

ANDOVER-HARVARD LIBRARY



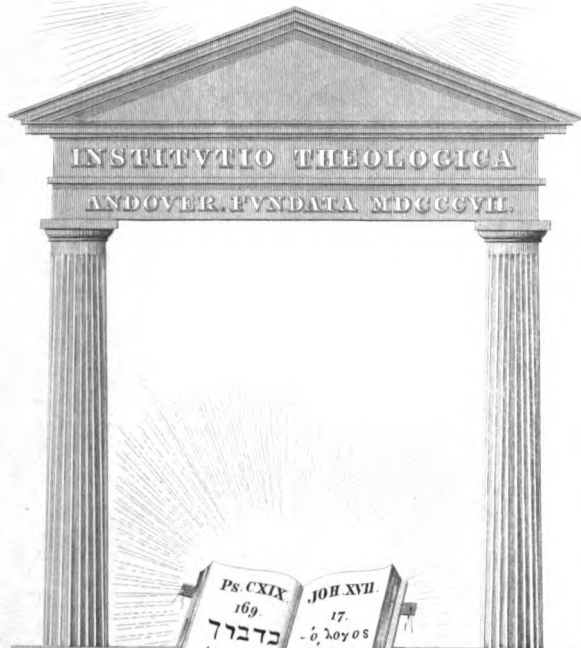
AH 55GB 1

The Pastor
AND
The Sunday-School

JOHN T. FARIS

The "Times" Handbooks
for Sunday-School
Workers. Number 2

יהוה



ΑΚΡΟΓΩΝΙΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ.

ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY

MDCCCCX

C TS

**THE PASTOR
AND
THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL**

**The Pastor
and the
Sunday-School**

By
John T. Faris
Pastor of
**Markham Memorial Presbyterian Church
St. Louis, Missouri**

**Philadelphia, Pa.
The Sunday School Times Company
1907**

ANDOVER HARVARD
THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
NOV 7 1917
ANDOVER
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

267,697

COPYRIGHT, 1907,
BY
THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES COMPANY

FOREWORD.

I know a pastor whose appearance in the Sunday-school is hailed with as much delight as the first burst of sunshine after a season of gloomy weather. The children want their teachers; they are loyal to their superintendent; but they are not satisfied until their pastor, also, is present. He is a power in the school; he is a power out of the school. The boys and girls like to be where he is. They go to church because his winning way of telling the gospel story appeals to them. They become Christians — so many of them — and rejoice that they can, under his leadership, enlist in work for the Master. Parents are drawn to the church because of the interest of the children. Thus the pastor's usefulness grows. And his heart is glad.

The Sunday-school in that church is large, earnest, enthusiastic. The superintendent gives the chief credit to the pastor; the pastor insists that the superintendent is responsible. The truth is, pastor and superintendent are working together so wisely and harmoniously that each

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

feels that the work done by the other is invaluable.

Longing to take like advantage of opportunities presented, I have been studying the methods of many pastors whose work in and for the Sunday-school has been blessed. Personal interviews and letters have brought helpful information. It has been suggested that this information be put within the reach of others. Hence this little book.

CONTENTS.

FOREWORD	iii
I	
OPPORTUNITIES REALIZED AND OPPORTUNITIES NEGLECTED	I
II	
THE PASTOR IN HIS STUDY	7
III	
WHAT SHOULD THE PASTOR DO?	12
IV	
THE PASTOR AND THE SUPERINTENDENT	16
V	
THE PASTOR IN THE SCHOOL	27
VI	
THE PASTOR AND THE TEACHERS	37
VII	
THE PASTOR WITH THE CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE	45
VIII	
THE PASTOR IN THE HOMES	55
IX	
GETTING THE CHILDREN TO CHURCH	60
X	
THE PASTOR AND SCHOOL OUTINGS	63
XI	
THE PASTOR AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY	65
XII	
INTERESTING THE SCHOOL IN MISSIONS	68
XIII	
THE PASTOR AND EVANGELISM IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL	71

I.

OPPORTUNITIES REALIZED, AND OPPORTUNITIES NEGLECTED.

A young man went from the seminary to his first field. He was eager for work. He tried to be faithful in his study, in the pulpit, in the prayer-meeting, and in the homes of his people. But he left the Sunday-school to the superintendent and the teachers. Every few weeks he would make inquiry as to the progress of the work among the children and young people of the church (few others attended); but there the evidence of his interest ceased. Perhaps four or five times a year he would spend ten minutes on the back seat during the closing exercises. In spite of this failure to actively cooperate in the school, a few boys and girls became members of the church. But he did not realize that many more might have been reached if he had been where it was his duty and privilege to be — in the Sunday-school.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

He became pastor of another church, where an unusual proportion of the members were young people. They were constantly talking of the Sunday-school. Surprised, he asked the reason. "Why, I've been in the Sunday-school so long I can't remember when I began," was the answer of one, "and I hope I'll never see the day when I'm out of the work. It was in the Sunday-school I gave my heart to Christ." When he had heard similar statements from several others, he became interested, and pursued the inquiry. He learned that nearly every one of the officers, the wives of many of them, the superintendent, the secretary, the librarians, and many of the teachers, had grown up in the Sunday-school. Then he asked himself: "Where would this church be if it had not been for the work done in the Sunday-school during the last twenty-five years?" And he determined that he could no longer afford to neglect the Sunday-school. Now, when the secretary posts the quarterly roll of those who have attended every Sunday, that pastor is proud if his own name heads the list; and when a funeral or some other call not to be resisted interferes with his presence, he feels as if the best part of his Sunday has been omitted.

The pastor of one of the largest Baptist churches in New England owns that he was

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

asleep on the Sunday-school question. "I awoke on reading the report of the triennial Sunday-school convention held in St. Louis," he writes, "I soon realized that, instead of leading in the great work of the Sunday-school, as every pastor should do, I had been lagging far behind. After studying the opportunities of my own field, I began a weekly teachers' meeting, and found my own enthusiasm kindling other hearts. Attendance at Bible-school increased more than one hundred within a year."

The pastor of a strong church in Chicago says: "I was not always as enthusiastic in Sunday-school work as at present. Children in my own family aroused me. A larger vision of the possibilities before the young who can be brought into the Sunday-school increased my interest. There are many in our school, without home training, whose characters have been completely transformed under the influence of the Sunday-school."

A pastor whose work in the Sunday-school has attracted widespread interest tells of the days when he was not so much interested as now in the young people of his church school, and says: "My enthusiasm was aroused by noting that the members of the school are in the formative period and can be reached. It is very difficult to reach adults and change their views

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

of life; there are so few conversions, comparatively, of those who are over twenty-five years of age. Then I found that getting into the Sunday-school enabled me to get a better view of the capabilities, consecration and intelligence of my members. It is one thing to sit in a pew and look wise, but quite another thing to teach a class and do it successfully."

"I was stunned when I learned that forty per cent of those enrolled in the Sunday-schools never became members of the church," was the exclamation of still another. "When I came to realize that the statement was true, I resolved to be more zealous. The thought that the Sunday-school is a forty per cent failure, and only a sixty per cent success, is startling."

The same argument aroused another pastor. "As I work among men and women who are not Christians," he writes, "I am surprised to learn how many of them spent years of their youth in the Sunday-school. Nearly every day I learn of one or more who were faithful and interested attendants at some school until sixteen, eighteen, or twenty years of age. They should have been reached for Christ during those years. Now they are far from him. I am resolved to do what I can to get hold of those who are now in our own school."

Here are the words of five pastors, them-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

selves aroused, who speak regretfully of others who are still asleep:

“I know a pastor of one of the largest churches in New York State who lost his hold on the young people, and finally on the church, largely through lack of interest in the Sunday-school.”

“At N—— there is a large church which presents a wonderful opportunity for work, especially among the young. They were eager for the pastor’s presence in the Sunday-school. But he was too tired to attend. Two prosperous missions, organized before his coming, asked his participation in the programs arranged for special days. He would not respond. Soon he realized that, for the sake of the church, he should resign the work to other hands. But he does not understand what caused his failure.”

“A church I know of in Chicago feels the loss of its pastor in the Sunday-school. The children do not know him, and he does not know the children. They pass each other on the street without recognition. The children never think of staying to church, for the chief person at that service is a total stranger to them. The living link between the church and the Sunday-school is broken.”

“In a great church in one of our large cities is an exceedingly small Sunday-school. During the sessions of a great religious convention, some

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

of the delegates went to inspect the school, supposing that such a famous minister as the pastor would have an ideal school. There were about sixty present. The superintendent put the visitors in the hands of a young man to give them exclusive attention. They were anxious to view the primary department, and the superintendent was equally anxious they should not. They would persist in staying till the close of the session. What was the mortification of the superintendent when the infant-class doors were rolled back, and the department revealed only the teacher and one little scholar! The pastor is not much interested in that school."

"Our pastor feels that he has no place in the school," a superintendent says. "We have four hundred members in the church, and as many in the school. The teachers want him there. He comes — but his stay is measured by the time required to pass from the front door, through the school-room, to his study. When I ask him to speak to the school, he says he has no message for the children; that somehow they never care to listen to him. The teachers are losing heart. Perhaps it is largely my fault. But I don't know what to do. I do need my pastor's help and counsel!"

