

The Importance Of The Sunday School

By Glen Mayhew

The majority of people do not realise the great importance of a good Sunday School. Not only is this true in the average home, but in many Christian homes too.

God's word tells us, "train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." Very few do this, but those that do, have their children living for God.

To train means to practice, and to train a child for a Godly life, means to see that that child lives Godly. Much depends on the home, and much depends on the environment of a good Sunday School.

The Sunday School has a greater appeal to children in general than any other type of religious service. And by careful observation it has been found that the chances of a child being saved increases with each year of its

THE ABSENTEE

"Someone is absent," the Shepherd said,
As over my classbook He bent His head;
"For several Sundays absent, too,
So tell me, teacher, what did you do?"
"I didn't call as perhaps I should,
I wrote some cards but they did no good.
I've never heard and she never came,
So I decided to drop her name."

He answered gravely, "A flock was mine,
A hundred—no, there were ninety and nine.

For one was lost in the dark and cold,
So I sought that sheep who had left the fold.

The path was stony and edged with thorns,

But I kept on seeking, not counting the cost,

And, oh the joy when I found the lost."
Thus spoke the Shepherd in tender tone,
I looked, and lo—I was all alone;

But God a vision had sent to me,
To show His will toward the absentee.

—Selected

life until about the age of fifteen or sixteen and then it decreases. This being true, we can see how important it is to have a good Sunday School.

When God said: "Train up a child in the way he should go." He knew that in youth was the best time to get things planted in a child's heart and mind.

Drs. Holaday and Stoddard conducted experiments with (in U. S. A) over 3,000 grade-school children, high-school students, and adults to determine how much they remember from the movies they see. The eight-and-nine-year-old children were found to retain sixty per cent as much as the adults who saw the same picture. If therefore a father attends the theatre with an eight-year-old son or daughter, for every five points which the father noted the child noted at least three.

Another surprise which the investigators received was with reference to the amount remembered over a long period of time. The

old theory that children forget everything right away, as water flows off the proverbial duck's back, exploded completely when a second test was given the group after six weeks had elapsed. The eight-and-nine-year olds, third and fourth grades, still retained ninety-one per cent of what they knew at the time of the first test. Fifth and sixth grades remembered ninety per cent, and the high-school students eighty-eight per cent. The adults, strangely, had the lowest rank with eighty-two per cent. What the children receive with the pliability of wax they retain with the durability of marble.

In the light of these facts, the screen becomes a gigantic educational system with an instruction more successful than the present text-book variety. Books cannot vie with the screen. Pictures have two means of reaching the human consciousness, the visual and the auditory. Estimating conservatively, children retain as high as sixty per cent of what is seen at a movie; and where is the professor who has the courage to compare the record of his classes with this record of movie-instructed children?

With these facts before us and the fact that the Sunday School is made up largely of children and youth, shouldn't we push Sunday School work as never before? And can't we see how valuable the use of the flannel board and chalk talks might be in showing the gospel pictures?

Now let us take a look at some court records to see the importance of the Sunday School. Judge Jawcett of Brooklyn, New York, sentenced 4,000 boys and girls to state institutions. Out of this group only three were regular Sunday School pupils. Judge Tatum stated that of the approximately 3,500 boys and girls that have been brought into Juvenile Courts since he has been judge, only seventeen have had regular Sunday School attendance records.

The Alexander Insurance Company of Chicago says that burglar and hold-up insurance rates are twenty per cent less in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore and Pittsburgh, than in Cleveland, Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis and Los Angeles. The first five cities have the Bible in daily use in their schools, while the last five carefully shut it out.

If the teaching of the Bible in the public schools has such an influence on public life, shouldn't we expect it to do as much good or more when taught in the Sunday School?

As we see the value of the Sunday School, isn't it worth all the effort that we can put forth from now on to build up good Sunday Schools?

The work of building up good Sunday Schools is not an easy one. It takes all there is in us, and more. It takes the help of God. But the Word says: "Be not weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not."—Emmanuel.

Sunday School Visitation

I have a request to make of every teacher in our Sunday school," said the pastor, smiling, as he rose to his feet.

It was near the close of the regular monthly meeting of the teachers and officers of our Sunday school. Every eye was upon the speaker. Just what could his request be? He was such a kind, devoted pastor, always greatly concerned for the best interests of his people. From the oldest to the youngest, he shared their joys and sorrows, and he was al-

ways anxious for the well-being of everyone under his care.

"I want every teacher to visit the home of every pupil in her class, at least once each year," he said. "I hope you can manage more than one visit a year, but don't fail to make at least one. Please!" That is all he said.

I do not know what experience the other teachers had the following week, but mine was enough to cause me to do some deep thinking. I called at two homes the first night, and what a pleasant reception I had! I must confess I had never done any systematic visiting among my pupils—I had made several calls on the sick, but I had never called at their homes with the purpose of having a friendly chat with them about the Sunday school. I was amazed to discover how eager parents were to discuss the Sunday school and the religious development of their children.

I had never done any work which gave me such an insight into the real needs of my pupils. By the end of the week I had visited the homes of all the pupils in my class. The next Sunday morning I had ten smiling faces in my class—a perfect attendance—the first in many months. Several other classes had a perfect attendance, and I suspected that several others had done as I had—called at the homes of the pupils.

The attendance of our Sunday school began to grow, but it was not till the next teachers' meeting that the truth was revealed.

The teachers had called upon their pupils, and a more enthusiastic group of teachers you never saw. They had learned to know their pupils and their home environment. They began to realize just how deeply some of those pupils' parents were interested in their work. It humbled every teacher to know how great was the opportunity of teaching a group of children.

That was the beginning of greater things in our Sunday school. Slowly and gradually a feeling of warmth began to creep over our school. The old discipline problem of former days seemed to vanish into thin air. Many of the discipline problems centered in a misunderstanding between teacher and pupil. Somehow the pupils knew now that the teachers were interested in them and in their homes. And because the teachers knew home conditions, they were able to apply their teaching in a far more effective manner.

Almost every visit brought information about a neighbor who wanted to start a child in some good Sunday school. Just a friendly invitation and a request for one of the pupils to stop by for the new recruit brought many new pupils into our school.

This business of being a teacher in our school began to assume the mark of a sacred adventure. It began to be a joy to be a teacher—we no longer thought of it as a duty. Our teachers are all happy in their work, and our pupils are happy, too. We love our Sunday school because we have learned to love one another.—Sunday School Times.

WILL THE ROAD BE ANY EASIER?

Will the road be any easier
Because you've passed that way?
Has your travel helped another
On the weary road today?
Is the path a little smoother
In the place where you have trod?
And have you helped some other one
To find his way to God? —Selected