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OUR PRINCIPLES: 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church. 2. The name Christian, to the exclusion of all party or sectarian names. 3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, a sufficient rule of faith and practice. 4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of fellowship or membership. 5. The right of private judgment and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

The Primitive Sabbath School Compared With the Present.

When Christ in the throes of death rent the air with that great shout of triumph which rocked the earth in rapid vibration and robbed the grave of its dead, the plan of salvation which was laid down at the fall of man by the wisdom of a benign and merciful Creator was then completed—the great foundation upon which the magnificent structure of Christianity is planted, and that, also, of its off-spring, the Sabbath School. Having this as its foundation, firm and immovable as the everlasting hills, let us see how it has flourished.

Like every institution which has grown to any considerable extent, the Sunday School work had its origin in a very small and seemingly insignificant beginning. As Christianity began to take root upon the soil of minds corrupted by idolatrous teachings, it became necessary to overthrow the vain, imperfect ideas held by the people in regard to the nature of one supreme and all-wise God. Very early in the Christian era, schools were established for the sole purpose of giving instruction to those who, though professedly receiving Christianity, had not, as yet, a clear conception of what it was to be a Christian, nor a full apprehension of the glorious principles contained therein. The object of these schools therefore, in one respect was the same as that of the modern Sunday School, the advancement of the kingdom of God upon earth. But while they were laboring for the same common end, and one in reflecting upon the condition of the world in that period upon its political, social, and intellectual standing—can really draw a very definite conclusion concerning the difference in the modes of teaching in that period and the present age. The persons taught in these schools were called catechumens, and were required, as it appears, to take a regular prescribed course before being considered by any means proficient in the knowledge of Christianity.

This was the beginning of the Sunday School work. As Christianity has spread so this has developed. Many vicissitudes of fortune has the long period of eighteen centuries strewn upon it. Many a time has the iron hoof of oppression crushed it almost into oblivion. But it has risen like the kite against the wind until, to-day, it towers far above the reach of all its enemies.

Christians, after embracing the truths of christianity, have ever felt the need of having their children instructed in its teachings. Time after time between the first and the eighteenth centuries have schools been organized at different places, for the purpose of attending to the spiritual welfare of children. In these schools, other studies besides those of the Bible have almost invariably been taught. To reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic as much attention was paid as to the Bible. These studies in those times were absolutely necessary since the education of the masses was at a very low ebb and in a great many places entirely unknown. Such a thing at the present day would be regarded as intolerant, and that with good reason, but taking into consideration the motive which prompted these studies on the Sabbath, we can readily see that no violation of the divine law was intended, since the tendency was for the elevation of mankind and the upbuilding of the kingdom of God.

Had these schools prospered, we know not what might have been the influence exerted by them, but as they were sparsely scattered over the continent of Europe, their influence was only of local importance, and not being united by the ties of central organization which is so essential to the successful prosecution of any extensive work, they were only too often fated to be hidden from the view of the world by the thick mists of idolatrous ignorance. Probably, the hand of destiny was against them, for it must be remembered that Christianity in those times was by no means pure and unadulterated. The Roman Catholic church was very corrupt, and as a consequence the Sunday School could not rise above the level of its mother since it had no outside influences of a higher nature. Before the Sunday School can prosper a revolution must take place in Christianity. The gold must be separated from the dross. Idle ceremony must be changed to pure devotion. Truth must be disentangled from the coils of error and set up as the standard around which the truly devotional must rally. As the dawn of the sixteenth century lighted up the horizon of the world's history, this standard was suddenly seen to unfurl itself from the ramparts of the great reformation. Thousands rallied around its folds and formed an army which has since increased with surprising rapidity, and which has done valiant service in promoting happiness among men.

The centuries almost pass away, and protestantism has obtained a firm foothold, when, lo, another great change takes place. Who is that we see on one beautiful sabbath afternoon talking to a lot of little boys, probably playing marbles on the streets of

Gloucester? Who is that we see assembling those same little boys on the following sabbath in a private room to teach them about Christ and his love? As we perceive that little group listening in rapt attention for the first time to the wonderful stories of the great Robert Raikes, the minds eye in pleasing, though probably superstitious fancy, pierces the veil which separates the natural from the supernatural, and beholds the angels of heaven hovering around that little room, hallowing and consecrating by the laying on of hands the little effort put forth by one weak human creature whose influence was so soon destined to spread throughout the earth.

