

Obstacles to Sunday School Success.

IRREGULARITY AND NON-ATTENDANCE OF TEACHERS.

This is admitted to be the second great obstacle in the way of success in Sunday School work. It stands next in magnitude to the indifference and neglect of parents. Scholars are the first requisites to a school; teachers the second. These sustain the most direct and intimate relation and dependence upon each other in the essential arrangements of a school. It is necessary to secure the attendance of scholars as a primary element of success; but the attendance cannot possibly be secured with promptness and regularity without the prompt and regular co-operation of the teacher. The effect on a class of the frequent absence of a teacher, is much the same in a Sunday School that it would be in a day school; the direct tendency is to destroy the interest and break it up.

A very few principles, briefly stated, lying at the basis of the teachers' work, if observed, will secure attendance and faithfulness to their sacred, God-given duties.

1. There should be a deep sense of obligation—feeling that God in his providence has pointed out this work in answer to prayer, put it within reach, and requires it. A work that can and must be done; a local demand imposed by the relations, positions, and talents of the person. With this will be intimately associated a desire to do good, and a willingness to sacrifice, if necessary, to accomplish it.

2. This will spring forth from the spirit of interest and love for the work in general, and the members of the class in particular. It is a happy constitutional tendency with us that we become interested in and attached to those with whom we are called to associate intimately, for the purpose of benefitting and instructing. We think about them, and what we shall do for them, and pray for them, and thus cannot do otherwise than feel deeply and solicitously interested in their behalf. This will produce vivacity of spirit, impressiveness of manner, earnest zeal, and access to their hearts that will be most unremittingly followed up week after week.

3. Then every effort will be made to be always present with the class. Instead of seeking obstacles and excuses, they will all be easily overcome. The work is taken hold of to be attended to and accomplished. There will be a determination to succeed. A sense of responsibility will lead us to give the class and position the attention it deserves. Instead of being prompted temporarily by curiosity, we will take hold of it as work for Christ and souls, under the hire of the great Lord of the vineyard who has said: "Whatsoever is right I will give you." We can surely trust him through the brief day of our labor, till the night and the reward comes.

"What does it Represent?"

"It is not my fault that I am not converted," said a young man in conversation with his pastor. "You tell me there is nothing I can do; so I wait. I am willing enough, whenever the Lord sees fit to receive me."

The pastor arose, and taking a picture from a portfolio that lay upon his study-table, silently laid it before his visitor.

"How beautiful!" he exclaimed, after a few moments' close study of the figure. "I have never seen a face of the Saviour that pleased me better. But what does it represent? He seems to be knocking, and I suppose behind that overgrowth of weeds there is a door, but it is not very prominent."

"Just so; and what a mercy that at the door of hearts, obscured by rank shoots of sin, Jesus still finds a place to knock. Alas, that it should ever be in vain. Have you considered that while there is nothing you can do to bribe the Spirit, as so many think they can, you may, in the lowliness of a contrite heart, invite him?"

"By sitting still and waiting for the Lord to convert you in your present temper of mind, are you not priding yourself upon your willingness, and drawing comparisons favorable to self between your position and that of those who profess no desire to be saved? Is not that weedy vine of self-satisfaction overspreading the door of your heart, stifling the sound of that gracious knock and the voice of Him who stands without? Only the soul loathing itself, and looking for salvation in its utter unworthiness, recognizes Him who invites the heavy-laden by sin to come."—*Am. Mess.*

A FAITHFUL WITNESS.—John Jay, when an ambassador to France, was once in a company of infidels in Paris. They talked on recklessly, venting their spite at the Bible. Jay was silent. It troubled them. He did not pronounce their shibboleth. They could not go on while that grave, just, true man sat there a silent spectator, a sort of solemn judge, rivetting their gaze. No wonder his bearing forced them to speak, and when they asked, as if to relieve themselves of their confusion and provoke his acquiescence, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ?" his silence had prepared the way for his confusing and confounding answer: "I do and I thank God that I do." He was silent at the right time, and spoke at the right time, and when he spoke said the right thing.

