deeply-interesting chapter in modern Church history.

The Sunday-school has been for many years a recognized branch of Christian service, but it has been left to our own times to witness its development into a powerful aggressive force for the spread of Christian institutions. It stands now to the Church as the light-armed infantry or cavalry regiments stand to the regular army. It moves with rapidity and with the least possible expense. It prepares the way for heavier battalions. Ten, fifteen, twenty mission Sabbath-schools can be organized for less money than it takes to build one very plain church. People who hold back from any church movement see no objection to a Sunday-school. Children are always easily won over. Should the school prove to be only short lived, the good accomplished by it far outweighs the cost. It can fall back from any poorly-chosen position without disgrace. It can penetrate into mountain fastnesses or plant itself in prairie or backwoods settlements wherever it can gather half a dozen children together. And in house-to-house visitation, which is a necessary element in the case, the missionary finds ample opportunity of conveying the Gospel message to 'all sorts and conditions of men.'

With these advantages in its favor it is no wonder that the Sabbath-school mission work of the Church has proved a success and attracted to itself many workers and supporters. That it has reached its highest plane of

development; that its methods cannot be improved upon; that its agents are always wise; that its schools are always permanent; that there is never a clashing of denominational interests, cannot be affirmed. But the history of the movement is a history of conquest. It is doing a grand pioneer work for the Church. It deserves not only recognition, but careful study and intelligent, hearty sympathy.

I propose to present in brief outline the recent phases of this work in our own Church, its underlying principles and the vastness of the field before it. I shall prove that notwithstanding the efforts made by the different denominations to gather the young people of our country into Sabbath-schools the number outside is steadily gaining upon us. I shall then consider, from various points of view, the relation of this work to the Church, and the responsibility of the Church towards the work, including, in this and other sections of the review, some practical considerations and suggestions.

For reports and other documents and information pertinent to this inquiry I am indebted to the following gentlemen, besides the officers of the Board of Publication: Rev. James M. Crowell, D. D., of the American Sunday School Union; Rev. J. M. Boynton, D. D., of the Congregational Sunday School and Publishing Society; Rev. Benjamin Griffith, D. D., of the American Baptist Publication Society; Rev. W. A. Newbold, of the American Church Missionary Society; Rev. Herman L. Duhring, of the American Church Sunday School Institute; Rev. Richard N. Thomas, Editor American Church Sunday School Magazine; Rev. J. M. Freeman, D. D., of the Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union; Mr. A. F. Childs, of the Census Bureau, Washington; Mr. Frank Woods and Mr. E. Payson Porter, of the Executive Committee, International Sunday School Convention; Mr. M. H. Reynolds, of the Michigan State Sunday School Convention; also to the Stated Clerks of many of our Synods.

## II.

## HISTORICAL.

For our present purpose it is not necessary to recite the history of the Sabbath-school mission work of the Presbyterian Church prior to 1887. The subject is fully treated in Dr. Willard M. Rice's admirable little book, entitled 'History of the Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work, prepared at the suggestion of the General Assembly of 1888, under the direction of the Secretary.' It is also outlined in a report of a Special Committee presented to the General Assembly of 1887, and appearing in the Minutes for that year. This Special Committee was appointed by the Assembly of 1886 to consider the question of the reorganization of the Board of Publication. It was constituted with 8 members, namely: General George H. Shields, Chairman; Ministers—John Hall, D. D., LL. D., George P. Hays, D. D., E. R. Craven, D. D., LL. D., Edward C. Ray, D. D.; Elders—Franklin L. Sheppard, William M. Tenney, Hon. John Trunkey. Dr. Hall and Mr. Trunkey being unable to serve, the membership was reduced to 6. Their report was thorough and exhaustive, and was adopted by the Assembly with entire unanimity May 21st, 1887. Under their recommendations the designation of the Board was changed from 'The Presbyterian Board of Publication' to 'The Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work,' with three departments, represented by three committees of the Board—the Sabbath-school Work, the Editorial Work, and the Business Department. Some other changes of more or less importance were made which it is unnecessary to mention here. The principal change was the CONSOLIDATION OF THE SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK AND COLPORTAGE OR MISSIONARY WORK into one department, with the Rev. James A. Worden, D. D., as Superintendent. The 'Sabbath-school work' had

been under the charge of the Rev. James A. Worden, D. D., since the year 1878, first as Superintendent, afterwards as Secretary. The Special Committee reported concerning the work that it had, 'by reason of the character of the Board's organization, been confined to the holding of Sabbath-school institutes, platform work in bringing the subject before the Assembly, and arousing renewed interest in localities, and in the organization of a course of normal instruction known as 'Bible Correspondence School.' Meanwhile what was known as the Colportage or Missionary Department, the really aggressive feature of the Board of Publication, was under separate management, under the old lines of work originally laid down. The committee recognized the efficient work done by Dr. Worden within his limited sphere, but described him, so far as aggressive work was concerned, as a general without an army, while the colporteurs, so far as Sabbath-school work was concerned, they described as an army without a general. The remedy, according to the committee, lay in consolidation, and the bringing of the Sabbath-school missionary work to the front—making the establishment of Sabbath-schools in destitute regions the first instead of a secondary aim of the Board. Heretofore the dissemination of religious books and Bibles had been the first object, and Sabbath-school organization, being secondary, had proceeded slowly. By reversing the order not only would there be a direct multiplication of Sabbath-schools, but the schools thus organized would also in their turn create a large and steady demand for books and school publications. The result has borne out this expectation. In 1887, 17 colporteurs distributed and sold 56,107 volumes and established 59 schools. In 1892, 72 Sabbath-school missionaries organized 1084 new schools, reorganized 311 schools, and distributed 89,024 volumes. In 1887, 17 colporteurs distributed 3,984,419 pages of periodicals and tracts; in 1892 the distribution reached 16,798,985 pages, of which 2,601,629 pages were disposed of in house-to-house visitations, and 14,197,356 were directly granted to schools. But we must add to the actual figures another class of re-

sults, namely, the growth of churches out of this work, the impetus given to the missionary work of our own and other religious bodies, the beginning of Christian Endeavor, Temperance, and other organizations, and the beneficial effects to hundreds of communities from the establishment within them of Christian institutions.

The SPECIAL COMMITTEE in their report referred to the frequent deliverances of the General Assembly that the Sabbath-school work of the Board of Publication was by far its most important feature, and that both Sabbath-school and colportage work should be done by the same missionaries. The 'field' of the work was described as 'destitute regions, not necessarily outlying and sparsely settled, but places destitute of God's Word and religious teaching, even in our largest cities.' The work was 'to enlist the children under Christ's banner.' The Church doing this would be 'the growing Church, the aggressive Church, the Church of the future.' The Standing Committee of the Assembly, Mr. Franklin L. Sheppard, Chairman, in presenting the annual report of the Board of Publication the same year, also emphasized previous deliverances of the Assembly to the same effect—the purely missionary character of this department of the work among the spiritually destitute—and remarked that the consolidation of the two above-named departments marked a new era in the history of the Board. It is interesting to quote the exact words: 'An era rich in hope of a glorious fruition in which it will command the love, confidence, and financial support of our Church as never before in its history, and in which it shall go on from strength to strength in the blessed work of spreading the Gospel of Christ.'

The recommendations of the Special Committee having been adopted by the General Assembly of 1887, the Board of Publication lost no time in carrying them into effect. The reorganization of the Board, recommended by the Special Committee, was effected. The Rev. E. R. Craven, D. D., who had been a member of the Special Committee, had already been chosen to fill the vacancy occasioned by

the death of the Rev. John W. Dulles, D. D., the late Secretary. The appointment had been approved by a resolution of the Assembly, and was now confirmed, and Dr. Craven entered upon his duties as Secretary of the Board of Publication and Sabbath-school Work, with general supervision of all the departments. The two departments of Sabbath-school and Missionary Work were made one, and Dr. Worden, whose nomination by the Special Committee had been also approved by the Assembly, was chosen Superintendent.

#### WORK OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT.

The DEPARTMENT of SABBATH-SCHOOL and MISSIONARY WORK being thus fairly launched, took a careful view of the situation and proceeded to adapt its methods to the new order of things. Its first steps were in the way of retrenchment and pruning. It had to face a debt of about \$25,000, equivalent to more than one-half the revenue of the Missionary Department the preceding year, and it was not yet clear how the Church at large would approve the change of plan. The staff of colporteurs was reduced to an effective force of 14, and the name 'colporteur' was changed to 'Sabbath-school Missionary.' The working force was increased during the summer of 1887 by the temporary employment of 55 theological students.

At the end of the first year the work, as compared with the colportage work of the year previous, showed an increase in Sabbath-schools organized from 59 to 73, but there was a falling off, as was to be expected, in the distribution of literature and the number of Sabbath-schools visited. The department, however, learned its first hard lessons, and had, moreover, the great satisfaction of paying off the entire debt and beginning its second year with a balance in hand of \$24,894.30. The response of the churches to the statements and appeals sent out was liberal. "Children's Day" brought in over \$15,000 as against \$3000 the preceding year. Six hundred and twenty-four more churches contributed, and the increase from Sabbath-

schools alone was between \$17,000 and \$18,000. With this substantial mark of approval from the Church the Board and its Missionary Committee and Superintendent took courage and proceeded to lay out the work on a broader scale.

#### SURVEY OF THE FIELD.

A careful survey of the field at this time, taking the statistics of the United States Census for 1880 and of the International Sunday-school Convention as guides, showed an immense disparity between the population of young people between the ages of 5 and 21, a difference of more than 10,000,000; and after making all reasonable allowances for children of Christian families not attending Sabbath-schools, and for every other explanation tending to lessen the disparity, it was still quite evident that the work before the Board was one deserving the most serious attention, and one in which there need not be any overcrowding or interference as between the various societies engaged in the same general field. It will be seen in the course of this review, that after a lapse of 4 years this disparity, notwithstanding the effective work done by our own and other churches and societies, has grown greater instead of less.

It may be well to notice here that the Sabbath-school work of the Board deals with two distinct lines of effort, missions being one and the elevation and improvement of existing schools being the other. This review is concerned chiefly with the former work, and the latter will only be referred to indirectly when we come to inquire into the relations of the school to the Church. It should be borne in mind, however, in considering the question of expense, that a portion of this is chargeable to what may be termed, for distinction sake, the educational work.

1888-89.

In 1889 the Standing Committee reported to the General Assembly the carrying out of the instructions of the Assembly of 1887, and added that the results were highly

satisfactory. The staff of missionaries had been increased to 34, and 70 theological students had been employed during the summer vacation of 1888. From 73 the number of new schools organized had sprung up to 831, with an aggregate of 33,031 scholars and teachers; 45,884 families had been visited, 4113 public addresses delivered, and a gratuitous distribution had been made of 33,123 volumes and 2707 Bibles and Testaments. But this does not represent the entire statistical increase. One hundred and seventeen schools, in addition to the 831 above referred to, had been organized under a standing offer from the Board of a full school equipment from their stock to every Sabbath-school established with the approval of any local Presbytery.

The rule laid down by the Board for the guidance of its missionaries was, that in every case they should take a vote on a resolution to establish a Presbyterian school, but they were not to insist upon it against the wishes of the people. The missionaries, acting upon this rule, organized Sabbath-schools, but it does not appear that they have been in the habit of reporting the exact denominational status of the schools when organized. The statistical reports of the Board return so many schools without distinction. This fact shows the interpretation put upon the instructions of the General Assembly by the Board, namely, that the missionary character of the work was to rank above its denominational character. It stamps this noble offering with the broad arrow of the Kingdom of Christ. The missionaries were directed, however, wherever practicable, to place the schools under the care of a Presbyterian Church session, and to keep themselves in communication with the Synodical Home Missionaries and the Presbyterial Committees on Home Missions and Sabbath-school work.

The STUDENT WORK during the summer vacation months attracted much notice. More than one-half of the schools reported this year were organized by these young men. The late honored senior Secretary of Home Missions wrote concerning them: 'Wherever these students went they did

magnificent service.' This special branch of the work has been continued in operation up to the present time with very gratifying results.

1889-90.

In 1890 the Standing Committee report to the General Assembly that the Sabbath-school work had proved itself to be 'an indispensable instrument of church edification and church extension.' 'If any defect,' say they, 'should be found in its administration it may readily be corrected.' They do not, however, point out any defect. On the contrary; they go on to say, in words deserving the closest attention: 'The direct missionary work of this Board is largely that of a forerunner to the work of the Board of Home Missions. We can occupy a field newly opened before the home missionary can reach it.' They draw a picture of the daily life of the missionaries: 'The work is laborious and full of vicissitude, requiring faith, zeal, and tact that are not extensively found. The self-denying Sabbath-school missionary meets with every variety of experience. He pushes on under the burning heat of summer and the biting cold of winter. He puts up with a rough diet and rougher lodgment. He faces objections, indifference, rudeness, and even opposition. \* \* \* He founds the school, appoints its officers, instructs them, \* \* \* and proceeds to the next station to repeat the useful work there.'

In this year (1889-90) the number of schools organized was 1139, in addition to 109 distinctively Presbyterian Schools organized under the equipment offer previously referred to. Teachers and scholars, 40,378. Other schools visited, 2616. Families visited, 65,920. Volumes sold and given away, 53,031. Bibles and Testaments, 6750. The contributions amounted to \$71,532.27; total income, \$122,327.01. 'Children's Day' produced \$28,000. Of the 117 Presbyterian schools organized the previous year under the equipment offer of the Board the ranks remained unbroken. Of the 831 schools organized by the missionaries 474 survived more than a year, 221 had disbanded, some of them

doubtless to be again gathered together, and 136 were not reported.

