WHAT is the pulpit? Is it an elevated and inclosed platform in a church, conspicuously fronting the audience as they sit in the pews or descend the aisles—a stately structure, elaborately carved from marble, or oak, or rosewood, richly decorated with velvet or damask—the most notable feature in an edifice on which architectural art has lavished its resources?

Is it a rough dry-goods box set on end in a low-roofed frontier school-house, cheaply but
neatly upholstered with chintz, deftly plaited by the fingers of some godly woman, to whom elegance in architecture is a recollection of her girlhood?

Is it a stump from which the ax of the backwoodsman has felled a huge forest tree, in the midst of a grove that shades the group of worshipers gathered from cabin homes to listen to the itinerant missionary?

Yes, it is either of these—all of these. No, it is neither of them. It is more than either, greater than either, more and greater than all.

The pulpit, as we speak of it to-day, is the power which may have its point of manifestation and action in some such place or structure; which may have either of those for its instrument. It is an intellectual power. It is a spiritual power. It is a human power. It is a divine power. It is the power of genuine, gifted, educated, consecrated manhood. It is the marvelous human power of speech, of uttering rational thought; the power of instructing, convincing, persuading human minds; the power which men call eloquence. It is the
power of the Holy Ghost, manifesting his divine wisdom and might "through the foolishness of preaching," in the weakness of human speech. It is a personal power. It is the carved and ornamental desk with a man in it. It is the rude box with a man behind it. It is the forest stump with a man on it. In either case it is a man of mind and culture of some sort, whether he got it in schools or not; in either case a man of piety, in whom the Holy Ghost dwells, an eloquent man—according to Quinctilian's definition, "An upright man, who understands speaking;" a Christian orator such as Apollos was; a good man who understands speaking; a man "mighty in the Scriptures," able to fetch the material of his discourse from the sacred pages, and able to set it forth in just and luminous exposition. We mean such a personal, living, holy, mighty power when we speak of the pulpit.

What is the Sabbath-school? Is it a dozen, or a score, or a hundred of ragged children, unschooled during the week—children of parents whose ignorance, or vice, or poverty, with its
hard necessity of slavish toil, prevents them from giving their children even elementary education—such children allured from the streets on their one day of leisure into some cheap room and patiently taught by benevolent men and women; taught the alphabet, taught cleanliness, taught decency, taught elementary lessons of virtue, taught Bible stories, Bible verses, Christian hymns, taught the Gospel of Christ?

Yes, the Sabbath-school has been all this from the beginning. It is all this now. God forbid that it should ever cease to be all this. But it has become much besides all this. The Sabbath school to-day is the Church's institute of biblical instruction. It is her provision for her catechumens. It is the system of agencies by which the Church endeavors to make her children and youth acquainted with the written revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures. The scope of this institution has, within the last few years, been much extended, its methods much improved, its efficiency greatly increased. It now enlists much of the best talent and education of the Church, lay and clerical.
It claims a large share of the best literature of the Church. It brings into use the forces of association, of organization, of statistical investigation, of concerted study and concerted prayer. It is showing itself capable of systematizing and organizing biblical study for all classes and ages and conditions of persons in all our congregations, without thereby diminishing—nay, thereby greatly enhancing—its efficiency as a missionary agency.

Each of these two Church powers may act directly upon the other, favorably affecting or influencing it, making it other and better in its own sphere and for its own ends than it otherwise would be.

The pulpit may and ought to exert a direct and powerful influence upon the Sabbath-school, making it a better, wiser, safer, and more efficient agency than it could be without or apart from the pulpit. Probably this will not be doubted by any who have had experience of the effort to sustain and carry on a Sabbath-school in some remote neighborhood where there is no preaching, and no resident
minister. Useful and peculiarly necessary as the Sabbath-school is in such neighborhoods, such Christian laborers have not failed to wish often and earnestly for the influence which, in other spheres, they have felt coming from the pulpit. They are sure to long for the coming of that holy power, and they fail not to hail its coming as the introduction of a new era, not only in the general religious history of the place, but specifically in their own Sabbath-school work. In most of our communities the pulpit and the Sabbath-schools are existing, and are at work in connection. We inquire, What are some of the ways in which the pulpit may benefit the Sabbath-school, that is, may increase its efficiency and excellence?

