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I. Literary.

ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

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I SUPPOSE most of us would say the Sabbath-school had its origin in the work of Robert Raikes in 1781, in Gloucester, England. Moved by the need of the poor and ignorant children, he employed "four decent, well-disposed women" to gather and teach these boys and girls; for this labor each received a "shilling a week." He is called, therefore, "the founder of Sabbath schools."

But this is true only of the modern work. Raikes was unwittingly restoring the "old paths." He was undoubtedly led of the Spirit of God to bring the church back to God's statutes, in which he had commanded Israel to teach his laws to their children. Dr. Trumbull, in his lectures on the Sabbath-school at Yale, shows conclusively that in each synagogue there was a school for the young. Philo states that "the Jews were by parents and teachers instructed in the law from their earliest youth." Josephus corroborates this by showing it was not new in his day. About 80-70 B. C. Simon ben Shetach reestablished the system of schools in every synagogue in all Palestine. Edersheim states that "there is no reasonable doubt that such schools existed in all the synagogues, and that up to ten years of age the Bible was the only text-book." There was also such a school in the temple. In this Jesus was found asking and answering questions when twelve years of age.

II. Editorial.

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THE NEW SUNDAY-SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

The Sunday-school has been made a special feature in this issue of the *MAGAZINE*, and it is with some degree of self-congratulation that we give our readers the four articles on this subject. The first article points out the position of the Sunday-school in the history of the church. The second one gives the history in the Southern Presbyterian Church. Dr. Phillips has done a great deal of work on this article, and gives much valuable information and many interesting and suggestive statements. The third and fourth articles are by two gentlemen who are at the head of one of the very best of Sabbath-schools, and from experience they advocate the graded system.

What is known as the New Sunday-school movement stands for the following things:

1. *A graded system of lessons.* "The great need of the church at present is to combine all the approved subjects of instruction into a complete, thorough, symmetrical and practical graded course for all our scholars."

2. *Careful and complete organization in the school.* This can be accomplished by division of the school into departments according to grade; by careful classification of the pupils in the different grades; by reports to the parents; by promotions and awards. It will be noticed that the names of the departments as given by Dr. Phillips and Mr. Crane differ slightly.

The names are somewhat arbitrary, but a uniform terminology is desirable for use on the lesson papers adapted to the different grades.

3. *Trained teachers.* These are furnished by normal classes and institutes. The report to the Assembly of 1901 by the *ad interim* Committee on Graded Lessons in the Sabbath-school, has this sentence: "We are convinced by experience, reading and conference that most of the serious difficulties in modern Sabbath-school work are due more to defective teaching than to a defective lesson system." The normal class should furnish teachers trained for their work. The institute should quicken the zeal and suggest new methods of teaching. The need of earnest teachers is certainly very great. It is a wonder that in 1900 the average attendance of scholars was as high as 59 per cent., when that of officers and teachers was only 48 per cent.

4. *Separate class-rooms.* This is regarded as a necessity in the day-school. Why should it not be in the Sabbath-school?

Our discreet old church has been debating with great deliberation whether she shall add to her slow but sure-moving machinery the new apparatus of the New Sunday-school movement. The argument urged in favor of this is the necessity of employing the same methods that a first-class day-school employs. But the Presbyterian constituency has been inclined to view this apparatus askance, and the General Assembly seems to have felt that it must be handled gingerly. The last Assembly did not commit itself even to the extent indicated by the following: "Grading has been done by many of our very best schools, and the experience of those who have tried it successfully is that more and better work is done. It should be incumbent upon every school to conform to some system of careful grading." The report of the committee from which this extract is taken was docketed to be considered at the next Assembly. However, institutes and normal classes were formally approved, and a General Superintendent appointed to do some general agitating.

Moved by "the conviction that our Sunday-school interest is not what it should be," the church was led to this election of a General Superintendent; and now, under the vigorous impulse of Dr. Phillips, she is gradually waking up to the fact that she did a good thing. Dr. Phillips is convincing her that this lack of efficiency in the work can be remedied by advocating

and working for and applying the modern Sunday-school methods.

J. R. R.

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