

## Mothers and the Sunday-School.

BY MARY L. BUTLER.

WHILE the earliest care of children was intrusted to the mothers, yet Jehovah himself saw fit to provide this larger and broader way of instructing them in the laws they were commanded to obey.

Yet for all this, the Sunday-school can not take the place of parental instruction. The two should go hand in hand, side by side. The mother's influence is felt before the child is even old enough for the primary department, and when he enters this school her influence should not depart from him.

Since the Sunday-school is the *divinely* appointed agency for instructing the youth, then surely there are some responsibilities resting upon mothers in connection with it. Many are so situated as to render it impracticable to be there themselves, but they can insist upon a regular attendance from their children. As a rule, nothing but sickness should admit of an absence. Many a child, when questioned by its teacher as to absence, replies: "I had no cloak;" or, "My new hat did not come," etc.

How I wish I could make mothers see the great harm that is done by permitting these excuses! Oh, if they could realize for one hour the distress that an over-dressed child causes in its class, surely they would institute a reform at once! First, there is injury done to the child herself, for her mind is so centred on her appearance that it is well-nigh impossible to turn it to the lesson.

Second, the influence of this fine attire is felt on all in the class, and in many cases much longer than the hour spent in the house of God. In one of the classes of my own school, this winter, a child was absent six weeks. On inquiry, the mother told me she had no cloak to wear. Had they been in abject poverty, this deficiency could have been speedily remedied, but I knew "no cloak" meant "no new cloak." The one worn during the week was worn and pretty, but not new. The mother said she had sufficient pride not to let her child appear in Sunday-school in such a garment, and since she could not afford to buy one ready made, why Nellie must wait until she could make her one. Six weeks she was kept at home, and, to my certain knowledge, much against her inclination. Surely such mothers have no realization of the great eternity for which they are training their children, and of the lasting and pernicious influence such irregularity in attendance at Sunday-school may cause.

It takes only a short time to make a child feel the importance of always being in her place *promptly*. When this habit is established, parents should regard it as a duty to see that the children are prepared with the lesson. This is perhaps a difficult thing to manage, but at least the Golden Text can be taught. There is always some kind of conversation at meal time, and during one of the daily

three meals the lesson could easily be discussed. If only the Golden Text is learned, it will make fifty-two of them before the next New Year's Day. Fifty-two Bible verses stored away in the mind are a good foundation on which to build character. When the child gets home from Sunday-school is a good time for talking over the lesson. If he is expected to repeat what has been learned, it will aid him in giving heed to what he hears.

From this the attention is often and easily turned to the teacher. A child begins life with absolute faith in his mother, and, oh, how careful she should be in speaking of her little one's instructor! Mother and teacher should be in such close sympathy with each other that the child will feel it though no words are spoken.

How many mothers feel it a pleasure, or even a duty, to call on their children's teacher? How many return the calls these teachers have made on them?

Some of my most successful teachers are girls from fifteen to seventeen years old; consecrated girls, from Christian families, who feel the responsibilities of their work more than many older ones do, and who want to know their little classes in their homes. One of them said to me one day: "I want to call on Allie Bennett, but I don't know whether to or not. Her mother has never called on me, and she is so much my senior I feel quite out of place in going there. I went last year to call on all the children in my class, and only one mother has ever been to see me. It makes me very uncomfortable."

Here was a case that made me feel that, if it were possible, I must blow through a trumpet to every mother in the land, saying, "Go and see your children's Sunday-school teacher! If you can't go, send them a note saying so, and invite them to come and see you, to tell you how your boy or girl is getting along."

Couldn't mothers arrange for the children to invite their teachers to tea or lunch once a year? The more simple the entertainment and informal the invitation, the better for both teacher and child.

Lastly, parents should have some connection with the Sunday-school, if only as visitors. Though circumstances may render regular attendance impossible, your child soon knows whether you have any interest there. Once a month, or once in two months, or once in three months, at least once a year, you can surely go to the school with your child and shake hands with the teacher and superintendent. That will settle the matter in the mind of the little one as to your interest in Sunday-school. Remember, you are building for eternity. Perhaps the good deacon's prayer might be suitable to frame into your own: "Lord help me to live this day as I shall wish I had lived when I come to give an account of the day's work."—*Pilgrim Teacher.*

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THE earth, O Lord, is full of thy mercy.