Yes, the spring time for Christianity had indeed arrived. Warmed and nourished by the first rays of the rising sun of religious freedom, it gradually put forth its buds and blossoms which to day are bearing most abundant fruit. It is needless for me to trace the growth of the Sunday School work from the time it was started by Raikes to the present day, as doubtless you are all well acquainted with its history. The magnificent proportions to which it has attained bear sufficient testimony to its rapid development and success. Could the mighty host of Sunday School workers which, to-day, occupy the arena of life pass before us in one grand panorama, the marvellous array would hardly appear credible to our own eyes. Its grand mission is such that no earthly obstacle can cause it to fail of success. Its improved methods of instruction only serve to make it more attractive. By the use of the International Lessons, and in a large measure, the same hymn books, the Sunday Schools throughout christendom are bound together once every week in harmonious union by the ties of the same gospel thought, and of the same sweet songs of Zion.

What a contrast between the Sunday School of the first and second centuries and that of the nineteenth century? Who can realize the differences between the primitive and the modern Sunday School? The one surrounded by the darkness of idolatry, the other environed by the light of spiritual day; the one a star shining alone in the reign of intellectual midnight, the other a still brighter star shedding forth its light as a brilliant adjunct to the mild rays of religious enlightenment; the one with no aid to guide it in its work but the undeveloped ideas of the early Christians, the other with a world of thought and experience to help it along; the one oppressed by the enemies of Christianity, the other encouraged in every possible manner. Such are some of the differences which exist, though we can form no just conception of their greatness.

But while to-day, the Sunday School is so far ahead of its ancestor in every particular, it has not yet reached the top round of the ladder of development. There are, still, communities in our own land where the Sunday School is unknown, and there are also communities in which its work is carried on in a very imperfect manner. It is for devising, and considering the best plans in pushing forward this work, for receiving new inspiration, and for acquiring a knowledge of our progress that we have assembled here in convention. While other organizations of similar character are marching forward imbuing heart and soul with the responsibility of this cause, we must not be idle. Our hopes of future denominational progress, our success in suppressing the mighty strong-holds of vice and superstition, everything that pertains to our future welfare as an organization, depends mainly upon our activity in this grand cause.

It is the young Christian who is capable of doing the greatest amount of good in life. It is the one who in youth receives the water of life from the fountain of divine knowledge who makes the valiant soldier in the army of God. Our earliest impressions are those which shape our destiny. Where are they whose character have been molded and whose objects in life have been stamped upon them by the lessons learned and the truths inculcated while attending the Sunday School? We find them all around us. In every department of life they are toiling for the completion of some grand and noble end. Inspired by the truths of the Bible they cause the spirit of thrift and energy to be felt wherever they go. Electrified by the fact of having something for which to live they kindle the flame of action within the breasts of all with whomsoever they come in contact. As the live coal kindles aflame, so the youthful member of the Sunday School aflame with the fire of sacred love breathes religious interest within the nostrils of his associates.

A nobler cause or one of more importance in forming the character of the coming generations is not to be found. Hailing its progress as a happy omen to the universal spread of the gospel truth, and honoring with gratitude its strong advocates of the past, with bright hopes we turn and look through the telescope of divine revelation into the future, and behold the Sunday School, marvelous

in strength, lofty in perfection, and its mission sublime, welcomed by all the nations of the earth.

HERBERT SCHOLTZ.

My Visit to Pleasant Grove, Va.

