

The
SUNDAY SCHOOL

Its History and Development

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE TEACHER'S WORK"

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THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL:

ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE
SUNDAY SCHOOL CENTENARY OF 1880.

BY JOHN PALMER,

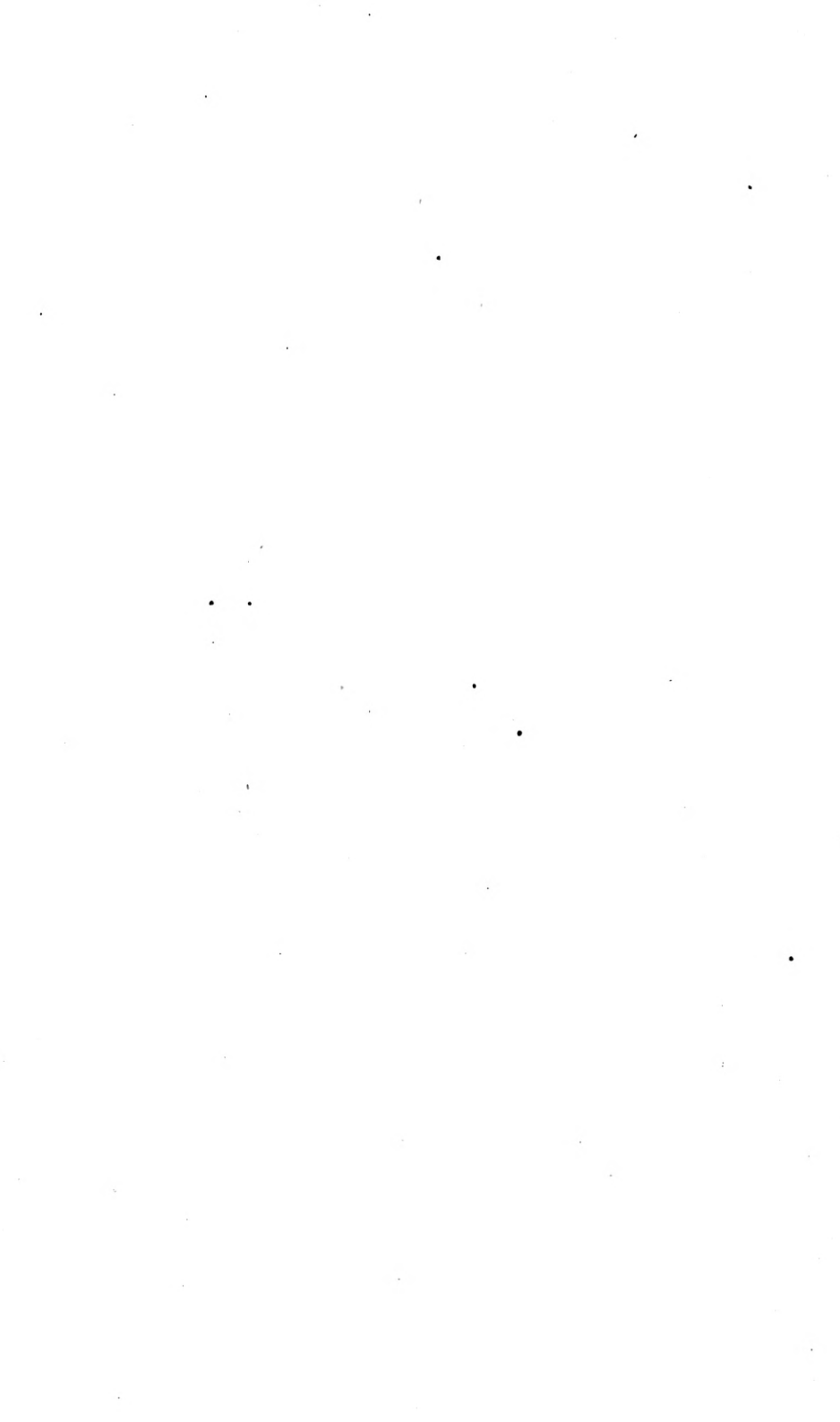
AUTHOR OF "THE TEACHER'S WORK."

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

London:
HAMILTON, ADAMS, & CO.,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

—
1880.





INTRODUCTION

BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK.

—◆—

THIS is a little work on Sunday Schools, written by one who has perhaps more knowledge than could be found elsewhere.

As the week days are now to be given up more and more to secular knowledge, so that in some cases no religious instruction will be given, and in others but a little, the Sunday School, which has begun to be looked upon as less important in places where religious instruction was fully given on week days, will assume for the future a new importance.

The Sunday School has excited in the past great zeal and activity. The Church Sunday School Institute alone has issued in a year a million and a half of its publications; and every year a thousand teachers flock to its

Introduction.

Examinations and carry away its certificates. In 1780 the Sunday School could not be said to exist as a parochial institution in Great Britain: in 1880 there were 550,000 teachers and five millions of scholars. Can any statistics be more eloquent than these?

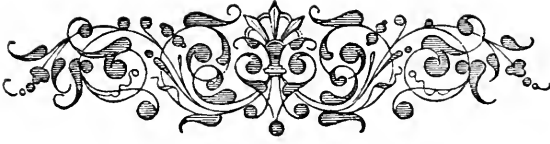
The present book shows what the Sunday School has been in the past, and what may be done with it in the future. I cannot doubt that the great number of the clergy will welcome this little volume for its practical information on a subject which so nearly concerns them.

The work begun in Gloucester by Robert Raikes and the Rev. Thomas Stock has by no means reached its fullest development. Those who shall promote it will have the comfort of thinking that they are obeying our Blessed Lord's command addressed to St. Peter, "Feed My Lambs."

W. EBOR.

BISHOPTHORPE,

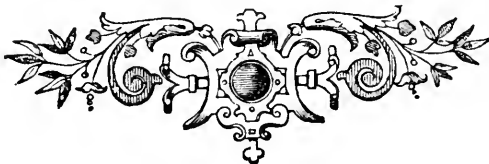
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CONTENTS.



CHAP.	PAGE
I. THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS	7
II. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH	25
III. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL: WHAT IS IT? . . .	40
IV. ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SENIOR SCHOLARS	54
V. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL CENTENARY, 1880 . .	80





PREFACE.



PROBABLY no modern institution has made such rapid progress within the last few years as that of Sunday-schools. They are now generally acknowledged to be the natural complement of Day-schools, and it augurs favourably for their extended usefulness that this estimate of their proper function should be readily accepted by the highest authorities in Church and State.

It is therefore of the first importance that the special work performed by Sunday-schools should be clearly understood, and the object of this Manual is to contribute towards this result. It is proposed to trace the steps by which the Institution has attained to its present proportions, to assign to it its proper place in the Church system, and to define the special work

it has to accomplish. A further object will be to show how the Sunday-school may be utilized for keeping a hold on those who have passed the age for the Elementary School, and for giving that advanced training in Church doctrine and practice the want of which leads so often to the loss of so many young persons at an age when they ought to be in close fellowship with the Church.

A further design of the Author is to show that the Sunday-school, when properly managed, offers to the clergyman adequate provision for completing the religious training of the young; and he has endeavoured to explain how the work should be done in another Volume of this series of Manuals.*

* *The Teacher's Work: What it is, and how to do it.*



THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.



CHAPTER I.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF SUNDAY-SCHOOLS.

THE recent celebration of the Centenary of the establishment of Sunday-schools renders some account of their origin of special interest.

A century has passed away since Robert Raikes, a layman of the Church of England, commenced Sunday school work in Gloucester. It is unnecessary to enter into the question as to whether Mr. Raikes was really the founder of Sunday-schools. In fact, before this can be satisfactorily settled, we must understand what is meant by *founder*. For the idea of Sunday-schools we are probably indebted to Cardinal Borromeo, nephew of Pope Pius V., who established similar schools in Milan in the middle of the sixteenth century. "His zeal," says Allan Butler, in his *Lives of the Fathers*, "in procuring that all children and

others throughout his diocese should be perfectly instructed in the Catechism or Christian doctrine was fruitful in expedients to promote and perpetuate this most important duty of religion. Not content with strictly enjoining all parish priests to give public catechism every Sunday and holy day, he established everywhere, under admirable regulations, schools of the Christian doctrines, which amounted to the number of 740, in which were 3,040 catechists, and 40,098 scholars."

It is also true that before the time of Robert Raikes many holy and earnest persons were in the habit of collecting children together on the Lord's Day. Amongst the earliest pioneers of the movement was the Rev. Joseph Alleine, the author of *An Alarm to the Unconverted*, who was curate at Taunton in 1655, and was in the habit of assembling young children of the poor for religious instruction on Sunday. One of the earliest Sunday-schools on record was started by Mrs. Catherine Boevey, of Flaxley Abbey, the young and beautiful widow whom Steele and Addison delighted in praising. She belonged to the Church of England, and appears to have used her wealth and position in every way to do good to her indigent and ignorant neighbours, and especially to the children on Sunday. At her death she bequeathed the interest of £800 towards apprenticing and providing for poor children.

In the year 1764, the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey

established a Sunday-school at Catterick, in Yorkshire, where he was for ten years incumbent. His place of instruction is described by a contemporary, Mrs. Catherine Cappe, of Bedale, as follows:—

“At two o'clock, before the commencement of the afternoon service, Mr. Lindsey devoted an hour in the church every Sunday, alternately to catechising the children of the parish and to expounding the Bible to the boys of a large school which was at that time kept in the village. The number of boys generally amounted to about one hundred, who formed a large circle round him, himself holding a Bible open in his hand, with which he walked slowly round, giving it regularly in succession to the boys, each reading, in his turn, the passage about to be explained; this method, accompanied by frequently recapitulating what had been said, and by asking them questions relating to it, kept them very attentive, and the good effects of these labours proved, in many cases, apparent in after life, Mr. Lindsey having frequently been recognised in the streets of London by some of his former Sunday pupils, who gratefully acknowledged their obligations to him. After evening service, Mr Lindsey received different classes of young men and women, on alternate Sundays, in his study, for the purpose of instruction; and Mrs. Lindsey, in like manner, in another apartment, had two classes of children, boys and girls, alternately.”

In the year 1769, Miss Hannah Ball, a Methodist, of High Wycombe, established a Sunday-school in her own house. “Her custom,” says Mr. Townshend Meyer, “was to assemble as many as thirty or forty children on Sunday morning to hear them read the Scriptures, and repeat the Catechism and the Collect preparatory to going to Church. Writing to John Wesley in 1770, she says—‘The children meet twice

a week, every Sunday and Monday. They are a wild little company, but seem willing to be instructed. I labour among them earnestly, desiring to promote the interests of the Church of Christ.' Miss Ball continued her school for many years, and so late as 1841, one of her pupils was living, 'an old servant,' in the family of the Rev. W. H. Havergal, Rector of Astley, and able to point out in High Wycombe Church the place usually occupied by Miss Ball's Sunday-scholars."