What opportunities for awakening indifferent pastors, and building up strong schools!

II.

THE PASTOR IN HIS STUDY.

No pastor should neglect to offer definite and persistent prayer in behalf of the Sunday-school. Such prayers are frequently made in public. But how often are they made in the privacy of the study? "Here there is, usually, a great void," is the judgment of a pastor, after an experience of forty years.

There should be prayer for the superintendent.

"Pray for me," is the urgent, repeated request made by one superintendent of his pastor. "It gives me strength to know that you are asking God to guide me and direct me in the work of the school."

There should be prayer for the teachers. "Every day I realize my responsibility more," a teacher said. "The boys are hard to control, and I so want to hold them long enough to bring them to Christ. Won't you pray for me, Pastor?" Two months later she went to the study again. "You have been praying for me — I know you have. A while ago I thought I

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

must give up my boys. Now all is going well." And there should be prayer for the scholars. "Will you please pray for these members of my class?" pleaded a teacher who was determined not to be satisfied until every member of her class was a Christian. "I am praying for them; but I want you, too, to pray." And she handed him a list. When earnest teachers understand that such lists are desired, they will be presented often. The distribution, in the teachers' meeting, of prayer-request cards will be found helpful in securing these. Such a card may take this form:

Dear Teacher:

Are there not members of your class whom you would like to see Christians? You are praying for them. Won't you let me share your burden with you? If you will write below the names and addresses of such persons, and will sign the card, I agree to pray with you, daily, for all of them.

[Signed]

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

I agree to pray daily for these members of my class that they may be brought to Christ.

[Signed]

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

What a quickening of the faith of both pastor and teacher follows public confession of Christ by some of those whose names have, by agreement, been laid before God in this manner!

Finally — need it be said? — the pastor must not forget to pray for himself that God will lead him in his work in and for the school. It would be well if these words of the late Henry Clay Trumbull were fixed in the mind of every pastor: “If he does not pray for special wisdom and grace as he attempts to write or to speak, to teach or to pray, for the benefit of others, can he hope that his work will show the gain that it could have through such prayer?”

Robert E. Speer was once addressing a mission class in the rooms of the Philadelphian Society at Princeton University. Earnest men were before him, many of whom had determined to devote their lives to foreign mission work. The importance of reading missionary literature was mentioned. “How many here have read five missionary books during the last year?” the speaker asked. There was no reply. “Four?” “Three?” Still no answer. “Two?” Several said they had read two missionary books. “One?” And only half-a-dozen men could answer this final question.

What would be the result if a body of pastors should be asked as to their reading of books

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

about the Sunday-school — new books of methods and plans, written by leaders in Sunday-school work,¹ reports of conventions, and other like literature? We feel the necessity of reading books devoted to other departments of the Church's activities. Why should the Sunday-school alone be neglected? Records of the experiences of others will be found invaluable in making plans for the school. And the pastor should help in devising plans. The superintendent looks to him for counsel and suggestion.

With sermons to be prepared, and visitors to be received, and letters to be answered, and calls to be made, and many week-night addresses to be arranged for, definite preparation for the Sunday-school hour is frequently omitted by the busy pastor. "Sunday's lesson is on 'The Parable of the Talents,'" he reminds himself when, on Saturday, he is wearily putting the finishing touches to his preparation for the next day. "I do not need to study that lesson. I have so often spoken on the subject." Or, "There's that five-minute talk to the school I promised to make after the lesson. I guess it is safe to let that go. Some message will come to me."

¹ An exhaustive and up-to-date list of such books may be found in the appendix to "How to Conduct a Sunday-school," by Marion Lawrance.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

But can we afford to permit previous study of the lesson to take the place of fresh preparation? Or can we be satisfied to leave the brief talk to "the inspiration of the moment?" Frequently the short talk will be heard by more people than either of the sermons — and those who hear can be more easily reached and influenced. "That is one reason I cannot longer afford to crowd the Sunday-school out of my study-hour," is the message of a busy pastor.

Prayer in the study! Planning in the study! Preparation in the study! And the pastor is ready to go into the school.

III.

WHAT SHOULD THE PASTOR DO?

The Rev. William Chalmers Covert, D.D., of Chicago, gives this suggestive and impressive reply:

“He should smile! Shake hands! Sit on the platform! Speak often to the children! School his own teachers in their art! Share official burdens! Shoulder some of the school calling! Scrutinize modern problems! Shame idle but able teachers! Stand for child evangelism! Sympathize with everybody! Shape the policy of the school, in all wisdom and grace!”

And here is the testimony of Mr. Frank L. Brown, Superintendent of the Bushwick Avenue-Central Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school of Brooklyn — one of the largest and most successful schools in the world: “Our pastor makes it a point to be at every Sunday-school service unless called away by a funeral. None of our pastors have been given classes regularly to teach. Occasionally they take some important class if the teacher is away, but, as a rule, the

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

pastor is purposely left free to go through the departments, see interested clerical and other visitors, and keep in touch with the work by observation. He is present at our teachers' business and other meetings with great faithfulness, has assisted in teaching the meeting of teachers for lesson study, and has conducted that meeting with excellent results. He is with us in carefully considering the interests of the school and guiding or helping the discussion of the school interests. He is ready at our teachers' social and department meetings, if called upon, with some choice thing for the teachers' thought. At our Rally Day services, in the morning, he preaches a special sermon for teachers and officers, deepening their sense of privilege and responsibility. He is on hand at our teachers' prayer-meeting. In other words, he shows his interest and help in any way he can — not to boss or to show authority, but to wisely co-operate. He is usually on the platform at the opening of the school to lead in prayer if called upon, or, later, to review the lesson, occasionally. In assisting in the evangelistic work of the school he is tender and wise."

The Rev. J. B. Donaldson, D.D., of Davenport, Iowa, has this to say of the pastor's place and work: "The pastor should be ready to do what he can do best that needs to be done worst ;

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

not interfering, nor taking work out of the superintendent's hands, nor causing the superintendent to feel that he is not responsible, but advising with him, whenever advice is desired or needed, aiding in securing teachers, and giving counsel when it is sought. The great office is to be the pastor of every child and teacher; to know them; to love them; to follow them — in school, in play, in work — as far and as fully as possible; and to attach every scholar, by the aid of teachers and friends and family, if God please, to Jesus Christ and his Church, as members and workers, before they get out of their teens."

"The pastor should sink himself out of sight as far as possible, in order to put others forward," is the remark of a minister, now retired, whose many years of effective work in church and school lend emphasis to the words. "As soon as any pastor thinks he owns the Sunday-school, he is crippled for usefulness. I never spoke of *my* school, but of *our* school. I saw in it one of the chief channels of accomplishing my ministry; therefore my attitude to it has always been one of settled conviction."

The Rev. Samuel E. Eastman, of the Park church, Elmira, N. Y., says: "I teach, but as substitute only, when class-teacher is absent; sometimes in primary, again in intermediate, junior or

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

senior departments. This brings me in close contact with boys and with girls, with all ages, and with all sorts. The children thus have a pastor, and lose all fear of him. One Sunday I was talking to the school from the platform. All the grades were assembled. A little boy six years old left his seat and stood beside me, putting his little arm around my leg and hugging it. A smile and a ripple of laughter went through the school. But I put my hand down on the little fellow's head and went on with my talk. I do not know what it was to him. But to me it was one of the springs of Elim, and the outflow from it has moistened many a wilderness place in my work since."

"But sermons suffer if I am in the school," is an objection frequently heard. "If the session is just before morning service, how can I, in justice to my work, be there?" The answer was thus promptly given by a hard-working pastor: "Suppose the morning sermon does suffer a little. It can't be helped. I must be in the school." Still more convincing is the reply given by a man who has the joy of working in a Sunday-school widely known for its evangelistic fervor: "I have not made six sermons in twelve years that have not grown, from the root to the flowering, out of my work in and through and for the Sunday-school."

IV.

THE PASTOR AND THE SUPERINTENDENT.

Nothing better has been said on this subject than this, by the late Henry Clay Trumbull:¹

“So long as a pastor is only the pastor in his Sunday-school, not immediately filling any subordinate office, he will, of course, as a wise pastor, have due regard to those who hold other offices in his Sunday-school. Although he is over the superintendent, he is not the superintendent; nor is it for him to direct the details of the work committed to the superintendent, nor to control the action of those who are under the superintendent, except through, or by arrangement with, the superintendent. There is no surer way of getting good work from one in any subordinate position of authority than by laying upon that subordinate the fullest responsibility within his sphere, and showing confidence in him as thus responsible, even while watching his work with a sense of larger responsibility for

¹ Yale Lectures on the Sunday-school, pp. 272-3.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

him and for his work as his superior. A good commander, on land or on sea, is always careful to avoid any seeming ignoring or over-riding of the authority of a subordinate, within the command of that subordinate; and a good pastor ought to have, so far, the qualities of a good commander in his sphere. What he desires to have done in the realm of the superintendent's authority, the pastor will seek to do through the superintendent himself, or with his cordial assent."

