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## I. Literary.

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### ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE SABBATH SCHOOL.

BY REV. J. W. ROSEBRO, D. D.

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.

## THE BIBLE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

BY REV. ROBERT P. KERR, D. D.

The most important work done among civilized peoples is the training of the young, because thereby are the characters of the succeeding generation formed. In the United States by far the greater part of this work is done by the public schools. These institutions have, to a very large degree, the making of the characters of the men and women of the nation. Are they doing their work wisely and well? In the secular branches they are undoubtedly thorough, but they give almost no moral and religious teaching, and they are undertaking, on a gigantic scale, to make character. The consequence of the banishment of the Bible as a text-book from the public schools is patent to every one, for the masses of the people are becoming more and more irreligious, and have less and less regard for law, human and divine.

If the state is going into the business of making character, for this is what education means, it is folly to expect success without the teaching of God's Word. We believe the greatest peril to the American people lies in the banishment of the Bible from the curricula of the public schools. What the end will be it is appalling to think.

The common objection to the teaching of the Bible in the schools is that it would lead to sectarian contentions. Knowing that the Bible is a text-book in the public schools of the Province of Quebec, Canada, I wrote to my friend, the Rev. D. H. MacVicar, D. D., chairman of the Protestant Board of Public School Commissioners of Montreal, asking his experience as to the working of their system. The following is his answer :

“MONTREAL, *November 21, 1901.*

“MY DEAR DR. KERR: Pressure of work has to this moment hindered me answering your note of the 16th inst.

“I have been on the Protestant Board of School Commissioners for Montreal twenty-five years; I am, and have been, chairman of the board for many years. I know its working thoroughly; I am glad to tell you that we teach the contents of the

Bible as fully as time will permit, as thoroughly as we teach arithmetic, history, geography and other subjects of our curriculum. In our schools we have pupils from all Protestant denominations, *e. g.*, Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregational, Baptist, Unitarian and Jews. All take the prescribed course of instruction. Even the Jews in many instances. Probably the vast majority of cases make no objection to taking New Testament lessons. Pupils are allowed, at the discretion of parents, to absent themselves from these lessons, but the facts are as stated.

"Still more. We do not pretend to teach the Bible as literature or ethics, but just as it is, the Word of God, the Creator and Saviour of men, to whom all owe reverence, love and obedience. And I am especially glad to tell you that during my somewhat long term of service on the board, we have not had the semblance of difficulty or contention among the denominations.

"Roman Catholic pupils attend our schools in considerable numbers.

"You will understand that these remarks apply to the Protestant schools of Montreal.

"I send you printed matter from which you will learn more of our work in Montreal.

"Yours truly,

D. H. MACVICAR,

*"President Montreal Theological College."*

The following is a sample of the examinations to which the pupils in the schools of Montreal are subjected, and it shows how thoroughly the Bible is taught there :

#### JANUARY TESTS, 1901.

##### *Scripture.*

##### SIXTH YEAR.

##### FIRST HALF.

TIME, ONE HOUR

3. 1. When the disciples had seen Jesus taken up into heaven, whom did they find standing by them? (1) What did the apostles while waiting at Jerusalem? (1) What were they to wait there for? (1)
4. 2. What happened on the day of Pentecost? (2) Who preached on that occasion? (1) How many were converted? [1]

5. 3. Write an account of the healing of the lame man at the gate of the temple.
3. 4. Why were Peter and John put into prison? [2] What was the result of their trial? [1]
3. 5. What happened to the apostles when imprisoned a second time? [2] When brought before the council, by whose advice were they set free? [1]
7. 6. Why were deacons appointed? (2) Give the names of three of them. [3] Which of them was accused of blasphemy? [1] What was done with him. [1]
6. 7. Write an account of the conversion of Saul.
6. 8. Who was Cornelius? [1] What vision did Peter have which made him ready to go to him when sent for? [3] What was Peter taught by his vision? [2]
4. 9. Who put James the brother of John to death? [1] What happened to Peter when imprisoned by him? [Give particulars.] [3]
9. 10. Quote as nearly as you can, in the words of Scripture, three of the following: [3 Marks each.]
- [a] What the disciples were told when they had seen Jesus ascend into heaven.
- [b] Peter's answer on the day of Pentecost when the people asked, "What shall we do?"
- [c] Stephen's prayer for himself—for his enemies.
- [d] The character given of Cornelius.
- [e] The answer of Peter and John when ordered not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus.

If the Bible can be taught in the public schools of Canada, why may it not be taught in those of the United States?

*Richmond, Va.*