Next in order comes a school started by a poor weaver, called "Old Jemmy o' th' Hey," at Little Lever, near Bolton, in 1775. He taught the poor "bobbin" or "draw" boys to read and spell, and a large room was lent for the purpose in a neighbour's cottage. The children were summoned morning and afternoon "by an excellent substitute for a bell, an old brass pestle and mortar." In 1778 a school was opened in Macclesfield by the Rev. David Simpson, and another in Ashbury, in the county of Berks, by the Rev. Thomas Stock, who was subsequently associated with Robert Raikes in starting Sunday-schools in Gloucester. Mr. Townshend Meyer, who has given much attention to the early history of Sunday-schools, refers to this group of pioneers in the following terms:—

"A striking and dramatically contrasted group is made by these early founders of Sunday-schools. The Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, a prince of the Roman Church, yet all



ROBERT RAIKES.

his life 'the bold opponent of her enormous abuses,' as severe in self-denial as munificent in charity; Alleine, the ascetic, tender-hearted young Nonconformist, the fire of whose zeal stimulated a weak body to fatal overwork; the beautiful, witty, accomplished, yet 'perverse' young widow, Mrs. Boevey, glittering in her white and silver raiment; the learned Unitarian enthusiast, Lindsey, long struggling between ties of family and association which bound him to the Establishment as vicar of Catterick and chaplain to his godfather, the Earl of Huntingdon, and stings of conscience which told him he was no longer her consistent servant; the quiet, gentle young Methodist, Hannah Ball, with her peaceful home and orderly ways; and, lastly, old weaver Jemmy, toil-battered, shrewd and kindly, clattering his brazen pestle and mortar to call his troop of ragged urchins about him:—all in their several modes and districts paving the way for the good work to be done by the prosperous practical Gloucester printer with the aid of his modest clerical colleague, the late Berkshire curate, and sometime master of King's School in the cathedral city."*

But whilst admitting that the idea was to some extent worked out in the isolated efforts of Cardinal Borromeo and others, it was practically left to Robert Raikes and his associates to establish the system which has developed into the modern Sunday-school.

Robert Raikes was born in Palace Yard, Gloucester, in 1735. His father was the proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal*, one of the oldest journals extant. He is described as a philanthropist, as well as journalist, and delighted to make his paper the organ of every good cause. Whitefield, who was then preparing for the ministry, contributed to its columns,

* *Who was the Founder of Sunday-schools?* By S. R. Townshend Meyer. London: Moxon & Co.

and the miserable condition of our prisons was exposed in them before John Howard began his labours. Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday-schools, appears to have succeeded his father at the age of twenty-two as proprietor of the printing business and editor of the journal, a position for which his training had eminently fitted him.

In estimating Raikes' claim to be considered the founder of Sunday-schools, it must be borne in mind that others were intimately associated with him in the work, and whose claims to the honour of having assisted at its inception cannot be ignored.

“In the whole of his labours,” says Mr. Gregory * “Raikes had several most valuable co-workers, and to one, at least—the Rev. Thomas Stock—belongs almost, if not quite, as much credit for the institution of schools in Gloucester as to Raikes himself. Raikes' distinctive honour lies in the fact that, having in common with several other kindred spirits perceived the advantages that would attend Sunday teaching, he did not content himself, as did others, with establishing a school or schools in his own neighbourhood, but by means of his newspaper and other organs of public opinion he recommended the practice far and wide, and never ceased his advocacy till the scheme was generally adopted throughout the land. The movement, hitherto unheard of, save in a few provincial towns and villages, was by him brought into the light of day. In vigorous language he introduced it to all classes of readers. From cottager to king, all learned of the new institution through Robert Raikes. He raised Sunday teaching from a fortuitous rarity into a universal system. He found the practice local: he made it national. It is upon

* *Robert Raikes: Journalist and Philanthropist.* By Alfred Gregory. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

this ground that admirers of Raikes rest his claim to the honoured title of 'Founder of Sunday-schools.'

The circumstances which led to the establishment of the first Sunday-school have been fully described by the Rev. Dr. Glasse, a personal friend of Raikes. "The streets were full of noise and disturbance every Sunday. The churches were totally unfrequented by the poorer sort of children, and very ill-attended by their parents; they were nowhere to be seen employed as they ought to be. Had they been disposed to learn or attend to anything that was good, their parents were neither willing nor able to teach or to direct them; they are described as being a perpetual nuisance to the sober part of the community." They were "riotous, impudent, and regardless of all authority whatsoever in their mode of behaviour, disrespectful in the extreme, and frequently detected in such petty offences as plainly indicated that they were on the high road to perdition, unless something could be done to rescue them."

Raikes' first step towards their reformation was to induce them by gifts of cakes, apples, and money, to attend the early service in Gloucester Cathedral. "At first," writes Dr. Glasse, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "he found himself surrounded by such a set of little ragamuffins as would have disgusted men less zealous to do good." It required some time to drill them to a decent observation even of the outward ceremonies of religion, so as to get them to kneel, stand, and sit

in the different parts of the service. But although this was important work, Raikes felt that much more was needed before any permanent good could be effected. An opportunity was soon afforded for carrying out his plans. A Mr. King, a woollen cardmaker, of Dursley, who had gone to visit two prisoners lying under sentence of death in Gloucester Gaol, visited Raikes next morning, and they walked together to one of the lowest parts of the town, called "The Island," where they saw "many boys at different sports."

In reference to this interview, the daughter of Mr. King writes: "My father said, 'What a pity the Sabbath should be so desecrated.' Mr. Raikes answered, 'How is it to be altered?' 'Sir, open a Sunday-school, as I have opened one at Dursley, with the help of a faithful journeyman; but the multitude of business prevents me from spending so much time in it as I could wish, as I feel I want rest.' Mr. Raikes replied, 'It will not do for Dissenters' (as my father belonged to the Tabernacle, being one of the Rev. G. Whitefield's followers). My father answered, 'Then why not the Church do it?' Mr. Raikes named this to a clergyman of the name of Stock, who paid a person to teach a few."

This clergyman was the Rev. Thomas Stock, who had left Ashbury (where, it is stated, he used to teach children in the chancel of the church on Sundays), and was appointed Head Master of the Gloucester Cathedral School in 1777. The vicarage of Glasbury

THEOLOGICAL



THE REV. THOMAS STOCK.

was presented to him (with a dispensation from residence) in the following year, and he was appointed to the curacy of Hamstead, near Gloucester. He subsequently held the rectory of St. John the Baptist, with the perpetual curacy of St. Aldate, in the city itself. He is described as of great learning, of exemplary life, unwearied in well-doing, and "never seeking the applause of men." His account of the interview mentioned by Mr. King's daughter is thus given by Mr. Gregory :—

"Mr. Raikes meeting me one day by accident at my door, and, in the course of the conversation, lamenting the deplorable state of the lower classes of mankind, took particular notice of the situation of the poorer children. I had made, I replied, the same observation, and told him if he would accompany me into my own parish we would make some attempt to remedy the evil. We immediately proceeded to the business, and, procuring the names of about ninety children, placed them under the care of four persons for a stated number of hours on the Sunday. As minister of the parish, I took upon me the principal superintendence of the schools, and one-third of the expense. The progress of this institution through the kingdom is justly attributed to the constant representations which Mr. Raikes made in his paper of the benefits which he perceived would probably arise from it."

The first Sunday meeting of these poor neglected children took place at the house of Mr. King, in July, 1780, in St. Catherine Street, Gloucester. Mrs. King was the first of the four teachers of the Sunday-school chosen by Mr. Raikes. She died three years afterwards, and her husband for many years supplied her place. In paying for this, Mr. Raikes was assisted

by Mr. Stock, who became responsible for one-third of the salary to Mrs. King, while Mr. Raikes paid the remaining two-thirds.

Mr. Raikes supported his own school without help. Mrs. Sarah Critchley, who resided in the same parish as Mr. Raikes—St. Mary de Crypt—became the teacher of his school; a third was under the care of a Mrs. Brabant, and the fourth assembled at the house of the sexton of St. Aldate, Mr. Trickey. These four were the first Sunday-schools in Gloucester; but during the last six months of the year 1780, other schools were established in various parts of the city.

In estimating the value of Sunday-schools, the influence of the Sunday-school movement upon the spread of primary education is not as widely recognised as it should be. Such education as the working classes received during the first third of the present century was almost entirely obtained in connexion with the Sunday-school, and the humble work which found a home in Gloucester in 1780 has proved the parent of the week-day school, now represented by three millions in the annual expenditure. In 1780 education was then at its lowest. It depended on the household or the district. The Prayer Book, it is true, enjoined parents and guardians to give religious instruction to the children under their care, and to bring them to church to hear sermons and to be publicly instructed in the Catechism. Here and there

this, and more, was done ; but the practice is spoken of with exceptional praise. At all events, the towns began to swarm with children who knew nothing, and the poor had no hope of either this world or the world to come.

It was at this period that Raikes and his colleagues tried to move this great mountain of ignorance and indifference, and to leaven it with Christian principle and hope ; with what success may be inferred from the fact that within seven years of his conceiving the plan he could reckon a quarter of a million well-clad and well-behaved children attending Sunday-schools. The movement soon excited general attention. Adam Smith wrote of it, "No plan has promised to produce a change of manners with equal ease and simplicity since the days of the Apostles ;" and William Cowper declared that it was a "wholesome means of spreading that knowledge which would alone bring about the reformation of manners among the people, without which all principle, religious and moral, would soon be obliterated from their hearts." Judges, Bishops, and others occupying high positions, bore testimony to the beneficial effects which had followed the spread of the movement amongst the people.

Its influence was also felt in another direction ; it prepared the way to the establishment of more than one of our great religious societies. In 1807 the British and Foreign School Society was established, and this was followed by the founding of the National

Society in 1811. George III. had expressed the wish that every child in his dominions should be able to read the Bible, but the first grant of public money for education was carried by Mr. Brougham in 1832, when he got the Government to propose a vote of £10,000 each to these two societies. Lord Russell, in 1839, wrote a letter to Lord Lansdowne, then Lord President of the Council, proposing a scheme of national education, and he tells us that for this letter he had the express sanction of the Queen, whose father, the Duke of Kent, had been a warm supporter of the British Schools.

Upon reading the history of the early days of Sunday-schools it is very striking to observe how entirely Robert Raikes believed in the capacity of the Church of England to meet the spiritual wants of the various classes of her children. Being a conscientious and devout Churchman, he sought to conduct his operations entirely upon what are called Church lines. His first step was to obtain the consent of the parents and the children living in one of the most destitute parts of Gloucester to meet him at the early service in the cathedral on Sunday morning. The numbers at first were small, but they rapidly increased; and his plans were so successful that the children were soon induced to "fly with eagerness to receive the commands and to be edified by the instruction of their best friend."