God doth not willingly afflict any of his children. They always stand in absolute need at that very time of the affliction he sends. It could not be laid aside, nor delayed longer, nor entered for another, without hurt to their souls.

How to Work for Christ.

"I think that more than a thousand souls have been brought to Christ the last year," says an earnest, soul-loving German in the Northwest, who has labored in more than thirty revivals, and who, in season and out of season, is always intent upon the one work of seeking and saving the lost. In his simple, idiomatic style, he adds:

I labor all times for a revival. I have labored sometimes years, and sometimes only weeks or days, before the work begins. Sometimes I speak with preachers and other Christians, and we start meetings, and always has the Lord done some good through them. But what shall I say of my instrumentality? I cannot say through me, nor yet through others. Let God have all the glory.

I labor as colporteur. I go from house to house, talking of Jesus and sell my good books. One says to me, "I am not a Christian." I kneel down and pray in that family, and I feel the power of God in my soul. I think I cannot leave that house before that lady finds Jesus. I tell her, "Madam, give your heart to the Saviour." I went happy along, believing, praying, and thinking that lady will surely become a Christian, because God answered me, and I felt his answer in my soul. Soon after that she found the Lord.

I go into another house. I persuade the mother and oldest daughter to go to the prayer-meeting and give their hearts to Jesus, and take the rest of the family along. They promise me, and I believe God will finish that work too. I leave with them tracts and books.

In another house where I sell books and speak for Jesus, father and two daughters request our prayers. The father and one daughter find Jesus there. The Christian wife and mother is very happy about it. I see the family altar raised, and I have God's blessing again in my soul. I leave with my new-born brother Dorrdrige's Rise and Progress, and I rejoice again in our good books.

Now I go again into a meeting. Thirteen souls kneel, looking for Jesus. Some find him there, and others in their homes. One man, with a Universalist wife, said, "You have given me an excellent tract, Why do you Swear? Well, sir, the right tract came to the right man." I stay over night, sell books, and pray there, and my prayer is that they may find Jesus.

The more closely we follow Jesus, the less will our sympathy be limited to our own particular church or party, and the more cordially shall we exhibit as well as cherish the desire,—"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."

The most knowing are the most desirous of knowledge; the most virtuous are the most desirous of improvement in virtue. On the contrary, the ignorant imagine themselves wise enough; the vicious are, in their own opinion, good enough.

There is a difference between happiness and wisdom—he that thinks himself the happiest man, really is so; but he that thinks himself the wisest man, is most generally found to be the biggest fool.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Rivers.

Oh, stream of life, that sweetly glidest
Through pleasant scenes and landscapes fair,
Thy silver current here dividest,
And turns to rivers rolling—where?

These banks are lined with fairest flowers,
The waters glow with purple light,
Sweet music hastens on the hours,—
The hours that lead unto the night.

The other stream has joys immortal,
That never fail, though long the way,
Reaching at last a golden portal
That opens to eternal day.

If lured by all the heart holds dearest,
I launch down the first away,
Ever when hope and joy seem nearest
My light shall fail, my heart shall die.

If to the calm, the silent river
I turn my bark with hopeful heart,
Unto my soul I take forever
A blessed joy, "the better part."

Adown this river ever ringing,
I hear the echoes of the song
That welcomes home, with joyful singing,
Those that have toiled and struggled long.

While with the songs on the bright river,
The stream that lured my steps at first,
I hear the moaning cries forever,
From those that there their all have lost.

Sometimes along my silent river
Will come a flash of golden light,
From the bright door that opens ever
To those that strive unto the right.

And the Great Love is ever turning
The darkest hour into the day,
Granting at last to all our yearning
A peaceful home within for aye.

June 7th, 1868.

ZETA.

For the Christian Messenger.

Our Foreign Mission.

