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REMARKS ON THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.—NO. IV.

BY REV. J. W. LOGUE.

CHAPTER III.—OF GOD'S ETERNAL DECREE.

I. God from all eternity did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass; yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

II. Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath he not decreed any thing because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions.

III. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.

IV. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

V. Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereunto; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

VI. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

VII. The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice.

VIII. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereunto, may, from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So shall this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence, and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation, to all that sincerely obey the Gospel.

VOL. XXXIX.—I.—12

## Sabbath-School Department.

(For the Evangelical Repository and United Presbyterian Review.)

### NO. I.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A PROPER SABBATH-SCHOOL, BIBLE-CLASS, AND CONGREGATIONAL LITERATURE, TO THE FORMING OF ENLIGHTENED AND EFFICIENT CHRISTIANS.

"Give attendance to *reading*." 1 Tim. iv. 13.

"Bring with thee the *books*, but especially the parchments." 2 Tim. iv. 13.

"While you are young, avail yourselves of every opportunity of acquiring useful knowledge. The sources of information are innumerable; the principal, however, are *books* and living men."—*Dr. Alexander's Counsels to the Young*.

"*Books* are the Glass of Counsel to dress ourselves by. They are feeless counsellors; no delaying patrons; of easy access; never sending away empty any client or petitioner. They are for company, the best friends; in doubt, counsellors; and in damps, comforters."—*Whitlock*.

We propose to offer a few observations on the importance of a proper religious literature to the right spiritual training of the young, as well as to the formation of well-developed and well-proportioned Christian character in those of maturer years. And in order to make these observations more practical, we shall, in connexion with these topics, point out, as means to these ends, the benefits of Sabbath-School, Bible-class, and congregational libraries.

#### I. SABBATH-SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

It would savour of disrespect to intelligent Sabbath-School teachers, to launch out in general declamation on the benefits to be derived to the young from the Sabbath-School library. That these are great and inestimable is now almost universally conceded. Our few remarks on this part of our subject will aim to give some hints, which may conduce to make those benefits still greater, and to guard against the evils incident to the institution of the Sabbath-School library through want of due care, vigilance, and assiduity, in those who are responsible for its efficient operation. We would say, then:—

1. *Let all the books in the library be carefully selected.* There must be a suitable variety. There should be books suited for the little ones, and books for the grown boys and girls. There must be books explaining and enforcing the blessed and glorious *doctrines* of saving grace, and books *exemplifying* these in the lives of Christian persons. There should be books of Bible exposition and on the fulfilling of prophecy; books of religious biography, history, and geography; books on Popery and other systems of false religion; books on temperance, on slavery, and on missions. Much care, with a considerable amount of acquaintance with suitable books, is requisite in making proper selections. Many unsuitable books, professing to be designed for Sabbath-School libraries, are afloat, which have much in them to attract the curiosity of the young. But as the end and object of the Sabbath-School library is to instruct and educate youth in the principles and practice of vital Christianity, all books, however captivating to the young, which do not bear more or less directly on these ends, must be set aside. The tastes and partialities of youth are not alone to be consulted, but the primary question should be—What will conduce to their best interests? and they must be taught to acquiesce with cheerful confidence in the superior judgment of their teachers. Seeing that the selection of proper books is a matter of so much importance, it would be well to intrust that responsible duty to a committee of the most pious and experienced of the Sabbath-School teachers; and in the discharge of that duty, certainly the assistance and counsel of the pastor—especially if he is one who has been at pains to familiarize himself with the intellectual and religious condition of his Sabbath School, and who keeps up a tolerable

acquaintance with the current Sabbath School literature of the day, as well as of former times—must be invaluable.

