

The Absent Teacher

(By Margaret E. Sangster, in 'Westminster Teacher'.)

It must necessarily happen that a teacher cannot invariably be with a class. Providential hindrances arise which make it plainly one's duty to be away. For occasional absences there doubtless are sufficient excuses. But when it is possible there should be no break in the chain which from Sunday to Sunday binds class and teacher in closest union. No substitute ever seems to fill to a waiting class just the place of its own teacher. They attend to the lesson, they are polite and receptive, but somehow it is a step-teacher, and a step-teacher, like a step-mother, does not win the hearts of those she yearns over, in a single day. The loyalty of the average class to its teacher is a beautiful and subtle thing, a thing compounded of fidelity, admiration and love, and it suffers a pang when it has even temporarily to transfer its regard from one object to another.

The teacher should by all means be with the class unfailingly, when in health. The engagement to meet and serve it is not less binding than that which sends one to the counting room, the typewriter, the professor's chair, or the loom. We keep our business engagements with unscrupulous care; in the stern competition of the hour, the slack and the heedless, the irresponsible and the ease-loving, cannot hold their own, and in the world's market they are pushed to the wall. We should as conscientiously work when we are about that business of saving souls which our Father has given

us to do with diligence and prayer, as we should in an earthly calling.

The weather, for instance, should not detain the teacher from the class. Blizzards and cyclones may of course interpose insuperable obstacles, but an ordinary rain or snowstorm, even if severe, keeps no person in ordinary health from secular work, nor should it from work which is above the secular. Because the easy chair invites, and the hearth is cozy, and the new book charming, the flesh may tempt to inaction, but the spirit must conquer the flesh.

A regular attendance on the part of a teacher means and insures the same on the part of the scholars. When the latter are sure that after the long walk, or the tussle with the tempest, they will meet the teacher's warm hand-clasp, welcoming smile, and bit of personal talk and greeting, they will let no light hindrance detain them.

Absence of either teacher or scholar, when a definite course of study is being pursued, is inevitably weakening in its result upon interest. Something is lost which is not easily regained; some word, some fact, some inspiration, which would have come in the unbroken line, may be missed forever on account of the hiatus.

Teachers should take a lofty view of their work. As a pastor, expected to preach on a given day in a given place, seldom disappoints his waiting congregation, and, if compelled to do so by circumstances beyond his control, takes means to provide an alternate, so the teacher should feel that the class is a little pastorate, an equally imperative sphere of service with that of the minister, having made due and

prayerful preparation for the hour, let the teacher be at his post.

When, however, you are unavoidably detained, do not impose on the superintendent the duty of filling your place. Choose your substitute yourself, and do not be at ease until this is done. If you are to be gone for several Sundays, be sure that your class will be in the hands of one capable person, not taught necessarily by those who can be found at a moment's notice.

Give your substitute any needed points about the class. Tell her about the different members, what they need, what their peculiarities are, so that she will not go to them quite as a stranger. Then, when compelled to be absent from your class, pray for it; pray for Christ's presence with it as a whole, and with one by one. Much care and preparation is necessary to be a Sunday school teacher, but it is work that pays.

Alcohol in all its forms is a brain excitant which gives force by spurring the vaso-motor activities to unwonted feverish energy. While we are taught scientifically that two or three ounces of alcohol may be oxidized in the human body in twenty-four hours, we must never forget the far more important scientific truth that the physical tissues were never meant to bear this forceful combustion. The fine temper and healthy integrity of both brain and body are gradually destroyed by the continued use of one half this amount. The continued moderate use of alcoholic beverage in the amount stated is invariably poisonous.—'Union Signal.'



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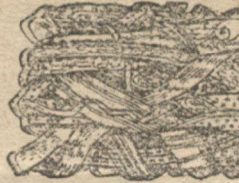
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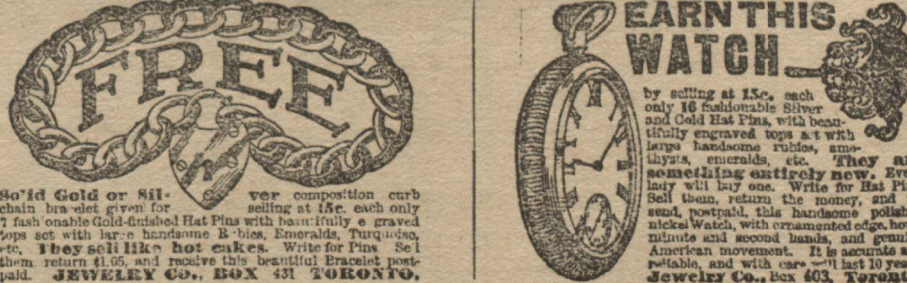
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