YOUNGVILLE, N. C., July 24.—DEAR BRO. BARRETT.—It was my privilege to visit Pleasant Grove, Va., the first Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday after preaching, the Ladies Missionary Society was called to order and the services were of much interest. The members of this Society are good, earnest, Christian workers. They sent up to our last Annual Conference \$17.75. From the church we went out to Bro. E. T. Pierce's and dined. Bro. P. has moved into his new mansion. It is pleasant to visit so interesting a family and such a hospitable home. The night was spent with J. J. Russell and his pleasant family. Bro. Russell is one of the best Christian men I know, a dear lover of the Christian church and has a generous heart. This was the first time he ever saw our little boy, that he named after himself. (Jones, Russell Klapp) and Dr. U. J. Jones, Rev. D. F. Jones, Rev. Sam P. Jones and all the balance of the good Jones' Sunday morning we drove out to the church (though very feeble) and met a very large congregation, after bringing in some chairs in the aisles, the most of the congregation were seated. The writer, ex-pastor, preached the funeral sermon in memory of Mrs. Jennie Gaill, a member of this church. She was said to have been a good Christian lady and died a very happy death.

The afternoon was spent with Bro. Joseph Carlton and his kind family. This is a pleasant home and the pastor always feels at home while there. We then drove down to Bro. T. A. S. Boyd's where we spent the night enjoying the hospitalities of this home, filled with generous hearts. Bro. Boyd is one of the most liberal hearted men I ever saw. If he had the means at his command the Christian church would never want. Friday night was spent at the comfortable home of Bro. O. Farmer, who is collector and Treasurer of this church. Bro. F. is very quiet, but a great lover of the Christian church. We were very glad to meet the many friends around Pleasant Grove again. Mrs. Klapp and Russell were with me. I served this church as pastor for four years; received—members into the church during that time. Made more than a thousand pastoral visits. Enlarged the audience room, put in two (2) devotional rooms, in which to spend a few minutes in private prayer for the success of the pastor, in the hours of service. One is to be used for a Sunday School library room and the other for the pastor's study. A hall in the rear, and doubtless the finest recess in the Conference. The work was very gratifying. Rev. P. T. Klapp is their present pastor and if he should remain as long, no doubt a great work will be done there. The good Lord bless the work there and elsewhere.

S. B. KLAPP.

The Elder Brother.

I want the people who weep over works of fiction to read this story. I know it will interest them. A great king who lived in a golden palace had two sons. The younger one wandered away in early boyhood. When far from home he was kidnapped by an enemy of the king and taken to the frontier of the kingdom. Then his captor brought him up in wretchedness and rags, yet made him believe he was happy. He told him that the king, his father, was a tyrant; that if he went back this cruel and unnatural parent would beat him with remorseless severity. The king's enemy so wrought upon the fears of the king's son that, when messengers came asking him to return, and promising him a cordial welcome, he would not believe them. He called them liars and cheats and drove them away.

Of course there were times when the boy felt lonely and sad. The filial instinct was in his heart, and would wake up now and then. He longed for a better home than that in which his captor kept him, but he knew not where to seek it, for he had no faith in the father from whom he had wandered. He believed what he was told—that the royal palace was a dreary dungeon.

But one day a stranger visited this wanderer. He was travel-soiled; he was weary. He had evidently come a long journey. He took the hero of our story aside, and said to him, 'I am your elder brother. Our father is so anxious for your return that he has sent me to seek and to bring you. He loves you; I love you. His home is not a dungeon, but a house with many mansions, and in it is a place fitted up expressly for you.'

The stranger was so frank and so kind that he made a deep impression on the young man. But what would his master say? He had sold himself to his father's enemy. He was closely watched and could not hope to escape. Possibly, however, the master could be induced to let him

go. The elder brother agreed to try. He went to the master and said, 'I would like to buy your slave. What is the price?' The master suspected that he was the king's son, and was determined to outwit him if he could. So he replied, 'I will sell the young man on only one condition, and that is that you pay for him ten ounces of blood from your heart.' He meant, of course, to try to kill the elder brother and still keep his slave. But the elder brother consented to the terms. He bared his body and told them to take his blood. The master was glad enough to do it. The younger brother looked on while the elder groaned under the weapons of his tormentors, then grew faint, and finally ceased to breathe. He was now convinced that his brother did really love him, and he cried, 'O, that he were alive again, for then I would go with him.' While he was speaking the elder brother opened his eyes. He had brought with him from his father's house the elixir of life. He had taken it just before they began to drain the blood from his heart. That elixir was powerful enough to restore him fully, to fill his veins with new blood and set his heart beating. So he rose up as from the dead. And then the wanderer said, 'I know now that this cruel master has deceived me. I have faith in my brother, who has come to die for me. I have faith in my father, who sent him to die. I will go back with him. I will be a loyal and obedient son.' And then appeared a great army that had escorted the elder brother, and had waited in ambush the result of his mission. Against this army the master was powerless, and with shouts of triumph the soldiers accompanied the brothers to their father's house.