2. *The teacher has a most important part to perform, as the proper medium of dispensing the books among the scholars.* Next in importance to the selection of proper books for the Sabbath School library, is the proper distribution of them among the pupils. The responsibility of this work naturally falls to the teachers. Each teacher is, or ought to be, the best judge of what books are suited to his class, and to each pupil in it; since none is so well acquainted as he with the capacity and attainments of his scholars. On him rests, therefore, the duty of seeing that each of them be furnished with a suitable book. But this implies that the teacher should be, himself, acquainted with the books he distributes to his class. The mention of this may possibly produce a smile on the countenance of some teachers, who may be disposed, perhaps, to regard it as a utopian idea, that the teacher should be familiarly acquainted with the books he dispenses to his pupils. We own, indeed, that there is too much cause to fear that it is often far, very far otherwise in practice. We have frequently sighed, and almost wept with pity for the Sabbath School child, into whose hands its teacher has just placed a *good* book, indeed, but one totally unsuited to its early years and childish attainments,—a book, perhaps, well adapted to a mature and robust Christian, consisting of that “strong meat” of which the Apostle speaks, which “belongeth to them that are of full age,” but not at all suited to “babes,” (Heb. v. 13, 14;) a book which the teacher probably judged to be suitable solely on account of its bulk and price! a book which he had never read, nor even glanced at; nor of which he had the least knowledge, even from the recommendation of others. This is as if a common school teacher should put his raw pupil in Arithmetic at once into Vulgar Fractions instead of Notation; or as if a teacher of Mathematics should at once plunge an unfortunate tyro into the abstruse mysteries of the Integral and Differential Calculus. But it is impracticable, insists an objector, that the teacher should read all the books he dispenses to his pupils. Why impracticable? Nothing is easier, or more pleasant. Nothing would be more conducive to the teacher’s benefit than to cultivate an extensive and intimate acquaintance with the Sabbath School literature. Nothing would so increase his influence for good over his pupils, than their discovering that their teacher has an intelligent acquaintance with, and a just appreciation of, the books he recommends to them; as well as that he possesses a correct knowledge of what books are suited to each of them. All that is necessary is, that when the teacher who has—say five or six scholars, (which we presume is a fair average of the number of a class,) takes from the library five or six books, one for each scholar, he should at the same time take two or three for himself. Let all the scholars of the class read all those five or six books taken out for them, passing them from one to another weekly, or every two weeks, under the eye of the teacher. It will thus take five or six weeks at least, till the scholars can all read over those five or six books; or it may be ten or twelve weeks, supposing they be exchanged in two weeks only. Now, during this time, the teacher, (who can surely read as fast and as diligently as his pupils, at least,) has had time to read over a fresh batch of five or six books to succeed the former. Or, in order that too many books may not be withdrawn from the library at a time, and be in the hands of the teachers, all that is absolutely necessary to this plan is, that the teacher take out but one book at a time, which, having read and found suitable, he will put into the hands of the sole pupil who shall have read all the five or six books then circulating in his class, returning to the library, at the same time, the solitary book which shall have been read by all his pupils. Thus each pupil gets a fresh book, and the teacher likewise. But little inconvenience, however, will arise to a well sustained and well stocked Sabbath School library, although each of the ten to twenty-five teach-

ers should have out several books for his private examination and personal reading. Nor is it essential, should your engagements sometimes prevent, that you read every book through in order to become acquainted with its character and its suitability to your pupils. A glance at even a few pages will frequently enable you, especially if you are a practised critic, to form a good judgment of a book, though, of course, the more fully acquainted you make yourself with each book the better.

Some may think that such a course as is here recommended would operate as an undue restraint on the young in regard to the selection of books. But we own we are not favourable to allowing the children to run riot among the books of the Sabbath School Library. In regard to the reading of books, as well as to other things, children should be taught and trained cheerfully to acquiesce in the superior judgment of their parents and teachers. The writer has been often distressed to witness the caprice of spoiled Sabbath School children, (for there are Sabbath School Teachers who *spoil* their pupils, as well as parents who spoil their children.) Some children will read only what they call "story books!" and others will toss away, without examination even, a book put into their hands by their teacher, because, as they express it, "it has not enough of *pictures* in it!" The Sabbath School teacher who gratifies the unreasonable caprices of his scholar, is strangely forgetful of one of the main ends and objects of his vocation, which is to train and discipline the young to the practice of all the Christian virtues; and, among others, to the habit of cheerful deference and obedience to the wishes and directions of their parents and teachers. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," and we may legitimately add, your *teachers* also, "for this is right." (Eph. vi. 1.)