Some other NEW FEATURES present themselves in the work of this year. Persons of means come forward and undertake the support of individual missionaries. Sabbath-schools in the wealthier parts of the country resolve to do the same. To encourage the latter movement the Board offer to place one new missionary in the field for every Sabbath-school sending \$550 towards his support, the salary of the missionary being \$800. Calls for missionaries come in from the South, from the States west of the Mississippi, and from the Pacific Slope. Inviting fields of work open up among the colored people and the mountain populations of West Virginia and Tennessee. There are also loud calls for home missionaries to foster schools already organized and encourage the formation of churches. Meanwhile a system of missionary correspondence has been arranged, under which 3000 and more contributing Sabbath-schools receive a letter every three months from a missionary, the condition being that the missionary whose letter is received is, in part, supported by the offerings of that particular school. Sympathy is thus stimulated, and workers and givers are brought into correspondence with each other.

1890-91.

In 1891 the Standing Committee report to the General Assembly that the mode of operations is more systematized, and that Presbyteries, pastors, and churches are showing increasing interest. 'The facts,' say they, 'indicate marked and healthful progress.' 'No other missionary work presents more forceful and impressive grounds of appeal.' In this year the staff of permanent missionaries was increased to 53, with 89 students assisting during the vacation months. The schools organized were 1209, with 45,373 scholars and teachers. One hundred and ninety-five Presbyterian schools were organized under the equipment offer. Other schools visited and aided, 2567. Public addresses, 6171. Families visited, 67,220. Miles traveled,

306,115. Of the schools organized the previous year, 714 are reported as alive and flourishing. Urgent calls continue to come in from different parts of the country for missionaries. 'Children's Day' this year produced \$35,000. These figures are evidently the mere dry skeleton of the story. Read between the lines and they speak eloquently of a work, the details of which, if they could be written, would seem like a romance. Think of the toils and vigils of these missionaries, of the messages of brotherly love and Christian greeting they carry, of the humanizing influences flowing from their labors, of the bringing of the neglected youth of the land to the feet of Jesus. There is no estimating the permanent good done by this persistent following up of these opportunities.

The QUESTIONS OF OVERSIGHT, permanency, and the development of these schools into churches fastens itself more and more deeply upon the attention of the Board, the Secretary, and the Superintendent. They cannot be settled by off-hand rulings. Not one of these 1200 schools organized this year can be regarded as one too many. And yet how can the missionaries give effective oversight to them all? Anxious thought is given to the subject, and the missionaries are counseled to exercise judgment, and to give special attention to the stability of their work.

## 1891-92.

In 1892, owing probably to more of the time of the missionaries being occupied than before in the care of existing schools, we find a diminution in the number of new schools organized, which amount to 961, while a new item appears in the report of schools reorganized to the number of 311. There are 72 regular missionaries, assisted during the vacation by 73 theological students. The contributions to the work are \$9000 in excess of the previous year. 'Children's Day' brought in \$45,000. One hundred and thirty-five Presbyterian schools were organized under the Equipment offer. Families visited, 68,777. Public addresses, 7338. Teachers and scholars in the new schools, over

49,000. Other schools visited and aided, 3454. Miles traveled, 377,782. Of the schools organized the previous year, 742 are alive and flourishing. The Standing Committee report to the Assembly that the financial exhibit furnishes 'gratifying testimony to the efficiency of the department and the growing confidence of the Church,' and with regard to the work itself they say: 'It is the pioneer of the Church, the voice crying in the wilderness. In quietness and without observation, trusting in God, it lays the foundations, prepares the way for the organized church, the permanent pastor, and also the ordinances of the house of God. While the Christian college is preparing young men for the ministry, and the Board of Education is extending its helpful aid, this Board is opening fields of usefulness. \* \* \* It is not only the vanguard of the Church, but it is also a nursing mother to the households of faith it establishes, the pastor's most efficient helper, the friend of the children, the educator of youth, and the solace of old age.'

An interesting feature of this year's work is the opening of a benevolent department for furnishing clothing for destitute children. In response to the appeal of the Superintendent, boxes of clothing valued at \$8000 were sent to the front, and at least 6000 children were by this timely aid enabled to attend Sabbath-school during the winter of 1891-2.

This brings us to the close of our history and to the work of the year 1892-93, of which, by the courtesy of the Superintendent of the Sabbath-school and Missionary Department I am able to present a brief summary at the end of this section. It will now be interesting to examine into the cost of the work.

#### FINANCES OF THE DEPARTMENT.

The receipts have steadily increased from the date of the consolidation in 1887. In 1890 the income had risen to \$122,327.01; in 1890-91 to \$127,477.89; in 1891-92 to \$152,700.84.

'Childrens' Day' offerings grew from \$28,000 in 1890 to \$35,000 in 1890-91, and \$43,000 in 1891-92.

The 'business profits' of the Board of Publication, included in the income of the Sabbath-school and Missionary Department, were in 1888-89, \$4461.36; in 1889-90, \$11,295.44; in 1890-91, \$8344.99; in 1891-92, \$29,803.22. These 'business profits' have for the period under our review considerably more than covered the entire administrative expenses of the department.

The total expenditures of the department under special consideration have been as follows:—

1888-89 . . . . .	\$65,206 32
1889-90 . . . . .	92,201 66
1890-91 . . . . .	101,593 25
1891-92 . . . . .	110,167 98
	\$369,169 21

An analysis of the expenditures shows the following:—

	Per cent.
Salaries and expenses of missionaries . . . . .	62.3
Literature, grants, and freight . . . . .	17.2
Other departments of Sabbath-school work . . . . .	10.0
Administration expenses (educational and missionary) . . . . .	10.5
	100.0

The administration expenses compare favorably with those of every other society whose reports I have studied, and the ratio of the same to the whole is steadily decreasing as the income increases.

The average cost of each school organized has been \$74.76, and of each scholar enrolled \$2.18, based on the entire yearly expenditure for both missionary and educational purposes.

SUMMARY OF WORK.

The results of the work from April, 1888, to April, 1892, four years, are as follows:—

Schools organized and reorganized, including 'equipment' schools . . . . .	4,938
Scholars, estimating those in the equipment schools at an average of 40 each . . . . .	169,112

Teachers, about . . . . .	17,984
Sabbath-schools other than the above visited or aided . . . . .	10,522
Families visited . . . . .	235,024
Public addresses . . . . .	23,512
Churches that have grown out of the schools . . . . .	216
Bibles and Testaments given away . . . . .	15,772
Other books given away . . . . .	241,331
Pages of periodicals, &c., given away . . . . .	51,419,165
Miles traveled . . . . .	11,163,567

To the above I am enabled to add the figures for 1892-93, as follows:—

Schools organized . . . . .	866
Schools reorganized . . . . .	299
Number of teachers and scholars . . . . .	41,255
Sabbath-schools addressed . . . . .	2,854
Sabbath-schools visited or otherwise aided . . . . .	3,326
Volumes distributed . . . . .	67,988
Periodicals and tracts distributed, pages . . . . .	17,135,385
Bibles and Testaments . . . . .	4,707
Families visited . . . . .	67,789
Addresses made . . . . .	7,936
Miles traveled . . . . .	429,058

Of the schools organized during 1891-92, 685 were reported at the end of the year as continued, 289 of these being summer schools and 396 'evergreen.' Out of these 59 churches have grown.

#### LOCATION OF MISSIONARIES.

The present location of the missionaries by States is as follows:—

California, 2; Florida, 2; Georgia, 1; Indiana, 1; Indian Territory, 1; Iowa, 3; Kansas, 3; Kentucky, 1; Michigan, 4; Minnesota, 5; Missouri, 6; Montana, 2; Nebraska, 7; North Carolina, 2; North Dakota, 1; Ohio, 2; Oklahoma, 2; Oregon, 1; Pennsylvania, 3; South Carolina, 1; South Dakota, 5; Virginia, 3; Washington, 2; West Virginia, 3; Wisconsin, 2: total, 65. The distribution of the student missionaries through these and other States in the summer months considerably increases the results of the labors of the regular missionaries.

## III.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES.

It is important that the GENERAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE PRESBYTERIAN SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK should be clearly understood, not only by the workers in the field, but by pastors, church members, Sabbath-school teachers and scholars, and all who are interested in the advancement of the Redeemer's cause and the growth of the Presbyterian Church. This work fills its appropriate place among other similar organizations—a place which they cannot fill. It is a work which appeals to the Presbyterian Church in particular, not so much on the ground of denominational zeal as on the ground of devotion to Christ. The Presbyterian Church ought not to leave the work to other hands. She is strong enough to rejoice in the success of kindred societies, but it would be a shame if she were to make those successes an excuse for her remissness. It will become very clear as we proceed that all and more than she can do in this special field is needed. At this particular point, then, in the history of this interesting movement, when it has lived through its early experiences and has proved by its brilliant record of results that it has a right to continue to live—when its managers are taking a quiet look at the work still before them and measuring their strength to cope with it—it is well to inquire into the principles on which the movement is based and which give it a special claim upon the loyal support of the Presbyterian Church.

1. SABBATH-SCHOOLS FOR SABBATH-SCHOOLS.—It is particularly founded upon the principle that young people who are in the possession of Christian privileges should take a peculiar interest in young people who do not possess them. In other words, this is essentially a Sabbath-school

movement. It is a work of Sabbath-schools for Sabbath-schools. Such was not, indeed, the exact thought at the beginning of the Sabbath-school work many years ago. The Presbyterian Church as a whole was appealed to. But as the aggressive character of the work became more distinct its peculiar relation to existing schools and to the young people of the churches came more and more into view. The General Assembly of 1883 declared that, in its judgment, Sabbath-schools should always and emphatically remember the Sabbath-school missionary work in their contributions, and this feeling has been growing stronger and stronger every year since then.

Here, then, is a practical work in the Presbyterian Church which, in its very nature, appeals to the Sabbath-school idea. Dr. Worden saw his opportunity, and, without ignoring the Church, made his appeal specially and directly to the schools, and the result was a grand success. It was an appeal to the young on behalf of the young, and it was not made in vain. Every Presbyterian Sabbath-school in the land promptly took in the situation. A healthy feeling of comradeship grew up as a work of such vast magnitude unfolded itself before the gaze of these young battalions. Henceforth the uplifting and improvement of teaching and methods in Sabbath-school work is to be associated with the spirit of Christian missions. To spend a pleasant hour or two on Sundays in comfortable church parlors and class-rooms, conning Bible lessons and singing pretty hymns, was all right, but it lacked the inspiration of a grand ambition. When the facts and figures showing the spiritual needs of millions of children and youth were spread before the Sabbath-schools, and it was said to them, 'This is your work,' the response was prompt and hearty, and the Sabbath-school idea was complete. Other agencies for doing the same thing have made their appeals to schools, churches, individuals, on the general and broad ground of giving to a good cause. The appeal was now made directly to the 'esprit de corps' of the Sabbath-school—to the feeling of kinship, of brotherhood and sisterhood, of the young for the young. It woke up the

enthusiasm of a mighty army languishing for an enemy to conquer. To the rescue of the children! The appeal was irresistible, and the money poured into the treasury.

And mark the benefit to the entire Sabbath-school connection. The institution woke up to new life now that it had something special to do outside of itself. Institutes, Bible-correspondence schools, teachers' classes, gained strength. The pulse of the school-life beat more steadily. To have a noble object before us makes us critics of ourselves. There is growth by exercise. Dilettanteism falls before a mighty purpose. Sabbath-schools will be more potent for good in their own localities—more strongly knit, too, in their fellowship with the Church—in proportion as they feel that they are helping to bear the burdens of the great world outside. I call attention to this first general principle of our Presbyterian work, that it gives tone, character, energy, and purpose to the Sabbath-school idea in the Church.

2. CATHOLICITY.—Another principle underlying the work is its genuine catholicity. Here we touch an important feature, on which there may, at first, appear to be a clashing of motives. Not really so. It is noteworthy that while this work makes its appeal primarily, if not exclusively, to Presbyterians, the work it is doing far outreaches the merely denominational idea. Let us look steadily at this point. There is a rationale of denominationalism which is usually accepted by each denomination as conclusive in its own case. Each Church appeals to the loyalty of its own supporters, and comforts itself that in so doing it is most effectually advancing the great cause common to each. At first glance it might be supposed that the main object of this Sabbath-school work is the planting of Presbyterian schools, which shall prepare the way for Presbyterian churches. That in itself alone would be a good object. It is indeed one of the objects of this work naturally. But, as I have already pointed out, it is not the first nor the main object, which is broadly enumerated in the deliverance of the General Assembly—'planting Sabbath-schools' and disseminating

Christian literature 'in places destitute of God's Word.' There is more in this distinction than may appear at first sight. A very large proportion of the most interesting and valuable work before the Board would have to be pushed aside as beyond its province if it should proceed upon the principle that it must never, under any circumstances, in its Sabbath-school work, outstep the denominational idea. It would, in fact, be narrowing and limiting the denominational work itself by insisting always upon doing that work and nothing else. To be disloyal to a Church is one thing, but to forget denominational preferences in the throb of a grander motive is really the most effective way of showing loyalty to a Church. It is the most effective way in the long run of building up a Church. The object in the missionary work of the Church is not so much to make Presbyterians in order that we may make Christians, as to make Christians first, by God's help, and Presbyterians afterwards, if it be God's will. To make Presbyterianism, with its lofty ideals of character and purpose, take hold on a community, we must often so work as to lose sight of Presbyterianism. This is, after all, genuine Presbyterianism. 'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth.\*' The good results to our Church through this Sabbath-school work have been not a little increased and intensified by the catholic spirit in which it has been conceived and carried out into practice.

