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## Poetry.

### TIRED MOTHERS.

BY MRS. ALBERT SMITH.

A little elbow leans upon your knee,  
Your tired knee, that has so much to bear;  
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly  
From underneath a thatch of tangled hair.  
Perhaps you do not heed the velvet touch  
Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so tight;  
You do not prize this blessing overmuch,  
You almost are too tired to pray to-night.  
But it is blessedness. A year ago  
I did not see it as I do to-day,—  
We are so dull and thankless; and too slow  
To catch the sunshine till it slips away.  
And now it seems surpassing strange to me,  
That while I wore the badge of motherhood  
I did not kiss more oft, and tenderly,  
The little child that brought me only good.  
And if, some night when you sit down to rest,  
You miss this elbow from your tired knee;  
This restless, curling head from off your  
breast,  
This lisping tongue that chatters constantly;  
If from your own the dimpled hands had  
slipped,  
And ne'er would nestle in your palm again;  
If the white feet into their grave had tripped,  
I could not blame you for your heart-ache  
then!  
I wonder so that mothers ever fret,  
At little children clinging to their gown;  
Or that the footprints, when the days are wet,  
Are ever black enough to make them frown.  
If I could find a little muddy boot,  
Or cap, or jacket, on my chamber floor;  
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,  
And hear its patter in my home once more;  
If I could mend a broken cart to-day,  
To-morrow make a kite, to reach the sky—  
There is no woman in God's world could say  
She was more blissfully content than I.  
But ah! the dainty pillow next my own  
Is never rumpled by a shining head;  
My singing birdling from its nest is flown;  
The little boy I used to kiss is dead!

## Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

### THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

AN ABSTRACT OF AN ESSAY READ BEFORE THE BAPTIST SABBATH SCHOOL CONVENTION, HELD IN PALMOUTH, SEP. 12th, 1872, BY REV. D. M. WELTON.

All that we propose to do with this subject is the simple statement of a few thoughts bearing upon it, leaving their amplification to your own minds and to subsequent discussion.

The relation of the church to the Sabbath school is confessedly one of great importance, though if we mistake not, it takes a very indefinite shape in many minds.

In some cases the Sabbath School sustains only a kind of *permissive* relation to the church—enjoys in fact only a *permissive* existence. The church allows it to occupy the basement room of their place of worship, and to furnish religious instruction to such children as have a mind to attend; but that is about all they know, if it is not all they care, concerning it.

In other cases, the sabbath school is not only independent of the Church, but its independence takes the form of a conflicting interest. It never reports its proceedings to the church, nor seems in any way desirous of having the church's approbation. Some of its officers and teachers are possibly not members of the church—persons, it may be of heterodox views, if not of immoral lives, and liable to inculcate sentiments and strive for ends which the church could not endorse.

Such a state of things, wherever it exists, is greatly to be deplored, and the church is mainly responsible for it.

We are not sure that our ideal of the relation which ought to exist between the church and the sabbath school finds realization in any church and sabbath school in our province.

It may be sketched in the following particulars.

1. In the first place, we think the church ought to assume the entire oversight and control of the school.

This oversight and control might be direct or indirect. In the former, the Superintendent and other officers and teachers of the school would receive their appointment to office directly from the church. In the latter, they would be appointed by what might be called the Sabbath School Committee of the church; said committee to be composed of five or seven of the best christian workers in the church including the Pastor—who should act as chairman; and its doings to be reported to the church for approval or otherwise. In either case, the officers, and teachers, by some simple ceremony, should be formally in-talled into their respective offices, and a charge addressed to each by the Pastor of the church. In this way the office of Teacher would be invested with dignity and importance, or rather the dignity and importance essentially belonging to it would be duly recognized.

Of course, in the selection of officers and teachers, whether by the church in its corporate capacity, or through the medium of its committee, strict regard should be had to their fitness for the work entrusted to them.

As to the Superintendent, he should be a man above reproach, in frequent communion with God, full of love to God and his race, in hearty sympathy and co-operation with his Pastor, as well known in church work as in the Sabbath school.—A man knowing the name of each scholar, in or out of the school, and always ready to bestow a word or smile of recognition.—a man of executive ability, of great self-control, prompt in action, and thorough in preparation.

As to the Teachers, they should be persons of punctual habits, always in their place at the opening hour; regular and constant in their attendance; persons of cheerful disposition; having much patience; of studious habits, always adding to their stock of Bible knowledge, and striving to perfect themselves in the art of communicating it; persons moreover of genuine piety, and members of the church. "To teach Christ, the teacher must have learned of Christ—must have found the heavenly way himself." "It is very desirable that the teacher be a church member, for the sabbath school is designed to assist in building up the church; to furnish for her pulpits consecrated ministers; for her foreign work, earnest missionaries; for her altars and her homes intelligent and spiritual members."