In this connexion we would make a further suggestion, viz.: that the teacher would find it also a very improving and delightful thing, to have frequently a little talk with his pupils in open class, about the books which teachers and scholars have so read. This would stimulate both teacher and pupils to read so as they may remember, and may be able to talk intelligently on, what they read. Five or ten minutes occasionally spent in this way, after getting through the regular lessons, would be well spent time. Let us give an example of such a Sabbath School class *conversazione*. (*Persons*. A lady teacher and her female class.)

*Teacher*. Well, my dear scholars, here is a book which you have all read, I suppose; it is a book exemplifying the Christian life; it is called "Fanny, the Flower Girl." Lucy, my dear, tell us something about this Fanny, the Flower Girl.

*Lucy*. Oh! she was a sweet little English girl; her mother died when she was born; and her father, who was poor, went to America, and left her in charge of a pious tradesman's wife, called Mrs. Newton. Mrs. Newton's husband soon died, and she and Fanny then became poor. They removed from the country to London. Mrs. Newton, whom Fanny called her grandmother, taught little Fanny many good things out of the Bible while she was very young; and when old enough, taught her to read it herself, and to commit to memory many verses of it. She taught her also to pray, and to keep God's commandments.

*Teacher*. That will do, Lucy; I see you have read this nice book, and recollect a good deal of it.

Now, Susy, love, tell us something more about Fanny, the Flower Girl, beginning where Lucy has left off.

*Susan*. Well, teacher, I remember that after good Mrs. Newton and Fanny went to London, Mrs. Newton became sick and frail, and they became very poor. Mrs. Newton prayed to God to provide for them their daily bread. Fanny, of her own accord, proposed to go out to the country every morning to a gardener's to buy fresh flowers to sell in the public market in London,

in order to help to support her grandmother and herself. She did so, and this was why she was called "Fanny, the Flower Girl." She became a favourite with the gardener, as she was a good and sweet little child; always smiling, and cheerful, and happy; so he gave her the prettiest flowers at a cheap price. These Fanny took home to her grandmother, Mrs. Newton, and made them up in pretty bunches for sale. Mrs. Newton, though sick, delighted to look at and admire the lovely flowers which Fanny spread out on the table, that her kind grandmother might look at them, and talk to her of the goodness and love of God to us in making beautiful flowers for our gratification. Mrs. Newton would often tell Fanny what Solomon said about the *Rose of Sharon* and the *lily of the valleys*, and also what Jesus says about the *lilies* in the Sermon on the Mount. Then, when she had got her pretty flowers all nicely tied in bunches, Fanny would set off to the market-place to sell them. You might see her there, on a lovely summer morning, with her basket of flowers on her arm, and hear her crying, in her pretty singing tone, as people passed thronging by—ladies in "whistling silks," (as the poet Cowper bath it,) and gentlemen in fine clothes—you might hear her singing out: "Come, buy my flowers! flowers fresh and fair!" and, perhaps, as a gentleman stopped a moment, and looked at her basket, you might see her seize a pretty bunch, and, holding it up before him, say: "Please to see, sir! a pretty rose, sir! and these pinks and mignonette! and a bunch of jessamine, sir! and all for one penny, sir!" One would pass her by; while another would, perhaps, look at her pretty face and smile; and another would say, "what a nice child!" but few would buy any of her pretty flowers, and so help the poor child to get bread for her kind guardian, Mrs. Newton, and herself.