No better commentary on these wise words can be given than the narratives of two pastors who have told me their experiences with superintendents. One of these pastors was especially happy in bringing out the best that was in his helpers. When he went to one church, he found a young man at the head of the school who was somewhat timid. But there was no necessity for timidity — his pastor saw that there was in him the making of an unusually good superintendent. "He urged me to speak to the school," this pastor says. "I said to him: 'You are superintendent, and I am ready to aid you in any way I can. But I wish the scholars to recognize you as the head of the school. I must keep in the background.' It was gratifying to me to see how much he grew in his ability to speak briefly and pointedly on any point in the lesson,

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

when he found he had to do it. He is now, seven years later, State Secretary of Sunday-school work in an Eastern State."

In another church, this same pastor was even more successful in developing an efficient officer. When he went to the field, the superintendent was a valuable man; the assistant was very efficient in his own sphere; but he never prayed in public, and he never spoke. He had been Provost-marshal during the war, but had never been able to speak to his men. When the superintendent left the city permanently, he was in a panic. A few hours after learning of the prospective departure, he sought his pastor to say that an election for superintendent must be called. "He went on to tell me his story about what he could not do, all of which I had heard many times." Thus the pastor tells the tale. "I said that I did not see that we needed an election; he was assistant superintendent, and it was his place to superintend in his chief's absence; it would not be treating him with courtesy to elect another at that time. His objections were then greater than ever. I asked him what it was he could not do. He said he could not pray; so I agreed to pray; or he could call on another. Then he said he could not review the lesson. I told him I would do that for him, but secured his promise to read the lesson with

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

the school. Next Sunday he came up with every part of the program written out. While much embarrassed, he got along very well, as I told him. After a few Sundays I told him it was time for him to go a step farther, and encouraged him to write out a few questions on the review of the lesson — these to be read from the paper. He did so, and got along well. A little later I remarked that the scholars had never heard him pray; that they did not know if he prayed or not. He slapped his hand on his thigh, and said: 'That's so! I never thought of that. I will pray next Sunday.' He did pray the next Sunday — just a few sentences. He was much embarrassed; but I told him he did very well indeed. The next Sunday he did the same. Soon after this he volunteered prayer in the prayer-meeting, and kept it up. He seemed pleased that he could do what he had assured me so many times he could not do. But his prayers were not like any I had ever heard. He had no early Christian training, and had no formula of prayer. It was like a child asking his father for something. He went on as superintendent, growing into it, and was re-elected for a long time. After a year he was invited to attend the township Sunday-school convention and take some part. Soon he became enlisted in the county work, and was the principal man in the

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

conventions. Some years later, he was elected president of the state Sunday-school convention, and his speech on retiring the following year was an agreeable surprise to me. He has for many years been an acceptable elder in the church, and, on ceasing to be superintendent, after twenty years' service, he took a class in the school, and continues as a teacher."

The second narrative is that of the Rev. J. H. Jenkins, a former pastor of the Washington Avenue Congregational church of Toledo, Ohio — a church which has rejoiced in having a number of pastors who knew how to work effectively with the Sunday-school superintendent.¹

"When I went to the Toledo church," Mr. Jenkins writes, "it was commonly spoken of as 'the Sunday-school with a church attachment.' This was because the church had grown out of the Sunday-school, and the latter far overshadowed the former. This condition of things, of course, could not be changed except to the detriment of the Sunday-school and, thus, of the church. It was a very difficult relation for Mr. Lawrance to maintain, and yet I do not think it could be possible for any one to be more loyal to his pastor than Mr. Lawrance always was.

¹ See Appendix C in Marion Lawrance's "How to Conduct a Sunday-school;" being Mr. Lawrance's tribute to former pastors, and their letters to him.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

The indisputable evidences of this were manifest on every hand.

“Fortunately, my training was such as to throw me into fullest sympathy with him in his devotion to the young people. We were brothers in all things. I did what he told me to do, and he did what I told him to do. In the church, he was my right hand. In the Sunday-school, I did my best to serve him and carry out his plans. In the church I was master. In the Sunday-school he was master. In both we were brethren, in honor preferring one another. At least, he was always pushing me to the front, and I should have been silly indeed if I had failed to avail myself of the help of one with an ability so available and always reliable.

“Mr. Lawrance would go past the church on the way to his dinner. There I met him every day for fifteen minutes by the watch. We talked and prayed over Sunday-school matters. In winter, sometimes, the church was so bitterly cold that we could only drop on our knees for a brief prayer and then scuttle away to more comfortable quarters. But this became so the habit of our lives that we could not be deprived of it even when we knew that one or the other would be kept away from the meeting. Alone, each would keep the tryst; and yet not alone, for the Master who had promised to meet the

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

two never failed to meet the one who came in his name and to consult him about his work.

“I was, *ex officio*, a member and an officer of the Sunday-school, and I made it a point to be present at all meetings where members or officers were expected to appear, and at many of the committee meetings where it would not have been expected that I should be present, except in my official capacity. It was a point with me to keep myself posted upon every point that interested the Sunday-school. Mr. Lawrance did the same. So what one missed, the other was pretty sure to get. Then we consulted and enlightened each other at our daily meetings, and prayed over any perplexities or encouragements that might arise. As I have said, the Sunday-school was the overshadowing feature in this church. Hence it may have been necessary to give it an amount of attention that would not be justified in some organizations. Still, from what I have myself experienced, if I were making recommendations to church workers, I can think of nothing more important for energizing and unifying their efforts than a habit like this. If at their first praying, they do not see light or cannot agree, drop it for that time and take it up subsequently. Keep at it until light does rise upon the darkness and agreement does result from the confusion. But never drop a subject

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

which God has laid upon the heart until you are agreed upon God's will concerning that matter.

"In the school proper, I was a free lance. During the opening exercises, I was on the platform with Mr. Lawrance. I had a regular part in these exercises; but, as they were almost never twice alike, a variety of irregular parts also fell to my lot. The same was true of the closing exercises.

"During the lesson, I did whatever I chose or whatever the superintendent chose to have me do. Neither he nor I chose to have my time taken up with regular duties, especially not with a regular class. I often took the place of an absent teacher. This was profitable for me as it gave me an opportunity of becoming more acquainted personally with the members of that class, and also of learning how that teacher was doing his work. I learned, in this way, things that I should not have otherwise known, and things that sometimes roused my sympathies for the scholars and sometimes for the teacher, and in any case, enabled me to understand, and sympathize with both better. But since I could learn more in a general way by a survey of the school, I usually moved about from class to class, hearing and observing such things as might be of value to me or to the superintendent. Especially did we watch for any indica-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

tions of spiritual tenderness that might show where the Spirit, like the wind, was blowing on that day.

“Strangers often visited us. The superintendent was usually too busy to give them more than a passing greeting. These were generally pleased to have the pastor welcome them and explain what they might be interested in in connection with the school. In this way some of his most profitable acquaintances were formed and some of his best work was done.

“New scholars, too, were my special care. By becoming personally acquainted with them, especially at their introduction among us (and I would emphasize *that*; if a pastor wants to reach scholars or their parents he must take them at the start), I secured a welcome at, and an introduction to, their homes. This work, in this particular school, was second to none the pastor could undertake.”

No Sunday-school can do its best work unless pastor and superintendent are thus working together, helpfully, loyally, and tactfully. Sometimes there is jealousy and suspicion; then the work languishes, the teachers are divided into parties, and there is discord in the school. But when the pastor exalts the superintendent, and the superintendent honors the pastor; when each strives in every way in his power to help

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

the other, the teachers are aroused, and the entire school feels the inspiration.

In his volume already referred to in this chapter, Dr. Trumbull has told¹ of one of the best managed country Sunday-schools he ever saw, where this ideal relation between pastor and superintendent existed, with the happiest results. "When I spoke with warmth, to the superintendent of that Sunday-school, of its methods and their working, he responded in all heartiness: 'Our *pastor* has done all this. He deserves the whole credit. He has trained our teachers. He made our song-roll for us. He leads our singing. He is always in the school. He presses home the lesson at the close of the study hour. He brings the church to see its duty to the Sunday-school. In fact, he does pretty much everything.' That sounded very pleasantly. But the very next day, when I spoke to that pastor about his Sunday-school, without his knowing what had been said to me of his part in it, he said, warmly: 'Our *superintendent* is everything in our Sunday-school. He spares neither time nor money to help it along. He is earnest and faithful. He is full of expedients. I could do nothing without our superintendent. In fact, he *is* the Sunday-school.'"

¹ Yale Lectures, pp. 274-275.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

The writer knows a pastor who is eager for just such a complementary relationship with his superintendent. They meet frequently at a down-town restaurant. There they talk of the school, its needs, its progress, its successes, and its failures. Many helpful plans have been originated during these table conferences. Moreover, the two men understand each other better because of the meetings, and so are able to work together to better advantage. Each has come to feel that he has in the other a helpful, sympathetic associate. And the Sunday-school thrives.

V.

THE PASTOR IN THE SCHOOL.

“The pastor whose absence from a Sunday-school session would be regretted as an exception, has a hold upon the hearts of those who attend that Sunday-school, unattainable by a pastor whose presence there would be a matter of surprise, if not a cause of constraint.”—*Henry Clay Trumbull*.¹

“The pastor’s presence in the Sunday-school can easily be justified by the attachment of the children for the pastor who is seen in the Sunday-school; and by the evangelistic work he is thus enabled to do.”—*The Rev. M. A. Matthews*, D.D., Seattle, Wash.

