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THE RELATION OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL TO THE CHURCH.

The ideal of the Sabbath-school is that it shall become a feeder of the Church. It would be supposed that one of the foremost things implied in such a relation, is the training of the scholars in church-going habits. It is certainly reasonable to look for this; and when this result is not obtained—especially when, under a supposed high state of prosperity in the Sabbath-school, there is an actual dwindling of the attendance of children upon the regular services of the Church,—the conclusion cannot be avoided that there is some serious defect in the popular mode of conducting those institutions.

We trust there yet remain many churches which, in the conduct of their Sabbath-schools, take care to avoid the result mentioned, and so arrange their work as to secure the regular attendance of the children in the sanctuary. But from accounts which reach us from numerous quarters, we are forced to the apprehension that, in its relation to the public worship, our Sabbath-school system is drifting into a dangerous course. This much is obvious: never, within the recollection of the living, has the child portion of our worshipping congregations been so proportionally small as now. Never before has it been so rare to see the children of the family ranged beside their parents in the pew. It is the very genius of the pew system, not improbably the very idea which brought it into existence, that families should sit together, children under the eye of their parents, preserving even amid the great assembly, a kind of home union and home isolation. We see little enough now to remind us of such uses of this arrangement. The parents are there, but where are the children, and why are they not there? The answer in most cases would be, that the Sabbath-school stands in the way. If not so bluntly expressed, this is nevertheless unmistakably implied in the cause assigned. It is plead in excuse for their absence, that they have two sessions of the Sabbath-school to attend, and that to ask of them more attendance upon public instruction, is laying too heavy a tax upon their power of endurance. The conclusion here expressed is certainly reasonable, if there be nothing wrong in the fact premised. If the confining of children from three to four hours of the day in the Sabbath-school room is a wholesome arrangement, then the point must be yielded that it is asking too much of them, to require the additional confinement of the church service. But in such a case, the implication above stated remains—the Sabbath-school stands in the way of their attendance upon the regular church worship. Whatever good of other kinds may come from it, it certainly tends to the depletion of that which ought to be the most interesting and hopeful part of all our congregations, and results in an early formed and therefore more hopeless habit of regarding the appointed gospel ministrations as of no account,—a habit which will soon, may it be feared now telling disastrously upon many of the Christian congregations of the land. We believe the time has come that there must be some modification of this state of things; or our Sabbath-schools, instead of feeding, will exhaust the Church.

It does not reconcile us to the case as it now stands, to be told that the instructions of the Sabbath-school are so much better adapted to the capacities of children than those of the pulpit are, that their spiritual edification will be better attained under the former, even at the sacrifice of the privileges of the latter. The point assumed, viz: that the capacity of the child for religious culture is best met in the Sabbath-school, is true in part, but not to the extent claimed. The notion that the preaching of our day, as a general thing, is abstruse and deep, and adapted to edify only well matured and highly cultivated minds, is a great popular mistake. There are, doubtless, instances of such practical misconception of the proper office of the Christian pulpit, but there are not enough of them to characterize the preaching of the day. Often in the Sabbath school we have seen

whole classes of children listening to an address, in which simplicity was pushed to the point of mere childishness of discourse, whose minds we knew to be ripe for the bracing and forwarding discipline of the pulpit, but who were allowed to avoid the latter because they enjoyed the former, and that was thought enough.

But even granting to Sabbath-school instruction its supposed superiority to that of the pulpit, for teaching the gospel to children, it scarcely mitigates the calamity of the destruction of the church-going habit. While the parents are in their place in the sanctuary, the child is at home alone, or with company who will only encourage his disregard of the proprieties of the day. It is the very time when, above all others, he ought to be with his parents, and under their watchful care. There is growing up in him no proper conception of the regular worship of the Church, as a Divine ordinance, and the highest appointed institution for rescuing men from sin and training them for heaven. Avoidance of the sanctuary has become a confirmed habit; and when his Sabbath-school days are over, a time which will not be long in coming—there comes no feeling that the church of his parents is a family spiritual home. There is no tie of habit to bind him to it, and away he goes, perhaps to some other place of worship, or perhaps to some more questionable resort; but, be it where it may, with no higher purpose than to mix with society and fill up the hour.

If asked how we would have this growing evil remedied we reply:

1. Not by giving up the Sabbath-school. The blessings which it has brought to our world can never be told this side of heaven. God brings forth measures for the times. He has given this great institution to our times, and the seals of his approbation of it are scattered abroad; they are on earth and in glory. Under the ordering of the Holy Spirit, it has become a necessity to the Church. We must cherish the Sabbath-school.