Dear Editor,—

From a Letter received from Rev. A. R. R. Crawley, dated "Rangoon, March 13th," it appears that he and sister C. were on their way to America, for the special benefit of their children, who were accompanying them. Bro. C. had committed the general supervision of our native preachers, &c., to Rev. E. A. Stevens, D.D. of Rangoon. This faithful Brother will undoubtedly discharge the duty satisfactorily.—The care, however, of our beloved sister DeWolfe is entrusted to our worthy and heroic sister Mrs. M. B. Ingalls, as appears from the following Letter, addressed by her to the Secretary of the American Board.

It will doubtless afford sincere pleasure to the relatives of Miss DeWolfe, and her numerous friends, as also to all who feel interested in the success of the Mission, to learn, that a cordial welcome was evidently awaiting her on her arrival, with a favorable prospect of her comfort and usefulness.

Ever yours,

C. TUPPER, Secretary.

Tremont, Aylesford, June 8, 1868.

RANGOON, BURMAH, March 23rd, 1868.

To Rev. C. Tupper, D. D.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I was present when your letter to Mr. Rose was opened by his wife, and, in the changes which have come it devolves upon me to write:

When I first returned, now 3 months ago, Mr. Crawley, who was then in Bassien, asked me to look after his people during his absence of 18 months; and asked me also to take Miss DeWolfe for him. I had just brought out a young lady myself; but I accepted the offer, and have long since made a place in my heart for the dear Sister. Last week Mr. Crawley left for America, and then we made the more permanent arrangement. I am now going to my jungle home, Thoang Zai, 120 miles north of this, where I have commenced a house. I leave Miss Adams, who is learning the language, with Messrs. Rose and Brayton, who will meet and receive Miss DeWolfe when she comes; which we hope will be in May or June. As soon as I learn that she is here, I shall come down and take them to our home.

This will be in the rainy season. After the two are a little settled, I shall leave them for a fortnight, while I go over the flooded rice fields to work for Mr. Crawley's people. Mr. Crawley gives me the companion for Miss Adams, and in return I can then work for him. In this way I shall work for his people as the Lord may open the way. My home, Thoang Zai, is the place for her to acquire the language; and I hope you will be pleased with the arrangement.

We shall have schools, and with them an English department; so before Miss DeWolfe gets the language she can do something for these people each day. It seems all right, for I can give them a great work to do, and I shall be pleased to give them my heart and home. Then, be assured, that your lady will be not only cared for, but welcomed. Miss Adams is delighted too with the prospect of this companion. She shall be one with us, whether in health or sickness, joy or sorrow. As Miss Adams is my special care, so shall be your young lady. Very soon after this reaches you, Mr. Crawley will be in your midst. Mr. and Mrs. Crawley are our best people. The Lord has blessed them, and we hope they can return to us. I feel that my own brother and sister are gone. You may be proud and thankful for having such agents as these two. After this I shall write to them and then (D. V.) you shall hear more about Miss DeWolfe.

Mr. and Mrs. Burpee were labourers with my dear husband in Akyule; and they are still cherished in the memory of the people. I longed to visit your part of the world while I was in the States, but I could not. I met Mrs. Burpee in Ohio. Mr. Rose is away on a trip to Upper Burma.

With an assurance of my joy in receiving Miss DeWolfe, may I beg that you will pray for us and the native agents.

Yours in Christ,
MURILLA B. INGALLS.

For the Christian Messenger.

Truth Revealed.

MAT. XVII.

In Mat. xvii, 24—27, the Revised New Testament, published by the American Bible Union, brings to light interesting and co-incident truth.

Ver. 24. "The half shekel," twice, the Greek words being the same in both places; for 'tribute money,' and 'tribute,' of the Common Version. And 'the half-shekel' is explained at the foot of the page, by referring to Exodus xxx., 13, 15. "The half-shekel" also implies a customary, or yearly, offering.

