

The secret of forgetting the past is a three-fold one. Faith, duty, prayer. Let us know and believe the love God hath to us, both with respect to mistakes, which he can rectify; disappointments, which He will explain; sorrow, which He will sanctify; sins, which when He pardons He heals. Duty, again, is the great medicine for a soul tempted to be morbid through over-much introspection. It is a great thing to be too busy to have time for rubbing gnawing bites into festering sores, and so to play into the tempter's hands. When St. Paul could not go out to preach he wrote letters, and his letters are the inheritance of the world.

Then there is prayer; and the Epistle for the fourth Sunday in Advent here interposes with its blessed counsel for troubled hearts. There are moments sometimes in the wakeful midnight hour, sometimes as we sit by a solitary fire-side, or when the springs of life run low and the wearied body means a jaded spirit, then old mistakes sting us and disappointments make our hearts ache, then sorrow and bereavement fill our memory with the ghosts of departed joys, or then the thought of old sins makes us shudder and shiver with unutterable anguish. At such moments we are to be careful for nothing, but in everything with thanksgiving to make known our regrets unto God, and the answer shall be not of necessity the gift we desire, the wish we covet; the removal of intolerable burden, the light on perplexing mystery—but *PEACE*.—*Church Bells*.

HOW TO START A SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

BY MISS L. L. ROBINSON.

It may seem for the moment a trifle flippant, in dealing with a problem such as the above, to say that the best way to start a Sunday-school anywhere, be it city or country, is to go and start it. But the statement is made in all seriousness.

In undertakings of this nature, more, perhaps, than in any other, so much valuable time is often lost in the consideration of the questions *When? Where? How?* when, perhaps, the answer to each lies immediately at the door.

For certainly in response to the question *When?* the best reply would be "at once." If there be need and opportunity for such a work at all, surely the sooner it be under way the better.

As to *Where?* the answer should be, right in the place most available for the time being, however humble and inconvenient, till a better may be supplied.

In meeting the larger query *How?* more thought and consideration may naturally be required; but even here the advice is still the same; start the work to the best of its ability, and let the question evolve its own answer in action.

Such at least are the suggestions born alike of observation and experience; and perhaps no more helpful way of expanding the ideas presented can be offered than in a practical illustration of them at work.

A Church family finding itself in a country community, destitute of all but the most meagre spiritual advantages, was not slow in recognizing alike its own duty and opportunity, however that duty might impress those with whom it should come in contact. Seeking permission, therefore, at once, from the School Trustees of the village at hand, on the Saturday afternoon succeeding arrival, the little school-house was put in readiness for use on the following day; a small organ, a reading-desk, prayer-books, and books of instruction being all that was required.

It is needless to say that quite a little crowd of onlookers watched the proceedings with in-

terest; and the opportunity was gladly used for the announcement, in reply to the many inquiries: "We always have Church service and Sunday-school on Sunday: won't you be present with us?"

The attitude thus assumed, as seen at a glance, is a purely unaggressive and inoffensive one; offering room for no controversy, running counter in no way to possible prejudices or existing opinions, nor setting up a claim, even, to enlighten the community with "new and better ways." It is simply a family observance of Sunday duty, conducted in the mode of worship which they believe to be right, and a hearty desire to have all who will unite with in that observance.

In the instance under mention, it certainly worked admirably. On the following morning, when the family assembled in the little school-house, it was to find a large and kindly disposed assembly of neighbors to meet them. And right here, then, was the desired opportunity. Having thus many of other or no religious convictions present, what better theme of instruction than the *why* of the service maintained thus by the few in their midst; that though for the time being separated from the Church's visible organization and ministry, none the less was the family itself a true branch of that Church, and just as responsible to its appointed mission as a faithful witness of God's Word and truth wherever placed.

Thus was the hour of instruction made as interesting as possible, and a more direct invitation then offered that those present should then and there unite in the organization of a permanent school for mutual aid and spiritual advancement. The proposition was readily accepted, and forthwith the school found itself "started," and was continued uninterrupted to this day.