It is therefore quite clear, from the fact of the attendance of the children at the cathedral services,

the subsequent teaching in the school-room, and the frequent catechisings in the church, that Robert Raikes did all he could to make the Sunday-school part of the Church's system; but while he was anxious that the Church should not allow an institution which was capable of doing so much good to be inadequately supported, he readily acknowledged the aid which the Nonconformists gave in raising the superstructure.

It is estimated that there are connected with Sunday-schools nearly 550,000 teachers, and more than 5,000,000 scholars; and if we add to these figures the statistics of Sunday-schools in other lands, the total will probably be not less than 1,500,000 teachers and 12,000,000 scholars. Out of this total the strength of the Church of England in her Sunday-schools is, according to the Statistical Returns which have recently been collected from thirty dioceses in England and Wales, in round numbers, as follows:—

Number of Scholars belonging to	
Church of England Sunday-schools .	2,000,000
Number of Teachers	170,000
Number of Scholars over fourteen	
years of age	250,000
Number of Scholars who are Com-	
municants	70,000

It is unnecessary to refer at greater length to the advantages which the Church has derived from such an organisation as this. It has afforded the best provision for the culture of the children in spiritual life

and godliness, furnished a regular supply of intelligent candidates for Confirmation, and its ministrations has afforded an opportunity for the exercise of the religious activity and zeal of an earnest body of lay-helpers. Its operations being essentially of a missionary character, in the carrying of them out the track of almost every other branch of Christian labour is crossed.

There can be no doubt that recent legislation has added very much to the importance of Sunday-schools, and materially altered the position of the Church in relation to them. Now is the time for developing the yet unknown power of the Sunday-school as a means for disseminating religious truth. In remote days, amidst almost universal ignorance, the clergy were the depository of knowledge, and they dispensed its advantages in no niggard spirit. They have always been the best friends of popular education, and it is mainly due to their energy and influence that the religious element has been so widely maintained. The tendency of modern legislation seems to point to the fact that the time has arrived for relieving, in some measure, the clergy from the exercise of this important function as regards secular instruction, but it remains for them to see that our children are carefully instructed in the doctrines of the Bible and in the distinctive teaching of the Church. The efforts which are made for the spread of religious education should be at least commensurate with those which are put forth in connexion with the spread of secular instruction.



CHAPTER II.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH.

WE now proceed to consider the Sunday-school in relation to the Church. It is not perhaps too much to say that the progress of Sunday-schools, or rather of the idea represented by Sunday-schools, has been coeval with the progress of Christian truth and of civilisation. The teachers of antiquity cared little for children as such. It was considered not prudent to ignore them altogether, because they would eventually become men and women; but until Jesus Christ came the world had little place in its thoughts for children. He was the first great Teacher who showed a generous appreciation of and sympathy with childhood; and in seeking to bring about a new and higher development of character, the child-like nature occupied a very prominent place in His teaching.

It has, however, taken mankind a long time to understand what seemed to be the strange doctrine that a man must set back again towards the innocence and simplicity of childhood if he would be truly a man, and this may account for the slow progress

which has been made in assigning to the various schemes devised for the religious training of the young their proper place in Church organisation.

English literature does not seem to have made any very intimate acquaintance with children until its latest stage. Shakespeare, it has been said, created everything but children; but now they have a literature of their own, the world being flooded with books specially written for boys and girls, and in their composition the greatest care is taken to make them attractive and interesting.

But our object is not to deal with the subject of children's literature, but to attempt to trace the efforts which have been made at various periods in the history of the Church to provide for the religious training of the young; and, in doing so, to show how the Sunday-school, although in its present aspect a comparatively recent institution, had yet its equivalent in the Jewish and early Christian Church; and also to show that, rightly guided and organised, it is capable of becoming a most valuable nursery of the Church.

The provision made in the Jewish religious system for insuring the proper training of the young in the knowledge of their holy religion was most exact. At the age of twelve parents were bound to bring their children to the temple, where, seeing what was done at the festivals, they would naturally inquire into the meaning of all that took place; and at the feast of the Pass-over the eldest person present explained to the younger

ones what it meant. Great care, too, was taken to instruct children in the rites of their religion, so that by an early education in the important knowledge of the mercies therein commemorated they might not easily forget them. Every considerable synagogue had a school where young persons were instructed by the rabbis in the study of tradition; and it was in one of the spacious halls assigned to purposes of teaching that Jesus, as a Child, received the instruction consistent with the natural progress of human development. The Jews, indeed, have from the earliest times continued to do this diligently. As soon as their children are capable of understanding anything they are made carefully to read the holy books, their meaning is explained, and before they can be called youths they are acquainted with the whole law of God. "In this," says Bishop Patrick, "they shame a great many Christians, who scarce understand as much of their religion when they are men and women as the Jews do of theirs when they are mere children."

Under all the Divine dispensations from the beginning, no duty is set higher, or more insisted upon, than that of instructing children in the knowledge of religion, and Christian parents are more expressly enjoined to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." To the praise of Timothy, as well as of those relations who had been his instructors, it is said "that from a child" he had known the Holy Scriptures, which were able to make

him "wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In later times it is interesting to observe with what fidelity the Christian Church, by its admirable practice of Catechising, made suitable provision in the new and wider system for obtaining the culture and training of the young in the principles of the Christian faith. The person set apart for the office of Catechist was not unfrequently a layman. Cyprian speaks of his making a Catechist of one who was a reader in his church. At Carthage we are told that a deacon exercised the office, for it began to be regarded as an office in very early days, and not merely was it regarded as an office, but an office of great importance, as we may see from the fact that at Alexandria there was a continuous succession of Catechists, commencing with St. Mark, and including Clement, Origen, and others.

In England the duties of Catechist seem to have fallen into the hands of the monks, and to have been exercised by them until the times of the Reformation. After the Reformation the Church Catechism was compiled, and it was required that "the Curate of every parish should diligently, upon Sundays and holy days, after the second lesson at evening prayer, openly in the church instruct and examine so many children of his parish sent unto him as he should think convenient, in some part of their Catechism." This injunction was for many years diligently and scrupulously observed by all curates in England, and

we find they made this examination in the Catechism an opportunity also for explaining its difficulties, and delivering a familiar lecture adapted to the capacity of their hearers ; but the immense increase of population, and the consequent demands for extra services, soon rendered it impossible for the clergy, with due regard to the wants and exigencies of the various classes of their parishioners, to perform this office to any extent commensurate with the needs of a populous parish.

But even supposing it were practicable, it must be remembered that public Catechising assumes and requires some kind of previous instruction, or what would be its use? This preliminary teaching supplied congenial work for the labours of pious parents and teachers. Once upon a time, no doubt, the pastor was the sole teacher of the flock, and to him all looked for instruction. Not only were the parents instructed by his ministrations, but he also had charge of the catechetical instruction of the children ; and where this was done by the parents or others, he, by virtue of his office, was delegated the work of its supervision. But the times and circumstances have changed. In a large majority of our parishes this work of instruction and supervision is too gigantic for the unaided efforts of the most devoted pastors, and the recognition of this fact, and a desire to expand the system in accordance with the growing necessities of the times, gave rise to a new order of

things, which has developed into the modern Sunday-school.

The Sunday-school idea was clearly prominent in the Apostolic teaching and practice; and although little is said upon the subject, where early Church history does refer to these things, it places the weight of all its evidence in favour of the institution. The Lord's-day meetings of the Apostolic Church were not simply gatherings of men and women; the young were there as well, and the very young were not forgotten in the ministrations of the holy day. The elders or other leading members of the primitive congregations, taking their example from the synagogue practice, taught the young and the old the "words of this life," and thus the Sunday-school in its substantial equivalent was found in the primitive Church, and was a field wherein all the activity and enthusiasm of the entire congregation could be used in building up the Church of God.

The growth of the Sunday-school system, like all other growths, has been gradual, and it was for many years most inefficiently worked by the Church. She has not done all she might have done for the instruction of her children between Baptism and Confirmation in the verities of her faith and practice. The Church is called in Scripture a household—a family; and just as a family is incomplete without children, so the Church falls short of her true dignity and beauty if she neglects to make ample provision

for the proper culture and training of her children. But if Churchmen looked with indifference upon the Sunday-school, Nonconformists were not slow to see the importance of the institution, not only as a channel for instructing children in the truths of the Gospel, but also for obtaining a continuous supply of Church members ; and it is no breach of charity to say that in this way Dissent has enlarged its boundaries, and numbers have been lost to the Church into which they had been baptized.

But the old state of indifferentism has passed away. The Sunday-school has at length emerged from the obscurity in which its operations were for many years carried on, and assumed its proper and rightful place as an important auxiliary of the Church. As a result of this increased interest the subject of the improvement and extension of Sunday-schools has engaged the special attention of the bishops and clergy, and active measures have been taken for employing the valuable machinery possessed by the Church in her parochial organisations for improving the efficiency of this useful branch of Church work. The constitution of the Church is broad enough to comprehend all the work done for the glory of His name, or for the benefit of His creatures ; and like a loving nursing-mother, she has made ample provision for the nurture of her children of all ages and under all circumstances. All that is required is that each stone in the spiritual edifice should be suitably shapen and carefully fitted

into its proper place by those whose privilege it is to build men up in Christ Jesus.

But not the least important argument in favour of the modern Sunday-school is that it finds employment for the clergy, the congregation, and that portion of the laity who are desirous of being actively employed in Christian work. There are clear and precise duties for each class to perform, and if the Sunday-school is to be equal to the task before it, the loyal co-operation of each of the three sections is indispensable.

It may not be unprofitable if we refer very briefly under each heading to a few of the ways in which the general object may be attained. Let us look at—

I. THE WORK OF THE CLERGY.

In the first place, the clergyman should see that the Sunday-school is recognised *as part of the parochial machinery*. It too often works alongside of the Church rather than as a recognised part of the Church system. It should be accepted as a portion of parish work, and steps taken to have it properly officered with at least as much care as is bestowed upon the Day-school, the District Visiting Society, the week-day services, or any other branch of parochial work. It has been too much the fashion in many parishes to hand over the Sunday-school to a few zealous men and women, who have done the best they could with the means at their disposal, but the best has been very far short of what might have been done under a better system.

But the clergyman's work in the Sunday-school is most important, and cannot be transferred wholly to any one else without injury to his own influence. Instead of being the least known of any of the visitors to the school, he should be conversant with all that is done, and take his proper place at its head. It is easy for the clergyman to obtain the headship in this or in any other department of Christian work. Church teachers are trained to respect authority, and when the clergyman does not receive it, it is often his own fault; but this authority can only be maintained by the exercise of clearly-defined duties, and by exhibiting an aptitude for government.

As the conductor of the Children's Service in the Parish Church, which affords an opportunity for ascertaining to what extent the instruction given in the school has been systematically and efficiently imparted, and as the president of the weekly meeting of the teachers for the preparation of the lesson for the following Sunday, his influence both with scholars and teachers is maintained. Besides the favourable opportunity it affords the clergyman to assist his teachers in the study of the lesson, and by this means to be the teacher of the whole school in the "one lesson," it also provides an occasion for the interchange of thought upon important questions connected with the government and well-being of the school, without which the spirit of discontent and insubordination frequently prevail.