This is the judgment of the pastor of a large city church whose strong hold on the members of the Sunday-school has been gained by constant attendance at, and work in, the Sunday-school.

“How shall we gain that hold?” is the ques-

¹ Yale Lectures, page 269.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

tion of many an earnest pastor as he looks longingly upon the children and young people of the Sunday-school. "What shall I do when I am in the school?"

Pastors who have tried it say that the very first thing to do is to be at the door, a little ahead of time, to greet with a hearty hand-grasp all who enter the room. (Of course he'll be cheerful and smiling, because of the pleasure of being in the school. Unless it is a pleasure, he had better be absent. The pastor who acts as if it was a trial to leave his study or his home during the sessions of the school has not yet learned to appreciate his opportunities.) The teachers like such a greeting from the pastor; the children are eager for it. Frequently they will pause an instant to whisper a word. "My papa says he is coming to church with me to-night!" "I've brought another new scholar to-day! Jimmie, speak to our pastor!" "My mamma said to tell you 'Thank you' for praying for my sick brother last Sunday. It's good to be in the prayers here!" Thus sentences are spoken which make the heart glad. Who would not be on such terms with the children who come to the Sunday-school?

Perhaps it is not possible to be present early. But be on time! There is just as much reason for being on time at the Sunday-school as at

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

the church services. And what an object-lesson to the boys and girls—and to their teachers! If the hand-shaking has been necessarily omitted at the beginning of the hour, let it come at the close.

Usually a superintendent likes to have his pastor with him on the platform during opening and closing exercises. Sometimes he will call on him to take part—perhaps a little oftener than the pastor may think is best. But sometimes, at least, the pastor is glad to take the opportunity to stand before the school. In a recent article in the "Homiletic Review," Mr. Amos R. Wells wisely says: "I like to see the pastor always seated on the platform beside the superintendent. It is well that his office should thus be recognized; for he is the head of the Sunday-school, as of the rest of the church, and the superintendent is merely one of his subordinate officers. But the pastor should not allow himself to be called on too often to make the opening prayer, nor should he allow the school in any way to make him a crutch to lean on. For the same reason he should not speak too often at the opening or closing of the sessions. Occasionally it is an excellent plan for him to give the lesson a brisk start at the opening by a pointed anecdote or illustration. Occasionally, it is well for him to sum up the lesson at the close

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

of the teaching by some questions, or a few brief, well-prepared sentences. If he is good at the chalk, a little blackboard work will be a fine stimulus."

Sometimes a pastor feels it is wise to take a regular class. But many desire to be free for other work. Some act, on occasion, as substitutes. Thus they can come in intimate contact, at one time or another, with nearly every class in the school. Those who have adopted this method say that they have found the opportunity invaluable. The Rev. J. G. K. McClure, D. D., writes: "Every time, as a pastor, I have taken a Sunday-school class in the absence of a teacher, I believe I have been drawn closer to the hearts of the scholars, and they have been drawn closer to me. The opportunity for a pastor to go to a class for a single Sabbath is incomparably precious."

A Chicago pastor who teaches a men's class has nevertheless formed the habit of making a monthly tour of the school, going in and out of each class, speaking with the teacher, and getting acquainted with the scholars. When he has allowed his visit to a class to be considerably overdue, both teachers and scholars have sent word to him that they were looking for his call. In response to an inquiry as to the results of these calls, he says: "They have enabled me

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

to keep before the young the duty and privilege of confessing Christ, and of working up to each communion season as the time to take such a stand. Especially, they have enabled me to select from the classes such scholars as I wished to join my Saturday afternoon class for 'Lessons in the Way of Life.' This is the most fruitful source of real, intelligent confession of Christ. Without exception, the largest number of accessions to the church have come when I have been most diligent in these rounds, and they have fallen off when I have permitted myself to neglect them. It is safe to say that almost every parent who has come to me to talk about Mary or John uniting with the church has been prompted to do so as a result of these visits."

Dr. Cleland B. McAfee, of Brooklyn, has a similar habit of making the rounds of the classes. He says: "My place is to be in constant evidence as the pastor of the church, so that the young people are habituated to me; so that my presence as I go about the room has no other effect than to be helpful to classes."

Another pastor, learning — when he took charge of a church — that a certain teacher was so remarkably successful in holding the attention of the boys that he was the admiration and envy of his associates, resolved to study his

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

methods. His periodical rounds of the school enabled him to do this very easily. To his dismay, he learned that the teacher, instead of dwelling on the lesson, made a habit of entertaining the boys with hair-raising stories. The discovery led to the teacher's resignation.

A somewhat similar incident is related by a pastor who was grieved to find a class of boys in charge of a man who was not only not a professing Christian, but his example was not the best. His teaching was sadly deficient. But when the pastor spoke to the superintendent, he was advised to say nothing, for fear the young man should be alienated. The pastor did speak to him, however. He asked him if he did not think it was wise to urge the boys to make a definite stand for Christ. The teacher hung his head a moment. Then he said: "You are right. But how can I speak to them? I fear I am not the man to teach that class. Can't you get some one else?" The change was made — as it should have been made months before. Not only so, but the young man was retained in the school.

Still another pastor observed a casual visitor to the school moving toward a class whose teacher was absent for the day. Knowing him to be a man whose record was not exactly clean, he intercepted him, and tactfully drew from him

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

a request that he (the pastor) should teach the class. The superintendent, who had invited the visitor to teach, was not aware of the cloud on his reputation. A word, after the school, was all that was necessary to explain to him the apparent interference with his plans.

In one church a financial problem was solved, with great spiritual benefit to the school and the church, in consequence of an observation made by the pastor during his weekly round of the school. The officers were just then—at the close of the year—debating ways and means of supplying necessary funds. It was the Sunday following the teaching of a lesson from 2 Kings 12—the account of how Jehoiada raised funds for the repair of the temple. While passing the seats occupied by a class in the intermediate department, he noticed a number of curious little pasteboard boxes in the hands of the teacher and her boys. He learned that the boys, impressed by the story of the chest set up by Jehoiada at the word of King Joash, had suggested that the members of the class have individual chests, and that—for one month—they put offerings in these for some special work. Then, passing to the senior department, he saw, in a class of married women, one member who was holding out a small metal bank to each of her classmates, in turn. The teacher,

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

noting her pastor's look of interest, said: "This is *our* Chest of Joash. If it was so successful in Jehoiada's day, why shouldn't it prove a good thing for us? At least, that is what my scholars said. So we have resolved to undertake the support of a native worker in China, the salary to be raised by extra gifts brought, Sunday after Sunday, to the Chest." The pastor thought some more, consulted with others, and then — a week later — mailed a call for a Month of Self-Denial. A miniature Chest of Joash was sent to each member of the church. And at the end of the month the church — and the Sunday-school, too, for the school refused to be left out — brought the fruit of their self-denial to the large Chest set up in the church. The deficit was paid — and more. And the spiritual quickening which followed was such that church and school demanded that "Joash Day" be made an annual institution. Other churches and Sunday-schools, learning of the plan, have used it with like profit. That pastor remembers with great gratification the Sunday when, in his own school, and by his own people, he was prompted to the experiment which has proven such a financial and spiritual success wherever tried.

In the same Sunday-school a very successful Bible-reading campaign was inaugurated by the

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

pastor, after he had taken notice, during these tours of observation, of the efforts—more or less successful—of the teachers to interest the boys and girls in the reading of chapters and entire books of the Bible, outside the range of the lessons. After counsel with several of the teachers, he prepared a printed list of forty Bible stories and incidents. These were distributed in the classes. Those who received them were called on to read, for example:

The story of a servant who was sent to find a wife for his master's son. Genesis 24.

The story of the day when God told his people to get their Sunday provisions on Saturday. Exodus 16.

The story of ten cowards and two brave men. Numbers 13 and 14.

The story of a cripple who was given a home for his father's sake. 2 Samuel 9.

The story of a strange real estate bargain. Jeremiah 32.

Thus, in a way, the Old Testament field was covered. Each one who wished to read the stories was invited to enroll on a coupon appended to the story-list; a second coupon was given for use in certifying that the reading had been done. Some 350 enrolled; of these 251 completed the reading. The school passed a

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

fairly good examination on the work. Teachers have testified that their pupils were, many of them, interested in the Bible, and it is now much easier to persuade them to do home reading.

VI.

THE PASTOR AND THE TEACHERS.

That pastor is a fortunate man who is on such intimate terms with the teachers in the Sunday-school that they will feel it the natural thing to come to him with their problems, to ask his sympathy and counsel. But pity the pastor whose teachers never think of him at such a time! Not long ago the writer saw a letter from a teacher who, in despair of a sympathetic hearing from her own pastor, wrote to a Christian in a distant state — an entire stranger — asking help in her work with a class of girls. Probably she misunderstood her pastor. He would, almost certainly, have responded to her request with cordiality and helpfulness. But somehow she was not sure of her ground with him.

The pastor who has won the confidence of the teachers in the Sunday-school will find that his longing for an opportunity to be of use to them is frequently gratified as they make known their wants, and that they, in turn, will strive to co-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

operate with him in his work. Sometimes his opportunity will come when a discouraged teacher, who has vainly sought to induce careless and indifferent members of her class to return, asks him to call on them and try his persuasive arts. Another teacher may ask him if he will take her class for a Sunday or two, study her boys, and advise her as to the best methods of dealing with them. A third may ask, perhaps, for help in arranging a social evening for her girls.