1. The pulpit should teach the teachers. It is evidently the duty of every Sabbath-school teacher to be a diligent, earnest, constant student of the Bible. He is immediately responsible for giving instruction on a definite Bible lesson every Sabbath-day. In the forcible language of Dr. Cox, he has no right
"to affect to teach before he has effected to learn." He ought to go to his class every time only after careful and thorough study of his lesson. As much as in him lies, he ought to be able to explain the lesson as a whole, stating correctly its scope and aim, and also to give the import and force of every verse, every sentence, every phrase and term in it. Its historical allusions; its geographical references; its metaphors; its doctrine; the duty it inculcates—all ought to be ready in the teacher's mind, and all plumed with appropriate illustrations, fitted to send it home like an arrow from the hand of the archer. How shall the teacher get this preparation? From books—Commentaries, concordances, introductions, encyclopædias; from newspapers and lesson papers? Certainly all these are to be diligently used, so far as teachers can have them, and perhaps now all can have at least these periodical helps. But has not the pastor far more time for such study than most of the teachers? Has not he had special education, and years of antecedent study on such Bible
themes? Has he not been trained for, and con-
secrated to, a work of which this is an eminent
part? Who else can make you understand a
Scripture passage so well? Who else can
throw so much light upon it, or make the
light so shine from it into your mind, as your
own minister? I am not intimating that ex-
position is the whole work of the pulpit. I rec-
ognize the higher and more solemn function
of enforcing the truth, of propelling it by the
forces of eloquent utterance, through the clar-
ified understanding, into the deeper places of
the heart, grappling it fast to the conscience,
and pressing it home in all its mandatory
power upon the will, capturing the very seat
of government in the human soul, bringing its
ruling forces into subjection to Christ. But I
do intimate that faithful, thorough, honest ex-
position is the beginning of preaching—is the
process whereby the "weapon is brought forth
from its scabbard," the smooth stones gathered
from the brook. I hold that expounding the
sacred text is not only thus the foundation of
effective preaching, but is on its own account
an important function of the pulpit, whereby all the people should, from Sabbath to Sabbath, be made more and more familiar with the true meaning of the Bible. Brethren in the ministry, have you any other hearers for whom it is so well worth while to do this work of instruction with studious and painstaking care as for your Sabbath-school teachers? Sabbath-school teachers, can any one else do this work for you so well as your own minister? Does not true biblical exposition drop like the rain, distill as the dew from his lips, and fall on your attentive spirits with far more genial, more fructifying power than you can get it from any other source?

2. The pulpit should teach the parents also. The Sabbath-school teacher is not a substitute for the parent; he is the helper of the parent. The Sabbath-school is not directly and positively a Divine institution; the family is. The Sabbath-school teacher, as such, is not directly appointed and commissioned by God; the parent is. The parent teaches and rules, and conducts divine worship by the clearest divine
right. The Sabbath-school teacher avails himself of an instrumentality devised by men, but godly men, to help parents, and it has this sufficient divine sanction, that God's word directs us all, as we have opportunity, to "do good unto all men." But let us never forget that it is as a helper to parents, and only thus, that the Sabbath-school can fulfill its highest and truest ends.

The Christian parent welcomes this aid as the intelligent parent welcomes the aid of schools and colleges for the general education of his children; and even in our Sabbath-school work for the children of ungodly parents, our aim should be, if possible, to win and waken them to care for their children. Perhaps we can oftenest and best do this by assuming that they do care for them, and from the first modestly proposing ourselves to them as helpers in a work which is properly and responsibly theirs. But I am speaking now of the pulpit, and of its influence over parents who are, or may be brought, within its reach. The pastor cannot be in earnest in his work
without seeing that parents, as such, are peculiarly proper subjects of his care. He cannot move them to true earnestness for the salvation of their children without rousing them to interest in the Sabbath-school, disposing them to sympathize with the teachers, and to unite with the teachers in prayer and effort in behalf of their children.