'Tribute money' and 'tribute' would naturally remind many readers of the Bible of the question in Mat. xxii., 17, 'Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?' and would lead them to suppose a 'tribute,' or tax, for the Roman government was meant. Whereas 'the half-shekel' is intended, which every Israelite was originally commanded to give as atonement money when the census was taken, and this money was to be devoted to the service of the tabernacle. See Ex. xxx., 12—16. In the time of Nehemiah, the people agreed to pay one third of a shekel yearly for the service of the house of their God. Neh. x., 32. See also 2 Chron. xxiv., 6—10. And in the apostolic age, the Jewish historian Josephus speaks of 'that half-shekel which every one, by the custom of our country, offers to God'; a half-shekel every year * * *, as they were previously paying to the temple in Jerusalem.' Jos. Antiquities 18, 9 1; Jewish Wars 7, 6, 6.

Ver. 25. 'Jesus anticipated him,' that is, spoke first; for 'prevented him,' which would now be understood as meaning hindered him, and would consequently give an erroneous or confused idea. 'Sons,' for children; and in verse 26, 'Then are the sons free.' By the original law, and the consequent Jewish custom, every male Israelite was required to give 'a half shekel'—the rich no more than that, and the poor no less—for the service of the tabernacle, or the temple, God's house. According to the custom of 'the kings of the earth,' then, Jesus as the Son of the Great King could claim exemption from this tax for the support of his Father's house. Hence the aptness and force of the conclusion to which he comes: 'Then are the sons free.'

Ver. 27. 'A shekel,' for the loose and indefinite translation, 'piece of money.' As the law, and the custom founded on it, required every male Israelite of twenty years old and upward to give 'a half-shekel,' 'a shekel' would be the exact amount to be given for Jesus and Peter, 'a half-shekel' for each. So beautifully does one part of God's Word harmonize with every kindred part, when, by a full and correct translation, its divine light is allowed to shine forth in its clearness and purity! And yet this instance of its admirable harmony and beauty is entirely concealed, in the Common Version.

We may also notice with what strict fidelity our Lord conformed, both in heart and in outward act, to every requirement of duty. 'Thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness,' as our perfect Saviour and Exemplar. (Mat. iii., 15) AQUEDES.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

MRS. LYDIA PEARSON,

Daughter of the late Mr. George Morrison, was born in Granville, Feb. 4th, 1788. At an early age she obtained hope in Christ, and was "buried with Him in baptism." To the close of life she walked in unbroken fellowship with the Baptist Church where her lot was cast.

About 37 years ago Miss M. was united in marriage with Mr. John Pearson, of Cornwallis, whose former wife was Abigail Tupper, a sister of the writer. Her kind attentions to this worthy man, especially during his long-continued and distressing illness, endeared her greatly to the family of his former consort. Her Christian deportment secured for her the esteem of her acquaintance.

As she possessed some property by heirship, accumulated some by industry and frugality, and had some left her by her husband, she had a considerable amount at the close of her life. With this, sister P. furnished means for the comfort of several relatives, to whom it is quite acceptable and beneficial. Feeling interested in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in the spiritual welfare of her fellow creatures, she, with commendable zeal and generosity—well worthy of imitation—devoted \$400 to the cause of Missions. As our sister now departed declined to have the name of the donor made public during her life-time, these sums were acknowledged as from "A Friend to Christian Missions, Cornwallis." They were \$100 for the Foreign, \$100 for the Home, \$100 for the French, and \$100 for the Micmac Mission.

Sister Pearson became paralyzed and much enfeebled some years prior to her decease. During the last six months she was, in general, almost entirely helpless. Her last residence was with her nephew Stephen Burns, where every kind attention was paid her. The writer visited her frequently. At times her faith was triumphant. With a steadfast reliance on her beloved Saviour, she quietly passed away, May 22, 1868, at the age of 80 years.

Agreeably to her request, her remains were interred in Canard by the side of her departed husband, those of his former wife being laid on the other side.

A discourse was delivered on the occasion of sister P.'s decease by the writer, from 1 Cor. xv. 57.—*Com. by Rev. C. Tupper.*