

Still another bond of union has been tested in forming the classes into an athletic department, with one of the boys as the director. A successful baseball team can be organized, and an annual match with the juniors is the chief attraction at the Sabbath-school picnic of one church I know. The preliminary practices also afford opportunities for the formation of friendships and the cementing of class interests.

In these and other ways that will suggest themselves to the teachers of men's classes, the Bible-class may be made a definite force and power in a school and church. A strong organization means, not alone a good list of members, but a high average of attendance, and this very regularity is a potent factor in the training of scholars as teachers and officers for the school proper. And all this varied intercourse between teacher and pupil, in the class room, in the home, or in the field, means a corresponding influence over the young men and a corresponding solution of the vexed problem I have taken as a text.

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THE TEACHER AND HIS CLASS

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(Second Article of Series on "The Sunday-School Teacher in Various Aspects.")

Having prepared the lesson in the manner indicated in a former article, the teacher should come to his class:

1. From his knees in the "inner chamber," where he daily pleads with his Father in secret for himself and his scholars (Matt. 6: 6).

It is not necessary here to dictate a form of prayer, or to say definitely what is to be included in his petitions at the throne of grace. His own spiritual wants and those of his pupils may be sufficiently suggestive in this respect. The main thing is not the form, but the spirit, in which he pleads. Requests presented to the heart-searching God should be breathed in a spirit of humble submission and unflinching trust in His infinite love and faithfulness, with the firm conviction that He will certainly do what Christ promised—"Give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him" (Luke 11: 13). Hence, honest, real prayers are usually short and pointed rather than conventional and vague.

The teacher who enters his class after such communion with God in the closet is always

earnest and impressive. And I do not understand how those who are habitually prayerless can expect to be successful Sunday School teachers, or why they should be asked or allowed to undertake this sacred work.

2. The teacher should enter his class with the determination to accomplish specific ends.

The lack of such definite purpose is always dangerous, and sometimes ruinous. This is the bane of not a few accredited instructors and educators in various departments, in schools, colleges and pulpits. What, for example, can be more unseemly and deplorable than a weak, rambling, aimless message from the pulpit? The aim of the teacher should be mainly twofold—not, of course, to the utter exclusion of subordinate ones:

(a) To inculcate effectually the dominant truth in the lesson. Fidelity to the Word of God demands this. In his preparation in the study he has clearly ascertained what this truth is, and has become so possessed of it that it will always be a controlling force in his own inner life. He cannot forget it because he has made it by intense, prayerful thought, part of his very being. He does not, therefore, require, when before his pupils, to make an embarrassing search for it in his notes or printed "Helps." It is the fire of divine truth burning in his soul, witnessing for itself, and impelling him to teach, and he teaches successfully only when, under the power of the Holy Spirit, experiences similar to his own are enjoyed by the members of his class. Thus the teacher is reproduced in his pupils. Hence his constant and highest aim should be:

(b) The salvation of his class. It is not enough to illustrate vividly the ruling principle of the lesson, and to marshal its facts in logical order. This is useful as a means to an end, but the presentation of truth should be adapted with heavenly wisdom to the spiritual condition of those taught. There are in our Sunday-schools many devout young Christians. They should be recognized and treated as such. The symmetrical development of their Christian character, and not their conversion, should be kept in view. Others, not a few, are practically heathen, and should be dealt with and prayed for from this standpoint. Every effort should be made to bring them to the Lamb of God, that they may have life, and then, under proper conditions, the life will unfold itself in the attributes of true character.