3. The pulpit rouses teachers, parents, and scholars. As I have already intimated, the didactic function of the pulpit is not its highest or ultimate function. This is preparatory to its work of persuasion and impulsion. Preaching first enlightens, that it may next arouse and move to earnest and right activity. It should have this effect upon all the Sabbath-school work—upon all the parties to that work, children, parents, and teachers. Thus the pulpit must perpetually vivify the Sabbath-school, evermore brood over it with life-imparting warmth and care and love.

Reciprocally, the Sabbath-school may, and should, exert a powerful and good influence upon the pulpit. The preacher, who is asso-
ciated with a corps of earnest, faithful, prayerful Sabbath-school teachers; who studies and consults and plans and prays with them for the welfare of their classes, for the salvation of their pupils; who visits the Sabbath-school every Sabbath, or rather is always at home in it; who knows every class by name or number; who has in his mind’s eye, as he sits in his study, the position of each class, and the usual aspect of its members and its teacher; who often sits down with the classes, one by one, in succession, and enters into their lessons, their questions, their doubts, their difficulties, their fears, their anxieties, their hopes, their loves, their joys; whose hand—every little hand there has some time grasped; up into whose eyes every timid eye there has looked, and seen fatherly love and care; whose heart has yearned toward every child there as the shepherd’s heart for the lamb which he gathers with his arm and carries in his bosom; and to whose listening ear the caroling of their young voices is the sweetest of earth’s music; such a minister will preach as he could not
without that specific culture, that peculiar enriching of all the capacities of his being. Not stilted and stately and cold rhetoric will exhibit itself in his pulpit, but simple, earnest, intelligible, persuasive words will flow forth from it. Such a preacher is likely to be what Cowper sketched, drawing from Paul's design:

"Simple, grave, sincere;  
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain,  
And plain in manner; decent, solemn, chaste,  
And natural in gesture; much impressed  
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,  
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds  
May feel it too; affectionate in look,  
And tender in address, as well becomes  
A messenger of grace to guilty men."

We have now to consider what the pulpit and the Sabbath-school ought to do for each other. Not only may each of these exert a direct influence upon the other, improving its quality, enhancing its power, but each can give the other its best opportunity.

Only by the advocacy of the pulpit can the Sabbath-school gain and keep its true and
proper position in the mind and heart of the Church. It must not be left to make its own way by a self-assertion which mars its character, and robs it of its grace and loveliness. The particular Sabbath-school should know its pastor as its protector, its defender, its solicitor. The Sabbath-school, as a Church institution, is coming to know the Ecclesiastical bodies as its thoughtful guardians. It sees itself recognized by them in the most honorable way. It is not necessary for it to lift up its own voice (which is a treble voice) in unseemly clamor for consideration. The masculine voices which sound from the pulpits of the land are making themselves heard in its behalf. Whatever the Sabbath-school needs of human help the pulpit will demand for it. Whatever the pulpit in this land persistently demands it always gets.

On the other hand, the Sabbath-school may and should do much to prepare the hearers to be benefited by the preaching which they hear from the pulpit. There is no other such preparation for profitable hearing of Gospel preaching as the study of the Bible. That is
the best preaching which disposes its hearers to “search the Scriptures daily, whether these things are so,” and they are the best hearers who do thus search the Scriptures. The idea of taking whatever is uttered from the lips of the preacher with unquestioning, implicit faith is not a Protestant idea. We need not hesitate to say, it is not a Christian idea. It is not the Bible idea. The Bible is and must be the authoritative Divine source of our preaching. We have no right to preach anything else than what we believe to be clearly taught in the Bible, or fairly deduced from it. Every thing, therefore, which makes our hearers acquainted with the Bible, prepares them to hear with intelligent discrimination, and with real benefit. And this is the very work of the Sabbath-school, its peculiar work, its great work—the work which it is doing now more and better than ever before. Its leaders and laborers, lay and clerical, are more distinctly than ever recognizing this; are making more extensive, more thorough and more scholarly provision for its fulfillment. I surely be-
lieve that there never were before so many people, old and young, studying the Scriptures, earnestly and thoroughly, as now; nor ever before was the scholarship of the world lending so much, so various, and so excellent help to all classes of intellects for such study. To me this seems a most hopeful fact. Let the mind of the people, the mind of the world, be thoroughly roused to and engaged in the study of the Bible, and the mind of the world will believe in the Bible. We need not fear all the attacks upon it. Neglect of it, ignorance of it, is the only thing to be feared.