2. Let the Sabbath-school be brought into harmony with the higher institution of the pulpit ministrations and appointed services of the Church. This can never be done until the double session system gives way to more reasonable hours. Of this we have spoken and will not enlarge. The organic relation between the Church and the Sabbath-school is becoming very loose, and increasingly so. In most cases, the authorities of the Church have no official connection with it. It is hardly entitled to the name of the child of the Church, but is left to the management of an outside association, which only follows an almost inevitable law of our common nature, when it practically accounts it an all-sufficient means of grace for children. Let the Sabbath School make a feature of the duty of leading children to the sanctuary and keeping them there. Let the Pastor become, in the minds of the scholars, their Pastor, and to this end, let his intercourse with the school be frequent and cordial; and while there, he should not be set before the children as simply a visitor who will "make a few remarks," but as the Chief Superintendent—not *ex-gratia* but *ex-officio* such, in virtue of the close organic relation of the School to the Church, as an institution of its own, under its care as a part of its own established means of grace. This is the Pastor's place, and in almost every church, it needs only to be claimed and it will be cheerfully granted. Indeed we are not without apprehension that the wrong of the now prevalent abnormal state of the relation of the School to the Church, would, upon close inquiry, be found lying at the door of the Church authorities, and that many of our churches are failing of their expected gatherings from the Sabbath-school, by their own act in isolating it from their official sympathy and control. Many Pastors and some Sessions we know are now awake to this matter, doing their duty and, in fair measure reaping the fruits. But we cannot suppress our apprehension that, on the broad scale, there has been a sad misapprehension of the duties in the case, and that, as the result, the Sabbath-school has fallen off into the kind of management which has left our pews so empty of children.

It would too much prolong this article to say other things which we have in mind pertaining to this subject. We may hereafter recur to it.

DEATH OF DR. JAMES HAMILTON.

LONDON, Nov. 30th, 1867.

I yesterday attended at Regent Square Church the funeral service of my friend and former pastor, JAMES HAMILTON, D. D. The name—familiar almost as a household word with Americans as well as Englishmen—and dear to all to whom it was familiar, is in itself a sufficient reason for devoting to it this letter. So great and irreparable a loss could not possibly occur to any church; as that which has just fallen upon the Presbyterian Church in England. We had no man so well known—no man so catholic in his sympathies and associations—no man so respected in other churches—no man whose words were of equal weight. Just past his fifth decade—in what in England we are accustomed to consider the prime of life—he has been claimed by the angels and carried to Abraham's bosom. For nearly quarter of a century he has, through all vicissitudes of social change, of death and removal, sustained in the large church at Regent Square, an interest that seemed never to pall or die out. To him on their arrival in London, went the young Scotchmen from the North, and in him found a brother's kindness with a father's oversight. Not a few Englishmen, spite of his northern pronunciation, were to be found sitting and working in his church—one eminently—a judge of the Queen's Bench. I scarcely know how to speak of him without extravagance, for gratitude and affection are often apt to be wild in expression. I remember, when I first came to London a stranger, drawn to his church, by his reputation, and simply commended to his care by an American minister who was a stranger to him, with what instant and genial frankness he treated me—introduced me to his working men—took me to his home and showed me as charming a picture of sweet, loving Christian happiness and simplicity as I ever saw. I remember the impressive grace, few-worded but hearty, the humor which beamed in his face before it left his lip, the delicate and ingenious facility for discovering the topics you could talk on, and bringing you out on them. One Sunday—the first of May—when he had taken me home to dine, as he began to carve the joint before him, I remember he said with a twinkling eye, "We have a sheep, Mr.—, with just fifty-two legs, and he gives us one every Sunday for a year." He loved such fancies—he had gained the inspiration of them from the "tall folios," which, when he was but a child, were, as he told me, the companions even of his bed. I have never come in contact with a gentler nature, which had all the advantage, also of being a social and not a diffident one. With all his love and tremendous application to books, he liked, and was the charm of society. His wide knowledge was always at his command for entertaining and instructing purposes, and for every class of mind. The little child and the philosopher were equally pleased with the lightness of his fancy or the profundity of his learning. He had not read the "tall folios" in vain. His accurate and retentive memory held its mastery over their contents, and adapted them to the exigencies of composition or conversation with wonderful facility. In his congregation and in society this faculty served him well. He seemed always to remember the slightest event that had occurred of any interest to any one he knew. Those who were intimate with the church could recognize, sometimes in a few sentences, that he had collected together a dozen cases of difficulty that had happened during a week. In the "lost daughter," the "son upon the deep,"—the "erring child"—and other such references, there was always some piece of comfort wrapped up for some one in the congregation. As it was impossible to visit all his people, he made it his business to know all about them. Great were the demands upon his time—numerous the calls upon his patience. Unreasonable callers in the later week annoyed him most. "Just as I have sat down and got my feathered flock of thoughts about me there comes a ring at the bell and a man or woman rushes in, and hey, presto! away flies my flock and I can't catch them again." Very few could know of his industry—of the immense correspondence, London-wide and world-wide—the calls and invitations—and yet how much he read. I lent him once a book which I had received from America, the interesting letters of Dr. J. W. Alexander, published by