The appointment, or at any rate the confirmation of the appointment, of teachers is another important function belonging to the clergyman. Only those who manifest a Christian life should be appointed to this office. Teachers cannot instruct in what they do not know—they cannot give what they have not. Much thought is being given to the question how far it is possible to add importance to the office, and we are inclined to favour the suggestion that Sunday-school teachers should be admitted to their office at a religious service. It would give importance and solemnity to the work to which they are appointed, and, without unduly magnifying the office, it would stamp it with the true dignity to which it is clearly entitled. It is worth considering whether it would not be well to revive the order of Catechists, working under episcopal authority. This may or may not be practicable, but there seems to be an almost unanimous feeling in favour of some special recognition of the teacher's work. If this were done it would convey to the world the high sense which the Church entertains of the office; it would probably deter teachers from taking up the work in a careless manner; and when once entered upon it would not be relinquished without sufficient reason.

One thing should be kept in mind, and that is that all men of Christian experience do not necessarily make good Sunday-school teachers. Church members obviously and naturally differ, according to temperament

and mental and physical capacity. But the tact of the clergyman is seen in ascertaining, and afterwards in utilising, the special qualifications which he observes in his helpers, with the view of their employment in some kind of Church work. The different kinds of Sunday-schools—the Parish, the Mission, and the Ragged—represent different classes of children, and require special qualifications, both in the superintendent and in the teachers, which are rarely found combined in the same person. Besides, the careful subdivision of labour gives play to the special qualifications of many individuals, and by this means suitable work is found for the man who is best fitted to fill the office of superintendent, for the teachers of the different classes, for the secretary, the treasurer, and the librarian; and other persons, possessing the requisite qualities, are relegated to the penny bank, the clothing fund, the committees, and other branches of parochial work.

But let us consider further—

II. THE WORK OF THE CONGREGATION.

It is the duty of the congregation in its corporate capacity to sustain the school, not only by giving it the small pecuniary support which it needs, but also in furnishing from time to time an adequate supply of teachers and helpers. The ideal state of things is that the congregation as a whole are consecrated in Baptism and Confirmation not only to lead holy lives, but also to do definite work for Christ.

This obligation is not so generally recognised as it ought to be. In some countries the military law compels every male of full age to qualify themselves for military service; it would be well if personal service were more generally recognised as the moral law of the Church. A large number of Sunday-schools are suffering at the present time from a lack of congregational interest in their proceedings, and much of their influence is checked from the isolated position which in many parishes they occupy. As a rule scarcely anything is known by the congregation at large respecting the Sunday-school. The impression seems to be that a few excellent persons devote themselves to the difficult task of taking charge of the children, but this is all they know about it, except that they subscribe once or twice a year towards a treat.

It remains for the clergy to create a bond of sympathy and union which should always exist between a congregation and its workers. The schools and the work done in them should be brought occasionally under the notice of the congregation, and a syllabus of the lessons might be hung up in the church porch, so that the parents and the congregation generally could see what kind of instruction is given to the lambs of the flock. By this means a closer union would be formed between the Church and the Sunday-school, and the benefits of this union to the Church and congregation would be real and helpful.

We have now to glance at—

III. THE WORK OF THE TEACHER.

This will only be hinted at here, especially as the subject forms the subject of a separate volume.*

The chief work of Sunday-schools is to promote the glory of God and the salvation of the children who are brought within their influence; and therefore the work of the Sunday-school teacher must be directed to this end. But while carefully avoiding any lower standard, it is well to remember that the attainment of this high Christian principle of action is quite consistent with the imparting of *definite Church teaching*. Those who are baptized into the Church should receive systematic instruction in the truths she holds. It is impossible to estimate the number of scholars who have been lost to the Church from a fear of teaching too much doctrine; but do we not often forget that it is from the children taught in our Sunday-schools that we must expect to perpetuate our communion? It is therefore the duty of every loyal member of the Church of England, after leading his scholars to the Saviour, to show how growth in godliness is fostered by her sacraments and services, and how they afford the best aid to all who are anxious to advance in the spiritual life.

This is a point which is of special importance to Churchmen at the present time. We must remember

* *The Teacher's Work: What it is, and how to do it.*

that the day is past for expecting large accessions from other communions ; the Church must grow from our scholars. To this end they should be clearly instructed in the services, articles, and principles of the Reformed Church of England, and in the simplicity and excellence of the Book of Common Prayer as a manual of devotion. We do not mean that the time of the teacher should be frittered away in useless discussions, but Bible truths and Church principles should be handled from their *positive* side. Too much of our teaching has been apologetic and negative ; but as the principles and articles of the Church are sound and scriptural, they should be taught *positively*. We should cease to teach what no one in his conscience believes, that one form of religion is as good as another ; or, that it is agreeable to the will of God that the Church of Christ should be split up into an innumerable number of contending sects.

But if the Sunday-school is to fulfil its mission of being the nursery of the Church, there is pressing need of closer union and better organisation both in and out of school ; and the degree of success which the Sunday-school cause eventually attains depends greatly upon the strengthening of the bond of union between the Church and the school, the superintendent and the teacher, the teacher and the taught. The loss by leakage in all Sunday-schools is very great. Oftentimes earnest efforts are made to gather in scholars, and very feeble and inefficient efforts are

made to retain them in connexion with the school. But it should be strong to hold as well as to gather. An individual school is powerless to exert any official influence beyond its own circle, but united with others it helps to form one of a number of local centres which in the aggregate compose a powerful organisation, capable of influencing public opinion on any of the great questions affecting the education and welfare of children, and of affording valuable aid in advancing generally the work of the Church.





CHAPTER III.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL: WHAT IS IT?

IN this chapter we propose to indicate very briefly what the Sunday-school is, with the view of explaining its proper work and function as a parochial institution. The increased attention which has been recently directed to Sunday-schools has naturally led to an inquiry into their past and present condition, and, as might have been expected, some of the criticism which has been elicited has not been altogether of a friendly character.

But an institution which is as widely known as the Sunday-school, which has a home in every town and village and hamlet in the United Kingdom, can have nothing to fear from candid criticism. What may be reasonably asked for is that the system shall be properly understood by those who discuss its merits; and that it should be judged by what it is and not by what it is not.

Let us, first of all, consider the question submitted for our consideration from its negative side, and in doing so we would notice, in the first place—

I. WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IS NOT.

(I.) *It is not an institution which has superseded the primitive practice of Catechising.*

Some persons, who evidently possess but an imperfect acquaintance with the practical work of Sunday-schools, appear to imagine that they were originated for the purpose of superseding the practice of Catechising. But this is not the case; on the contrary, Church Sunday-school teachers are generally found amongst the most strenuous supporters of Catechisings and Children's Services; and indeed the revival in the matter of Children's Services which has taken place during the last ten years is due in a great measure to the exertions of the friends of Sunday-schools.

But while we admit the advantages to be derived from the systematic exercise of Catechising, we entertain a very decided opinion that by itself it supplies but a feeble and inadequate provision for the proper instruction of the young in religious knowledge. Many warm adherents of "Catechising in Church" appear to forget that Catechising requires previous instruction. They fail to see that however admirable and efficient the practice was in primitive times, the immense increase of population, the numerous demands upon the time of a parish clergyman, and the altered circumstances of modern life, render it utterly inadequate to the requirements of the present day. As a matter of fact, it is simply impossible for the most experienced catechist to give systematic instruction at

a Children's Service; this can only be done in the *class*, where each scholar receives from the teacher special attention and instruction.

From our point of view, both Catechising and Sunday-school teaching are essential in the religious training of the young; and the work will probably be most efficiently performed in parishes where the teaching of the Sunday-school forms the basis of the instruction at the Children's Service. All we desire to insist upon now is that the modern Sunday-school does not claim to be a substitute for public Catechising; but that it is an institution which, when rightly worked, is capable of rendering the more ancient form of instruction increasingly effective by adapting it to the exigencies of modern parochial life.

(2.) We would next observe—*That the Sunday-school does not relieve parents of responsibility.*

It is strange that any one should suppose that it did. No one can relieve a parent of responsibility in regard to his own offspring. But suppose the parent is indifferent in regard to the religious training of his children, are they to be left entirely to their own devices? Recent legislation makes it imperative that a child should receive secular instruction whether the parent wishes it or not: are Sunday-school teachers to decline teaching that child the weightier matters of the law for fear of interfering, in some unexplained manner, with the parents' responsibility?

Those who advance this argument against Sunday-

schools profess to see some connexion between it and the disregard of the working-classes to the requirements of public worship. If it were not for Sunday-schools, it is said, parents would attend the services in God's house, and bring their children with them. An extraordinary argument truly! The fact is, where parents are interested in the religious training of their children their efforts are supplemented by the Sunday-school teacher; but where the parents are indifferent, the instruction given at the Sunday-school is the only religious influence which is brought to bear upon the children. In the one case, the parent appreciates the efforts of the Sunday-school teacher, and will probably be more regular in his attendance at public worship; in the other, if you deprive the child of the religious instruction of the Sunday-school, you dispense with a most powerful indirect influence for bringing the parents under religious impressions.

Indeed, to contend that the Sunday-school is a failure because parents do not attend public worship, and because the scholars when they grow up do not always become regular church-goers, is about as reasonable as it would be to declare the Church of Christ a failure, and the preaching and ordinances of the Gospel a mistake, because thousands of persons in every district live in utter disregard both of its teaching and its requirements.

But, again—

(3.) *The Sunday-school does not claim to be the sole medium for imparting religious instruction to the young.*

All that is claimed for the Sunday-school is that it is an important element in the religious training of the young. Religious instruction is still given in our elementary Day-schools, and we are far from undervaluing the modicum of instruction of the same kind permitted under the most favourable circumstances in Board schools; but this is not enough. Here the Sunday-school is most valuable: it steps in and adapts the instruction given in the Day-school to the moral and spiritual requirements of individual scholars. Indeed, it seems to us that the progress made in secular education furnishes the strongest argument in favour of the extension of Sunday-schools. When we consider the time required for secular studies, all that can be done in regard to religious instruction in our Day-schools, even under the most favourable circumstances, is to teach the facts of Scripture and the principles of Church teaching. By this means the *head* may be stored with *facts*, but it requires the special machinery belonging to the Sunday-schools to be able to *apply* those lessons to the *heart* and *conscience*.

In dealing with the question of the religious education of the young, there should, therefore, be no signs of rivalry between the workers in a common cause. Mutual interests naturally draw the teachers in our Day and Sunday-schools together, and the results achieved should be a matter for mutual satisfaction. Sunday-school teachers gratefully

acknowledge the help derived from the Day-school; and in the face of the reports of the Diocesan Inspectors it would be absurd to suppose that the Day-school is not ready frankly to admit the advantages it receives from a well-managed Sunday-school. If the Day and Sunday-school teachers work independently of each other, the results in either case cannot be so satisfactory as would be the case when they work in friendly co-operation.