One teacher, who was much distressed because she seemed to have no control over the harum-scarum boys who pretended to listen to her every Sunday, took her problem to her pastor. It was as a result of this conference that a proposition was made to the school to award a deportment banner each Sunday to the class which—in the judgment of the officers—most deserved it. The proposition was enthusiastically endorsed. The class of troublesome boys received the award on the second Sunday. And, ever since, the teacher has had an orderly class.

The writer once heard a pastor tell of messages of a different character given to him by some of his teachers. "Before nearly every communion service," he said, "I can expect one, two, three, or more, teachers, to come to me saying, 'I wish you would speak to M— in my

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

class. I think he has about decided to unite with the church.' Or, 'J— has given his heart to Christ, and he has told me he wishes to be baptized Sunday.' Maybe no word will be spoken beforehand, and I will know nothing until there is a knock at the door of the session-room. I open, and find a teacher waiting with a boy or a girl, a young man or a young woman, who, I am informed, wishes to make arrangements to become a church member. At one communion, not long ago, half of those received came in just this way. I tell you, it made my heart glad." But teachers are not apt to be thus eager to bring their scholars into the church if they are not on cordial terms with the pastor.

Some pastors make it a habit to write letters to the teachers. Such letters may be written when — for instance — there is a death in the family; an illness severe enough to keep from Sunday-school; a bit of good-fortune; a season of special hardship in business; a birthday; a return to the city after absence. The occasions are numerous which will suggest a letter to the pastor who is watching his chances to be helpful to the teachers. And one cannot measure the possibilities of such letters. A discouraged teacher, about to give up his class, may be influenced by a word of appreciation to try a little longer. An irregular teacher, reading a message of con-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

gratulation on faithful attendance for a month, may be led to resolve that he will deserve, every month, the same commendation. And a teacher who has succeeded in leading one of her scholars to Christ will rejoice when she receives a hearty word of recognition from her pastor.

The pastor who keeps in touch with his teachers will learn of others to whom similar letters may be sent. "I am anxious about Thomas," he hears one worker say. "He has been such an earnest Christian; but just now he is being severely tested. I am afraid he will yield to the temptation." A wise pastoral letter to Thomas will not be amiss; it may influence the decision for the right. "Mary is not so eager to set a good example to her schoolmates as she was six months ago. I wonder what is wrong?" another teacher tells her worry. Perhaps a letter to Mary will help. Thus Uncle Sam's mail service can, frequently, be used to draw pastor and teachers nearer together, to help the teachers with their scholars, and to do the work of the Master.

"But such letter-writing would take far more time than I can spare; I am too busy for so many things I would like to do, and this is one of them," some earnest worker will say. One of the busiest men engaged in Christian work to-day is editor of a number of weekly and

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

monthly periodicals of national circulation; he writes, every year, many helpful articles and books; he is pastor of a church which has been built up, under his ministry and within a few years, from a small mission to a membership of a thousand; he is an aggressive Sunday-school worker; he does his pastoral calling in the evenings; and, with all this, he finds time to write hundreds of letters each year to members of the church and to teachers and scholars in the school. It is his habit — on Sunday night, after service — to recall all he has heard during the day about absentees, the sick, the tempted, and the bereaved, in church and Sunday-school, and to write to them before he sleeps. It pays, too — pays richly.

Dr. W. S. Rainsford of New York City appreciates the importance of being on intimate terms with the teachers of the Sunday-school, as with all other workers in the church. Through such intimacy he is kept informed of the needs of the work. He says:¹ "I do not think there ever was a man as fortunate as I am in the band of lay-workers that surrounds him. We need each other, love each other, and trust each other. They give me of their best. For instance, I am going to speak in the Sunday-

¹ In "A Preacher's Story of his Work."

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

school. I go to my superintendent. 'What do you think I ought to say? What do they most need just now?' And so in other organizations. The result of my going is that my friends who know the inward needs of each of these organizations, and the young people who make them up, give me their own sermon to preach, and I preach it. They can see what I cannot see. They hear and know what I have not had an opportunity to hear and know. . . . Such experiences make a man's ministry very rich."

A helpful experiment, tried in a number of churches, is a special service for the teachers. Such a service was recently conducted in the Bushwick Avenue-Central M. E. church, Brooklyn, by the Rev. F. Watson Hannan, Pastor. After a specially-prepared responsive service for officers and teachers, a sermon was preached on "The Teacher," and this hymn, composed by the pastor, was sung:

(Tune, Missionary Chant.)

Teacher, thy work may oft be hard,
And rough the road that must be trod,
But great and rich is thy reward
To upward lead young souls to God.

Minds frank and open to inform,
And natures plastic, there to mould;

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

But truth will never lose its charm,
Nor love's sweet story all be told.

The Word of God is in thy hand,
His Spirit warms and rules thy heart,
His power is given at faith's command
T' enforce the truth thou dost impart.

Prayer, love and work, with humble faith
And wisdom, all thy needs shall meet.
Then simply trust what Jesus saith,
And thy equipment is complete.

Then to thy task, for Jesus' sake;
In love and patience teach the Word,
Thy aim, thy class entire to make
Sincere disciples of the Lord.

(Tune, "Doxology," softly.)

Father, attend my humble prayer
And grant me grace and light divine,
To make Thy holy will my care,
That all my life and work be Thine.

Of course the pastor will be found in the teachers' meeting. He will never absent himself when he can possibly help it, especially if he shares the opinion of Amos R. Wells: "I hold that the teachers' meeting of a Sunday-school is a center of power and influence in a church second only to the pulpit, and not always second

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

even to that;" or the conviction of the Rev. S. E. Eastman of the Park Church, Elmira, N. Y.: "I would much rather fail to be present in the pulpit than here, for in my judgment the former failure would be of slight importance compared with the latter."

What the pastor will do in the teachers' meeting must be decided according to circumstances. Sometimes, perhaps, he will be the leader; at other times he will simply listen, or give counsel, when asked, or take part with others. It will be the desire of every wise pastor to bring out the best that is in his teachers. If this can be done only by leading, he will wish to lead; if by having some one else in charge, he will gladly turn over the meeting to other hands.

This will be true also of the Normal Class, or the Teachers' Training Class. In some schools the pastor feels that such classes should be in his own hands. And, unless there is some safe, competent layman to guide these important agencies, he is right.

VII.

THE PASTOR WITH THE CHILDREN AND THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

The Rev. Campbell Coyle, of the Collingwood Avenue Church, Toledo, O., recently said: "I have found that my presence in the Sunday-school makes it easy for the members of the school to know me when they see me outside the church, and far more easy for me to gain their friendship and esteem. This has been my experience again and again."

"Have *you* had any such experience?" The question was asked of a pastor who, every Sunday, has the privilege of going into a Sunday-school where from six to eight hundred children and young people gather.

"Have I?" was the answer. "If you should go with me on the streets anywhere within half a mile of the church you would not need to ask. Once I was not as careful as I might have been in greeting the boys and girls as I passed them; I looked out for the grown people—but very often the children were passed by. Yet they like

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

to be spoken to. . . . One summer day, while a passenger on a lake steamer, passing through the St. Clair Flats, I was interested in listening to the cheers of the summer residents on the shore. Sometimes a toy cannon was discharged. The captain pulled the whistle cord in response to every greeting. There was one little fellow who shouted as loud as he could. But no notice was taken of him, though he waved his arms vigorously in the effort to attract attention. Finally he caught hold of a megaphone almost as large as himself, and the call came over the water: 'Won't you salute me, too, Captain?' . . . That is the way the children feel: they want a greeting, as well as their parents. So now, when I am on the street, I keep my eyes open for them. There are so many in the Sunday-school that I am afraid of missing some. (Perhaps it would be best to adopt some such arrangement as the members of Marion Lawrence's Toledo school have: you know they have a school signal which they give to one another, and to their teachers and superintendent, when they meet on the street.) But when I see a boy or girl coming I watch. If he or she is one of our folks, there is almost sure to be a smile on the face which can be seen as far as the features can be distinguished. The smile broadens as the child comes nearer. Then I know that it is time

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

for me, also, to smile, and to speak. How it cheers me to hear the answering greeting. 'Good-morning, Pastor!' 'How do you do, Mr. G?' Or, maybe, it is 'Hello, Father!' spoken very respectfully, with a bob of the head and a hand at the cap. Sometimes, when I am on my way to the study just before day-school begins, there will be a patter of feet behind me, and — from alley or doorway — one or two will run up, take my hand, and start with me toward the church. But I have the most fun when I pass the school in the same block with the church just at the moment when the children are starting home. What a mob gathers about me! The children catch my hands — they grab my coat — they call to me — they shout their exclamations to their friends. 'You was up to our house yesterday, wasn't you?' 'I'm coming to the church to-night!' 'When is the boys' club going to start?' 'You want to know who that is? Why, that's our Pastor!' A minute, and they are off for home. But they leave me happy — so happy that I have several times, remembering the experience, left vexatious problems in the study at the exact time necessary to get into the rush at the school gate. I needed cheering up — and I got it.

