

## The Christian Helper.

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Not for that we have dimision over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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### THE TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITY.

Everyone who undertakes to teach anything to another, contracts a certain amount of responsibility. If he lose sight of this, he will, in all probability, fail of accomplishing his object. This sense of responsibility presses its full weight upon the Sunday school teacher. His work, it is true, is purely voluntary and benevolent, but having entered upon it, he is as responsible for the obligation involved in it, as if his choice of occupation had not been his own free act. The nature of this responsibility should be well and deeply pondered.

In a sense never to be lost sight of, the teacher has made himself responsible by his own act to God, for the spiritual care of the class committed to him. As in God's sight he has said, "I will do all in my power to form the minds and characters of these scholars, to lay open to them the fountains of Divine knowledge, to guide them into the way of peace, to introduce them to the Friend of Sinners." To feel aright this responsibility to God lies at the very foundation of the Sunday-school teacher's work. Nothing will be done to purpose without it. Every other standard of obligation will be found too low, and mean, and powerless in the absence of this. Our chief engagement in this work, is with God. We are acting for Him, to Him we must look for approval, to Him we must render our final account.

There is a responsibility, too, contracted by the teacher to the members of his class. He has undertaken to be their teacher in sacred things,—“the things which belong to their peace.” Another cannot do his work; and if he neglects it, or performs it amiss, the consequences to himself and to his class may be lamentable beyond expression. He is bound to be at his post with unflinching regularity,—no obstacle less than a really insurmountable one should prevent his attendance; and his ambition ought always to be to

teach Christian truth in the best way, to make it intelligible to the youthful mind, to convey it with interest and impression to the heart. But his responsibility to his class does not end with the preparation of the lesson and the regular Sunday talk. Our meaning will be clearly indicated by a quotation from *The Baptist Teacher*:

“Only too many of our Sunday school teachers seem never to imagine, for a moment, that anything but teaching can be properly expected of them. With more or less of punctuality, they patiently sit, or possibly impatiently, upon successive Sundays. And that is all. If a scholar is absent, it is none of their business—the superintendent must attend to that; and if a scholar should happen to die, the undertaker must attend to that—for they are quite too busy to go to the funeral. They may, like Paul, be “on the go,” but it is not at all in Paul's direction. Social enjoyments, fashionable amusements, business engagements—these things engross their thoughts and monopolize their time; and so they are kept in such a whirl, that going upon God's errands is out of the question altogether. Now we don't believe in such teachers at all—they are next to good for nothing. The most effective teachers are those who do not wait for a class to be gathered for them, but who, full of tender solicitude for those who are as sheep without a shepherd, go out and gather a class for themselves; and who feel that perpetual pastoral oversight of the little flock thus gathered around them is at once a solemn duty, and a very precious privilege.”

Nor must the teacher forget the responsibility which he has contracted to his fellow-labourers in the same important sphere. He must co-operate with them; he must be a link of harmony among them; he must keep up the respect, the influence and authority of his superintendent. One upstart, ignorant, ill-tempered teacher may disturb the repose, the order, and the efficiency of the whole school. Where such a teacher “creeps in un-awares,” the sooner he is removed the better it will be for all concerned. If he is allowed to keep his place, he will corrupt others, and fearfully arrest and hinder the work of God.

### DISCIPLINE IN THE SCHOOL.

If order is heaven's first law it is certain that it is one of the first requisites towards a successful prosecution of the work of the Sunday School. Without it there will be an endless confusion, counteracting the best efforts of the best workers. No lesson is more forcibly taught us by all the experience of the past, than that too

much pains cannot be taken to establish in the Sunday School a thoroughly good system for working and discipline. For the lack of such a system many schools are either suffered to languish, or sink down into utter confusion and ruin.

We entirely agree with the Rev. Smith Baker—who contributes an article on this subject to *The Congregationalist*—when he says: “There should be discipline on the part of the superintendent in the general management of the school. It should be understood that he has authority from the church, and his words are to be respected as those of the recognized head of the school. It is his duty to secure punctuality, promptness, and order; to see that each part of the exercises begins on time and closes on time; that no one part interferes with another part, and that no teacher or officer is disturbed by another in the time of his particular duties. Teachers are to fall into line with his requirements, and though they may not agree with all his opinions, they are to comply with his regulations.”

Most cordially do we endorse the following view, expressed by the same writer: “*The place to commence discipline is with the teachers, for only as they are obedient, can they secure obedience.*” It is self-evident that every teacher should conscientiously contribute his quota of service towards the full triumph of law, and order. A teacher, who, from ignorance, conceit or self-will, does not fall in with the prescribed regulations of the school, is a serious obstacle to the comfort of his fellow teachers, to the harmony and efficiency of the institution, and to the reasonable and legitimate influence of the superintendent. If this be correct it follows that the first duty of every teacher, in entering on his work, is to make himself thoroughly acquainted with it; to understand all the existing rules and regulations of the school; to conform himself to them with military precision; and to throw his whole influence into the scale of order and good government.

We have heard it sometimes hinted that, as all Sunday school teachers are voluntary, and even gratuitous, agents, it will not do to be as strict with them as if they held office upon a different tenure. We entirely differ from this opinion.