

Our Contributors.

The Relation of Elder and Minister to the Sunday School.

BY J. B. H.

To my mind the Sunday School, as every organization of the Church, being under the control and authority of the Kirk Session, the minister should have supervision, but should not be expected nor required to take an active part in its work. We Presbyterians, expect much from the pulpit ministrations of the minister, and, therefore, he should be relieved of any other work than preaching and conducting Divine Service on the Lord's Day. If, however, the minister can find time to occasionally visit the Sunday School, thus satisfying himself, by talks with the Superintendent or teachers and examination of the scholars, that the doctrines of the Church are being inculcated and progress made in teaching the Word of God, such visits are very essential and most advantageous, while those engaged in the work of the Sunday School are encouraged, and often, in a quiet way, given valuable hints for improvement.

The ideal position for the Minister is to be a connecting link between the Church and the Sunday School; he should pray for the teachers and scholars in the services of the Church that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth; and in his visits urge the scholars to decide for Christ.

As the Sunday School is the nursery of the Church and from its ranks the workers of to-day are replenished, therefore, it is of vital importance that the religious teaching of the children is thorough and according to the tenets of the Church, so that when ready to be advanced from pupil to teacher there will not be the least doubt as to capability and fitness. No one should be more certain of this than the Minister and I incline to the view that every such promotion, recommended by the superintendent, should receive his sanction and approval before final adoption. I believe if this was more general much after unpleasantness might be avoided, and what we regard as insidious and erroneous teaching prevented.

The minister should be a member of any committee for purchasing books for the Sunday School library. There is nothing in connection with Sunday School work more important, for the influence of books on the minds of the young is incalculable, consequently the selection should be most carefully made and no one should be more jealous of the literature distributed than the Minister. He should be convinced that the books are in every way worthy to be in the library of the young; that they are not after, sensational, or erroneous in thought or teaching, but have high ideals of life, incite to noble endeavor and a devout spirit. The best of history, biography, missionary effort, or religious story should find a place, the tendency of every book being to lead to higher and better purpose.

When visiting amongst his people the Minister should become acquainted with the children, gain their confidence and seek to obtain any items of interest to communicate to their respective teachers in the Sunday School. Boys and girls are soon interested in those who are interested in them; and by the Minister being

their friend and carrying that friendship to the teacher—Minister, teacher and pupil become friends, the result of their amity being as far reaching as to often form the boy or girl's safeguard in the years to come, when battling with the world's temptations and fighting heroically its battles.

Then, by being the friend of the children and trusted by them, the Minister may, through the ministry of a little one, obtain admission into a non going church home, eventually bringing the inmates to the Saviour and winning them for Christ.

The Sunday School should be remembered in the services of the sanctuary by prayer or supplication; and every now and again special sermons should be preached by the Minister adapted for the juvenile mind, showing the children that they are not forgotten, and at these services every parent, as far as possible, and adult member should be present.

As regards the ruling elder and the Sunday School, he should be apt to teach, some of us ruling elders are not, sink the elder in the teacher and never allow the former office to obtrude, unless it be to check any tendency he may notice to introduce new fangled or unpresbyterian methods in the conducting of the school. Whilst forgetting for the time being, he is an elder he should ever remember that the session, to which he belongs, is the governing body within the Church and controls all other organizations, that to it the Sunday School is subservient and he should never encourage any independence of the Session. As a superintendent the elder should not have too many ideas of his own, arbitrarily insisting on their adoption; on the contrary he should encourage others to give their views and plans for furthering the interests of the scholars and if he sees merit in them use all his influence to have them adopted. With the teachers he should be courteous and considerate; with the pupils gentle and kind; knowing each one by name, taking an interest in the respective classes, tactful in advice, impartial in decision, having every teacher and scholar respecting him as superintendent and loving him as friend.

If a teacher, the elder should be more in the back ground than otherwise in the general work of the Sunday School, but foremost in loyalty to the Superintendent, supporting him in every effort for the advancement of the school and the improvement of the children. He should show by his actions that the Superintendent can always depend on him; be ready to do just what the Superintendent deems best whether that be to teach a Bible class or take charge of the infants. It is needless to add that wherever placed, whether as superintendent or teacher, he should go to his work well prepared by prayer and meditation. Like the minister it should be his endeavor to win the confidence of the pupils by taking an interest in them and their pursuits, knowing all about them and the families to which they belong, bringing before them the plan of salvation and urging them to become soldiers of the Cross. Besides the regular lesson for the day, he should, as should all teachers, inculcate habits of sobriety and morality, show the evils of intemperance and ungodly living, uphold truth and righteousness, teach that the seen and temporal are not the essential things of life but the unseen and eternal; and, last but not least, the elder should

insist on loyalty to the Church and its government, maintaining that the Minister should have the first place within the Church, and that he above all others is entitled to respect, esteem and love.

Concerning Accidents.

BY REV. ROBT. AYLWARD, B. A., PARKHILL.

There is nothing new, unfortunately about accidents. On the contrary they are all too common. Not a day passes but what they happen. Moreover, there is a striking similarity between most accidents. Now and then one stands out in bold prominence, defying rivalry, supreme in terror, awful in consequence. But as a rule the one that happened to-day is painfully like the one that happened yesterday. What is it that gives to an accident a startling reality? I reply it is largely a question of locality. So much depends upon where the accident happens. Accidents are happening everywhere and are never quite without interest, but when one occurs at our very door, and when by it familiar figures are removed and familiar friends are bereaved, then it is that our interest is stirred to the depths and the flow of our sympathy becomes a flood.

Why do accidents happen? Strictly speaking there is no such thing as an accident. In other words that which happens happens for a sufficient reason and never otherwise. Every burning house was set alight by some means. In like manner every accident that happens is the result of some cause. Accidents sometimes happen through carelessness; and this is always true, when by reasonable foresight it might have been avoided. But do not the innocent suffer through carelessness? Yes, for ever since the world was, the innocent suffer not only because of the guilty but also because of the careless. But if the innocent occasionally suffer because of the careless we must not forget that millions are blessed every day by the careful and the painstaking.

Accidents sometimes happen that a greater accident may be averted. There are but few accidents but what might have been worse. A little delay in time or a little change in direction and how much greater the catastrophe might have been. Accidents should have a salutary effect upon others. What should accidents teach us? They should teach us how frail a thing life is. It is like the grass of the field—"In the morning it flourishes and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth." Man sometimes boasts of his strength. His boasting is vain. For scarcely hath the blow fallen and he is gone. They teach us the terrible uncertainty of human life. When one thinks of what is certainly happening how can he doubt the uncertainty of human life? Now if life is so frail, so uncertain, would it not be wise to prepare for the end of it? The careless and the unbelieving are staking eternity upon the veriest bubble. Presently the bubble bursts and everything is lost. Why do people run such risks? Why do they not seek God while He may be found? Why do they not call upon Him while He is near? Accidents are constantly happening. The wise insure against them—if not for this world for that which is to come!