Having explained what the Sunday-school is not, we proceed to explain—

II. WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL IS.

(I.) *It is a medium for the spread of Biblical instruction.*

Although a few sanguine persons appear to imagine that in view of the zeal and activity manifested by the clergy the Sunday-school might in some places be dispensed with, it is not very clearly explained how the operations with which it has been identified could be successfully carried on. In its early days the Sunday-school gave a great impetus to the reading and study of the Bible, and became a centre for the spread of religious knowledge. The Sunday-school came into existence at a period of general inactivity, when the Church viewed with apathy the prevailing ignorance and irreligion which abounded; and the new institution was destined to spread a knowledge of God's Word, and to quicken into activity the slumber-

ing energies of the Christian Church. It was the means of disseminating a knowledge of the Scriptures amongst the masses of the population at a period when the efforts of the various Christian organisations were powerless to make any permanent impression, and it would not be difficult to show how much both the Church and the nation are indebted to this instrumentality for the preservation in a slothful age of spiritual life and a respect for law and order.

But the Sunday-school is also—

(2.) *A medium for instructing the young in Church principles.*

Besides being an effective medium for disseminating a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, the Sunday-school is also a suitable channel for instructing the young in Church principles. The charge is sometimes made that Sunday-schools have failed because much of the teaching given has been wanting in definiteness. If this be true, who is to blame? Those who make the charge would probably reply without hesitation, "Why, Sunday-school teachers of course!" Now we cannot admit that it is the fault of the teachers. The fault lies with those under whose authority the teachers work, viz., the clergy. The men who are ready to taunt Sunday-school teachers with a want of definiteness in their teaching are generally those who do nothing to bring about a better state of things. The clergyman who has the welfare of the younger portion of his flock at heart, and who believes that the teaching in

his Sunday-school is defective, will take steps to remedy it by means of preparation classes, over which he himself presides, and in this way he becomes the teacher of his teachers, and places the teaching power in its proper position.

Another charge, also made by the same class of objectors, is that the spread of Dissent is in some manner traceable to the influence of Sunday-schools. This is another of those extraordinary statements which it is difficult to suppose that any one at all acquainted with the working of Church Sunday-schools can seriously believe; but even if they have in some places exercised an influence in this direction, it is probably due either to the indifference of the clergy, or to a want of tact in administration. Let the Sunday-school be fairly worked, and no better organisation can be devised for instructing the young in the faith and practice of, and in attaching them to, the Church; and no Sunday-school teacher can be said to have performed his duty faithfully to his scholars until they are able to explain not only why they are Christians, but also why they are Churchmen and not Dissenters.

But further—

(3.) *The Sunday-school is a nursery for the Church.*

The Sunday-school stands to the Church in much the same relation that the nursery does to the garden. The gardener goes to the nursery in search of the plants he requires; they have been rooted and trained,

and are in time ready to be transplanted to other places, where, under proper influences, they grow up into trees of beauty and usefulness. Those who have the privilege of being instructed from childhood by pious men and women in the mysteries of the kingdom—who have in the example of the teacher a living commentary upon the lessons taught—are being subjected to the best kind of training, and also fitted for future usefulness in the Church and in the world.

The importance of the Sunday-school as a preparatory training ground for subsequent Church membership will be generally acknowledged, and, under judicious management, it may become a most valuable nursery for the Church. Even under the most favourable circumstances the utmost that can be done in the Board-school is, as we have before observed, to teach the facts of the Bible, and the more thoroughly these facts are learnt the greater the necessity for the work of the Sunday-school teacher. Scholars attending Church Sunday-schools should be systematically trained with a view to Confirmation, and then prepared so as to become regular and intelligent Communicants and active Church workers.

(4.) *Lastly, the Sunday-school brings the clergy and laity together, and interests the latter in Church work.*

The Sunday-school has done more to bring the clergy and laity into intimate relationship with each other than any other branch of Church work. Think

of the thousands of lay-helpers it has trained for useful service, and what a power this has been in furthering the cause of Christ in populous districts! How many a hard-working clergyman, struggling bravely in the midst of the teeming populations of our large towns, would be compelled to give up the unequal daily struggle with sin and ignorance if the help afforded by his staff of voluntary teachers were withdrawn! It is no exaggeration to say that the Sunday-school is in many places the most active sign of spiritual life, and that it is a focus round which many useful operations centre.

It would be a startling revelation if a calculation could be made of the loss the Church has sustained in the past by declining the help of zealous Christian laymen, and thus driving them into the arms of Dissent. Those who assert that the Sunday-school is responsible for the prevalence of Dissent should give this point consideration. It has in many places enlarged its borders through the Church failing to utilise the energy and the desire for Christian usefulness which some of her most earnest and devoted children were anxious to spend in the Church's service. The Sunday-school affords an opportunity for the exercise of this zeal and activity, and the clergy have only to exercise ordinary tact in order to secure the interest and co-operation of their congregations in this and other branches of Church work.

We now proceed to consider very briefly—

III. WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL HAS DONE.

We do not propose to refer, even in the most cursory manner, to the benefits conferred by Sunday-schools, nor indeed is it necessary to do so. The records of their usefulness are sown broadcast over the country. They are to be found in the simple schoolrooms in the metropolis, in the large northern towns in our land, and in the villages which are scattered over the face of the country, in which godly men and women gather from week to week the little ones around them, and tell them simply of the love of Christ. From the days of Raikes to the present time the motive for entering upon the work has always been the same—the constraining love of Christ—and so this simple instrumentality has assisted in the extension of Christ's kingdom.

It is true that in some respects the results have not been so great as they might have been, and the Centenary Commemoration seems a most fitting moment for examining the weak points of the machinery, and making such adjustments as circumstances require. But, while admitting this, we have ample testimony that the Sunday-school has in the past been a blessing in the home, in society, in the Church, and that it has left its mark upon the religious history of the country.

But although the Sunday-school has made good its claim for support, its most ardent friends readily

admit that it is capable of considerable improvement. This work of improvement is that which the Church of England Sunday School Institute, as the representative of Church Sunday-schools, is energetically, and with increased vigour, engaged upon. It is doing this work most effectually by its Publications, its Normal Classes, its Training Lessons, its Examinations for Teachers and Scholars, and in many other ways; but to perform it more thoroughly and efficiently in the future the Institute needs the active support of all who are interested in the progress of religious education.

It only remains for us to indicate—

IV. WHAT THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL HAS STILL TO DO.

Much, indeed, remains to be done. While grateful for what it has done in the past, we feel that, if true to its mission, it has a still greater work to accomplish in the future, all parties being agreed as to the absolute necessity of Sunday-schools as the complement of secular day-schools.

In the face, too, of the tendencies of education now-a-days to mere secularism, the responsibility is laid upon those who have the conduct of the Sunday-school to see that the young brought under their influence are carefully instructed in the doctrines of the Bible, and in definite Church teaching. Indeed, the rapid stride which has been made in the acquisition of secular knowledge, renders it of paramount

importance that the standard of the Sunday-school teacher should be raised to the highest possible pitch of excellence. We need more evenness, more regularity, more systematic teaching, a greater *esprit de corps*, and less individualism. More combined action, too, is absolutely essential. Sunday-school Associations have done much to intensify the interest taken in the work, and indirectly they have performed a useful part in bringing together men from different centres to compare notes, and to receive mutual counsel and encouragement; but this branch of the work requires extension, in order to prevent the Sunday-school becoming an independent institution, distinct from the control and sympathy of the great body of the Church.

In considering the possibilities of Sunday-schools in the future, one fact should be carefully borne in mind, and that is that the battle for the maintenance of the National Church will to a great extent be fought in their midst. This is a consideration of some importance to Churchmen; and if, as we are told, the hopes of the Liberation Society centre in the Sunday-school, it is through the instrumentality of the same institution that Churchmen may hope, by the inculcation of sound doctrine and a complete knowledge of the truth, to hand on untarnished to the next generation those privileges which they have been permitted to enjoy.

Above all, Sunday-school teachers must appreciate

more highly the greatness and grandeur of the work in which they are engaged. They must realise the fact that they are, according to their power and ability, employed in a work which has for its object the pulling down of the stronghold of Satan, and recovering the best energies and powers of the world for the service of Christ and the truth.





CHAPTER IV.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SENIOR SCHOLARS.

WHILST few persons in the present day deny the benefits which have been rendered to the Church and nation through the operation of Sunday-schools, it is also true that the results would have been much larger had not the Sunday-school been too often treated as a temporary arrangement, requiring little thought or attention from the clergy. It is impossible to say to what extent this erroneous estimate of the character of the work has checked the growth of the movement and diminished its results; but it is only in this way that we are able to account for the large number of scholars who for a time receive instruction in the Sunday-school, but are never brought into closer communion with the Church.

From this it is clear that there is a great loss from what we may call "leakage." It indicates the existence of small holes through which much of the usefulness and practical energy employed run to waste. Prodigious efforts are made to gather in

scholars, but scarcely any for retaining them. But a school or an institution should be able to retain as well as to gather, or else much of the power bestowed upon it is wasted.

Think for a moment of the numerical strength of the force engaged in this work of Sunday-school instruction, to which reference was made in the opening chapter of this Manual. What an immense army this force would make if massed together! How difficult to estimate its power if it were united, well led, and its energies concentrated! How is it then that a movement, representing such a vast amount of active beneficence has not received a more general encouragement?

It is no sign of good generalship for a commander to ignore the presence of weak points, if such exist, in his position before the enemy, or to recklessly expose the lives or fritter away the energies of his soldiers in purposeless attacks. Indeed, the prudent captain is careful to guard them from useless slaughter, and strengthens his position. In the same way the teacher who possesses sufficient experience and grasp of mind to enable him to look at the Sunday-school as a great system of which his own class or school forms a part, is thankful for the friendly warning of the wary watchman who from his standpoint thinks he can see how much of the labour expended in the cause is wasted.

With the view of giving a practical turn to the con-

sideration of this subject, we propose, in the first place, to examine into the cause of this waste, and then to see how it may be prevented.

Before proceeding further, however, perhaps it would be well to understand who are meant by "Senior Scholars." The Sunday-school may be divided into three divisions ; the Primary department, the infants ; the large Medium class (comprising children between the ages of seven and twelve), of which our Sunday-schools principally consist ; and the Advanced department, consisting of senior scholars, whose ages range from thirteen to eighteen. This is the class which it is found so difficult to retain.

But the question naturally arises : Why is this class so difficult to retain ? The answer is at hand : Because in this division you have the boy who is just beyond boyhood, and who yet cannot be regarded as a man, and whose counterpart is the girl who is just beyond girlhood, and yet cannot be regarded as a woman. If we think of some of the peculiarities and temptations of this age, we shall at once see the difficulties which surround the subject.

1. These young people are leaving the age of artlessness and simplicity, and they have arrived at that of awkwardness and self-consciousness.