3. FIDELITY TO PRESBYTERIAN POLITY.—In this respect this work claims to represent the Presbyterian Church, and it especially proceeds upon a frank recognition of the authority and oversight of the Presbyteries. Its missionaries recommend people to seek the brotherhood and aid of the Presbyterian Church in their permanent organization and work. They conduct their business in accordance with Presbyterian rule. It is an order of the General Assembly that no missionary shall labor within the bounds of any Presbytery without consent of such Presbytery. In at

---

\* Prov. xi. 24.

least one case a Presbytery refused to give its consent, and the Board submitted. Probably the refusal has been retracted by this time, but the Presbytery had the clear right to understand what it was asked to do in receiving the missionaries of the Board under its oversight, and the Board recognized that right and waited.

On entering upon their duties the missionaries confer with the proper officers of the Presbytery, and at stated periods they report to the Presbytery the results of their labors.

The Presbytery therefore has full authority, and this principle is loyally accepted as one of the leading principles underlying the work.

Other points in this connection will be brought out under the section upon the relation of this work to the Church.

4. FIDELITY TO EVANGELICAL DOCTRINE.—This is still another essential principle at the basis of this work. The Presbyterian Church is a conservative church, in a doctrinal sense, allowing, indeed, in its ministry and eldership a large liberty in the interpretation of its standards, but quick to detect any divergence from essential evangelical truth. While its communion is open to all who unfeignedly confess their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, its clergy are supposed to be duly instructed in the theology of the Reformation, and to be in hearty sympathy therewith. The ministry of the Presbyterian Church is, as a whole, a conservative ministry. While tolerant and charitable towards other denominations of Christians, it ‘holds fast the form of sound words.’\* It believes in the permanence of revealed truth, and is jealous of anything that, even in appearance, might seem to detract from the infallibility of the Word of God. It does not believe in turning the sanctuary into a debating hall or a lyceum. The Presbyterian Church also believes in orderly church government. When a church is established in any town the community have the guarantee of a great historic body, reaching with its influences over

---

\*2 Tim. i. 13.

the entire world, that the evangelical truths which have so signally blessed mankind will be faithfully preached, and the institutions of a Christian Church maintained and carried on in an orderly way. There may be local exceptions and local causes of trouble, but as a whole the Church honorably sustains this reputation. The Sabbath-school mission reflects this principle, and makes it felt among the changing, restless, ambitious people of the newer settlements of our country, and wherever it sets up its banner.

These underlying general principles—Sabbath-schools for Sabbath-schools, Catholicity, Fidelity to Presbyterian Polity and Doctrine—mark out for this Sabbath-school missionary work of our Church a clear and definite sphere. It cannot separate itself from these principles, and it is well that the principles themselves should be associated in the closest degree possible with the aggressive and educative aims of this work among the children and youth of our land.

## IV.

## THE FIELD OF WORK.

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK OF OUR CHURCH is a home institution, having its field of operation in these United States. I propose to bring forward some important testimony showing the disparity between the membership of Sabbath-schools and the youthful and juvenile population.

Before entering upon this testimony a preliminary point or two may be taken.

The Sabbath-school in America has grown far beyond the Sunday-school of Robert Raikes. It is no longer an institution for poor children only, but for children and youth without regard to financial or social condition. It is fast growing even beyond that, inasmuch as it includes in its membership not only the great majority of the youth of our churches, but also a great number of adults of all ages, who are attracted to it by the opportunity it affords them of receiving instruction in the Bible. For this reason we may expect to find that the membership of Sabbath-schools is very large. As a matter of fact, it is composed to a very considerable extent of persons over twenty-one years of age and of persons well advanced in social condition.

Again, the extent to which young people do not avail themselves of Sabbath-schools when within easy reach of them may be gathered in a general way from careful observation without reference to statistics. Go into any city, town, or village where there are plenty of churches and schools, and you will, if you look around, find many children and young people not in attendance, and if you follow up your observations with questions you will find very many not even enrolled, even among those who seem to stand in the greatest need of Christian instruction.

It would be a difficult matter to estimate within say a

million or two the extent to which absence from the Sabbath-school of young people indicates want of religious training. Due allowance must be made for cases in which parents prefer to teach their children at home, though it is to be feared that no discoveries which might be made on this point would materially affect the result. Allowance must also be made for a large number of young people, especially young men, who do not regard themselves as ignorant or depraved, or even as indifferent or hostile to the Church, but who, nevertheless, for one reason or another, do not attend Sabbath-school.

Any statistical showing must, of course, be discounted by reason of the above considerations, but to what extent it shall be discounted must be a matter of observation and opinion. The disparity between the Sabbath-school enrolment and the figures of the census is terrible, and would be still terrible even if discounted by 50 per cent., which will be regarded by most intelligent observers as altogether too liberal an allowance.

There are entire towns, and even counties, and great numbers of such, in the more recently-settled districts of the country that are without Sabbath-schools, and there are localities within comparatively short distances of wealthy churches in the East, both in cities and rural places, that need the Sabbath-school missionary. These constitute the special field of this great work, and the need is palpable to every worker, without the aid of statistics.

The large immigration to this country of foreigners brings many young people into the list of absentees, but at the same time opens up an interesting sphere of work peculiar to itself in connection with Sabbath-school missions.

The Roman Catholic population is included in our statistical inquiry, and wherever it has been necessary to resort to the rule of averages has been placed on the same footing as Protestants.

Mormon Sabbath-schools have not been counted in, as I have not any data to go upon. Their absence cannot,

however, materially affect the result, the population of Mormons to the entire population being very small.

#### STATISTICS OF THE CASE.

According to the CENSUS for 1890 the number of young people in the United States above 4 and under 21 years of age (I shall hereafter term these the youthful population) was at the time of the census 22,447,392, or 35.1 per cent. of the entire population. Increase since 1880, 4,127,560. Average rate of increase per annum, 412,756. In the estimates of the INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL CONVENTION, the enrolment in Sabbath-schools in 1890 is, for teachers and scholars, 9,800,471. In this estimate no Roman Catholics are included, except for the State of Maryland, where it seems these bodies had been counted. Taking the averages for the rest of this country on a basis of a Catholic population of 8,632,521, I estimate a Catholic youthful population of 3,090,442, and of these I shall expect to find about one-third, or 1,030,147, in Roman Catholic schools. Deduct from these the Catholic enrolment for Maryland, which is 17,144, and add the remainder to the enrolment figures of the Convention, and we have a total enrolment of 10,813,750. This is for 1890, and shows the entire membership of Sunday-schools, including teachers and adults. I have been at some trouble to fix upon a reasonable estimate of that portion of the membership which is over 21. Some persons, whose opinions I have taken, fix the proportion as high as two-fifths of the whole, or about 40 per cent. There are not a few schools where this would be true, but, on the whole, I prefer to take about 25 per cent. as probably nearer and yet within the mark.\* The Convention figures give the number of teachers in 1890 as 1,151,340. I take the same figures for adults in Bible-classes, and reach a total of 2,302,684 for adult teachers and members. This gives us a net youthful membership of 8,511,070.

---

\* Where a deduction of adults is taken from the number of scholars only I put the average at 10 per cent. In this instance the deduction is really only about 23 per cent. for adult teachers and scholars.

I apply the same method of calculation as nearly as possible to the figures for 1880, and reach the result of 6,517,208 youthful membership. Increase for 10 years, 993,862, or an average of 199,386 per annum, representing the addition of scholars above 4 and under 21 years of age, whereas the increase in the population of the same age is 412,756 per annum. The gross figures stand as follows:—

	1880.	1890.
Youthful population . . . . .	18,319,830	22,447,392
Net enrollment . . . . .	6,517,208	8,511,070
Difference . . . . .	<u>11,802,622</u>	<u>13,936,322</u>

By taking the International Convention figures as they stand, and making any reasonable allowances on the score of Roman Catholics, adults, and any other considerations, the reader can work out the results for himself. He will find it convenient to get the average rate of annual increase and multiply it by the number of years under consideration, as the Convention figures do not give an estimate for 1880. I give the table as kindly furnished to me by Mr. Frank Woods, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the International Conventions:—

CONVENTIONS.	YEAR.	NUMBER OF SABBATH-SCHOOLS.	NUMBER OF SCHOLARS.	NUMBER OF TEACHERS.	TOTALS.
Baltimore . . . . .	1875	69,871	5,790,683	730,060	6,543,708
Atlanta . . . . .	1878	78,046	6,504,054	853,100	7,357,154
Toronto . . . . .	1881	84,730	6,820,835	932,283	7,753,118
Louisville . . . . .	1884	98,303	7,668,833	1,043,718	8,712,551
Chicago . . . . .	1887	99,860	8,048,772	1,118,265	9,156,737
Pittsburgh . . . . .	1890	108,939	8,649,131	1,151,340	9,800,471

We have then the astounding result that whereas there was an increase of the youthful population in 10 years of 4,127,560, the increase in the enrolment of youthful scholars during the same period was only 1,993,860, or 40 per cent. of the increase only. By this calculation Sabbath schools are losing ground at the rate of 60 per cent. of the increase of youthful population every year.

Of course, the figures are approximate only, and it is confessedly difficult to get accurate statistics on this question. On the other hand, the successive International Conventions have been represented by a permanent Executive and Statistical Committee, who have been at great pains to gather in reliable information. Their tables may be compared with the results reported by five Sabbath-school Extension Societies for 1892.

	NEW SCHOOLS.	SCHOLARS.
American Sunday-School Union . . . . .	1,664	59,551
Presbyterian Sabbath-school Work . . . . .	961	40,653
Methodist Episcopal Sunday School Union (net increase). . . . .	256	27,280
Baptist Sunday-school Society, about . . . . .	376	15,000
Congregational Sunday-school Society,* about . . . . .	500	20,000
Totals . . . . .	3,757	162,484

The above returns, except those of the Methodist Society, which are net, must be largely discounted by reason of lapsed schools, and there must be a further deduction from the whole on account of adult scholars. This would bring the net gain from these 5 societies to a point not far from 133,000, which is about two-thirds of the average increase for the past 10 years,

TESTIMONY FROM MICHIGAN.

It would be interesting to push these investigations into the different States, but I must content myself with one example which comes to my hand in the form of a report from the Michigan State Convention for 1892. The Secretary, Mr. M. H. Reynolds, of Owosso, Mich., has evidently been at great pains to get at the facts of the case. Full returns were obtained from 20 denominations, and personal visits, inquiries, and careful estimates were made to obtain the facts from all as nearly as possible. The total membership

---

\* The Baptist and Congregational Societies give the number of schools but not of scholars. I therefore credit these schools with about 40 scholars each, that being a full average per school for the American Sunday-school Union and Presbyterian Sabbath-school work in distinctively missionary fields.

(scholars only) of Sabbath-schools in the State, including Roman Catholic, was 311,242. If we apply the rule for adults, say 10 per cent., we find 280,118 of the youthful population enrolled. The census gives a total youthful population for the State of 703,684, so that the proportion of enrolled to non-enrolled is barely 40 per cent., which agrees surprisingly with the result obtained for the whole country. The International Convention of 1890 gave Michigan 277,200 enrolled scholars. The increase from 1884 to 1892, eight years, was 52,535, taking the figures of the International Convention for 1884 and the figures of the State Convention for 1892, less 10 per cent. for adults in each case. The increase of youthful population from 1880 to 1890 was 134,604, and the average annual increase in enrolment was 49 per cent. of the average annual increase of youthful population. It is therefore not surprising that the Executive Committee of the Michigan State Convention say in their report for 1892 :—

We desire to emphasize the supreme importance of Sunday-School extension work, and would here express our recognition of the valuable services rendered this year by Sunday-school missionaries employed by the several denominations, and those in the service of the American Sunday-School Union, not overlooking the grand, heroic efforts put forth by many individual Sabbath-school workers.

I cannot withhold one more extract from the report of this committee, because it appears to strike a vital point in this subject, namely, the need of a wise co-operation and comity between the various societies and churches engaged in this work :—

The fact is, no individual church or denomination can answer the question as to the adequacy or efficiency of Sunday-School work for the requirements of a given area; it can only answer within the boundaries of its own denomination, and when every denomination has given its own answer, there will be found a hiatus of unclaimed territory which cannot be covered without the co-operation of the various sections of the Church.

#### TESTIMONY OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

1. THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION is entirely undenominational. It has been in existence 68 years and

has done a noble work. It now maintains over 100 permanent missionaries, and has organized an average of more than 1302 new Sabbath-schools every year. Last year it organized 1664 schools, with 66,569 scholars and teachers. Other schools visited and aided, 2127. Visits to families, 56,582. Bibles and Testaments distributed, 15,573.

The first object of the Society is to establish a Sunday-School in every needy neighborhood, and the second is to diffuse abroad a healthful religious literature.

It instructs its missionaries to visit and foster the schools until they reach a position of permanency and strength. It records the number of accredited conversions through the evangelistic services of its missionaries, and encourages the growth of churches of any evangelical denomination from the schools. In the annual report are incorporated reports from each of the district superintendents, and voluminous extracts from letters from missionaries. The expenditure of this Society for 1891-2 was \$105,988. It says:—

When a great country over 3000 miles long by nearly 2000 miles wide—an area about as large as Great Britain and all Europe—is to be covered with a net-work of Bible schools so completely that one shall be sustained in every village, hamlet, farming and mining settlement over this broad territory, the work demands an aggregation of wisdom, experience, wealth, and of Christian forces commensurate with the gigantic character of the enterprise. \* \* \* Nor is the field growing more limited, but, on the contrary, owing to immigration and extension of railways, which produce constantly changing centres in the New South and the great West, the field is yearly becoming larger and the demands growing more imperative.—Report, 1892.

The Rev. J. H. McCullagh, Superintendent of the South District, writes:—

The year's work has demonstrated the great necessity for increasing our missionary force. There are 373,724 children of a school age in Tennessee who receive no Sabbath-school instruction. There are 250,000 in Georgia in the same sad condition. In this district there are 2,700,000 growing up without Bible instruction.—Report, 1892.