*Teacher.* That will do, Susan; I see you recollect a great deal about the good little flower girl, and her troubles and disappointments. Learn from her example, my dear children, to expect trials and crosses in this life, and learn to bear them cheerfully and without murmuring against God, who sends these on us for our good. For I recollect that we are told, that Fanny did not feel vexed, nor sit down and cry, and give up, when unfeeling persons would toss up and disarrange the pretty bunches of flowers in her basket; but would quietly and cheerfully place them in order again, and then resume her pleasant cry in her pretty singing tone: "Come, buy my flowers! flowers fresh and fair!"

"Now, Jennie, you must have your turn now; tell us something more about Fanny. Can you tell us how she came to be acquainted with good Mr. Walton, and how kind a friend he became to her and her grandmother, Mrs. Newton?"

*Jennie.* "Oh yes, dear teacher, I recollect all about it. One day, when Fanny was in the market, offering, as usual, her pretty flowers for sale, a benevolent old gentleman, who was very fat, spoke kindly to her, and, to encourage her, bought three nice bunches of her flowers, for which he gave her sixpence, as he thought; which, indeed, was twice or thrice what Fanny asked for them. But he made a mistake, and gave her a gold piece instead, called a half sovereign, which happened to be in the same vest pocket as the sixpence. Both are about the same size, but the one is gold, and the other is silver. When the fat gentleman, as Fanny called him, (whose name she afterwards learned was Mr. Walton,) had put, as he thought, the sixpence into Fanny's hand, saying, 'Here is sixpence for you,' he hurried off as fast as he could. Then Fanny turned to her friend, the lame vegetable seller, beside whose stall she was standing with her flowers, and cried: "Sixpence! a whole sixpence! and all at once! What will grandmother say now? See!" opening her hand at the same time and exhibiting the piece. The vegetable man, looking at it closely, exclaimed: "Eh! what is this? Why, this is a half-sovereign! it is worth twenty sixpences." It was some little time till Fanny could compre-

hend that the fat gentleman had made a mistake; but as soon as she understood it, although the vegetable seller advised her to keep it, and take it home to her grandmother, who would know, he said to her, what to do with it, she felt that it was not hers, and that it would be *stealing* to keep it. So, setting down her flower-basket beside the stall of her friend the vegetable seller, she ran after the fat gentleman as fast as she could, who, by this time, had got a considerable way ahead. However, pushing her way through the crowds of people in the market-place, she at length overtook him. He was walking on slowly, wiping the drops from his forehead, for he was very stout, and it was a hot summer morning. When Fanny came up with him, she was quite out of breath with running, and it was some time till she could say: 'See, sir; you said you gave me sixpence, and Mr. Williams says there are twenty sixpences in this little bit of money.' On this, Mr. Walton exclaimed, in surprise, 'Dear me! is it possible? Could I have done such a thing?' and he began to fumble in his waistcoat pocket, and in it he found the sixpence which he thought he had given to Fanny. Mr. Walton was so much pleased with Fanny's honesty that he gave her two sixpences instead of one. And this was only the beginning of his kindness to Fanny and her grandmother, Mrs. Newton; for he inquired of her where she lived, and he soon came and paid them a visit in their humble dwelling; and finding that, though poor, Mrs. Newton was a pious person, and that it was her good teaching from the Bible that had taught Fanny to be honest, and that it was her duty to return the half-sovereign which he had given her in a mistake, he became ever after their best friend. He gave Mrs. Newton a half-sovereign for Fanny, and another for herself. And soon after, as Mrs. Newton continued sick, he removed them to a nice cottage with a pretty garden, near his own residence in the country, in the neighbourhood of London; where Mrs. Newton got better, and where Fanny grew up a good and lovely girl, pious, and industrious, and beloved by all. Mr. Walton often came and visited them. At length, very unexpectedly to them all, Fanny's father returned from America, after having been many years away, and after they had long supposed him dead. He had become tolerably rich. He sought them out. He settled near good Mr. Walton's, where he bought a farm with a good house on it, and Fanny became her father's housekeeper; and good Mrs. Newton, her grandmother, as she called her, lived with them. Fanny was glad to have it in her power thus to show her affection and gratitude to her best friend, who had been so kind to her in her infancy and girlhood days.