Dr. Hall. They were a long time in his possession, and his apology was, "I haven't time to read them straight through; I just kept them for the waking moments at night after I was in bed."

Of his intellectual abilities, those who best knew him and could best offer an opinion formed the highest estimate. He was capable, had opportunity turned him that way, of being the profound metaphysician, the lucid and picturesque historian, the able theologian. He gave indications of all these, and besides, the accurate and accomplished natural philosopher, the man of science, the clever biographer, a master in the *belles lettres*, a refined humorist. His published books speak best for him, and no doubt there are mines of glittering wealth yet uncovered to the day, which may be exhumed and published posthumously. This is not the time or place for criticism of his productions; in fact he always disarmed criticism. The most exquisite piece of humor I ever heard was his description at a small tea-meeting, of the summer "treat" to the Sabbath School Children. So delicate—yet so funny—with such ingenuous and telling yet kindly irony—how did he picture the grave, metaphysical F—, with his arms and legs occupied by teeming children—and his coat-tails desperately tugged and tested by a band of amateur sailors! How did he recount with Virgilian exactitude the details of that wonderful expedition, and picture the out-going and incoming in tenderly natural lines! until, weak from laughter and shoutings, he left us wishing he would never end.

But all this—and much more, how much more the world can never know—was last Sunday silenced and snatched away into unknown dimness—beyond echo or whisper—and the casket of it was yesterday hidden in the tomb. The service took place at Regent Square Church at eleven o'clock in the morning. The galleries had been draped in black, but it is impossible to make that church look uncheerful. The centre part was left for mourners and the clergy of London who attended in large numbers. The rest was occupied by the congregation and many other friends decently attired in black. On every face the deepest sorrow and solemnity were visible. The coffin was brought in covered by a pall upon which was laid a large wreath of evergreen and flowers—the flowers he loved so well—could name so readily, and descant upon with such beauty: the evergreen that emblemized his own immortality. The service was conducted by Professor Lorimer of the English Presbyterian College, Dr. King, the eminent United Presbyterian Minister, and Dr. William Chalmers, his quondam college mate. The latter's address was a model of simple good taste and sincere grief. In the course of the proceedings, the following hymn was sung. Shortly before he died, with his family around him, he asked them to sing it, and endeavored with his feeble voice to join in expressing its triumphant hopes:

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I sighed for,
The fair sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But day'spring is at hand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.
Oh! Christ, he is the fountain,
The deep, sweet well of love;
The streams of earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above.
There to an ocean fulness
His mercy doth expand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.
With mercy and with judgment,
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dew of sorrow
Were lusted with His love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that planned,
When thronged where glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.
Oh! I am my Beloved's
And my Beloved's mine,
He brings a poor vile sinner
Into His "house of wine,"
I stand upon His merit;
I know no other stand,
Not even where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.

I need say no more—the soul that found peace and pleasure in the dark valley from such sentiments as those speaks out its own immortality in the silverest and most thrilling voice. LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY COME.

ADELPHOS.

No less than 2,350,000 portions of the New Testament, besides many thousand Psalms were distributed at the Paris Exposition.

A LAYMAN'S CALL.

In answer to the request of "J" and to strike one more blow for the cause, we beg leave once more to appear in print.

PLAN.

We propose that each church of our communion, in the City, shall annually elect a fixed number of delegates, who shall form an Association, having a charter and the necessary officers to carry out the following objects:

1. To promote the greater usefulness of the Laity.
2. To carry on Mission work in the City.
3. To promote a closer intimacy between Christians of our various churches.