Mr. J. W. Armstrong, of Washington State, writes:—

I have never lived in any place where the people are so hard to reach and lead to Christ as they are in this country. My only hope is in

reaching the children. \* \* \* The country is deluged with sin. \* \* \* The churches are doing the work only to a very limited extent.—Report, 1891.

Mr. F. G. Ensign, Superintendent of Northwestern District, writes:—

The need for this movement is becoming urgent and almost alarming in many of our Western communities. \* \* \* Many of the young people will come up to manhood with no knowledge of the Bible. \* \* \* If this goes on for the next 20 years as it has been going for the last 25, the problem of home evangelization will be doubly difficult.—Report, 1891.

Mr. W. L. De Groff, Superintendent of Rocky Mountain District, writes:—

The relation of the Sunday-School work to the future of this nation is probably more vital in this district than in any other area of equal extent in our country. The necessities are imperative, the possibilities thrilling and grand, and the consequences of neglect are appalling.

Kansas has 509,614 school population, and a Sunday-School membership of 246,554; Colorado has 94,963 of school age, with 36,225 in Sunday-schools; Wyoming (estimated), 18,000 of school age, with 3341 in Sunday-schools; New Mexico claims 40,000 of school age, and 1570 reported in Sunday-schools; Utah, 14,647 of school age (Gentile), and 47,325 (Mormon), and 7295 in Sunday-schools. These figures indicate that the best sections show that not above 40 per cent. of the children and youth are in the Sunday-schools, and the less favored less than 20 per cent.—Report, 1891.

In the prologue entitled "Our Work," the Secretary of the Society writes:—

The population of the country is increasing now more rapidly than the Sunday-schools. The field widens; souls are perishing, for Satan is not idle.—Report, 1891.

2. THE CONGREGATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL SOCIETY is doing a work perhaps more akin to our own in some respects than even the American Sunday-School Union. It has been in operation almost 62 years, and has now in the field about 40 missionaries and superintendents. Its work has greatly expanded during the last decade, its income for the past 3 years averaging about \$60,000 a year, the expenditures being about the same amount. During these 3 years it established through the labors

of its missionary staff 1513 new schools, or an average of 500 schools a year.

The last triennial report of this Society contains a statement of general principles by which its agents are to be guided. Summarized, these may be stated as follows: Work to be judged by its character and permanence rather than by its amount. Local churches to be enlisted in Sunday-school mission work. Standard of teaching to be kept as high as possible. Schools, if possible, to be placed in relation with a church, so as to secure some oversight and occasional preaching. Grouping of small schools to be encouraged. Liberal aid to be given at the start, but self-help steadily drawn out. Organization of churches not the work of the Society, but, when thought desirable, a council of churches or the assent of the Home Missionary Society to be obtained. The need of the Gospel to be regarded equally with denominational growth.

Allowing for ecclesiastical differences, these general principles are almost identical with those of our own Society.

I give the following extracts from the reports of this Society:—

We believe that this work is to be in the future, as in the past few years, an important element in the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ, and that this laying of foundations on which the superstructure of a thoroughly Christian civilization is to be built is of vital importance to the salvation of our land. We are content, then, to go on, limited only by the means intrusted to us to administer. If we can only continue to plant 500 Sunday-schools a year, and to see 50 Congregational churches grow from them each year, as has been the case for the last 3 years, we shall feel that the work abundantly justifies the effort. If the great cause of Home Missions, of which this is only a part, could take the hold upon the consciences and contributions of our Christian people of large, and, as well, of moderate, means, this, as well as all our departments, could easily be doubled in efforts and results.

Referring to the older Western States the report says:—

There are in all these States neglected regions which need the same kind of pioneer missionary work which is found necessary in the newer territories. Constantly increasing demands are made upon us for the increase of workers in the rapidly growing States and Territories of the new West and the Pacific Coast.—Report, 1891.

Then, again, quoting from the Rev. G. H. Atkinson, D. D., Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society in Oregon :—

Had you begun 10 or 20 years sooner, we could have had many more churches in Oregon.—Report, 1891.

3. THE BAPTIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL WORK is, like our own, conducted as a department of the Publication Society. Its aim 'is to put into each State and Territory of the Union a first-class State Sunday-School missionary,' giving his entire time to organizing all the Baptist Sunday-School forces of the State for efficient work, to forming new schools 'wherever they are needed and can be sustained,' and to improving the instruction in all existing schools. This Society organized 376 schools in 1891-2, besides doing other missionary work. It has been in existence 68 years, and during that time has organized 9303 schools. From a little handbook published by the Society, and called 'A Helper,' I quote :—

More missionaries are needed in every State of the Union. Men are ready and waiting; only the means to send them into the field and keep them there are wanting. \* \* \* We ought to organize 1000 new Sunday-Schools every year; and it can be done if the schools, churches, and individuals will furnish the money.'

4. The METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH has a Sunday-School Union 'designed to advance the interests and promote the cause of Sabbath-schools in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and elsewhere.' It has 6 departments—statistics, benevolence, instruction, periodicals, publications, Epworth League. The Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Dr. Jesse L. Hurlbut, in his last report to the General Conference, says: 'We are convinced that the Sunday-School lies as near to the heart of the Church as ever; that its work in general is improving in quality; and that it is more than ever recognized not as an independent institution, but as a part of the Church organization, nurtured by the care of the Church, supported by the resources of the Church, and directed by the authori-

ties of the Church.' The receipts for the year (wholly benevolent) were \$25,241.81, and the disbursements \$30,885.51. It gives grants of books, materials, &c., to the home field, and grants of money to the foreign field. The report does not give the number of new schools, but the net increase for 1892 over 1891 was 730 schools and 42,916 scholars in all lands. Deducting the increase in foreign lands, there remain 256 schools and 27,280 scholars for the home field. Of these latter 141 schools were organized by the special aid of what is termed 'The Rindge Fund,' a gift of \$25,000 by Mr. Frederic H. Rindge, of California, for the express purpose of establishing new Sabbath-schools. About \$4000 of this money was used for the above purpose, but the amount is not included in the general receipts.

5. The PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH in the United States has an Association called the American Church Sunday-school Institute, having as president this year the Right Rev. Bishop Whitaker, of Pennsylvania, and for its Secretary the Rev. Francis J. Clay Moran, B. D., Archdeacon of Maryland. The object is 'to associate clergymen, teachers, and others interested in Sunday-school work; to provide opportunities for consultation as to the best means of carrying on Sunday-schools; and generally to promote the efficiency of this branch of Church work throughout the United States.' The work is diocesan in character, and I am not aware that the Institute employs missionary agents to establish schools, or that it publishes statistics. In Pennsylvania, which is the largest diocese in the country, there is a Sunday-school Association, working in harmony with the Institute. This Association publishes 'The American Church Sunday-school Magazine,' edited by the Rev. Richard N. Thomas, a publication of great merit, and circulating largely through the entire country. In the number for September the total Sunday-school membership of the country at the present time is estimated at 12,000,000. This is naturally higher than the estimate of the International Convention of 1890, and allows for a growth of two

years. At this estimate, after deducting 25 per cent. for teachers and adults, the result would be a youthful membership of 9,000,000, and as against this we must allow for the increase in youthful population since 1890.

#### CONCLUSIONS.

In the light of the above facts and figures, supported by the testimony adduced, I feel no difficulty in arriving at the following conclusions in reference to this part of our subject:—

1. The vast extent and rapid development of this country, unprecedented in the annals of civilization, demand of every branch of the Church of Christ the putting forth of her best energies in the work of home evangelization.
2. The Sabbath-school missionary work is an important and necessary feature of home evangelization.
3. While the various churches and societies should encourage each other to effort by a zealous and worthy emulation, it is the duty of all to manifest and practice true inter-denominational comity.

## V.

RELATION OF SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK  
TO THE CHURCH.

DOES SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK, AS CONDUCTED BY THIS BOARD IN ANY WAY SET ASIDE OR DISPARAGE THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL AND THE OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF THE CHURCH? Here and there this question is asked as if in criticism, and it deserves a reply.

AS TO INTENTION.—The motives of all those who in any way have been parties to the movement have unquestionably been entirely sound on this point. The employment of the Sabbath-school for missionary purposes, as a subordinate arm of the Church, subject to the authority and oversight of the Church, has been steadily kept in view at every step. The men appointed to serve on the Board of Publication and the Sabbath-school Missionary Committee are loyal to the Church to the backbone. So are the officers of the Board. The Rev. Dr. Craven was for 33 years pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church of Newark, New Jersey, has repeatedly been a member of the General Assembly, and was in 1885 its Moderator. He was also Chairman of the Committee on the Revision of the Book of Discipline, and, as we have already seen, on the Special Committee on Publication. Dr. Craven would be the first to detect and disapprove any tendency towards a separation of the Sabbath-school work from Church work.

The Rev. Dr. Worden has been laboring for many years among Sabbath-school workers for the recognition by them of the principle of the control of Sabbath-schools by the Church. His views have been widely diffused in two handbooks circulated among teachers, 'The Westminster Normal Class Outlines,' issued by the Board of Publication in 1879, and 'The Bible Teachers' Guide; or, Methods of Work in the Sabbath-school,' issued by the Board in 1892. In the

former there is a lesson on the Church and the Sabbath-school in which the above principle is fully set forth. From the latter I give one or two extracts as specially pertinent to this inquiry, the first being a quotation from the Presbyterian Digest:—

The Sabbath-school is not independent of the Church. It is simply one form of the Christian activity of the Church, one of the regular Church services. The Sabbath-school is one with the Church in the unit of its composition—in the persons constituting it, in the government controlling it, in the doctrines taught in it, and in the work done by it.

The Sabbath-school, like all the religious institutions and agencies of the Church, is, and ought to be, under the watch and care of the Session.

The Session should be satisfied of the knowledge and piety of those who teach in the Sabbath-school.

He fortifies these points with testimony from persons eminent in Church and Sabbath-school, to the effect that the latter is the product, the child, the auxiliary, the friend of the former, and should be under her control.

The reports of the department are very clear, as the following extract will show:—

This department constantly recognizes and urges upon its missionaries that Sabbath-school mission work is for the Church of Christ. The Church is regarded by it as the divinely-ordained teacher, preacher, and reformer of the world, and its missionaries are instructed to establish and sustain Sabbath-schools in such places and in such a way as to afford reasonable hope that they may become organized churches.

I dwell upon this point particularly, because of a growing tendency in some directions to draw a broad line between the Sabbath-school and the Church, giving to the former an independent existence and government, by virtue of which it enters into a kind of partnership with the Church, but repudiates its control. The Sabbath-school without Church oversight is lacking in an essential condition of true spiritual prosperity.

But whatever may be the tendency in regard to Sabbath-schools in any other connection, it may be truly affirmed of those established by the Board that they are organized with a distinct recognition of their true relation to the Church, and of the subordination of the work to the preach-

ing of the Gospel and the planting of Christian institutions in their entirety.

It may be asked, 'How can a Sabbath-school be under the control of a Session when there is no local church?' The answer is, of course, 'By delegated authority.' Our Church fully supplies this when it authorizes this Board to place the schools, if possible, under the care of the nearest church Session. In many cases this cannot be done. What then? The schools come under the oversight of the Presbytery. But what if this is more nominal than real? In that case the work must be regarded as defective, and the remedy supplied as soon as possible. But what if the Sabbath-school thus called into existence should object to being placed under the control of a neighboring Session? What if it should repudiate denominational control altogether? Answer—We have no remedy in such a case, except exhortation, influence, and counsel; and certainly we must accord to the parties forming the membership of the school a right to determine their own ecclesiastical connection. Meanwhile the Church herself, which is higher than the Session, authorizes the Society to go on organizing schools, and endeavoring to lead them into the fold of the Church.

AS TO FACT.—These schools and the missionaries are doing the work and bidding of the Church and of the Master in carrying the Gospel message to all people. The preaching of the Gospel may be defined by some as the delivery of sermons, but it has also a broader meaning. It means the carrying of the Gospel so as to make others acquainted with it. But, even in this single item of preaching, the missionary Sabbath-school is invariably an ally of the Church. There may be places where the people are so few that a church organization or building may be out of the question, but the school invariably begets an appetite for preaching.

In the history of nonconformity in England the multiplication of 'preaching stations,' especially in rural districts, or villages adjacent to a large town, has always been a

noticeable feature. It is a very common thing to have little Sabbath-schools connected with these preaching stations, both being under the oversight of some neighboring non-conformist church. The good done by these little conventicles cannot be over-estimated. In this country, with its exceptionally vast distances, and the multiplication of settlements and towns, there must be an adaptation of means to ends. If the Church cannot send ordained ministers and build churches fast enough, let her multiply her Sabbath-schools and preaching stations.

#### DOES THE SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK STRENGTHEN AND BUILD UP THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH?

This question is a fair one, and I have been at pains to arrive at trustworthy conclusions. The reply, of course, is in the affirmative. It is building up and strengthening the Presbyterian Church. To what extent we may presently be able to form an opinion.

Generally speaking, it may be reasoned that any work of this nature conducted by persons in entire sympathy with a particular Church, disseminating its literature by wholesale, presenting the polity and doctrines of that Church before the public in the most favorable light, cannot do otherwise than strengthen and build up that Church. But the work of this Board is conducted on broad and catholic principles, and a large proportion of the good results may and probably do flow to other denominations. It will be interesting, therefore, to ascertain in some rough way, as nearly as we can, what proportion of the good done flows into the Presbyterian Church, and what proportion may be regarded as an offering from the Church to the general cause without regard to our own denominational increase. To this point I shall presently come.