"I could tell you many delightful little incidents which have grown out of this intimacy with

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

the children. One day a boy approached me. The smile was on his face, all right; one hand was lifted to his cap; with the other he touched the lapel of his coat where he wore one of the buttons given by our school to all who care to wear them. 'Oh, Pastor! I belong to you!' he said. 'See?' and he pointed to the significant button. On another occasion a little girl stood on a grating in front of a store, crying softly. She saw me, came running to me, and told her little tale of woe. She had dropped her mother's change down the grating. The man in the store wouldn't pay any attention to her, and she was afraid to go home. I can tell you it was joy to help her, and to see how quickly a smile drove away the tears. . . . Then there was a boy who had received in change a bad piece of money. When he discovered it he stood still, uncertain what to do, until he saw his pastor. Then he came to me in full confidence that a way would be shown out of his trouble.

"I leave the street and go to my study. The children follow. The room is on the first floor, at the intersection of two streets. In summer, when the windows are open, boys—and sometimes girls—climb to the ledges and look in. I hear the call, 'He's here!' Then others crowd up—so many of them, perhaps, that the light

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

grows more dim. Sometimes they speak; sometimes they watch me at my work. If the day is warm, and the electric fan is running, they may ask to come in that they may stand a moment and catch the breeze. . . . A nuisance, you say? . . . Well, what if they do interrupt my work? I guess I can stand a few interruptions like that!

“They don’t intend to hinder me. Often they are eager to help. One Saturday morning there was a timid knock at the door. In answer to my word the knob was softly turned and a little chap of ten came to the desk. ‘Please, Pastor, can I help you? Don’t you want me to run an errand, or do *something* for you?’ That was the first of many such visits. Now there are a dozen or more boys who can be counted on to come with just such a request. And they have come voluntarily. At first I wronged them by thinking they were wanting to earn a few pennies. No; they came because they wanted to help!

“Don’t you think that’s fine? Of course you do. And I only want to add that any pastor can have experiences of the same kind if he’ll be a part of his Sunday-school, and show the boys he hasn’t forgotten how boys feel. . . . In dealing with the children a minister must not be too stiff and formal; if he is, he’ll never have the thrill which came to me one day when

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

I was calling at a home where I had never been before. The door was opened by the six-year-old son of the house, who explained that his mother would soon be down. The interval gave us a chance to get acquainted. We proceeded to enjoy ourselves. When the mother entered she was horrified. Calling the boy to her, she whispered a few words. At once he turned, looked at me, and exclaimed, incredulously: 'Why, Mother! He can't be! He isn't at all like a preacher!' Poor boy! He must have thought that preachers are not human."

A story, recently told¹ by a member of the first church of which the Rev. Charles F. Goss was pastor, shows how another pastor won his way with his boys. "I remember one time I was at a clay pigeon shoot, when he came to us. The glad hand went to him from all directions, and every gun was at his disposal. And there was not another swear word while he was there. Again he was going along a vacant street, where, in a vacant lot, some street urchins were practicing on the bar, some of them quite expert for boys. They were delighted when he stopped to look at them. One of them, after showing off, turned to Dr. Goss with: 'Mr. Preacher, you can't do that!' Off went the coat of Dr. Goss,

¹ In The Westminster.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

and the exhibition he gave was marvelous to them. Their hats went up into the air, and their plaudits were loud. And those boys went to Sabbath-school after that."

The successful Sunday-school pastor will thus be always on the lookout for boys and girls whom he may win to the school. The work is not easy. It requires infinite tact and patience. But the effort pays. Some helpful points from the experience of a man who knows how to get hold of the boys were recently given in the columns of a Sunday-school periodical.¹ As will be seen, the article was written by a teacher for the guidance of teachers. But it has been helpful to at least one pastor who read it. Perhaps it will prove helpful to other pastors. It tells of the boys' respect for a man—"a real, live, vigorous man that knows about wars, pestilence and famine; football, baseball, Julius Cæsar, and Daniel; Jonah and hickory nuts; wild turkeys and Samson; the Flood and Africa; the journey through the wilderness and big game.

"But how about lassoing the boys and bringing them in? Here is the way one successful teacher does it: He picks out one or two, never more than three boys, to work on at a time. He learns as much about them as he can. He

¹ William H. Hamby, in *The Sunday School Times*.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

meets one of them on the street, and with a careless wave of the hand says: 'Good morning, Joe.' He does not smile, he does not look straight at the boy, nor does he do anything else to indicate special interest. When he gets a good chance, he asks the boy something,—where to find good skating, quails, hickory nuts, anything that he wants to know, that the boy would probably know. Directly he inquires how things are getting along in the sixth grade. Has a little talk about geography or history.

"All this he does naturally, because he is really interested in the boy, in what he does, what he knows, and what he likes. It is fatal to make talk of a platitudinous sort. A boy hates to be talked to as a boy; he does not want to be considered a man. He merely wants you to consider him somebody. You are Tom Evans, perhaps you are grown. Very well. He is Bud Pool, ten years old. Very well. He knows something, you know something. He wants to treat you as Tom Evans, and he wants you to treat him as Bud Pool.

"Finally, when he is pretty friendly with the boy, he stops him some day—always a weekday—and in a fair, square way asks him to join the gang of boys down at his Sunday-school. He names a few of them, and tells him that just now they are reading about the Jews trying to

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

build up the walls of Jerusalem, while their enemies are trying to tear them down.

“He does not ask for a promise to come. Merely states the case and gives the invitation. Later he suggests to one of his trustiest boys that he might invite Joe to join the class. The boy rarely comes the first Sunday. The teacher goes on meeting him in the usual way, and seven times out of ten before the month is out Joe is in the class.”

But the problems are not all solved when the boys and girls are brought into the Sunday-school. It is, frequently, a difficult matter to keep them after they have reached the age of sixteen or seventeen — especially the boys. Fortunately it is not so difficult to retain the girls. The pastor who is not habitually in the Sunday-school, and has little conversation with the scholars on any occasion, seldom has information of the danger of losing one of his boys from the school; he is gone before he knows it. On the other hand, the pastor who is present at the Sunday-school hour, and goes among the members of the school at other times, is, very frequently, able to learn of a restless boy in season to do something which will make him desire to stay. One pastor learned from a teacher that several of the boys in her class — one of the choice classes of the school — were

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

thinking of spending their Sunday afternoons elsewhere. After prayerful thought, and conference with the superintendent, he sought one of the most prominent men of the city, a leader in politics, society, and the church, a man whom the boys respected, and asked him for a message to the school. This is the word he wrote:

“I am indebted to the Sunday-school for the happiness of my life. During my sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth years — the time when a young man usually determines his views of life and religion — I was under the influence of the old Sunday-school you are attending. And I can now see, as I look back over the years that have intervened, that all the blessings of my life can be traced to the Christian faith which the Sunday-school helped to establish in me.”

That was nearly two years ago. But those boys are still in the Sunday-school.

VIII.

THE PASTOR IN THE HOMES.

That title does not refer to the homes of the church members. Of course the pastor will go there. But—the pastor in the homes of the members of the school who have no other connection with the church.

No doubt many a busy pastor feels that it is impossible to increase the number of names on his calling-list by adding the Sunday-school enrollment. But will he not make a mistake if he does not do it? The pastor who goes into the homes of the members of the school has a far better opportunity to know the children than if his acquaintance with them does not go beyond the school or the street. When he learns what their surroundings are, he is better able to tell what their needs are; he will realize that some children need more sympathy than others; that he must be more patient with Mary, and more firm with James, and more tolerant with some of Henry's peculiarities which he has always considered trying. This knowledge will enable

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

him to give useful hints to the teachers who have Henry, and James, and Mary in their classes. And how many teachers are longing for hints which will help them to do more telling work!

Sometimes, during the visit to the home of a boy or girl, the pastor will see a chance to give a word of counsel. One pastor, who had missed from the school a boy of fifteen—once quite faithful—went to his home. For a time, the mother had little to say. At length, however, she opened her heart. "I'll tell you what is the matter with Frank," she said. "His heart is set on having a bicycle. He is working as office-boy during the day, and he knows his wages must be brought home. His evenings are his own. He is using them, I am sorry to say, by doing the only work he could get. He sells candy in the theater. He gets two dollars a week—for evenings and Sunday afternoon—and he puts it all by toward the wheel." That was valuable information. One of his boys in the Imperial theater! No wonder he was not at Sunday-school; he was at the matinee. No time was lost in seeing him. He was back in his place next Sunday, and has been regular in attendance ever since. . . . In another home the pastor learned that Albert had made up his mind to stop school; he thought he was old enough to be at work. The mother had been

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

unable to make him see that he ought to remain in school at least several years longer. The pastor's help was sought and gladly given. . . . In still another home it was learned that a boy who had left school and gone to work was growing impatient because his wages were not increased rapidly enough to suit him. He was about to leave a good position, and begin elsewhere. After an interview with him, the pastor had the satisfaction of knowing that he would remain contentedly in the factory where he had already made a good beginning.