They found the father waiting to welcome them. He had a feast prepared at which his wandering, wayward son was the honored guest. He clothed him in royal robes. He placed a crown of gold upon his head. He built for him a city whose foundations were precious stones, whose gates were pearls, and whose streets were transparent gold. In this city were trees bearing all kinds of luscious fruits, and a fresh crop every month, and their leaves healed all kinds of sickness. So that there was in the golden home no pain, or sorrow, or crying, or death. O, how glad that his elder brother came and redeemed him. O, how grateful he was to him and his father for all they had done for him. O, how happy he was in that beautiful home!

Now, is there any story in the most glowing fiction of the day more touching and more wonderful than this? It exceeds the tales of fairyland and the Arabian Nights. And yet all our readers know it is true. It is but a meagre epitome of the story of the cross. It is only a faint and feeble presentation of the love of Christ for sinners, and of the love of God in Christ for those who despise and reject him.

And the moral is evident. Readers of romance, there is no book so full of what you admire and love as the Bible. And while other wonder books are false, it is not only true, but true for you. It comes with a personal appeal. It tells not only of a father; but of your Father; of your Elder Brother, and of the home that may be yours if you will only believe in the love of him who died to redeem you.—Obadiah Oldschool, in The Interior

"The Bright Side."

'My work is done,' said the Countess of Huntingdon, when eighty-four years old. 'I have nothing to do but to go to my Father. When an aged Christian can echo these words there is no fear of death, only joyful anticipation. The reward is assured if the work has been done. After the cross borne patiently comes the crown to be worn victoriously. I am on the bright side of seventy,' said an aged man of God; 'the bright side being nearer to everlasting glory.' J. Pulsford writes, 'As ripe fruit is sweeter than green fruit so is age sweeter than youth, provided the youth were grafted into Christ. As harvest time is a brighter time than seed time, that is, if youth were a seed time, for good as the completion of a work is more glorious than the beginning, so is age more glorious than youth, that is, if the foundation of the work of God was laid in youth. As sailing into port is a happier thing than the voyage, so is age happier than youth, that is when the voyage from youth is made, with Christ at the helm.'

One of the most delightful and comforting thoughts to the aged is that of the waiting friends on the other shore.' Soon after his daughter died an aged, faithful Christian said:—'Sailors on a voyage will drink 'Friends astern' till they are half way over; then, Friends ahead! With me it has been 'Friends ahead!' this long time!'

What a precious thought: 'Friends ahead!' The dead beloved ones which we have 'lost awhile.' But old age is not always a time of mere 'waiting' with folded hands for the call to come up higher. There are old people whose mental and physical strength keeps them working even unto the very borders of their graves. Socrates at an extreme old age learned to play on musical instruments; Petrarch between seventy and eighty began the study of Latin; Oato at eighty began Greek, and Ludovico at one hundred and fifteen wrote the memoirs of his own time.—Christian at Work.

All God's people are praying people. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer. What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise. Renew your subscription.

A Great Home Circle.

The Bible describes Heaven as a great home circle. Well, now, that would be a very queer home circle where the members did not know each other. The Bible describes death as a sleep. If we know each other before we go to sleep shall we not know each other after we wake up? Oh, yes. We will know each other a great deal better then than now, 'for now,' says the apostle, 'we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.' It will be my purified, enthroned and glorified body gazing on your purified, enthroned and glorified body.