#### DIFFICULTIES IN THE INQUIRY.

THE STATISTICS OF THE CHURCH, as presented in the Minutes of the General Assembly, or as obtainable from

Presbyterial sources, do not assist us materially. They give with a close approach to accuracy the statistics of the churches as to locality, designation, membership, and contributions, but the columns devoted to Sabbath-schools are very defective, and any general conclusions based upon them will be far astray. This is not to be wondered at, for the means of collecting and verifying school statistics are much less effective than those for collecting the data of the churches. In the Minutes for 1892, more than 1000 churches, many of them very large and influential, make no return whatever of their Sabbath-school membership. In some cases the returns of the preceding year are given for want of later information. The names and locations of Sabbath-schools where there are no churches are not given.

There must be many Sabbath-schools identified with our Church which are not recorded in the Minutes, simply because no church Sessions have taken them under their care, or because, having done so, no report of the fact has been made to the Stated Clerk of the Presbytery. This doubtless accounts for many omissions. The whole subject needs looking after. The Sabbath-school missionary may sometimes be to blame in not reporting the school to the Chairman of the Sabbath-school Committee, or the latter may be to blame in not reporting to the Stated Clerk. The superintendent of the school probably knows very little about the Presbytery. There must be hundreds of these cases which have never been reported or in any way gathered into the statistics of the Church. Meanwhile, the good work goes on notwithstanding, and there can be no doubt that in time all these matters will receive attention, and order and system be evolved out of chaos.

I cannot find all the information I desire on this point in the REPORTS OF THE BOARD, nor in the STATISTICAL RETURNS OF THE MISSIONARIES to the department. The missionaries give full reports of their daily work every month, but rarely refer to the Presbyterian or any other Church by name. It must be remembered that their work lies

mostly in regions where the Presbyterian Church is far outnumbered as to membership by other Churches, and that in conformity with their instructions, when they fail to get a vote in favor of a Presbyterian school they proceed to organize a union school. In practice they report the organization of many schools without stating whether a vote has been asked for. It would perhaps be better to report the facts of the case every time. We lose nothing by knowing the truth. The catholicity of our work will not be impeded by keeping ever in mind that we are Presbyterians.

For the purpose of the present inquiry I must, therefore, make further investigation.

#### CIRCULAR LETTER.

By permission of the department I drew up a circular letter, which was forwarded to each one of the 60 and more missionaries now in commission, asking for information. The letter ran as follows:—

1. Can you furnish me from your actual knowledge the locations of Sabbath-schools in your special field of labor which have developed into Presbyterian Sabbath-schools, say within the past three years?

2. Can you furnish me from your actual knowledge the locations of Presbyterian churches within your special field which have grown out of the Sabbath-school work of our Church?

I am not at all anxious to have your explanations why there are not more such schools and churches. I simply want to get at the facts as nearly as possible. I do not include under the first head schools which have been established under the general equipment offer of the Board.

Do not feel it necessary to name all the churches—only those which in an hour or two's thought occur to you as examples of the classes I have mentioned; but be as full as possible.

To this circular I received replies from 50 missionaries. Sickness or absence from home on duty have delayed the answers in some cases, and these might materially affect the showing.

#### PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS.

1. AS TO SCHOOLS.—From 46 missionaries, laboring in 24 States, I received lists giving me the name and locality,

and in many cases the superintendent's name and post-office address, of 439 schools now existing, the direct fruit of this work, entirely and strictly Presbyterian, within the actual knowledge of my informants. It must be borne in mind that many of these latter have not been in the employ of the company during the whole of the period of three years which I asked them to consider in making their return—some of them not many months—and that they were asked to give information only with respect to their special fields. It seems to me, therefore, that these returns, gratifying as they are, do not fairly represent the actual increase. We have a solid basis of actual facts to begin upon, but we must still have recourse to estimating. It appears to me that we may multiply the figures above given by two without being in danger of exceeding the mark. This would give us 878 schools, which I will term Presbyterian schools *de jure*. To this number we may now fairly add, as representing the essentially, though not strictly, Presbyterian character of the work, the schools which use Presbyterian literature exclusively, some of them also having Presbyterian superintendents. Here, again, I have no way of getting at the exact number, at least within a reasonable time, and therefore must again resort to estimating. Judging from the character of the letters I receive from the missionaries, and from data supplied in the office, I feel no hesitation in saying that fully one-half of all the permanent schools organized by missionaries, after deducting the strictly Presbyterian schools, are of this character—Presbyterian *de facto*. The reader will have an opportunity of judging from extracts of letters whether this is a reasonable computation. This would add, say, another 500 to the list. To these must, of course, be added the whole of the schools coming in under the special equipment offer of the Board, which for the three years amounted to 367. This swells up the number to 1745. But there is yet another item, namely, the 311 reorganized schools, which will certainly give us at least 150 schools Presbyterian *de facto*. We have, therefore, in a calculation based

partly upon actual knowledge and partly on well-considered estimates, the following result as to schools:—

Schools reported by missionaries now existing, Presbyterian <i>de jure</i> . . . . .	439
Reasonable addition to these reports . . . . .	439
One-half of the other permanent schools, say Presbyterian <i>de facto</i> . . . . .	500
Equipment schools, not included in above, Presbyterian <i>de jure</i> . . . . .	367
One-half of schools reorganized, not included in above, Presbyterian <i>de facto</i> . . . . .	150
	<hr/>
	1,895

This is a fair showing out of the total of 3987 schools organized and reorganized during the 3 years—about 50 per cent., and it would still be a cause for congratulation if we omitted the second item entirely.

Of course, this is more or less ‘estimate.’ It is quite as likely to be under as over the mark, and therefore, in this connection, I would take the liberty of suggesting the desirability of instructing the missionaries in future to report the exact denominational, or extra-denominational standing of each school at the beginning, with such changes in this respect as may subsequently come within their knowledge. The superintendent of a school coming under Presbyterian oversight might, perhaps, be brought into correspondence with the department, and invited to furnish, from time to time, direct information as to the state of his school. This would probably involve a little more departmental work, but the information gained, besides other advantages, such as checking original returns and tracing the history of the schools, might well repay the cost and trouble. I merely throw this out as a suggestion, the practicability of which, or otherwise, the Board will be quick to determine.

Supposing, however, we eliminate all estimating whatever. We still have indubitable evidence of the creation of 806 staunch Presbyterian schools, and of hundreds of other schools the future denomination of which depends largely upon the care which the Church bestows upon them.

This is a very important addition to the possessions and opportunities of the Church.

#### PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES.

2. AS TO CHURCHES.—We come now to the question of churches growing out of this movement. This really opens up a very large subject. I will content myself, however, at present, by stating that I received reports from missionaries, laboring in 24 States, of the growth, within three years, of 238 Presbyterian churches, within their respective fields of labor, and within their actual knowledge.

#### CONCLUSION FROM THIS EVIDENCE.

As a matter of fact, then, though the data are not as satisfactory as we could wish, or as they will probably become as the Board fairly settles down to its great work in future years, yet we have actual evidence showing that the Presbyterian Church has been strengthened and built up by this movement, both as to actual numbers and as to the area of its operations and influence. To use a common business word, which conveys a great deal of meaning, the Presbyterian Church has been extensively and continuously advertised and brought to the front in this matter of evangelizing the newer portions of our country, and the foundations have been laid for the wide and permanent extension of that Church in the immediate future.

#### VIEWS OF MISSIONARIES.

Although I discouraged my missionary correspondents from entering into explanations of the facts I asked for, some of them thought it their duty to express their views on the subject, and I have pleasure in quoting from their letters.

From Virginia, Mr. W. A. Yancey, who sends a list of 29 schools and 6 churches, writes:—

There are 5 or 6 other good points that may become churches soon.

From Kentucky, Rev. J. D. Irwin writes:—

I put our Sabbath-school help supplies in all the schools I start. Although our Church is very weak here it is doing a grand work.

From Indiana, Rev. W. B. Chamberlin writes:—

We could organize two more churches, but our Home Mission Committee of the Presbytery say they cannot supply preaching.

From North Carolina, Rev. Harmon H. Boone writes:—

Many of our schools, owing to the inability of the Presbytery to furnish ministers, have been organized into Baptist and Methodist churches.

Mr. Boone, however, reports 9 schools and as many churches.

Of Iowa, Mr. L. O. Sutherland, who reports 7 schools and 1 church, writes:—

Many of the Sabbath-schools started by our missionaries, though they cannot be called strictly Presbyterian schools, yet do great good for us by making the people acquainted with our literature and our polity, and thus influence them to attend our churches and schools when, as is often the case, they remove from the country to the towns where we have churches.

From South Dakota, Mr. J. N. Lucas, who reports 5 schools and 3 churches, writes:—

Quite a number of other schools receive their lesson helps and Sabbath-school papers from our Board, and have no other than a Sabbath-school missionary to look after them, yet strictly could not be called other than union schools.

Mr. E. S. Ely writes from Kansas:—

The great lack in our Sabbath-school work is the want of a home missionary to follow up the work of the Sabbath-school missionary.

Mr. George Perry reports 8 schools and as many churches from South Dakota, and writes:—

Many of our fields have gone into the hands and under the influence of other denominations—perhaps more than half—our Church being unable to procure ministers. We have now many localities where Presbyterian churches could be organized through the influence of our Sabbath-school work if men were here in the field to make the work permanent.

From Ohio, Mr. J. S. Phillips, who reports 7 schools and 2 churches, writes:—

I would be greatly in sympathy with some home mission or other plan which would follow our work up and lead the scores of mission schools

which we now lose into the line of our own Church. However, we are making many Presbyterians for our town and city churches.

Mr. Dillard, a colored missionary working in South Carolina, reports no less than 22 schools and 5 churches, all staunch and true.

Mr. W. J. Hayden, from Missouri, reports 19 schools and 4 churches from his special field, and writes:—

This is a partial list.

Mr. William Davis, of Oklahoma, reports 3 schools and 10 churches, and writes:—

The results under your first question are small because of the mixed church membership of most communities in Oklahoma, in which it is almost out of the question to organize a Presbyterian school or to change a union school to a Presbyterian afterwards without a Presbyterian church and house of worship.

In the experience of this brother, it is evidently best to first organize the church and let the school follow, and he acts upon that conviction. He adds, however:—

There are yet several communities where Presbyterian churches could be organized, with good prospect of success, where no work has yet been done except on the part of the Sabbath-school missionary.

Mr. Thomas Scotton, from Minnesota, who reports 10 schools and 4 churches, writes:—

It takes more than 3 years—6 months in a year—for a Sabbath-school organized in a community where all denominations are found to develop into a Presbyterian Sabbath-school, but as the work is done now we can expect larger results in the future. \* \* \* Other denominations have occupied some of the fields we should have had because they had ministers to send there.

Mr. J. B. Currens, who sends a list of 8 churches and schools in Nebraska, 4 in Wyoming, and 2 in South Dakota, writes:—

The variety of denominations, the few Presbyterians, the difficulty of finding leaders, convince me that it is wise to organize the schools, put in the literature, and care for them until they know us and our Church, and not to present the matter of a denomination till we are ready to organize a church. Nine of these 14 churches had not a single Presbyterian in them when organized. Union Star Church has 56 members, and only 2 original Presbyterians. We have no difficulty in introducing our

literature, and none in organizing a church after the people get acquainted with us.

### PEN PICTURES.

I have before me an interesting pamphlet containing pen pictures from the experiences of Mr. Joseph Brown, a Sabbath-school missionary in Wisconsin, from which I quote a few extracts :—

Sabbath last was a day to be remembered by the people living in the McGregor district. On that day the McGregor Sabbath-school Mission Presbyterian Church was duly opened and dedicated. The services of the day were 3 in number, all of which were numerously attended and much appreciated.

Went into the Dudley district and spent 3 days in Sabbath-school mission work there. \* \* \* Here another mission Sabbath-school chapel is about to be built. \* \* \* This station is 15 miles from Merrill. The chapel when finished will be deeded to the trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Merrill, to be held for the people of the district.

On Saturday, the 8th of August, made my way from Wausau to the Hartsville district, 12 miles east of Wausau. On this occasion was accompanied with Mr. Armstrong, one of our student missionaries, our purpose being to hold a series of meetings in the new Sabbath-school mission chapel, preparatory to its dedication by the Rev. W. O. Carrier, of Wausau. The chapel thus erected and dedicated is the fruit of Sabbath-school mission work as done by the Presbyterian Church.

Again we say to all, come and see. Come with us to Shortville, a farming district in Clark County, 9 miles from Neilsville. Three years ago a Sunday-school was organized under the auspices of our Board. On Sabbath, April 13th, after a series of 6 services, a petition was presented and signed by 30 persons, asking the Presbytery of La Crosse to form them into a church.

The above quotations explain how Presbyterian churches grow. I must crowd in one more quotation :—

The Sabbath-school department is one of the growing and most hopeful institutions of the Church. \* \* \* It is the circuit-rider of the Presbyterian Church. \* \* \* It is said that President Lincoln was once discussing with the Secretary of War the necessity of river gunboats in defending the Western portion of our country. 'We need,' said the Secretary, 'flat-bottomed boats that will run inland even up the smallest creeks.' 'Yes,' remarked the President, 'we want some that will run on a light dew.' Brethren, the Presbyterian Church has its large gunboats. There are river boats, and the Home Mission Board has sent some of the flat-bottomed boats into the small creeks, but the Sunday-school missionary can run them on a light dew.