2. The world is fascinating to them, and they see everything through a rose-coloured medium. Their view of the world and of themselves is false, and this

gives them an over-weening sense of their own importance.

3. They lack the power of self-government. It takes years to learn how to rule one's self, and these senior scholars have not learnt the lesson.

Under ordinary circumstances, a large proportion of our Sunday-school scholars go to work at thirteen or fourteen years of age. This, then, is the most critical period in the scholar's life, being just at the moment when his first contact with the world is made.

Perhaps we do not quite realise what is involved in this transition. With little preparation and inadequate training, the youth is at once thrown into the society of older persons, whose conversation, habits, and thoughts are totally different to what he has been accustomed. It is a new world to him, and he is bewildered and perplexed with the strange things he sees and hears. If he remain true to the principles in which he has been instructed, he must be singular (which most boys dislike to be), and he will probably have to find his way alone into the mysteries of the work he has to perform. Even grown-up persons often experience a sense of shrinking from new work, and are frequently perplexed with doubts as to whether they will be equal to the duties required, and in large factories and other places where many persons are employed, there will always be found those who

are mean enough to make a good lad's course as unpleasant as possible. If a teacher has been in the habit of praying with and for a lad whilst under the happy influences of a well-regulated home, and surrounded by faithful counsellors, how much more urgent need is there for his prayers when his scholar enters upon his first place !

In this new position, even his connexion with a Sunday-school will be likely to add to rather than diminish his difficulties, for he will probably be called upon to endure the jeers of lads of his own age, or a little older ; and it not unfrequently happens that men, sometimes from thoughtlessness, sometimes from ignorance, think it consistent with their manhood to sneer at what they call the "young saint." Who can be surprised if, although the lad is firm enough at first, his scruples are gradually overcome, and he at last thinks that there cannot be much harm in talking and acting as his elders are in the habit of doing ?

But we will assume that the Senior Scholar remains steadfast to his principles, and keeps up his connexion with the Sunday-school ; he is then probably confirmed, and becomes fully identified with the Church. Now let us see how far the ordinary machinery of the Sunday-school may be employed to this end, and when this becomes inadequate, how it may be supplemented by a separate organisation.

First of all then we propose to inquire how far the Sunday-school, with its ordinary machinery, is able to

meet the want of Senior Scholars. In order to retain its influence provision has to be made for two distinct periods in their lives, viz., that which precedes and leads up to Confirmation, and that which immediately follows.

I. THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL AS A RETAINING FORCE.

The Sunday-school, with certain modifications, is capable of retaining Senior Scholars up to the time of Confirmation, the machinery being adapted to the mental and physical growth of the scholars. It must be borne in mind that we are not now dealing with children. There is nothing that elder scholars will sooner resent than to be regarded as children when they are such no longer, and to be supplied with a diet which, however suitable and nutritious it may have been in the early stages of their career, requires, under the altered circumstances, the elimination of some elements and the addition of others if real growth is to be effected. Unless, then, we let our elder scholars see that we are conscious of these altered circumstances, and provide for them in our teaching and deportment, we tend to strengthen the prevalent misconception that the Sunday-school is designed for children only. A false shame on this account becomes widely diffused, inducing many to leave school at this most critical period.

It is essential, therefore, that the tone of the school should be raised. There must be less of school feeling

and discipline, less of the ordinary restraints of school life, although there should not, of course, be any relaxation of the discipline necessary to insure order and progress. Symptoms of languor or dissatisfaction, which will sooner or later be seen if the pupil thinks that the time of his being reckoned amongst the scholars should cease, must be noted and discreetly attended to. Caution and tact are necessary, so that, on the one hand, the pupil is not discouraged, and, on the other, that he is not, without due preparation, burdened with a responsibility which he is not able to carry; but if teachers studiously refuse to make adequate provision for the growing intelligence of their scholars, and decline to give reasonable attention to their sense of personal importance, then the bond of union between them will in a very short time be snapped asunder. In his teaching, conversation, and general bearing, the teachers should let his scholars feel that he is impressed with their growing importance, and in this way he would not only be able to check any unusual symptoms of this growth, but, what is of more value, he would be able to direct this new element of power and energy into suitable channels of usefulness.

It is all the more easy to do this, because the modifications required are very slight, and consists more in the exercise of tact on the part of the teacher than in anything else.

It is well, where practicable, to permit the elder

scholars to meet for study in a separate room, to arrange occasional meetings for their special edification, and in other ways to make them understand that you are impressed with their growing importance and intelligence. Whilst the adoption of this plan removes the feeling of shame frequently produced through being associated with younger children, it also enables a teacher to have twice as many scholars in a room occupied by his class alone than he could in a school filled with other classes.

Up to the period of Confirmation, a well-managed Bible-class is the only machinery necessary for effecting this object. Much of course depends upon the teacher, but properly worked, it may become a most valuable link between the Sunday-school and the Church. The teacher must try to make his scholars think ; he must be one to whom they cannot imagine themselves superior, whose mind and character are felt to be a power, and who is capable of adapting himself to the new views of those he has under direction. At the age to which we have supposed the members of the senior class to have reached, there is a great amount of mental activity, an earnest searching after principles, and *Why* and *What* are constantly brought into requisition. The senior class teacher should be capable of dealing wisely, tenderly, and honestly with these peculiarities, and of suiting his illustration, reasoning, and examination to their growing capacities.

The teacher will readily perceive what a valuable provision he possesses in the rite of Confirmation for urging his scholars to take that step which should be the application of all his teaching—the personal consecration of those who come under his influence to the Lord Jesus Christ and His service. The diligent and prayerful exercise of this duty creates the most tender and lasting bond of union between the teacher and the pupil, and amongst the many privileges which fall to the lot of the earnest Sunday-school teacher, there is none so great as that which is his who is permitted to witness those whom he has watched, trained, and prayed for, give themselves publicly to the Lord, and then to join them at their first communion at the Lord's Table.

It also affords an opportunity for imparting definite Church teaching. As we have elsewhere remarked it is too often forgotten that it is from the children taught in our Sunday-schools that we must expect to perpetuate our communion; and as we meditate upon our own spiritual blessings, and recall the way-marks by which we have been led, we shall be ready, if only as an act of gratitude, to show how growth in holiness is fostered by the Church's sacraments and services, and how they assist all who are anxious to advance in the spiritual life.

II. A SPECIAL ORGANISATION.

We have attempted thus far to show how the Sunday-school may be used for retaining Senior

Scholars up to the time of Confirmation, we now proceed to consider what kind of organisation is necessary to retain a hold upon them subsequent to that period.

We assume that the Sunday-school is no longer sufficient. What is required now is a *separate organisation*, but one which should, if possible, be in direct union with the school and the Church. It should be one in which the young people are supplied with a bond of union, at the period when they are especially exposed to the temptations of life. They should be made to feel that they do not stand alone, but that they belong to a vast brotherhood, with common sympathies, hopes, and aims, and they should be provided not only with the means of continuing their studies, and of obtaining recreation, but should also be brought within the range of further religious teaching and influence.

But an organisation of this kind can only be worked successfully, by the *harmonious action of scholars, parents, teachers, and clergy*. The attainment of this result is not so difficult to effect as might at first sight be supposed. The first thing is to have a clear idea of the kind of association required, and the proper man to superintend it, but it is clear that any steps taken in this direction cannot be successful unless they receive the *intelligent obedience of the scholars*; for whatever machinery is adopted, its ultimate success depends entirely upon the degree of

importance attached to it by those for whom it is devised.

The *co-operation of parents*, too (especially those possessing high characters and sound religious principles), must be solicited in the formation of such a force. There is a great deal of nonsense uttered and written by persons who know little of Sunday-schools, about parents delegating to others the privileges and responsibilities involved in the religious training of their children ; but the truth is, that where parents of this type are found they seldom delegate their power to anybody. They exercise it to the full, and in doing so they render the most invaluable assistance to those who are engaged in the religious education of the young. The more fully parents exercise their undoubted rights and privileges, the better will it be for both parents and children ; the greater importance they will probably attach to the Sunday-school and its associations, and the more real and lasting will this retaining power become.

The *part of the clergy* in the creation and maintenance of this power consists in devising, or, where this is impracticable, in supporting, by their sympathy and goodwill, the working of the necessary machinery, and in encouraging those who undertake this important branch of Church work. A thorough understanding between the clergy and teachers is absolutely essential to insure the success of any scheme of this kind. If the teachers act independently of the minister, and

the personal interest of the latter in the affairs of the association is wanting, then, however well the work may be done, the result will be very much less than it would be if there were united action. To obtain the fullest results, the clergy and the teachers must loyally co-operate with each other, and take frequent counsel in reference to the means adopted for promoting the advancement of the scholars, and in securing their membership to such a society as that now under consideration. This is a principle well understood and acted upon in Nonconformist Sunday-schools. The greatest care is taken of the children, and their progress in age and intelligence is carefully observed, with the view of admitting them ultimately into Church membership. By this means the teacher works into the hands of the minister, and the school, in return for this encouragement, furnishes a continuous supply of new members. Why should a force, which is capable of such important results, be frittered away in Church schools through imperfect organisation?

It will be seen that, although the clergy have an important share in this work, *the loyal co-operation of the teacher* is indispensable. From his intimate knowledge of the habits and pursuits of his scholars, he possesses great advantages over any one less closely acquainted with them. If judiciously managed, the Sunday-school and its associations become in time almost indispensable to the senior scholar, and what-

ever happens, he knows there is one spot at least where he is sure to find comfort in trouble, counsel in perplexity, sympathy in trial, companionship in sport, and congratulation in success.

But before proceeding further, it is necessary to consider *what this organisation should be called.*

There is no better plan for accomplishing the end here indicated than by means of some distinctive association, in which the conditions of membership are framed so as to be suitable to the ages and circumstances of the members. By what title such an association should be called is considered by many to be of some importance, although personally we think it matters little what the organisation is called, providing the rules for its government are sound and healthy, and that judicious discipline is enforced. Various associations having this object in view are scattered all over the country under the names of Association, Club, Guild, Institute, Bible, and Fellowship Classes; but the aim of each organisation is the same, although there is a difference in the mode of operation, and in the machinery employed. A strange preference is exhibited in the selection of some of the titles, and an unfortunate suspicion in the rejection of others. For instance, within the last few years the title of "guild" has been adopted for describing associations of this kind, but it has hitherto been mainly adopted only by a section of the Church. Guilds were in existence in pre-Reformation times, but were suppressed at the

Reformation for the superstitious practices which were then connected with them. For this reason the title is abhorrent to the feelings of a large section of Churchmen, who look upon its revival with a great deal of suspicion, especially as from the practices enjoined in the rules of some of the existing guilds much that is puerile seems to have been resuscitated with them.