Now I demand, if you believe the Bible, that you take this theory of future recognition out of the realm of speculation and surmise into the region of positive certainty, and no more keep saying, 'I hope it is so; I have an idea it is so; I guess it is so.' Be able to say, with all the concentrated energy of body, mind and soul, 'I know it is so.'

There are in addition to these Bible arguments other reasons why I accept this theory. In the first place because the rejection of it implies the entire obliteration of our memory. Can it be possible that we shall forget forever those with whose walk, look, manner we have been so long familiar? Will death come, and with a sharp, keen blade hew away this faculty of memory? Abraham said to Dives, 'Son, remember.' If the exiled and the lost remember, will not the enthroned remember?

You know very well that our joy in any circumstance is augmented by its companionship of our friends. We cannot see a picture with less than four eyes, or hear a song with less than four ears. We want some one beside us with whom to exchange glances and sympathies; and I suppose the joy of Heaven is to be augmented by the fact that we are to have our friends with us when there rise before us the thrones of the blessed, and when there surges up in our ears the jubilate of the saved. Heaven is not a contraction, it is an expansion. If I know you here I will know you better there. Here I see you with only two eyes, but there the soul shall have a million eyes. It will be immortality gazing on immortality—ransomed spirit in colloquy with ransomed spirit—Victor beside victor. When John Evans, the Scotch minister, was seated in his study his wife came in and said to him, 'My dear, do you think we will know each other in Heaven?' He turned to her and said, 'My dear, do you think we will be bigger folks in Heaven than we are here?'—Talmage.

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All God's people are praying people. You may as soon find a living man without breath, as a living Christian without prayer. What we win by prayer, we must wear with praise.

Giving and Taking Offence.

Everybody admits the sinfulness of giving offence, because he can do that while thinking of his neighbor; but comparatively few reflect upon the impropriety of taking offence, because to do that would involve self-condemnation. Yet they are kindred faults, and commonly also neighbors. He who is slow to put a wrong construction on the words or actions of another, will generally be a tender in his dealings with his fellowmen. But the man who rides rough-shod over the feelings of others will be the first to make an outcry if one wounds his sensibilities. The root of both evils is self-conceit. In giving offence the man is enamored in his own way, and so determined to have it that he is unconsciously, it may be, yet obliviously, of the rights of others to have opinions of their own, and to set them forth with much earnestness as they can command. It may be true that his way is the best way; but if they are members of the association equally with him, they have a right to be consulted, and they need to be persuaded. Now, dogmatism is not persuasion, and dictation is not one of the most approved methods of convincing; and so when a man expects that the mere putting through of his scheme is all that is to be cared for, he cannot fail to give offence all around. He has forgotten what was due to others in the exaggerated estimate which he has formed of the value of his own protest.—Christian at Work.

If any of my hearers are still in the sinners' ranks let them not fear that they are now called to labor.—Lo, God's table is set. He invites you to eat. It is a grand symposium worthy of the great King who gives it, 'a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees.' There is bread of heaven, angels' food, and water of life that you may drink and never thirst again. There are wine and milk to give you strength and to make you merry always.

The table is large enough to seat all who come. Invitations are out to all people in the wide world. This is not yet the great wedding feast which God will make for his Son, but it is nevertheless a grand and sumptuous banquet. Then crowds innumerable shall set around the Father's board in heaven, but even now millions may take their place at his table on earth. Tens of millions are now eating with joyful minds before the Lord. Will not you join the throng? Yes, come, eat and drink, that you too may have joy.

Long ago the first invitations were sent out. God called Abraham to a land flowing with milk and honey. He summoned Israel out of Egypt and gave them manna. Isaiah cried, 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk, without money and without price.' So also the later prophets. Then came John the Baptist announcing that the day was near. All Israel was bidden, and many were the hints thrown out that the Gentiles also should be welcomed to the feast.

Finally Jesus came, God's Son, the Lamb appointed for our Passover. He sent forth his apostles to bid all nations come. They lifted up their voice and cried, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' The work of redemption was complete. Atonement has been made for sin. The vilest sinners could now wash in the Fountain and be clean. He could don the robe of righteousness bought with the Saviour's blood. None need fear that he was not fit to appear before the presence of the Almighty.