## TESTIMONY FROM SYNODS.

Important evidence on this point could be adduced from the Presbyteries and Synods of our Church. As the latter usually issue a printed report of their proceedings, I am able to quote some interesting testimony:—

The Synod of Nebraska publishes the report of its Synodical Missionary, Rev. Thos. L. Sexton, D. D., an eminently competent authority, who says:—

The Sabbath-school work in the State has been pushed forward with vigor, and has resulted in the planting of not less than 75 schools where otherwise there would have been no organized effort to promote Bible study and instruction. This is especially true of the northwestern part of the State, where not less than 260 teachers have been raised up to do real missionary work. These teachers are scattered through the frontier settlements, beyond churches and ministers, and oftentimes they stand alone in conducting religious work among those destitute neighborhoods. They have been called into this service through the direct agency of our Sabbath-school missionaries, who have sought them out and encouraged them to undertake it. The schools thus planted and fostered will soon be followed by the church, and then will be demanded the living minister to preach the Gospel. Even now the demand for preachers is pressing upon us, and we have not the men needed to do the work. The whole western portion of the State is an open and inviting field for missionary effort.

The report also states that the Presbyterian churches in Nebraska have had large additions to their membership, chiefly on profession of faith, and that the growing number of pastoral settlements is specially encouraging. One of the Presbyteries (Hastings) had deemed it wise to appoint a pastor-at-large to watch over youthful organizations, and there had been more than usual activity in the erection of new church buildings. As another indication of prosperity, the contributions from the churches to all the Boards of the Church had largely increased.

The Committee on Sabbath-school Work also report that 7 permanent missionaries had been at work during most of the year and 2 students during the summer, and had formed the nuclei of churches, besides organizing 71 and reorganizing 18 Sabbath-schools, and the report

concludes with this practical advice to ministers and churches:—

Get one of them (the missionaries) in your field, if possible, to canvass it with the literature of our Board and help to make our people strong in the faith.

The Synod of Iowa adopts a resolution directing the Synod's Committee on Sabbath-schools 'to secure, if possible, more efficient work throughout the State by means of Sabbath-school mission work under the Board and through the channels of individual church authorities;' and also resolved to request the Board to place a State Sabbath-school missionary, an ordained minister, upon the field to superintend the entire work.

The Synod of Wisconsin, through the Sabbath-school Committee, draws attention to the large foreign element immigrating into the State, 'making, with their households, perhaps one-half the inhabitants.' These have to be brought to Christ. The report says:—

This great problem is to be solved in Wisconsin. Can these diverse and even antagonistic elements be so Americanized and unified that the interests of our country and Church may be safely committed to their hands? As a Synod we must do our part and do it well. To do this we need all the help we can secure. We, with our implement of war, are ruled out of the common schools. The Sabbath-school furnishes us with a strategic point. Here we must mass our forces. We have in the State 592,755 children between the ages of 4 and 20 years. Of this number about 350,342 are in the public schools. As yet the Presbyterian Church has gathered into the Sabbath-school but 14,688. The great burden of this work rests upon 1666 officers and teachers. Where are the 9800 other members of the Presbyterian Church in Wisconsin?

The Synod also passes a resolution recognizing the 'efficiency of the work of the Board. Sabbath-school Missionary Joseph Brown reported the organization of 5 schools, reorganization of 3, the erection of 1 Sabbath-school missionary church, the development of 2 Presbyterian churches, and the planting of 20 preaching stations, all in localities where 'no other persons go to do work for Jesus.'

The Synod of Oregon, in the report, states that the work of the Sabbath-school and Missionary Department 'has

again been signally blessed.' Three student missionaries had been employed during the year, resulting in 23 schools. It adds, 'Some of these are union schools and may not live during the winter. Yet the young men did a great work.' The narrative also reports prosperity:—

Best of all, we have had the largest increase in membership in the history of northwest Presbyterianism. God has graciously poured out His Spirit upon us, and the result has been a quickening of spiritual life, and the conversion of hundreds of sinners.

The Synod of Minnesota says:—

The Sabbath-school work in the Synod the past year has been one of steady and vigorous growth. Your committee are happy to report that the blessing of God has rested abundantly upon the labors of our faithful missionaries, and a rich fruitage of souls has been gathered in.

Our Presbyteries, except Duluth, are now supplied with a permanent Sabbath-school missionary. Nine student missionaries have been employed during the summer months. Three of these have labored in the Presbytery of Mankato, 3 in St. Paul, 1 in Red River, and 2 in Winona. All of these students have done good work, and the wisdom of the Board in thus employing our young men who are in training for the ministry continues to be confirmed both by the substantial service rendered to the Sabbath-school cause directly, and by the valuable experience gained by the workers themselves. They have during the summer organized and reorganized an average of 13 schools each.

Number of new schools organized during the year 98; number of schools reorganized 64; making a total of 162. Into these schools have been gathered 4529 scholars and 533 officers and teachers, a total of 5062. Besides these, 260 other schools have been visited, addressed, or otherwise aided. In connection with this work our missionaries have visited 4067 families, and have distributed a large amount of tracts and other religious literature not fully reported. Thirteen churches have during the year been organized out of Sabbath-schools started and fostered by our missionaries.

The 'narrative' adds the following:—

From every hand we hear of the faithful and effective service of the pastors-at-large and Sabbath-school missionaries in the several Presbyteries.

The Synod of North Dakota resolves:—

(3.) That our Sabbath-school missionary, Mr. E. M. Atwood, be heartily commended for his faithfulness and the consecrated zeal with which he has labored in our midst, and that we hereby express our gratitude to God for the presence of one so filled with the Holy Ghost and with power.

The Synod of South Dakota adopts the following resolutions:—

That, in the language of the report from Black Hills Presbytery, Synod ‘take under special thought and prayer the question, what are we to do with the churches that grow out of the Sabbath-schools and vainly petition for ministers?’

That chairmen of Presbyterian Committees on Sabbath-school Work heartily encourage the Sabbath-school missionaries in their efforts to nourish all schools they have wisely founded, and also in evangelistic work with weaker churches.

That we commend the general efficiency and fidelity of the management of the Board in its various lines of work.

The narrative says:—

Our Sabbath-schools show an increase in attendance. Fifty-three new schools have been organized and others reorganized by our Sabbath-school missionaries. Through the faithful services of our Sabbath-school missionaries, even our schools where there are no churches are doing a grand and good work. Another encouraging fact is that many of those received into our churches have been brought in through our Sabbath-school work.

The Synod of New York resolves:—

That the Synod set apart some portion of its session to consider the question of Sabbath-school extension, and that a similar recommendation be sent to the Presbyteries, requesting them to set apart a portion of either the fall or spring meeting to the consideration of this work.

That the Board of Publication be requested, if the way be clear, to send one or more students, during the summer months, to labor within the bounds of the Synod, with a view to increasing the number and efficiency of our schools.

The Synod of Michigan recommends ‘that the churches give more generally and liberally to the Sabbath-school missionary work of the Board;’ and requests the Board to appoint a Synodical Sabbath-school Missionary ‘to supervise and develop the Sabbath-school work in this Synod.’

The Synod of Ohio resolves:—

That pastors and stated supplies be urged to preach at least once a year upon the subject of Sabbath-school work, thus endeavoring to bring churches and Sabbath-schools into more intimate relations.

We entreat all Sabbath-school workers to look upon the more than half a million children and youth in our State who are outside of the Sabbath-school, and then in the spirit of the Good Samaritan, help them by

bringing them in, that they may be saved and trained for the service of Christ and the glory of heaven.

The Synod of Kentucky resolves:—

We heartily recommend the united movement of the Sabbath-schools of our Church to gather the neglected children and youth into their schools, and all the churches are urged to co-operate.

The Synod of California, in its narrative, says:—

In Sabbath-school work the year has been one of evident advance. The intelligent conviction is prevailing more and more widely, that the school is the Church engaged in one department of her work, and the consequence is a quickening of the sense of obligation on the part of church members to be engaged in the work, either as teachers or learners. There is yet room for improvement, however. We need a larger proportion of well-trained teachers and more co-operation on the part of parents with the workers and work of the school. We need to connect more closely attendance upon the school with attendance upon the church services. And we need more than all to focus our Sabbath-school efforts in the one central thought of bringing the young to Christ and making them saving partakers of His grace.

The Synod of Illinois warmly commends the Board of Publication and Sabbath-school work to the sympathies and prayers of all our people.

#### CORROBORATIVE EXPERIENCE.

To one portion of the foregoing testimony, namely, that referring to the difficulty of properly following up the work by home missionary efforts, I would add similar testimony from a report of the Congregational Sunday-School Society. Speaking of the number of churches (169) growing out of their list of 1500 permanent schools, it is observed:—

This number (169) would have been much larger if there had been the ability to follow up all these beginnings of Christian work with the regular presence and service of pastors over each group of schools. \* \* \* But here has been the lack. For this cause—because our pioneer work could not be followed up with vigor—we have been obliged to withdraw our men from more than one important field after they had patiently turned up the sod and planted it with pure wheat, thus leaving it to others to reap the harvest of our sowing,

The views of our missionaries are also borne out at other points by those of other societies. I instance the following

from a superintendent of missions writing to the Congregational Board :—

If I should organize only where there are Congregationalists, the schools would be very few indeed ; but the best way, I find, is not to mention denomination, but just to organize, and then let the school grow into Congregationalism as a second nature. Many of the schools, he adds, know nothing of Congregationalism until it is learned through the school.

Another agent of the Society writes :—

It seems to me that we will never be able to do all that might be done for these points until some such plan as that used by the Methodist circuit rider is adopted. I see no other way in which scores of Montana towns and camps, numbering from 100 to 400 in population, can ever be supplied with regular and efficient services. In most cases the population is so transient that even if a church were organized its permanency could not be depended upon, nor any definite portion of a minister's salary absolutely guaranteed.

I hope the time may come when the Congregational Sunday-school and Publishing Society and the American Home Missionary Society can jointly enter upon the support of men to do this kind of work, taking the Sunday-school as the starting-point in securing the interest and cooperation of the people, and always choosing men who have strong faith in the Sunday-school as an evangelizing agency and who are qualified to bring the schools to a high degree of efficiency.

#### REFLECTIONS.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES.—The first aim of the Church, working through this agency, is to win souls to Christ—to redeem the moral wilderness—to advance Christian civilization. Our second aim is to bring Presbyterian principles and polity to the front, because we thoroughly believe in both. If the Sabbath-school missionary, on going into a new settlement, insists on calling the school Presbyterian, he will be defeated in the majority of cases. But if, while avowing himself a Presbyterian, and offering Presbyterian assistance, he tells the people that the denominational question will be left to them to decide, he will get his school, he will have made a good record, and if Presbyterian literature, oversight, and, above all, its true catholicity of spirit, fail to win the people, it will be owing to causes that neither the missionary nor the Board can prevent.

REFLEX INFLUENCE UPON THE CHURCH.—The benefits of the Sabbath-school mission work do not lie wholly in additions brought to the Church of schools, churches, and members. There is also a reflex influence exerted upon the Church itself, widening and deepening its sympathies, bringing it into touch with the people, quickening its spiritual life, arousing interest in philanthropic problems, enriching it with records of unselfish heroism, glorifying it with the halo of a Christly virtue. On this point I shall not enlarge. The mere mention of it will suggest the line of thought to which it leads.

## VI.

## PERMANENCE IN SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK.

SABBATH-SCHOOL MISSION WORK has been criticised for its apparent want of permanence. The desire to report a large list of new schools and to swell the total of teachers and scholars is, it is said, a strong temptation to the missionaries to be superficial rather than thorough, to start a number of little schools in a great many places without any reasonable expectation that they will live longer than a few weeks or months, and without giving them that thorough personal attention which is almost a necessary condition of their taking root. What the Church wants above all things, say the critics, is stability and endurance. What is worth doing at all in this direction is worth doing well. Better make good the work as we proceed than rush from one place to another and leave each task only half finished. Better to have fewer schools organized, provided that those which are organized are permanently rooted.

It is important that this criticism should be frankly met by an explicit statement of aims, methods, and actual facts. No one will question the desirability of permanence in this work. The same argument for the starting of a school applies with exactly the same force to its continuance. A Sabbath-school is not a temporary device for amusing or even instructing people. It is, or should be, an institution and handmaid of the Church—'a plant of God's own planting.' It should be nurtured and sustained with all the solicitude given to the care of human life.

Admitting to the fullest extent the force of these considerations and the duty of the Board and its missionaries to give this question of permanence the closest attention, we must not be too hasty in censuring them for results which may be entirely beyond their control. On the other hand, it may be of great benefit in the future history of this

Board that the question should now be thoroughly ventilated.

#### DATA AT COMMAND.

THE DATA at my command for arriving at the facts are, (1) the annual reports of the Sabbath-school work; (2) a number of statistical reports from missionaries; (3) points brought out in correspondence and conversation with the secretary, the superintendent, and missionaries.

1. ANNUAL REPORTS.—This is the only Society out of all those whose methods I have studied that systematically publishes any record of its failures. Perhaps failure is too harsh a word to employ in this connection, but it describes the situation at its very worst, and for that reason may be used in this connection. The Board is, I think, to be commended for its frankness in this respect.

In 1888-9, really the first year of its expansion, it organized 831 schools, besides 117 schools reported as the result of a special equipment offer of the Board. At the end of the year a careful census was taken of the condition of these schools, and the result, as reported in 1890, shows that 474 of the schools first named, and all the others, which I may here term 'Equipment' schools, were alive and flourishing. Of the remainder, 136 made no report—in other words, the agents of the Board were unable to find out anything about them. Reports from the places occupied by 121 schools told of their dissolution.

In 1890, out of 1139 schools organized by missionaries and 109 'equipment' schools, 714 of the former and the whole of the latter were alive and flourishing. Of the rest, 391 had succumbed.

In 1891, out of 1209 organized by missionaries and 123 'equipment' schools, all the latter and 742 of the former survived the first year, and 135 were not heard from.

Here is a total of 3528 schools started, and of these 2279 survived the first year, and 1249 had either passed out of existence or made no answer to questions sent to them by mail.

