

Above all things to be avoided in story-telling are legends and myths. Because there is so little in the Bible about the childhood of our Saviour there is a tendency to introduce many pretty myths, such as the oxen-bowing down on Christmas night, and the story that when Jesus was a little boy he used to fashion in his play little birds of clay, and give them life, when they flew away.

Even worse are the so-called "myths from classical authors;" such as are not infrequently told to children in the kindergarten. For example, the children are told that the gods made man, made him round with two faces, four arms, etc., but he was so selfish the gods ordered him sliced in two, and that is why we now have our present form, with a flat back. Plato told this story to explain male and female, but it will certainly appear to any earnest Sunday school teacher that it is not to be compared with the Bible account of God creating man in his own image, and breathing into him the breath of life. Myths and legends confound the testimony of truth. Sunday school teachers, beware of them. It is not a legitimate or safe way to use the imagination of children.

Irregular Attendance in the Sunday School.

ALICE MAY DOUGLAS.

PERHAPS there is nothing, with the exception of the preaching of the pulpit, of more vital and eternal interest than the Sunday school; and there are few things conducted so loosely as Sunday school class work. This is true of the average Sunday school of all denominations. This sinful laxity is glaringly seen in the irregular attendance of the pupils. The fault lies generally with the teacher. Some teachers never keep a list of their scholars. They think they know their scholars so well they do not need that; yet they do not know them as well as their parents do, and parents keep a list of their children in the family Bible. One of the most impressive figures in the Bible is that of the Lamb's book in which is written the names of the redeemed. And the plantation song well says, "My God is a-writing all the time." If Christ needs to keep an exact record of his children in the school of life, do not we need to keep one of our spiritual children? One might as well have a bank full of money and no bank book as a class full of scholars and no list.

Irregular attendance is encouraged when the teacher pays no attention to it. Every Sunday some word or a card or Sunday school paper should be sent to every absent scholar. A

scholar absent for two consecutive Sundays should be called upon by the teacher. If absent for a longer time without reasonable excuse, another scholar should be sent to call for and to bring to church the missing pupil. If he does not then come, let some one call for him every Sunday until he returns to the Sunday school. If the child lives at such a distance that you can't call, send him a written invitation every week. Think what an impression such zeal will have upon the parents of that scholar. It may be the means of leading him to Christ.

Let the scholars know that you mark their attendance in your little book every Sabbath. If they deserve a word of praise in this matter don't withhold it. Offer prizes to those who show the best attendance during the year.

Another cause for irregular attendance is the indifference of the parents. They never attend divine service and do not encourage their children to attend. The only cure for this is to get those parents converted. If they won't go to the prayer meeting, they will probably not object to opening their house to such a service. And by the way, it is an excellent plan to have a prayer meeting for the mothers of the children. Ask them to meet you at your home or at the church to join prayers for the little ones.

Irregular attendance is often occasioned by reason of Sunday school tramps, meaning children that drift from one school to another just as they choose. That these may never be without the influence of some school the teacher should request the new teacher to whom they are going to report each scholar, if he or she should in turn leave that school.

The greatest difficulty I have ever met in irregular attendance is the excuse given by parents that their children cannot attend Sunday school because they cannot dress as well as others. I know of children who have cried for hours because their parents would not allow them to attend a Christmas or a Children's Day service. Other children beg and beg to come Sabbath after Sabbath, but are kept away from the same cause. Absentees of several weeks' or months' duration have often resulted from the same reason; and often the parents are churchgoing, even Christian people. The children have clothing good enough for day school, but the parents think that the better-dressed children of the Sabbath school may look down on those not dressed so well. I hope that all teachers do not meet this foolish excuse, which is none the less a difficulty to the work. One way to overcome it is to faithfully teach the scholars that all are equal in God's sight, and that pride and boasting are sinful.