Israel was called; then the Samaritans, and last the Gentile. The apostle published the invitations, and their successors. The call has been repeated day by day for near two thousand years. It is heard now from thousands of mouths; at church; at school and in the home. You hear it, at this hour, as it fell from the Saviour's own lips. I repeat the self same call, 'Come for all things are now ready.' Will you? Behold, all is now ready.—From the barrel of a Lutheran Clergyman.

We too often proceed in the wrong way with our children. We preach and scold and punish to make them good, but do very little which truly makes them happy. Children are so easily pleased, but we too often make the mistake of giving that which is to them so little pleasure. More of mother's love, time, and attention, and fewer tucks on the tiny garment would make many a child happier.

God may accept our prayers, and yet not grant us the very thing we pray for.

We have not what we ask, when we ask, we know not what.

Where we have a tent God must have an altar.

Only be steadfast, never wavrr, Nor seek earth's favor, But rest:

Why should'st thou fill to-day with sorrow, About to-morrow; My heart?

A Changed Hymn.

"He hath put a new song into my mouth."—Psalm xi, 3. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him, and the Lord shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders."—Deut. xxxii, 12. "Jesus, lover of my soul," Bids me in his bosom stay, And though billows round me roll, I am safely hid away; For he holds me in his arms, Quite beyond the tempest's reach, And he whispers to my heart, Words unknown to human speech. "Other refuge have I none," He my habitations is; Here no evil can befall, I am kept in perfect peace. I am covered all day long, With the shadow of his wing; Dwell in safety through the night, Walking, this is what I sing: "Thou, O Christ, art all I want," Rests my helpless soul on thee; Thou wilt never leave alone, Thou hast saved my soul from death, Thou hast scattered doubts and fears, And the sunshine of thy face Sweetly drieth all my tears.

"Thou of life the fountain art," Thou dost wash me white as snow; I'm content to dwell apart From all else, thy love to know. Blessed Sun of Righteousness, I so love to look on thee, That my eyes are growing blind To the things once dear to me.

NUGGETS OF GOLD.

It matters not how long we live but how.—Daily's Feast.

Wisdom is oftimes nearer when we stoop than when we soar.—Wordsworth.

How immense appear to us the sins we have not committed.—Mme. Necker.

He approaches nearest to the gods who knows how to be silent, even though he is in the right.—Cato.

Let us humbly accept from God even our own nature, and treat it charitably, firmly, intelligently.—Amiel.

Be brief; for it is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed the deeper they burn.—Dr. Southey.

If thou art wise, thou knowest thine own ignorance, and thou art ignorant if thou knowest not thyself.—Luther.

The pleasantest things in the world are pleasant thoughts, and the great art in life is to have as many of them as possible.

True piety and morality are inseparable. Piety is love with its face toward God; and morality is love with its face toward man.

When thou art obliged to speak, be sure to speak the truth; for education is half way to lying, and lying is the whole way to hell.

Sin is never at a stop; if we do not retreat from it, we shall advance in it, and the further on we go the more we have to come back.—Barrow.

One thought sublimely sweet, Where'er my wanderings be, One star to guide my feet; The Lord hath need of me.—Josephine Wolcott.

Let it never be forgotten that there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, and that human salvation is by him, and him only. If we fail of his salvation, we fail altogether.

If there is such a thing as its being forever too late to mend under the organic and physical natural law, probably, add more than probably, there is such a thing under the moral natural law.—Joseph Cook.

Ah, well! for us all, some sweet hope lies Deeply buried from human eyes; And, in the hereafter, angels may Roll the stone from its grave whither!—J. G. Whittier.

We must either conquer sin or be conquered and destroyed by it. It is 'war to the death.' 'Use sin,' said Richard Baxter, 'as it will use you—spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murderer of the world; kill it, or it will kill you.'

Faith will frequently find force, numbers, discipline, knowledge, and strategic skill against it. Yet, being nothing less than a direct dependence on the Almighty, it will be stronger than any or all of its antagonists. 'And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even, our faith.'—H. Clay Trumbull.