Reader, where do you stand on this subject? do you say, "go on may the Lord bless you?" or do you say, let us go on and the Lord will bless us? If you are of the last class, let me have your name, address, a clasp of your hand, and we will call a meeting of our fellow Laymen and enter into the work. Address, B. in care of this paper.

A UNION THANKSGIVING SERVICE.—The *Episcopalian* gives a very interesting report of a Union Thanksgiving Service, held on the evening of Nov. 28th, in the 3d Baptist Church, in pursuance of the following notice:

UNION THANKSGIVING SERVICE.—The congregation of the First Presbyterian Church, Southwark, that of the Gloria Dei (Old Swede's), and the Trinity in Catharine street, will unite in the Third Baptist Church in Second above Catharine, this evening at 7½ o'clock. Addresses will be made by Rev. Mr. Culver of the Presbyterian Church, Rev. J. Sanders Reed, of Gloria Dei, and Rev. A. Myers of the Trinity Church. All cordially invited.

Our contemporary says:

At the appointed hour the services began, by singing and a prayer by Rev. J. S. Reed of the Gloria Dei (Old Swede's) Church, in which he implored the out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the ministers and people, who had joined to give thanks on this occasion. "and especially anoint the pastor of this Church, with the Holy Ghost, that the words he may here utter, may be made effectual to the salvation of men." The pastor, the Rev. Mr. P. E. Myers, in introducing the pastor of a neighboring Presbyterian Church, Rev. Mr. Culver, said, "I meet you all as brethren, and present a brother who will address you." Mr. Culver took for his subject "the goodness of God," and showed how that goodness has followed us in numerous ways, filling our hearts with food and gladness, and that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that the Saviour in the procuring cause of all the blessings that we enjoy, while every good thought, and word and action in us is from the Spirit.

Then Rev. Mr. Reed spoke of great mercies, little mercies, and bitter mercies; the great mercies sometimes acknowledged, the little ones overlooked, though numerous as the sands on the sea shore; and the bitter ones are not received as such, though so intended and sent. Christ was again set forth, and His Spirit the Comforter preached.

Rev. Mr. Myers, who for some months has temporarily filled the pulpit of Trinity (P. E.) Church, called all "brethren" and "friends," in the unity of the Holy Catholic Church. He said it was pleasant to get away from the narrow boundaries of our own Church. Many in imitation of an ancient custom in the Jewish Church, had that day sent "portions" to friends and to the needy.

He was succeeded by the pastor of the Church, who in a few words told that while preparing in his study for this day, it occurred to him that a union of the Churches in his neighborhood would be agreeable, and calling upon the clergymen, they were not only apparently willing, but pleased to join. He told of the cordial welcome he had received twelve years ago from the late Dr. Clay, then pastor of Gloria Dei Church, and how he had often gone to hear him preach; the same from the Presbyterian pastor near, how in his affliction, members of Trinity Episcopal Church had been the first to enter his door with their love and sympathies. This is an item of news, of interest, no doubt to many who are watching the progress of those in our Church who wish the disabilities of non-Episcopal intercourse removed. In this pleasing instance peculiar denominational tenets and claims were not brought forward. All united in worshipping the Triune God with great delight and full enjoyment. The house was filled by an attentive and much interested congregation. The prospect is that in the matter of interdenominational fellowship, no law will be needed here, each one becoming a law unto himself, and in the city of Brotherly Love no notice but a God-speed will be taken of it by those who have authority.

A SAD BEREAVEMENT.—The *Evangelist* of last week thus announces an event of the saddest character, as befalling a brother just entering upon his ministerial career. May he, by gracious assistance, find it good to bear the yoke in his youth:

"It is with very great sadness that we learn of the sudden death of the wife of Rev. Henry M. Booth, of Englewood, New Jersey. She was a daughter of Rev. Dr. Newell, of this city. It is but three or four months since she followed her mother to the grave, and but three weeks since she was united in marriage to the youthful pastor of Englewood. Beautiful in person, as she was lovely in disposition and in manners, she seemed formed for happiness. Yet so soon is the light of that dwelling extinguished. To her young husband it is a terrible blow, while to her father, recently bowed with his own great loss and suffering from severe and it is feared dangerous illness, it must come with crushing effect. May the God of all consolation be with them in this dark hour!"