Again, the pastor who is in the homes of the members of his school will sometimes hear things which throw a flood of light on the work done by the teachers. "Yes, it's a fine day," Anna said to her visiting pastor. "And I'm so glad the rain is over at last. Do you know, mamma said she was afraid it was going to rain forty days and forty nights and we'd all be drowned. I told her God had promised it wouldn't ever again. She didn't know that." That Anna knew of the rainbow promise spoke well for her teacher; she had evidently been doing some supplementary work, for no lesson on the flood had been taught for years.

The pastor who goes to the homes represented in the Sunday-school has a magnificent opportunity to meet the parents. They are glad to

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

talk with one who is interested in their children. Often they will permit him to show an interest in them, too. An invitation to the church is sometimes accepted. Maybe membership in the church follows. The writer recalls a score of instances of such pleasing results of an introduction to the family home, gained through the children. In a number of cases, whole families have followed a child into the church.

It is well to learn of the teachers when children are sick, or when there is sickness in their homes, that calls may be made. Calls may well follow a time of rejoicing, also. "I have a little niece! I am an aunt now!" little Stella cried, as she danced into the open door of the study. "Don't you want to come down with me and see the baby?" Of course the pastor wanted to go—and one result of the visit was that the mother and one of her sisters became members of the church.

The man who rejoices in being "the pastor of the Sunday-school" is glad to respond to every invitation to hold a funeral service in the home of a member of the school. "Do you mean you take all the Sunday-school funerals, too?" a busy pastor was asked. "I should think you would find it an impossibility." But he does not find it impossible to go where he is needed so much as in the house of mourning.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

And he has found that response to such calls is, often, the first step in leading members of the household to Christ.

Many times when these calls in the homes do not result in bringing a new member into the church, they are successful in increasing the membership of the school. "Do you really want grown folks in your Sunday-school?" was one response to an invitation. "I thought it was only for children. I believe I should like to come." If, however, it seems impossible to persuade the mother or the father to attend the school, an explanation of the work of the Home Department may enlist another family in this important branch of an up-to-date Sunday-school's work.

IX.

GETTING THE CHILDREN TO CHURCH.

“One of the most lamentable things about the church to-day is the absence of children,” an elder was recently heard to mourn. “When I was a boy there were children in nearly every pew. Now it is a common experience to go into a church where a child is a curiosity.”

The reasons assigned for this change are various. Some say that parents are indifferent. Others insist that the blame attaches to the pastors, because they do not interest the children. Still others call attention to the practice of renting “sittings.” In many churches the rates are high, and, instead of the pew for the family, only two or three seats are taken, and even the adult members of the household take turns in occupying these.

Many pastors have seen the evil and are striving to draw the members of the Sunday-school to the church. Some are holding a special “Children’s Church” service, on Sunday afternoon. Some have organized “Go-to-Church

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

Bands" among the children, and thus have met with much success in filling the pews with boys and girls. Some announce special sermons for children, while others try to have something for the children in every sermon. The plan of having a mixed choir of boys and girls for the morning service, or a choir of boys and a choir of girls, singing on alternate Sundays, has worked well. A Pennsylvania pastor, in a country town whose Sunday-school is unusually large, frequently invites a special class to occupy reserved seats at the evening service, and is careful to give the boys and girls a smile of recognition as he enters the pulpit. A special evening review service at the end of the quarter — the stereopticon being used — has been found helpful.

The pastor who takes one or two minutes during the closing exercises of the school for announcements can impress his invitation to the church services on the minds of the children. He should not be content with making a stereotyped announcement. If he has something attractive to say, or something new, the children will listen, and some of them will come. "I always invite the members of the school to the church services," says an Omaha pastor. "When there is anything of special interest to take place, I tell of it. I take pains to make these

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

announcements strictly trustworthy. So, when I say there is to be a visitor who is in any way out of the ordinary, they know that they can depend upon the announcement. Some one has said, 'You deliver the goods.'"

When the children come to the service, they should be treated with the same deference and care as their elders. If a fan or a hymn-book is given by the usher to every adult, let him give a fan or a hymn-book to every child, too. If a printed bulletin is used, each boy and girl should have a copy. If there are not hymn-books, or fans, or bulletins, enough to go around, get more! The money will be well invested.

And when—the service over—the pastor stands at the door to greet the members of the congregation, the boys and girls should receive just as hearty a greeting, by word and by hand, as those who are older. They are so quick to notice what they think is a slight. And it is so much easier to take pains to keep them in the habit of coming to church than to get them into the habit again after they stop because of the feeling that they are not wanted.

X.

THE PASTOR AND SCHOOL OUTINGS.

It was the intention of the writer to say something about the school picnic, and the pastor's part in it. But the message he wanted to write has been written already by the Rev. Ernest Bourner Allen — written so tersely, wisely and suggestively that it is copied here.¹

“Somebody said the other day that ‘the crying want of the age is good fathers,’ fathers who get next to their boys when they want to learn how to spin a top, or fly a kite, or bait a hook, or clean the first ‘shiner,’ or pitch a ball, or load a gun. There is a similar need for pastors who can get in touch with the youth in their congregation. There is no place equal to a picnic for this purpose — a picnic that includes every youngster in the Sunday-school, and every aged youth in the church.

“Does your church and Sunday-school have a picnic? Have it, without fail. And you, much-

¹ From The Sunday School Times.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

degreed, silver-tongued, hard-pressed pastor, be sure to go. Wear your old clothes. If every old coat you possess has a long background, cut it off so that you can run! Get out into the open with the boys and girls. Hear the call of the wild, and help others to feel that

‘God’s in his heaven;
All’s right with the world.’

“Have a picnic for the entire congregation. Put some thought, vim, money, and prayer, into it. Have it at about the same date each year. Run, play, shout, laugh, with the youngsters. It’s a splendid investment for body and brain, for soul and service, for Christ and the Kingdom.”

XI.

THE PASTOR AND THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL LIBRARY.

It is important that an eagle eye be kept on the books which find their way to the library shelves. Much of the work done by the teachers on Sunday may be undone during the week by the books which the scholars take home. On the other hand, the books may be of such nature that they will help the teacher in molding sturdy Christian character.

The selection of books should never be left entirely to the librarian, no matter how competent he may be. The pastor should be considered, *ex officio*, a member of the library committee, and no books should be purchased without his approval. Moreover, it will pay him to devote time and thought to the preparation of lists of books for the library committee's use.

But there is still work for him to do when the books are in the cases. The members of the school, many of them, will need to be guided

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

in their selections. If they are left to their own devices, the more profitable books will be permitted to gather dust, while other volumes — helpful, of course, or they would not be in the library; but not so helpful as others — will be soon worn out. Most boys and girls want story-books. They ignore books of travel, history and biography, and tales of missionary heroism. The pastor can make many of these neglected books popular, if he will. After a reference to one of them in a talk, an incident from another in a lesson-review, a five-minute statement of the good things in a third, the librarian will be surprised to note how the once despised volumes spring into favor. Just suppose that among these books are Riis's "The Making of an American," "DeAmicis' "The Heart of a Boy," the book of travel and adventure entitled "The Lure of the Labrador Wild," and "Soo Thah, A Tale of the Karens." What boy would choose these of his own accord? He would say the first sounds dry; the second is nothing but an old diary — he knows, because he looked in it, attracted by the title; that the third looks prosy; and the fourth is only "one of those missionary books." But if the pastor tells the story of how Mr. Riis lost his dog through the cruelty of a New York police-station sergeant, and afterward had a chance to take revenge on

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

him, but didn't; if he relates one of the incidents of the Italian boy's school-life, so interestingly told by DeAmicis; if he speaks of the heart-breaking adventures of the Labrador explorers; if he gives some details from the life of Soo Thah which will make his hearers realize that he was an actual boy — then the "prosy" books will be read by some who will thus, perhaps, begin to develop a taste for biography, and records of travel, and books still more solid. The same thing can be done with books in which the girls will be more especially interested.

Of course this, too, will require work. But it will be work worth while.

XII.

INTERESTING THE SCHOOL IN MISSIONS.

This is the age of missions. Thousands of pastors are using every proper means to interest the members of their churches in the great work of winning the world for Christ. They are eager to have their people share in carrying the gospel message to those who are still in darkness. Missionary pastors are supported, not only by well-to-do churches, but by many comparatively weak congregations. The salaries of native workers are paid by still other churches. And the work prospers.

But so many pastors are neglecting the greatest field—and the easiest—for creating missionary interest: the Sunday-school. Yet those who have made a serious effort to arouse their Sunday-schools to missionary zeal have been abundantly satisfied with the result.

“A mission-loving Sunday-school means a mission-loving church, twenty years hence,” is the reason given by one pastor for his earnest

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

work for missions in the Sunday-school. And his boys and girls are becoming interested, too. They were already contributing generously to the cause when an appeal was made for quite an addition to their gifts, for a chapel building in China. At first it seemed out of the question to raise the amount. Then the pastor came before the school with a proposition to subscribe the necessary sum in class shares. In five minutes he found he could have three times the sum called for.

In another Sunday-school the pastor, with the cordial approval of the superintendent, occupies five minutes once a month in presenting one of the missionary agencies of the denomination. As a consequence, the setting apart of one offering in four for missions may not satisfy the school much longer; clamor for more generous giving is already heard.

In a mission church of eighty-four members, which is contributing five hundred dollars yearly to the support of a missionary, the Sunday-school is arranging to heed the pastor's plea for two hundred dollars additional for the support of a native minister, educated in America. No fear that this will not be a missionary church in the next generation!