A word here. The distances traversed by the missionaries during the year are so immense, and the schools often lie so far apart from each other, that a journey of inspection all over the field for the purpose of making these inquiries is practically impossible. Superintendents and friends are addressed by letter in many cases, and their replies furnish the requisite information as to the condition of the schools.

The official record therefore shows that a little over one-third of the whole number of schools organized through the direct or indirect work of the Board in 3 years disappeared from view during the first 12 months after they were started. If we confine our view to the schools strictly organized by missionaries, the proportion is even greater, being 1249 deaths out of a total of 3179 schools, or not quite two-fifths. Nearly 2 schools out of every 5 started by the missionaries disappeared from view.

2. REPORTS OF MISSIONARIES.—The Board requires its missionaries to obtain and forward at the close of each statistical year reliable particulars as to the condition or existence of every school established during the year. I took 22 reports, giving particulars of 521 schools. Of these, 18 were returned 'not heard from,' or 'no report.' One hundred and twenty-seven were returned 'dead.' The rest, numbering 376, were alive and generally in a fairly prosperous state. But here comes in another element which does not appear in the statistics. Of the 376 living schools, 132 were summer schools only, 1 was a winter school only, and 243 were 'evergreen,' or schools continuing their sessions through the year. In this investigation the proportion of schools disappearing within the year to the whole number was as 2 to 7 only, instead of 1 out of 3, a showing which, if maintained throughout the reports for 1892, will somewhat improve the general result. No record has, however, been made in the annual reports heretofore of the proportion of summer schools to the rest of the living schools, which, according to the partial data, furnished me, appears to be in the proportion of 133 to 376, or a little over

one-third. Evidently we have data sufficient to generalize upon. Probably about one-third of the schools established by missionaries disappear within 12 months, and of those which remain about one-third are summer schools only, with here and there a school that, for some cause or other, can only be kept together in the winter.

3. CONVERSATION AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH MISSIONARIES.—From this source I gather the general correctness of the above conclusions, though the difference in the character of the field of work evidently raises or lowers the average under each heading. One of the most reliable and successful of the missionaries claims that four-fifths of the schools established by him and others within his observation are permanent schools. Another states that while the proportion of lapsed is certainly not more than one-third, it would not appear to be so great if it were not for the avowedly temporary character of many little schools gathered together during the summer months by the student missionaries; in other words, that the permanent missionaries are doing a permanent work in the main.

It must be confessed that it is not always easy to embody in a statistical column the whole story, or even so much of it as is really necessary to a proper understanding of the figures. Hence a grain or two of the salt of discrimination is often necessary to prevent false conclusions. The disappearance of schools from an unpromising region, once traversed by the missionary, detracts from the general averages. But these schools may be recovered the following year, and appear again in the statistics under the heading 'Reorganized.' In the report for 1892 the first entry of reorganized schools appears, in number 311. These 311 schools represent so much lost ground recovered, and should, in justice, be counted in to the credit of the movement. Deduct 311 from the 1249 deaths and the deaths are reduced to 938, and the proportion of dead to living is reduced from one-third to a little over one-fourth. May we not venture to hope that the good work will go on, and that of many

another 'defunct' school it shall be said, as it was said of the prodigal of old, 'This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found!'

### WHY DO SABBATH-SCHOOLS DIE?

This subject appears early to have engaged the attention of the Board. In the Annual Report for 1891 it is thus referred to:—

An important aim of the Board has been permanently to establish Sabbath-schools, and not simply to organize them. The obstacles in the way of such establishment are principally the following: the difficulty of finding suitable men to superintend the schools; the impossibility in some localities of finding a sufficient number of suitable teachers; the blockades of snow that in many northern regions make the roads impassable and so prevent attendance during the winter; the spiritual indifference that prevails in many communities; and in a few localities generally prevailing lawlessness and strife amongst the people.

The reasons for the disappearance of schools may be classified under the following heads:—

(1) Want of Teachers or Superintendents; (2) Climate; (3) Local Depravity; (4) Sectarianism; (5) Want of Buildings; (6) Want of Church Affiliation; (7) Want of Oversight and Help.

1. WANT OF TEACHERS.—Next to the presence of scholars, that of teachers is essential. None but Sabbath-school missionaries fully realize this. One brother writes: 'Hunting grounds abound, and I can find jack-rabbits, prairie chickens, and prairie dogs almost without number, but \* \* \* a capable and willing person to take the charge of a school or the place of a teacher is not easily secured.' A lady, writing in explanation of the discontinuance of a school, says: 'It was impossible to get any one to serve as teacher or officer.' It is very discouraging to a missionary when he sees a good opening for a school in numbers of children and youth willing to join, but can discover, no, not by diligent search, a godly few who will for Christ's sake come forward to teach. What can he do under those circumstances? Perhaps there is not one professing Chris-

tian in the whole town. He bethinks him of one or two serious young people, twenty miles or so away. Can he interest them? Perhaps they are Christian Endeavorers. He 'hitches up' his horse, and drives off, but only, perhaps, to meet with objections and difficulties which seem insurmountable. Perhaps he gets a promise, but the promise is not kept, and a letter or postal-card comes declining and offering what seem to be reasonable explanations. He meets the scholars alone. A few adults drop in to see what is going on. He pleads with them. He makes another diligent canvass of the whole region. At last, when almost in despair, he succeeds in persuading two or three adults to lend their aid. Sometimes it happens that the superintendent is sadly unfit, even on moral grounds, for the part. But the missionary does the best he can with his materials. It sometimes happens that things turn out well. The superintendent feels the responsibility of his new position, and is the first to reap a spiritual blessing. Sometimes the reverse is the case. And yet the attempt must be made. 'In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.' (Ecc. xi. 6.)

2. CLIMATE.—In certain cases, well understood by dwellers in remote and rural districts, it is well nigh impossible to keep a school together during the winter. I shall not dwell upon this reason except to say that the excuse of climate is, no doubt, sometimes urged without due reason. The religious energy and vitality of the leading Sabbath-school people in the neighborhood is at so low an ebb that it soon freezes out. There are cases, however, where the region is so sparsely settled and the distances to be traveled by the children to the school so great—from half a mile to, perhaps, seven or eight miles—and the accommodation in the school so poor—perhaps a mere log house or sod hut, and no shelter for teams—that there is really nothing practical but to suspend during the winter.

3. LOCAL DEPRAVITY.—Here and there the missionary enters a settlement or town where Satan seems to have almost entire possession. Family and social feuds abound. Drunkenness is the prevailing vice. Local passions are easily aroused. He succeeds, however, in launching a little school, but no sooner is it started than disputes and bickerings break it up again. The people 'love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.' They dispute over the offices. They backbite and slander each other. One steps out because he is ridiculed. Another because somebody else is put in. The women are as bad as the men, or even worse. The children are unruly, having copied too well the habits of their parents. If preachers come into the town they are insulted. It is evident that Satan holds possession, and will not be driven out by a first, or even a second attempt. How comes it that we hear of whole counties, and many of them in a single State, without one regular preaching service? No pastors, no Sabbath-schools. Vices prevalent. Not very tempting grounds these for the clerical seeker after soft places! Neglected of the Church, these are the strongholds of sin. And they cannot be taken by a single skirmisher.

4. SECTARIANISM.—One writes in explanation of suspension: 'The —— and the —— [naming opposing denominations in the town] showed their disapproval by staying away.' The consequence was that the school went down. There is not strength left for even a union school. With all the tact and Christian courtesy that can be brought to bear in the case, a missionary is sometimes defeated even at the threshold of success by the churlishness of professing Christians. They say by their actions, if not by their words, 'If we cannot rule we will break.'

5. WANT OF A BUILDING.—This is often a very formidable difficulty. The building or room at first engaged is found too expensive, or it is withheld and the school turned out. A superintendent writes of a suspended school: 'The

trustees of the public school do not wish the Sabbath-school to use the building in the winter, and, therefore, we have to suspend.' One of the missionaries went to a certain town which was entirely without religious services—a place that had been tried and abandoned as hopeless by the missionaries of another society. He thought of the public school, but found that he would have to get the written consent of all the taxpayers, and then pay a high rent. He hired a dance hall, paying a few weeks rent in advance. A Christian friend had handed him \$5 to help on any good work, and he thought he could put the money to no better purpose than this. The school was organized there, but there were drawbacks which threatened its life. Fortunately, friends were raised up in the town and a little building was soon erected for school and church. This saved the school. A Presbyterian church has since been organized there. The \$5 started the school, and the little church building saved it.'

6. WANT OF CHURCH AFFILIATION.—The Sabbath-school and church cannot get along well without each other. A little school without some kind of healthful church influence around it is like a home without father or mother. There is a void which cannot be otherwise filled. In a city surrounded by churches a school may live and prosper alone, in some special cases, but experience proves that in almost every case a school without a church or a church without a school stands on a weak foundation. It is wanting in an essential element of spiritual growth and strength. In many places in frontier regions the nearest churches are too far off to extend practical aid or to give a touch of sympathy. Spiritual fervor dies. The fire simply goes out.

7. WANT OF OVERSIGHT AND HELP.—There are many cases where a school could be kept alive and vigorous by systematic oversight and aid, even when the organization of a local church or church affiliation cannot for years be

thought of. It is one of the characteristics of our country that little nuclei of agricultural or mining towns spring up and just hold their own for years without advancing in population or wealth. By and by they feel the impulse of some distant wave. They 'boom' up more or less rapidly. Then there is an ebb and things settle down somewhat after the old way. These places should not be neglected. Schools started there and left to the mercy of circumstances will not live. Perhaps some wandering preacher of doubtful connection will find them out and take possession. Perhaps indifference, that stolid, sleepy condition of mind and body which comes over quiet little communities, will smother the school. It needs the excitement and refreshment of systematic visitation from the regions beyond. An observant and thoughtful missionary writes in this way: 'If there could be a man secured who is wise and prudent, full of aggressive zeal and whole consecration to the work, to do nothing but look after the schools organized by others and aid and build them up wherever it might seem justifiable so to do, there is no doubt that very much of the work done could be saved to the Church which is now undoubtedly lost.' Again he writes: 'I know of four places where Sabbath-schools were organized by our students in ——— Presbytery that could be developed in a very short time into good, strong churches and grouped with other churches now vacant.'

#### SAFEGUARDS AND REMEDIAL MEASURES.

Fully aware of the dangers threatening these schools from their very birth, the Board appears to have very early devised certain measures and safeguards calculated to overcome and ward off the various causes of disintegration and decay sure to set in, especially in the case of small outlying schools in the newly-settled regions. These constitute the great majority at least of new schools. It will be seen by dividing the total new membership of any year by the number of schools that the average membership of the schools is only a trifle over 40 for each. There must, therefore,

be many new schools with a membership of even less than 40 at the beginning. Schools have been started with 5 or 10 that have increased to 30 or 40 within a year. Schools reaching a membership of 50 to 100 and more may be regarded as having passed the stage of experiment, or let us say of infancy. The dangers and diseases of infancy no longer threaten them. The community yielding such a school has usually in it at least a few people capable of taking positions as teachers and superintendent, and the school is constitutionally strong enough to resist dangers flowing from the various causes which I have enumerated. It is among the small and tender schools that danger lurks, and these from the first were the objects of the Board's earnest solicitude. Another duty, however, equally imperative, commanded its attention—that of pushing its men continually to the front on their missions of aggression and conquest. This work must not stand still for a day. How to be faithful to duty at both ends was the problem. The laborers are few. The fields before them are white unto the harvest. The voice of the Church urges them on. And yet the grain must be gathered into sheaves and housed. Let us look at the policy of the Board and the action of the missionaries.

1. MISSIONARY WATCHFULNESS.—The instructions placed in the hands of every missionary on his appointment convey, in every page and line, the idea of stability and permanence as the most important feature of the work. The foundations are to be well and securely laid in every instance by earnest consultations with the local Presbytery through its constituted officers, and also with the Synodical home missionary and the pastors of the churches nearest to the proposed field. The place being thus judiciously chosen and all preliminary objections and difficulties removed, the local work is to be entered upon with zeal and prudence combined. There is to be thorough house-to-house visitations, a public meeting, resolutions, election of officers, enrolment, pledges of support. The utmost care must be

given to the choice of superintendent. Prayer and effort are to go hand in hand. The school is to be, if possible, under the care of the Session of the nearest church; if there is no church near it is to be commended to the Committee of Presbytery, or, if it seems best, placed under the immediate care of the Synodical missionary. After following out these instructions, as far as possible, the missionary is to push his way to the front and go over the same round of duty in another field, but he is specially instructed to continue his correspondence with the superintendents of the schools he has organized, and to revisit them from time to time as opportunity offers, doing all in his power towards preserving and fostering the schools he has established. He is also specially instructed not to neglect a particular school because it is small, since 'the organization of a small Sabbath-school out in some destitute region' might 'give birth to results far greater than those achieved by some renowned warrior.'

2. DEPARTMENTAL SUPERVISION.—In the circulars sent out to the missionaries from time to time the matter of permanence is emphatically brought to their notice. I give some quotations: 'Conscientiously and faithfully concentrate your whole effort, not only upon the organization, but the PERMANENT ESTABLISHMENT of new Sabbath-schools.' 'Constantly aim at quality and stability; never sacrifice permanence to mere numbers.' 'Our work has been criticised that the schools die; you must see that they live. It is undoubtedly true that too large a proportion of our schools do die. Keep watch over the schools which you have organized. Pray for them, each one. Revisit them, and do everything in your power to preserve them from extinction.' Nothing could be more clear and decided as showing that from the very inception of the work permanence and stability have been regarded as essential marks of success.