Apart, however, from the mode of conducting an association of this kind we cannot but think that the title of "guild" for such an organisation is most appropriate. It is comprehensive, and has a quasi-religious history attached to it, albeit many of its associations were of a pernicious character. In early times the word "guild" meant a feast, and its votaries were gradually led into the wildest excesses; but in later years the term came to be applied to the members of a society or corporation combining together for mutual protection and support.

Now, if the tendency of guilds in the past has been in the direction of observing obsolete and discarded ceremonies, of sanctioning undue formality in worship, and of countenancing illegal ritual, and if in some of the modern revivals the same evils are supported, let us by all means carefully guard against the introduction of these practices in any associations which may be started in future; but why Churchmen generally should permit a title which possesses manifest advantages to be monopolised by the organisations belonging only to a section in the Church it is difficult to

understand. A more appropriate title could scarcely be found for describing such an association as we are advocating, and which might easily combine whatever was good in its early institution with the bond of brotherhood which its recent meaning has assigned to it. What is wanted is that some distinctive title should be adopted which would be as universally accepted as is that of Sunday-school; and if the various Bible-classes, Societies, Institutes, and Guilds could be grouped under a common title (whether it be Guild, Church Institute, or any other appropriate title), and operate from a central source, they would exert an enlarged influence which in their present scattered and disunited condition it would be hopeless to expect.

However, what the thing is *called* is, as we have stated, of secondary importance so long as the organisation itself exists. The nucleus of such a society already exists in our Bible and senior classes; and where these happen to be small, the association of several schools in forming a Guild or Institute could be easily effected. A number of simple rules, enjoining faith, purity, self-denial, integrity, and manliness, should also be framed for the guidance of the members, but everything which tends to foster a mere system of professional religiousness should be rigidly excluded, care being taken to direct the religious zeal and activity of its members into suitable channels of Christian usefulness.

An important question arises as to how such an

organisation should be managed. All experience proves that its success depends very much upon the energy, tact, and personal influence of those entrusted with its management. The general affairs might be directed by a small Committee, but unless it is a *working* Committee, it would be a hindrance instead of a help to the undertaking. Under any circumstances, however, an energetic lay secretary is indispensable.

It is desirable also to have some simple form of admission, as it gives importance to the society, and a small fee should be paid by the members. It is customary in many associations for new members to be formally proposed and elected by ballot. Some such plan as this helps to get rid of the impression which is prevalent amongst young people, that they are conferring a favour upon the superintendent and teachers by keeping up their connexion with them. A record of names, addresses, and other particulars applying to members should be kept, and in the event of a member moving to another district, an effort should be made to find a similar institution into which he could be introduced, and be thus saved from the perils to which he might otherwise be exposed in the selection of new companionships.

III. THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL ORGANISATION.

The work of such an association, as we have been considering, should consist of two parts—the RELIGIOUS and the SOCIAL.

1. *Work of a Religious Character.*

Under the first division, the (1) *personal consecration of each member to God's service* should be placed in the forefront of any scheme. In dealing with young persons we should always be careful that we do not lead them up to a point in Christian experience and then leave them. It would be an awful discovery if we knew the number of senior scholars who have been lost through an unnatural shrinking from the personal application of Christian holiness—personal consecration. Those who have not been confirmed should be duly prepared for that holy rite; and those who have should be encouraged to attend regularly at Holy Communion; should be still further instructed in Holy Scripture, and so built up in their most holy faith.

(2) *A regular, punctual, and devout attendance at the Church services should be enjoined.* Of course considerable caution is necessary in carrying such a rule into practice. Young people, especially in the present day, have to be guarded against the notion that attendance at Church services constitutes the whole duty of the Christian and the Churchman. The growth of sanctity in its members should be the end of all associations of this kind, the spiritual life being the root of all else.

As we have elsewhere stated, it would be an immense gain to the Church, and would materially further the interests of such an institution as we have been considering, if a warmer congregational interest

could be taken in its youthful members, and if efforts were generally made for giving them a more friendly welcome to the Church. From the cold reception they meet with in some churches, they are led to suppose that they are little better than intruders, and in others they are left to shift for themselves. If we thought oftener of the responsibility attaching to every member of Christ, and of our duty, as Christians, to extend on all sides the blessings of Christ's kingdom, we should be more anxious for the welfare of others, and no steps would be thought too difficult which would more effectually bind the youthful members of a congregation to the services of the Church. Non-conformists in this, as in many other instances, set Churchmen a good example in the efforts they make to bring the young people into membership, and also in the care they take to retain them in actual communion after admission.

(3) But no organisation would be perfect without a *Bible-class*. There is a sad lack of systematic teaching of this description; yet if our senior scholars are to become intelligent Churchmen, and built up in the faith of their fathers, it will be best accomplished by regular, systematic instruction, and by seeing that the knowledge imparted is of a character calculated to help them in the solution of the doubts and difficulties peculiar to their age and circumstances.

(4) It is also desirable that systematic arrangements should be made for *providing active employment for the*

members in Mission and other work. The best way to hold any one, old or young, in the service of Christ is to keep that one occupied with Christian work. In many cases young people are unemployed much of their time, and indolence aggravates every special difficulty which besets them. The person who is drifting down stream may turn his boat and head up the current, but unless he steadily pulls the oars he will drift down, even if he keeps his face turned up the stream. How many professing Christians are there who, although their faces are turned towards God, are really drifting with the world! At the earliest possible moment an effort should be made for employing the most experienced members in some definite work for God and His Church, and the most effectual manner in which young people can be employed is in trying to influence for good those who are about their own age. The adoption of a system of classes, each with its class leader or warden, responsible to some extent for the moral and spiritual well-being and discipline of those under their charge, would be found of great use in creating an interest in the work, and of promoting the moral and religious welfare of the members. The only condition which should be absolutely enforced is, that whatever is done should be performed in a simple manner, without any attempt at parade or ostentation, and under proper control.

There are two kinds of work of a religious character

in which the members of such an association might be usefully employed.

(a) In general Mission work.

They would be very useful to the parochial clergy in a Mission. In isolated cases this plan has, in fact, been adopted, and with the most cheering results. In Liverpool, for instance, the Fellowship Class movement, under the direction of the Rev. J. R. D. Colston, appears to have done a very good work, and it also shows how the members of a parochial association may be usefully employed as missionaries. In this Mission the young men held meetings in the cottages and cellars of the working men, and the elder scholars in the Sunday-school gave themselves up to usefulness in other ways. The lads scoured the streets in the district, and "coaxed" all the boys and girls whom they saw playing to come to the services which had been arranged for them; and this movement was so successful that a similar one was set on foot for the girls. Connected also with many of the guilds similar machinery exists, although the plan of operation is different, but each member is encouraged to seek the welfare of some companion who may not be religiously impressed.

The other work of a religious character which the members of such an association might be employed is—

(b) That of Sunday-school teaching.

There is little doubt that if the Church of England is to maintain her rightful position as the National

Church, many changes must take place, and not the least important is to devise some scheme for obtaining God-fearing men and women to undertake the work of Sunday-school teachers. The strength of the Church is centred in the Sunday-school, and the success of those opponents who are seeking her humiliation will be in proportion to the interest which Churchmen take in promoting the efficiency of their Sunday-schools.

It is unnecessary to refer to the advantages which a Youths' Association would afford to the clergyman in the management of his Sunday-schools. In it he would be able to train suitable persons to fill the office of teacher, librarian, secretary, and probably of superintendent. Of course those who make the appointments should possess an intimate knowledge of the qualifications and character of the members, or very serious mistakes would occur; but with this assumed acquaintance with the capacity of the members, the advantage of having a useful body of lay-helpers ready to assist in parish work is obvious. All, of course, would not be fitted for teachers, but those not fitted for the Sunday-school might find congenial employment in the children's service, the singing-class, and the Church services. Ample scope would be provided for the exercise of the ability and zeal of the most earnest members, and the loyal obedience to a properly-constituted authority, which should be strictly required of all members, would prevent the enthusiasm evoked from degenerating

into a desire for the gratification of mere personal ambition.

2. *Work of a Social Character.*

We pass on to consider very briefly the second division of this subject, viz., the *social element*.

We can only indicate the direction in which the social element may be developed, but its judicious management is a matter of the utmost importance. By means of it a wider knowledge of the habits and difficulties of the young people is obtained, and the information acquired will be found to be of great value.

No association would be complete which did not include in its operations the numerous classes for educational purposes usually connected with the various Youths' Institutes and Societies scattered over the country; but besides these, special attention should also be given to the cultivation of the purely *social* element. There should be a reading-room, a library, and the ordinary routine of such an association should be relieved by occasional entertainments. Apart from the pleasure they give to a large number of persons, they possess the advantage of employing many of the members in work designed for the good of others.

A word of caution is, however, necessary. Whilst the utmost freedom and open-mindedness should be encouraged in the practical work of this department, and the members permitted to hold free intercourse with their elders, and probably superiors in position,

extreme care is necessary in order to prevent this freedom from degenerating into rudeness and undue familiarity. The lack of a reverential spirit is one of the vices of the youth of the present day, and the apparent dislike of the generation now growing up to cultivate the habit of teachable submissiveness is not a pleasant spectacle to contemplate.

Too much attention, therefore, can scarcely be devoted to the proper management of the social element in the proposed organisation, for unless it is judiciously managed it will prove a source of weakness instead of strength. As is well known to all who have had any experience in the training of the young, the hours devoted to recreation have a marked influence upon character, and while all that is calculated to elevate the taste and promote a high sense of honour and true manliness should be encouraged, the most determined opposition should be offered to everything which is likely to debase the mind or to foster baneful habits. There is no time when the real character of a youth is seen with greater clearness than when he is engaged in sport; but the first indication of rude or vulgar behaviour should be as quickly repressed as instances of gentlemanly bearing and generous conduct should be approved.

We desire to speak with emphasis upon this point, because we have known of more than one association of this kind failing in its mission because undue license was permitted, the good resulting from its useful opera-

tions being entirely neutralised by the riotous conduct permitted in the class-room and in the play-ground.

Amongst other ways in which the social element might be exercised, are the following :—

1. In promoting friendships amongst the members.
2. In providing libraries, classes, and entertainments.
3. In the supply of out-door sports in summer, and in-door games in winter.

It is unnecessary to add anything in support of these agencies, as the advantages arising from them are self-evident. For instance, what can be more important than that our young people should be assisted in the selection of congenial companions? The influence of friendships formed in early life upon character is very great. Companionship always serves as an uplifter, or a drag to sink us, and experience shows us every day how frequently a man in choosing his companions chooses his future.

In regard also to entertainments for the young, the subject presents many difficulties. How far amusement is to be allowed, and of what kind, has excited much controversy, the difficulty being apparently to find something like common law or general principle for the regulation of the whole question. Whatever view, however, may be taken in the controversy, it is quite as lawful that social entertainments should form part of the work of these associations as that they

should be permitted in our own homes, and much the same rule that applies to the one regulates the other.