In the same city is another Sunday-school where the children — once lukewarm on the sub-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

ject of missions — have been aroused in consequence of the arrangement made by the pastor for the support of a native worker. They learned of his work; they became interested in his letters; and when they found that he was receiving only two hundred dollars a year, they insisted on increasing the amount by fifty dollars.

Pastors and superintendents of these schools will readily agree with John R. Mott¹ in saying: "The same expenditure of attention required to enlist the active support of one Christian advanced in age would kindle the enthusiasm of a score of young people."

¹ *The Pastor and Modern Missions*, p. 74.

XIII.

THE PASTOR AND EVANGELISM IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL.

“ There are those who will not come to Christ if they are not urged to do so in childhood. In one of the cities of New York a minister arose in one of the meetings to say: ‘ Let me tell you of a playmate of mine, a little girl. There was a special service in the school of which we were both members; an appeal was made, which resulted in my own conversion. This girl was even more deeply moved than I, but, there being no one to lead her to a decision, she left the school. I met her years after in Paris, when I asked if she ever became a Christian. With a sneer on her face that had once been wet with tears, she said, “ Why, I never think of it, and have not for years. I have clearly made up my mind that I shall never be a Christian.” What God in his mercy may do for her before her life’s journey ends I cannot say, but there was a time when as a child one touch of helpfulness would have led her to a decision.’ ”¹

¹ Evangelism in the Sunday-school, by J. Wilbur Chapman, pp. 47-8.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

This incident indicates the importance of evangelistic work in the Sunday-school. It also illustrates the danger of Decision Day when the appeal to the children to give their hearts to Christ is not preceded and followed by the careful, prayerful, personal effort of teachers, superintendent and pastor. Decision Day may become a great blessing to the school when it is looked upon as only a part of the school's evangelistic work. The day will almost certainly be an evil if the evangelistic work of the year begins and ends then. Happy results may be looked for when teachers are habitually faithful in urging the members of their classes to become Christians; when superintendent and pastor advise with their teachers about this all-important work in their classes, and wisely second their efforts from the platform; when pastor, officers and teachers prayerfully look forward to the day for weeks or perhaps months; when the school is thoroughly informed of the meaning of the day; and when — after it is over — the girls and boys are brought together by the pastor in an instruction class.

A Decision Day service conducted in October, 1906, in a large St. Louis school, with the assistance of Mr. Bradford Williams, of New York, has been favorably commented on. The day had been prepared for, and all knew what was

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

coming. After a twenty-minute talk the speaker asked that all bow their heads while three officers led in prayer. During the prayers the teachers spoke quietly to their scholars, asking them to decide for Christ. In a few moments the request was made that those teachers who had received affirmative responses from any should lead them into a room prepared for their reception. Some boys and girls, seeing the company passing down the aisle, sought to follow; but they were restrained: none were permitted to go but those who had spoken to their teachers. During the closing exercises, the pastor met the children and the teachers in the ante-room, talked with the children, and promised to see their parents. When the parents had given consent, the boys and girls were admitted to the pastor's class in preparation for church membership. A number of those of more mature years were welcomed to the church the following Sunday.

Such preparation classes are held by many pastors for a few weeks before Communion days. Sometimes it is thought best to have the class at the Sunday-school hour — boys and girls from many classes being temporarily enrolled. Another method is to hold the class in the pastor's study during the closing exercises, and for a few minutes after. This has its advantages and

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

its disadvantages. A serious drawback is the removal of many from their places before the session is over. On the other hand, it has been thought a good method because the quiet departure from the main room of a dozen or a score of young people to attend a class whose object is known to the entire school, is impressive, and compels thought. Still another method frequently adopted is to announce in the school that such a class will be held before or after the morning service, or at some time during the week.

The Rev. E. W. Brown, of Spirit Lake, Iowa, after consultation with the teachers, sends a letter to the parents, announcing a series of special meetings for boys and girls between the ages of eleven and sixteen at four o'clock in the afternoon, of week-days. Topics for these meetings are announced in the letter; also a card like this is sent:—

I believe in JESUS CHRIST as the Son of God.
The BIBLE as the Word of God, and
The CHURCH as the Home of God's People.

Therefore, after prayer and study and talking with
my parents and pastor,

I accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour;
I take the Bible as my Guide;

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

I purpose, at the earliest opportunity, to unite with the Church and with God's help to lead a Christian life.

Name.....

Date.....

Thus the parents understand, in advance, what their children may be asked to do. At the meetings the blackboard is at hand, and Bibles are freely used. Experience has proved that the children who come from these classes have a better understanding of the fundamentals of Christian faith and doctrine than many adult members of the church, and that those of them who come into the church are "sticking to it," to use Mr. Brown's own phrase.

Superintendent Frank L. Brown, of the Bushwick Avenue-Central M. E. Sunday-school, Brooklyn, says that his pastor "finds the school, and especially the senior department, a great field for recruiting the church's membership. Nearly one hundred of the school have joined the church this year (1906), and that is about normal. He takes these young people and, on a week night, trains them in a probationer's class which averages an attendance of seventy young men and women, and drills them to locate and quote the pivotal passages relating to the plan of

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

salvation, and in the development of personal testimony."

The Rev. F. E. R. Miller, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Grand Forks, N. D., has found that an altogether different method is advisable among his children and young people. He has told of it in a letter to the writer :

"I have always done personal work among children from nine to eighteen years of age, but this work is difficult, often unsatisfactory, and sometimes without result, when I must meet the children before others in their homes. This situation induced me to try appointments in my study. When children meet me thus they are at once set at ease because, relieved from curious eyes and ears, they are moved to thorough honesty and freedom of expression. So I obtain a complete knowledge of their spiritual condition, as well as a full discussion of personal religion. I then seek an interview with parents and teachers, calling in the child if it seems advisable.

"As for results. Since last January I have had some ninety preliminary interviews with children in my study, in and out of Sunday-school time. The volume of personal work this has brought to view is so large that the superintendent and I are looking for an assistant to assume a part of the labor of visiting in the children's homes.

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

“ This triplex card furnished me, when signed, [notice that everybody could sign] with very desirable information :

I realize and confess that I am a sinful person in need of a Saviour, and hence I hereby express my wish to follow Christ and live a Christian life.

Name

Address

Being a Christian, I should like to follow Christ in baptism, and unite with the church for fellowship and service.

Name

Address

As a member of.....church I acknowledge my obligation to serve Christ and to seek the salvation of my kindred and acquaintance, hence I hereby promise to yield to the Spirit's directions in this matter.

Name

Address

My attempt has been to see the signers of card number one the first time by sending for them to come to my study during the lesson period. Then I made subsequent appointments as seemed wise. It will require another three months be-

The Pastor and the Sunday-School

fore I shall care to cast up the net results in the terms of conversions, church-membership, etc.”

There are many methods. Each pastor, in conference with his superintendent, must decide what is the best method for the school where the work is to be done.

But it must not be left undone. “The only logical and spiritual reason for the existence of the Sunday-school is the work it can do by teaching the Bible and bringing the children to Christ.”¹ And, since the bringing of the children to Christ so often leads to the coming of their parents to Christ, how can the pastor, who has consecrated his life to this very purpose, be content to neglect the Sunday-school, where the fields are white already to harvest?

¹ The Rev. M. A. Matthews, D.D., Seattle, Wash.

The "Times" Hand-books for Sunday-School Workers

Each book treats of a distinct phase of Sunday-school work, and is written by an expert. New titles will be added at frequent intervals until present departments and problems are treated; when any new plan or department of Sunday-school work is proved a success, a new book will be added to the series. The books are uniform in size and general style; some are bound with limp covers, some with stiff board.



No. 1. The City Sunday-School

Its Work, Growth, Possibilities. BY FRANK L. BROWN, Brooklyn, N. Y., Special Commissioner sent by the International Committee to Japan to organize the national Sunday-school work. 25 cents, net.

A book filled to the covers with plans which have proved successful under city conditions; and an appendix contains a large number of printed forms, records, letters and blanks, which Mr. Brown has used successfully in his Sunday-school,—now the next to the largest in the world. 70 pages. Limp cover.

No. 2. The Pastor and the Sunday-School

BY JOHN T. FARIS, Pastor of the Markham Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. Louis, Missouri. 25 cents, net.

A book of experiences, not of theory. It tells how pastors have contributed to the success of Sunday-school work. It is rich in hints and practical plans. 84 pages. Limp cover.

No. 3. The Sunday-School and the Home

BY FRANK L. BROWN, Brooklyn, N. Y. 25 cents, net.

A thoroughly practical discussion of the relationship that should be sought after between the home and the Sunday-school. He gives many illustrations of how this relationship can be secured and cemented, and a number of letters are appended to show just how he has reached out into the homes of his neighborhood and attached the home life and influence to the school. Limp cover.

IN PRESS

No. 4. The Primary Department

BY ETHEL J. ARCHIBALD. 50 cents, net.

No. 5. The Home Department of To-Day

BY MRS. FLORA V. STEBBINS. 25 cents, net.



PUBLISHED BY THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TIMES CO.
1031 Walnut Street.  Philadelphia, Pa.