So of the Librarian, the Secretary, and the chorister—if distinct from the Superintendent—they should be qualified for their several places, and if possible, members of the church.

Nor should the church remain satisfied with simply appointing the teachers; the utmost carefulness should be exercised that all the religious instruction imparted through their agency be in strict harmony with the word of God. The object of the sabbath school "is not to teach morality alone—this indeed it ever insists upon—but always as connected with the regeneration of the heart by the Holy Spirit, and the exercise of a living faith in Jesus as a personal Redeemer." The church that allows error to be taught in its sabbath school is equally guilty with the one that allows it to be taught in its pulpit. We should probably be surprised if we knew how much false doctrine is taught in many schools reputed to be evangelical. How many children are taught for example, that they are already good; how many have their natural goodness flattered by being addressed as the "children of the Church," and of "the Covenant," and as "lambs of the fold."

A little daughter of a minister was under deep conviction for sin, and when she exclaimed, "I am so great a sinner, I am afraid Jesus can't forgive me," the father replied, "no, my daughter, you are not a great sinner," and then asked, "what have you ever

done so bad?" A similar error is taught when children are told that if they will love Jesus, he will love them; as if they could love Jesus in their natural state,—as if Jesus' loving them depended on and were measured by their loving him. How much better to teach them that Jesus has already loved them, and to point them to his death on the cross for the proof; being careful, at the same time, to show them that, while in their sins, Jesus loves them, not with the love of complacency and approbation, but with that of pity, and compassion, and that only when they have repented of their sins and believed on his name, will he love them in the former way.

And these errors are not only often orally taught the children in class, but they imbibe them from many of the sabbath school hymns they sing, and from many of the Sabbath School books they read. If examination were made it would probably be found that many of our Baptist sabbath school Libraries contain objectionable books:—books it may be of fiction, with not enough of the religious element to keep the fiction from spoiling: books too, interspersed with Pedobaptist sentiments, in which not only infant baptism, but possibly baptismal regeneration is taught. How important that an intelligent, judicious committee should read and pronounce upon every book before it goes into the library.

2. In the second place, the church should assume the responsibility of the schools pecuniary support—should provide the funds for carrying on its operations and provide them liberally. Money is voted annually by the different school sections to provide secular instruction for the children: why should not the church provide in a similar way for their religious instruction? Books and papers are wanted in the sabbath school, and wanted continually and we maintain that the church as such should furnish the means for obtaining them. We maintain that just as the church votes so much money for the Pastor's salary, and so much for the current expenses of the church, so should it vote the requisite amount for the sustentation of the sabbath school. The sum requisite to carry on the work of the school should be included in the church's estimate of expenses for the year, and as faithfully raised as any other portion of it.

In the great majority of schools, however, a few persons, comparatively speaking, perform all the work and provide all the funds also. Or, it may be, the money, or a portion of the money contributed by the children, all which should be allowed to go for benevolent objects, is taken, either with or without their consent for supporting the school. The church should not act the part of a cruel step mother to the schools, withholding the means necessary to purchase books, papers, maps of Bible lands, missionary maps, scripture mottoes &c., and also putting it in a dark, damp, dingy room—a place more suited for a prison, than where bright, innocent children are taught the beautiful and blessed ways of religion. It should rather act the part of the natural mother of the school—should tenderly nurse it—giving it healthy nutriment and plenty of it—should greet it with her kindest smiles, and defend it with her best energies. And whatever cost all this might involve should be cheerfully met by the church.

3. In the third place we take the ground that the church should be in the sabbath school. The pastor of the church should be in it, if not indeed as Superintendent or Teacher, yet as a frequent visitor. The Pastor's visits to the school should never be regarded as an intrusion, even though his presence should occasion some deviation from the ordinary routine of exercises. If he is a man of sense and judgment, he will make his visits agreeable and profitable, the children will welcome him among them, and listen with delight to his words.

The secret of Dr. Tyng's success as a minister and Pastor is, as he tells

us, *personal attention to his Sabbath School.* He is Pastor of both sheep and lambs. Fifty ministers of the gospel have gone out from his church, or from the sabbath school from which his church so largely draws its membership. One hundred and forty seven were added to his church in one year chiefly from the sabbath school.

But others beside the pastor should be in the school. Evidently the deacons should be there, unless hindered by circumstances beyond their control. Yet they are not always there. Some of their number have not even looked into the school for years. How they make this indifference consist with their official position in the Church, and with their professed desire to promote its welfare, is more than we can understand. In short, every member of the church, either as a teacher or scholar, should be in the sabbath school.

The whole church, in the form of a Bible school, should devote at least one hour of the 168 hours of the week to the study of the Word of God.