*Teacher.*—That will do. We have not time to hear any more about Fanny, the flower girl, now. I am pleased to find, my dear scholars, that you have all read Fanny's history with attention. You may all learn from it some good lessons. You see from it that *it is always best to do right*. If Fanny had kept the half-sovereign which Mr. Walton gave her by mistake, her conscience would have constantly told her she had as good as stolen it, and that would have made her unhappy; and, besides, she never would have gained the friendship of Mr. Walton, which was of so much importance to her in after life. So, my dear pupils, if *you* do right, you will obtain the favour of God and of good people, which will make you far happier in this world, even though you be poor, or sick, or distressed, than all you could possibly gain by breaking God's commandments could make you. And, besides that, what happiness will be in store for you in the world to come!

Let the teacher, on another occasion, take up some *doctrinal* book as the subject of a conversation with his or her class, and after eliciting from each pupil some intelligible account of its contents, let him or her familiarly explain from it and illustrate, in a way interesting to children, the blessed *doctrines of grace*; introducing, as occasion may serve, apposite anecdotes or reminiscences.

By judiciously following up such hints as these, we cannot but think that the Sabbath-school Library might become, both to teachers and scholars, a source of much more interest, instruction, and benefit, than it too often is. Children require moderate stimulants to mental exertion; and, indeed, so likewise do we teachers, who are but older children.

“Like children here we speak and think,  
Amused with childish toys;  
But when our powers their manhood reach,  
We'll scorn our present joys.”

It was our purpose to proceed to treat of the benefits of *libraries for the adult youth of the congregation*—for the young men and women forming the Bible classes; and also of the advantages of *congregational libraries* for the benefit of the members of the congregation generally; but these subjects we must defer for the present. If allowed an opportunity, however, we shall endeavour, at a future time, to present our views on these topics also, in another, or, it may be, in two consecutive papers.

WM. S. RENTOUL.

*Philadelphia, July, 1862.*

#### TRUTHFULNESS.

Truthfulness is the foundation of character, and to instil this virtue in the minds of children is of the highest importance; and any teacher who does not endeavour, by all proper means in his power, to ingraft and cultivate habits of truthfulness in the children committed to his charge, would be considered guilty of a breach of trust.

By truthfulness, we understand accuracy in stating facts, sincerity, candor and uprightness.

How, then, is a teacher to fulfil this portion of this high mission?

1. By his own example.—Scholars have keener perceptions on some points than we usually give them credit for? and if, for instance, they see the teacher has better order during the presence of visitors, or that extra work is done for a short time previous to examination, or that he does not, by his own example, endeavour to enforce that punctuality or neatness which he considers necessary in them, his admonitions and example will have little or no influence. A teacher should, therefore, at all times and in all respects, be what he wishes his scholars to be; and if this maxim be carefully carried out, he will soon find that what is called the moral tone of his class will be raised considerably.

2. Confidence of the children in him.—To gain the confidence of his children, the teacher must show an interest in their welfare: he must carefully and patiently listen to the tale of their little joys and griefs, which seem of no little consequence to him, yet are of great importance to them. Children are naturally fond of sympathy; yet, if the one whose name should be connected in their minds with all that is good and kind, treats them with such indifference, their sympathies with him are soon dried up, and the teacher no longer possesses any moral influence over them; he finds them reserved, and in some cases, deceitful; but if this confidence be gained, the child is no longer so strongly urged by fear, as to tell a lie.

3. Discouraging vanity.—One cause of untruthfulness is vanity. Most people love praise, and to claim it we sometimes lay claim to higher pretensions than justly belong to us. Children are actuated by the same motive—a desire of appearing better than they are—when they show a copied exercise as their own; when a vain child does wrong, it has a strong temptation to hide its fault by a falsehood, lest it should be less thought of. In such cases the teacher should endeavour to show the child how foolish and sinful vanity is.

4. By placing confidence in the children.—This is the most powerful of the