To the extent, then, of offering one answer to the open question presented as the subject of the pre-ent article, this brief sketch has served its purpose; for the methods and workings of a school offer consideration apart. But inasmuch as the question of available teachers enter so largely often into the problem of starting a Sunday school, perhaps a word of suggestion may be of value; and it is to this effect—that it is remarkable how few teachers will be found sufficient for the successful maintenance of quite a large school. In mission schools, especially, experience will discover that instruction, under circumstances, must be largely oral. Pupils, as a rule, neither through education nor opportunity are much given to habits of study, and hence a far greater amount of information can, in a given time, be imparted to a class as a whole than by the method of individual question and answer. It will be readily seen, therefore, that a large class may be almost as easily handled as a smaller one.

In the school just mentioned, numbering now some sixty pupils, there are and have been for years but two teachers. To one, filling likewise the place of superintendent, is assigned all those sufficiently advanced for instruction direct from Bible reading; to the other all younger scholars; by each the instruction is addressed to the class in common.

Such a plan is not of course suggested as the best, or most satisfactory; for the pupils miss the very decided advantages of a well graded and progressive course. But it is offered as a very feasible substitute when called for, and as presenting a possible solution to the one of the many obstacles often prominent when considering "how to start a Sunday-school."

Should the above methods seem to attach exclusively to family life in rural districts, it may be said that they may and have been as successfully applied by any little concourse of Church people, even though constituting a working force literally of but "two or three."

GIVING.

(From the West Indian Guardian.)

Giving is one of those duties which has been so much neglected, that by some it is scarcely regarded as a duty at all. Yet the Christian, whatever other duties he may observe, must be also a giver. With this view before us, let us consider the subject, and mention some points which must weigh with us, so that it may lead to the good of all.

First we must give. Why?

1. Because it is a duty. There are three things a man ought to do with his money: he must give to God's glory; he must provide for the present necessities and reasonable enjoyment of himself and those dependent on him; and he must make reasonable provision for the future.

2. Because this duty is enforced by the authority of our Master, by his precept, by his example, and by His promises and encouragements.

3. Because the duty is enforced by the sacred writers of the Old and New Testament, our Lord's Apostles and other disciples.

4. Because all God's irrational creatures, whether animate or inanimate, seem to be giving.

5. Because God has been pleased to annex a special pleasure to giving in a loving spirit. And further, gifts are greatly needed for many benevolent objects, for the erection of churches, Mission Rooms, Schools, for the food and clothing of the poor, etc., and for mission work at home and abroad.

For all these reasons every one should give. What are we to give?

1. Ourselves. 2. Our time, our influence, and our money.

But how are we to give?

As to the *quality* of the gift, or the spirit in which we are to give, it must be: willingly, unostentatiously, cheerfully and lovingly.

As to the *quantity*, how much we are to give: Generally, it is to be given freely, as "freely we have received" everything.

More particularly, the measure of this free giving is to be our ability. "Every man shall give as he is able," and "as God hath prospered him." Giving must be under some rule; only the rule, or the measure of the amount, is left to the individual conscience enlightened by God's Word. It is this giving by rule which will prevent the giver when asked for contributions to charitable objects from always talking about the 'many calls,' or the 'bad times,' or 'being very poor,' or 'having many engagements' as excuses for not giving. No man is at liberty to give or not as he pleases; nor to give as little as he pleases without reference to his ability. We must 'not give to the Lord what costs us nothing;' nor need any one be ashamed of giving little, unless his conscience tells him he ought to give more. The Jew gave his tenth, the Christian should not give less.

And when must we give?

Generally, when opportunity offers,—when cases of undoubted and urgent need come before us.

And give where?

More particularly in the Lord's house.

"None shall appear before Him empty."

"Bring an offering and come into His courts."

No man shall excuse himself from giving because of his many engagements, many calls, or other of the many excuses which are offered for not giving; and with the example of "the poor widow" before us, we can scarcely think of any as too poor to give. It is by such loving giving, and striving to give as our Master gave, that we may hope to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and we shall find it true that all that a man can count his own, when he comes to die, is what he has given away for God's honour and glory.