It is not enough simply to bring the sabbath school scholar into the church; he needs instruction—a life long instruction after he has been brought in. One great reason why so many church members are fickle and erratic in their course, and remain such dwarfs in religion is,—their religion is devoid of intelligence; it rests, not upon a clear and comprehensive knowledge of God's word, but upon mere feeling and impulse. They are babes all their lives, and require all their lives to be fed on milk. An ounce of meat would quite derange their stomachs. Even the milk they take must in some instances be diluted into a kind of pap.

But the sabbath school furnishes a fine field for christian work. It has been denominated the work shop of the church. It is a fitting sphere for the training and development of the best energies of the church. On his own account as well as on that of others, no church member can afford to be deprived of the privilege of working in connection therewith.

And the congregation also, as well as the church, should be found in the sabbath school, and they should be brought in through the church's agency.

The church should not feel that her duty has been done, while a single individual of the community remains outside the sphere of Bible and gospel influence. To bring every person old and young into the sabbath school, or into the adult Bible school of the Church, and by this means into the church:—in other words, to save their souls and bring them to heaven—this should be the constant aim of the church—of every member in it.

When the church goes into the sabbath school with all her heart and mind, it will not be long before the sabbath school will be in the church. It would be well to bring the sabbath school frequently into the church building—the house of God,—that the children might witness its worship and join in it. Sometimes they are allowed to go home after attending sabbath school and not permitted or instructed to remain at the following service in the Sanctuary. Their parents feel perhaps that they have done their duty in simply sending them to the sabbath school. They should also early plant them in the House of God and teach them to love and respect all the ordinances of religion. Children can perform important service in singing: in some instances they have mainly composed the choir, and delighted all listeners with their sweet voices.

Such then is our ideal, briefly and imperfectly sketched, of the relation which ought to exist between the church and sabbath school. We are glad to notice progress in the direction of its realization. Let the Church come into closer, more organic, vital, sympathetic union with the sabbath school, and the great object of each will be more speedily and effectually accomplished.

For the Christian Messenger.

### A FEW THOUGHTS ON PRAYER MEETINGS.

To the devout and experienced christian how many delightful ideas are associated with the word *prayer*. In his mind it is connected not with duty merely, but also with privilege—with the purest and most elevated spiritual enjoyment. Some of the sweetest, tenderest and most profitable hours of his existence have been hours of prayer. In them he has, through the one Mediator, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, found access to the Father. The divine Comforter has helped his infirmities, and he has experienced the blessedness of having fellowship with the Father and with the Son. To him the throne of God has truly been a "Throne of grace" where he has found mercy and grace to help him in time of need. These things are especially true of private or secret prayer of which our Lord has beautifully said, "but thou when thou prayest enter into thy closet; and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Yet such is the corruption of fallen humanity, and such the number, variety, and power of adverse influence, that opportunities for prayer are sometimes neglected and misimproved. And if this be so with respect to secret prayer much more is it so with reference to public and social, an important question arises just here—*Our prayer meetings—are they what they ought to be?* In answering this question, it may be observed.

1. *That they ought to be what their name signifies, meetings for PRAYER.* Are they such in reality? Is it found that in them actual prayer is presented? Prayer is the offering up of our desires unto God.

Without this there is not, there cannot be any prayer. There may indeed be, as far as mere words are concerned the language of prayer. That, language, too, may apparently be the most appropriate, uttered with much solemnity of tone, and even blended with much feeling, but if there be not the desire of the heart, it is but solemn mockery. Will our prayer-meetings bear to be tried by this test?

2. *They ought to be definite as to their objects.*

In other words we ought to have some distinct notion of what we are about to ask. It has been well said by some one, that, "when a man really feels the want of nothing, or desires nothing, he asks for everything."—we sometimes have long rambling utterances (for they cannot justly be called prayers) in which many objects are adverted to, and many favors requested, but not one of which is really prayed for. Such exhibitions are wearisome to the brethren, dishonouring to God and sinful in themselves; but they will speedily vanish from amongst us, if we have distinct and definite objects in view, when we professedly come together for prayer. Let brethren in going to a prayer meeting, ask themselves what things are we to ask for at this time? And are these things really desired by us?

3. *They should be marked by unanimity.*

In scripture much stress is laid on christians agreeing together as touching any thing that they shall ask. It was when the disciples continued with one accord in prayer and supplication that the pentecostal blessing was bestowed. In like manner, a renewed communication of divine aid was imparted when "with one accord," the apostles and brethren prayed "that with all boldness they might be able to speak" the word. Acts iv. 21. And when the whole church offered instant and earnest prayer on behalf of Peter when imprisoned, an answer was granted much beyond their expectations. But can we say that our social meetings for prayer are marked by this oneness of mind. Do all the brethren in their hearts go along with him who for the