3. THE ANNUAL CENSUS.—As a further safeguard, every missionary is required at the close of every year, in addi-

tion to the monthly reports and quarterly letters, to make a census of the schools established during the year, showing their condition, if living, and the causes of discontinuance, if dead. The personal visits to or correspondence with these schools naturally draws the attention of the missionary to the special features of each case, and may be the means of preventing their demise or of resuscitating them.

4. PRESBYTERIAL OVERSIGHT.—The superintendent corresponds with the chairmen of the Presbyterial Committees, sending to them copies of the rules, instructions, and circulars issued to the missionaries, so as to keep them advised and secure their co-operation. The missionaries also send their monthly reports to these gentlemen for examination and indorsement before forwarding them to the department. These reports are sure to be scrutinized carefully, and are likely to be presented and discussed at the meetings of the Presbyteries. The principle regulating all is truth, publicity, light. In one instance, at least, a missionary was dismissed because of ‘inaccuracies’ in his reports.

5. SYNODICAL SUPERINTENDENCE.—It is evident that the Board has felt throughout the paramount importance of this question. But were the safeguards thus far devised perfect? Could anything further be done to decrease the proportion of lost schools? The missionaries were, it is true, selected because of their special fitness for this work, and were believed to be in hearty sympathy with the department. But they labored in fields of vast extent, generally at great distances from their advisers and directors. They might sometimes prove lacking in judgment. The supervision of the Presbytery might be more nominal than real. The officials and committees of Presbytery give their services without a money recompense. They are mostly busy, overworked pastors. Synodical home missionaries work for another Board, and have their time and energies fully taxed without throwing upon them the responsibility

of inspecting the work of the Sabbath-school missionaries. There was one step further which, without involving a large expense, could not fail to bring into the work the desired element of a constant supervision. In the early weeks of this year, 1893, the Board of Publication gave its approval to a proposition for the appointment, whenever deemed necessary, of Synodical Sabbath-school missionaries, who should not only labor as Sabbath-school missionaries themselves, but also supervise the labors of the other missionaries of the Board within the bounds of their respective Synods.

This plan will no doubt be immediately put into operation in those States wherever it seems to be most called for. It will not take any responsibility or authority from the Presbytery as the local judicatory of the Church, but it will insure thorough oversight and supervision, as well as efficient training for the missionaries, both permanent and temporary, and their judicious allotment to fields of labor. It will not be altogether an experiment, for the Synod of Minnesota five years ago constituted one of the missionaries of this Board a Sabbath-school Synodical missionary on its own account. The arrangement seems to have worked exceedingly well. The Sabbath-school and the Home Mission Synodical missionaries have worked harmoniously together and to their mutual benefit, as it was believed they would, and Minnesota is regarded as the best field of the Board. Eight other Synods have already officially requested the Board to appoint Synodical Sabbath-school missionaries within their bounds.

#### SUMMER SCHOOLS.

Many of the discontinued schools which have brought the charge of want of permanence upon this work have been what are termed 'summer schools,' gathered together during a summer campaign of theological students, and disbanding at the approach of winter. It is a pity to let them disband. But was it a mistake to gather them together? There are places where it is practically impossible,

under the existing conditions, to keep up a Sabbath-school during the winter. Does it follow that it is useless to maintain one during the summer? While permanence is to be greatly desired and earnestly sought after, these little flickering lights, shining for a little while in dark places, ought to have a warm place in the heart of the Church.

It might be a good suggestion to keep this summer work distinct in the reports from the regular work of the stated missionaries. I throw the suggestion out for consideration, whether the mingling of all schools together in a common list gives a sufficiently clear view of the actual work done, and may not be answerable for many apparent failures, which ought instead to be termed successes, and would be so termed if they were classified under the head 'Transient, or summer schools.'

#### ENCOURAGEMENTS.

There is a bright and hopeful side of the question even in reference to schools which ought, by every consideration, to be permanent, but are not.

Is it reasonable to expect that the work of Sabbath-school extension can be carried on without failures and disappointments? We do not expect this of any other department of aggressive labor. We do not expect it in the home mission or foreign mission work. If we were to institute comparisons, I have no doubt we should find that the proportion of success to failure is as great in this work as in any other department of the Lord's service. We do not expect this in the sphere of worldly business. A manufacturing or mercantile concern is well satisfied if the results of each year, or of each commercial journey, 'average' well. 'The children of this world are wiser in their generations than the children of light.'\* I do not say that we should not grieve over our failures, but I do say that we cannot expect, in the nature of things, always to succeed. And then we must not forget that a death implies a life. The life may

---

\* Luke xvi. 8.

have been short, but who can say that it had been better had there been no life.

Ministers, of all men, should not speak too disparagingly of these drawbacks. They know too well how often they stand in need of encouragement over the difficulties and failures of their ministry, and how ready the 'enemy' is to gloat over these admissions. But, for all that, they believe and are sure that the Word of God does not fail. A school may be transient, but the work of the Holy Spirit is not transient. Christian faith and heroism will see in the 'breakdown' of a promising work not merely an occasion for grief, but a call to greater consecration, zeal, and faith. Some of the brightest instances of individual conversion and spiritual awakening may be in places where the school itself has gone down.

Then, also, it must be remembered that much of this Sabbath-school work is really tentative and experimental. It is like 'prospecting' for mines. It must be done. It involves no serious cost, as has been seen in another section of this review. A failure to establish a school involves no risk, and, should the effort be well made, implies no disgrace. Would any reasonable person contend, in respect of any one of these lapsed schools, that the attempt to establish it ought not to have been made?

It is easy to be wise after the event. If missionaries are never to organize a school unless they are absolutely certain of its permanence, the Sabbath-school extension work will soon dwindle down into very meagre proportions. They do not know when they go into a town whether they shall succeed or not. They have hope and faith, and it is their duty and privilege 'to sow beside all waters.' In this connection it would be well to read over again, and very thoughtfully, our Lord's parable of the sower, and its interpretation as given to the disciples.\* Here were three cases of failure to one of success. If the disciples, in their home missionary journey—'through the towns' 'of Israel,' 'by

---

\* Matt. xiii. Mark iv. Luke viii.

two and two' \*—had been expected to send in a statistical report of their successes and failures, it might have looked discouraging to any but to Him 'who knoweth all things.' In the 'great day' some of the greatest triumphs may appear to have been where the world, and even the Church, have pronounced the word 'defeat.'

---

\* Matt. x. 5. Mark vi. 7. Luke ix. 1.

## VII.

## RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.

IS THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH FULLY ALIVE TO THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SABBATH-SCHOOL EXTENSION MOVEMENT, AND PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP THE ADVANTAGES ALREADY GAINED?

This question CANNOT BE FULLY ANSWERED in this pamphlet. There are indications of an awakening of thought towards this subject, which will lead, let us hope, to wise and earnest counsel and effort.

1. THE PRESBYTERIES.—I have shown in the discussion on General Principles that this Sabbath school work is based on a recognition of Presbyterian authority and responsibility. It is not conducted by an independent society working along lines laid down by itself. Its very existence depends upon the voice of the Church, through the General Assembly. Its objects are defined, and its general methods and plans, as far as possible, laid down by this august body. The Presbytery is free to admit or to refuse admission to this work within its bounds. The General Assembly concedes this right by special resolution. But having opened its doors to the work, the Presbytery cannot ignore it. It ought not to do so, for the Board and the Presbytery are both working for the same cause. Accepting the oversight, it becomes responsible to the whole Church to this extent, that it shall not fail to carry out that oversight and to aid the work to the extent of its ability. Obligation and interest here go together. An obligation, however, may be recognized as to the letter but evaded as to its spirit. This is a work, indeed, which no Presbytery having in view the progress of the Church can afford to overlook. Its failure in any place means the failure of the Presbyterian Church in that place. Its success means the success of the Presby-

terian Church. It is pioneer work that is being done. It commands the confidence and has aroused the enthusiasm of the membership of the Church. Much of its distinctively Presbyterian and permanent character depends upon the hearty support and countenance given to it by Presbyteries. It is only reasonable to conclude that if the Presbyteries show but little interest in the new schools many of them will pass into the hands of other denominations or soon become extinct.

#### SUGGESTIONS FROM THE FIELD.

An interesting letter from one of the most experienced of the Sabbath-school missionaries contains some practical suggestions on the above points:—

The prime cause of our Church not reaping the full benefit of the missionary work is the failure of the Presbyteries to take charge of the work and carry it forward after our missionaries have left. \* \* \* Hundreds of schools have been organized and well developed, and have asked for Presbyterian care, but could not have it. Other denominations are always ready to supply what our Church fails to give. Many other schools wait until they become discouraged, and then die for want of care. That the Presbyteries are unable, in a great number of instances, to care for the schools organized and save them to our Church, is a fact; and there are three causes which prevent this: First, indisposition; second, lack of money; third, lack of men. And yet the missionary is blamed for not making the schools develop into Presbyterian schools and churches. \* \* \* But the questions are raised and must be answered. What becomes of the schools organized? What can be done to save more of them to the Church? As to the first, I would say about one-fifth are thoroughly and permanently Presbyterian, two-fifths are Presbyterian in literature and supervision, and in every way so far as the missionaries can make them, and will become thoroughly and permanently Presbyterian if properly fostered by the Presbyteries, and if not will, to a great extent, fall under the care of other denominations; one-fifth belong to other denominations when organized, and one-fifth are lost.

The second question is not so easily answered, but I would suggest the following: \* \* \* Let Presbytery require one elder from each church, or some other person, to visit four such schools during the year, and every minister in the Presbytery to give three Sabbaths during the year to preaching in these new fields, and then each Presbytery should have a pastor-at-large to supply the vacant churches that depend on the Home Mission Board for aid. Let the Home Mission Committee and the Sabbath-school Committee work jointly in providing for those new schools

and new fields. If such an arrangement could be made there would be an astonishing advance in all our Church work, and most of the new Sabbath-schools would be saved to the Church.

There may be other plans besides these suggested by my correspondent that might prove effective. It might be possible, in some cases, to employ paid teachers and superintendents. Persons might be induced by the prospect of a small stated remuneration to reside in a particular town and devote a part or the whole of their time during the week as well as their Sabbaths to visiting and building up the school. The work might be made part of a broadly laid plan of evangelistic work, in which lay as well as ministerial talent should be utilized.

2. THE CHURCHES.—Whatever plans may be devised for drawing out the strength of the Church in meeting the demands of the age, one thing is clear. The Church itself, as a whole, needs most of all the quickening of the Holy Ghost to enable her to rise to the importance of the work and the grandeur of the opportunity. It sometimes happens that an apparently accidental circumstance draws attention to a great crisis or duty. Providence often uses unexpected and seemingly small causes to bring about marvelous results. It probably seemed to many a small matter when the Presbyterian Church simply consolidated two departments of its Publication Board into one, but this mere change in a matter of detail has been the means of opening the eyes of many in the Church to a great peril and of kindling thought and enthusiasm in the hearts of multitudes in the effort to avert it. The fact that the Church of Christ in this land of ours, notwithstanding all its noble institutions, is steadily losing its hold upon the youth of our country, has long been suspected by many who note the turning away of multitudes of young people from church and Sabbath-school, but the facts and figures unfolded through the investigations of the Sabbath-school work of our Church turn these suspicions into realities.

## VIII.

## CONCLUSION.

I SHALL leave to the reader the task of drawing his own inferences and conclusions from the various points brought under review in the foregoing pages, having already written at far greater length than I originally intended. The division of the treatise into sections removes the necessity for recapitulation. A few closing words will give the view of the subject, as a whole, which is deeply impressed on my own mind.

It has undoubtedly been proved that the Sabbath-school mission work opens up hundreds of new fields of labor every year in our Church alone. The Church ought therefore to be prepared to follow up the advantage in a systematic, earnest way. Lay talent can be used in this service to immense advantage. Evangelists and ministers, equipped by a course of sound Biblical training, even if not learned in the original languages of Scripture, should be encouraged to go to the front. Men are needed who can persuade and lead men—good organizers, good preachers, men who are wide awake and can talk in the plain vernacular of the people—above all, men full of the Holy Ghost. Women who can teach and influence women are needed. If this means that the income of our Missionary Societies should be doubled, or even quadrupled, the Church can do it if it will. The responsibility is alike on churches, pastors, presbyteries, and people. We are, I believe, on the eve of a great outburst of Christian enthusiasm in this work, and the fire will spread till it embraces all the agencies of the Church. Instead of the offerings of the churches being reckoned at so many cents per head to the cause of Missions, they will mount up until they are counted by so many dollars per head. A steady inpouring of the tithes into the treasury of the Lord will prove the Lord of hosts, and gifts

consecrated by faith and prayer will bring down a spiritual blessing.

FOR AS THE RAIN COMETH DOWN, AND THE SNOW FROM HEAVEN, AND RETURNETH NOT THITHER, BUT WATERETH THE EARTH, AND MAKETH IT BRING FORTH AND BUD, THAT IT MAY GIVE SEED TO THE SOWER AND BREAD TO THE EATER:

SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: IT SHALL NOT RETURN UNTO ME VOID, BUT IT SHALL ACCOMPLISH THAT WHICH I PLEASE, AND IT SHALL PROSPER IN THE THING WHERE TO I SENT IT.

FOR YE SHALL GO OUT WITH JOY, AND BE LED FORTH WITH PEACE: THE MOUNTAINS AND THE HILLS SHALL BREAK FORTH BEFORE YOU INTO SINGING, AND ALL THE TREES OF THE FIELD SHALL CLAP THEIR HANDS.

INSTEAD OF THE THORN SHALL COME UP THE FIR TREE, AND INSTEAD OF THE BRIER SHALL COME UP THE MYRTLE TREE: AND IT SHALL BE TO THE LORD FOR A NAME, FOR AN EVERLASTING SIGN THAT SHALL NOT BE CUT OFF.\*

---

\* Isa. lv. 10-13.







Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 01038 5419