Brethren in the ministry, let us recognize and improve our great opportunity. Let us gird up ourselves to the wise use of it. This is what the Sabbath-school is doing, and may more and more be made to do, for our pulpits, for us in our pulpits. It is setting the people before us awake to inquiry on biblical themes, on all the great questions to which the Bible calls attention, and on which it sheds the only true light. I say it is thus presenting the people. I speak not only of the children, for I
think that we are getting rid of the old notion that the Sabbath-school is for children only. We are coming to the realization of the idea that the study of the Bible is never a finished study, and that the school in which the Bible is the only study is a school from which we can never graduate till we enter the school of heaven.

I also say to Sabbath-school teachers, it is your high privilege and honor thus to prepare your pupils for the work which the pulpit is ordained to do upon them, and to present them before the pulpit as the prepared subjects for that work. To this also Christian men and women are awaking. “How can we secure that Sabbath-school scholars shall be habitual attendants upon the preaching of the Gospel?” is one of the prominent questions of our time in Sabbath-school associations. There is no greater question, and I believe we are coming swiftly to the happy answer to it. That is the very thing that our Sabbath-school teachers can do, and when their attention is thoroughly and generally awak-
ened to it, it will be done. So numerous, so intelligent, so influential a body of men and women, having so much love to Christ and to his Church, and being themselves so much indebted to the pulpit for all that they hold most precious, as our Sabbath-school teachers know themselves to be, are not going to teach their scholars to turn their backs on the pulpit and the sanctuary. They are just now finding out that by simple inadvertence they have largely been neglecting to take their pupils by the hand and lead them from the Sabbath-school into the sanctuary, and set them before the pulpit to receive its instructions and its influences; but they are alarmed at this discovery, and they are, I am sure, about to correct the mistake. It is hereafter to be the ambition of Sabbath-school teachers to train church-goers and intelligent hearers of the Gospel. Thus, coming to a full and happy understanding of each other, working our way through years of experiment out into this clear light, Sabbath-school teachers and ministers of the Gospel—the Sabbath-school and the pulpit—are nearly
ready, and are fast getting ready for that great work which together they are to do.

The Sabbath-school and the pulpit together, the Church's agencies for preaching the word and for catechetical instruction, being happily combined and harmonized, are to work together to bring the entire community under the influence of the Gospel. The particular aspect of this great achievement to which I desire now to secure attention is the uniting of old and young—people of all ages—in this salutary attention to the Gospel, which is the Divine method of securing their salvation.

In Old Testament prophecy, after that lovely picture of the wolf and lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the ox, feeding and lying down together, and a little child leading them;—after that, I know of nothing more beautiful than that prediction of Messiah's forerunner, with which the Old Testament closes: "And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse." That solemn liability to a curse lies
over against every great opportunity for a blessing. But let us look at the opportunity. Seeing, seizing, wisely improving that, we surely escape the peril. It belongs to the Gospel, coming into human hearts and homes, to unite old and young, children and parents, in holier and happier fellowship than that of nature.

Can this turning the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers, be accomplished in any other way, or by any other means, so well as by the combined and co-operative action of these two powers, the Sabbath-school and the pulpit? Are they not fitted to each other, and together fitted for this high use with a wisdom that is more than human? Have not they been predestined by God to be developed in this age, and to come forth together soon, in their beautiful harmony and marvelous adaptation, ready for the great work to be done for Christ?

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