Such is the outline of an organisation for Senior Scholars which we should like to see started in every parish. When once set on foot, success is only obtained by sustained and united action. Mere spasmodic efforts are of little use ; it is quiet, patient, persevering work which can alone give permanence and success to any movement. There is now a wonderful unanimity in the Church in favour of the employment of lay help, but the difficulty is to know how to obtain it. The most practical solution of the difficulty is for the Church to give more attention to the training of its lay members for active work, and to put an end to the erroneous notion that it is the business of the clergy to do all the work of the Church. A wise farmer looks forward to the coming years, and takes pains to save the earliest and the best matured seed in order that his crops may be brought to greater perfection from year to year. Something of the same care is needful in the management of Sunday-schools. Instead of waiting to find those who are qualified to teach, there should be wise forethought in selecting from the younger members of advanced classes those who show that they possess the qualifications requisite for a teacher, or for some other kind of active Church work.

The dangers to which young people are exposed in the present day are peculiarly seductive, and renders the formation of associations similar to that we have

advocated of increasing importance. If we do not provide our elder scholars with opportunities for meeting together for mutual counsel and social intercourse they will seek them elsewhere for themselves, and in doing so make many mistakes. They are easily deceived by appearances, and ruled by expediency. Who can gaze upon a number of bright young faces without feeling that they will be good or bad, intelligent or ignorant ; that they will make their parents glad with an infinite gladness, or pain them with an enduring sadness ? They start up amongst us with great rapidity, and soon pass away. The time and opportunity for training are painfully short ; and yet it may depend, in some measure, upon the direction in which we send them in the brief hour they are under our guidance whether they shall be a blessing or a curse to their families, the world, and the Church.





CHAPTER V.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CENTENARY, 1880.

THE mode in which the Centenary of the establishment of Sunday-schools was celebrated during the year 1880, furnished historical data of permanent value and interest. The celebration was unique in many ways, the most important characteristic being that it may be said to have been *universal* in its operation. India, Australia, America, and Canada had its special services and meetings, and efforts were everywhere made to direct the enthusiasm evoked into channels of practical usefulness.

In the United Kingdom the subject of the Centenary received special attention; in every large centre influential committees were appointed, and plans were adopted for its proper observance at least a year in advance.

The Church of England Sunday School Institute prepared the way for the celebration by issuing a series of papers, addressed to various classes of persons, on the subject of the Centenary, viewed from its different aspects, containing information of a practical character, and indicating the objects it was hoped would be attained.

The Institute, of course, sent no word of command to dioceses and to parishes; it had neither the authority nor the power to do that. It obtained, in the first place, the sanction of the Archbishops and Bishops to the celebration, and then put forth an invitation, so to speak, to all whom it might concern; and the response astonished everybody. It gave the signal—a signal which none were bound to notice—and the whole Church accepted it as a call to thanksgiving and rejoicing. Bishops and clergy and teachers organised their own services and meetings, and what the *Times* justly called “a very genuine and remarkable commemoration” was the result.

The full account of the proceedings in connexion with the celebration of the Centenary, which appeared in the August, September, and October numbers of the *Church Sunday School Magazine* fully testified to the very general extent of the commemoration. Preaching at a special service at Newcastle, the Bishop of Durham referred to the mode in which the commemoration had been observed in the following terms:—“We see,” said his Lordship, “the enthusiasm with which this Centenary is celebrated everywhere in Europe, in America, by Churchmen and Nonconformists alike—celebrated with such an enthusiasm as this, not stirred, as popular enthusiasm often is, by momentary passion, but built up of the gradual experience of a century; such an enthusiasm as this must be accepted as a final verdict upon the results of the system.”

In London, special services at the Cathedral and Westminster Abbey were arranged. The Archbishop of York preached the sermon to an immense congregation at the great commemoration service which was held in St. Paul's Cathedral. Subsequently conferences at Lambeth Palace and Cannon Street Hotel were held; an inaugural meeting at Guildhall—the one meeting arranged by the Institute and the other Sunday-school Societies together—at which the Lord Mayor presided, and the Archbishop of Canterbury moved the first resolution; a meeting of clergy and teachers, arranged by the Institute, at Exeter Hall, and a great children's gathering in the grounds of Lambeth Palace, at which the Prince and Princess of Wales were present. These meetings were but typical of what was carried on with equal heartiness and success all over the land.

In every part of England, in every large town, in almost every quiet village, something like this took place. Indeed few things in our time seems to have so stirred the hearts of all the people of this land as the Sunday School Centenary. Some of us can remember great political events which have made for the time a more violent commotion, but perhaps never before has a movement, which is purely and simply benevolent and philanthropic, made an impression so broad and so deep.

At the scholars' gathering in the grounds of Lambeth Palace on Saturday, July 3rd, nearly 20,000 children were present (being representatives of about 325 schools), besides 2,000 teachers and 500 of the clergy.

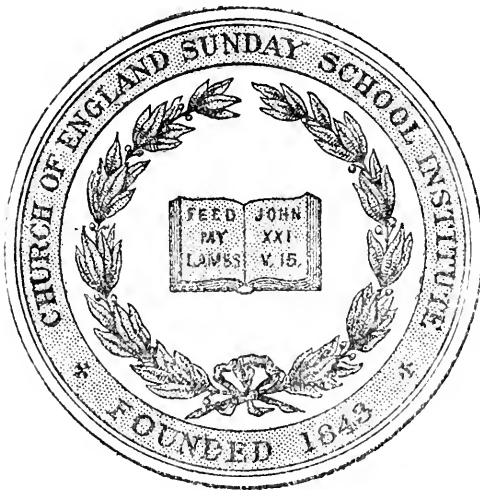
The Prince and Princess of Wales were accompanied by the Princes Albert Victor and George Frederick, and the Princesses Victoria, Louise, and Maud. Each of the Royal children were presented with a Bible and Prayer Book, the funds for this object being raised by voluntary contributions of one penny from the children present.

On this occasion the Committee of the Institute presented to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury a gold medal, commemorative of the Centenary. The desire of the Committee was to express their warm and grateful appreciation of the interest which his Grace had always shown in their work, and especially of the assistance which he had given in connexion with the Centenary. On the obverse of the medal was a portrait of the Queen, with the words, "Sunday School Centenary, 1880," the reverse bearing the design of an open Bible, and the motto, "Feed My lambs," surrounded by the words, "Church of England Sunday School Institute, founded 1843." Round the rim was, "Presented to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury," with the date, "July 3, 1880."

No stronger proof of the interest excited by the Centenary can be adduced than that afforded by the newspapers, who gave special reports and articles upon the subject. Although it was in the midst of the Parliamentary session, the London daily papers had special reporters at all the central gatherings. This is a very notable fact, considering how chary they usually



OBVERSE.



REVERSE.

are in inserting anything of special interest to the religious world. Those who remember the utterances of the daily press upon Sunday-schools and Sunday-school teachers a few years since, must have observed with satisfaction the marked change in the tone and temper in which they and their work were referred to. The *Times* considered that the Sunday-school had "changed the face of the country," and that "few people, of even a University education, could take up an ordinary Sunday-school manual without learning something, and having his interest excited to some new field of inquiry." The *Spectator* wrote: "Sunday-schools, to us, appear to be among the very few solidly good institutions which the 'religious world' has succeeded in establishing." The *Saturday Review* admitted that the "movement set on foot by Raikes was a most praiseworthy, and has proved on the whole a very beneficial, one." The *Daily News* asserted that it was "impossible to over-estimate the extent of our obligation to Sunday-schools." Amongst the Church papers the *Guardian* contended that the Sunday-school needed "considerable extension both of scope and power," and that "it would be a fatal error to allow the Sunday-school work, so well begun by English Churchmen, to pass entirely into other hands." The *Rock* gave the movement its support from the commencement; while the *Record*, taking a survey of the speeches made at the principal meetings during the week of the Centenary, stated that "the proceed-

ings had been thoroughly sound and healthy in tone. The great movement, whose origin it commemorates, has been spoken of in no doubtful or hesitating terms ; while among the trumpets that have been blown, the signal of advance has been sounded clear and full."

It is too soon to speak with confidence of the results which are likely to follow this great movement, but one result of the Centenary will certainly be that Sunday-schools will in the future occupy *a higher place in public esteem* than they have done in the past. This renders it all the more necessary that careful attention should be given by the clergy and teachers to the work of organisation. Without it no permanent benefit will result from the Centenary, and the enthusiasm which has been called forth will quickly subside. Closer union is absolutely necessary. There may be some points upon which Churchmen are not agreed, but from the public utterances which have been made upon the subject, there does not appear to be any serious divergence of opinion as to the value of the Sunday-school itself. After making full allowance for a few persons who entertain certain theories upon the question of the religious training of the young, but whose views about Sunday-schools are not for the most part the result of practical experience, there is no real difference of opinion upon the subject. Differences of opinion may exist as to the details of the system, but general unanimity prevails as to the value of the system itself. In this, as in most

cases where a difference of opinion prevails, the quickest way of arriving at the truth is for the clergy to meet occasionally in friendly conference, compare notes, relate experiences, and seek by mutual counsel to formulate some intelligible and practical course of action. This can be done effectively through the instrumentality of Local Unions, and it is hoped that one result of the Centenary will be that Local Branches will be increased in number and efficiency.

An addition to the teaching power of the country may also be reasonably expected to follow this general recognition of the importance of Sunday-schools. At the present time all classes of society contribute personal workers to this department of Church work, and as the result of the special attention which has been directed to the subject, additional recruits from each section may be expected. Special attention has been given of late years to the question of teaching, and considering the facilities which are now placed within the reach of the Sunday-school teacher, more rapid progress may justly be anticipated. The issue, for instance, of what are known as Teachers' Bibles is of the greatest importance; they supply the teacher in a small compass, and at a moderate cost, with a vast amount of valuable information, which, together with the Notes of Lessons and other helps, furnish the Sunday-school teacher with ample assistance in the preparation for his work.

But there is a further result which it is hoped may

follow the recent commemoration, and without which other advantages would be of no permanent value, viz., *the need of increased spiritual vitality amongst all engaged in the work.* We are in danger in these days of attaching too much importance to plans and schemes, and in the desire to extend and perfect our machinery, to forget that this after all has to do with the mere "bones" of the system. It cannot in itself impart life, but it is as powerless to effect spiritual results as the most elaborate piece of machinery would be to achieve the object of its design without the power to set it in motion. In the early days Sunday-school teachers were, for the most part, wanting in mere book-learning, and yet they succeeded in doing a work which is now acknowledged by the highest authorities in Church and State to have been of transcendent importance. What, then, was the secret of their success? *They were men and women of prayer.* They believed in the Divine character of their work; and, upheld by this thought, they continued their quiet work amidst obstructions and difficulties of all kinds, and were at length victorious.

May the enthusiasm which has been aroused be sanctified by the Spirit of God, and result in the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom! May all who are engaged in the work labour with a single eye to His glory, and have grace and wisdom to use aright the opportunities for increased usefulness which the Centenary has afforded!

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