

Statement in ~~Sunday~~ Schools.

Interest in the Sunday ~~School~~ School.

Few people really enjoy saying what is true, ~~because~~ I ^{suppose} ~~think~~ the reason is because few like to hear such things. One of the poets tells us, "that all who rhyme - nay all who write, shrink from that fatal word to genius - 'truth'." But I ^{suppose} ~~think~~ they all must come to it now and again. That is my dogma ^{certainly} ~~and~~ ^{in my ear it is more than usually} ~~and~~ ^{difficult to say} truth than is anyway agreeable. I object to it in particular because ^{it is} ~~it is~~ ^{difficult to say} truth things well. Horace has assured us of that fact and my experience justifies him. It is easier ^{to say} ~~to say~~ ^{almost anything else will.} ~~to say~~ ^{to keep} ~~the~~ ^{company of commonsense in almost any other quarter. That may be the reason why} ~~so many of us can get no name for common sense.~~

The present adds one more to the numerous occasions on which I must yield to the dominion and authority of the commonplace. I shall not dare avow that no way is open to avoid it. I am cured of talking that way, ~~and~~ ^{and} I am sure there must be brighter heavens of invention than I can ^{possibly} ~~possibly~~ ^{have} ~~affirmed~~ ^{it was impossible to say anything new or fresh upon a given topic only to find myself later much in error, when another, more ingenious, man took hold of it. The old authors were wont to talk about ingenious writers and speakers, but that custom has now passed out of vogue. Those ^{who} ~~are~~ ^{used to be ingenious are talented now, and it is not the happiest change that could be.}}

~~But~~ I am free and frank ~~enough~~ to confess that I am not ingenious enough to clothe this subject with any sweetness and light. I heartily wish that I were both for your sakes and for my own.

Like the most commonplace sermons that we preach, and sometimes hear, I will divide the subject into three parts:

1. Social interest in the Sunday School. I place this first in order, for two sufficient reasons, namely, ^{because} ~~as~~ ^{it is} ~~the~~ ^{least} ~~important~~ ^{interest} ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~subject~~, and secondly, I do not wish you, on that account, to overlook it. For it is not of trivial importance. I have known schools and classes ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~schools~~, I think to suffer by reason of the neglect of it. The social element is perhaps the foremost part in human nature. It lies at the center of the human heart, and ^{if} ~~if~~ ^{the} ~~the ^{social element can find} ~~not~~ ^{adequate} ~~place~~ ^{and play in your} ~~Sunday~~ ^{School,} ~~it will seek for recognition in~~ ^{another, or on the streets, or anywhere. The social interest in the Sunday School I admit is hard to deal with and direct. Society has its} ~~own~~ ^{own} ~~republic,~~ ^{and its own laws,} ~~and it is as jealous of them, as~~ ^{any infringement of these as the Church is jealous of despotism over the conscience. Therefore you may always look for} ~~cliques~~ ^{and coteries, in the} ~~Sunday~~ ^{Schools.} ~~You would be unwise to preach a crusade against them, unless you, perhaps, bring~~ ^a ~~distinct~~ ^{coterie} ~~of your own. Who does not belong to one or other of these? They are a part of the mortal cage of every man. Mr. Joseph Cook would call them environments. You will find these environments~~ ^{in the infant class room. There are apt to be ladies} ~~of fashion & tiny aristocrats,~~ ^{who} ~~only~~ ^{with children} ~~who~~ ^{are} ~~are~~ ^{dressed in velvet."} ~~These may now and anon have a fierce up and down fight between themselves, but they will show a united front~~ ^{against} ~~the children who are dressed in cotton.~~ ^{You would smile} ~~to~~ ^{at} ~~it;~~ ^{but} ~~perhaps~~ ^{children are justly much the same all the}~~

that should be cherished and promoted ^{on the} within the ~~Sunday~~ Schools, the social, the intellectual and the spiritual; and that beyond the bounds of the School ~~itself~~ there are three places ⁱⁿ where interest for ~~the institution~~ should be ~~generally~~ fostered, ~~to~~ the Church, the family and the community.

Something was said when this subject was assigned to me about the ~~various~~ means to be employed in order to excite or increase ^{these various kinds of} interest, ~~on~~ ~~Sunday~~ Schools, but I have already spoken too long. I decided I have acquired a strong aversion to being assigned a place on the Committee of Ways and Means.

The ~~cause~~ ~~of that aversion~~ origin of that aversion is due to a bit of personal experience. For several years I managed a farm that ~~was~~ ~~situated~~ immediately at the roadside, ^{where} ~~and~~ it seemed to me that almost every man who passed ~~through~~ ^{by} found leisure to constitute himself into a Committee of Ways and Means, and suggest some alteration in the method of ~~conducting~~ ^{superintending} my husbandry. If I had listened to all the advice I got I cannot conceive in how the task would have looked after it was ~~done~~ ^{completed}. One old gentleman ~~was~~ returning from the ^{milk-}stream whether he went almost daily to catch fish, but never with success ~~found~~ ^{on a certain} ~~one~~ ~~day~~ scattering plaster ^{over} a field of clover. He climbed the fence with his poles and other ~~tools~~ ~~tools~~ and after desiring the process for a season, ^{in silence} ~~informed~~ ^{absolutely} me that I was "a doin' o' nuthin' an' wuss than nuthin'". I felt like retorting the same speech upon my critic, but ^{happily} ~~was~~ ~~able~~ to forego the pleasure for the sake of goodinorn and grace. I am afraid, however, if I attempted to give advice to this company about a ~~good~~ matter which they understand better than I do, that they might not all of them be able to command their tongues, and somebody might ^{say} ~~inform~~ ~~me~~ ~~that~~ again that I was "a doin' o' nuthin' an' wuss than nothin'".

~~Therefore~~ There is ~~one~~ ~~way~~ ~~general~~ ~~state~~ ~~only~~ ~~one~~ ~~general~~ ~~statement~~, that I would allow myself to make, ^{namely} ~~in~~ ~~this~~ ~~connection~~, ~~that~~ ~~all~~ ~~real~~ ~~interest~~ ~~in~~ the Sunday School is the result of honest work. Andrew Fuller, ^a ~~who~~ ~~was~~ ~~for~~ ~~many~~ ~~years~~ ~~the~~ ~~Secretary~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Baptist~~ ~~Missionary~~ ~~Society~~, ~~and~~ ~~was~~ ~~charged~~ ~~with~~ ~~the~~ ~~duty~~ of providing the means for supporting its missionaries in the East. He used to say, "my principal concern is that the work shall be done, ⁱⁿ ~~everything~~ ~~depends~~ ~~upon~~ ~~the~~ ~~missionaries~~. There is no doubt if they do good work that the money will be supplied to pay for it." It is the same case ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~Sunday~~ ~~School~~. If good work is done by every officer and teacher, there will be no lack of interest. The scholars will love their classes and the School; the Church will be proud of its child, the family will lend its powerful aid and the ~~whole~~ community will ^{send} ~~its~~ ~~applause~~, and good will be done.

And now ~~that~~ ~~by~~ ~~your~~ ~~good~~ ~~leave~~ I would refer all particulars and details to the worshipful company before me, who constitute a far wiser and more effective Committee of Ways and Means than I could ~~hope~~ ~~to~~ ~~be~~.